

S K E N È

Journal of Theatre and Drama Studies

9:1 2023

Performing *The Book of Esther* in
Early Modern Europe

Edited by Chanita Goodblatt

SKENÈ Journal of Theatre and Drama Studies

Founded by Guido Avezzù, Silvia Bigliuzzi, and Alessandro Serpieri

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SKENÈ Theatre and Drama Studies
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www.edizioniets.com

Distribuzione
Messagerie Libri SPA
Sede legale: via G. Verdi 8 - 20090 Assago (MI)

Promozione
PDE PROMOZIONE SRL
via Zago 2/2 - 40128 Bologna

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Cassandra as a False Chorus and Her *Skeuê* in Euripides' *Trojan Women*

Abstract

Female characters and female choruses seem to have strong bonds in Euripides' plays, there are instances in the Euripidean corpus in which a heroine cannot interact the way she wishes with the chorus. The chorus remains almost unresponsive, despite the heroine's efforts to involve them in a kind of choral activity. Bierl, commenting on this phenomenon, has characterized one of these heroines as a false chorus leader. This essay examines Cassandra in *The Trojan Women* as a false chorus leader of *hymaenaios*, focusing on her *skeuê*. Cassandra attempts to involve a female chorus in the performance of a choral song. She distorts the usual choral form and urges others to join her deviant *choreia*. To mark her choral activity, this solo singer is equipped with objects that reveal her intentions. Parts of her costume reveal Cassandra's identity to other characters, the female chorus, and the audience. This paper focuses on the verbal descriptions of the parts of the *skeuê* of Cassandra and its functions and argues that her descriptions reveal the character's role as a false chorus leader to the play's internal and external audience.

KEYWORDS: Euripides; *Trojan Women*; objects; Cassandra; chorus leader; tragic *skeuê*

1. Introduction

Female choruses abound in Euripides' plays¹ and tend to develop close ties

¹ There is a female chorus in Euripides' *Medea*, *Hippolytus*, *Andromache*, *Hecuba*, *Suppliant Women*, *Ion*, *Electra*, *Trojan Women*, *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, *Helen*, *Phoenician Women*, *Orestes*, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, and *Bacchae*. Mastronarde observed that there are fifteen male choruses, sixty-two female choruses, and 105 choruses with undetermined gender in Euripides' corpus. See Mastronarde 2010, 103. According to Calame, the 82% of Euripides' tragic choruses consists of women. See Calame 2020, 776. The chorus of Euripides' *Cresphontes* was thought to belong to the female gender but evidence suggests otherwise. See Lu Hsu 2014, 14-15. For female choruses in classical Athens cf. Budelmann 2015. There is a female chorus in the fr. of Euripides' *Aeolus*, *Alcmeon A' and B'*, *Andromeda*, *Danae*, *Ino*, *Hippolytus Veiled*, *Cretan Women*, *Palamedes*, *Peliades*, *Protesilaus*, *Hypsipyle*, and *Phaethon*. See on this Mastronarde 2010, 103, n. 28. Foley's Appendix is slightly different. She adds in the list the choruses of the *Alexander*, *Meleager*, and *Skyrians*, whereas she regards that the *Theseus* has a mixed chorus. See Foley 2003, 26, 32. See also the index entries in Collard and Cropp 2009.

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with the female protagonist.² These same choruses often engage with the heroine through antiphonal singing.³ Even though female characters and female choruses seem to have strong bonds in Euripides' plays, there are instances in the Euripidean corpus in which a heroine cannot interact the way she wishes with the chorus. The chorus remains almost unresponsive, despite the heroine's efforts to involve them in a kind of choral activity. Bierl, commenting on this phenomenon, has characterized one of these heroines as a false chorus leader.⁴

This paper proposes that this is not the only appearance of a "false chorus leader" in Euripides' plays. Another Euripidean tragic heroine fails to actively involve the female choruses in their singing. That she is denied the chorus' sympathy, at least in the form she wishes, emphasizes her isolation. This paper examines Cassandra in the *Trojan Women* as a false chorus leader of *hymaenaios*, focusing on her *skeuê*.⁵

