DOI: 10.14232/suc.2022.3.57-86

ELEONORA FALINI

Florida State University

Notes on a Minor Character in Attic Tragedy: The Nurse of Phaedra. A Study on Subordinate Characters in Tragic Plots

5th century Attic theatre was a mass phenomenon and the audience was the focal point of this collective dimension. The tragic subject was based on the epic tradition, which was part of spectators' cultural heritage: the tragedian could not overlook these expectations. This study aims to investigate the dramatic key role of minor characters, which represents a privileged tool to introduce novelty in the repertoire. The reconfiguration of them, even drastical, did not necessarily imply a disruption of the epic core, and so the marginal position of servants, pedagogues, nurses, messengers, was crucial. The λόγος is the only mean at their disposal, that's the reason why they so frequently pronounce warnings and training. But are these humble characters capable of being righteous advisors, for a good παιδεία*? The case of Phaedra's nurse, in Euripides'* Hippolytus Stephanephoros*, offers an intriguing opportunity of study.*

Keywords: Attic tragedy, Euripides, *Hippolytus*, *Phaedra*, Secondary characters, Servants, Nurse, Pedagogues, Greek *paideia*, Athenian audience

How important are minor characters in Attic tragedy? Why are these marginal figures so assiduously documented amongst the most important tragic works? Is their role so marginal that the myth could do without them? The aim of this work stems from being pure research on the importance of servants in tragedy and Attic society, investigating each case where secondary characters appear in drama works thoroughly. Conversely, the intention is to give a general framework of the research questions, attempting to offer few coordinates. At first, the work will draw the narrative functions of marginal roles, while in a second moment will be analyzed a specific case study: the dialogue between Phaedra's nurse and

her protégé, which takes place in the first episode of *Hippolytus Stephanephoros*, with particular attention to the servant's speech.

Bond to a religious and popular dimension, tied to ancient mythological traditions and dependent on fixed expressive means, Greek theatre was addressed to a prepared audience, already prone to the vision of a poetic performance featuring sacred elements.

> Theatre in 5th century Athens embodies mainstream forms of representation and expression that account for an essential perspective and a common field for the authors. However, the Greek Myth is not to be seen as a closed system, official and defined: rather, it is an open text, that is created anew in different versions. The magic of drama consisted of introducing heroes into contemporaneity.[1]

Therefore, it is evident that the chosen stories and the characters brought on stage are not accidental. Spectators were put before a conflict, where human possibilities seemed irrelevant, and where the πόλις political and social cornerstones were reiterate. Tragic theatre was a complex institution, both mythical and ritual, 'the efficacy of which it was essential to achieve the active participation of the citizens'.[2] The audience knew they were spectating a fictional scene; nevertheless, there was a profound sense of truth, bound to the perception that theatre could give access to a sacred dimension. If it's true that, as stated by Giorgio Ieranò, 'tragic theatre doesn't appeal to the intellectual sphere of the viewer, doesn't produce educational results through a didactic training, doesn't show notions but provokes an answer that is not purely rational',[3] it can be asserted that each choice made by the tragedian reveals, in addition to the artistic taste, their educational intentions. A question could be hypothetically raised: was the tragedian free in his action of writing in conformity with his artistic taste? Otherwise, was he inhibited by the reception and taste of the audience? Notwithstanding, as widely renowned, τοὺς […] παρειλημμένους μύθους λύειν οὐκ ἔστιν (Ar. *Po*. 1453b), 'it is not possible to dismiss the traditional myth'.

---

[1] IERANÒ (2010: 12).

[2] CAPOMACCHIA (1999: 9).

[3] IERANÒ (2010: 13).

Aristotle had already posed in the *Poetics* what he deemed to be the 'preferential themes' derived from the myths that the tragedians resorted to: from these episodes the δεινὰ ἢ οἰκτρὰ, 'the sort of things that seem terrible and pitiable' would emerge, elements that made a τὸν καλῶς ἔχοντα μῦθον (Ar. *Po*. 1453a), 'well-built story' out of a tragedy.

> The poet who resorted to such assets of tales had the responsibility to try and "use the traditions well", to highlight each time the perspective through which observe the development of the events, attempting to preserve in the creation process the "fact that defines the identity and the very core of a single story".[4]

The tragic plots were traditional, and the poet's prerogative lied in the introduction of the novelty, manipulating the matter to revive and modernize them. Thus, how was it possible to balance the will to innovate and the audience's expectation? The performance used to show a section of one heroic saga, a frame of a mythical story, which embodied notions that were familiar for a 5th century spectator. In the dramatic composition, along with the heroic figure, a variety of accompaniment characters appear, so marginal that they seldom have a name. These characters interact, talk, and concur with the development of the story. This type of character is 'a character without life or story other than the one that tides them to the protagonist. A character, as it can be seen in general with every helper, servant, slave, that comes handy to the tragedian, being part of the constellation of characters to service the protagonists of the story'.[5] These figures constitute an important element of innovation, as they give the tragedian the chance to manipulate and redeploy the scene, from technical necessities on the stage to the very keystones of the myths. Secondary characters could easily be the element of modification to the traditional version, without undermining the mythical core of the story. Considering for example the 'substitution' of Pylades with the pedagogue in Sophocles' *Electra*, the comparison with Aeschylus's *Libation Bearers* can show a strong innovation, which should have been received with surprise by the audience. The innovation is significant, as it

[4] SUSANETTI (2017: 21).

[5] DE MARTINO–MORENILLA (2011: 39).

shows a didactic enhancement of the storyline: not a peer friend by the young hero's side, but a teacher is now supporting his actions. The narrative core remains unchanged. Deeming secondary characters as mere functional elements, whose role is to solve the most practical stage issues during a performance, almost as if they didn't have their own personality, would be fairly reductive; no element is incidental to the theatrical aspect. There is no intention in overestimating the importance of secondary characters; however, their dramatic role appears to be so skillfully built that one could be attracted – if not by the specific servant, pedagogue, or nurse – by their behave and mode of intervention. Their relationship with the protagonist is essential, and they add a lot to the overview of the story and to the understanding of the sequence of events as a whole, showing different points of view on the happenings and on characters' behavior, also suggesting solutions that could challenge heroes' decisions 'in such a way that makes a secondary character essential for the development of the dramatic action, acquiring importance and relevance in the plot through their freedom of speech: out of instinct and sometimes challenging the orders given, for the sake of their owners. As a matter of fact, behind the secondary characters' action and speech exists a subtle overlap of functions and, in some specific cases, there are references to other tragedies or to the very contemporaneity, as the example of Phaedra's nurse will highlight. An element of interest is the wide spectrum of possibilities the tragedian disponed to modify these characters' functions, and the modes by which the poet obtained alternative dramatic settings – without dismissing the myth – following the pedagogic, political, moral, or religious message they intend to convey to the audience.

