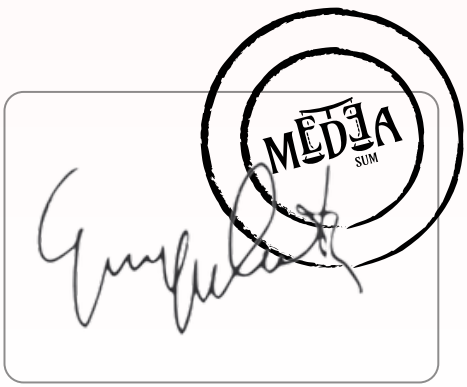
INVESTIGATION NOTEBOOK

EURIPIDES

IMPORTANT NOTES



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INVESTIGATION SHEET	
Character	
Number of items selected	

From the evidence file provided by Judge Ginsburg, we have selected the items listed in the table below.

This **investigation sheet** will enable us to easily locate the items that will help us establish our character's profile.

Evidence collection carried out by (Surname, First name):

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GATHERING OF EVIDENCE	
Item No.	**Relevance to our investigation / our subject**

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GATHERING EVIDENCE	
Item No.	**Relevance to our investigation / our character**

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TESTIMONIAL

Character Profile	

Based on the ‘character profile’ we have drawn up, and by trying to anticipate the questions that might be put to us by the opposing parties, we are writing a testimony for our character here.
This testimony aims to defend our character: exaggeration, downplaying, accusation, paraphrasing, irony… All means are permitted, **except lying**.

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MEDEA
SUM

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INTERVIEW

Person being interviewed	

QUESTIONS / ANSWERS

For each person we have met in connection with this case, we have recorded our questions and their answers here.

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INVESTIGATION
Notebook

Topic **EURIPIDE AND MEDEA**

Testimonies have been collected that allow us to explore the theme of "Euripides and Medea" in greater depth, in order to understand the context and arguments underlying the tragedy.

SECTION 1 *Euripides tells us about a Mater Terribilis*

In the spring of 431 BC, in Athens, the tragic competition of the Great Dionysia was won by Euphorion, son of Aeschylus. Second prize was awarded to Sophocles. The third and final prize, a consolation for having at least passed the initial selection of the three poets in the competition, went to Euripides, who had presented a trilogy that included Medea.
Euripides wrote this work based on an existing myth and a figure well known to the Athenians, Medea, but it seems that he "enriched" the story with important details! In fact, no source before Euripides explicitly alludes to intentional and violent action on the part of the mother, nor is the death of the children related to Medea's relationship with Jason.
These are some of the earlier versions of the myth:

- In the 8th century BC, the epic poet Eumelus of Corinth recounts that Medea's children died in a ritual performed by their mother with the aim of making them immortal. Medea did not want to kill the children, but to try to save them. When Jason discovered what had happened, he abandoned her and returned to Iolcus.
- According to Creophylus of Samos, it was the citizens of Corinth who killed Medea's children and then insidiously blamed the mother. The state had never accepted Medea and decided to let the children starve to death - other sources speak of lynching - simply because they were the children of a foreigner.

Euripides was well aware of all these narratives, but in his tragedy he tells a very different story, describing a mater terribilis, clouded by a thirst for revenge, and transforming the ritual killing of her children into premeditated murder.
Claudius Aelianus (2nd-3rd century AD) cites more than one testimony to support the claim that it was Euripides who attributed the role of infanticidal mother to Medea.
Among these testimonies is that of the polygraph of Preneste (170-235 AD), according to whom Euripides wrote the tragedy at the request of the Corinthians: they were the real culprits of the killing of the children and, thanks to the poet's skill, they wanted a lie to prevail over the truth.
Furthermore, the Alexandrian grammarian Parmeniscus (2nd-1st century BC) provides a curious detail: according to him, Euripides received five talents from the Corinthians for attributing the murder of her children to Medea; instead, they had been killed by the Corinthians, exasperated by the fact that a foreign sorceress ruled the city.

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SECTION 1 *Euripides tells us about a Mater Terribilis*

According to Pausanias, Medea did not kill her children, but rather the Corinthians did, because the children had brought Creusa the incendiary gifts of their mother, namely a poisoned crown and peplos.

Historians' interest in Euripides' modifications to the myth was linked to critical and literary reasons: the aim was to verify Euripides' poetics in the light of Aristotle's theory that myths cannot be altered and that it is the poet's task to find plots and know how to present those handed down well (“Commentary on Euripides” Medea', Gennaro Tedeschi, University of Trieste, 2010).

