

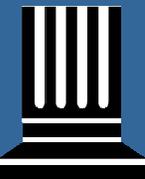
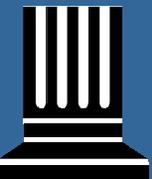


Euripides



Hippolytus and Phaedra on Stage

- the play we will read is actually Euripides' second attempt at staging the Hippolytus and Phaedra myth
- the myth is very old and has parallels in other Mediterranean cultures
- e.g. in the Old Testament the tale of Joseph and Potiphar's wife



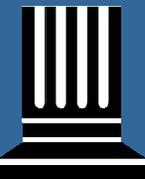
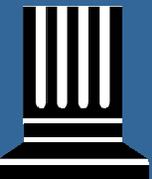


Euripides

Hippolytus and Phaedra on Stage



- the basic plot follows this pattern:
 1. A step-mother (usually, an older husband's younger wife) falls in love with her husband's chaste and pious son, not her own child but her husband's by an earlier marriage or affair.
 2. She offers herself to him, but he haughtily rebuffs her.



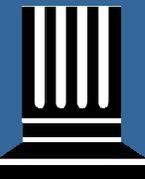
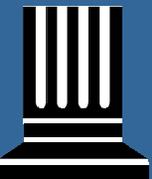


Euripides

Hippolytus and Phaedra on Stage



- the basic plot follows this pattern:
 3. In anger and fear, she goes to her husband and falsely accuses the son of rape.
 4. The father curses his son who dies most horribly (or barely escapes death).
 5. In anguish and remorse, the wife confesses all and commits suicide.





Euripides



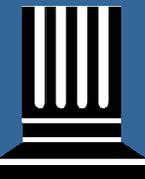
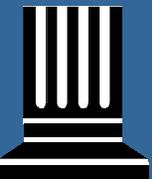
Hippolytus and Phaedra on Stage

Hippolytus Veiled (Euripides)

- early in his career, Euripides wrote *Hippolytus Veiled*, a play which scandalized the Athenians
- in this tragedy, Phaedra throws herself openly at Hippolytus and warns him:

People who run from love too much

Are sick, just like those look for it too much. . .





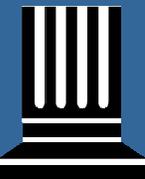
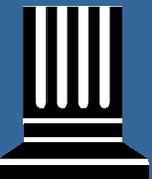
Euripides



Hippolytus and Phaedra on Stage

Hippolytus Veiled (Euripides)

- Hippolytus rejects her:
I wish that Holy Shame, who lives among
All men, would strip away all shameless thoughts.
- in “self-defense,” Phaedra cries rape
- Theseus condemns Hippolytus to death
- Phaedra commits suicide
- and Euripides did *not* win first prize





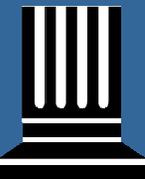
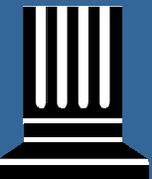
Euripides



Hippolytus and Phaedra on Stage

Phaedra (Sophocles)

- some time later, Sophocles wrote *Phaedra* in which he attempted to reform Phaedra's character
- he set the play during a famous episode in Theseus' mythic cycle, his death-journey to the Underworld
- hearing reports of Theseus' "death," Phaedra panics





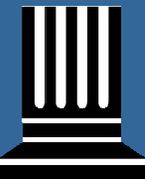
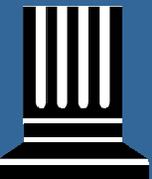
Euripides



Hippolytus and Phaedra on Stage

Phaedra (Sophocles)

- Phaedra is now a foreign widow with no political or legal rights in Athens
- so she begs Hippolytus to marry her in order to protect her
- she claims she wants to protect her children and Theseus' royal line:
“To a mother, children are the anchors of life”





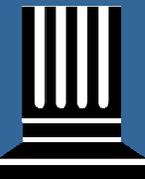
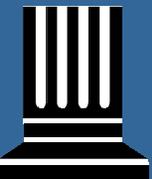
Euripides



Hippolytus and Phaedra on Stage

Phaedra (Sophocles)

- but Hippolytus is the obsessive character in this play and interprets her proposal as a sexual come-on
- he rebuffs her vehemently
- someone (the chorus?) says: “He spat away her words!”