Secondary character's type is attested as a major or minor appearance in nearly every play, much more consistently in Euripides'work. One of his biggest innovations consists in his modality of bringing secondary characters on stage, and in how he discusses their condition as servants: their speech discloses a certain intellectual complexity and they are also entrusted with actions by which is determined the development of events. Modern characters, in a way, constitute a joining link

between myth and contemporary reality.[6] Tragic secondary characters, on one hand, embody all those typical features that the audience would well recognize in contemporary servants, so much that 'in a theatre, kids could sit by their pedagogue's side'[7]; but, on the other hand, the saga was seemingly detached from the real historical Athenian environment, where these plays were taking place concretely. What appears on stage is a world of kings that moves around in an everyday setting, a dimension that is willingly kept afar from the citizens which were attending the show:

> …beyond the effective and constant disguise of modern debates into the mythical past, the very basis of power was impersonated not by members of the democratic πόλις, but contrariwise by kings and princes, local sovereigns, heirs whose consanguinity translated into the promise of a realm.[8]

The Athenian spectator was permeated by a sense of distance towards these characters projected in an anachronistic dimension, perfectly inserted in the epic frame. A juxtaposition of levels appeared on the scene, the familiar and the alienating ones:

> …this distance, an emotional cushion for the spectators, is usually accomplished in tragedy through the use of stories from the distant mythical past and the distance is often created by the foreign setting and characters, producing a spatial and conceptual rather than temporal distance.[9]

Therefore, what is known and what is mythical would combine in a complex mechanism that brought the hero temporarily in touch with the audience through the scene, an audience that would have returned to the life of the πόλις, once the tragedy was over. A singular and uncommon element was the secondary characters' mode of intervention: it was characterized by unseen audacity, in response to their personal will,

---

[6] See FUNAIOLI (2011: 76).

[7] RODIGHIERO (2013: 223).

[8] CAPOMACCHIA (1999: 70).

[9] VERNANT–VIDAL–NAQUET (1988: 245).

which could be in conflict with their 'legitimate' owners' decisions. An example is the episode of the *Libation Bearers* where Cilissa becomes the herald of a false message directed at Aegisthus, hoping for the end of his and Clytemnestra's tyranny: doing so, she interrupts the stream of events, thus redirecting them from what her owner had in mind. Which real actual servant could have ever acted in such a way, in the 5th century Athens? Is it hard to conceive a servant such as the one that in the first parts of the *Hippolytus* reproaches his owner for his behavior against Aphrodite, but in Euripides times?[10] Historically framing the extent of freedom given to servants in Athens can be quite problematic.[11] However, thanks to the examples of marginal characters retrieved from tragedies, it is possible to highlight some recurrent dramatic peculiarities. Consider once again the initial episode of Euripides's *Hippolytus*, where the dialogue between the Amazon and the old servant takes place: the youngster, devoted exclusively to Artemis, arrogantly dismiss Aphrodite, while the servant reproaches him, suggests to abstain from haughtiness, and invokes the Goddess for her forgiveness towards his protégé. The theme debated by this marginal character is a burning issue, and it can only be imagined how unusual it would sound for the Athenian spectator to hear such a big matter discussed by a humble servant. Moreover, the sense of superiority displayed arrogantly by the youngster could be seen as inappropriate, especially in light of his uncommon behavior.[12] At the end of the play, the servant keeps sending his prayers to Aphrodite, justifying Hippolytus' attitude as a result of his young impulsiveness and unawareness; with these last words, he

[10] For this type of characters and their relationship with masters, see SYNODINOU (1977: 61 ff).

[11] CITTI–CASALI–FORTI (2009: 1).

[12] It is important to consider the historicist fact, that the perception of a 5th century BC spectator could not, by force of things, be identical to that of a contemporary reader and coincide there, as PADUANO (2000: 23) points out in his translation of the *Hippolytus*: 'L'impressione sgradevole suscitata nel lettore moderno è il prodotto della nostra lontananza dalla valutazione dell'auto-elogio nella civiltà classica, dove esso non suonava offensivo quando era investito del valore dell'oggettività e del consenso sociale e, dunque, era propriamente omogeneo se non identico al comportamento virtuoso: è appunto il presupposto della civiltà di vergogna'.

fixes the main features of the hero and, from a meta-theatrical point of view, it is possible to grasp a reference to the tragic end of the story (Eur. *Hipp*. 117–120). In the Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers*, other than Orestes nurse, a second marginal character acts against his owners' will, namely Aegisthus servant: the man exits the palace announcing the death of the tyrant, calling Clytemnestra on the scene. After forecasting the death of the queen, instead of grieving over or feeling compassion for her, he affirms that her death will be an 'act of justice' (Aesch. *Lib*. 884). When he then reveals the ambush that Orestes had planned against her, he does not attempt to save her, calling her attention to the presence of her son instead. This type of behavior does not quite reflect the one typical of a marginal character, manifesting instead how the servants can sometimes be moved by pure devotion, instead of obedience. Another useful example is given by the two shepherd-servants of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*: Laius's servant, responsible for saving Oedipus as a newborn instead of exposing him to death, and Polybus's servant that had took the infant to his owner in Corinth. The disobedience towards Laius's orders leads to the misunderstanding of the hero's paternity, the crucial element of the whole story. The two shepherds will again contribute to discover the truth when forced to confess, interrogated by Oedipus himself in his palace, despite their refusal to answer. They are responsible for Oedipus' faith twice: at first, with their actions, and then through their own confession. In *Alcestis*, Euripides returns to a domestic dimension, amongst Admetus' palace walls. The servants enter the scene talking about food, referring to the banquet prepared to host Heracles, who suddenly appears without remorse, despite Alcestis' recent death. Heracles eats voraciously to the utmost indignation of the servants, and the distance from an everyday dimension can be here immediately detected: the servant reproaches the host, calls him back to the state of things the host seems to be ignoring and encourages him to intervene. Thanks to this behavior (which certainly does not befit a secondary character), Heracles goes back to his heroic nature and snatches Alcestis from Thanatos. Another Euripidean example is the prologue of *Iphigenia in Aulis*, during the forced stop of Agamemnon and his army in Aulis before marching towards Troy. Agamemnon in the first lines of

the play is writing a letter to his wife Clytemnestra, while conversing with an old servant. The hero through his letter wants to warn Clytemnestra not to reach him together with their daughter Iphigenia; in fact, the two women were previously been called to the Warfield with the promise of an arranged marriage between Iphigenia and Achilles, whereas it was a plot against the girl all along: according to the seer Calchas, the young woman needs to be sacrificed in order to obtain the favor of the gods, and put an end to the unstopping wind that was blocking the sailing. Agamemnon regrets the plot and decides to save his daughter, thus sending his servant as a messenger. The instructions given are continuously interrupted by the servant's objections and reproaches; nevertheless, he finally accepts to go, but Menelaus stops him along his path. The sovereign threatens the servant to death, and then Agamemnon starts to fight with his brother. The role of the old and faithful servant is not yet fully accomplished, as he once again crucially intervenes on the scene by confessing to Clytemnestra and Achilles the existence of the plot against Iphigenia. Thus, the servant pushes the two heroes against the Atreides: although by the end of the story Iphigenia herself will be sacrificed for her own will, the dramatic importance of this marginal figure cannot be overlooked, first as a confidant, then as advisor, ultimately as a messenger. Another old man appears within Euripides' *Electra*, an old servant from Agamemnon's house, pedagogue of his sons, depicted on the scene as a shepherd that complains about his extremely old age. He brings to Electra – fallen into disgrace, since when Clytemnestra forced her to marry a farmer – the news of a strand of blond hair found on the tomb of her father, the first clue of the return of her brother. Although she does not listen to old man's words, he insists on trying introducing her to the brother: first, through the track of a foot left nearby the tomb and then, talking about a mantle wore by a stranger seen around the palace, similar to Orestes' one. Ultimately, when Orestes finally appears on the scene, the servant will act again, and actively plot against Clytemnestra: the two dethroned will get their revenge by Electra's house, killing the betraying mother and taking the throne.