Cassandra interacts with a family member and attempts to successfully engage with the chorus.⁶ Cassandra attempts to involve a female chorus in the performance of a choral song. She distorts the usual choral form and urges others to join her deviant *choreia*.⁷ To mark her choral activity, this solo singer is equipped with objects that reveal her intentions. In this paper, it is suggested that parts of her costume reveal Cassandra's identity to other characters,⁸ the female chorus, and the audience. However, this is a false

² The ties of sympathy between female characters and the members of female choruses, especially in Euripides' plays, have been the object of debate among modern scholars. See Castellani 1989; Pattoni 1989; Hose 1990, 17-20; Mastronarde 1999, 95; Foley 2003, 20, 24; Weiss 2018, 66; Calame 2020, 782.

³ On this issue see Pattoni 1989, 49-60. Weiss argues that lament, when not in its purely solo form, typically involves a lyric exchange between a female leader and a sympathetic female chorus, as it is seen in some of Euripides' plays. See Weiss 2014, 125. See also Kousoulini 2020a, 3-5.

⁴ Bierl discusses Agave in the *Bacchae*. In his words, "Agave arrives as a "false," imaginary *choregōs* since she actually does not lead a chorus but comes alone". See Bierl 2013, 224. I use the notion of "chorus leader" to refer to the protagonist or an individual character of a play as defined in earlier scholarship and not to an actual chorus leader who is a member of the chorus itself.

⁵ By the use of the term *skeuê* I mean the actor's costume, mask, and accouterments. On the term *skeuê* as a part of the *opsis*, the spectacle-theatrical performance, see Arist. *Poet.* 1450 b16-20 and 1453 b1-10.

⁶ On her attempt to involve the chorus in her performance see Brillet-Dubois 2015, 176.

⁷ *Choreia* is first defined by Plato in the *Laws* (654b) as the combination of dance and music (song and accompaniment). Contemporary scholars frequently use this term to describe the performance of a song by a chorus. For the term *choreia* see, for example, Mullen 1982; Nagy 1990, 339-81; Ladianou 2005; Peponi 2007, 351; Weiss 2020b.

⁸ On the role that all the parts of an actor's costume play in revealing the identity of an ancient Greek tragic character see Battezzato 1999-2000, 343-44; Wyles 2011, 55-

identity that she constructs for herself.⁹ A character's *skeuê* creates meaning through the combination of the actual costume and its description (Wyles 2011, 51). This paper focuses on the verbal descriptions of the parts of the *skeuê* of Cassandra and its functions and argues that her descriptions reveal the character's role as a false chorus leader¹⁰ to the play's internal and external audience.¹¹

2. Cassandra, the False Chorus Leader of *Hymenaios*

Cassandra is singing a solo song in a Euripidean tragedy. She should be grief-stricken, since she is a war captive about to be exiled by her country and qualifies as one of Euripides' self-absorbed singers.¹² These Euripidean singers, mention themselves and their dire situations repeatedly,¹³ continue their song no matter what, and are unresponsive to other characters or the chorus. The solo songs performed in Euripides' plays usually have many similarities to ritual lament.¹⁴ Cassandra could have been one of Euripides' self-absorbed singers or she could have performed an antiphonal lament along with the female chorus.¹⁵

6; Skouroumouni-Stavrinou 2016, 2, 4, 10. On the agency of ancient Greek tragic costume in general see also Mueller 2001; Wyles 2010a, 171-80, 2010b; Wyles 2011; Mueller 2010, 2011, 2016a; Skouroumouni-Stavrinou 2015; Petrides 2014 156-281 and the essays in Mueller 2018.

⁹ For the power of tragic *skeuê* to construct a false identity see Wyles 2011, 64-5; Mueller 2016b, 63.

¹⁰ I adopt Wyles' arguments that in ancient Greek theater, the playwright and the spectators are conscious that a language of the costume is employed; that is, that the playwright embeds symbolism in the actor's costume and the audience has to decode it. See Wyles 2011, 46-7.

¹¹ On how a character's perception of a costume manipulates the audience's perception of it see Wyles 2011, 52.

