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Between Lions and Men:
**The Metaphoric Association of Women and Animals in
the Literature and Art of Archaic and Classical Greece**

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Abstract

Ancient Greek literature and art frequently created metaphorical associations between women and animals. This association has not been studied in the scholarship in great depth and breadth, although research on aspects of this metaphor do exist. The purpose of this thesis is to examine how the “woman as animal” metaphor was portrayed: across a wide range of literary sources which compare female characters to animals, artistic representations which closely associate women with animals, and mythological narratives from the archaic and classical periods of Greece. Each point of comparison which is drawn between a woman and an animal is considered within the context of its genre, chronological developments, and its relation to similar comparisons. A wide sampling of extant evidence indicates that the “woman as animal” metaphor is adapted and developed for different media and genres, but remains a coherent cultural theme from the Homeric epics through to the literature, art and mythology of the archaic and classical periods. This thesis argues that the representations of women as animalistic were primarily concerned with the transition that young women would have undergone between girlhood and motherhood, although mature women who are not under the control of a husband could also be understood as animalistic. Moreover, the “woman as animal” association is closely connected to the “courtship as hunting” cultural metaphor.

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Notes

All translations are my own, unless otherwise stated.

Greek spelling is used throughout except for conventional anomalies, such as text titles and writers which are more commonly known by the Latinized forms (for instance, *Bacchae* rather than *Bakkhai*).

All dates should be taken as B.C. unless otherwise stated.

Abbreviations used:

ABV: Beazley, J. D. (1956). *Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painters*. New York: Hacker Art Books.

BAPD: Beazley Archive Pottery Database (<http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/pottery/>)

LIMC: *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*

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Introduction

It is clear in the literary and artistic records of ancient Greece that animals were considered a culturally accepted metaphor for women. However, despite an assumption of this association between women and animals in the scholarship, this phenomenon is rarely explored or explained in any great depth.¹ While the similes and metaphors of specific texts or particular animals may be discussed, the cultural metaphor as a whole is seldom addressed. This thesis will examine the literary and artistic records which represent women as animalistic in an attempt to determine how the cultural metaphor of 'woman as animal' was expressed.² Due to the word-count and time limitations of the thesis, it would not be possible to undertake a comprehensive study of all extant material which represents women with any kind of animal association, and so a sampling of literary texts and artistic representations from the archaic and classical periods will be discussed with reference to other works which portray similar or contrasting ideas of women as animalistic. The thesis will also be confined to sources which represent women as metaphorically animalistic, and so some obvious female figures who are otherwise closely connected to animals but are not themselves represented as animalistic, such as Kirke in the *Odyssey*, are not discussed except by

¹ One such study is that of Reeder (1995), who briefly outlines some expressions of the "woman as wild animal" metaphor, and includes short discussions on the *arkteia*, erotic pursuit scenes, and some relevant mythological figures. However, the art-based chapter has some limitations in the generalisations required for the short articles and artistic analyses. More recently, but also in a more specialised study, Bettini 2013 considers the role of the weasel in ancient Greek and Roman birth mythologies, although also acknowledging the enduring animalisation and symbolism through to modern times, "as when we tell children about 'the birds and the bees' or explain that 'the stork brings babies.' ... childbirth is one of those embarrassing topics that inspire all kinds of evasive manoeuvres and stories." (pp.140-141).

² Franco's study of the dog in ancient Greece (2014) was greatly informative as a model for investigation into the "cultural encyclopaedia" which would have informed the responses a text might have elicited from the culture by and for which it was produced. The problem of assuming that sources which span significant temporal and geographical distances represent a "Greek community" is acknowledged by Franco, and this study will follow her approach of considering this a necessary generalisation which allows for an approximation of the shared cultural background throughout Greece in the archaic and classical periods which would have informed the extant literary and artistic sources (Franco's theory and methodology is explained pp.161-184; see especially pp.164-5).

comparison. While this study cannot offer an exhaustive account of all associations between women and animals, it will highlight consistencies and developments throughout time and genre in an attempt to reconstruct recurring cultural themes which emerge from a considered sampling of the extant record. It will be argued that the woman-as-animalistic metaphor can be interpreted as expressing the perceived wildness of girls which should be tamed once they mature and become mothers, although women who are outside of male control may also be described in animal terms. Frequently *parthenoi* are described with animal comparisons, but mature women who may be mothers can also be described as animalistic if they are not under the control of their husband. This may be through subverting the ideal role of a passive and obedient wife, for instance, Klytemnestra's affair and murder of Agamemnon, or simply a wife in the absence of her husband, such as Penelope before Odysseus' return. The concentration of animal metaphors around the time in a young woman's life when she would first encounter sexuality and motherhood, or in a mature woman's life when she has not taken the socially appropriate role of a mother, appears to indicate an othering and animalising of femininity without masculine control.

Chapter One will consider how animal metaphors are used for female characters in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Helen's claim to be a dog or dog-eyed which occurs three times across both epics will be considered, as well as the curious application of a lion simile for Penelope in the *Odyssey* and how this is connected to other lion similes as used for male warriors in the *Iliad*. Chapter Two examines how animal metaphors are used in lyric poetry of the archaic period. It begins by exploring whether Semonides' *Lamb on Women* presents a metaphorical picture of women applicable to other lyric texts; the development of this genre from the epic genre allows for more diversity of animal metaphors, although precise meanings of such comparisons are more difficult to establish. Literary metaphors comparing women and animals are continued in Chapter Three, which will consider tragedy with particular reference to Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and Euripides' *Bacchae*. The rich animal

imagery used by Aeschylus creates diverse and appropriate characterisation for the three significant female characters of the play, Klytemnestra, Iphigeneia, and Cassandra, while consistencies with the earlier tradition can still be seen. The *Bacchae* also represents women with animal metaphors which are established in the earlier literary traditions, but presents the women as also being literally part of the natural world. Chapter Four will look at the representation of maenads in pottery painting.³ The frequent representation of these women with wild animals such as snakes can be understood as symbolism for their animalistic behaviour which is also expressed through their violence towards other animals. Chapter Five considers the evidence for the *arkteia* festival and, assuming that it did occur as a ritual in which girls would 'act' or 'be' a bear at some point before marriage, it may provide historical evidence to reinforce the literary and artistic metaphors that imagine young women as animalistic. In Chapter Six, the body of mythic traditions which describe women going through a metamorphosis into an animal will be examined. These animal transformations can be associated with the transition between virginity and motherhood for young women, with the metamorphoses usually occurring either just prior to or following first sexual experience or marriage of a *parthenos*. The final chapter, Chapter Seven, will consider the cultural metaphor of courtship as a hunt. Women are consistently represented as prey animals in this metaphor, as expressed throughout both literature and art, while men in the same metaphorical descriptions remain human and take a hunting role. This is a specifically gendered phenomenon as the homosexual expressions of the 'courtship as hunting' metaphor are far less explicit than the heterosexual counterparts.

³ *ABV* references are generally not provided in pottery referencing because they are included in the BAPD entries where relevant.

Chapter One

Animal Metaphors in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*

While animal similes and other metaphoric associations of characters with animals are by no means exclusive to women, reading the various instances of how similes are applied to women is likely to provide insight within the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, but also for later texts for which the Homeric tradition would have proved formative, such as lyric poetry and tragedy. While the main commonality of these similes in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is the application to female characters, this method follows Ready's claim that when reading series of similes, we need not limit ourselves to those that have the same vehicle.⁴ Several significant similes which compare female characters to various animals will be discussed along with commonalities in the application of animal similes to women. Animals which are used for significant metaphors and similes include dogs, lions, and birds. It emerges that animal similes are generally used to display vulnerability of female characters, even when offset by the characterisation of strength or power in the same character elsewhere in the texts. Animal similes are also not usually employed for positive characterisation when they are applied to women.

Dogs

The first metaphorical association between a female character and an animal to be discussed is that of three instances throughout the epics in which Helen refers to herself as a dog.⁵ All three of these are passing references in which Helen briefly employs a metaphor to compare herself to a dog and

⁴ Ready 2011 p.261. Ready follows Richards (1936) in distinguishing between the subject of the simile (the tenor) and the comparison (the vehicle).

⁵ *Iliad* 3.180, *Iliad* 6.344, *Odyssey* 4.145-46.

then continues with her speech. Both *Iliad* 3.180 and *Odyssey* 4.145 use κυνώπιδος (dog-eyed), while in *Iliad* 6.344 simply κύων (dog) is employed. Helen's use of the dog metaphor is unusual in that it is a character-spoken and self-directed description. It is uncommon for similes to be used in speech in the epics, and Ready suggests that the use of similes in speech is a method for heroes to distinguish themselves as speakers in verbal competition.⁶ While Helen is clearly not attempting to distinguish herself as a clever speaker, her use of a simile for self-description does seem to be employed by the poet in order for her to distinguish herself from others, albeit in a self-deprecatory way. It is also comparable to the instance in the *Odyssey* where Penelope compares herself to a nightingale, in which the comparison serves to emphasise her indecision and loneliness, and therefore also serves to set her apart.⁷

How Helen is like a dog is not obvious. The meaning of dogs is not inherently straightforward in this context, and is further complicated by the dog-eyed variant. The role of this metaphor as applied to Helen is difficult to fully understand since it is unique in several regards. Within a thorough examination of *dog* as an insult in Greek society, Franco states that the insult functioned within a wide range of contexts without favouring any trait or characteristic in particular, and therefore it is never clear what the insult was supposed to denote.⁸ While "dog" as an insult is used elsewhere in the epics,⁹ it is not a self-inflicted insult for any other character. Often the shamelessness of dogs is connected to Helen's departure from her husband, but the role of dogs in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is far more varied than a lack of sexual shame and in fact carries rather ambiguous connotations.¹⁰

⁶ Ready 2011, eps. p.86, 261. For instance, Achilles' claim that agreements cannot be reached between lions and men, or wolves and sheep (*Iliad* 22.262-66) which implies a great distinction between himself and Hektor, placing himself in a predatory position and Hektor as prey in the metaphor.

⁷ *Odyssey* 19.518-24.

⁸ Franco 2014, esp. p.10.

⁹ For a comparable example: Achilles calls Agamemnon "dog-faced" *Iliad* 1.159, 1.225.

¹⁰ For example, Jones' commentary on the *Iliad* states that at 3.180 Helen "calls herself a slut/whore" as a non-literal translation κυνώπις (dog-eyed) (2003, p.90). See also Franco 2014 p.9.

Throughout the *Iliad*, dogs are frequently evoked as a threat to warriors' bodies through battlefield scavenging, however this characteristic has no obvious relevance to Helen. The greed of dogs is also alluded to, such as in the first book of the *Iliad* where Achilles calls Agamemnon dog-eyed for his threat to claim Briseis.¹¹ The application of the term dog-eyed to a character who is being accused of material and sexual greed is perhaps comparable to Helen's self-directed description when she herself has been the subject of dispute between two men. However, the parallel is not perfect: to Achilles, Agamemnon is dog-eyed for taking Briseis in jealousy; whereas Helen considers herself to be dog-eyed for leaving her husband. In both cases, the fault is a disregard for previously established relationships. Kirk also suggests that while 'dog-eyed' is a violent term, it is perhaps not as bad when applied to a woman as when it is used for a man.¹²

Yet dogs in Homer do not carry exclusively negative associations. Indeed, one of the most memorable dog-related instances is that of Odysseus' old hunting dog instantly recognising him when no other characters do.¹³ In this scene it is the enduring loyalty of Argos despite being neglected in Odysseus' absence that is the primary canine characteristic. It is worth noting that the three instances during which Helen calls herself a dog occur when she is lamenting that the war has happened for her sake, and even when she misses Menelaus or insults Paris.¹⁴ These scenes could be read as a display of loyalty to her former husband and regret for following Paris to Troy; possibly the dog-like characteristic is similar to the enduring decades-long loyalty of Argos to Odysseus. However due to the overwhelming other use of "dog" as an insult, if this characteristic is at all

¹¹ *Iliad* 1.49-60.

¹² Kirk 1985 p.290. Kirk's suggestion is based on a comparison between the word as applied to Achilles and Helen in the above metaphors (*Iliad* 1.49-60 and 3.180, and also 18.396). This assumption that the insult would be lessened when applied for a woman may be understating the extent to which Helen intends her description to be, as her meaning is difficult to infer.

¹³ *Odyssey* 17.290-327.

¹⁴ *Iliad* 3.180, *Iliad* 6.344, *Odyssey* 4.145-46.

implied, it is likely a minor aspect.¹⁵ The possible relevance of loyalty as a characteristic of a dog which may be drawn from Argos is also minimised by Priam's fears that once he is dead he will be eaten by his own dogs, indicating no assumption of loyalty from his dogs at all.¹⁶

To be called a dog is therefore not exclusive to Helen, and there are two related instances where goddesses are called "dogflies" in book 21 of the *Iliad*. This use of dogfly is applied to Athena by Ares,¹⁷ and to Aphrodite by Hera.¹⁸ As both instances occur in close proximity to each other in the text, and are both applied to goddesses, they can easily be considered together. To be called dogfly in this context appears to be an insult for interfering; Ares accuses Athena of starting trouble amongst the gods, and Hera uses it to point out that Aphrodite is leading Ares away from Athena. The use of *κυνάμυια* (dogfly) here is not obvious. Franco discusses other zoological and botanical species which included some variant of "dog" in the name; she claims that it was the aggressive trait of biting which prompted the use of dog in other species' names.¹⁹ This interpretation does not apply perfectly to the dogfly in the *Iliad*; but both Athena and Aphrodite are being rebuked for their involvement in conflict, which could be interpreted as a form of aggression. Richardson calls this insult "splendidly abusive, suggesting both the proverbial shamelessness of the dog and the recklessness of the fly."²⁰ The insult may not be as strong as if Athena and Aphrodite were called "dog", yet the connotations appear to be similar to those of Helen; the accusations generally centre

¹⁵ Although it is used later than the context of the epics and so cannot necessarily be taken as expressing the same concept, the ambiguity of the loyal dog is also alluded to by Klytemnestra's similar use of a self-directed dog metaphor in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* 606-8. While Klytemnestra claims to have been a faithful dog in her husband's absence, the obvious dramatic irony undercuts any validity for the dog metaphor to be taken as evidence for faithfulness.

¹⁶ *Iliad* 22.64-71.

¹⁷ *Iliad* 21.394.

¹⁸ *Iliad* 21.421.

¹⁹ Franco 2014 pp.34-37; esp. p.34. The name dogfish, or seadog, for shark is used as an example due to the carnivorous nature of sharks.

²⁰ Richardson 1993 p.88.

on to causing trouble and presumption. To be called dog or dogfly is clearly not complimentary in either case, despite the precise meaning being ambiguous.

Lions

Like the metaphor comparing Helen to a dog, another very unexpected simile is that in which Penelope is compared to a lion:

ὄσσα δὲ μερμήριξε λέων ἀνδρῶν ἐν ὀμίλῳ
δείσας, ὀππότε μιν δόλιον περὶ κύκλον ἄγωσι,
τόσσα μιν ὀρμαίνουσαν ἐπήλυθε νήδυμος ὕπνος:²¹

She was as anxious as a frightened lion in a crowd of men when the treacherous circle is drawn around it; so great was her pondering when sweet sleep came upon her.

Lion similes are very common throughout both epics; but most other similes involving lions can be categorised as a trope used to describe warriors.²² These similes can be used to describe a warrior who is either attacking or attacked. Yet, despite the frequency and diversity of this group of similes, the application to Penelope has been read as strange since she is not a warrior fighting at Troy, but a mother and wife awaiting the return of her husband.

In the comparison of Penelope to the lion, the obvious parallel is that she feels trapped by her situation and the treachery of people around her; not only the suitors, but her discovery of the departure of Telemachus has also just revealed that even those closest to her have kept her in the

²¹ *Odyssey* 4.791-3.

²² Scott 2009 has usefully categorised all instances of lion (and boar) similes pp.193-6.

dark. The simile of being drawn into a devious trap is therefore very apt, especially since it is *men* whom Penelope, like the lion, is concerned about.²³ While there is not a physical trap being set for Penelope herself, another connection in the simile is that such a literal trap is being planned for Telemachus.

The difference in this simile then, is that Penelope is not obviously like a lion itself, especially amongst the wider consideration of lion similes in the epics where the savagery of a warrior is comparable to that of a lion. It has been frequently noted that this simile does not quite fit with the lion-warrior comparison. For example, Scott first claimed that this lion simile was not part of the traditional usage of lion similes, and that lion similes were actually inappropriate for non-war scenes.²⁴ However, this view was later amended with the opinion that Penelope could be a lion in this sense since in her own way she was a warrior in support of Odysseus' cause.²⁵ Penelope's comparison to a lion has also been explained by Moulton, for instance, as a means to emphasise her association to Odysseus and Telemachus, as both are described with lion similes,²⁶ and Magrath states that although there are victimised lions in the *Iliad*, they are not hunted by men, rendering the purpose of this simile to show Penelope as the passive mate of Odysseus.²⁷ These explanations interpret the lion simile for Penelope as an extension of Odysseus, rather than attempting to examine if the lion simile is valid for Penelope in her own right. Additionally, within the context of the lion simile for Penelope, it does not come across as simply a metaphor to link her to her family because the emphasis is clearly placed on her isolation and feelings of helplessness. Such an interpretation would require the audience to recall other lion similes, which are used for a wide

²³ The relevance of the trap in this metaphor is also discussed in chapter seven, pp.78-79 as it can be understood as relating to the courtship of the suitors as hunting Penelope.

²⁴ Scott 1974, p.62.

²⁵ Scott 2009, p. 183.

²⁶ Moulton 1977, p. 124. Especially recalling the lion simile used of Odysseus at 4.335-340. Podlecki 1971 also explains the "odd" simile as a reminder of the unity between Odysseus and Penelope (p.84).

²⁷ Magrath 1982, p.206-7.

variety of characters and circumstances throughout the epics, so that specifically recalling the use of lion similes for Odysseus may be an unrealistic expectation for audiences.

Despite this line of reasoning which largely characterises Penelope relative to her male family, there are several explanations as to why she should be entitled to a lion comparison herself. Lion similes are usually employed to describe warriors in battle, but not exclusively offensive warriors, and they can be used to describe people in positions of vulnerability.²⁸ The purpose of lion similes seems not to show an invincible warrior; but rather to emphasise the power and strength attributed to the warrior character, even if in the instant he is under attack or about to be killed.²⁹ In this context, Penelope as a lion becomes immediately accessible. Her character is consistently demonstrated to be wilful and strong and she remains competent in avoiding the advances of the suitors. Since this simile occurs when she discovers that Telemachus has abandoned her, the use of the lion simile to show a normally strong character left in a vulnerable position and under attack is therefore constant with other lion similes throughout both epics. In this way, the use of such a simile for Penelope need not be considered as an anomaly amongst the other uses of lion similes throughout the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

Another aspect of this simile which is worth consideration is that Penelope is not the only female character in Homer to be compared to a lion. In the *Iliad*, Hera states that Artemis is a lion to women.³⁰ In this comparison the emphasis is on Artemis' role as a destructive goddess and her ability to kill women at her will, yet the exchange precedes Hera reducing Artemis to tears and running away. This demonstrates that once again, a lion comparison is being used on the one hand

²⁸ Instances of vulnerable lions include: *Iliad* 11.548, 17.657, 18.318.

²⁹ The epics contain many formulaic phrases which are not necessarily immediately relevant in all instances of their use, for instance, Achilles is still called swift-footed while he sits by the sea (*Iliad* 1.364).

³⁰ *Iliad* 21.483-4.

to highlight the strength of the subject of the simile, but also to emphasise a striking contrast with the situational vulnerability of the character.

Birds

There are several instances where women are metaphorically associated with birds throughout the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The first to be discussed here involves Artemis and Hera.

δακρυόεσσα δ' ὕπαιθα θεὰ φύγεν ὥς τε πέλεια,

ἢ ρά θ' ὑπ' ἴρηκος κοίλην εἰσέπτατο πέτρην

χηραμόν: οὐδ' ἄρα τῆ γε ἀλώμεναι αἴσιμον ἦεν:

ὥς ἢ δακρυόεσσα φύγεν, λίπε δ' αὐτόθι τόξα.³¹

The goddess [Artemis] fled, crying and slipping away as a dove from a hawk flying into a hollow rock, a hole, not yet destined to be caught. Thus she fled crying, leaving her bow on the spot.