The examples provided above aim at drawing some of the fundamental secondary characters' peculiarities, highlighting the importance

of their actions on scene. They are always bound to their original condition of marginality, and no matter how uncommon and new their interventions may appear, they will always be subordinate to heroes. Generally, servants' actions acquire significance as they oppose the obstacles that could put the hero at risk, ignited by their utmost devotion. Thanks to this tie, there is a constant 'link to everyday life'[13] on stage; the heroic stature of the protagonist is emphasized and put into contrast with the marginality of the servant. Amongst different tragic characters, nurses and pedagogues seem to take a special role, as they constantly accompanied the protagonist. This protecting activity is perpetrated thorough years, so much that they move to the protégé's house even once their task of raising the children is over, and the nurse, as well as the pedagogue, maintains a role of tutoring, even when her protégé is absent. The τροφός, more specifically, follows her owner even in the husband's house, and follows her in every movement. It is not just a servant-owner relationship, it is rather the acquiring of a mythic significance, so she becomes the stereotype of the loyal supporter throughout the tragic path of the heroine. An example of this dramatic importance is evident in the case of the nurse Cilissa in Aeschylus' tragedy. She is the maid of Orestes in the *Libation Bearers*, savior of her protégé from the tyranny of Aegisthus. When she enters the scene, she is immediately interrogated by the choir on her direction: the τροφός explains that she has been invited by her owner to talk about Orestes' death. She has an affectionate bond with the hero and does not know that the news of his death is just a facade to carry on the plot. After describing the false grieving of Clytemnestra, in fact hiding the joy for the disappearance of the only one in power to take the throne, Cilissa falls in a deep and felt sorrow for the end of his protégé, remembering him since his birth, thus displaying her truly bond of affection for him. The realism of Cilissa's description represents a dramatic break from the typical heroic tone, which 'lower' the level of the tragic text, with the depiction of concrete and common details from everyday life. Her words increase the pathos and at the same time the accessibility to the episodes on scene: in a context of extreme heroism, the audience needs to see those epic values as part of their

[13] SUSANETTI (2007: 281).

lives; only this way tragedy can fulfill its educational purpose, through the use of references that belong to everyone's life and common people. More specifically, the role of the nurse is contra posed to the one of Clytemnestra, almost taking the role of substitute mother in a situation of unfulfilled motherhood.[14] Once the choir reveals the facade of Orestes' death, the nurse sends a fake message to Aegisthus and leads him into his killers' trap: it is thanks to the saving intervention of the τροφός that the revenge of Agamemnon's son can be fulfilled; this secondary character, fixed in his function of tutor – typical for the maids – takes the events planned by Orestes to a direction that results decisive for the completion of his heroic path. A variation can be found in Euripides' *Electra*, where the old preceptor of Agamemnon is responsible for saving Orestes, and the same happens in Sophocles' *Electra*. This variation is significant, because draws the characteristics of a figure that is not simply collateral, but rather has a role in the tradition of Agamemnon's myth and his family. Therefore, their function can be modified along with the choices of the poet. In *Medea*, the nurse is given a monologue that introduces the setting of the tragedy: her words explain to the audience the conquest of the Golden Fleece, the return of the Argonauts in Greece with Medea, the death of Pelias caused by her daughter, the escape from Corinth and Jason's decision to marry Glauce, daughter of Creon. The nurse is visibly worried about Medea's violent reaction, and she looks anguished for her children. At this point, the pedagogue of the poor children enters the scene, and the two exchange a dialogue entirely based on the destiny of their protégés. The servants are both aware of the terrible things to come, referring to the epilogue of the story, but they choose not to give up on their role of constant guide and protectors: the old lady who raised the protagonist, together with the old man who educated her children, represent now a fundamental part of the tragic-

[14] FRANCO (1997: 139); cf. also ROSE (1982: 50): 'Cilissa [...] functions as a natural and familiar figure of the sorrowing mother in contrast with Clytemnestra's cold formality, while her recollections of the infant Orestes contrast with Clytemnestra's sinister dream in which she gives birth to a snake and wraps it in swaddling clothes. Additionally, she suckles the monster as the nurse fed the real-life baby (753–754) [...]. She recalls that Orestes was not a blood sucking snake but a harmless and defenseless baby'.

mythical path, to such level that they cannot dismiss their destiny until the tragic end. Again, it is a pedagogue – Oedipus'– that in Euripides' *Phoenician Women* escorts Antigone on the roof of Thebes palace to observe the army deployed in front of the city, called to help Polynices. In the dialogue between the old man and the protégé, the παιδαγωγός through his presence and words helps to revive and symbolize the tie between Antigone and her fleeted brother, a crucial aspect that will transform her in the protagonist of the tragic events, up to her exile with the father. One last example: Deianira's nurse in Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*. Although seemingly not essential from a first glance, as she appears on scene only twice, with a deeper analysis it can be seen how her contributions takes place in two critical points of the saga: at the beginning of the story, with the appearance of the protégé, and in the moment of her death. The τροφός is part of Deianira's life, who is longing for Heracles' news (her spouse); the nurse suggests to send their son Hyllus to the father and this proposal will direct the story to its tragic development. Heracles is already on his way home from Euboea, together with Iole, the daughter of Eurytus. A messenger refers this fact to Deianira, and she resorts to what she believes to be a love potion, given to her by the centaur Nessus, to re-bind Heracles forever to her. Hyllus himself will attend to the devastating effects of the poison, which will corrode Heracles' body, while Deianira, after having involuntarily caused the terrible deed, takes her own life. At this point the nurse, after having suggested the heroine to use the potion, enters the scene and announces the faith of the two protagonists: doing so, she closes the story of her protégé, narrating the end she brought her to. As it emerges from these examples, instead of intervening with their actions, the secondary characters act through words. Their words, suggestions, reprimands, and calls for a righteous behavior constitute the bond that runs between them and the protagonists, and they keep playing a role of protection and support. There is another mythical function that can be analyzed, which belongs to these marginal categories: surely, they can function as an anti-heroic pendant or, conversely, challenge the heroic stature of the protagonists by establishing a peer relationship with them. However, the 'function of the τροφός and παιδαγωγός is heroic in itself, as it is

essential to the fulfillment of the protégé's destiny'[15] as they are entrusted with raising and educating the heroes from their birth. These secondary characters take an important part from a pedagogic point of view, as they are heroes' διδάσκαλοι, with the task of teaching the principles of the traditional παιδεία. But are they always fit for their roles?