¹² On Euripides' self-absorbed singers see Damen 1990, 34; Chong-Gossard 2003; 2008.

¹³ According to Damen, some of Euripides' heroines are "notoriously self-absorbed". See Damen 1990, 34. Chong-Gossard suggests that although these Euripidean singers are in a dreadful situation, they refuse to be comforted. See Chong-Gossard 2003; 2008.

¹⁴ On this issue see Pattoni 1989, 49-60. Weiss argues that lament, when not in its purely solo form, typically involves a lyric exchange between a female leader and a sympathetic female chorus, as it is seen in some of Euripides' plays. See Weiss 2014, 125. See also Kousoulini 2020a. The same songs are also frequently tied with bacchic *choreia*. See on this Dué 2006, 120; Foley 2001, 43; Marinis 2012, 34.

¹⁵ Suter calls Cassandra's song a "reduced lament". See Suter 2003, 8-10. I agree that this song bears similarities with ritual lament, as the ones pointed out by Suter, nevertheless, we should take into consideration that tragic lyric is often a mixture of different traditional lyric genres. See Weiss 2020a for the generic hybridity of the tragic evocations of choral genres. Croally also regards that there are similarities between Cassan-

Instead, by choosing to perform a *hymenaios*¹⁶ and attempting to involve others in her performance,¹⁷ Cassandra manages to distort this choral form in almost every possible way.¹⁸

Cassandra sings a monodic *hymenaios* (308-40)¹⁹ in highly resolved dochmiac-iambic meter. Not only the meter used indicates that Cassandra performs a highly energetic and lyrical song (Weiss 2018, 113) but dochmiac is considered the meter of lament.²⁰ Cassandra addresses Hymen, the god of marriage, borrowing the typically choral refrain of “ὦ Ὑμέναιε (ἄναξ)” which is similar to the repeated cry of “ὕμνηνον” that we find in Sappho fr. 111 V (Weiss 2018, 114). Cassandra calls on several deities, besides Hymenaeus, addressing a cultic cry of “εὐὸν εὐοῖ” in 326 to Dionysus (Papadopoulou 2000, 520; Weiss 2018, 113-14), Hecate (323),²¹ and Apollo (329) (Papadopoulou 2000, 520-1). She even sings a *makarismos* to herself (312). Not only the *makarismos*, a traditional feature of *hymenaioi*,²² was usually sang by the chorus to the bridegroom;²³ however, a *makarismos* outside the context of wedding ritual was meant either for the dead or for someone who was about to die (Papadopoulou 2000, 522). Cassandra, as I mentioned above, attempts to

dra’s song and ritual lament but is of the opinion that Cassandra is not a lamenter. See Croally 1994, 73. Some of Sappho’s wedding songs indicate lamentation, which often includes images of plucking and departure: fr. 104a, 105a, 105b, 107, perhaps 109, and 114 V. I regard that the ancient audience would have recognized and responded intellectually and emotionally to Cassandra’s song as a *hymenaios*. On the importance of the ancient audience’s contemporary experience for a study whose aim is to explore tragedy’s use of ritual song see Wright 1986, 3-6; Swift 2010, 304; Kawalko-Roselli 2011, 19-20.

¹⁶ On Cassandra’s song perceived by modern scholars as a *hymenaios* see, for example, Rehm 1994, 129-30; Papadopoulou 2000, 515-21; Weiss 2018, 113-14.

¹⁷ For the association between *hymenaios* and lament in Greek tragedy see Seaford 1984-1985, 227-9; Seaford 1987; Rehm 1994; Hoffmann 1996, 257-62; Margariti 2017, xvii-xxiii. For the relationship between wedding and funerary rituals see Danforth 1982, 74-116; Borghini 1987; Kligman 1988, 215-48; Lawson 2011, 546-61; Margariti 2017.

¹⁸ Webster calls it a “travesty of wedding songs”. See Webster 1967, 178, n. 9. Foley calls it a mock *epithalamium*. See Foley 1985, 85, 88. On the distortion of the lyric form of *hymenaios* by Cassandra see also Papadopoulou 2000, 520; Swift 2010; Weiss 2018, 113-16.