Here the vulnerability of Artemis and the power of Hera are contrasted in the simile. The power dynamic clearly demonstrates that the dove, Artemis, does not have good odds against the bigger and more vicious bird, Hera. Artemis' escape is also to be seen to be as swift as the flight of a bird, an interpretation favoured by Richardson.³² The obvious point of difference between the simile and the literal meaning is that Hera does not actually pursue Artemis as the hawk pursues the dove, but she simply wants to put Artemis in her place. Unlike the dove who escapes, Artemis has already been attacked. Artemis has been boxed around the ears, causing her flight from the rebuke rather than in anticipation of an attack. This simile is not unlike that of Penelope as a lion: both describe the women as animals which are under attack in the metaphor (Artemis from the hawk, Penelope

³¹ *Iliad* 21.493-6.

³² Richardson 1993 p.95.

from the lion hunters), but the situation which the simile describes does not place the women in a position of danger from physical attack.

It is worth noting that this simile is not an isolated type. The same simile of a hawk attacking a dove is also used soon after for Achilles and Hektor.³³ In this case the simile appears even more apt; Achilles is actively pursuing Hektor and the threat of violence is far more immediate than that of Artemis and Hera. The repetition of the simile in a battle context also demonstrates that the conflict between Hera and Artemis need not be dismissed due to their gender, although their roles as goddesses rather than women must be acknowledged. This also gives further credence to the application of the lion simile to Penelope as appropriate despite her being a woman because it is clearly not an isolated instance of the same simile being used for different contexts and different genders.

A further significant bird simile that is applied to women in Homer, is that of Odysseus' revenge on the unfaithful maids:

ὥς δ' ὅτ' ἄν ἦ κίχλαι τανυσίπτεροι ἠὲ πέλειαι
ἔρκει ἐνιπλήξωσι, τό θ' ἐστήκη ἐνὶ θάμνω,
αὐλιν ἐσιέμεναι, στυγερόν δ' ὑπεδέξατο κοῖτος,
ὥς αἶ γ' ἐξείης κεφαλὰς ἔχον, ἀμφὶ δὲ πάσαις
δειρήσι βρόχοι ἦσαν, ὅπως οἴκτιστα θάνοιεν.³⁴

³³ *Iliad* 22.139-142.

³⁴ *Odyssey* 22.468-472.

As long-winged thrushes or doves fall into a snare set up in a bush, going into their roosting place only to receive a hated welcome to their nest, the women held their heads one after another with the nooses all around their necks; in such a way, they died most piteously.

As in the simile of Hera and Artemis where the dove was used as an example of helplessness, so are the maids in this simile helpless to their fate. The emphasis of the simile here is the vulnerability of the maids to Odysseus' revenge, but unlike the others discussed above, the simile does not serve to also highlight any usual strength in the characters of the maids. There is also no individualism of any of the women, they are simply treated as a homogenous group. As is also the case with Penelope when she is likened to a lion, the simile of trapped animals when the literal meaning of the text does not convey a trap for the women,³⁵ heightens the sense of vulnerability of the women. In this way, Homeric similes overstate the vulnerability of the women they describe by placing them in a metaphorical situation which presents more physical danger than the women actually face. In the case of the hanged maids, while they still do face a literal death, the metaphor describes them as birds innocently and unexpectedly meeting their fate, whereas the *Odyssey* makes it very clear that the women are to be killed as a punishment for their previous behaviour.

By examining this series of similes as a group characterised by their application to women, some conclusions can be drawn about the use of similes in the epics as specifically applied to women. None of the similes discussed here are used as complimentary comparisons. As in the cases of the lion simile for Penelope, the dove for Artemis, and the doves for the hanged maids, the animal similes are used to over-emphasise the vulnerability of the women, often placing them in more dire

³⁵ The capture of the women will also be discussed in chapter seven, p.79 where the trapping of women as metaphorical animals is compared to other instances of the conflation of hunting and courtship or the control of sexuality.

situations than they actually face. However, these similes are also not exclusively used to portray the female characters as vulnerable: Penelope is likened to a lion which is a simile usually used to describe warriors in battle, and the dove simile for Artemis is similarly perjured by a description of her as a lion. The exception to this is the description of the maids being hanged as birds who are caught in a snare, because they are represented as entirely helpless in their situation. While this generalisation of women being depicted as vulnerable when metaphorically associated with animals fits well for most of the simile discussed here, the simile used for Helen is somewhat more complex as any definite interpretation of the meaning of a dog simile remains elusive. However, it is still consistent with the generally ambiguous nature of such Homeric animal similes when applied to female characters.

Chapter Two

Animal Metaphors in Lyric Poetry

In poetry from the archaic age, influences from the Homeric tradition can be clearly seen in the associations between women and animals. Yet there are also various innovations and developments in the representation of women as animalistic, here discussed through metaphoric symbolism. This association of women with animals becomes more complex and some consistent themes can be seen to emerge across numerous early lyric poets. Women and girls are most notably compared to horses and deer, although a wide range of animals is invoked to describe the character or behaviour of women. As an obvious example, Semonides' *lamb on women* (fr. 7), will be used as a framework from which to begin a discussion of other works which contain metaphors or references which associate animals with women. For the most part Semonides' use of animals to describe characteristics in women appears consistent with other animalistic associations of women throughout archaic poetry and so, as a source which deals with a number of animals and which is better preserved than most early Greek lyric poetry, it is a suitable work with which to compare some of the more fragmented records. Owing to the very fragmentary nature of much of the lyric poetry, all conclusions drawn from the material discussed here can only be taken as applicable to the extant record, as this may not necessarily have held good for all archaic lyric poetry.³⁶

This discussion of course must take account of the relevant context, including the Homeric tradition. As stated by Fowler: "the influence of the epic on Greek lyric poetry is obvious and extensive. One of the first steps therefore in any study of lyric as a type of literature might be to consider its relations

³⁶ Lyric fragment numbering in the footnotes follows that of the Loeb Classical Library, with full fragment references provided in the bibliography organised under the same numbering.

to Homer.”³⁷ While this was stated in regard to the literary influence of epic on Archilochus, it remains very applicable to the development in literary associations between women and animals. A particular point of difference between the earlier epic tradition and lyric poetry is that of narrator and voice. While accepting that the lyric “I” is a major distinction between epic and lyric, Gerber stresses that in lyric the narrative voice is at the foreground of the poetry and it is more intimate, while this is not the case in Homer.³⁸ While De Jong suggests that narrative is not objective or neutral in the Homeric epics, the subjectivity is expressed by focalisation which remains more distant than a first person narrator.³⁹ There is a clear danger associated with accepting that the lyric “I” reflects the actual views and opinions of the poet rather than those of a narrative character; such a reading may explain the overtly misogynistic voice in Semonides’ treatment of women as animals as fitting within both the expectations of the iambic genre, and the larger traditions of associating women with animals in a lyric context. In his introduction to the text, Lloyd-Jones emphasises that the word *iambos* was connected with *iapto* meaning “to hurl” which had connotations of pelting with abuse; and that Semonides was among other poets who were famous for personal abuse of a victim.⁴⁰ He stresses that Semonides’ intent was to amuse by representing the viewpoint of a peasant man.⁴¹ This view is also accepted by Brown, who adds that while the poem may entertain, that does not exclude it from presenting a conventional male perspective of a woman’s role in society.⁴²

³⁷ Fowler 1987 p.3.

³⁸ Gerber 1997 p.7.

³⁹ De Jong 1987, specifically in the *Iliad*. While De Jong’s ‘embedded focalisation’ or speeches made by characters does account for first-person text in the *Iliad*, this is described as being presented through the primary narrator-focaliser, that is, the narrative voice, or the bard. (esp. p.226, see also gloss of terms p. xiv). To apply De Jong’s description to Greek lyric, the primary narrator-focaliser would be the first-person voice throughout many of these poems.

⁴⁰ Lloyd-Jones 1975 pp.13-14.

⁴¹ Lloyd-Jones 1975 p.24.

⁴² Brown 1997 p.75.

Semonides' *iamb on women* claims that women can be categorised according to their similarity with various animals (as well as earth and sea which are omitted from this discussion). The motivation for the identification of each type of woman with an animal is based on characteristics that are generally undesirable in a wife. Some of these animals also feature in other lyric poems as comparisons for women, while others do not appear to be established conventions.

The comparisons begin with the sow woman.⁴³ She has a muddy, disorderly house with everything on the ground; she is unwashed and sits in the dung growing fat. This unpleasant picture does not appear to be a common comparison for women at this time, as there are few similar references.⁴⁴

Phocylides, in a similar poem to Semonides,⁴⁵ also claims that one type of woman comes from a fierce⁴⁶ sow, but she is neither bad nor good.⁴⁷ This ambiguity is similar to the next woman in Semonides, who comes from a wicked female fox.⁴⁸ She knows everything, although she calls what is good bad, and bad good; her moods are unstable.⁴⁹ While there does not appear to be a strong tradition of comparing women to either pigs or foxes in archaic lyric, the emphasis of not keeping oneself or the house clean and tidy, and instability are characteristics which appear to be accepted as unfavourable in a woman.

⁴³ Semonides Fr. 7.2-6.

Lloyd-Jones suggests that rather than a domestic pig, a wild swine is the implication here (Lloyd-Jones 1975 p.65)

⁴⁴ Hipponax Fr. 145 contains a possible reference to a woman being like an Ephesian sow, but the subject is uncertain and no further description is given.

⁴⁵ Due to the similarity of texts, it is uncertain whether Phocylides was influenced by Semonides, or if both poets were drawing on a common tradition (Gerber 1999 p.393 n.2.).

⁴⁶ The use of βλοσυρός is questioned by Gerber (who translates as "bristly"). Gerber believes that the description as translated to mean a fearsome appearance is not suitable for the context (1999, p.393 n.1.)

⁴⁷ Phocylides Fr. 2.5.

⁴⁸ "Vixen" is not used here, as throughout where appropriate, because the translated feminine form is likely to be understood with existing English connotations surrounding the word as would be applied colloquially to a woman. Thus "female fox" is used to denote the gendered Greek text.

⁴⁹ Semonides Fr. 7.7-11.

The description of the woman created from the dog⁵⁰ is even more unfavourable: she wants to know everything, is always looking and wandering around, and nothing can be done to stop her yapping.⁵¹ These sentiments of Semonides are echoed in Phocylides: the woman who originates from a dog is difficult to deal with and wild (ἡ δὲ κυνός χαλεπή τε καὶ ἄγριος).⁵² While, outside of Semonides and Phocylides, it appears uncommon for women to be compared to dogs in lyric poetry, there is one other rather noteworthy instance of such a comparison in archaic literature: Hesiod describes Pandora as being dog-minded.⁵³ Franco has dedicated significant research into the specific association of women with dogs in Greek thought, and begins and ends with exploring Hesiod's statement.⁵⁴ While she emphasizes the role of dogs in Greek society as a whole to arrive at ambiguous conclusions of what this dog comparison meant, a more simplistic approach is to consider Hesiod's comment exclusively to the context of these texts. As Pandora brings great troubles into the world, her dog-mind could be interpreted as similar to instances where a woman is compared to a dog in Homer, where, as concluded in the previous chapter, one aspect of which is likely to imply that the woman has characteristics which cause trouble.⁵⁵ This troublesome characterisation is also consistent with Semonides' and Phocylides' description of women as dogs who are either annoying or difficult.

There are several other animals which Semonides then employs to describe a range of unpleasant characteristics in women that are not established in lyric poetry, or at least not in the extant record. The donkey-woman is reluctant to do any work, spends her day eating, and accepts any companion

⁵⁰ See n.48 above for the use of "dog" rather than "bitch".

⁵¹ Semonides Fr. 7.12-20.

⁵² Phocylides Fr. 2.6.

⁵³ Hesiod *Works and Days* 67.

⁵⁴ Franco 2014. Her conclusions are complex and varied, but emphasise a deep cultural model in which the dog can be both the faithful wife or daughter, but also an adulterous spouse or reckless women aspiring to autonomy and dominion. Women and dogs are the negative cast of men who are excluded from manly virtue (esp. p.153).

⁵⁵ See chapter one above, pp.4-8.

for sexual activity.⁵⁶ Even worse is the weasel-woman; she has nothing good associated with her;⁵⁷ she is sex-mad but repulses her partner, and is notorious for thieving.⁵⁸ These two animals, while one may not initially see a comparison between a donkey and weasel, can be generalised to have the similar characteristics of greed and sexual indiscretion. As is discussed in greater detail below and throughout this thesis, a woman's sexuality, especially illegitimate sexuality, is frequently described with reference to animals.⁵⁹ Yet the worst type of woman is that from a monkey: she shares the characteristics of ugliness, maliciousness and shamelessness.⁶⁰ It is noteworthy that here it is the monkey who is associated with shameless behaviour, considering that this characteristic is frequently associated with dogs in readings of Greek, and especially Homeric literature.⁶¹

It is the comparison of women to mares that appears to be best established in lyric poetry outside of Semonides' poem. Semonides considers the mare-woman to be a beautiful sight, but she is vain, and because she will not work she is no good for a man who cannot afford an ornamental wife.⁶² The characteristics of pride and haughtiness do appear throughout lyric, and the metaphor of the horse is closely connected with commentary about a woman's sexuality. "Haughtier than a horse" (ἵππου γαυροτέρα) is recorded among other erotic phrases attributed to Sappho or Anacreon.⁶³ There are enough instances where women are represented as horses for this to be considered a conventional description that could be applied to women. A poem by Anacreon is addressed to a

⁵⁶ Semonides Fr. 7:43- 49.

⁵⁷ Semonides Fr. 7:51-2.

⁵⁸ Semonides Fr. 7:50-56; While this comparison is not established in other texts, Bettini (2013) has a good commentary on why the predatory nature, "maniacal sexuality" and repulsion of the weasel is suited to Semonides' description of a thieving, hyper-sexual and repulsive woman pp.161-2.

⁵⁹ See especially chapters 6, Metamorphoses myths, and 7, the metaphor of courtship as hunting.

⁶⁰ Semonides Fr. 7. 71-82.

⁶¹ See above in chapter one, pp.4-8.

⁶² Semonides Fr. 7.57-70.

⁶³ A comment on erotic imagery in Sappho and Anacreon by Gregory of Corinth writing on Hermogenes' *Peri Methodou Deinotetos*. Listed under Sappho Fr. 156.

Thracian filly who flees from him and frolics in a meadow because she does not have a man to ride her:

πῶλε Θρηκίη, τί δή με
λοξόν ὄμμασι βλέπουσα
νηλέως φεύγεις, δοκεῖς δέ
μ' οὐδέν εἰδέναι σοφόν;

... νῦν δέ λειμῶνάς τε βόσκειαι
κοῦφά τε σκιρτῶσα παίζεις,
δεξιόν γάρ ἵπποπείρην
οὐκ ἔχεις ἐπεμβάτην.⁶⁴

Thracian filly, why do you look at me askance and relentlessly flee, expecting me not to know any skill? ... Now you graze in the meadows and lightly leap and play, for you have no skilled horse-man to ride you.

This has been read by Rosenmeyer as somewhat predatory, where the male narrator observes the girl from a distance with the intent to “tame” her, as she cannot be allowed to stay in the meadow, or remain unmarried, forever and his cleverness will counteract her stubbornness.⁶⁵ As with Semonides’ claim that the mare is best admired but not kept due to her vanity, here the narrator shows the woman-horse as arrogant to the threat of male pursuit. The theme of marriage being similar to a horse and rider is also echoed in Theognis, where again the woman believes that she is above the male control of her “rider”:

⁶⁴ Anacreon Fr. 417.

⁶⁵ Rosenmeyer 2004 pp.170 -71.

ἵππος ἐγὼ καλή καί ἀεθλίη, ἀλλὰ κάκιστον

ἄνδρα φέρω

πολλάκι δὴ μέλλησα διαρρήξασα χαλινόν

φεύγειν ὠσαμένη τὸν κακὸν ἠνίοχον.⁶⁶

I am a beautiful, prizewinning horse, but I carry the worst man ... often I was about to break through the bit to flee having thrown off the bad rider.

In his commentary, Gerber claims that the likeliest interpretation of this imagery is that of an upper-class woman resenting a marriage to a lower-class man.⁶⁷ However, the narrative voice is that of a woman rather than a man, which would imply that the poet believed this to be a plausible comparison that a woman may make of herself. This suggests that, unlike throughout Semonides where most of the animal comparisons are not complimentary, this comparison is intended more favourably. The horses in these examples have some degree of autonomy in their approach to their “riders” – the horse in Theognis believes she can throw off her rider – but clearly the reference is to the perceived “wild” nature of female sexuality that must be tamed or controlled. The use of the word ἠνίοχος in the last line would most literally mean the chariot driver, which may also indicate a further level of power beyond just a horse and a rider, to a more controlling chariot driver. Within the context of a woman needing to be tamed, this may be a comment on the control that would be expected between a man and a woman.

⁶⁶ Theognis 1.257-60.

⁶⁷ Theognis 1.257-60.

According to Semonides, the only purely good animal to which a woman could be compared was the bee. She must have only the good characteristics of being prudent, hardworking and a mother.⁶⁸ The same idea is expressed by Phocylides, for whom hard work is the bee's virtue.⁶⁹ While not frequently referred to in the lyric record, it is established in the scholarship that bees were seen as industrious and virtuous in Greek thought.⁷⁰ While Semonides deals with a variety of animals in his iambs, he does not present an exhaustive account of all animals to which women were frequently compared in the archaic lyric tradition. Two other animals which occur frequently enough to deserve comment are birds and deer, most often fawns.

The use of birds to represent women does not appear to be a very complex convention. The metaphors are often brief and lack any of the detailed explanations as to how the female is like the animal that occurs in most of the examples discussed above. Alcman describes girls (*neanides*) as scattering like birds when a hawk flies over them.⁷¹ This simile is strikingly similar to the simile in the *Iliad* where Artemis is compared to a dove escaping from a hawk, and as in Homer, here the emphasis of the simile appears to be the vulnerability of the girls.⁷² Sappho also refers to girls (*parthenoi*) as getting less sleep than clear-voiced birds.⁷³ As with many of the other animals discussed, this passage appears to also carry sexual connotations as this lack of sleep is due to the instructions given to the girls to fetch unmarried young men (*eitheoi*). Once again, with Sappho, this comparison is created through a female perspective, suggesting that the bird metaphor, as with the mare, is not a wholly unfavourable association.

⁶⁸ Semonides Fr. 7.83-94.

⁶⁹ Phocylides Fr. 2.6-7.

⁷⁰ Pomeroy (1975) comments that the bee-wife is virtuous in part because her lack of interest in sex will not lead to adultery (p.49). Davies and Kathirithamby (1986) discuss bees as industrious (p.59), and their perceived divinity and chastity (pp.69-70). See also Gerber (1997) p.76 on the bee as an ideal wife. An ancient text which supports the idealised wife as like a bee is Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* 7 in which a husband uses an extended metaphor of the role of a good wife as being akin to that of the bee leader (queen bee) in a hive.

⁷¹ Alcman Fr. 82.

⁷² *Iliad* 21.493-6.

⁷³ Sappho Fr. 30.

Another animal which is referred to several times throughout the extant record is the deer, and often specifically the fawn. Archilochus describes a girl who has been seduced as either ceasing from something like a fawn,⁷⁴ or in a proposed amended text reading “as she tried to persuade me with entreaty I caught her just like a fawn.”⁷⁵ A similar concept of catching a fawn as a metaphor for male seduction is twice echoed in Theognis: νεβρόν ὑπέξ ἐλάφοιο λέων ὡς ἀλκί πεποιθῶς ποσσὶ καταμάρψας⁷⁶ (*I snatched the fawn from the doe like a lion with his claws trusting in his might*). In this instance, the fawn is clearly reduced to a vulnerable victim, while the lion is overtly predatory with his claws and might. Bacchylides also refers to a girl as running like a carefree fawn.⁷⁷ This image in Bacchylides has been interpreted by Power as an erotic male fantasy where the fawn-girl is constructed as a creature to be captured, tamed and socialised by marriage.⁷⁸ This takes a similar approach to the representation of women as mares discussed above, where it is their native role as an untamed animal which creates an air of eroticism in the poetry although in the case of fawns, the appeal appears to be placed on the concept of the capture.

However, there are also instances of women being compared to deer in lyric through a female perspective. Although the subject is lost, it is probable that a simile in Sappho of dancing like young fawns refers to girls.⁷⁹ Additionally, Alcaeus, writing in the voice of a woman, compares an infatuation to the noise made by a deer.⁸⁰ Assuming that metaphors which use a female voice would indicate a comparison that a woman might approve of, it may be implied that a deer metaphor was not emphatically negative, such as Semonides’ metaphors (especially as this comparison is used by

⁷⁴ Archilochus Fr. 196a:46-7.