The importance of παιδεία was already resonating in 'Homer poems, where it was considered as a fundamental value that characterized in a didactic sense the relationship among different characters'[16]: παιδεία was based on ancient values transmitted from generation to generation, through a profound and constant relation between teachers and students, founded on trust. Consider, for example, *Iliad* episode 9, where amongst the participants of Achilles' delegation, next to Odysseus and Ajax, two marginal characters make their appearance: Nestor and Phoenix. To convince Peleus' son to go back to battle, two heroes and two old wise men are sent as messengers, and one of them in the past has played for Achilles the important role of tutor. The old man reveals the bond that ties him with the hero during the speech he pronounces to persuade him: he is the one who held him on his lap. Phoenix will not reach his goal, and the hero will not return to battle; but it's not a casualty that by the end of book 9, when Agamemnon's army withdraws, Achilles wants Phoenix by his side, making a bed for him in his tent. The tutor will be the one following him in his return to the battlefield: Phoenix as a supporter of Achilles, from his birth to his death. He is the archetype of the wise marginal character. In the 15th book of *Odyssey*, another old servant appears, interrogated by Odysseus in disguise, narrating his own story: Odysseus' servant, the best and most loyal of all, entrusted with taking care of the pigs, to the point of receiving the epithet of δῖος ὑφορβός. He is a virtuous and humble character, content with his life, suffering from his owner's distance and for the ruin of the palace; he does not have a wife nor sons, living with the pigs he takes care of. Eumaeus welcomes Odysseus, destitute and begging, offering him his only mantle; he feels empathy towards the beggar and hosts him in the name of Zeus. Eumaeus is the ethical opposite of the

[15] CAPOMACCHIA (1999: 50).

[16] CASTRUCCI (2013: 25).

suitors, impersonating the mythical example of virtue and devotion. Tragedy and epic poetry are two completely different worlds, although many references and didactic characters can be found both in Homer and in tragedy. It is almost as if they are relocated into an idealistic pedagogic horizon, namely the ancient παιδεία of the *patres*. According to this idea, διδάσκαλοι on scene embody the traditional ethic that began to waver in 5th century Athens, and their teachings are in contrast with the new and emerging pedagogic strategies. But is it always true that each didactic figure appearing on the scene embodies the authority of the tradition? Nurses and pedagogues are, conventionally 'old': they have raised the hero, and on some occasions, have followed them in their heroic path, or have found them later in a key moment of their exceptional story. Their old age is related to wisdom, to long life experience, to the credibility of their teachings and the promulgation of moral principles:

> …the assumption of this important role by a slave is tempered by his or her advanced age and by his or her espousal of the master's values. The slave is evoked as a means of defining for the free protagonist, rather than for himself, but the master's reliance on others implies a loss of independence that compromises his authority and may create situations in which the slave gains a measure of honor that clashes with his status.[17]

However, if it's true that 'the tragic παιδεία was a νόστος, led by a good διδάσκαλος that investigated the validity of the fundamental values of the tradition',[18] and that an antithesis exists between the ancient Homeric παιδεία and the νέα παιδεία of the Sophists, it could be useful to focus on the role of διδάσκαλος as a secondary character. The servant-protégé relationship presents some internal limits traced back to the pressuring responsibility of conferring a virtuous παιδεία to the protégé, which risks to trespass into plagiarizing and corrupting the disciples. What was the role of παιδεία, of the preceptor in the dramatic context, and of the relationship between a teacher and a student? It is difficult to

[17] JOSHEL–MURNAGHAN (1998: 8).

[18] CASTRUCCI (2013: 70).

overlook such a matter with regards to the tragic contest, being 5th century BC a period historically overturned by revolutionary forms of pedagogy, alienating teaching theories, extravagant figures of tutors that present themselves (if not imposed themselves) as new preceptors of the dominant classes, responsible for disorienting the ethical directions of the ἀρχαῖα παιδεία.[19]

> Generally, we talk about "Sophists" as if there were something widely known and assumed. However, even in its literal meaning, the word itself can be deceptive, as in 5th century Greece there has never been a homogeneous tradition of thought, and consequently an institutionalized school that could be called "sophistic".[20]

In this complex cultural context, tragedy brings the myth on stage and attaches new vibrant emotions and meanings to it, in order to wake the audience's conscience up.

> διδάσκαλοι, as characters, contribute to fulfill this purpose with their actions and speech. Projecting them into the scenery of the myth, the tragedian transposes contemporary issues into a dim and distant light, where an unambiguous resolution is not possible, and the human thought and actions are unfit.[21]

These words can be applied also to the 'servile teaching' theme, to the point of turning disciples into teachers and teachers into disciples, inducing the audience into reflecting on whom can be considered as a 'teacher' during the annual Great Dionysia representations, as well as in the everyday life scenery. If tragedy stages a recurring theme that after Aeschylus has been called 'the drama of the πάθει μάθος', and the

---

[19] Cf. NERI (1992: 111): 'Sulla scena si colgono gli echi della vita culturale ateniese, i dibattiti della sofistica che aveva insegnato a contrapporre le ragioni del *nomos*, della "legge", a quelle della *physis*, della "natura"'; cf. also CASTRUCCI (2017: 143): 'con l'avvento delle distorsioni della nuova pedagogia sofistica il principio stesso dell'educare era stato messo a dura prova, venduto da maestri itineranti che provenivano dal di fuori e che operavano al meglio per "snaturare" i fondamenti e i valori antichi in cui da sempre Atene si riconosceva'.

[20] BONAZZI (2010: 13).

[21] IERANÒ (2010: 138).

spectator 'learns as a self-taught person' where the wisdom derives from the process of feeling anguish, can be noted how this tragic principle is also inserted in the pedagogic discourse, involving the figure of the διδάσκαλοι. The preceptor has the task of supporting disciples in their personal (and otherwise lonely) anguishing learning path so that the πάθει μάθος becomes συμπάθεια in sorrow, compassion, and identification with the other's πάθη.

> It's better to be sick than nurse the sick:
> the first is plain and simple suffering,
> the second mixes sorrow in the heart
> with hard work for the hands.