¹⁹ On the oddity of a *hymenaios* sung as a solo song in this tragedy see Weiss 2018, 113. For the motif of absent *choreia* in the *Trojan Women* see also Weiss 2018, 103-14.

²⁰ See Suter 2003, 8-9. All three tragedians use dochmiacs to express strong feelings such as grief, fear, despair, horror, excitement, and, occasionally, triumph or joy. See Dale 1968, 110. De Poli also notes that dochmiacs in Greek tragedy express intense emotions, like panic, sorrow, or at least a sort of excitement. See De Poli 2018, 52-3. The only *hymenaioi* that survive are encountered in Sappho’s corpus, their meters vary.

²¹ Karamanou argues that Cassandra’s torches bring to mind death mainly through their association with Hecate. See Karamanou 2015, 392, 395-6.

²² See Hague 1983, 134, 141, n. 11; Swift 2010, 246-7; Wasdin 2018, 184-94.

²³ See, for example, Sappho’s 112 and 113 V.

transmit her distorted, monodic *choreia* and recruit her mother, Hecuba, and the chorus as members of her wedding *pompe*.²⁴

Cassandra refers to her *choreia*, throughout her monody. The singer emphasizes the kinetic element of *choreia*, as she constantly refers to her own movement and dancing. In addition to the lines in which Cassandra refers to her torch-carrying (308-10 and 319-24), she also amply describes her dance movements (332-4: ἄναγε, πόδα σὸν ἔλισσε τᾶδ' ἐκέισε μετ' ἐμέθεν ποδῶν / φέρουσα φιλτάταν βάσιν, lead off and whirl your foot this way and that, joining with me in the joyful step) and seeks other participants for her song and dance. As Olsen remarks, she seems to imagine herself leading a chorus (326: <ἄναγ'> ἄναγε χορόν, <strike up,> strike up the dance; 328: ὁ χορὸς ὅσιος <ὅσιος>, the dance is holy, <holy>; 332: χόρευε, dance), not a completely fictitious one, but a potentially real combination of the play's actual chorus of Trojan women (338-9: ὦ καλλίπεπλοι Φρυγῶν / κόραι, you daughters of Phrygia, with your lovely gowns) and her mother, Hecuba (332: χόρευε, μάτερ, χόρευ', dance, mother, dance) (Olsen 2016, 147). Cassandra prays to Apollo to lead her dance (329-30: ἄγε σύ, Φοῖβε, νῦν· κατὰ σὸν ἐν δάφναις / ἀνάκτορον θυηπολῶ, do you, Phoebus, lead it. For crowded with laurels I serve in your temple). She reproaches Hecuba for her lamentation (315-18: ἐπεὶ σύ, μάτερ, <μάται'> / ἐν δάκρυσι καὶ γόοισι τὸν / θανόντα πατέρα πατρίδα τε / φίλαν καταστένουσ' ἔχεις, for you, mother, in tears and groans <foolishly> keep lamenting my dead father and our dear country) and asks her to participate in her performance (325-7: πάλλε πόδα αἰθέριον <ἄναγ'> ἄναγε χορόν· / εὐᾶν, εὐοῖ, / ὡς ἐπὶ πατρὸς ἐμοῦ μακαριωτάταις / τύχαις, lift your foot and shake it, <strike up> strike up the dance (Euhan! Euhoi!) just as in my father's happiest days; 332-3). Cassandra also urges the members of the female chorus to take part in her *choreia* (338-41) and uses a series of choral terms to describe what she is asking her mother to do (325-6; 331-4); the heroine wants everyone to take part in a joyous activity. Through the references to the kinetic part of her *choreia*, she tries not only to express her intense emotions but to convey them to the internal and external audiences of the play by generating kinesthetic empathy.²⁵ But what does

²⁴ Processional songs performed at weddings appear in ancient Greek sources as moving feasts that constantly acquire new participants. See, for example, Hom. *Il.* 18.492-3; Hes. [Sc.] 273-9; Sappho's 44 V.