⁷⁵ The proposed text is offered by Slings 1987 p.26, with explanation for the amendment p.46-47.

⁷⁶ Theognis *Elegiac Poems* 1.949-950 and 2.1278cd. Text is the same in both instances.

⁷⁷ Bacchylides 13.87-90.

⁷⁸ Power 2000 pp.78-9

⁷⁹ Sappho Fr. 58

⁸⁰ Alcaeus Fr. 10b.

Sappho, being a female poet). The precise connotations of the deer metaphor are not as clearly explained as the animals are in Semonides' iambos. Certainly, like the mare, the wildness of the fawn is significant, although the choice to frequently compare girls to fawns, rather than to deer, appears to be an important factor in stressing the youth of the subject. A reference in Archilochus explains that to compare a man to a deer is to express his cowardice,⁸¹ but it seems highly inappropriate to understand the subjects of these passages as cowards. Instead, given the often predatory tone to the male-voiced similes and the subjects being *parthenoi*, it is likely more apt to read these fawn similes as suggesting the pre-sexual timidity of youth.

When compared with the use of animal metaphors for women in Homer, their use in lyric has a deeper level of complexity and variety. As previously concluded, with the exception of Helen's comparison to a dog which can be understood as describing behaviour which causes trouble or is presumptuous, the animal similes in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* generally fit into a pattern of emphasising the weakness and vulnerability of the female characters. In the Homeric tradition, it is generally not complimentary for a woman to be compared to an animal. These ideas can be seen as continuing to exist in the lyric tradition: when women are compared to dogs the emphasis is still their difficult nature, and the vulnerability of women is still expressed through comparisons to birds and deer. However, the most frequent theme to emerge from these animal similes is that of a woman's sexuality, either in a positive or negative light. While there is a hint of female sexuality related to animal comparisons in Homer through the maids who are punished for their sexual involvement with the suitors, and less directly through Helen, sexuality is not a major aspect of animal metaphors in the epics. In contrast, in lyric poetry, excessive sexuality is expressed through unfavourable comparisons to the donkey and weasel in Semonides; but chastity or potential sexuality is presented favourably through the bee, mare, birds, and fawns. However, a divide may be found in that

⁸¹ In reference to a Homeric metaphor (Archilochus Fr. 280).

Semonides' animal-women are all wives which do not adhere to the desired role for a wife or are a misery to their husbands, and the only positive animal, the bee, is also the only mother in the poem. However, other poems which emphasise the pursuit of or potential sexuality present the women more positively. Another significant difference from what was established in Homer is that of the types of animals used in these comparisons. While there is greater diversity of the animal metaphors in lyric, women are generally compared to less powerful animals: there are no extant similes comparing women to lions or birds of prey. The narrative voice is also a significant difference from the Homeric tradition: instead of a narrator who is removed from the description, in lyric the voice of the poet is much more immediate and closely associated with the subject of the poem. This probably accounts for the more personalised comparisons between women and animals, and the greater complexity and ambiguity. It also provides multiple perspectives on a commonly used metaphor, including both male and female perspectives in some instances – whether that be of a real (as in Sappho) or imagined female voice.

Chapter Three

Animal Metaphors in Tragedy:

Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and Euripides' *Bacchae*

The metaphorical associations between women and animals in the earlier traditions of both epic and lyric can also be seen to carry on into the classical period. In tragedy, these metaphorical associations can be very sophisticated, such as is seen in Aeschylus' plays. First, the *Agamemnon* will be examined because it provides rich animal imagery to describe the female characters, Klytemnestra, Iphigeneia, and Cassandra, who each have significant and distinctive roles within the play. The animal imagery in the *Agamemnon* can be seen as consistent with comparable characters elsewhere in Greek tragedy; for example, similar metaphors are used to describe both Klytemnestra and Medea, both of whom are characters who do not behave according to their appropriate role as a wife. The second section of this chapter will concern Euripides' *Bacchae*. Unlike the *Agamemnon* which primarily associates the characters with animals by metaphor, the *Bacchae* also creates strong allusions between the women in the play and the animal world through the actions of the female characters as well as employing metaphorical language to create the understanding of the women as animalistic. This approach of using character behaviour in addition to similes and metaphors can create apparent inconsistencies between characterisation by metaphor and characterisation by behaviour, which allows expression of the "woman as animal" metaphor in a different and more complex way than would be possible simply through metaphorical imagery.

The use of animal metaphors in tragedy is believed to express strong emotion by Thumiger; animals are considered to be capable of the same impulses as humans, but with greater intensity and simplicity.⁸² Garson, who considers recurring metaphors throughout Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, most

⁸² Thumiger 2014, esp. p.89.

of which involve animals, believes that the metaphors link the fate of oppressors with their victims, but ultimately provide insight into the characters' regard of themselves and for others.⁸³ Such an interpretation would indicate a greater importance of metaphors beyond simply characterisation. Moreover, animal metaphors can also be used as a plot device to connect certain characters and events together, such as the relationship between Iphigeneia's death as a sacrificial animal and the revenge of Klytemnestra described as a wild animal. The use of metaphors within dialogue is also a point of difference between tragedy and the earlier Homeric epic and lyric traditions, where the lack of a single narrative voice in tragedy results in all metaphors being presented as the opinion of the character who speaks them rather than being attributable to an authorial or narrative voice.

Agamemnon

Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* is rich in animal imagery. The application of such animal imagery as distinct to each of the female characters is particularly effective for characterisation and individualisation of three very different women through separate types of animal metaphors. Klytemnestra is portrayed using mainly predatory animals, including lion metaphors, Iphigeneia is imaged using sacrificial animals, and Cassandra is primarily described using bird metaphors. The scope of animals used in these metaphors are similar to what has already been seen in epic and lyric, although Aeschylus' imagery becomes more vivid and the various animals demonstrate specific characteristics more coherently and consistently in constructing an individual.

⁸³ Garson 1983 p.39. For instance, Klytemnestra and Agamemnon are both described with lion metaphors, Klytemnestra and Cassandra are both compared to dogs.

When animal metaphors are used to describe Klytemnestra, the imagery is either that of an obviously predatory creature, or at least an animal of ambiguous connotations. The most noteworthy example of Klytemnestra's animal associations is her comparison to a lion:

αὕτη δίπους λέαινα συγκοιμωμένη

λύκῳ, λέοντος εὐγενοῦς ἀπουσίᾳ,

κτενεῖ με τήν τάλαιναν⁸⁴

This two-footed lioness, sleeping with the wolf in the absence of the noble lion, will kill pitiable me.

This metaphor is spoken by Cassandra as she prophesies her death, and so it is not unexpected that she would describe her future killer as a predatory animal and see herself as a victim. It is quite likely that the audience would have perceived this metaphor in a similar way to the pity with which the chorus reacts towards Cassandra as she accepts her death.⁸⁵ While the association with such a predatory animal is easily understood as an omen of Klytemnestra's future violent actions, such a use of the lion metaphor diverges from other lion metaphors which are used for women in the earlier literature. As discussed in Chapter One, when lion similes are applied to women in Homeric epic, they can be understood as simultaneously emphasising the characteristic strength but situational vulnerability of the female character.⁸⁶ However, Klytemnestra is no Penelope, and her characterisation is more reminiscent of the warrior-as-lion simile which frequently occurs through the *Iliad* than it is of Penelope as a trapped lion in the *Odyssey*.⁸⁷ The interpretation of the lion metaphor to characterise Klytemnestra as a more masculine or warrior-like figure is consistent with other descriptions of her within the play. It is commented that Klytemnestra is male-minded,⁸⁸ and

⁸⁴ Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1258-60.

⁸⁵ Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1295-8; 1321.

⁸⁶ As was concluded in chapter one, pp.10-11.

⁸⁷ See chapter one for discussion of lion similes in Homeric epic, pp.8-11.

⁸⁸ Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 11.

she is shown to be more strongly-willed than Agamemnon,⁸⁹ without even taking account of her ability to physically overpower and kill her husband, who is himself a warrior.⁹⁰ The masculine characterisation of Klytemnestra seems especially appropriate here if one considers the lion simile within the frame of the warrior-as-lion image, and considers that within the same passage, Cassandra also refers to Agamemnon as a 'noble lion'. While the Klytemnestra-as-lion metaphor could still be interpreted in a similar vein to the woman-as-lion similes in epic where the strength of character is emphasised, there is no immediate reduction of Klytemnestra's strength such as is seen for both Penelope and Artemis.⁹¹ Therefore it can be seen that the lion symbol as used for Klytemnestra is here being employed quite differently from the previous examples of lion similes for women in the epic tradition.

The more general relevance of the lion comparison in Aeschylus' plays is considered by Knox to be extremely diverse in its application to multiple characters to express renewing vengeance through the *Oresteia*.⁹² Knox's belief would support a more thematic interpretation of the above metaphor of Klytemnestra as a lion. Rather than imagery used simply for characterisation, the metaphor would fit within a wider theme of vengeance, and therefore holds a more a complex range of possible interpretations than was previously seen in the lion similes for Penelope and Artemis in Homeric epic. Garson has also interpreted the lion simile differently for each character in the *Agamemnon*: for Agamemnon, he thinks it indicates a noble spirit despite wartime savagery; for Aegisthus, savagery and cowardice; but for Klytemnestra it indicates that she is human only in appearance but savage in nature.⁹³ In this reading of the lion simile, savagery is the primary characteristic which is modified for each character. Such an interpretation is in line with, but not the

⁸⁹ For instance, when Klytemnestra convinces Agamemnon to walk on the carpets against his earlier wishes. Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 905-944.

⁹⁰ Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1379-92.

⁹¹ Penelope: *Odyssey* 4.791-3; Artemis: *Iliad* 21.483-4.

⁹² Knox 1952.

⁹³ Garson 1983 p.33

same, as the use of epic lion similes for warriors. Therefore, according to Garson, Klytemnestra's comparison to a lion can be understood as one instance of a recurring metaphor throughout the *Oresteia* which illustrates significant and violent events, characterising her as an embodiment of violence.⁹⁴

However, the comparison of Klytemnestra to a lion is also not exclusive to the *Agamemnon* – it also occurs in *Libation bearers* and Euripides' *Electra* which may indicate a level of relevance of this metaphor to Klytemnestra beyond a recurring symbol in the *Agamemnon*.⁹⁵ For the significance of the metaphor to Klytemnestra as a character outside of the *Agamemnon*, a comparison to another murderous female character of tragedy may provide some insight: Medea is also described with lion similes several times by Euripides.⁹⁶ Considering that Klytemnestra and Medea are often considered to be two of the most grossly violent women of Greek tragedy, the use of a lion simile for both women suggests that it would have been understood as an appropriate comparison to describe their behaviour and character, and not used simply as a literary device by Aeschylus.⁹⁷ With this comparison, it becomes clear that the use of a lion simile for a woman in tragedy of the classical period carries significantly different connotations from that of a lion simile for a woman in Homeric epic, even if the tragic use may draw upon the epic practice of lion similes for men.

Konstantinou has perceived a contrast between the treatment of a lion simile between epic and classical tragedy, who believes it has changed from having positive connotations in epic to a negative tone once the comparison involves women, as this stresses the savage side of the animal's

⁹⁴ Garson 1983 p.33

⁹⁵ Aeschylus *Libation Bearers* 938; Euripides *Electra* 1163.

⁹⁶ Euripides *Medea* 187-89, 1339-43, 1405-07, 1351-60.

⁹⁷ Such as in Garson where it is among other metaphors which link victim and attacker. It could be seen as appropriate to describe violent and murderous tendencies.

emotions and behaviour.⁹⁸ While this view does not seem to take account of the use of lion similes for Penelope and Artemis in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, it does raise the suggestion that the grammatical form of lions in the epics is only masculine, but the feminine form appears in the fifth century as used by Aeschylus and Herodotus, and has limited uses.⁹⁹ Konstantinou citing *Agamemnon* as an early example of this feminine form, does again suggest that lion metaphors in tragedy, and particularly in the *Agamemnon*, could carry different connotations from what had occurred before in the epic tradition, even if one does consider that such lion similes had been previously applied to women. However, this suggestion that the negative connotations occur with the use of the feminine form does not appear to take account of the more masculine aspects of Klytemnestra, or that the treatment of her character could allow an interpretation of the lion metaphor as closer to that of a warrior in epic than as a new form of a savage woman.

Not only is Klytemnestra compared to a lion, she is also described as a cow who gores her mate with her horn.

ἄ ἄ, ἰδοὺ ἰδοῦ: ἄπεχε τῆς βοῶς

τὸν ταῦρον: ἐν πέπλοισι

μελαγκέρῳ λαβοῦσα μηχανήματι

τύπτει:¹⁰⁰

Ah, Ah, look, look. Keep the bull away from the cow: having taken him by the robe she strikes him with her black horn.

⁹⁸ Konstantinou 2012 p.126.

⁹⁹ Konstantinou 2012 p.127; Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1258 and Herodotus 3.108 are cited as the early examples.

¹⁰⁰ Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1125-8.

This is an unusual form of animal metaphor with little comparison in the earlier literature, making a specific meaning somewhat more obscure. As with the lion metaphor above, this comparison is made by Cassandra to describe Klytemnestra's intentions towards Agamemnon. The cow is explicitly described as a violent threat to the bull, so rather than presenting Klytemnestra as a threat to Cassandra herself, she perceives Klytemnestra as a danger just to Agamemnon in this comparison. As with the lion metaphor, again there is a parallel to Medea, who is compared to a bull by Euripides, indicating this bovine metaphor may be related to the lion similes, or expressing similar characterisation of violent tendencies.¹⁰¹ Bull similes are generally considered to denote aggressiveness in tragedy by Thumiger,¹⁰² which would account for a similar use of bull and lion similes to describe a woman as dangerous.

Other animal imagery used to describe Klytemnestra is more ambiguous. The dog, a common comparison for women, is used for her, with the ironic implication that she has been loyally awaiting Agamemnon's return.

γυναῖκα πιστήν δ' ἐν δόμοις εὖροι μολῶν

οἶαν περ οὔν ἔλειπε, δωμάτων κύνα

ἔσθλην ἐκείνῳ.¹⁰³

Coming back, he will find his trusted wife in the house just as he left her, a good dog to his house.

Unlike the above metaphors used by Cassandra to describe Klytemnestra, this dog comparison is self-directed, like the comparisons of Helen to dogs in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* which are self-

¹⁰¹ Euripides *Medea* 187-9.

¹⁰² Thumiger 2014 p.89. Cites Sophocles *Ajax* 322, Euripides *Medea* 92, Euripides *Heracles* 869.

¹⁰³ Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 606-8.

descriptive.¹⁰⁴ As both Klytemnestra and Helen are women who do not remain loyal to their husbands, their use of dog metaphors to describe themselves is likely to be related to the general ambiguity of dogs in Greek literature; the suggestion is that while a dog is theoretically loyal so long as it is kept and fed, it will just as soon turn on its owner.¹⁰⁵ Klytemnestra appears to have been loyal to Agamemnon initially, yet after Iphigeneia's death she ceases to be so and immediately turns on him. Franco interprets the dog in Aeschylus as representing internal conflict and domestic strife.¹⁰⁶ This is specifically manifested in Klytemnestra's behaviour through her betrayal of Agamemnon while claiming to be faithfully loving.¹⁰⁷ Dog imagery to portray vengeance in women can also be seen in *Hecuba*: firstly Polymestor's description of the attacking women as bloodthirsty dogs,¹⁰⁸ then followed by the report that Hekabe will herself become a dog.¹⁰⁹ The shared motivation of vengeance for both Klytemnestra and Hekabe appears to suggest that in tragedy the use of a dog for comparison was applied more harshly than in Homeric epics when Helen's description of herself as a dog has undefined but negative connotations.¹¹⁰ The Homeric use is less direct, in that "dog-eyed" (κυνώπιδος) is used twice out of the three dog comparisons used to describe Helen, and the same term is even used for Klytemnestra, rejecting a concept that it may simply be a difference of characters' behaviour.¹¹¹

Iphigeneia is presented as a contrasting character to Klytemnestra and this is represented by the use of a separate set of animal metaphors to describe and characterise her. While predatory animals are favoured for Klytemnestra to represent her violent characteristics, instead sacrificial animals are the point of comparison for Iphigeneia. The reason for this difference is obvious: Iphigeneia is not a

¹⁰⁴ *Iliad* 3.180, *Iliad* 6.345, *Odyssey* 4.145-46.

¹⁰⁵ See chapter one, dogs pp.4-8.

¹⁰⁶ Franco 2014 p.140.

¹⁰⁷ Franco 2014 p.141.

¹⁰⁸ Euripides *Hecuba* 1173.

¹⁰⁹ Euripides *Hecuba* 1265.

¹¹⁰ See chapter one.

¹¹¹ See chapter one, pp.4-8.

predatory woman like Klytemnestra, but rather is portrayed as a sacrificial victim. Iphigeneia as a sacrificial victim is especially notable in the description of her death by the chorus, where she is compared to a goat and described like an animal being sacrificed:

φράσεν δ' ἀόζοις πατήρ μετ' εὐχὰν

δίκαν χιμαίρας ὕπερθε βωμοῦ

πέπλοισι περιπετῆ παντὶ θυμῷ προνωπῆ

λαβεῖν ἀέρδην, στόματός

τε καλλιπρώρου φυλακᾶ κατασχεῖν

φθόγγον ἀραῖον οἴκοις,

βία χαλινῶν τ' ἀναύδω μένει.¹¹²

After a prayer, her father directed the attendants to raise her up over the altar with all their strength, like a goat, face down with her robes spread around; and with a gag in her finely profiled mouth, to prevent her voice from cursing her house, by violence and with the silencing force of a bit.

The use of animal imagery in this passage is clearly stressing the dehumanising of Iphigeneia. In being sacrificed she is reduced to an animal, which is explicitly expressed in Klytemnestra's accusation that Agamemnon has treated their daughter as no more than a beast:

ὃς οὐ προτιμῶν, ὡσπερὶ βοτοῦ μόρον,

μήλων φλεόντων εὐπόκοις νομεύμασιν,

ἔθυσεν αὐτοῦ παῖδα, φιλότατην ἐμοὶ

¹¹² Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 232-8.

ὠδῖν', ἐπωδὸν Θρηκίων ἀημάτων.¹¹³

He sacrificed his own child without honour, like the fate of a beast, even as there were abundant sheep in the fleecy flock, she who was the dearest of my labours, to charm the Thracian winds.

This reduction is perhaps necessary for the audience to fully imagine the difficulty of killing a reluctant girl by drawing a comparison to a more familiar scene of an animal sacrifice, as well as enabling the conceptualisation of the uncomfortable subject of human sacrifice. The description of raising Iphigeneia above the altar, wrapped in her robes is reminiscent of an image on an amphora of Polyxena's sacrifice, where she is tightly held up by three men, with her blood dripping onto an altar.¹¹⁴ This image in which Polyxena is shown to be human but held like an animal makes the sacrifice image disturbingly real, which may explain why it would be effective to imagine such a sacrifice through an animal metaphor. On the one hand, it creates a dramatic visual image comparable to an artistic representation, but it also enables a perception of a human as an animal. The latter idea can also be seen in an alternative treatment of this myth, such as is described by Euripides where an actual human sacrifice is avoided by having a deer be substituted for Iphigeneia at the moment of death.¹¹⁵ The connection between Iphigeneia's death and a deer is further cemented in Sophocles' *Electra*, where the reason given for Iphigeneia's sacrifice is Artemis' anger at Agamemnon for killing a stag.¹¹⁶ This conflation of a deer with female sacrifice is also echoed in a comparison of Polyxena to a deer which is killed by a wolf in *Hecuba*.¹¹⁷ Although neither example is a direct parallel, the metaphorical connections are clearly expressing the helplessness of the girls about to be killed. There is not a precedent for the deer as a metaphor for a human sacrificial victim in Homer, but the lyric tradition provides several examples of female comparisons to deer,

¹¹³ Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1415-8.

¹¹⁴ Attic black-figure ovoid neck amphora, Timiades Painter c.560-550 BC, London 97.7-27.2, BADP 310027.

¹¹⁵ Euripides *Iphigeneia at Aulis* 1580-89.

¹¹⁶ Sophocles *Electra* 563-576.

¹¹⁷ Euripides *Hecuba* 90.

especially fawns, which may be understood as generally appearing to portray the pre-sexual timidity and vulnerability of youth in girls or young women.¹¹⁸ In both the cases of Iphigeneia and Polyxena, their status as *parthenoi* is significant to their deaths: according to Euripides, Iphigeneia is lured to Aulis by the pretence of marriage, and Polyxena comments on dying unmarried.¹¹⁹ Other deaths in tragedy can also be responded to in terms of an animal sacrifice, in line with Iphigeneia and Polyxena; Pozzi has suggested interpreting Antigone's behaviour as indicative of a sacrifice,¹²⁰ and, as will be discussed below, the *Bacchae* represents women as the agents of sacrifice as well as being victims themselves.