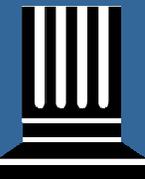
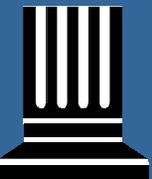
Euripides



Hippolytus and Phaedra on Stage

Phaedra (Sophocles)

- soon after that, Theseus unexpectedly returns from the Underworld
- Phaedra panics, thinking Hippolytus will claim she made sexual advances on him
- so she accuses him of rape as a form of pre-emptive attack





Euripides

Hippolytus and Phaedra on Stage



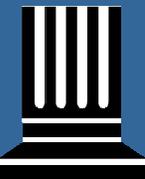
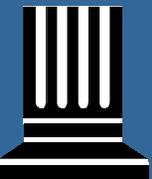
Phaedra (Sophocles)

- Theseus confronts Hippolytus with Phaedra's charge:

Nor would any city be safe ever
In which what is just and temperate
Is trampled under foot, and a twittering fool of a man
Takes a villainous whip in hand and gains the city.

- Hippolytus responds:

There is nothing worse for a man to have
Than a evil wife and nothing better than
A temperate one.





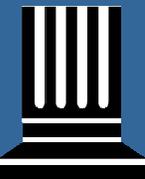
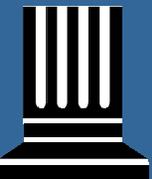
Euripides

Hippolytus and Phaedra on Stage



Phaedra (Sophocles)

- note how Sophocles has altered the traditional storyline
- he has stripped Phaedra of her typical lustful nature and made a “helpless” foreign woman without legal recourse
- that is, he has turned a myth about sexual excess into one about politics





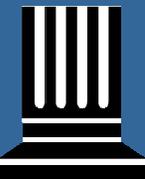
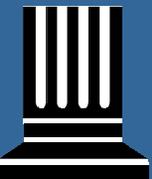
Euripides



Hippolytus and Phaedra on Stage

Hippolytus Garlanded (Euripides)

- *Phaedra* was, no doubt, one of Sophocles' many dramatic successes
- apparently, this spurred Euripides to take another crack at staging the myth
- it is unusual for a Greek playwright to stage exactly the same episode of a myth twice in different plays





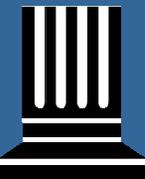
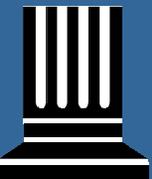
Euripides



Hippolytus and Phaedra on Stage

Hippolytus Garlanded (Euripides)

- it is as if Euripides were correcting or disagreeing with himself about how the Hippolytus-and-Phaedra myth should run
- it just goes to show that Euripides was an unconventional playwright in many different ways and broke all sorts of rules





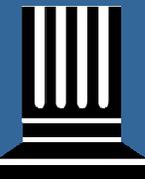
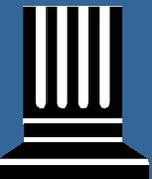
Euripides



Hippolytus and Phaedra on Stage

Hippolytus Garlanded (Euripides)

- Euripides also shows that he learned an important lesson from his past failure with *Hippolytus Veiled* and from Sophocles' success with *Phaedra*
- Euripides' second Hippolytus play is called *Hippolytus Garlanded*





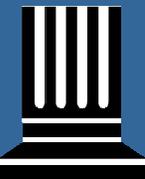
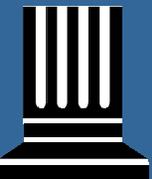
Euripides



Hippolytus and Phaedra on Stage

Hippolytus Garlanded (Euripides)

- in this version of the myth, he toned down Phaedra's excessive nature
- it is clearly a lesson he learned from Sophocles' success with *Phaedra*
- but he did not strip of her lustfulness so he kept more of the traditional myth intact





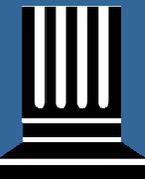
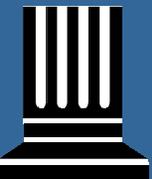
Euripides



Hippolytus and Phaedra on Stage

Hippolytus Garlanded (Euripides)

- instead, Euripides transferred much of Phaedra's guilty nature to another character, her Nurse
- cf. Juliet's Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*
- moreover, he re-structured the plot in a small but bold way, as we will see
- and with this he won a rare first prize!