²⁵ The descriptions of dance in choral poetry can generate to the audience kinesthetic empathy. On the term see Olsen 2017, 154; 2020a, 339-40. Other classicists have also adopted it. See Fernández 2015, 312-21; Bierl 2017, 257n95; Curtis 2017, 4. n6; Meineck 2018, 120-53; Kousoulini 2020b. The term is widely used outside the discipline of classics. See, for example, Järvinen 2007; Sklar 2001a; 2001b; Noland 2009; Reason 2010; Foster 2010. Sklar defines this concept as the process of translating from visual to kinesthetic modes which generates the capacity to participate with another's movement or

this imply? According to Olsen, the descriptions of dance in choral poetry can spotlight certain elements of a performance, construct hierarchies of beauty, excitement, or interest, and encourage specific forms of aesthetic response (Olsen 2016, 4-5, 42-7; 2017). The verbal descriptions of movement and dance that accompany the dance itself (in the case of choral performance) might have shaped the visual and kinesthetic experiences of dancing for ancient audiences.²⁶ According to Meineck, choral self-references can serve as an anchor for the projection of emotions (Meineck 2018, 52-119). More specifically, the actions that take place during the performance of a song, such as gestures, dance, and movement, can involve the audience by making them want to mimic the expressivity of others.²⁷ Cassandra wishes to share her intense emotions with the internal and the external audience of the *Trojan Women* and spread her deviant chorality.

Cassandra tries to spread her vocabulary of chorality and the chorus seems to catch up with her words (e.g., 343: μή κούφον ἄρη βῆμ' ἐς Ἀργείων στρατόν, before she steps lightly into the Argive army). Nonetheless, the chorus is still not convinced to sing the *hymenaios* with the heroine. The Trojan women ask Hecuba to stop Cassandra's song (342: βασιλεια, βακχεύουσας οὐ λήψη κόρην, my queen, stop your delirious daughter),²⁸ remaining completely unresponsive to her calls for participation in the *hymenaios*. The song ends with the chorus' command to Hecuba to stop Cassandra's *choreia*. Hecuba not only stops the performance of *hymenaios* but gives orders to the female chorus to begin a new song of lament.²⁹

Brillet-Dubois persuasively argues that there is a competition of chorus leaders between Hecuba and Cassandra in the *Trojan Women* (Brillet-Dubois 2015.); Cassandra's distorted *hymenaios* competes with Hecuba's lament (Brillet-Dubois 2015, 176). Earlier in the play, Hecuba became the chorus leader of an ad hoc performance of a lament.³⁰ Cassandra attempts

another's sensory experience of movement. See Sklar 2001b; 2001a, 199n3.

²⁶ See Olsen 2016, 6. Olsen uses the term "communal resonance" to refer to the discursive construction of dance and movement in literary sources which can reflect and attempt to affect the embodied experiences and kinetic expressions of its audience. See Olsen 2016, 10. She borrows the term from Albright's work. See Albright 2011, 17.

²⁷ See Meineck 2018, 120-53. Meineck calls this phenomenon "emotional contagion" (2018, 127). Varakis uses the same term in connection with the emotion of joy in Aristophanic comedy. See Varakis 2018, 312-14 with more bibliography.

²⁸ Weiss (2018 115-16) has remarked that this phrase works to silence Cassandra, decisively ending her attempt at choral leadership. I agree with Olsen (2016, 147) that this description retains a hint of chorality.

²⁹ On the agency of tragic mothers and its limitations see Tzanetou 2012. On mothers in Euripides see Zeitlin 2008.

³⁰ Murnaghan argues that the close identification of chorus and protagonists in Euripidean plays depicting the fall of Troy is a symptom of catastrophe: the fall of Troy

to replace her mother's cries of pain with cries of joy in her *hymenaios*. However, Euripidean female choruses usually only develop close ties and perform songs with one female character: the protagonist. Hecuba is the central character of the play and the leader of chorus of the Trojan women. As other scholars have observed, Cassandra's prophetic powers allow her to have an alternate view of the events preceding the fall of Troy.³¹ For her, this is a joyful occasion because she has access to information that the chorus does not. The female chorus shares Hecuba's view and follows the real chorus leader. But does Cassandra's *skeuê* play a role in the construction or revelation of her false identity?