The final female character to be discussed in the *Agamemnon* is Cassandra. Again, animal imagery has been used for a specific purpose; here primarily bird similes are used for Cassandra, although other animals are also used metaphorically. Clytemnestra suggests Cassandra's possibly foreign speech might sound like a swallow,¹²¹ her lamenting is compared to a bird and a nightingale,¹²² which she then accepts and uses this comparison herself,¹²³ and she finally is described as dying like a swan.¹²⁴ At one point Cassandra even makes a negative comparison of herself to a bird; she claims that she does not shrink with terror like a bird.¹²⁵ The frequent bird similes appear to be consistent in their characterisation of helplessness or fear. This is comparable to the extended simile in the *Odyssey* where the hanged maids are compared to birds in a trap, with the emphasis of the

¹¹⁸ See chapter two.

¹¹⁹ Euripides *Iphigeneia at Aulis* e.g. 685, Euripides *Hecuba* 416

¹²⁰ Pozzi 1989 p.503

¹²¹ Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1050-1052. The lack of speech is considered to be one of the key aspects in the distinction between human and animal in the *Oresteia* by Heath (1999). Heath concludes: "Man is born with speech, and should he use it ... he exercises that part which most distances him from the beast." (p.47) Therefore, Cassandra's refusal to speak in this scene (as well as her gender) places her firmly outside of the world of men, and therefore within the realm of the animal.

¹²² Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1140-5.

¹²³ Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1146.

¹²⁴ Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1444.

¹²⁵ Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1314.

comparison being vulnerability and pathetic suffering.¹²⁶ While bird similes are also common in lyric poetry, the comparisons do not appear to have any obvious complexity and the main point of similarity seems to be the meekness of the birds. The descriptions of Cassandra as bird-like also appears to be following the previous tradition of expressing the helplessness or vulnerability of her situation, even as she claims not to be like a scared bird. The use of a bird metaphor to express fearful or lamenting women is also seen in other tragedy as well, further showing this to be an established point of comparison.¹²⁷

The use of animal similes to describe Cassandra is also more complex than simply drawing on bird similes. She is also described as a hound on a trail to discover blood as she is prophesying her own and Agamemnon's deaths,¹²⁸ which is curiously similar to the use of a dog simile to describe Clytemnestra. As mentioned above, this use of the same simile for Clytemnestra and Cassandra has been interpreted by Garson as creating a connection between attacker and victim.¹²⁹ Yet Cassandra's acceptance of her death is also likened to an ox going calmly to the altar to be sacrificed.¹³⁰ This is similar to the description of Iphigeneia, and such a comparison recalls the causal link between both Iphigeneia and Cassandra's deaths. If these metaphors are to be interpreted in terms of a plot device, they would appear to place Cassandra's role as a character between Iphigeneia and Clytemnestra, as both a sacrificial victim and also a dog of ambiguous loyalties.

The descriptions of women by women through animal metaphors in the *Agamemnon* provide insightful characterisations of the various female characters. Clytemnestra is described as a lion by

¹²⁶ *Odyssey* 22.468-472. See chapter one, pp.12-13; chapter seven, p.79.

¹²⁷ Aeschylus *Seven against Thebes* the chorus fears like doves (290); Euripides *Trojan Women* has Hekabe lamenting like a mother bird (145), which is later echoed by the chorus using the same metaphor (825); and Euripides *Phoenissae* also describes a mourning mother bird who has lost her chicks (1515-18).

¹²⁸ Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1091.

¹²⁹ Garson 1983 p.39.

¹³⁰ Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1295.

Kassandra, which is not surprising considering Cassandra foresees her own death at the hands of Klytemnestra and so would perceive her as a threatening animal. The comparison of Klytemnestra makes of herself to a dog is reminiscent of Helen's Homeric self-directed dog simile, where she uses the comparison to ironically stress her loyalty to Agamemnon, while Helen uses a similar description when she is lamenting her disloyalty. The descriptions of Iphigeneia as a sacrificial animal by Klytemnestra provide and explain the motivation for her murder of Agamemnon and Cassandra. Therefore, the use of animal similes for female characters in the *Agamemnon* not only provide characterisation of the women they describe, but also of these women who use the metaphors in their speech.

Bacchae

Euripides' *Bacchae* is so firmly set in the world of animals and nature and the prominence of the female characters makes it an obvious play through which consider the connection between the women and their animals. It has been commented that while Euripides deals in metaphorical imagery far less than Aeschylus and other tragedians, the *Bacchae* is one play which does greatly engage in metaphors alongside other vivid imagery.¹³¹ Many such comparisons can be found throughout the play which link women to a range of animals, which are often surprisingly consistent with the previous traditions despite presenting vastly different characterisation. The maddened women of Thebes¹³² and chorus of Dionysus' followers are generally described in imagery which places emphasis on the youth or vulnerability of the animal, in contrast to their characterisation by behaviour and usually more violent non-metaphoric associations between the women and their animals.

¹³¹ Eg. Barlow 1982 p.3, 97.

¹³² The term "maenad" is avoided here as the term is used to describe Dionysus' female companions in pottery painting, so in order to prevent unintended conflation between the two groups of women, the characters in the *Bacchae* will be referred to as the Theban women.

As it has been throughout most of the literature discussed thus far, bird imagery is used several times throughout the *Bacchae* to describe the Theban women. Their departure after tearing apart cattle is compared to that of birds,¹³³ and the rush of the women to kill Pentheus is likewise described as being as swift as a dove.¹³⁴ While this comparison may have been employed simply to express the speed with which the Theban women move, the comparison is unusual when bird metaphors are frequently used to describe women in other literature as helpless or fearful, including that of Cassandra discussed above.¹³⁵ A further similarity between the use of bird imagery in the *Bacchae* and earlier traditions is when Pentheus expects to find the Theban women engaged in erotic behaviour like birds in a bush.¹³⁶ The sexual connotations of such a comparison is not unlike the Sappho fragment discussed earlier which compares girls to birds with the implication of future sexual activity.¹³⁷ Kadmos' description of Agaue as a swan could also be compared with Cassandra's death as a swan in the *Agamemnon*.¹³⁸ Other noteworthy instances of animal similes include the chorus comparing themselves to a fawn who has escaped the pursuit of a hunt,¹³⁹ and two references to the Theban women as foals:

... πῶλος ὅπως ἄμα ματέρι

φορβάδι, κῶλον ἄγει ταχύπουν σκιρτήμασι βάκχα.¹⁴⁰

As a foal with its grazing mother, the bacchant takes her swift-footed leg with her leaping.

¹³³ Euripides *Bacchae* 748.

¹³⁴ Euripides *Bacchae* 1090.

¹³⁵ Eg, Cassandra in the *Agamemnon*, the maids in the *Odyssey*.

¹³⁶ Euripides *Bacchae* 956-7.

¹³⁷ Sappho 30.

¹³⁸ Euripides *Bacchae* 1364-5; Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1444.

¹³⁹ Euripides *Bacchae* 862-76.

¹⁴⁰ Euripides *Bacchae* 166-7.

αἶ δ' ἐκλιποῦσαι ποικίλ' ὡς πῶλοι ζυγά,

βακχεῖον ἀντέκλαζον ἀλλήλαις μέλος.¹⁴¹

And some, as foals having abandoned coloured yokes, were singing a bacchant song together.

Both of these two passages describe the effect that Dionysos has had on the women, the first (166-67) being a comparison drawn by the chorus of Dionysos' followers, and the second (1054-57) from the perspective of the messenger, and so an outside view of the women. Seaford has commented that the young women compared to foals with their mothers may have actually been with their mothers on the mountain, taking a more literal interpretation of this image where the point of the comparison is that the women are likened to horses.¹⁴² This is in contrast to placing emphasis on the specific youth of the foal in the metaphor. However, the simile reads with the focus on the foal, rather than the mare, and it may be more appropriate to understand this simile as describing the state of vulnerability that the women have been subjected to by Dionysos. The later passage (1054-57), where the women are foals who have left the yoke is considered by Seaford to be especially appropriate because yoking an animal was a common image of what marriage was for the bride, and so leaving the yoke implies the disruption of the marital home.¹⁴³ However, a similar metaphor is also used by Euripides of Orestes for erratic behaviour, so if the simile is not exclusively appropriate for women who have abandoned a marriage, it may still be understood in terms of domestic disruption.¹⁴⁴ The specified youth of the foal also suggests inexperience in being yoked, and a reluctance to be domesticated. Kirk's commentary interprets the foal (lines 166-7) as

¹⁴¹ Euripides *Bacchae* 1056-7.

¹⁴² Seaford 1996 p. 166.

¹⁴³ Seaford 1996 p. 223. This concept was also more fully explained by Seaford (1988, p.127) as the difference between the wildness Artemis inspires in women, which is a temporary state as a prelude to marriage, and of Dionysos who renews the opposition to marriage which ought to have been overcome in the marital transition (see also chapter seven, on the taming of women in marriage). Therefore, Seaford convincingly argues that by "leaving the yoke", the women are not part of the wild as preceding marriage, but rather as a disruption of it.

¹⁴⁴ Euripides *Orestes* 45: πῶλος ὡς ὑπὸ ζυγοῦ (*as a foal from the yoke*).

symbolising freedom and closeness to nature, but also vulnerability.¹⁴⁵ Again, these similes are comparable to the benign comparisons found in lyric poetry or the victimisation of Iphigeneia and Polyxena during their sacrifices which stress the youth, innocence and vulnerability of the girls or women they describe. Therefore, such similes are unexpected points of comparison for maddened women who violently kill both animals and Pentheus.

This disparity between the actual actions of the Theban women and the animals which are used to describe their behaviour is curious, but explanations can be proposed with consideration of how the women and other individuals are characterised. There is a strong theme of hunting running throughout the play and the inversion of the hunter and the hunted. The wider context of this theme of hunting through the *Bacchae* can be easily read through Pentheus' experience, where he himself begins the play intending to confine Dionysos and hunt down the Theban women, yet he ends up the victim of both Dionysos and the women. The point at which the roles of hunter and hunted change can be seen at line 810, when Pentheus begins to go along with what Dionysos suggests. Like Pentheus, the Theban women are also presented as not holding a fixed role as either hunters or prey. Kirk, for instance, has commented on the transition between the hunter and his quarry with reference to Pentheus and Dionysos as underlying the entire play, and mentions that this is also indirectly suggested by Agaue's description of the women as hounds which are hunted by men.¹⁴⁶ This fluidity in the role of hunter and hunted it is clear in the metaphors used to describe the women. For instance, Agaue's description of the women as hunted dogs:

ἢ δ' ἀνεβόησεν: ὦ δρομάδες ἐμαὶ κύνες,

θηρώμεθ' ἀνδρῶν τῶνδ' ὑπ': ἀλλ' ἔπεισθέ μοι,

¹⁴⁵ Kirk 1979 p.43

¹⁴⁶ Kirk 1979: p.13; see below for the comparison.

ἔπεσθε θύρσοις διὰ χερῶν ὠπλισμένοι.¹⁴⁷

But she cried: "O my running dogs, we are hunted by these men; but follow me, follow armed with thyrsos in your hands."

In this description, the women are imagined as dogs (an already ambiguous animal) which feel threatened, and this results in their turning to attack in perceived defence. The metaphor of the women as dogs is also later echoed by the chorus who call the Theban women dogs.¹⁴⁸ The dog imagery is an especially appropriate simile when the use of dog metaphors for women is considered in other contexts: from Helen's and Klytemnestra's self-identifying as dogs as discussed above, it is never clear precisely what is meant by such a comparison. The established ambiguity of dog metaphors when used for women is especially appropriate for characters which are sometimes presented as under attack but also sometimes as the attackers themselves. This same ambiguity is possibly the best method of understanding the other animalistic metaphors throughout the *Bacchae*.

Despite Euripides using predominantly unthreatening animals in the women's characterisation, they are clearly shown to be violent and powerful through the literal text of the play: they tear cattle apart, wear fawnskins,¹⁴⁹ and Agaue even unknowingly implies that she herself is a lioness or gorgon.¹⁵⁰ Barlow has discussed Pentheus' use of animal tracking and hunting language directed at the maddened women and understood this as Pentheus regarding the women in bestial terms; both

¹⁴⁷ Euripides *Bacchae* 731-3.

¹⁴⁸ Euripides *Bacchae* 977.

¹⁴⁹ While this behaviour is not exclusive to the women (Kadmos and Teirsias also wear fawn skins), it is indicative of the wildness surrounding Dionysos.

¹⁵⁰ Euripides *Bacchae* 734-9. This occurs when Agaue does not recognise Pentheus and states that his mother must have been a lioness or gorgon (988-90).

the women and Dionysus are prey to be hunted down.¹⁵¹ Therefore, despite their violent behaviour in the play, the women are still considered to be potential prey. Yet, the women are also characterised with a gentler and maternal side in some of their relations to animals: they hold young gazelles, and mothers who have abandoned infants feed wolf cubs with their milk.¹⁵² This nurturing side to the women's actions, that they are considered to be prey by Pentheus, and that they are very much shown to be victims of the Dionysian madness shows the women to be vulnerable themselves, and primarily hunted characters rather than hunters. This reading could explain the use of predominantly meek and vulnerable animals such as birds, deer and foals to characterise the Theban women as victims of both Dionysos and Pentheus.

An alternative reading of this inconsistency between the similes used to describe the women and the way they are shown to behave in the text could be that there is a breaking down of the divide between the literal and metaphorical worlds of the women and the animals. As noted in his introduction to the play, Dodds states that if you tear an animal to pieces and eat it warm and bleeding, you add its vital powers to your own, and so the women are absorbing animalistic characteristics.¹⁵³ The absorbing of animalistic characteristics through association with non-human creatures is also a potential interpretation of the representations of maenads holding animals in archaic pottery painting.¹⁵⁴ The *Bacchae* strongly conflates femininity with the animal world: it is the women, not men, who are driven out into nature, and Segal has connected the robing scene of Pentheus as that of a transformation from male to female, and from human to beast-victim.¹⁵⁵

While Segal does not explicitly connect the two, the obvious implication is that Pentheus' transformation is that of male-human to female-animal as he is only able to be "sacrificed" once he

¹⁵¹ Barlow 1982: p.111.

¹⁵² Euripides *Bacchae* 695-701.

¹⁵³ Dodds p. xvii-xviii.

¹⁵⁴ See chapter four: Maenads.

¹⁵⁵ Segal 1985 p.158. This idea can also be understood with regards to Seidensticker's (1979) analysis of how Pentheus' death clearly mimics a sacrificial ritual (pp.182-8).

has become “female”. Such a conflation between the metaphorical and reality could also serve as a reading of the substitution of a deer for Iphigeneia during her sacrifice, where the disappearance of Iphigeneia and appearance of a deer allows room for various interpretations as to what extent the deer is associated with Iphigeneia.¹⁵⁶

Several differences can be seen between the use of animal metaphors for women in the Homeric and lyric traditions with the use of them in tragedy. As demonstrated in the *Agamemnon*, lion similes come to represent a greater degree of violence in female character, and dog similes, while still ambiguous, come to have more explicitly negative connotations. Both bird and deer imagery continue to be used to represent vulnerability and sexuality, although the emphasis on sacrificial animals is also used to emphasise the victimisation of female characters, especially in death. Generally, women such as Klytemnestra, Medea, and the Theban women are depicted with greater power than the women who are compared to animals in the previous literature; but some are also made more vulnerable: Iphigeneia’s reduction to a sacrifice could be compared to the hanged maids as birds in the *Odyssey*, yet her treatment as an individual rather than as a whole group allows for a more sympathetic reading. Pomeroy has suggested that differences between Homer and classical tragedy are due to an evolution of the *polis* and codes of behaviour which resulted in an uncomfortable placement of women, resulting in many tragedies portraying women in rebellion against the norms of society.¹⁵⁷ This may explain the seemingly more damning use of animal metaphors for women like Klytemnestra. In contrast, the emphasis on sacrifice through women like Iphigeneia and Polyxena, and the actions of the Theban women of the *Bacchae* as partaking in a sacrifice of Pentheus, may be related to the genre of tragedy as symbolic sacrifice, a shared emotional experience of killing.¹⁵⁸ The progression of time, with consideration of a different genre

¹⁵⁶ Euripides *Iphigeneia at Aulis* 1580-89 describes Iphigeneia vanishing at the moment of death, and a deer appearing in her place.

¹⁵⁷ Pomeroy 1975 p.97.

¹⁵⁸ Seidensticker 1979.

and a variety of types of female characters would allow for the varied use of animal imagery for women and for these animals to have developed more established uses for specific characteristics.

Chapter Four

Maenads in Pottery Painting

As the literary record presents women who are not under the control of men as wild animals, such as Klytemnestra, so too does the artistic record represent wild women who subvert their expected gender role as animalistic. Maenads are very clearly represented as being part of the animal world through their dominion over animals, and the methods through which this association is drawn can be understood as attributing animal characteristics to the women themselves. Such close association with their animals is vastly dissimilar to the representation of women with birds on white-ground lekythoi, for example, where the birds appear to hold symbolism separate to the women they are shown with.¹⁵⁹ The literary record previously discussed often compares women to more docile or domestic creatures such as birds, fawns, dogs, and horses; although an element of savagery is also implied with lion similes. However, maenads are more consistently depicted with a range of wilder animals and the ways in which the association is created is more savage. The animals which maenads are most frequently depicted with are snakes, deer, and large felines, although other animals do also feature. The methods of association vary for each of these animals, although two general themes of the maenads' approach to animals emerge: one of savagery towards animals, and the other where wild animals appear to be reduced to tame creatures. It also appears that maenads are something of an icon of wild women with animals; some of the iconography associated with maenads or Dionysian scenes can be recognised in other representations of women with animals, resulting in unusual or conflated iconography.

¹⁵⁹ See Appendix A.

While there is some division in the scholarship as to whether the female companions of Dionysus and the satyrs ought to be described as maenads or nymphs, according to Henrichs, what clearly distinguishes a maenad is the animals that she carries.¹⁶⁰ Hedreen, however, rejects the use of the use of the term 'maenad' for the women in pottery painting, citing the use of the word for the maddened Theban women but not Dionysos' original followers (the chorus) in the *Bacchae*.¹⁶¹ A similar view is also expressed by Carpenter, who believes that during the first half of the fifth century Athenians would have understood the women to be nymphs connected to Dionysos' youth, and would therefore not be mortal maenads.¹⁶² For the purposes of this chapter, it is not so important to distinguish between those women considered nymphs who freely worship Dionysos and the women who are driven mad and are temporarily associated with him. Both sets of women are presented as existing outside of the conventional gender role for a mature woman, and so are presented as wild and animalistic. Therefore, while the term 'maenad' might be most appropriate for mortal women who are in a state of madness,¹⁶³ even those figures which might be considered nymphs are shown as permanently existing in a role which is similar to the women who temporarily abandon their husbands and children, such as in the *Bacchae*. Therefore, the women in pottery painting who are shown with animals will be called maenads, following the conventional use of the term,¹⁶⁴ rather than attempting to draw a distinction between the women follow Dionysos of their own free will and those who are maddened. Additionally, the use of the term as such allows for the

¹⁶⁰ Henrichs 1987 p.103. Edward's earlier study also distinguished between 'nymphs' who do not have Dionysian attributes (*nebris*, snake, thyrsos) and accompany satyrs, and 'maenads' who do appear with such attributes (Edwards 1960 p.80). See also Carpenter 1986 pp.79-80, who considers "nymphs" to be semi-divine spirits associated with nature, while "maenads" are the frenzied female followers of Dionysos.

¹⁶¹ Hedreen 1994 pp.47-53.

¹⁶² Carpenter 1997 p.52.

¹⁶³ As the name 'maenad' (mad woman) would suggest.