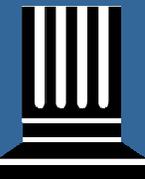
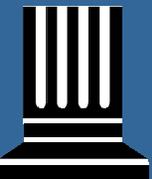


Euripides

Hippolytus



- the play opens with a prologue by **Aphrodite** who explains why she wants vengeance against Hippolytus
- her principal reason is her quarrel with Artemis over who is more powerful
- Artemis delivers the epilogue at the end of the play
- the appearances of these goddesses stand like pillars enclosing the drama



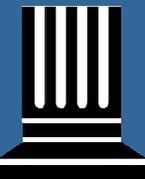
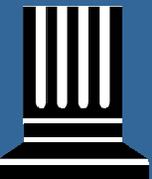


Euripides

Hippolytus



- both goddesses are unspeakably cruel to the humans in the play
- Aphrodite, for example, uses Phaedra to destroy Hippolytus and then discards her with little remorse
- this sort of treatment of the gods in drama earned Euripides the suspicion and enmity of the more religious members of the Athenian audience



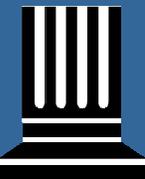
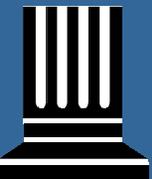


Euripides

Hippolytus



- the play moves through a wide range of characters, both mortals and gods
 - goddess in heaven (Aphrodite)
 - mortal males in the “inviolable meadow” (Hippolytus/Servant)
 - the sickbed of a mortal woman (Phaedra/Nurse)
- then it goes back up the human/divine ladder: Phaedra → Theseus → Artemis



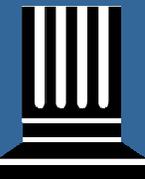
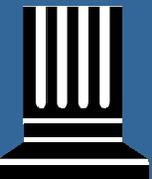


Euripides

Hippolytus



- the most interesting and dramatically compelling of these levels is that of mortal women
- Phaedra is one of Euripides' best "deranged" female characters
- Aphrodite has made her fall in love with her own step-son Hippolytus
- cf. Helen in *The Iliad* (Book 3.380-461)



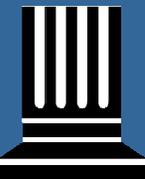
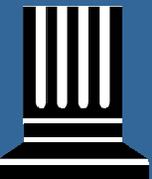


Euripides

Hippolytus



- the long confrontation between Phaedra and her **Nurse** is especially fascinating as a study in psychology
- it is also longer and more complex than any dramatic sequence yet attested in classical Greek tragedy
- the sequence leading up Phaedra's suicide has at least **seven steps**





Euripides

Hippolytus



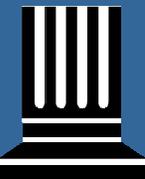
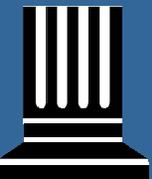
- Step 1 (176-197): Phaedra's first appearance, with her Nurse
 - Phaedra wants to go outside but, once outside, she isn't happy
 - the Nurse is frustrated with Phaedra's fatal illness and mysterious ranting:

It's better to be sick than be a nurse.

Being sick is one thing but nursing means

Mental anguish and hard work besides.

(Hippolytus 186-188)



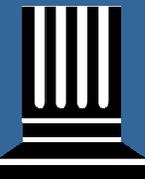
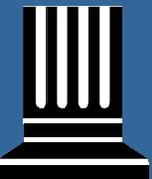


Euripides

Hippolytus



- Step 2 (198-249): Phaedra finally opens up and starts speaking
 - she says she wants to “break Venetian colts”
 - the name “Hippo/lytos” = “horse/break”
 - when the Nurse in confusion repeats these words back to her mistress, Phaedra realizes how close she came to confessing the truth
 - she covers herself with a veil and refuses to speak again



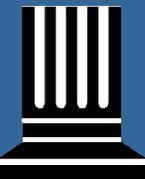
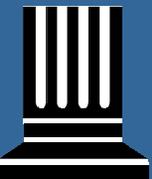