3. Cassandra's Inappropriate Torch-Carrying

Cassandra's performance is completely inappropriate, as she should have been a mourner; she has no right to wish for a wedding celebration, since she is about to become a concubine rather than a wife.³² Cassandra uses a part of her *skeuê* as a means to distort the wedding ritual. Her torches, the ones she has no right to carry, are usually held by the mother of the bride during the wedding procession.³³

Cassandra uses the torches to draw the audience's attention to her intense kinetic *choreia* and describes carrying her torch in her song. Cassandra starts to give herself, the sole performer of this *hymenaios*,³⁴ orders in a self-referential manner (308: ἀνεχε· πάρεχε / φῶς φέρε, raise it, bring it on, bring a light).³⁵ Her first orders are related to the objects she carries. She

levels the city's social structure so that members of the royal family and their former servants are slaves together, although in peacetime there is a social gap that does not allow them to be closely associated or mourn together. See Murnaghan 2016, 415-16. On Hecuba as a chorus leader of ad hoc lamentations in this play see also Suter 2003, 14-15; Murnaghan 2013, 160, 175-7; Brillet-Dubois 2015, 167-9; Fanfani 2018, 257-8; Weiss 2018, 110-13. On the importance of music in the *Trojan Women* see also Battezzato 2005.

³¹ See Papadopoulou 2000, 515-16 with more bibliography; Brillet-Dubois 2015, 176.

³² On the inappropriateness of Cassandra's *choreia*, see Olsen 2016, 147; 2020b, 142.

³³ Athenian vases frequently depict the mother of the bride bearing the marriage-torch in the wedding procession. See Tufte 1970, 42. For torches and fire used throughout the trilogy (*Alexander*, *Palamedes*, *Trojan Women*) as symbols see Papadopoulou 2000, 519 with more bibliography; Karamanou 2015.

³⁴ I prefer the term *hymenaios* to the narrower term *epithalamia*. *Epithalamia* were the songs performed outside the house once the bride and groom were inside. The term *hymenaios* encompasses all the songs performed before, during, or right after a wedding ceremony. See Lardinois 1996, 151n3; Swift 2006, 125n2. For more on *hymenaios* see Tufte 1970; Contiades-Tsitsoni 1990; Horstmann 2004; Wasdin 2018.

³⁵ On the self-referentiality of Cassandra's song and its plenitude of choral terms see Olsen 2016, 147; Weiss 2018, 115.

tells herself to raise the torches so their light can be seen. She uses *deixis*, urging everyone to look at the light emanating from her torches (309: ἰδοὺ ἰδοῦ, see, see) and sends a marriage cry to Hymenaios, the god of marriage (310-11, λαμπάσι <σοι> τόδ' ἱερόν, / Ὑμέναι' ἄναξ, with torch fire this holy place, Lord Hymenaeus). She tries to clarify the purpose behind her torch-carrying (319-24: ἐγὼ δ' ἐπὶ γάμοις ἐμοῖς / ἀναφλέγω πυρὸς φῶς / ἐς αὐγάν, ἐς αἴγλαν / διδοῦσ', ὦ Ὑμέναιε, σοί, / διδοῦσ', ὦ Ἑκάτα, φάος, / παρθένων ἐπὶ λέκτροις / ἧ νόμος ἔχει, but I in my marriage set alight this blaze of fire, giving it for gleam, for glare to you o Hymenaeus, and to you o Hecate, for a maiden's marriage as custom ordains) and seems to want her mother and the chorus to engage in a kinetic activity that will be part of her wedding *choreia*. She waves the torches and points to a wedding procession (Brillet-Dubois 2015, 171), into which she wishes to inveigle the others.³⁶ Cassandra tries to make her torches a part of her “plan” to involve in a choral song the internal and the external audiences of her solo *hymenaios* by creating kinesthetic empathy, that is, Cassandra's torches are used to construct her identity as a chorus leader in the *hymenaios*. But how does the audience of this performance react to her torch-carrying?