¹⁶⁴ For instance, as Edwards 1960 p.80 describes the term: "figures ... wearing the *nebris*, or fawnskin over their robe and carrying snakes in their hands." While not an exhaustive list of iconographic characteristics, the *nebris* and holding of snakes give an indication of the type of figure which is frequently described as a maenad.

distinction between artistic and literary iterations of similar figures to be made which are treated separately.¹⁶⁵

The most recognisable iconographic attribute of a maenad is that she wears the *nebris*, or fawn skin.¹⁶⁶ As has been pointed out by Edwards, the *nebris* is not exclusive to the maenad, nor confined to Dionysian scenes.¹⁶⁷ However, it is frequently employed as the traditional dress of maenads. When a person wears an animal skin it implies that the individual has killed the creature herself, here denoting the brutality of the maenad who wears it.¹⁶⁸ While maenads do frequently wear the *nebris*, they are also frequently depicted wearing panther skins, or the *pardalis*.¹⁶⁹ Because of the implication that wearing the skin carries, to wear a panther skin should denote a far greater degree of ferocity than that of the *nebris*.¹⁷⁰ The representations of maenads wearing animal skins can therefore be understood as characterising them as wild and ferocious at the least, and possibly as even animalistic themselves. Where a maenad is shown wearing a panther skin, this would carry

¹⁶⁵ The women of the *Bacchae* are discussed in chapter three, and are referred to as the Theban women, in order to emphasise that they are one group under a wider umbrella of female Dionysian worshippers which also includes the chorus in the play.

¹⁶⁶ For instance, black figure neck amphora, c. 550-500, New York: Metropolitan Museum 06.1021.85; BAPD 1071.

¹⁶⁷ Edwards 1960 p.81. For example, a white-ground lekythos depicts Artemis with a swan wearing a *nebris* (white-ground lekythos, Pan Painter, c. 500-490. St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum: 6 2363. *L/IMC* Artemis 969, BAPD 206365). It is also worn by male figures – for instance, Hermes (Athenian black-figure hydria, c. 575-525, Rome, Musei Capitolini: 65; BAPD 100); Apollo (Athenian black-figure krater, c.520-510, New York, Metropolitan Museum: 07.286.76; BAPD 310); Theseus (Athenian black-figure neck amphora, c.550-500, Hannover, Kestner Museum: 752; BAPD 3255).

¹⁶⁸ As was mentioned in the previous chapter, commenting on the *Bacchae*, Dodds stated that if you tear an animal to pieces and eat it warm and bleeding, you are adding its vital powers to your own, and so the maenads depicted as such in pottery painting can be compared to the Theban women in the play as both can be understood as absorbing animalistic characteristics by behaving as predatory animals themselves (Dodds 1960 p. xvii-xviii).

¹⁶⁹ Maenads who wear a panther skin can be depicted as violently fighting off a satyr, for example, an Athenian red-figure cup which depicts a maenad aiming her thyrsos at a satyr, c.500-450, Munich, Antikensammlungen: 2654; BAPD 204729.

¹⁷⁰ To suggest this would also require the implication that when a maenad wears a fawn skin rather than a panther skin, she is also to be associated with the characteristics of the more timid deer. While this would fit neatly with the associations between women and deer seen in Lyric, maenads are clearly not being shown as meek, but rather maddened wild women. One opinion of maenads as wearing deerskins in order to be associated with certain properties of deer is that of Maxwell-Stuart (1971) who surprisingly suggests that donning a deerskin may have been believed to offer some protection against snake bites: presumably a desirable trait considering the maenad's predilection for brandishing snakes.

doubly predatory connotations: firstly that she has killed the panther, and secondly that she might be considered as panther-like herself.

The vicious nature of maenads towards the animals with which they are associated is also expressed far more obviously than the violence connoted by the wearing of animal skins. A black figure amphora (figure 1) depicts two maenads, one of who is holding a fawn over her back while both she and her companion reach towards a lion.¹⁷¹ This representation appears to suggest a subtle threat to the deer and may be understood as a step towards other depictions where maenads are shown holding animals which they have torn in half. Depictions such as figure 2, a red-figure amphora, clearly shows the extent to which maenads can exercise their vicious abilities to kill animals such as deer with their bare hands, as is only implied by their frequent depiction wearing deer skins.¹⁷² The concept of maenads as women wild enough to tear animals apart with their bare hands is also extended to representations of maenads as so uninhibited as to even rip men limb from limb.¹⁷³ In such instances, the maenad has evolved beyond simply having power over the animal world to being a threat to human men.

Yet the power that maenads wield over animals is not exclusively violent. Vase paintings also express this concept through maenads treating wild creatures as akin to domestic animals. Their methods for holding snakes, and felines such as panthers and lions, appear quite unrealistic when one considers the wild nature of these animals. Maenads frequently hold snakes by their middle and

¹⁷¹ Athenian black figure amphora by the Orosphos painter, c. 525-475, University (MS), University of Mississippi, University Museums: 77.3.58. BAPD 361412.

¹⁷² Red-figure amphora, c. 475-425, attributed to the Achilles Painter, Paris, Cabinet de Médailles 357; BAPD 213822.

¹⁷³ For instance, an Athenian red-figure stamnos depicts maenads holding detached human legs, c.525-475, attributed to the Berlin painter, Oxford, Ashmolean Museum: 1912.1165, BAPD 201963. Another example depicts maenads holding the severed upper torso and head of Pentheus (named): Athenian red-figure psykter, c. 550-500, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts: 10.221a-f, BAPD 200077.

appear to be waving the snakes around without fear of being struck at.¹⁷⁴ The preferred method of carrying panthers, however, is to hold them up against the maenad's chest, such as in figure 3,¹⁷⁵ where the maenad on the left holds the panther from underneath, or the panther can be hugged against the maenad's chest.¹⁷⁶ Such methods may be plausible were the maenads carrying domestic cats, but they would be grossly inappropriate for holding onto a wild panther. Henrichs has explained this: "while assimilating these predators to more domesticated animals, and therefore de-emphasising their wildness, the artists also seem to transfer the latent predatory power to the maenads who handle them."¹⁷⁷ This explanation is consistent with the more vicious depictions of maenads and seems to logically bridge the divide between the violent and non-violent maenads well. Additionally, there is a motif in maenad imagery that represents the women riding bulls.¹⁷⁸ This appears to fit into the same conceptual theme of maenads being able to control wild animals. In all such instances, the maenads treat very wild animals (such as panthers, bulls and snakes) more like domestic animals, and do not appear to have any concern for their personal safety around such creatures. Maenads can be represented with some docile animals without any overt threat,¹⁷⁹ but there is usually a more sinister, or at least ambiguous, side to these representations. For instance, figure 3 depicts two maenads holding animals amicably, but the third wears a panther skin.

Whether the maenads are represented as violent or more amicable towards the creatures they are associated with, the animal connection appears to represent domination over the animals with

¹⁷⁴ For example, see figure 2.

¹⁷⁵ Athenian red figure cup, c. 525-475, attributed to London E 2 Painter by Beazley, Paris, Musée du Louvre: G93. BAPD 202289.

¹⁷⁶ Athenian red figure amphora, c. 525-475, attributed to the Nikoxenos Painter, Paris, Musée du Louvre: G46. BAPD 202097.

¹⁷⁷ Henrichs 1987 p.98.

¹⁷⁸ For instance: Black figure amphora, c.525-475, Oxford, Ashmolean Museum: 1960.540, BAPD 1573. Black figure amphora, c. 525-475, Bologna, Museo Civico Archeologico: C5, BAPD 8157. Both of these examples depict women sitting on bulls with grape vines, indicating that it is likely maenads rather than Europa being depicted, although Europa is often shown with similar iconography.

¹⁷⁹ Athenian black figure amphora which depicts a maenad resting her hand on the neck of a deer, 550-500, attributed to the Group of Berkeley 8.3376 by Beazley, New York (NY), Gallatin. BAPD 302911.

which they are associated. This places the maenad in a position of subverting the metaphorical predator/prey dynamic seen in the literary, artistic, and mythological representation of Greek sexuality.¹⁸⁰ In this dynamic, women would be expected to play the role of the prey or the dominated creature, while men would be the predator. This dynamic can be seen in the portrayal of women in Greek lyric, where the metaphorical representation of women as animals favoured meek or tame creatures, such as fawns, doves, and horses, especially when they are presented as a romantic or erotic interest.¹⁸¹ This concept was even treated somewhat explicitly in some poems, such as where a male narrator was imagined as a lion snatching a female fawn.¹⁸² For maenads to be overtly represented as predators is at odds with the general model established in the literary tradition during the archaic and classical periods. This inconsistent construction is heightened in the instances where maenads are represented as violent towards predatory animals, such as panthers. For a maenad to prey on predators would imply that she not only subverts her expected sexual role for her gender, but is elevated even above the position which should dominate her; that is, she is not only depicted as a predator herself, but this violence may be directed at men.¹⁸³

In this context, it is also appropriate to consider the maenads' relationship with satyrs, their male companions, in order to fully explore which aspects of the maenads' representation are due to their female gender. While satyrs are clearly shown to also be connected to the animal world, they themselves are physically animalistic, rather than closely associated with animals, as the maenads

¹⁸⁰ See chapter seven: the metaphor of courtship and hunting. It will be argued that (mortal) women must be represented as the animalised prey while men are understood as the hunters, or predators. This is not exclusive to heterosexual courtship, but the predator/prey divide is more strongly represented than in homosexual interpretations of this metaphor.

Hedreen (1994), while discussing the *Bacchae*, also suggests that the blurring of gender roles seen in maenads is present in the effeminate appearance of Dionysos.

¹⁸¹ See chapter two.

¹⁸² Theognis *Elegiac Poems* 949-54: 949-950 and 1278cd.

¹⁸³ There are several instances in which maenads are shown tearing men limb from limb that could be seen to show more literal support for this metaphorical concept of maenads being represented as acting as predators to men, such as is described in the *Bacchae*. See n.173 above for visual depictions of maenads tearing men apart.

are. This connection with the animal world without literally being animals is present in literature where women may be depicted metaphorically as animals or understood as having animalistic characteristics, yet few circumstances push this animalistic link into a literal representation.¹⁸⁴ The relationship between maenads and satyrs is also illuminating in the context of the maenad's dominion over animals. With the satyrs placed more clearly *in* the animal world, which the maenads have at least some control *over*, it could be expected that there might be instances where maenads are depicted as having power over the satyrs. McNally discusses the relationship between maenads and satyrs, concluding that a development in hostilities between maenads and satyrs was caused by a developed closeness of maenads to the natural world of animals.¹⁸⁵ To follow McNally would suggest that the greater the association between maenads and animals, the more maenads would resist the sexual advances of satyrs. This again places the maenad in a position where she is subverting the expected role of being "prey", and is not submitting to male control.¹⁸⁶

While the maenad's representation as a predatory woman appears to set her as subverting the expected gender role, there are other instances of women being depicted as having physical power over animals. As was discussed in the Homeric tradition,¹⁸⁷ the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* contain two references which compare female characters to lions: Penelope, for whom the simile emphasises

¹⁸⁴ While the majority of this thesis discusses the metaphorical understanding of women as animalistic but not as literally animals, chapter six describes mythological traditions of metamorphoses of women into animals and appendix B catalogues some instances of animal-woman hybrid monsters which creates a visual reality in which the feminine and the animal is merged.

¹⁸⁵ McNally 1984, p.136. McNally's view is also supported a decade later by Hedreen 1994, at least to the extent that a change in the attributes associated with maenads can be connected to a growing loss of interest of the maenad in the satyr (pp.61-64). Hedreen even points out that some of the early maenads who resist satyrs use their snakes as a weapon. However, Hedreen's view diverges from McNally somewhat: as the term 'nymph' is preferred to 'maenad', the changing attitude to satyrs is explained by the nymphs' total dedication to Dionysus which does not allow for sexual relationships with satyrs, rather than by an increased association between the nymphs and the natural world (p.65).

¹⁸⁶ For example, maenads can be represented as behaving violently towards satyrs, see McNally fig.9 p.126 and fig 13 p.131. The relationship between maenads and satyrs is not discussed here as it is a separate type of representation from maenads with animals.

¹⁸⁷ See chapter one.

her as characteristically strong but in a position of vulnerability;¹⁸⁸ and Artemis, for whom the comparison serves to stress her role as a destructive goddess.¹⁸⁹ The *Iliad* passage refers to Artemis' power over women, and in the *Odyssey* Penelope is described as a lion trapped by men, which shows these women do not have much power over men themselves (unlike maenads over satyrs), but the comparison to lions is one of power and strength, albeit with limitations. An even more obvious parallel between maenads and the Homeric tradition is that of Kirke. She surrounds herself with wild animals which have been domesticated, and shows herself to be capable of dominion over men through transforming them into animals.¹⁹⁰ The reduction of Kirke's lions and wolves to a comparison to dogs¹⁹¹ is strikingly similar to how maenads can be seen treating wild animals such as panthers akin to domestic animals, without any apparent concern for their wild nature. It is worth noting that these three women who are associated with wild animals in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are all portrayed as being independent of men: at the time of the lion simile Penelope is without either husband or son; Artemis is a virgin goddess; and Kirke turns the men which she encounters into pigs, at least until Odysseus can resist her drugs and Kirke then defaults to him. In this context, as with the maenads and satyrs, it is the men who are physically animalistic (that is, turned into pigs), while the women are closely associated with, and have power over, the animal world. It is worth noting that until maenads are represented as ripping men limb from limb, none of these women have any significant power over men who are not presented as somehow animalistic.

In the same way in which parallels can be seen between maenads and women who are associated with animals in Homer, there appear to be several instances where maenad iconography is conflated with other examples in archaic vase painting of women who are associated with animals. One such conflation is that of the maenad with the *Potnia Theron* figure. Such a link is especially

¹⁸⁸ *Odyssey* 4.791-3.

¹⁸⁹ *Iliad* 21.483-4.

¹⁹⁰ *Odyssey* 10.239-40.

¹⁹¹ *Odyssey* 10.216.

evident on an amphora attributed to Nikosthenes the potter (figure 4),¹⁹² where one side of the neck depicts a maenad accompanied by Dionysus, with traditional iconography including vines and an animal skin (figure 4a). The reverse of the neck depicts a woman standing between two symmetrically positioned lions (figure 4b). She holds one by the neck, while her other arm is raised in a similar pose to the maenad on the opposite side. While there is a strong similarity between the depiction of the woman with lions to the other maenad, she also clearly recalls the iconography of the *Potnia Theron*; Beazley describes this figure as a maenad, but also suggests it may depict Artemis or *Potnia Theron*.¹⁹³ One such representation of *Potnia Theron* that is typical in its iconography is that found on the handles of the François Vase.¹⁹⁴ Here, the *Potnia Theron* grasps two animals by the neck: a panther and a deer; two animals with which she is often associated. The composition, as well as the inclusion of a large feline typical of *Potnia Theron* is significantly similar to the possible maenad depicted on the vase potted by Nikosthenes, however the portrayal appears more an influence or conflation than an imitation. An association between the two iconographies is perfectly plausible as maenads are constantly shown to have dominion over their animals, just as *Potnia Theron* does, as her name, ‘mistress of animals’, suggests.

A further parallel between maenads and other women associated with animals is that of a depiction of a woman identified as Thetis. A black figure skyphos (figure 5) depicts a man grappling with a woman who holds a snake in her fist, identified as Peleus and Thetis, and the couple is surrounded by women wearing leopard skins and holding various animals, including snakes, with vines in the background.¹⁹⁵ As with the *Potnia Theron*-like maenad discussed above, the conflation of Dionysian iconography with that of Thetis is probably drawing on the common concept of the strong

¹⁹² Athenian black figure amphora, c. 550-500, attributed to Nikosthenes the potter, Vatican City, Museo Gregoriano Etrusco Vaticano: 17716. BAPD 302750.

¹⁹³ Beazley *ABV* 216.1.

¹⁹⁴ François Vase, c. 600-550, Florence, Museo Archeologico: 4209. BAPD 300000.

¹⁹⁵ Athenian black figure skyphos, 525-475, attributed to the Painter of Munich 2100, Athens, National Museum: 12584. BAPD 302665.

association with animals which maenads share with Thetis. The difficulty of portraying a metamorphosis while still maintaining a recognisable character is obvious: for Thetis, this problem is typically reconciled by representing her in the form of a woman, while referring to her animal nature by including animals, such as snakes, in the depiction, and creating the association by Thetis holding the snake.¹⁹⁶ The conventional depiction of Thetis in this way, who can be understood as a figure who transforms into various animals, may invite the interpretation of similar maenadic representations as expressing the animal-like nature of the maenad through the creatures she holds.

A final unusual conflation of maenad and other imagery, is that of an Athenian black figure amphora which depicts a winged woman riding a bull with vines in the background (figure 6).¹⁹⁷ While the image of a woman riding a bull is frequently depicted in maenad imagery,¹⁹⁸ the inclusion of wings is curious as this is not the norm for depictions of maenads, yet the vines indicate a Dionysian setting. While the composition of this image is very similar to many other instances where women riding bulls are more easily identifiable as maenads often by the inclusion of grape vines, there is also little which clearly distinguishes these from depictions of Europa on the bull.¹⁹⁹ Such a minimal yet significant distinction by the addition of wings suggests that this is a further example of conflated iconography, although it is not clear what exactly has been conflated.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ By representing the scene in this way, the painter has also demonstrated an apparent reluctance to depict a woman as physically or literally an animal, but rather to emphasise the animal connection through a more metaphorical method. The artistic depiction of women transforming into animals, including Thetis, is further discussed in chapter six.

¹⁹⁷ Athenian black figure amphora, c. 550-500, attributed to the Painter of Munich 1519 by Beazley, Los Angeles (CA), County Museum: A5933.50.28. BAPD 302958.

¹⁹⁸ See n.178 above for examples.

¹⁹⁹ For instance, Europa on the bull is depicted on an Athenian red-figure amphora, c.475-425, London, British Museum: 1856.1226.48, BAPD 214181.

²⁰⁰ The addition of wings might suggest that a goddess is intended; Iris may be a possibility (for example, Athenian red-figure skyphos, c. 475-425, attributed to the Penthesilea Painter, Berlin, Antikensammlung: F2591, BAPD 211713) or Nike (for example, Athenian red-figure lekythos depicting Athena and Nike, c. 475-425, Hannover, Kestner Museum: 1968.93, BAPD 1925), both of whom would find wings useful in the swiftness required of their roles. A comparison could also perhaps be drawn to *Potnia Theron* considering she

These examples demonstrate that the representation of maenads could be flexible in order to express imagery of other women who were associated with animals in Greek mythology. Such confluences may have occurred owing to maenads being perceived as a model for wild women who were associated with animals. In the example of Thetis' metamorphosis being expressed through her holding a snake in a similar method to that of a maenad, the painter is able to draw on the established iconography of maenads as the 'wild women associated with animals' default, and can use a similar image to express a variation of a similar concept. Instead of a maenad appearing to have control over the specific animal which she carries, the implication is that Thetis likewise has control over her form transforming into the creature she holds. Similarly, the image of the possible maenad which clearly draws on the iconography of the *Potnia Theron* also takes advantage of existing ideas surrounding a woman who holds two animals by the neck to express her domination over the animal world to communicate the maenad's control over her animals.

The representation of maenads with animals is quite different to that of other women with animals in the literary record. While the association with wild animals, such as lions, is present in the Homeric tradition, the women in those contexts are still presented as having limitations to their ferocity. The maenad is also far more deeply immersed in the animal world; her association being a close control over her animals rather than a metaphorical comparison. The methods of this control also vary according to the ferocity of the animal involved: savagery towards deer or other timid animals, but apparent domestication of very wild creatures such as panthers or snakes. These two generalisations seem to allow for the greatest possible emphasis of the maenad's power, in that she

is also often represented as winged (such as is depicted on François Vase, see n.194) and the possible connections between her and maenads have already been considered. An Athenian red-figure cup also depicts a winged woman (possibly Iris) standing beside a bull holding a fillet (Athenian red-figure cup, attributed to the Penthesilea Painter, c.475-425, Oxford, Ashmolean Museum: 1931.12, BAPD 211638).

can be associated with the wildness absent in a panther she holds, or she demonstrates an ability to kill the deer whose skin she wears. The evidence of iconographical conflation of maenads with other wild women, such as Thetis or *Potnia Theron*, also suggests that maenads might have been considered an archetypical representation of a wild woman. For their iconography to be drawn on in order to represent other wild women, it seems a reasonable assumption that in vase painting maenads represented the peak of animalistic women.