In conclusion, it seems that it is “Euripides” fault' that Medea became the terrible murderer capable of any deed, as tradition tells us.

‘If we do not want to believe the reports of Aelian and Parmeniscus, according to whom Euripides composed the tragedy at the request and for the remuneration of the Corinthians in order to place the blame for the crime on Medea and free themselves from the infamous accusation, then we can think that it was Euripides himself who introduced this formidable and highly provocative variation, skilfully manipulating the traditional material, especially in comparing civilisation and barbarism and addressing the themes of “the other” and “the exile”.’ formidable and highly provocative, skilfully manipulating the traditional material, especially in contrasting civilisation and barbarism, in addressing the themes of “the other”, the exile, the outcast from society. Euripides' tragic poetry creates a new myth, destined to span the centuries, the myth of the mater terribilis'' (Maria Grazia Ciani).
Perhaps Euripides was only interested in creating a memorable character: infanticide would have caused a scandal and brought a certain fame to the tragedy.

MEDEA SUM

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SECTION 2 *Medea, emblem of a society*

MEDEA, FOREIGN WOMAN

Euripides therefore uses Medea as the protagonist of his tragedy to bring to light the tensions, injustices and dilemmas of his era, without offering simple answers, but stimulating reflection on the human and social condition.
First of all, Medea, born in distant and unknown Asia Minor, is a "barbarian" to the Greeks. The Greeks care little that she gave up her position as princess of Colchis for Jason.

Jason also suffers from the burden of being "the husband of a barbarian woman". In fact, he claims that "no Greek woman would have dared so much" (vv. 1339-40).

When Creon promises him Glauce as his bride, he sees a way to reclaim his identity as a Greek man: marriage to Creusa would restore his prestige.
Euripides knows that the Greeks harbour prejudices and fears of difference towards Medea, even though Athens proclaims itself a free and democratic city... The right conditions exist to create a work "that will provoke discussion".

MEDEA, A REBELLIOUS WOMAN IN A PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY

The condition and social status of women in ancient Greece was marked by a strong patriarchy and, in some cases, misogyny. Although this condition varied from polis to polis, some elements remained constant. In particular, women had to submit to the authority of their husbands and the state. Their main function was to bear "legitimate children" and manage the home and property, which remained the property of their husbands.

Euripides expressed the misogynistic Greek view when he stated that women were "incapable, by nature, of doing good, but highly skilled in every kind of evil".

Medea is a foreign woman repudiated by her husband, a woman betrayed and humiliated; Euripides brings out in Medea's words a deep awareness of the condition of inferiority and subordination that the male-dominated Athenian society assigns to women in relation to men. Euripides is not a precursor of feminism; it would be an anachronism to consider him as such, interpreting him according to categories that did not exist at the time. Simply put, in his tragedies, Euripides wants to encourage his audience to question new and different issues, using themes that are familiar and close to the common sentiment, morals, social customs, and ideological and political beliefs of his time.

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SECTION 2 *Medea, emblem of a society*

Andrew Messing, PhD from Harvard University, believes that Euripides capitalises on the social anxieties of an entirely male audience regarding the emancipation of women. Specifically, although the narrative of Medea seems at first glance to elicit sympathy and empathy for such a strong and resolute character, this very strength and determination are nothing more than a dramatic device to emphasise the contrast between her and Greek patriarchal culture, resulting in a deep sense of distrust towards the protagonist and the re-legitimisation of the macho desire that women must be controlled.

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SECTION 3 *It was left to posterity to judge...*

Euripides attracted attention, but he was not unconditionally appreciated by his contemporaries (in fact, he came last in the competition of 431).
Although he did not achieve the desired consensus among the general Athenian public, the tragedian managed to win the sympathy of young people educated at the school of the Sophists, who ideally elected him their favourite poet.
The lack of success of the first performance of Medea was largely offset by undoubted fortune, as can be seen from the influence it exerted on the works of other authors. Euripides' tragedies, which were most likely published at the same time as their theatrical performances, enjoyed considerable success only after the author's death, particularly from 386 BC onwards, when the practice of staging the work of one of the three tragedians was introduced at the Great Dionysia.

Despite its lukewarm debut, Medea became one of Euripides' most widely read and studied tragedies.