Euripides

Hippolytus



- Step 3 (250-361): the Nurse at last coerces the truth from Phaedra
 - the Nurse tells the chorus that she doesn't know what's wrong with Phaedra
 - she chatters on about what will happen if Phaedra dies, especially to her children
 - finally when she mentions the “bastard” son of the Amazon, Phaedra gasps in shock
 - the Nurse knows she hit a nerve



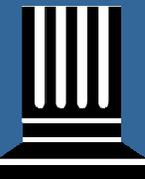
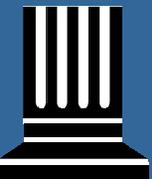


Euripides

Hippolytus



- Step 3 (250-361): the Nurse coerces the truth from Phaedra
 - the Nurse presses on with her questions
 - weakened by her illness, Phaedra's resistance begins to falter and she admits that the problem is love
 - “Of whom?” asks the Nurse
 - Phaedra answers, “... a man ... his mother was an Amazon ...”





Euripides

Hippolytus



- Step 3 (250-361): the Nurse coerces the truth from Phaedra

- realizing the truth, the Nurse reacts in shock:

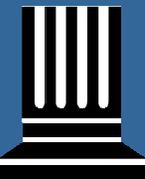
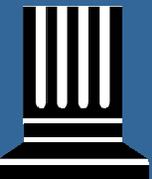
... Cypris, you are no God.

You are something stronger than God if that can be.

You have ruined her and me and all this house.

(Hippolytus 359-361)

- the Nurse runs off stage in shock and terror into the house



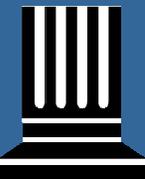
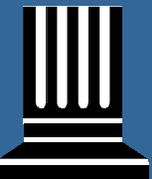


Euripides

Hippolytus



- Step 4 (362-432): Phaedra feels relieved and addresses the chorus about her “shame”



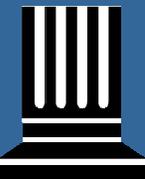
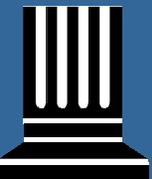


Euripides

Hippolytus



- Step 5 (433-524): the Nurse returns unexpectedly, having changed her mind:
 - “... second thoughts, it seems, are best”
 - the Nurse tries to justify Phaedra’s passion by asserting that the gods marry their relatives “and shouldn’t we imitate gods?”
 - finally, she promises to “help” Phaedra — with the sort of magic only women have!



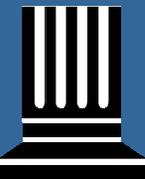
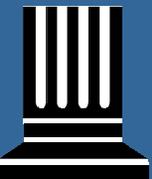


Euripides

Hippolytus



- Step 6 (525-668): the Nurse goes off to meet with Hippolytus off stage:
 - the chorus sings a beautiful “Ode to Love,” as Phaedra listens by the door of the house
 - near the end of the song, Phaedra tells them to be quiet because she hears yelling inside the house
 - it is Hippolytus cursing a female servant



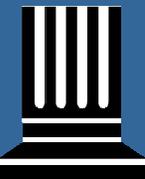
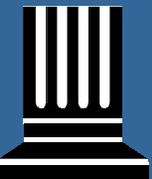


Euripides

Hippolytus



- Step 6 (525-668): having learned the truth from the Nurse, Hippolytus explodes with rage against all women
 - Hippolytus comes crashing out of the house, with the Nurse hanging onto him
 - the Nurse reminds him that he swore by Artemis not to tell anyone her secret
 - fulminating with anger, Hippolytus denounces all women





Euripides

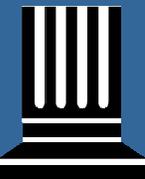
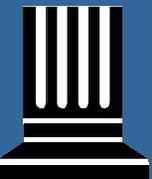
Hippolytus



- Step 6 (525-668): Hippolytus ends his speech by “spitting” on the whole female race:

Damn you all! I'll never get my fill of hating
Women. And if someone says that's all I ever talk about,
It is. Because they're always up to no good.
So either let someone teach them temperance,
Or get out of my way and let me trample them forever!

(Hippolytus 663-668)



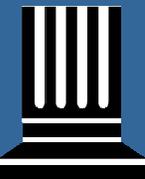
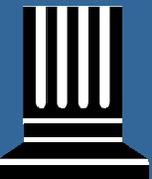


Euripides

Hippolytus



- Step 6 (525-668): but where is Phaedra during Hippolytus' tirade
 - he never addresses Phaedra directly
 - but he alludes to her indirectly:
 - I'll walk with my father step by step and see how you look at him, . . . you and your mistress both.
 - is she hiding among the chorus, and Hippolytus spots her only late in his speech?
 - but out of contempt, he never speaks to her!