This quote (Eur. *Hipp*. 186–188) is useful to understand the identification between teacher and disciple as companionship through anguish: the result is an attempt to 'teach reality' to the protégé, to protect them from feeling sorrow and to permit the early learning other than, following the tragic scheme, when it is too late to remedy. The goal of the διδάσκαλος is to avert the worst, to analyze reality and saving solutions from one's life baggage: sorrow as *magister vitae* can now be translated into precautional solutions, to prevent other negative teachings. Occasionally, it is almost as if the characters that are entrusted with the role of righteous advisers forgot the necessity of a virtuous παιδεία, anchored to the belief that justice lies in the middle ground. The traditional moral law seems to be left behind, in favor of opportunistic strategies that aim at saving the protagonist. In some cases, a deeper sense of affection emerges and surpasses the moral constraints that, to some extent, takes the lead and turns orthodox teaching into a direction of compromising or even murder. Nevertheless, the triggering element of this training is the sense of protection that the teacher feels for his pupil: how is it possible then for διδάσκαλοι to steer their loved pupils to evil? Is it intentional manipulation or is it corruption, merely caused by ignorant arrogance? What is shown on the scene is an ancient theme such as the one of pedagogy, enriched with its new problems and, more especially, with its new shadows. The sense of protection the διδάσκαλος is gripped by conducts to a 'second education', often far from the commonly accepted moral norms and directed at obtaining ad-

vantageous results for pupils. Based on these elements, it is clear that φῐ́λία constitutes an obstacle and a limit to παιδεία. In addition to φῐ́λία, it is possible to find another limiting element in the relationship between secondary characters and their pupils. There are multiple reasons why traditional norms did not always find fertile soil in the teaching repertoire of these humble tutors, and the violation of νόμος is not simply caused by the sense of protection towards the hero. At the roots of it could lie a lack of awareness towards a moral code the teachers apprehended, perhaps passively, which has been never internalized. Thus, it could be explained how, when faced with the urgency of reality and practical necessity, servants resort to 'common sense' and their personal experience, rather than relying on ethical notions. The old nurse and the old pedagogue usually don't possess right cultural instruments to understand the moral precepts they have inherited, lacking intellectual education. They 'find happiness in their protégés through the only means they can use. They worry for their owners as if they were their children, to the point of slandering or plotting against those who try to damage their protected ones'.[22] The low class the nurse and the pedagogue come from, as well as the domestic dimension in which they exist, are equivalent to a dimension of life that is 'other' than the royal dimension the tragic protagonists belong to. Therefore, it is paradoxical how these very characters are entrusted with such pedagogical function, resulting from a bond of trust built through years of formation together. Both these figures play the role of διδασκάλοι exclusively in function to the φῐ́λία that links them to the protected ones; φῐ́λία that, as stated before, represents one of the strongest limits to a virtuous παιδεία. The fundamental contribution of secondary characters consists in their constant closedness and never-ending support toward the protagonists, whilst from a pedagogic perspective they resort to mere old-school teachings in order to fight the indecipherability of the tragic: through these traditional notions emerges the weakness of their confusing and superficial subscription to old values, which they don't fully comprehend. With naive 'didactic buoyancy' they try to take on their educational responsibilities and 'give lessons' by imposing their various γνῶμαι of unclear origins, moved by a sense of affection: 'the most vivid aspect of their personality

[22] DE MARTINO–MORENILLA (2011: 278).

and action is their intense tie to their owners',[23] but the lack of knowledge about the true nature of good is what they miss to do good. The damage is also aggravated by the fact that they are assigned an educational mission that involves the custody of a disciple whom will trust them all through his growth. In this sense, the characters of the nurse and the pedagogue are profoundly dramatic and bring the human limits to *παιδεία* on the stage: good intentions are not sufficient.

It is a widely acknowledged opinion that Euripides, prompted by a strong experimental drive, has developed a kind of theatre that conferred the role of protagonist to the man, their feelings, their psychic sphere, their impulses. To some extent, it was coherent with the spirit of his time, which was spreading equally in different fields such as historiography, medical science, philosophy, and politics. Expression of this new anthropocentric theatre type is the constant presence of verbal agony: protagonists and interlocutors debate on issues from different and almost unreconcilable perspectives, in a way as to prevail on one another through augmentation, giving the impression that relativity of opinions is not and undefeatable. It is a subtle intellectual exercise, well-concealed with this phase of Greek culture and civilization. An exercise that stimulates the audience to analyze the pros and cons of every situation to act accordingly, being the verbal agony the perfect place for a conceptual examination of the drama on scene. The true element of novelty in the Euripidean theatre consists in the spirit that enlivens it: the plots are those of the myths, characters of the tragedies are still heroes from the Troy war or other sagas; however, what is left of these heroes on the scene is their theatre costumes, as in their intimate self and in their way of thinking and of acting they resemble the men and women of the 5th century BC seated at the theatre. The main characters in their human dimension don't just measure themselves through oracles, demons, constrictions, written or unwritten laws: they face ordinary situations and problems determined by feelings that are common to every human being such as love, hate, need for vengeance, the reputation they want others to perceive; they have a personality, a specific nature that determines their choices. Thanks to this 'humanistic' approach, Euripi-

[23] SUSANETTI (2007: 51).

des' theatre proposes to display a fragment of existence that is based on protagonist's personality, rather than on pre-constituted ideological parameters. As a consequence, premises and implications – both religious and moral – from which the myths derived, when immersed into the realism of ordinary life can become surreal or be subverted by the characters. For such a strong tradition, statute of the tragic genre, theatrical communication form was entrusted with the representation of a myth with a powerful pedagogic meaning. For these reasons, the relationship between Euripides and his audience was not the greatest, as the meager number of victories testimony. However, as the following extract from Aristophanes' *Clouds* demonstrates, the younger audience made the exception in receiving his works:

> STREPSIADES: «'For my part' he at once replied 'I look upon Aeschylus as the first of poets, for his verses roll superbly; they're nothing but incoherence, bombast, and turgidity'. Yet still, I smothered my wrath and said 'Then recite one of the famous pieces from the modern poets'. Then he commenced a piece in which Euripides shows [...]»

His unprecedented study on men seldom received wide consensus, if not completely rejected from the critics, being this type of theatre a disrupture with the tradition.

> The change of the axis from the hero to the man also resulted in the alteration of the mythical fact into a more "human" conclusion, coherently with the personality of the character as the times and settings of the tragedy were too distant from the one of the myth.[24]

Among Sophists and during the assemblies led by demagogues, while Athens was internally wounded by intestine wars and destined to a military defeat, the ethical principles on which the city was founded started to falter. The thirty-year war against Sparta would have eased the process. It is in such context that Euripides decided to move to Pella, even though 'it remains surprising to think of such a prominent Athenian abandoning his city to dwell at the palace of a sovereign'.[25] Euripides

[24] AMMENDOLA (1946: 5).

[25] CANFORA (2001: 205).

made an extreme gesture towards a city that demonstrated not to be ready for his theatrical innovations and preferred to take shelter in a traditional and safe institution.

> 'He left Athens because he gave up on the difficult task of dialoguing with the audience of Athens, in one of those moments of blatant obscurantism. The democratic city had rejected him. More precisely, it had demonstrated intolerance: a kind of intolerance that is merged with incapability, or lack of interest in understanding, to which Aristophanes has the resolution to become, even after his death, an implacable interpreter'.[26]

Aristophanes has been one of the most tenacious opposers of Euripides, being the comedy writer that depicted him parodically, using detrimental and polemical tones, both in *Thesmophoriazousae* and in *Ranae*, with the aim of hit and ridicule the unsettling critics Euripides moved against the average Athenian. Aristophanes attacked the most intellectual and bothering aspects of his drama, a drama that gives voice to 'restless women and antisocial men' as well as the aspects that put into discussion those long-established familiar and social values.