In the Hellenistic and Roman periods, Euripides' tragedy entered the school canon and was frequently quoted and imitated.
In the Middle Ages, it was known mainly through Latin sources.
In the modern age, the works of the following authors, among others, are noteworthy:

- Corneille, Anouille, Racine (indirect influences)
- Grillparzer (according to M.R. Cornacchia, “a true crossroads between ancient and modern, because he gives subsequent literature the image of an unhappy exile, an isolated migrant discriminated against for her diversity, a diversity that does not stem from her faults, but becomes the cause of them”)
- Pasolini (film Medea, 1969)

In the contemporary age:

- Wolfe
- Alvaro
- Lars Von Trier

In European literature, Medea has been and still is a figure capable of stimulating artistic productions and anthropological and social reflections, as a symbol of highly topical issues (the condition of women, otherness, power, revenge).
While Euripides' Medea undoubtedly belongs to the category of “unforgettable classics”, not all of the numerous other versions of the myth have enjoyed similar success, even though they constitute the fertile ground on which the symbolism of the character has developed and been enriched.

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SEZIONE 4 *Euripide e il suo tempo*

Euripide visse in un clima di trasformazioni, tra tensioni politiche e culturali, di cui restano palesi riferimenti nella sua produzione teatrale. Nella tragedia Medea, oltre a molteplici allusioni agli avvenimenti contemporanei, sono palesi ad esempio:

- l'elogio della μετριότης (moderazione, equilibrio, giusto mezzo, una virtù cruciale per la saggezza), e dell'ἰσότης (uguaglianza, parità, equità) declamato dalla nutrice,
- l'esaltazione di Atene cantata dal Coro, che ci testimonia la sua profonda adesione alla concezione periclea della polis,
- gli interventi di Medea sulle questioni relative alla condizione della donna e dei sapienti sostenitori di nuove dottrine.

I continui riferimenti alla società del suo tempo mettono in evidenza quanto fosse immerso nella realtà politica, culturale e sociale, e con quale sensibilità reagisse ai mutamenti che avvenivano all'interno della polis. Euripide quindi contribuí attivamente alla messa in discussione dei valori tradizionali con strumenti a lui peculiari.

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EVIDENCE: EUR_0001_EN	
Title	Prologue
Subtitle	The Nurse explains the reason for Medea's pain.
Author	Euripides
Date / Historical era	Ancient
Theme(s)	Justice and revenge
Character(s)	The Nurse
Translation	Automatic translation generated using an AI-based tool and edited by the project team. This translation is provided for educational and non-commercial purposes.

Excerpt

Nurse

How I wish that the ship named Argo had never sailed towards Colchis! Medea would never have sailed towards the towers of Iolcus, madly in love with Jason!
Now everything has turned to hostility, and things are going badly, because Jason has betrayed his children and my mistress, choosing to take a princess as his bride, while Medea, his poor wife, stripped of her honor, appeals to the oaths made and recalls the strong promise of fidelity and loyalty she made to Jason, giving him her right hand.

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She lies fasting, abandoning her body to pain, consumed by tears since she learned that she had been treated without honor by her husband, never raising her eyes or her face from the ground.

Now that she hates her children and feels no joy in seeing them, I fear she is planning something unheard of; for her spirit is violent, and she will not tolerate the outrage: I know her, and I fear her.

She is a fearsome woman; whoever her enemy may be, he will not easily prevail over her.

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EVIDENCE: EUR_0002_EN	
Title	Anapestic verse introducing the Parodo and Parodo
Subtitle	Medea, overwhelmed by grief and humiliation, is in the grip of madness and invokes death to find peace.
Author	Euripides
Date / Historical era	Classic
Theme(s)	Medea recognizes that her actions against her homeland and her family to help Jason are the cause of her misfortune.
Character(s)	Medea
Translation	Automatic translation generated using an AI-based tool and edited by the project team. This translation is provided for educational and non-commercial purposes.

Excerpt

Medea

I have begun to suffer, wretched woman, I have begun to suffer pains worthy
of great lamentation: O cursed
children of a hateful mother, may you die
with your father, and may the whole house go to ruin.
May a flame from heaven pass through my head;
what advantage is there for me in living any longer?
I would like to find peace in death,

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leaving behind a hateful life.
O father, O city, from which I fled
in shame, killing my brother.