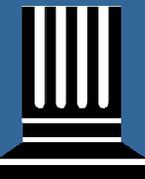
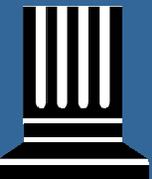


Euripides

Hippolytus



- Step 7 (669-731): Phaedra is distraught with terror at Hippolytus' threat
 - she's worried about her reputation and her children's future if she is painted as a wanton woman
 - and she doesn't trust Hippolytus to abide by his vow and keep her secret
 - she runs off stage, threatening to commit suicide



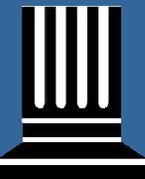
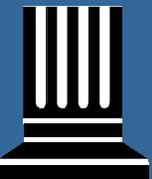


Euripides

Hippolytus



- Step 7 (669-731): but what did Euripides' audience expect Phaedra to do?
 - did they think she would kill herself at this moment in the play?
 - traditionally she kills herself at the end
 - also, they have just watched the Nurse change her mind offstage and return with a new plan
 - and Euripides is famous for “red herrings”



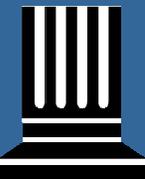
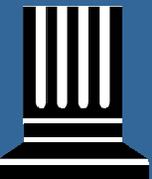


Euripides

Hippolytus



- Step 7 (669-731): the Greek audience at the premiere probably concluded to themselves that Phaedra would reappear with a new plan to save herself by falsely accusing Hippolytus of rape
 - so, when the Nurse's cries that the Queen is dead are heard offstage, it must have been quite a surprise to them that Phaedra was really dead!



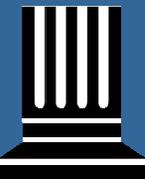
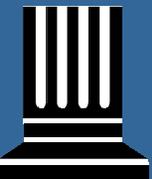


Euripides

Hippolytus



- but how will she accuse Hippolytus of rape then?
- Theseus enters and finds his wife dead
- while grieving over her corpse, he discovers a writing tablet
- n.b. this is an anachronism—writing had not yet been invented in the time when the play is set



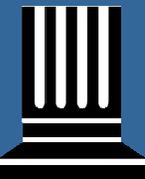
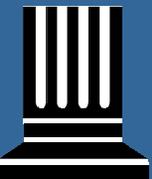


Euripides

Hippolytus



- Theseus reads the tablet silently because the audience can guess what it says
- n.b. Theseus' words are "It roars! It roars! This accursed tablet!"
- Phaedra's suicide in this play reinforces and confirms the charge of rape
- Phaedra is innocent and pure (like in Sophocles) but still lustful and vindictive (as in the traditional legend)



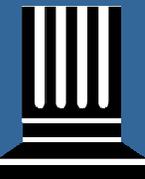
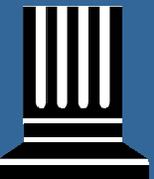


Euripides

Hippolytus



- Phaedra is innocent and pure, the way she was in Sophocles' *Phaedra*
- as opposed to the offensive presentation of her character in Euripides' first *Hippolytus (Veiled)*
- but she is also still lustful and vindictive, as she is in the traditional legend



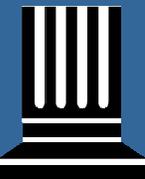
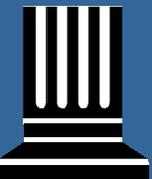


Euripides

Hippolytus



- so, by moving Phaedra's suicide to the middle of the play, Euripides has reconfigured both the plot and her character
- and he has made the story more effective as a drama by focusing on the psychology of Phaedra



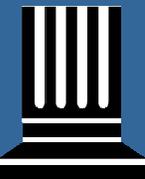
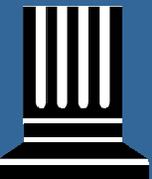


Euripides

Hippolytus



- Theseus curses Hippolytus by Poseidon without even hearing his son's defense
- when Hippolytus enters and sees Phaedra, he reacts with shock
- but his extreme innocence looks like a hypocritical rapist trying to cover his guilt