> It is easy for Aristophanes to choose the most provoking taboos by choosing in the vast tragic production of Euripides, who analyzed the very core of interhuman relations from different angles. The work of Euripides, instead of reviving and re-establishing the traditional values of the πόλις, put them into question. Through Aristophanes, who with great clarity had grasped Euripide's lack of involvement in the political and institutional tasks, it is possible to understand the perception that Athenians had towards the tragedy of Euripides. Together with his escape to Pella, this situation concurred in causing his failure, and consequently the frustration of his artistic ambitions'.[27]

What would have happened if Euripides had decided to rewrite one of his unsuccessful pieces following the taste of the audience? How could

[26] CANFORA (2001: 205).
[27] CANFORA (2001: 205).

have he reconfigured the story without breaking the mythical core in a way to obtain a positive reception of his tragedies?

The *Hippolytus Stephanephoros* is reported to be a recantation, that is the rewriting of a tragic story by retreating and resetting the facts previously narrated. For the sake of this study on secondary characters, the figure taken into consideration is Phaedra's nurse, to highlight through her case marginal characters' peculiarities and functions. This character embodies all the peculiarities of the anti-heroic tutor devoted to protecting her owner, a trope in the traditional tragic τροφός; however, she hides something unsettling in her resoluteness. If audacity can be listed as one of the common features of secondary characters, it is also true that they have never exited their marginality, and their marginal dimension helped to glorify the hero by contrast. In the episode between Phaedra and the nurse can be detected a subversion of roles: the heroine is exhausted by her sufferance, whilst the servant, using sophist-like rhetoric, plagiarizes her fragile mind. Even in this case, as common amongst the nurse type, the intensity of her words is fueled by her maternal sense of protection towards Phaedra and thus her solutions seem righteous, even if they break with the traditional ethics. The disorienting element for a viewer, together with the impactful final suggestion, is the persuasive mode in which the τροφός reasons to push the heroine to talk. She appears on stage before Phaedra: like a simple soul, she cannot comprehend the 'unpleasant disease' that corrupts her owner's body and soul, she can only assess that her sufferance is haunting her.

> O the troubles we mortals undergo,
> the wretched illnesses! What shall I do
> to make you comfortable? What do I not do?
> Here you are in the fresh air and sunlight.
> Your sickbed has been moved outside the house,
> for coming here was all you talked about.
> But soon enough you'll be hurrying back
> to your own rooms again. You'll be convinced
> you were mistaken. Nothing pleases you.
> You get no joy from what is here at hand
> and find what is not here more pleasurable.

If it's true that on some occasions she speaks words of wisdom, she is also able to express deep and felt words. As a matter of fact, after having affirmed, in an impulse of rage and 'selfishness', how her closeness to her protected is already a matter of sorrow for her and how life is made of obstacles, she then reflects with profundity on how a man is attracted to everything that shines in the world, preferring it to the uncertainties of their faith. The audience would assess an intellectual depth that is unusual for a minor character, so meaningful to steal the attention throughout her speech. Later on, after presenting the suffering of the heroine through the servant's words, the dialogue seems to take a direction of inconciliability between the two. The τροφός takes the role of the rational and realistic side that does not understand the passion of Phaedra, who seems almost into a hallucinatory state. The servant attempts to contain the absurdity of her desires, being this typical for a character that only lives in a domestic setting and cannot adventure herself beyond the practical dimension. Unable to find a pragmatic solution, the nurse roots her protégé's problems back to a god's will, as Phaedra herself had thought, believing she has fallen victim to a delusion that brings her to scandalous desires.

> I am so miserable! What have I done? 280
> Why has my mind lost all its common sense?
> I was insane;struck down with delusions
> from some god. Alas, I am so wretched!
> O nurse, please cover up my head again.
> I am ashamed of what I have just said.
> Cover me. My eyes are streaming tears,
> and my face betrays my shame.

Referring to her nurse as if she were her mother, Phaedra implores her to cover her face out of shame. The reaction of the old nurse creates a break in the common ethical ground in which she based her reasoning of the first section of the dialogue. It is the perspective of someone who frames experiences in the category of tradition and ancient wisdom. She then proceeds to wish for her own death, after trying to make her owner come back to her senses, starting with a series of dissertations on the

existence of men, moving from a personal to a universal sphere and seeing φιλία as the root of her sorrow.

> I'll cover you up. But when will death come 250
> to cover up my body? A long life
> has taught me a great deal: human beings
> should pledge affection for one another
> not to very marrow of their souls,
> but with moderation. Bonds of friendship
> linking hearts should be easy to untie,
> easy to cast off or tighten.

That is why the example of the Phaedra's nurse can help understanding one of the peculiarities of the secondary characters in Attic tragedy. After the exhortation of the choir, the nurse wishes even more for Phaedra to speak up and asks Troezenian women to be by her side more than ever, to testimony the affectionate bond they have. Behind this request perhaps lies an awareness of the bold words she is about to say, unfit for a servant to say? Or is she just aware of the subtle and manipulative ways she is using? These are just conjectures; however, it seems that the servant before speaking up would like to highlight how her actions are aimed for the good of her protégé, almost as if she wants to justify her own ways. From this point on, her tone changes radically: from a tired and discouraged servant to a maternal and reassuring nurse, calling her protected ὦ φίλη παῖ, 'my dear child', reprising the familiar roles, based on mutual trust and comprehension. She invites her to relax and forget everything she had said by that moment, reassuring of her health condition and the gravity of the situation. She declares that she will change her attitude and choose better means of communication, but one could spot a certain degree of forcedness in these words, perhaps only meant to reassure the protégé:

> But come now, my dear child, 310
> let's both forget what we just talked about.
> […] Well, I'll stop that

and find a different and a better way.
[…] Why are you still silent?
You should not remain so quiet, my child,
but if I've said something wrong, correct me,
or else accept the good advice I offer.

Before the tenacious silence of Phaedra, the nurse displays all her discomfort and, abandoning the detachment shown previously, proceeds with threatening her, showing her the catastrophic outcomes her death would cause. After mentioning the sad destiny of her sons, destined to be dethroned by Hippolytus, the illegitimate son of Theseus, Phaedra finally cries. The nurse thinks she has touched a sore spot, and it will not stop the servant from doing her investigations. Again, she promptly changes her ways.

PHAEDRA: «Nurse, you are destroying me! 360
By the gods I beg you to say nothing
about that man; don't mention him again!»