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EVIDENCE: EUR_0003_EN	
Title	Anapestic verse introducing the Parodo and Parodo
Subtitle	Jason wounds Medea with harsh words of ingratitude
Author	Euripides
Date / Historical era	Antiquity
Theme(s)	Gender stereotypes and patriarchy; Divinity and fate
Character(s)	Jason
Translation	Automatic translation generated using an AI-based tool and edited by the project team. This translation is provided for educational and non-commercial purposes.

Excerpt

Jason

I, since you exaggerate the gratitude due to her too much,
believe that Cypris is among the gods and men
the only savior of my maritime enterprise.
You have a subtle mind; but for you it is hateful
to say that Eros forced you
with inevitable arrows to save my body.
(...)
I will show you first that I am wise,
then sensible, and also a great friend

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to you and my children; but stay calm.

(...)

It would indeed be necessary for men to beget children from somewhere else

and for the female race not to exist:

and thus there would be no evil for men.

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EVIDENCE: EUR_0004_IT	
Title	Third episode
Subtitle	Medea is plagued by doubts about her plan to kill her children.
Author	Euripides
Date / Historical era	Antiquity
Theme(s)	Motherhood & Filicide
Character(s)	Medea
Translation	Automatic translation generated using an AI-based tool and edited by the project team. This translation is provided for educational and non-commercial purposes.

Excerpt

Medea

I burst into tears at the thought of what I must do
I will kill my own children
there is no one who will take them away from me
and after completely destroying Jason's house,
I will leave this land (...)
Indeed, it is unbearable to be mocked by enemies, friends (...)
But why are you looking at me with those eyes, my children?
Why are you smiling at me with the last of all smiles? (...)
No, I could never do it. Farewell to my earlier intentions.

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I will take my children away from this land. They are mine.
Why should I bring twice the pain upon myself
just to afflict their father with this sorrow? (...)
But what is happening to me? Do I want to expose myself to ridicule by leaving my enemies unpunished? (...)
Let no one think me an ordinary, weak woman,
nor meek, but (...)
violent towards my enemies and benevolent towards my friends;
for the lives of such people are full of glory.
For the avenging underworld of Hades,
this will never happen, that I leave
my children to my enemies to mistreat them.
It is necessary that they die: and since it must happen
I will kill them myself, I who gave birth to them.

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EVIDENCE: EUR_0005_EN	
Title	II scene (vv. 316-324; 347-354)
Subtitle	Creon decrees exile for Medea, then, persuaded by her, grants her one more day in Corinth.
Author	Euripides
Date / Historical era	Classico
Theme(s)	Exile
Character(s)	Creon
Translation	Automatic translation generated using an AI-based tool and edited by the project team. This translation is provided for educational and non-commercial purposes.

Excerpt

Creon

Your words sound gentle, but inside I
am afraid: you are plotting some deception.
I trust you even less than before.
It is easier to guard against a woman or a man
ready to fly into a rage than against a prudent person who does not reveal their feelings.
Leave, quickly and without saying another word:
our decision is already final, and your tricks
will not save you; you will not be able to stay here: you are my enemy.

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(...)

I am not a tyrant

and I have often paid dearly for my mercy.

Even now I know I am wrong, but that's all right:

you will get what you ask for. But I warn you:

if tomorrow's light finds you

and your children within the borders of this land,

you will die.

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EVIDENCE: EUR_0006_EN	
Title	III Scene (vv. 356-364)
Subtitle	The Chorus reports on the state in which it saw Medea and comments on her condemnation to exile.
Author	Euripides
Date / Historical era	Classic
Theme(s)	Medea's Pain – Fate – Exile
Character(s)	Chorus - Medea
Translation	Automatic translation generated using an AI-based tool and edited by the project team. This translation is provided for educational and non-commercial purposes.

Excerpt

Chorus

I heard her shrill cries of pain,
her shrill,
heart-rending lamentations
against her wicked husband, who had betrayed her in her bed.
A victim of injustice, she invoked Themis
minister of Zeus, guardian of oaths.
Themis urged her to come to Greece
beyond her homeland,
at night, across the waves,

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towards the bitter strait, difficult to cross.

(...)

But how much pain must you endure, poor wretch!

And where will you go now? Who will take you in?

Are you sure you will find a home, a country that will protect you from misfortune?

A god has plunged you

into a stormy sea of calamity, with no way out.