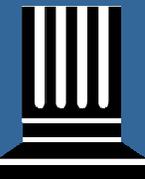
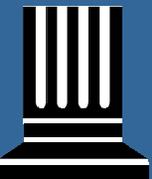


Euripides

Hippolytus



- Hippolytus and Theseus have an *agon*
- it's very close to a real courtroom scene because Hippolytus is trying to flee the charge of rape
- but he can't tell the full truth without breaking his oath to Artemis
- so he accepts his father's verdict



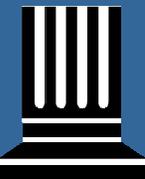
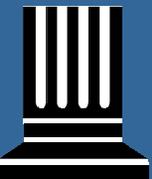


Euripides

Hippolytus



- Theseus adds the punishment of exile to the curse of Poseidon
- it hints that Theseus doesn't really believe that the god—his own father!—will live up to his promise
- note that Hippolytus is doomed to die, whether or not he escapes Theseus' charge



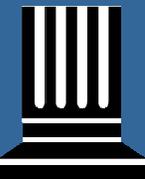
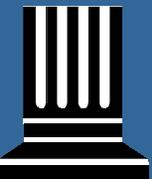


Euripides

Hippolytus



- a Messenger comes on to relate what happened to Hippolytus
- the appearance of the bull from the sea and the grisly chariot wreck that ensues is the equivalent of an action-sequence in a movie today
- or, better, it is Homeric in its narration of violence and gory detail



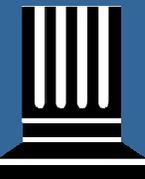
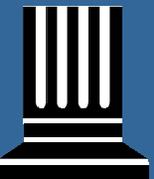


Euripides

Hippolytus



- finally, **Artemis** appears on the *mechane* and chastises Theseus for killing his son without real cause
- but she puts the real blame on Aphrodite who engineered Hippolytus' untimely end
- and she promises to kill in revenge one of Aphrodite's favorite (Adonis)





Euripides

Hippolytus

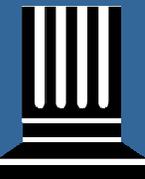
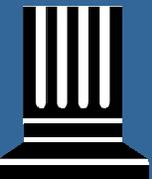


- Hippolytus is carried on dying
- he laments his fate —at some considerable length!
- Artemis leaves him rather coldly:

So farewell, for me it's uncustomary to look
upon the dead

And defile my face with the rattle of mortals dying.
I can see you're near that and bad off.

(Hippolytus 1437-39)





Euripides

Hippolytus

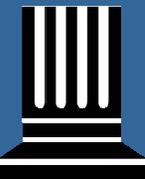
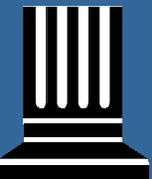


- Hippolytus retorts:

And farewell to you as you depart, holy maiden!
You leave a long alliance easily.

(Hippolytus 1440-1441)

- again, Euripides seems to be disparaging the gods by putting into Artemis' mouth such a flimsy excuse to leave the stage





Euripides

Hippolytus

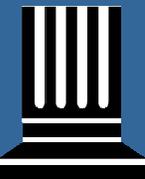
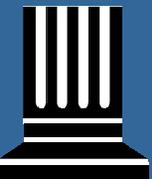


- in the final moments of the play, Hippolytus forgives his father, sort of:

Pray to heaven, Father, for *legitimate* sons like me!

(Hippolytus 1453)

- this scene stands outside the pillars of the goddesses
- in this play, it is the only completely “human” moment, uncontrolled by the gods



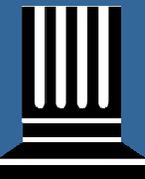
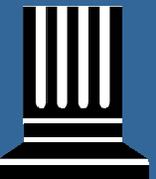


Euripides

The Structure of Greek Tragedy



- in *Hippolytus*, Euripides' major innovation to the myth was to move the suicide of Phaedra forward in the story
- in that way, her drastic emotional state reinforces her false accusation of rape
- it's an ingenious innovation which is based on more than mere ingenuity



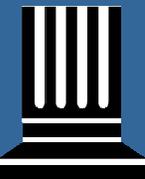
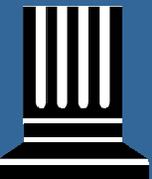