Chapter Five

Ritual Associations of Women and Animals: The *Arkteia*

The conflation of women and animals is not limited to literary metaphors, but can also be seen in the expression of ritual concepts, as will be discussed here through the *arkteia*. There is little that can actually be known about these rites for Artemis in which girls acted as ‘little bears’ due to very limited evidence, but this has not prevented various scholars speculating on what the girls involved would have done for this ritual. For the purposes of this chapter, the focus shall be on what can plausibly be assumed from this limited evidence and how such a ritual would have been reflective of the wider Greek associations between women and animals, including references to other ritual contexts. General themes which have been presented by scholarship surrounding the *arkteia* that are relevant here include the interchangeability of the girls and bears, the possible irrelevance of the specific animal involved, and the purpose of the *arkteia* to purge a girl’s wildness in preparation for marriage (as is the general modern perception).²⁰¹

Before any speculation on the details of the *arkteia* can be justified, it is wise to begin with the ancient sources for this ritual. This evidence is limited to a reference in Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata* to a character having been a Brauronian bear, and some fragmentary *krateriskoi*.²⁰² The *Lysistrata* passage is as follows:

κᾶτ’ ἔχουσα τὸν κροκωτὸν ἄρκτος ἢ Βραυρωνίως²⁰³

... then wearing the saffron coloured (robes), I was a bear at the Brauronian festival...

²⁰¹ For example, Cole 1984 pp.421-2; Sourvinou-Inwood 1988 p. 111; Vernant 1991 p.218-9

²⁰² First published by Kahil 1965.

²⁰³ Aristophanes *Lysistrata* 645.

While it is not contemporary with the classical period, the *Suda* provides a little more detail, including an origin story for the rite as retribution for a bear sacred to Artemis having been killed, and suggests that a *parthenos* could not live with a husband before she had played the bear.²⁰⁴

While it cannot be certain if the same festival is being discussed, the Brauronia is also mentioned as one of the penteteric festivals by [Aristotle].²⁰⁵

The other source of evidence cited for the *arkteia* is the *krateriskoi* found primarily at Brauron but also at Mounichia and a few other sites, first published by Lily Kahil.²⁰⁶ These *krateriskoi* all date from the sixth and fifth centuries B.C., and where girls are depicted, they are considered by Kahil to “certainly represent the *arktoi* of Aristophanes”.²⁰⁷ Some of these depict girls running or dancing, or apparently participating in ritual activity.²⁰⁸ In her iconographic study, Sourvinou-Inwood found the ideal age for the girls participating based on these depictions to be ten years old, although she found the “bears” could also be as young as five.²⁰⁹ Sourvinou-Inwood’s methodology for determining age is based on interpretation of other representations of female figures in Greek iconography, and therefore it is likely it has at least some limitations of subjectivity.²¹⁰ However, in the absence of other evidence, Sourvinou-Inwood’s study will be used with caution because her findings do appear to be consistent with the *Lysistrata* passage. While it is tempting to take such visual representations of girls at the precinct of Artemis at Brauron to depict the same ritual mentioned in *Lysistrata*, Faraone has questioned the use of these *krateriskoi* as evidence for the *arkteia*, suggesting that they could represent some other festival of Artemis at the sanctuary, and

²⁰⁴ *Suda* Adler alpha 3958

²⁰⁵ Aristotle *Athenian Constitution* 54.7.

²⁰⁶ Kahil 1965 pl. 7-10.

²⁰⁷ Kahil 1983 p.237. A similar level of certainty that the fragments depict the *arkteia* has also been expressed by Sourvinou-Inwood who believes Kahil to be “obviously, right beyond any possible doubt” that the *krateriskoi* show girls as “bears” performing ritual acts belonging to the cult of Artemis Brauronia (1971, p.341).

²⁰⁸ For example, Kahil 1965 pl.8 n. 1-5, pl. 10 n. 3-7.

²⁰⁹ Sourvinou-Inwood 1988 pp.21, 23, 67.

²¹⁰ Sourvinou-Inwood’s method and interpretation is described 1988 pp.39-66.

Hamilton earlier cautioned against using literary evidence to interpret the pottery.²¹¹ Despite these views, one of the *krateriskoi* does represent a man and a woman wearing bear masks or with bear heads.²¹² A clear link between these *krateriskoi* and ritual at Brauron involving bears in some way does make it plausible that the *arkteia* is being represented. However, some scepticism is not unfounded and the *krateriskoi*, like most of the other sources mentioned here, should probably be used as evidence for the *arkteia* only with caution.

Considering the above evidence, all that can be extracted from the ancient literature above is that a ritual existed in which girls “were” or “played” bears at Brauron, a precinct dedicated to Artemis. If this was connected to the Brauronia mentioned by [Aristotle], it would make the bear activities part of a penteteric festival; and if the *krateriskoi* do depict the same ritual, then something of the activities involved in the *arkteia* may be guessed at, but without certainty.²¹³ With so little that can be known for certain about this ritual, it may be questioned what the value is in engaging with the wealth of speculation surrounding the *arkteia*. However, since there appears to have existed a ritual in which girls “became” or pretended to be bears around the age of ten, this would seem to fit very well within the wider cultural associations of women (and girls) with animals, if for a period in their lives they were actually expected to imitate, or otherwise be understood as, a bear. Such a ritual as the *arkteia* would suggest that at some level there was an understanding of an interchangeability of

²¹¹ Faraone 2003 p.46; Hamilton 1989 p.462.

²¹² Attic krater fragments, c.430-420, Basel: Cahn HC 503. Drawing first published in Kahil 1977 fig. C; colour photos are also published in Reeder 1995 p.327. Kahil interprets these as representing people wearing bear masks (1977 pp. 92-3); however, Hamilton prefers an explanation that a transformation is taking place in this depiction, possibly of Kallisto (1989 pp.462-3). Regardless of which interpretation is accepted, this image does provide a correlation of bears in some form with the ritual depicted.

²¹³ The scholarship contains some level of speculation on what the *arkteia* would have involved: some examples of suggested explanations include the following. Nielsen has attempted to describe the ritual as involving ritual race, dance, and drama based on the images on the *krateriskoi* (2009 pp.87-95). Sourvinou-Inwood (1988) has suggested that the bears would have been selected by tribe (p.113), that possibly one tenth of Athenian girls would have participated (p.114), they were dressed or naked according to phase in the *arkteia* (pp.119-124), and that the shedding of the *krokotos* marked the end of the ritual (p.134). Reeder (1995) believes “a ritual chase would act out the well-known metaphor whereby the male pursuit of the female functioned as a socialising device, with the capture of the female the equivalent of domestication.” (p.322). See also chapter seven on courtship as hunting.

girls and animals. This type of interchangeability is made clear by some of the apparent aetiological myths surrounding the *arkteia*.

The aition given by the *Suda* states that girls must play the bear as retribution for the death of a tame bear in the temple of Artemis.²¹⁴ While this is not a contemporary account, it does fit within a wider network of similar foundation myths,²¹⁵ of which another significantly similar variant is that of Iphigeneia: according to the *Suda* the girls must act as bears because a bear was killed; and in one tradition, Iphigeneia's death is demanded by Artemis as retribution for the deer killed by Agamemnon.²¹⁶

Within this framework of other mythological traditions, it has been suggested by Clément that the particular animal involved, that is, the bear, is not significant. This is based on the idea of a similar rite for Artemis in which girls would "play the fawn" in the *nebreia* in Thessaly instead of the bear of the *arkteia* at Brauron.²¹⁷ Clément argues for a change in the legend of Iphigeneia which influenced the *arkteia* and *nebreia*. A connection between the story of Iphigeneia and Brauron can be found in Pausanias, who reports that it is said that after leaving the land of the Taurians with the wooden image of Artemis,²¹⁸ Iphigeneia came to Brauron where she left a wooden image of Artemis.²¹⁹ While there is a difference of animal between the bears of the *arkteia* and the deer of Iphigeneia, both do represent a conflation of girls and animals in association with Artemis. The connection of Iphigeneia and Brauron may indicate that the specific animal involved in the tradition may be less

²¹⁴ *Suda* alpha 3958.

²¹⁵ Faraone 2003 p.59 table 3.2 compares myth variants which are relevant to the *Arkteia*, concluding that women or girls would serve as bears (or fawns) to commemorate or replace an animal dedicated to Artemis which was wrongly killed.

²¹⁶ Sophocles *Electra* 566-72.

²¹⁷ Clément 1934 p.407.

²¹⁸ As is consistent with Euripides' *Iphigeneia among the Taurians*, for instance, 1313-16 states Iphigeneia left with the image of the goddess.

²¹⁹ Pausanias 1.33.1, also mentioned at 1.23.7.

important than the association of girls with animals in relation to Artemis. More recently, the rite of the *nebreia* proposed by Clément has been supported by Faraone, who additionally proposed that the “bears” of the *arkteia* may have been a personal dedication to Artemis in the form of temple service, and that temple personnel could be named after animals.²²⁰

Regrettably, Faraone does not provide ancient sources for this claim, however, there are several references which would appear to support this view that temple personnel could be referred to with animal names. Presumably these are amongst what Faraone intended. Pindar mentions the Delphic Bee,²²¹ and “bee-keepers” are mentioned by Aristophanes in association with Artemis.²²² A further connection between Apollo and a potential Delphic Bee, is the story given by Pausanias in which the second Delphic temple was made by bees from wax.²²³ A similar concept can also be seen in Herodotus, where two versions of a story are given, in which temple women are described as birds. In one version, it is women who founded the oracles of Dodona in Greece and Libya, the other account describes two birds bringing the oracle.²²⁴ Herodotus suggests that the dove story arose due to the foreign language of the women sounding like the twittering of birds, making it clear that Herodotus believed both versions to express the same story and ideas. While it may have been little more than narrative metaphor which resulted in the two versions of the legend, such an animalising of women in a religious setting is relevant amongst these other accounts. As this appears to be evidence for the transformation of religious women into birds for legendary record, it would support a concept of at least metaphorical interchangeability of women and animals in a ritual setting.

²²⁰ Faraone 2003 p.57.

²²¹ Pindar *Pythian* 4: 60-1.

²²² Aristophanes *Frogs* 1274.

Elderkin 1939 argues for a very early association of bees with the Ephesian cult of Artemis, tracing the significance of bees, hives, and honey through Minoan and Mycenaean culture.

²²³ Pausanias 10.5.9.

²²⁴ Herodotus 2.54-57.

If a similar metaphorical interchangeability can be applied to the girls and bears in the *arkteia*, then it is worth considering what such an interchangeability with a bear may have meant to those involved with the rite. The special significance of the bear to the *arkteia* has been considered by Lonsdale to relate to the essentially wild and frightening nature of the bear, which is also a tameable creature.²²⁵ “The rite took on a character of a spiritual transformation of the young girl from a wild, disorderly creature ... to a tame and nubile being. The highly complex and ambivalent symbol of this transformation was the bear.”²²⁶ Thus the bear, itself a wild, yet tameable animal, is interpreted by Lonsdale to represent the wild, yet tameable nature of a girl.²²⁷ Many scholars agree that it appears the *arkteia* probably involved symbolism of the transformation of wild girl into tamed woman.²²⁸ To understand the *arkteia* in this way also recalls the mythological tradition of Kallisto.²²⁹ As a follower of Artemis who is transformed into bear after the loss of her virginity, her story can be read as another retelling of the concept in which the transformation from girlhood to adulthood, and therefore also motherhood, is understood through symbolic transformation from virgin girl to bear mother.²³⁰ Considering the *arkteia* as an initiation to adulthood, or a maturation ritual, Sourvinou-Inwood has indicated that some similarities can be found to the *ephebeia* for boys: these centre on the idea that both boys and girls must purge their perceived wildness in order to be appropriately socialised into either warriors or wives.²³¹ If such an interpretation of the *arkteia* is correct, it would

²²⁵ Lonsdale 1993 p.181.

²²⁶ Lonsdale 1993 p.192.

²²⁷ This symbolism is possibly supported in Aristotle *History of Animals* 608a 33-34 where the only species in which the female is braver than the male are the bear and leopard. If the wildness of the girl is the emphasis, it may have been a logical choice to select an animal for which the female was considered especially wild, even as the passage goes on to explicitly state that in humans, women are less spirited than men. Aristotle may also provide evidence for a Greek concept of the maternal aspect of the bear, indicating that when fleeing bears will pick up and carry their cubs (Aristotle *History of animals* 611b 33-4).

²²⁸ For instance, Cole 1984 pp.421-2; Sourvinou-Inwood 1988 p. 111; Lonsdale 1993 p.182. Other evidence for the wider cultural imagining of young women as wild animals is discussed in most other chapters: see especially chapter 7: courtship as hunting.

²²⁹ Recorded in Euripides *Helen* 375; Apollodorus *Library* 3.8; Pausanias 1.25.1, 8.3.6.

²³⁰ As will be discussed in chapter six on metamorphosis myths, most Greek myths in which a woman is transformed into a bird or animal involves her loss of virginity, or some other aspect of her sexuality.

²³¹ Sourvinou-Inwood 1988 p. 111-112.

further demonstrate the interconnection between women and animals as expressing female sexuality, and the anxieties surrounding the “wildness” in women which may be seen as dangerously uncontrollable in such a patriarchal society.

The lack of significant evidence for the *Arkteia* prevents any substantial conclusions from being drawn, however what can be seen is literary evidence that girls could symbolically become bears as part of a ritual for Artemis at Brauron. The *krateriskoi* cannot be definitively read as a visual representation of the same rite, but do also indicate the significance of young girls and possibly bears at Brauron. The combination of these two sources of evidence appear to support the idea that a ritual for girls existed where they were considered to be “bears”. From this, it can be hypothesised that this probably indicated an understanding that there was a particular association between girls and bears, which fitted within a wider association between women and animals. Other literary sources also appear to provide evidence that people could be called animals for ritual purposes, and that possibly the *arkteia* was just one instance of a wider social construct, if we are to accept Clément’s proposition that a very similar rite also existed where girls would “play the fawn” for Artemis. Despite many of the ideas surrounding the *arkteia* being speculative, what can be assumed provides a historical perspective to the wider cultural associations of women and animals, which can otherwise only be seen through literary metaphors, artistic correlation, and mythical narratives.

Chapter Six

Mythological Metamorphoses of Women into Animals

The association between women and animals can be explicitly seen in the mythological traditions of women going through a metamorphosis into an animal. Such stories typically have a core cause that is related to the woman's sexuality, often connected to the loss of her virginity. Metamorphosis myths which will be considered here include, but are not to be limited to, that of Thetis, Kallisto and Io. The animals which are used in these myths are also consistent with other representations of the association between women and the same animals: the bear, lion, and especially birds are discussed throughout this thesis.²³² Due to lack of other evidence, some of the texts and images referred to in this section may fall outside of the archaic and classical periods; however this is in keeping with the approach of Forbes Irving who emphasises the continuity of the basic structure and themes in transformation myths throughout different periods of the classical world.²³³ While preference will be given to evidence dating to the archaic and classical periods, later sources will also be used with the assumption that the general plot and themes of these stories were at least similar in the earlier archaic and classical periods. Such myths of transformation will be limited to instances where women become animals, and will exclude other accounts where women and animal transformations are connected, for example Kirke in the *Odyssey* turning men into animals, as this does not demonstrate the same immediate and interchangeable association of women and animals.

The story of Kallisto provides a good model for several of the other myths to be discussed in this chapter. The literary record provides some variation in the Kallisto myth, although the common

²³² Eg Lions in Homeric and tragic use (chapters one and four respectively), bears in the *arkteia* (chapter five), and birds are commonly used in various media and appear in most chapters.

²³³ Forbes Irving 1990 p.5.

strands indicate she was one of Artemis' followers who was raped by Zeus, transformed into a bear after the discovery of her pregnancy, and she was subsequently shot by Artemis.²³⁴ There is not a great wealth of artistic representations of Kallisto, but instances which do depict her appear to present Kallisto with some bear features, although she remains primarily human in form.²³⁵ A common reading of such representations of these images might be that the process of transformation is being depicted, as has been supported, for instance, by Trendall.²³⁶ However, Davies has argued that the representation of mixed human and animal features, or an apparently incomplete transformation, was rather an iconographic feature to indicate that the transformed figure was originally a human, and so a method to visually indicate a narrative of metamorphosis within a single image.²³⁷ Although it is not possible to know the artist's intentions in creating such a depiction, it does seem likely that the desire to represent a mythological tradition in which a person is transformed into an animal would lend itself to visual representation of both the states of human and non-human, both to indicate a narrative and to enable the viewer to understand which character is depicted. While the Apulian krater fragment does not have enough of the image preserved to interpret it convincingly either way, the Apulian chous does have more of the image preserved. Kallisto sits on a rock, in a position which would seem much more appropriate to her human form than to a bear. However, a child is also present, and if it were her son Arkas, it would

²³⁴ Hesiod *Astronomy* frag. 3 recounts Artemis as the cause of Kallisto's transformation; Apollodorus *Library* 3.8 states it was Zeus who turned her into a bear; Pausanias 1.25.1, 8.3.6-7 gives Hera as turning Kallisto into a bear, as does Ovid *Metamorphoses* 2.409 – 531. Gantz summarises the many variants into two distinct strands of narrative: in the first, Artemis' anger includes turning Kallisto into a bear after her pregnancy is discovered; and in the second Artemis merely expels Kallisto from her company, and Hera becomes involved as a jealous wife who deceives or orders Artemis to kill Kallisto once she has been transformed (1993, pp.725-9, especially 727-8) Forbes Irving (1990 p.204) suggests the introduction of Hera into this myth may have come about as a conflation with the story of Io.

²³⁵ For example, both an Apulian krater fragment dating to c. 390-380 (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 13.206; LIMC Kallisto 5) and an Apulian chous with similar iconography (J. Paul Getty Museum 72 AE 128; LIMC Kallisto 6) depict Kallisto as primarily human, albeit with bear paws, hairy skin and pointed ears.

Attic pottery fragments associated with the *arkteia* which may depict Kallisto show a woman in human form with a bear's head: see chapter five on the *arkteia*, n.212 (c. 430-420; Basel, Cahn, HC 503; BADP 2458; first published Kahil 1977 fig. C, also Reeder 1995 p.327).

²³⁶ Trendall 1977 p.100.

²³⁷ Davies 1986. Various mythological traditions are referred to, including that of Akteion at the point of his death where the literary record indicates he was fully transformed.

be expected that Kallisto would be represented as a bear since her transformation occurred after she became pregnant and before she gave birth. Despite this apparent inconsistency with the literary record of the myth, the way Kallisto gazes at her hand-turned-paw does appear to support an interpretation of a metamorphosis in action.

Like Kallisto, Io was also seduced by Zeus, although she was transformed into a cow and this is explained more consistently as an attempt by Zeus to conceal the seduction from Hera.²³⁸ In contrast to Kallisto, images which represent Io frequently depict her in cow form.²³⁹ One oinochoe does represent Io as a cow-human hybrid, with a bovine body and woman's face,²⁴⁰ but other representations appear to suggest that the preferred method of representing Io is in the form of a cow,²⁴¹ possibly because this is an easily recognisable aspect of her mythic tradition. In contrast to Davies' interpretation of hybridised characters to denote a transformation which is applicable to Kallisto above, the general preference to depict Io in her cow form does not give any obvious iconographic indication that she was formerly human, but rather other cues must be used to understand the context of the image.

Like both Kallisto and Io, Thetis is also described in the literature with her transformations being associated with a sexual encounter. However, unlike the other women discussed here, she is an

²³⁸ Apollodorus *Library* 2.5.2-9; Pausanias 1.25.1. [Aeschylus] *Prometheus Bound* 295-301 recounts that Io was first transformed into a cow, and then Zeus took the form of a bull to sleep with her. Gantz suggests that the version in which Hera perceives Zeus' infidelity and punishes Io for it by transformation provides a more cogent, and possibly more traditional, motivation for the narrative (Gantz 1993 p.201). A different account of Io is recorded by Herodotus, in which Io is not transformed into a cow but rather was either taken to Egypt by force (Herodotus 1.1), or voluntarily went to Egypt to avoid her pregnancy being discovered (1.5). However, the cow association with Io is still acknowledged (2.41).

²³⁹ For instance, Io in her cow form is shown on an Athenian red-figure stamnos, c. 500-450, attributed to the Argos painter; Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum: 3729; BADP 202608.

²⁴⁰ Lucanian red-figure oinochoe, c. 445-430, attributed to the Pisticci Painter, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 00.366, LIMC Io I33.

²⁴¹ Although one representation appears to depict Io as a bull: Athenian black figure white ground lekythos, c. 525-475; New Haven, Yale University 1913:116; BADP 331411.

immortal nymph and her transformations are under her own control in an attempt to avoid a marriage to Peleus.²⁴² She also takes several forms, including a lion, fire, and water. Visual representations of Thetis usually show her in human form, and she is frequently depicted either holding animals, or with animals surrounding her, in contrast to the representation of Kallisto and Io as either mid-transformation or in animal form. Animals which she is commonly shown with include lions and snakes, resulting in depictions which are not unlike those of maenads.²⁴³ Buxton has suggested that gods would not have been represented mid-transformation because this would assimilate the deity to hybridism, and therefore monstrosity.²⁴⁴ Thetis is represented as “morphologically non-monstrous ... *accompanied by some of her equally non-monstrous metastases.*”²⁴⁵ If one accepts Buxton’s idea, this would imply that, at least for a god, to be transformed into an animal is not a negative experience, but rather a choice the deity takes for a particular purpose.