NURSE: «You see? Your mind is fine, but even so,
though your thoughts are clear, you are not willing
to help out your own sons and save your life»

The speed of the dialogue becomes striking, dialogue that will end in the much-expected confession, a stichomythia led by the τροφός that penetrates the reticence of the heroine and will reach the proposed outcome of knowing the truth. It is the classic process of agony, a recurring trope of the Euripidean tragedy. The peculiar element of this episode is that the one who prevails in the conclusion is the marginal character, after using the weapons of the persuasive rhetoric and more: in front of her lack of arguments 'the blindness of the nurse becomes desperate and produces the decisive advance, as well as the determining event of the tragic action: her plea has the features of a sacred and ritual prayer, and therefore it applies an unavoidable pressure'.[28] The servant's behavior is almost characterized by violence; however, the subsequent part will not

[28] PADUANO (1998: 12).

become clearer in its development, but 'it will be crossed by a tendency in have things said rather than saying'. When Phaedra mentions her family's guilty love chain, playing the role of the third victim of a common destiny, the τροφός does not grasp the truth. Only when the queen affirms more clearly that she only knows the bitterness of love, the old lady understands she had fallen in love, and she herself mentions Hippolytus after Phaedra 'had named him through periphrasis', that is 'the son of the Amazons'. The servant horrifies and, if in a first moment she had prayed for her own death, now even the light of the day irritated her. There is now a crucial part, as researchers have theorized an estimated anti-Socratic remark in it: the servant affirms that βίου θανοῦσα· χαίρετ', οὐκέτ' εἴμ' ἐγώ. οἱ σώφρονες γάρ, οὐχ ἑκόντες ἀλλ' ὅμως, 'virtuous people now love what is bad, they do not wish to do that but they do'. This statement is the exact opposite of Socratic ethics, also called 'ethical intellectualism', according to which only those who don't know the good can do bad. Analyzing the theme of a hypothetical debate between Euripides and Socrates goes beyond the scope of the present study, however, it is important to once again demonstrate how the tragedian relies on secondary characters to inert references to contemporary reality. Back to the text, following the τροφός reaction, the scene hosts a dialogue between Phaedra and the choir, in which she lost herself in a long monologue about virtue. This intermission gives the old servant an occasion to calm down and restore her role as a tutor; nevertheless, this will be the moment when her word will reach the utmost level of audacity. Her motherly affection perhaps forces her to look at her protégé's sorrow with a lighter soul: it is not a sinful passion but a love desired by Aphrodite. Ever since she starts talking again, her speech is set on a tone of retreat, to resize the gravity of the matter and convince Phaedra that a solution to her problem is natural and right.

> So Aphrodite then is no mere goddess, but something greater, if such beings exist, for she has utterly ruined Phaedra, as well as me and this whole royal house. (362)

A situational subversion can be spotted in this passage through a subtle and refine rhetoric, almost as if the servant was not the unwary nurse

displayed few lines before anymore, one who could not detect the subliminal messages of her owner. Nurse's speech is so convincing that Phaedra appears to be unjust and proud to the gods, due to her reticence. What is deemed to be virtuous in the traditional ethics becomes evil and arrogant in the words of the nurse, against the will of the gods. This could have also been the perception of the audience in seeing the τροφός intervention and her sophistic speculations, so common in the Athens of the 5th century. It is no casualty that the opposition between νόμος and φύσις, law and nature, codified ethics and soul power, was one of the most discussed themes by the Sophists. Is it a genuine wisdom 'that glorifies the undefeatability of love as the creative force of the universe',[29] or is it a brutal lack of morals that pragmatically affirms the meaning of life, as stated by Paduano?[30] Are these simple words, derived from a long experience that wisely acknowledges imperfection as an integral part of heroism, or is it just that 'the nurse seems anything but a clever, manipulative character'[31] trying to manipulate the weak mind of Phaedra? The only certainty is that the more Phaedra loses decisional power the more the nurse acquires some. To her opposition, the nurse responds less appropriately to win her. With an unstoppable climax, propelled by the nurse's affection, Phaedra goes from affirmation of her position to a weak resistance. She gives in to her nurse's insistence and indulges, although still fearing the worst (vv. 519–524).

> NURSE: « But you're afraid of everything. What do you dread now? »
> PHAEDRA: « That you will mention something about me to Theseus's son »
> NURSE: « Leave it to me, my child. I'll organize things properly. I only pray that you, Aphrodite, lady of the sea, work with me in this »

The nurse's plan will fail and she will try to stop Hippolytus' rage without results, calling him out on the silence oath he had pledged before the confession: she will only receive impulsive and impious words in charge. After hearing the renowned tirade against the female gender

[29] GRILLONE (1979: 82).
[30] PADUANO (1998: 13).
[31] ROISMAN (1999: 47).

and the betrayals they plot together with the maids, the nurse submits to the inexorable Phaedra's judgment and curse. Again, the servant reappears in her humble superiority: she is aware that her owner is enraged but she does not stop reasserting her affection towards her. She knows she has failed but, without hypocrisy, she admits that if she eventually had succeeded in her plan, she would have now been deemed wise, as men 'measure wisdom according to the results'. She is not humiliated nor enraged, and she concludes her path with a last intellectual stance, loyal to her own dramatic role. What did Euripides want to represent through the character of the nurse? According to the critics, there is no single answer. Considering similarities between the rhetorical attitudes of the servant and the sophistic philosophy that was growing in Athens, is it possible to see a glimpse of this new movement in the character of the servant? Was Euripides' intention to take the old and new παιδεία together on the scene? Following these assumptions, does Phaedra represent, with her virtuous demeanor, the positive values of tradition, whereas the nurse, with her subtle and opportunistic relativism, represents the Sophistic philosophy, self-proclaimed as the best of the teachings?

If so, the theme of the didactic relation between a secondary character and the hero is once again represented on the scene, with its shadows and limits. Some have even hypothesized that 'the nurse reveals the mind of her creator', being this figure 'a capsule of the modern mind'.[32] What Blitgen want to say is that the nurse's advices are not coming from a place of cynicism, conversely, they synthesize a tradition modeled on the comprehension and tolerance of everything that is human: the nurse seems to consider Phaedra as an individual human, beyond codified ethical assumptions. The essence of the τροφός actions lies in compassion and the empathy she feels, and according to Blitgen it leads the audience to feel more engaged and closer to the marginal character.

Regardless of the impressions and questions he raised in the audience, Euripides has never given an unambiguous answer through his representations. What appears to be evident instead is how 'the whole

[32] BLITGEN (1969: 85).

mythical and scenic action has started from the nurse'.[33] This secondary character interferes with the normal stream of events and it can be affirmed that she is responsible for starting the tragic mechanism. Prompted by her compassion towards the protégé, she covers a fundamental dramatic role: with the confession of Phaedra's love towards Hippolytus, the tragic path of the heroine stops and, consequently, the one of Hippolytus starts with a breach in his destiny. Until that moment, the young man had conducted an esoteric and pure existence, purposedly detached from the political and social setting of everyday life, whereas Phaedra has kept the secret of her love, deciding to abandon herself to sorrow. These two protagonists could have proceeded in different directions through their tragic paths, with distant schemes: Phaedra in her feeling of guilt before the heresy of her own desire, and Hippolytus living in his Artemidean dimension, convinced of his superiority over the other men. Phaedra gives in to the love impulse that was devastating her, while Hippolytus represents the opposed tendency, rejecting his corporeality. It is only thanks to a third element, that functions as a joint link, that the dramatic action meets a turning point in the story. The nurse is a marginal character but, paradoxically, she can be considered to have a central role in the story. It is with her that the tragedy is fueled inexorably, with a dichotic development, through the common tragic outcome of the two protagonists. Once again, it can be observed how the poet deploys marginal characters as a way to introduce plot modifications, and how through this manipulation he is able not to subvert the mythical core. The character of the nurse embodies different functions: companion, guardian, teacher and confident for the heroine. Moreover, her words hide references to contemporaneity, such as the alleged remark on the Socratic ethics, the Sophistic speculation on νόμος and φύσις, the verbal agony's relativism, the instruments of rhetoric, all transformed into subtle weapons of persuasion. A secondary character, versatile and multifaceted, results in the end essential and irreplaceable to the tragic mechanism.