Euripides



The Structure of Greek Tragedy

- Euripides clearly understands the history and nature of storytelling as far back as Homer
- if you recall, Homer used “ring composition” (ABCDCBA) as a way of structuring his story





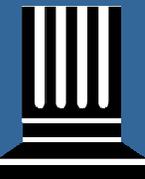
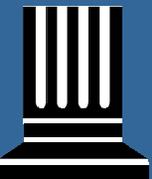
Euripides

The Structure of Greek Tragedy



Analysis of *The Iliad*, Book 1

- Prayer and Plague: Chryses invokes Apollo
 - **Council of Men**: Agamemnon and Achilles
 - Odysseus leaves to return Chryseis to Chryses
- **ACHILLES AND THETIS**
 - Odysseus delivers Chryseis to Chryses
 - **Council of Gods**: Zeus and Hera quarrel
- Feast and Joy: the Gods Party on Olympus





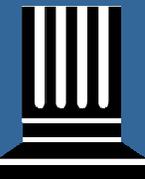
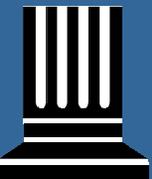
Euripides

The Structure of Greek Tragedy



Analysis of The Iliad, Book 1

Ring composition serves several purposes:





Euripides

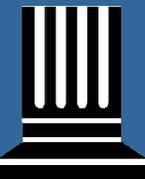
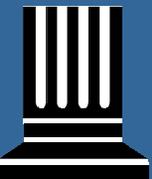
The Structure of Greek Tragedy



Analysis of *The Iliad*, Book 1

Ring composition serves several purposes:

- the symmetrical balance imitates nature and is artistically satisfying





Euripides

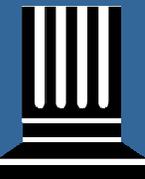
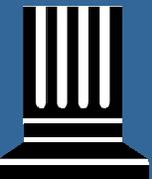
The Structure of Greek Tragedy



Analysis of *The Iliad*, Book 1

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- the return to A at the end of a section signals closure to the audience





Euripides

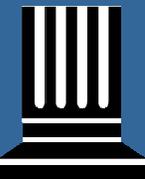
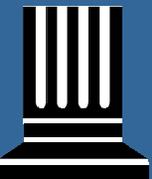
The Structure of Greek Tragedy



Analysis of *The Iliad*, Book 1

Ring composition serves several purposes:

- the symmetrical balance imitates nature and is artistically satisfying
- the return to A at the end of a section signals closure to the audience
- most important, by using ring composition, an oral poet can better remember where he is in the story



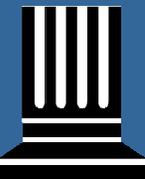
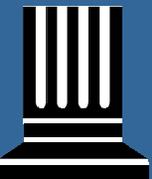


Euripides



The Structure of Greek Tragedy

- of course, tragedians have no need for mnemonic devices like ABCDCBA, because they are writing their plays, not composing them spontaneously in performance like oral poets
- but by the Classical age, Greek audiences are used to ring composition
- and balanced narrative structures are artistically satisfying



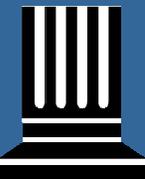
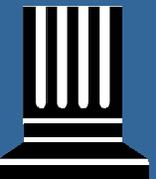


Euripides



The Structure of Greek Tragedy

- thus, there is ring composition visible in the structure of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*





Euripides

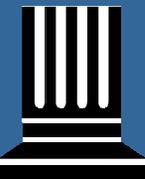
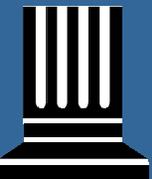


The Structure of Greek Tragedy

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- Aegisthus: Thyestes' Revenge





Euripides



The Structure of Greek Tragedy

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- Vengeance: Clyt's Recent Success in Argos

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Euripides



The Structure of Greek Tragedy

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- Vengeance: Ag's Recent Victory at Troy

- Clytemnestra and the Herald: The Past

- Clytemnestra and Cassandra: The Future

- Vengeance: Clyt's Recent Success in Argos

- Aegisthus: Thyestes' Revenge



Euripides



The Structure of Greek Tragedy

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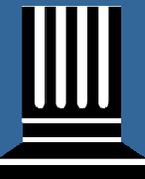
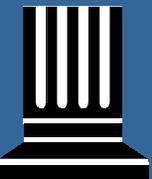
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AGAMEMNON AND CLYTEMNESTRA