²⁴² Pindar *Nemean Ode* 4.62-65 describes Peleus overcoming fire and a lion to marry Thetis, and, although little more detail is given, Gantz interprets the oblique allusions as indicating that it was a well-known story (Gantz 1993 p.229); Apollodorus *Library* 3.13.5 describes Thetis as turning into fire, water, and a wild animal (*therion*) before resuming her usual shape. Although without mention of her shapeshifting, in the *Iliad* Thetis claims: ἔτλην ἀνέρος εὐνήν πολλὰ μάλ’ οὐκ ἐθέλουσα (I suffered the bed of a man [Peleus] although very unwillingly) (*Iliad* 434-5). Euripides *Iphigeneia at Aulis* 701-2 also mentions that Zeus betrothed Thetis to Peleus, although he does not indicate what Thetis’ opinion was of the match.

Thetis’ reluctance can also be seen in Aristophanes’ *Clouds* 1067-9 which mentions Thetis leaving Peleus after their marriage because it was not pleasant to spend the night with him. However, the reason given is that it was Peleus’ *sophrosune* that Thetis objected to and that Peleus was not lustful enough. While this reference shows some consistency to Thetis’ unwillingness, it demonstrates an alternative interpretation that it was not a reluctance to engage in sexual activity. Despite this, it must be acknowledged that this account is put forward by the ‘wrong/unjust argument’ and so cannot necessarily be taken as an entirely accurate representation of a mythic tradition because *Clouds* places emphasis on misleading rhetoric.

²⁴³ For example, one depiction of Thetis and Peleus which includes a lion, snake and dragon: Athenian red figure stamnos, c. 500- 450 BC, Worcester, Art Museum: 1953.92, BAPD 203001. Another depiction shows Thetis welding a snake, as is common for maenads, while Peleus grasps her (See chapter four): Athenian black figure skyphos, c. 575-525, Athens, National Museum: N928, BAPD 302665.

²⁴⁴ Buxton 2009 p.82. This concept is specifically applied to Zeus, however later the same idea appears to also be understood in relation to Thetis as well (p.88). See also appendix B below on woman-animal hybrid monsters.

²⁴⁵ Buxton 2009 p.88.

The animal transformations in the above mythological traditions all centre on the concept of the sexuality of the woman involved. The transformation takes place either prior to or following a sexual encounter, which lends itself to several potential interpretations. The transformation could be understood as a punishment for illicit sexuality, here most applicable to Kallisto, or as an escape or attempted elusion from unwanted advances or rape, such as in the case of Thetis. Additionally, the various potential interpretations may suggest that rather than there being one or a few readings which can always be applied to stories of female transformations, the myths indicate the complexities in understanding the process by which girls matured into adult women and mothers.

Some of the women who were turned into animals can be grouped together by understanding their mythologies as stories of a crime and punishment. Forbes Irving attributes this type of myth as part of the Hesiodic pattern, in which there is a crime of an insult to a god followed by punishment in the form of a degrading transformation.²⁴⁶ Although Forbes Irving's category is not limited to female, or even animal transformations, Kallisto and Io are amongst the list and do clearly fit this group of women who commit a sexual offence and are subsequently transformed into animals. While the language used by Forbes Irving to explain these mythological figures as *crime* and *punishment* might appear harsh for women who were raped, the emphasis is rather placed on the experience of illegitimate sexual activity, regardless of the intention or will of the woman involved. For instance, Kallisto was a follower of Artemis and therefore was supposed to remain a virgin. The discovery of her pregnancy exposed Kallisto's sexual experience, and, regardless of her willingness or otherwise to accept Zeus' advances, her crime was the loss of virginity.²⁴⁷ Additionally, Atalanta is another example which fits well into this understanding of a transformation following a crime, especially as

²⁴⁶ Forbes Irving 1990 p.13

²⁴⁷ While outside of mythology the loss of virginity for a woman would not necessarily have been unacceptable, it is probably significant that Kallisto is unmarried because this experience occurring outside of marriage would have been perceived as a threat to the certainty of paternity which can only be assured if a wife is monogamous to her husband.

her actions more clearly express a sexual transgression. By having sex with her husband in a sacred area,²⁴⁸ they have both acted in such a way that a punishment by transformation into lions is understandable, and even more justified than in the case of a raped woman.²⁴⁹

An alternative understanding of the body of myths of women being transformed into animals could be as an escape from rape or a traumatic experience. There are two sides to such an interpretation: firstly, that animal transformation could be used as an attempted escape from the unwanted advances of a man prior to the event; and secondly, that the transformation follows the traumatic experience of the woman having been raped. When this is considered, it is noteworthy that many of the women in these myths have expressed a desire not to marry, from which it could be implied that their eventual marriage or sexual encounter was unlikely to have been a positive experience. For example, Thetis actively did not want to marry Peleus, Kallisto joined Artemis' group for which virginity was expected, and Atalanta was reluctant to marry and preferred to remain a virgin.²⁵⁰ Thetis is a strong example of the interpretation by which animal transformation is used as an attempt to avoid the unwanted advances of a man. Such an interpretation is favoured by Ormand, who asserts that women only have the ability to shapeshift before marriage and that stories involving shapeshifting women always take place within the context of avoiding marriage.²⁵¹

²⁴⁸ Apollodorus *Library* 3.9.2. Gantz believes that other, more fragmentary evidence suggests that there were two individuals called Atalanta, one who does not wish to marry and so sets up the fatal race, and another who was a great huntress and involved with the Kalydonian boar hunt. Unsure which of these two traditions the metamorphosis belongs to, Gantz tentatively favours the former, although he warns that the mythic tradition may have changed between the Archaic period and the later records (1993 pp.337-9).

²⁴⁹ This model of understanding stories of transformations is not at all limited to women, such as Aktaion who, depending on which mythic record one follows, may have been punished for a sexual transgression by Artemis. For example, Apollodorus, *Library* 3.4.4 acknowledges two traditions which would both constitute a sexual transgression: either Aktaion desired Semele, or saw Artemis bathing.

²⁵⁰ For evidence of Thetis' reluctance, see n. 242.

Of Kallisto: Apollodorus *Library* 3.8 states that Kallisto swore to Artemis that she would remain a *parthenos*. Of Atalanta: Apollodorus *Library* 3.9.2 recounts that Atalanta killed those who attempted to force her, and that she would only marry a man who could beat her in a race, and any man who lost was killed on the spot before she was eventually outrun.

²⁵¹ Ormand 2004 p. 304. Ormand's opinions remain unchanged in the more recent expansion of his original article (2014, p.86).

However, it should be noted that Thetis is an immortal sea nymph, unlike the other women discussed here who are mortals, and therefore it is not surprising that Thetis' transformations are under her own control and are used to her own purpose, especially as she is the daughter of Nereus, who seems to have been a shapeshifter;²⁵² whereas this is not the case for the mortal women who were also reluctant to marry.²⁵³ These other women who are changed into animal forms are not considered by Ormand, and although they do show some divergence from his established patterns,²⁵⁴ generally Ormand's conclusions remain transferable, especially the emphasis on reluctance to marry. Mortal or immortal, it appears that women who change into animals in myth can only demonstrate resistance to marriage or sexual activity, not indefinitely avoid it.

In contrast to the abilities of a sea nymph to control her own form, the stories of mortal women often involve the transformation after a possibly traumatic experience or event. The traditions of Kallisto, Io, and Atalanta can withstand such a reading. All three were women who initially appeared averse to sexual activity, and subsequently then did have such an experience. While the original intention of the story cannot be known, it does not appear too speculative to assume that Kallisto's and Io's rape by Zeus would have been traumatic if the stories are understood in terms of how real women would have reacted outside of fiction. Therefore, the subsequent transformation into an animal can be understood as an escape from the difficult situation they have experienced. Such an interpretation is expressed by Helen in Euripides, who claims:

²⁵² Glynn (1981) has commented that Pherekydes provides the earliest literary source for Nereus as shapeshifting in a struggle with Herakles (pp.121-22).

²⁵³ References to other immortal women who use animal transformation in an attempted evasion of marriage include that of Demeter trying to avoid Poseidon by turning into a mare (Pausanias 8.25.5); Asteria turning into a quail to evade Zeus (Apollodorus *Library* 1.4.1); and Nemesis also attempting to flee Zeus by changing into a goose (Apollodorus *Library* 3.10.7).

²⁵⁴ For instance, the statement: "women have the ability to shape-shift only before marriage, and the stories about their shape-shifting always take place in the context of trying to avoid marriage" (Ormand 2004 p.304) fails to account for the likes of Kallisto, who is transformed after she has been raped.

ὦ μάκαρ Ἄρκαδιᾶ ποτὲ παρθένε

Καλλιστοῖ, Διὸς ἄ λεχέων ἀπέ-

βας τετραβάμοσι γυίοις,

ὡς πολὺ κηρὸς ἐμᾶς ἔλαχες πλέον,

ἀ μορφῆ θηρῶν λαχνογυίων

† ὄμματι λάβρω σχῆμα λεαίνης†

ἐξαλλάξασ' ἄχθεα λύπας.²⁵⁵

O blessed one, once a virgin in Arkadia, Kallisto, who left the bed of Zeus on four paws, how much more preferable your allotted fate is than mine, you who in the form of a shaggy beast, [the shape of a lioness with blazing eye,] have shed your burden of pain.

Kassandra makes a similar wistful escapist comparison to Prokne in the *Agamemnon*, saying that while Prokne was given ‘a sweet life without weeping’ in being turned into the nightingale, Kassandra herself faces death.²⁵⁶ The use of Kassandra’s comparison, like Helen’s of Kallisto, indicates that the perception was that transformation could be a release from trauma. Buxton has interpreted the metamorphosis in this story as representing the traumatic experiences of Prokne, Philomela, and Tereus as finding eventual and emblematic permanence in bird form.²⁵⁷ Unlike the other women discussed here, Prokne and Philomela find their animal forms as a nightingale and swallow; small birds which do not have the size or might of Kallisto’s bear, Io’s cow, or Thetis’ lion. In their transformation, Prokne and Philomela are reduced to creatures which connote vulnerability

²⁵⁵ Euripides *Helen* 375–580.

²⁵⁶ Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1146–8. Although Prokne is not named, she is referred to as the nightingale, and her son Itys is named at 1144. While this reference contains minimal explanation of the myth, the details included are consistent with the more explicit account in Apollodorus *Library* 3.14.8.

²⁵⁷ Buxton 2009 p.57.

and helplessness, perhaps as an expression of their situation. However, Kallisto and Io are turned into animals which do not carry similar implications of vulnerability despite also being put into a situation they do not appear to have any control over. One point of difference is that unlike the other mythological women, Prokne and Philomela do not have an established prior reluctance to sex or marriage, and so their situations do not align as neatly as the other women discussed here.

The body of myths which involve a transformation of a woman into an animal all have several common aspects which can be read as centring on female sexuality. The women in the stories generally have shown a reluctance to engage in sexual activity, either explicitly in the case of Thetis or implicitly in the case of Kallisto. Such reluctance by mythical characters may have been reflective of apprehension that probably would have accompanied young women before their own marriages. The mythic process of the metamorphosis also typically precedes or follows soon after the woman has had a sexual encounter, although before her child is born. Ormand has suggested that such myths of transformation address an anxiety about the instability of female identity during the time where her identity shifts from being the daughter of her father, to being the wife of her husband.²⁵⁸ In classifying the period of animal transformation as occurring during the transition of marriage, Ormand perceives the myth of animal transformation as expressing the transformation of a woman's social identity. Additionally, the social transformation through which a girl would become a wife and mother would also be paralleled by the physical changes of puberty and pregnancy which would also occur around the time of marriage and first sexual encounters.²⁵⁹ Stories which attributed an animal transformation to the progression of maturation, marriage, loss of virginity and pregnancy may have accounted for the emotional "wildness" of both pubescent and pregnancy hormones which would eventually be "tamed" once a woman matured or settled into motherhood.

²⁵⁸ Ormand 2004 pp.305, 313-4.

²⁵⁹ King 2008 comments on how the social and biological changes in a girl should indicate her transformation from *parthenos* to *gyne*, but in practice there may not always have been a clear progression: for instance, social and biological changes may not match up, or a woman may be pregnant but unmarried (pp.79-81).

Such a reading would also allow for the variations in which animal transformations occur either before or after the woman's first sexual experience. Alternatively, these myths of metamorphoses may warn against illicit sexuality, or suggest that the introduction of sexuality into a woman's life could allow her potentially threatening wildness, or animalism, to emerge.²⁶⁰ The animals which feature in these metamorphosis, such as the lion, bear, and cow are not easy creatures to tame or subdue, perhaps expressing anxieties that, like Peleus, the Greek husband may have some difficulty with a new wife. By understanding the general theme of animal transformations as representing the "wild" transition from girl to mother, we may also explain the points of difference in the story of Prokne and Philomela. As Prokne is already a wife and mother, it would not be as appropriate for her to be transformed into a wild animal as Kallisto is turned into a bear. Such an explanation does not hold up as well for Philomela, although the distinction in that she does not express an aversion to sex, like how Kallisto and Thetis are resistant, may be seen to manifest itself in simply an escape from past trauma, rather than also an expression of uncontrollable initial sexuality. Under this reading, Prokne would support a divergence from the literary metaphors discussed in other chapters, where other wives who act violently against their husbands are imagined as vicious animals and pre-marital women are described as vulnerable animals.²⁶¹ However, such an apparent inversion of the concepts established in other Greek writing is still consistent with the wider cultural metaphor of women who are not under the control of a husband as animalistic, despite some variance in the nuances of the expression of this idea in different media such as metaphors in tragedy and mythological traditions.

²⁶⁰ Forbes Irving 1990 p.66 suggests that these transformations express the negative side of the link between women, animals, and sex; showing the degeneration from human to animal that follows sexual activity.

²⁶¹ See chapter three: Tragedy. For example, in the *Agamemnon*, Klytemnestra is described as a lion for not being under the control of her husband, whereas Iphigeneia and Cassandra who are under the power of men are imaged through sacrificial or other helpless creatures.

Chapter Seven

The Metaphor of Courtship as Hunting

If women are imagined as animalistic in various aspects of their lives, and especially with a concentration around their sexuality, then it is not unexpected that this metaphor would be extended to include the concept of courtship, in which the woman plays the role of a prey animal. Ideally, the result of the hunt of courtship would be to obtain a tamed wife. However, the hunt may take a different path, whereby the woman is not caught and domesticated, but rather dies or is sacrificed as a virgin. In some of these situations, the death can be understood as a substitute for the taming which has failed to occur. A successful hunt should either result in a tamed or killed creature: either outcome asserts the dominance of the male hunter over his prey. In heterosexual courtship, this metaphor by which seduction is understood as hunting can be seen to have several facets; here three aspects which are particularly relevant to women will be examined. Firstly, there is the concept of the pre-marital *parthenos* as a wild and untamed creature, who is the ideal prey for a hunter. Once a woman is of marriageable age, there are then two potential results. The woman may not allow herself to be “caught”, but is instead “killed”. Such an idea is most clearly expressed by the conflation of marriage and death for women in Greek tragedy, a concept which Rehm calls a ‘marriage to death’.²⁶² The alternative to death by the hunt is domestication, where the newly married wife must be tamed of her former wildness.

Although not involving women, images of pederastic courtship also frequently employ the metaphor of hunting as courtship. In such instances the conflation of hunting and courtship is underscored by

²⁶² Rehm 1994.

animal gifts, which are often presented alive but may also be killed prey.²⁶³ Barringer interprets the animal gifts as signifying the amorous negotiation between *erastes* and *eromenos*; presumably the animals were given with the intent of swaying the favour of the *eromenos*.²⁶⁴ The animals which are most commonly portrayed are hares, although cocks, deer and felines are also shown. Plato also draws a comparison between erotic pursuit and hunting, saying that the *erastes* should not praise his *eromenos* until he has caught him, lest the boy become haughtier and more difficult to win, in the same way as a hunter should not scare away his prey and make it harder to catch.²⁶⁵ A similar idea is also expressed by Plato in *Phaedrus*:

ὡς λύκοι ἄρννας ἀγαπῶσιν, ὡς παῖδα φιλοῦσιν ἐρασταί.²⁶⁶

As the wolf is affectionate to the lamb, the erastes loves his boy.

Barringer has commented on the interchangeability of the pursuer and the pursued in such pederastic scenes, and the absence of this flexibility in the heterosexual counterpart of courtship as a hunt.²⁶⁷ Therefore, even when men are the “prey” in the hunt of courtship, they retain an element of power which is not seen when women are portrayed as the hunted victims. Even in disagreeing with the analogy of hunting and pederastic courtship and preferring only an association, Lear has commented that it should not be considered an analogy because pederastic courtship scenes are

²⁶³ For example, red figure Athenian amphora, c. 500 – 450, attributed to Matsch painter, Rome, Mus. Naz. Etrusco di Villa Giulia: 50462, BADP 202569.

²⁶⁴ Barringer 2001 p. 71.

²⁶⁵ Plato *Lysis* 206a.

²⁶⁶ Plato *Phaedrus* 241d. Although a literal translation of this text would read with the first clause in the plural, it has been changed to the singular in this translation for better idiosyncrasy in English.

²⁶⁷ Barringer 2001 p.106. However, Cyrino (2013) comments on the role reversal between hunter and prey in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, especially p.382: “she [Aphrodite] becomes both the passive object of Anchises’ desire and an active sexual predator out to capture her man-prey.” Cyrino discusses the explicit use and inversion of the hunt as seduction, with a woman, although a goddess, presenting herself in the image of an Artemis-like virgin huntress to “hunt” her “man-prey”. Such a reading may suggest that rather than the difference in the interchange of hunter and prey being one of homosexuality as opposed to heterosexuality as expressed by Barringer, it is instead one of status. That is, that a goddess may become hunter to a mortal man, or one man to another, but a mortal woman is not allowed such flexibility and must remain as the prey in the hunt.

consistently distinguished from scenes of violence.²⁶⁸ As will be discussed below, the violence which is lacking in pederastic representation is not wholly absent from heterosexual courtship.

The metaphor of courtship as hunting for women begins with the imagining of *parthenoi* as wild and untamed creatures prior to marriage. Expression of this concept can be clearly seen in the lyric tradition, where female sexuality is considered to be most positive when it deals with chastity or the potential for sexuality not yet fulfilled.²⁶⁹ Lyric poetry which likens women to horses provides a first-person perspective for either the man who is pursuing, or the woman who is pursued.²⁷⁰

Commenting on Anacron's poem of the Thracian filly who does not yet have a rider,²⁷¹ Rosenmeyer takes a predatory reading: "the speaker [of the poem] invents a scenario of conquest for himself, and the poem is as much about his pride as it is about the object of his attention."²⁷² The horse is told: *Now you graze in the meadows and lightly leap and play, for you have no skilled horse-man to ride you.*²⁷³ Clearly at least part of the appeal for the speaker of the poem is both the innocence of the "horse" in her wild play, and also in her arrogant belief that she will not be able to be tamed.

The narrative voice does not doubt his skill or ability in being able to tame the horse, or seduce the woman. Anacreon's extended comparison in this poem clearly expresses several concepts related to the hunting as courtship metaphor. Firstly, the woman that the speaker desires is reduced to an animal, while the man remains human, placing the two characters clearly into "prey" and "hunter" roles. Additionally, the horse is shown to inhabit the wild without any male or human control, but is told that she cannot remain in this state. While this poem does not express the concept of an explicit hunt, as horses are not prey animals, the idea of male and human domination over the

²⁶⁸ Lear 2008 pp.86-87.

²⁶⁹ See chapter two, lyric poetry.

²⁷⁰ See chapter two, pp.19-21 (Anacreon Fr. 417, also Theognis 1.257-60).

²⁷¹ Anacreon Fr. 417.

²⁷² Rosenmeyer 2004 p.172.

²⁷³ See chapter two, pp.19-21 for full quote and translation, and further discussion within the context of lyric poetry.

female and animal is explicit. In the metaphorical hunt of courtship, the desired outcome would be a domesticated wife, so the taming of a wild horse, as a domestic animal, is an apt analogy.