Cassandra's torch-carrying is the first thing that Hecuba and the herald, Talthybius, and—we have to suppose—the spectators notice from afar (298-307). Talthybius is the first to try to describe what they see. Judging from the light coming from the tents, he suggests that someone is carrying a torch (298: ἔα· τί πεύκης ἔνδον αἶθεται σέλας; But what is this? Why is the light of a pine torch gleaming inside?). He makes a wrong assumption regarding the holder of the torch and guesses that the Trojan women are setting their tents, or even themselves, on fire (299-305).

Hecuba deems Cassandra's performance unsuitable for the occasion.³⁷ The first words she utters concern Cassandra's torches. Hecuba calls on Hephaestus and complains about her daughter's *skeuê* (344-6: Ἡφαιστε, δαδουχεῖς μὲν ἐν γάμοις βροτῶν, / ἀτὰρ λυγρὰν γε τήνδ' ἀναιθύσσεις φλόγα / ἔξω τε μεγάλων ἐλπίδων, Hephaestus, you bear the torch when mortals marry, but this gleam you now spread abroad is painful and far removed from our high hopes). According to Hecuba, this torch-carrying *choreia* brings pain (344: λυγρὰν, painful).

Hecuba, the rightful chorus leader, connects Cassandra's emotional state with her right to carry these torches. According to her mother and the female chorus, Cassandra is almost out of her mind; this is something we

³⁶ At 455, Cassandra asks her mother to escort her to her destination and uses the verb πέμπω (πέμπτε).

³⁷ On the inappropriateness of Cassandra's song and its dramatic use see also Papadopoulou 2000, 522.

hear long before the heroine's entrance. Hecuba, in her lyric exchange with the chorus, implores the women to keep Cassandra inside a tent, fearing that the Greeks will ridicule Cassandra's state of mind (168-71). Cassandra is described as a maenad (172, *μαινάδ'*, the maenad girl and 307, *μαινάς*, my mad daughter,³⁸ 170: *ἐκβακχεύουσας*, the maddened) and is a spectacle that Hecuba wishes to avoid.³⁹ Cassandra is not getting married and thus is not the rightful performer of a *hymenaios*, nor is she in the proper state of mind to perform such a song. Indeed, Hecuba reproaches Cassandra for her performance because she sees that her daughter is not in the right mental state to carry a torch (348-9: *οὐ γὰρ ὀρθὰ πυρφορεῖς / μαινάς θοάζουσ'*, you are not right to carry a torch, mad and frenzied as you are);⁴⁰ Hecuba believes that Cassandra's actions are close to maenadism.⁴¹ Cassandra is a maenad or at least maenad-like⁴² (307: *μαινάς*, mad). Cassandra uses torches to construct her identity as a chorus leader, but those same torches reveal this false identity to the audience. Cassandra has no right to initiate a choral song to celebrate her union with Agamemnon.

Hecuba takes Cassandra's torches away (348: *παράδος ἔμοι φῶς*, give me the flame!) and orders the chorus to take them indoors (351: *ἐσφέρετε πεύκας*, take the torches indoors); this is a symbolic gesture. Often in Greek tragedy, when a character removes a part of their costume, they are discarding their identity (Wyles 2011, 56-7). In this case, the chorus leader of this chorus of Trojan captive women removes the symbol of Cassandra's false identity and commands the women to assist her. But this is not the only order that she gives to the chorus. Hecuba orders the female chorus to change its lyric mode. According to her, the Trojan women have to sing a lament in place of Cassandra's *hymenaios* (351-2: *δάκρυά τ' ἀνταλλάξατε / τοῖς τῆσδε μέλεσι*, Τρωάδες, γαμηλίους, Trojan women, in exchange for her wedding songs give her your tears!).

Cassandra stops singing altogether after the torches are removed from

³⁸ The ancient text and the translation belong to Kovacs.

³⁹ Karamanou (2015, 392) notes that Cassandra's torch-carrying evokes in the mind of the audience the nocturnal torch-dances of the maenads.