This research, through the specific case study of the nurse in *Hippolytus Stephanephoros* has attempted to explain how secondary characters

[33] GRILLONE (1972: 67).

of Attic tragedy are not marginal to the development of the story: they represent a privileged instrument for the tragedian to introduce elements of novelty in the epic repertoire. It is a privileged choice as, due to their subaltern nature, the secondary characters in tragedy leave a wider scope of possibilities to insert a change. The audience was already equipped with expectations that needed to be fulfilled, and these expectations were based on the traditional myths. Thus, changing the function of a marginal character even drastically, did not necessarily imply the disruption of the epic core and consequently the fruition by the audience was not compromised. In the end, it can be said that minor characters' dramatic flexibility gave the tragedian great potentialities to reconfigure the mythical story: without their intervention, the plot would not have found so unforeseen development. Without them, there would have not been the tragedy.

Primary sources

AMMENDOLA 1946 G. AMMENDOLA (a cura di): *Euripide: Ippolito*. Firenze 1946.

BARRET 1964 W. S. BARRET (ed.): *Euripides: Hippolytos.* Oxford 1964.

BIEHL 1965 W. BIEHL (ed.): *Euripides: Orestes.* Berlin 1965.

DALE 1961 A. M. DALE (ed.): *Euripides: Alcestis.* Oxford 1961.

DI BENEDETTO 1997 V. DI BENEDETTO (a cura di): *Euripide: Medea*. Milano 1997.

DIGGLE 1984 J. DIGGLE: *Euripidis Fabulae, Tomo I*. Oxford 1984.

KANNICHT 1969 R. KANNICHT (ed.): *Euripides: Helena*. Heidelberg 1969.

MUSCOLINO 1970 G. MUSCOLINO (a cura di): *Euripide: Alcesti*. Milano 1970.

OWEN 1939 A. S. OWEN (ed.): *Euripides: Ion.* Oxford – New York 1939.

PADUANO 2000 G. PADUANO (a cura di): *Euripide:Ippolito*. Milano 2000.

PADUANO 2008 G. PADUANO (a cura di): *Euripide: Ippolito*. Milano 2008.

PAGE 1938 D. L. PAGE (ed.): *Euripides: Medea*. Oxford – New York 1938.

PASCUCCI 1950 G. PASCUCCI (a cura di): *Euripide: Ippolito*. Firenze 1950.

PASCUCCI 1960 G. PASCUCCI (a cura di): *Euripide: Ippolito*. Firenze 1960.

PELLEGRINO 2004 M. PELLEGRINO (a cura di): *Euripide: Ione*. Bari 2004.

SCHIASSI 1958 G. SCHIASSI (a cura di): *Euripide: Elettra*. Bologna 1958.

WEBER 1930 L. WEBER (ed.): *Euripides: Alkestis*. Leipzig – Berlin 1930.

Secondary sources

BASSI 1942 D. BASSI: *Nutrici e Pedagoghi nella tragedia greca*. Dioniso 9 (1942/2–3) 80–87.

BLITGEN 1969 S. M. BLITGEN: *The nurse in Hippolytus and Euripidean thought*. The Classical Bulletin 45 (1969) 85–86.

BONAZZI 2010 M. BONAZZI: *I sofisti.* Roma 2010.

BRANDT 1973 H. BRANDT: *Die Sklaven in den Rollen von Dienern und Vertrauten bei Euripides.* New York 1973.

CANFORA 2001 L. CANFORA: *Storia della letteratura greca.* Bari – Roma 2001.

CAPOMACCHIA 1999 A. M. G. CAPOMACCHIA: *L'eroina Nutrice: sui personaggi 'minori' della scena tragica greca.* Roma 1999.

CASTRUCCI 2013 G. CASTRUCCI: *La figura del maestro in Omero.* Catania 2013.

CITTI–CASALI–FORTI 2009 V. CITTI – C. CASALI – L. FORTI: *Dialogoi. Percorsi di lessico greco*. Torino 2009.

DE MARTINO–MORENILLA 2011 F. DE MARTINO – C. MORENILLA: *Teatro y Sociedad en la Antigüedad Clásica. La mirada de las Mujeres.* Bari 2011.

DILLON 2004 J. DILLON: *Euripides and the philosophy of his time*. Dublin 2004.

DOODS 1959 E. R. DOODS: *I Greci e l'irrazionale*. Venezia 1959.

GRILLONE 1972 A. GRILLONE: *La nutrice nell'Ippolito di Euripide*. Atti Accademia Scienze, Lettere, Arti di Palermo 32 (1972) 67–88.

JOSHEL–MURNAGHAN 1998 S. R. JOSHEL – S. MURNAGHAN: *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture: Differential Equations*. London 1998.

IERANÒ 2010 G. IERANÒ: *La tragedia greca. Origini, storia e rinascita*. Salerno 2010.

MASTROMARCO–TOTARO 1996 G. MASTROMARCO – P. TOTARO: *Storia del teatro greco*. Firenze 1996.

MASTRUZZO 2009 G. MASTRUZZO: *Aspetti sociali della tragedia di Euripide: il rapporto padrone-schiavo*. Sileno 35 (2009/1–2) 111–116.

NERI 1992 A. A. NERI: *Per una lettura antropologica dell'Alcesti*. Lexis 9–10 (1992) 93–114.

RODIGHIERO 2013 A. RODIGHIERO: *La tragedia greca*. Bologna 2013.

SCHMIDT 1892 J. SCHMIDT: *Der Sklave bei Euripides*. Berlin 1892.

SUSANETTI 1997 D. SUSANETTI: *Gloria e purezza. Note all'Ippolito di Euripide*. Venezia 1997.

SUSANETTI 2005 D. SUSANETTI: *Favole antiche. Mito greco e tradizione letteraria europea*. Roma 2005.

SUSANETTI 2007 D. SUSANETTI: *Euripide. Fra tragedia, mito e filosofia*. Roma 2007.

SYNODINOU 1977 K. SYNODINOU: *On the Concept of Slavery in Euripides*. Ioannina 1977.

VERNANT–VIDAL-NAQUET 1988 J. P. VERNANT – P. VIDAL-NAQUET: *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece*. Princeton 1988.

WECKLEIN 1912 N. WECKLEIN: *Ausgewählte Tragödien des Euripides. Für den Schulgebrauch erkl*. Leipzig – Berlin 1912.