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- Vengeance: Clyt's Recent Success in Argos

- Aegisthus: Thyestes' Revenge



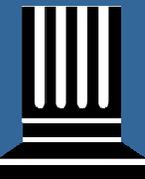
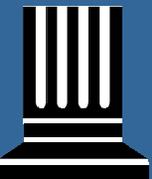


Euripides



The Structure of Greek Tragedy

- ring composition can also be seen in Euripides' *Hippolytus*
- but note that the plot is considerably more complex
 - more sections of actions (9 versus 7)
 - and sections have subsections of action, e.g.
 - Phaedra goes mad but does not confess
 - Phaedra goes mad again and does confess
 - Phaedra goes mad yet again and runs offstage threatening to kill herself





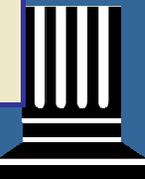
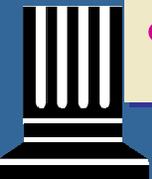
Euripides

The Structure of Greek Tragedy



- Aphrodite's Prologue: a. Goddesses at War b. H's Purity

- Artemis' Epilogue: a. Goddesses at War b. H's Death



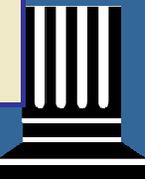
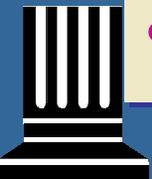


Euripides



The Structure of Greek Tragedy

- Aphrodite's Prologue: a. Goddesses at War b. H's Purity
 - Phaedra's Tragedy: Agon+Chorus+Messenger
 - Hippolytus' Tragedy: Agon+Chorus+Messenger
- Artemis' Epilogue: a. Goddesses at War b. H's Death



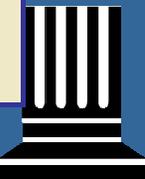
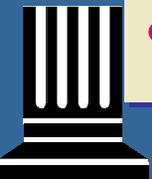


Euripides



The Structure of Greek Tragedy

- Aphrodite's Prologue: a. Goddesses at War b. H's Purity
 - Phaedra's Tragedy: Agon+Chorus+Messenger
 - First Curse: Hippolytus curses Women
 - Second Curse: Theseus curses Hippolytus
 - Hippolytus' Tragedy: Agon+Chorus+Messenger
- Artemis' Epilogue: a. Goddesses at War b. H's Death



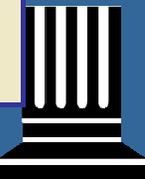
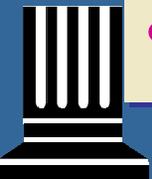


Euripides



The Structure of Greek Tragedy

- Aphrodite's Prologue: a. Goddesses at War b. H's Purity
 - Phaedra's Tragedy: Agon+Chorus+Messenger
 - First Curse: Hippolytus curses Women
 - Phaedra and Nurse (on stage): Phaedra's Fate
 - Phaedra and Nurse (off stage): Phaedra's Death
 - Second Curse: Theseus curses Hippolytus
 - Hippolytus' Tragedy: Agon+Chorus+Messenger
- Artemis' Epilogue: a. Goddesses at War b. H's Death



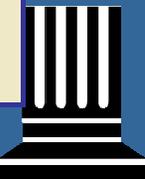
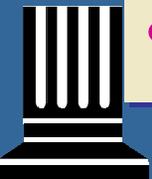


Euripides

The Structure of Greek Tragedy



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 - Phaedra's Tragedy: Agon+Chorus+Messenger
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 - ESCAPE ODE: Phaedra's Suicide**
 - Phaedra and Nurse (off stage): Phaedra's Death
 - Second Curse: Theseus curses Hippolytus
 - Hippolytus' Tragedy: Agon+Chorus+Messenger
- Artemis' Epilogue: a. Goddesses at War b. H's Death





Euripides



The Structure of Greek Tragedy

- clearly the tragedians are borrowing and building from Homeric epic
- yet they deploy the stories of the epic cycle in new ways
- and they use ring composition but as an aesthetic principle not a mnemonic device
- so there is more continuity than one might think between epic and drama