⁴⁰ For costumes incompatible with their wearer in Greek tragedy see also Skouroumouni-Stavrinou 2015, 127.

⁴¹ Cassandra is not an actual maenad, but these words used to describe her are borrowed by a relatively unfamiliar realm of experience to describe an unusual degree of emotion. See Segal 1971, 47-8. Karamanou (2015, 393) notes that usually in poetry, maenadic terminology tends to be used to describe an emotionally stricken state of mind and lack of self-control.

⁴² According to Seaford (1993, 115), this is not a reference to actual maenadism but a "Dionysiac metaphor". Seaford considers a "Dionysiac metaphor" any explicit or implicit comparison of behavior to the frenzy inspired by Dionysus. For a narrower definition of the term see Marinis 2012.

her. Song almost disappears from the scene.⁴³ From this point and on, no one mentions Cassandra's *skeuê*. The heroine enters into a kind of a dialogue with her mother, the chorus, and Talthybius. Cassandra reveals the motive of her joy and the reason that Trojan people have to celebrate. She prophesies Agamemnon's demise and everything else that will happen in Greece after his death. She also allows Talthybius to lead her to her real destination (445: στεῖχ' ὅπως τάχιστ' ἐς Ἅιδου νυμφίῳ γημώμεθα, Go with all speed! Let me marry my bridegroom in Hades!). The woman who tried to use torches to entangle her mother and the chorus in her mad wedding *choreia* allows herself be led to her marriage to Death.

4. Conclusion

Cassandra's interaction with the female choruses of the *Trojan Women* is not completely successful. The chorus remains almost unresponsive, despite the heroine's efforts to involve them in her delusion. The chorus of the *Trojan Women* does not take part in Cassandra's *hymenaios*. They remain loyal to their chorus leader and protagonist of the play, Hecuba. After Cassandra's performance, they are instructed to perform a lament. The chorus sees the heroine's performance for what it is: a lyric performance of a false chorus leader.

The denial of sympathy in the form the heroine wishes highlights her isolation, as she is unable to effectively share their emotions with the members of the chorus. Cassandra is separated from the other women as she is immediately directed to the Greek ships. Cassandra attempts to perform a joyous choral song along with the chorus, although the song she chooses is not appropriate for the occasion. The heroine is in a mental state that does not allow her to see her situation clearly; Cassandra is mad and she resembles a maenad. She is brought back to reality by the intervention of her mother and is forced to stop her performance. Cassandra is advised by Hecuba or even compelled by reality to begin a lament.

Parts of Cassandra's *skeuê*, which are very obvious to the female chorus and the audience, are used by her to construct her false identity. Cassandra uses torches, one of the most characteristic paraphernalia of the *hymenaios*, to

⁴³ Weiss (2018, 116) rightly observes that the immediate effect of the orders given by the chorus seems to be an absence of song altogether, for, in striking contrast with Cassandra's highly lyrical performance, all characters speak predominately in iambic trimeters for the next 170 lines (with the exception of Cassandra's trochaic tetrameters at 444-61). Karamanou (2015, 393) argues that the change of meter from dochmiacs and glyconics (308-40) to iambic trimeters (353-43) and then to trochaic tetrameters (444-61) illustrates Cassandra's shift from delirious mood to mental normality and then to the climax of her highly charged final prophecies.

mark her song as a *hymenaios* and herself as the chorus leader. She describes her own movements and dance; her torch serves as a means to emphasize her kinetic activities. This object is also used to distort a traditional choral form. Cassandra, the “bride”, should not have carried the torches or had a wedding procession. Her torch-carrying is specifically marked as inappropriate. This part of her *skeuê* signals her distortion of the proper choral form to anyone that can see it.

Cassandra's torches are taken away by her mother with the aid of the female chorus. After her props are gone, the heroine becomes more rational. Cassandra stops singing and tries to explain that her power of prophecy provides her with access to information that the Trojan women and Hecuba do not have. Cassandra's torches do not only reveal her false identity as a chorus leader or signals the distortion of a choral form; they are also used by other characters to strip the heroine of this false identity and compel her to stop her improper performance.

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