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EVIDENCE: EUR_0007_EN	
Title	Fifth episode
Subtitle	The pedagogue informs them that the children will be able to stay with their father and his new wife, and that they are safe from exile.
Author	Euripides
Date / Historical era	Antiquity
Theme(s)	Exil
Character(s)	Pedagogue
Translation	Automatic translation generated using an AI-based tool and edited by the project team. This translation is provided for educational and non-commercial purposes.

Excerpt

Pedagogue

Mistress, these children of yours are free from exile,
and the royal bride has gladly received the gifts
in her hands: on that side there is peace for your children.
Oh! Why are you troubled when you are successful?
This is not in keeping with what has been announced.
(...)
Take courage: you too will return home in the future, with the help of your children.
You are certainly not the only one who has been separated from your children:

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mortals must bear misfortunes lightly.

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EVIDENCE: EUR_0008_EN	
Title	Fifth stasimon
Subtitle	The messenger informs Medea that Creusa and Creon are dead.
Author	Euripides
Date / Historical era	Classic
Theme(s)	Hubris & Excessive Passion
Character(s)	Messenger
Translation	Automatic translation generated using an AI-based tool and edited by the project team. This translation is provided for educational and non-commercial purposes.

Extract

Messenger

Oh you, who have committed a terrible act contrary to every law,
Medea, flee, fleeing, leaving behind
neither a sea vessel nor a chariot that treads the ground.
What has happened to me that I deserve this flight?
The royal princess and Creon, who begot her, have just died, because of your poisons.
(...)
Think straight and do not go mad, woman,
you who, after destroying your masters' hearth,

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rejoice at hearing such horrors and are not afraid?

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EVIDENCE: EUR_0009_EN	
Title	Fifth episode
Subtitle	Medea rejoices at the messenger's words recounting the deaths of Creusa and Creon.
Author	Euripides
Date / Historical era	Classic
Theme(s)	Hubris & Excessive Passion
Character(s)	Medea
Translation	Automatic translation generated using an AI-based tool and edited by the project team. This translation is provided for educational and non-commercial purposes.

Excerpt

Medea

But don't be in a hurry, my friend,
and tell me: how did they die? In fact, you would make me happy
twice over if they died in a horrible manner.

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EVIDENCE: EUR_0010_EN	
Title	Prologue (vv. 83-118)
Subtitle	The Nurse reflects about Jason's role as husband and father
Author	Euripides
Date / Historical era	Classic
Theme(s)	Hubris & Excessive Passion
Character(s)	Nurse – Children - Jason
Translation	Automatic translation generated using an AI-based tool and edited by the project team. This translation is provided for educational and non-commercial purposes.

Excerpt

Nurse (to the Pedagogue): “O children, do you hear how your father treats you? May he go to hell, perhaps not: for he is my master; nevertheless, it is proven that he is truly infamous towards his loved ones.”

(...)

Nurse (to Medea): Alas, alas, poor wretch. In what way do you think the children share their father's guilt? Why do you hate them? Alas, children, how distressed I am for fear that you may suffer something!"

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EVIDENCE: EUR_0011_EN	
Title	Parodo (vv. 180-189)
Subtitle	The Chorus invites the Nurse to reason with Medea once again.
Author	Euripides
Date / Historical era	Classic
Theme(s)	Hubris & Excessive Passion
Character(s)	Nurse – Chorus - Medea
Translation	Automatic translation generated using an AI-based tool and edited by the project team. This translation is provided for educational and non-commercial purposes.

Excerpt

Chorus: “Go and lead her out of the house: speak to her in a human voice and tell her that there is friendship here too, hurrying, before she does something bad to those inside: for this pain is unleashed with great force.”

Nurse: “I will do so; but I fear I will not persuade my mistress; however, I will add this difficult favor. It is certain that she casts beastly glances at the servants, like a lioness who has just given birth, when someone approaches her to speak to her.”

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EVIDENCE: EUR_0012_EN	
Scene	Fifth stasimon (from 1144)
Subtitle	The messenger recounts Creusa's reaction to the arrival of her sons and Jason's mediation to save them from exile.
Author	Euripides
Date	Classic
Topic(s)	Betrayal and infidelity - Revenge
Character(s)	Messenger – Creusa – Jason
Translation	Automatic translation generated using an AI-based tool and edited by the project team. This translation is provided for educational and non-commercial purposes.

Excerpt

Messenger

"The mistress we now honor in your place,
before seeing your two children,
kept her passionate gaze fixed on Jason;
but then she covered her eyes
and turned her white cheek away,
feeling disgust at the children's entrance. Then your husband
tried to dispel the girl's anger and rage
by saying these words: 'Will you not be kind to those who are your friends,

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and put an end to your resentment, and turn your head again,
considering your husband's friends as your own,
and you will accept the gifts and ask your father
to pardon these children's exile for my sake? ‘
And she, as she turned her gaze to the ornaments, could not restrain herself,
but promised everything to her husband (...)’

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EVIDENCE: EUR_0013_EN	
Scene	Fifth stasimon (from 1186)
Subtitle	The messenger describes to Medea the agonizing death of Creusa and Creon.
Author	Euripides
Date	Classic
Topic(s)	Betrayal and infidelity - Revenge
Character(s)	Messenger – Creusa – Creon
Translation	Automatic translation generated using an AI-based tool and edited by the project team. This translation is provided for educational and non-commercial purposes.

Excerpt

Messenger

(Creusa) took the colorful peplos and put it on
(...) From that moment on, however, there was a terrible sight to behold
(...) the golden wreath placed around her head
emanated a strange torrent of voracious fire,
(...) the thin peplos, a gift from your sons,
devoured the white flesh of the unfortunate woman.
(...) a frightening sight. Everyone was afraid to touch
the corpse: (...)
Her father (...) threw himself on the corpse.

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(...) and, wrapping his arms around her,
kisses her (...)
remained attached to the thin peplos, (...)
He wanted to lift her knee,
but it held him back; if he pulled with force,
he would tear the old flesh from the bones.
In the end, the unfortunate man gave up and died
(...) The daughter and her old father lie dead.
(...) It seems that on this day the god has rightly brought
many evils upon Jason.

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EVIDENCE: EUR_00014_EN	
Title	VV 1350-1360
Subtitle	Medea justifies her revenge to Jason
Author	Euripides
Date / Historical era	Classico
Theme(s)	Revenge
Character(s)	Medea, Jason
Translation	Automatic translation generated using an AI-based tool and edited by the project team. This translation is provided for educational and non-commercial purposes.

Excerpt

Medea

I could prolong this discourse at length, if Father Zeus did not know what I have done to you and what you have done to me. After dishonoring my bed, you should not have been able to live a pleasant life, mocking me; neither your royal wife nor Creon, who arranged your marriage, could have driven me from this land without suffering harm. So, call me a lioness, if you will, and Scylla, who dwells on the Tyrrhenian soil. I have inflicted the appropriate retribution on your heart.

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EVIDENCE: PAV_0001_EN	
Title	The Argonauts
Subtitle	Jason, now old, remembers Medea while talking to Melita, a nymph priestess at the temple of Aphrodite.
Author	Euripides
Date / Historical era	Modern
Theme(s)	Betrayal and infidelity - Motherhood
Character(s)	Jason
Translation	Automatic translation generated using an AI-based tool and edited by the project team. This translation is provided for educational and non-commercial purposes.

Excerpt

Jason

We sailed the sea, destroyed monsters, set foot on the meadows of Colchis — a cloud of gold sparkled in the forest — yet we each died by the hand of a sorceress, each by the spell or passion of a sorceress. The head of one of us ended up torn and crushed in a river. And someone is now old — and speaks to you — who saw his children sacrificed by their furious mother.

Melita

They say she is not dead, sir, that her spells have conquered death.

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Jason

It is her destiny, and I do not envy her. She breathed death and spread it. Perhaps she has returned to her homes.

Mélita

But how could she have touched her children? She must have cried a lot...

Jason

I never saw her cry. Medea did not cry. She only smiled that day when she said she would follow me.

Mélita

Yet she followed you, King Jason, she left her homeland and her homes, and accepted her fate. You were cruel as a young man, too.

Jason

I was young, Mélita. And in those days no one laughed at me. But I did not yet know that wisdom is yours, that of the temple, and I asked the goddess for impossible things. And what was impossible for us, destroyers of the dragon, lords of the golden cloud? One does evil to be great, to be gods.

Mélita

And why is your victim always a woman?

Jason

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Little Mélita, you are of the temple. And don't you know that in the temple — in yours — a man ascends to be a god for at least a day, at least an hour, to lie with you as if you were the goddess? A man always demands to lie with her — then he realises that he was dealing with mortal flesh, with the poor woman that you are and that they all are. And then he rages — he seeks elsewhere to be a god.

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