In myths of metamorphosis, often the animal transformation precedes the woman being overpowered or caught and promptly married. Thetis is one clear example of an animal transformation myth which withstands a reading within the context of hunting as courtship. Like the horse in Anacreon's poem discussed above, the mythological tradition of Thetis and Peleus can also be read in light of the male and human eventually obtaining domination over the female and animal. Peleus remains a mortal man throughout the encounter, while Thetis shapeshifts through various animals in an attempt at avoiding a marriage.²⁷⁴ However, eventually she does submit to Peleus and return to human form. Other mythological traditions of women into animal metamorphoses as discussed in chapter seven also support this reading: Io was turned into a cow, and back into a woman before her sexual encounter with Zeus;²⁷⁵ but Kallisto, who was transformed after she became pregnant never returned to her original form, but remained as a wild bear,²⁷⁶ significantly she was not a domestic animal such as Io's cow.

The imagining of courtship as hunting is not always represented in a positive light: Penelope in the *Odyssey* is described in terms of her negative experience of being courted. She is described as being: *as anxious as a frightened lion in a crowd of men when the treacherous circle is drawn around it.*²⁷⁷ While in this scene Penelope is not immediately worried for her own sake, she is worried about her suitors attacking her son, and their attempts to further coerce her into marriage with one of the

²⁷⁴ First extant record, Pindar *Nemean Ode* 4.62-65. See chapter six: metamorphoses, n.242 for more complete references and variations.

²⁷⁵ Apollodorus *Library* 2.5.2-9; Pausanias 1.25.1. see chapter six: metamorphoses, n.238 for further references

²⁷⁶ Apollodorus *Library* 3.8, see chapter six: metamorphoses, n.234 for further references of Kallisto's story.

²⁷⁷ *Odyssey* 4.791-2. See chapter one, p.8-11 for full quote and other discussion within the context of Homeric animal metaphors.

suitors. While Penelope is described as a lion, a simile which is generally only used for women who are not under male control,²⁷⁸ she is in the process of being trapped. In the simile, the suitors are imagined as hunters closing a trap around a frightened animal by deceitful means. As with the other metaphors previously mentioned, this simile represents the men (the suitors) as still human men, while the woman (Penelope) is transformed into an animal which has fallen prey to the male hunters. Although ultimately unsuccessful in their courting, the suitors are metaphorically shown to retain the power and assumption of dominance over Penelope. Also in the *Odyssey*, the courtship as hunting metaphor is played out to express the punishment for the maids who were sexually involved with the suitors. Unlike the simile involving Penelope, the trap is not used as an attempt at courtship, but the maids are described as falling into a snare as a punishment for their previous sexual activity.²⁷⁹ Rather than the result of the hunt being capture in a trap which could be interpreted as marriage, the result of the trap has been the death of the women. As will be discussed below, death is a possible outcome of the courtship as hunting metaphor, but an outcome which is also parallel with the male dominance over animalised women: in this instance, the dominance of Odysseus over the maids, and the assumption that he has the right to control and contain their sexuality, even during his absence from the house.

In some visual representations, the connection between the courtship and hunting is presented more explicitly than through the metaphors of literature. For example, there are several instances in which Poseidon is shown pursuing Amymone, apparently on the point of stabbing her with his

²⁷⁸ For instance, it is also used of Artemis, the eternal *parthenos* (*Iliad* 21.483-4), and of Klytemnestra who is so far removed from being controlled by her husband that she takes a lover in Agamemnon's absence, and kills him upon his return (For instance, as it is expressed in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, see chapter three).

²⁷⁹ The maids' deaths are described in *Odyssey* 22.468-472, see chapter one, pp.12-13, for the full passage and translation. The reason for their deaths is given at *Odyssey* 22.443-445.

trident.²⁸⁰ Reeder interprets one such image²⁸¹ as Poseidon attacking Amymone “exactly as if she were a fish he were harpooning.”²⁸² Reeder’s reading of this image as a graphic and explicit expression of Poseidon’s advances as an attack is in contrast to Sourvinou-Inwood’s discussion of erotic pursuit scenes involving weapons, in which she stresses the difference between hunting and capture, preferring the analogy of an animal capture for women under pursuit. According to Sourvinou-Inwood, erotic pursuit resulting in capture of a woman is not a hunt because a hunt would imply an attack on the woman.²⁸³ Images which show male youths carrying spears²⁸⁴ in pursuit scenes carry “implicit, muted, connotations of violence and menace” but a reading in terms of denoting an attack is rejected.²⁸⁵ While it would be plausible for different iconographic conventions to be employed for mortal figures as opposed to a god such as Poseidon, the wider use of the cultural metaphor of courtship as hunting does not present women as being safe from physical danger or death as a result of being courted or sexually pursued.

In an actual, that is, not metaphorical, hunt it would be expected that the desired result would be the death of the prey animal. While real women are not expected to have been literally chased down and killed in Greek history, the conflation of marriage with the metaphorical death of the woman becomes relevant in the context of the metaphorical hunt. The concept of the “death” in marriage is most strongly expressed in tragedy, often within a sacrificial setting. In examining

²⁸⁰ One such example in which Poseidon’s trident is just about to puncture Amymone, is an Attic lekythos, c. 475, attributed to the Dresden Painter, Zürich, private collection, BADP 207644.

Other similar representations include a red figure krater, c. 475, attributed to the Achilles Painter, St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum: ST1535, BADP 213878; and a red-figure lekythos, c. 475, attributed to the Phiale Painter, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art: 17.230.35, BADP 214280.

The encounter between Poseidon and Amyone is recorded by Apollodorus, *Library*, 2.1.4 and Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 2.38.2 mentions the son of Poseidon and Amymone.

²⁸¹ Attic lekythos, c. 475, attributed to the Dresden Painter, Zürich, private collection, BADP 207644.

²⁸² Reeder 1995 pp.339, 354.

²⁸³ Sourvinou-Inwood 1987 p.138

²⁸⁴ For example, a red-figure krater depicts two scenes of men pursuing women, one with a sword and the other man carries a spear. Neither man is depicted as an immediate danger to the women, but both point their weapons towards the female figures. Red-figure krater, c. 500 -450, St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum: ST1786, BADP 205639.

²⁸⁵ Sourvinou-Inwood 1987 p.131

various tragedies, Rehm concludes that the idea of 'marriage to death' does not serve a single thematic end, but often is related to exploring social and political problems by a comparison of the *polis* and *oikos*.²⁸⁶ The representation of sacrificial women in tragedy has already been discussed in regard to their comparisons to sacrificial or vulnerable animals,²⁸⁷ but the marital associations in their deaths are also significant in that they express the conflation of virginity, animality, death, and marriage. In the tradition when Iphigeneia is initially lured to Aulis under the pretence of marriage to Achilles,²⁸⁸ she presents a strong case for the conflation of all four traits; although other women, such as Polyxena and Antigone, also die with marriage analogies present in the texts.²⁸⁹ The Hippocratic account of *parthenoi* also strongly associates post-pubescent young women with death: they are described as being both murderous and suicidal, although this madness passes.²⁹⁰ Even though animal imagery is not used in the later descriptions, such a conflation of death and marriage is consistent with the cultural metaphor of courtship and marriage as a hunt to the death.

Loraux has suggested that such a sacrificial death of a virgin could be interpreted as a kind of loss of virginity.²⁹¹ In this interpretation, the young woman ceases to retain "the pure virginity that she is going to lose along with her life as the knife cuts her throat."²⁹² In tragedy, it appears that the characters who are about to be sacrificed are not clearly perceived as either virgins or non-virgins. For example, in *Iphigeneia in Aulis*, Agamemnon laments:

²⁸⁶ Rehm 1994 p.136. For example, the *Agamemnon* is seen to express conflict between men and women, *oikos* and *polis*, justice and vengeance, kinship and civic loyalties, for which the conflation of marriage and death reflect an attempted resolution (pp.57-8).

²⁸⁷ See chapter three.

²⁸⁸ Euripides *Iphigeneia in Aulis* 607-610.

²⁸⁹ Marital and death references in Sophocles' *Antigone* include: 876-7, 891, 1240-41. Polyxena mentions her unmarried state just prior to her death in Euripides *Hecuba* 416.

²⁹⁰ Hippocrates *Peri Parthenon* 30-40.

²⁹¹ Loraux 1987 pp.37-40.

²⁹² Loraux 1987 p.40.

τὴν δ' αὖ τάλαιναν παρθένον — τί παρθένον;

Ἄιδης νιν, ὡς ἔοικε, νυμφεύσει τάχα²⁹³

But the poor virgin – why virgin?

Hades, it seems, will soon marry her.

Similarly, after her death Polyxena is described as *nymphe anymphos* and *parthenos aparthenos* (bride who is not a bride; virgin who is not a virgin).²⁹⁴ Loraux has interpreted this confused conflation of marriage and sacrifice as expressing the idea that through her death, especially one by a cut throat, the virgin loses her virginity.²⁹⁵ In Euripides' *Trojan Women*, Cassandra talks of how her marriage (οὐμοὶ γάμοι) will cause her own death by an axe to her throat, among the other consequences for Agamemnon's family:²⁹⁶ again conflating marriage, and therefore loss of virginity, with a cut throat.²⁹⁷ The correlation between a sacrificial death by a cut throat and marriage has been demonstrated to be part of a wider and well established discourse by Topper's application of the metaphor to the story of Medusa giving birth to Pegasus and Chrysaor through her neck after her decapitation.²⁹⁸ Additionally, Herodotus recounts a festival for Athena where virgins fight each other with sticks and stones, and any woman who dies of her wounds is considered to be a false virgin (*pseudoparthenos*).²⁹⁹ King has interpreted this passage as evidence that bloodshed was not compatible with *parthenoi*, but it rather fell under the role of mature women (*gynaiques*) who should

²⁹³ Euripides *Iphigeneia in Aulis* 460-461.

²⁹⁴ Euripides *Hecuba* 611: νύμφην τ' ἄνυμφον παρθένον τ' ἀπάρθενον.

²⁹⁵ Loraux 1987 pp. 38-9.

²⁹⁶ Euripides' *Trojan Women* 361-4.

²⁹⁷ One possible explanation for the understood loss of virginity through a cut throat may be the conflation of the neck and vagina, as proposed by Hanson 1990 p. 327.

²⁹⁸ Topper 2010, esp. p.114 comments on Medusa as a maiden figure comparable to Iphigeneia and Polyxena, with discussion of the metaphor which equated blood shed from the neck with hymeneal blood.

²⁹⁹ Herodotus *Histories* 4.180.

bleed through menstruation, sex, and childbirth.³⁰⁰ Under King's gynaecological reading of the relationship between bloodshed and virginity, the women such as Iphigeneia and Polyxena who die through a sacrificial cut throat would no longer be considered virgins as their blood has been shed, which is not the role of the *parthenos*.

The alternative to death in courtship, whether metaphorical or literal, would be the domestication of a woman after marriage. Such a concept could not only be expressed metaphorically: Xenophon recounts a discussion in which a husband, Ischomachus, talks about being able to teach his young wife household management only after she had become *submissive and domesticated* (χειροθήτης ἦν καὶ ἐτετιθάσευτο).³⁰¹ The desired effect of marriage is also mentioned in the *Hymn to Aphrodite*:

ἦ δέ τε παρθενικὰς ἀπαλόχροας ἐν μεγάροισιν
ἀγλαὰ ἔργ' ἐδίδαξεν ἐπὶ φρεσὶ θεῖσα ἐκάστη.
οὐδέ ποτ' Ἄρτέμιδα χρυσηλάκατον, κελαδινὴν
δάμναται ἐν φιλότῃ φιλομμειδῆς Ἀφροδίτῃ.³⁰²

She instructs soft-skinned girls in splendid handwork, placing it in the mind of each one.

But laughter-loving Aphrodite never tames in love Artemis of the golden arrows and the hunting call.

If Aphrodite teaches *parthenoi* in domestic work, but cannot tame Artemis in love, it probably suggests that marriage, under the instruction of love, would be expected to have a taming effect on women. When only the immortal virgins are not under Aphrodite's control, or under the influence

³⁰⁰ King 2008 p.88. King associates Athena, and especially Artemis, as eternal virgins, with a lack of bloodshed: "Artemis does not shed her own blood in the hunt, in sex or in childbirth."

³⁰¹ Xenophon, *Oeconomicus* 7.10.

³⁰² Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite 14-17.

of erotic love, then mortal women who have made the transition through the hunt of courtship into marriage would be expected to have been tamed (δάμναται) into domestic wives, such as that mentioned in Xenophon above.

The courtship as hunting metaphor is consistent with the other expressions of female sexuality in animalistic terms. The metaphor begins with the premise that girls and young women are wild and untamed before their marriage, which can be seen in lyric poetry, as well as in metamorphosis myths which represent women becoming animals prior to either a sexual experience or marriage, as in the cases of Thetis and Io. While not discussed in this chapter, the *arkteia* festival also demonstrates the perceived wildness of girls who, like the women who transform into animals in mythology, may have gone through the process of “being bears” before they could be married.³⁰³ Following their perceived wildness, the process of the hunt could be represented as an attack on the woman, such as in some visual representations where men pursue women with weapons. The illusion of an actual hunt or attack fits well with the conflation of marriage with death for young women, especially in tragedy. Even when the woman is sacrificially killed before she has had any sexual experience, the language used suggests that in dying she may have experienced a loss of virginity. Alternatively, the result of the hunt may not be the death of the woman before her marriage, but ideally she will have become tamed or domesticated by the time she has finished the transition from *parthenos* to *gyne*. The ideal of a domesticated wife may be expressed through general absence of extant instances in which well-behaved mature wives are represented as animals. Instead, animal metaphors are generally reserved for pre-marital young women, or wives who are not under the control of their husband (such as Helen, Klytemnestra, and Penelope). Through the metaphor of courtship as a hunt, there is an underlying theme of power imbalance and the opposition of male and female. Unlike the pederastic courtship scenes, which carry

³⁰³ See chapter five on the *arkteia*.

connotations of the hunt through animal gifts, and which may hold some flexibility in the roles of the pursuer and pursued, heterosexual courtship is depicted very distinctly without this flexibility. Male-female relationships take the metaphor of the hunt more literally, often being expressed through metaphors and similes which reduced the woman to a vulnerable animal, while the man retains a human role as a hunter. These metaphors, in Homeric epic, lyric poetry, tragedy, and mythological references in other literature, reinforce a concept of the opposition of the male and human against the female and animal. This power imbalance results in a very different expression of a gender-neutral cultural metaphor for homosexual and heterosexual relationships.

Conclusion

The cultural metaphor which imagined women as animalistic was expressed throughout the extant literature and artistic record in a number of ways in the archaic and classical periods. While this thesis does not allow for the full scope of all evidence which might link women and animals together, the selective sampling does suggest a coherent cultural theme which is expressed across different media and genres. The representation of women as animalistic is primarily concerned with the transition that females would have undergone between girlhood and motherhood, although mature women who are not under the control of a husband may also be understood as animalistic.

The Homeric women who are described with animal similes are typically represented as mature women who are not under male control: Helen abandons her first husband, Penelope is left alone by both husband and son, and the maids of the *Odyssey* were previously involved with the deceased suitors and the deaths of the maids may be understood as Odysseus reclaiming his control over their actions after his absence. However, lyric poetry places greater emphasis on the sexuality of the women it describes, many of whom are *parthenoi*. The similes tend to represent more personal characterisation of the women they describe than was present in the Homeric epics, and often it is the youth and vulnerability emphasised by the metaphors which positively describe potential sexuality of young women. However, Semonides' *Iamb on Women* represents a variety of types of wives a man may have represented as animals, and all are negatively described in animal terms except for the bee-wife, who is also the only woman in the poem who is explicitly said to be a mother. Therefore, the lyric tradition can be seen as primarily expressing both potential sexuality in young women and problematic wives. Additionally, Semonides' animal-wives are almost exclusively not mothers in animal metaphors, also placing them as between the roles of *parthenos* and mother.

As the literature developed from the archaic to the classical period, the animal metaphors used for women also developed. The former vulnerability of women which was expressed through comparisons to timid creatures, such as birds or deer, becomes exaggerated into a metaphor of sacrifice and sacrificial animals for Iphigeneia and Cassandra in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*. Additionally, the lion metaphor used to describe Klytemnestra emphasises her violent behaviour while the lion simile used for Artemis in the *Iliad* carries far less intensity. While Klytemnestra is a wild animal without the control of her husband, the Theban women of the *Bacchae* are presented as animalistic through the inversion of the hunter and prey, resulting in characterisation of women without men as wild and predatory, yet also vulnerable. Like the Theban women of the *Bacchae*, the representation of maenads in pottery painting demonstrate the depiction of mature women who exist outside of the ideal mother-wife role as animalistic and wild. Maenads are represented as deeply immersed in the animal world, and through their wild behaviour towards animals they demonstrate a subversion of the expected role of women as submissive and "prey" animals. The conflation of maenad iconography with other wild characters such as *Potnia Theron* and Thetis may also be understood as showing maenads as belonging to a typical role of women who are uncontrollable and of the animal world.

If maenads express the wild nature of the mature woman who is uncontrollable, the wildness of younger girls who are yet to be married can be seen through the *arkteia*. If the *arkteia* involved a maturation ritual, it can be seen as expressing the process by which girls became marriageable women as one akin to progressing through a transformation of human to bear, and back to human. A similar concept of women undergoing a transformation is expressed in the tradition of metamorphosis myths. These stories centre on female sexuality, especially the transition from pre-marital and pre-sexual young girls, to marriageable young women, and finally to married mothers.

The myths of animal transformations express a concept of pre-marital wildness, or the potentially threatening female sexuality which should eventually be tamed by marriage, once the woman has returned to human form. These myths are closely related to the cultural metaphor of courtship as hunting. Through the *arkteia*, metamorphosis myths, as well as characterisation in the literature, the pre-marital *parthenos* is constantly represented as a wild creature such as a bear, deer, or horse. While the wild young woman ideally will be tamed in marriage, the theme of death in marriage which is especially prevalent in tragedy can be understood as conflating the experiences of death and marriage for women. Metaphors which represent courtship as hunting also demonstrate a difference between homosexual and heterosexual relationships: both *eromenos* and *erastes* are presented as human men; as is the man of a heterosexual courtship, but the woman is constantly animalised in metaphor, or represented as physically under attack in vase painting. Again, this demonstrates that a woman who has not yet been “captured” in marriage is understood to be like a wild animal which will be simultaneously “tamed” and vulnerable to attack once she becomes a mother.

Throughout all the examples discussed here, the expression of the ‘woman as animal’ metaphor can consistently be understood as expressing the uncertainties of the liminal time between girlhood and motherhood. The “wildness” of such young women is also in line with the significant social changes which a woman would go through between puberty and maternity from being a *parthenos* to a *gyne*.³⁰⁴ However, women who may be mature but not under the control of a husband, such as Klytmnestra or Helen, are also represented in animal terms, presumably because they do not enact the ideal mother-wife role which was considered appropriate for a mature woman. For both the virginal *parthenos* and the mature woman who does not adhere to her expected role, the lack of male control appears to have placed a woman in a dangerous and undesirable state. By presenting

³⁰⁴ As discussed, for instance, by King 2008 pp.79-81.

such women as animalistic, they are de-humanised, perhaps to serve as both a warning and model to women, but also men about their wives, who would have encountered such literature and visual representations.

Appendix A

Women and Birds on White-Ground Lekythoi

Knowing of the prevalence of white-ground lekythoi which depict women and birds in close association, this topic was investigated. However, despite a clear association between women and birds, this aspect of Greek vase painting does not appear to hold meaning or iconography which is clearly related to the themes explored throughout this thesis. Despite the phenomenon of women and birds frequently appearing together on white-ground lekythoi, there is no clear explanation for the relationship between the women and birds. However, despite not being immediately relevant to the characterisation of women as animalistic, aspects of the iconography are still related and parallels can be drawn to this section from other chapters. Therefore, this study is included as an appendix because while it does not directly support the thesis, it is still a related field and perhaps further and more generalised study may find a more concrete link between this type of pottery decoration and the wider association of women with animals and birds in ancient Greek culture.

White-ground lekythoi frequently depict women who are closely associated with birds. These depictions may show women in domestic or funerary contexts as is common to general depictions of women on white-ground lekythoi; and a wide range of birds can be seen, both small and large. Generally, a theme emerges of women being associated with larger birds, such as geese, in domestic scenes,³⁰⁵ and smaller birds such as doves at the grave,³⁰⁶ although there are many exceptions to this generalisation. The interpretation of these birds with women on lekythoi is not simple, and

³⁰⁵ For example, white-ground lekythos, c. 475-425, attributed to the Lupoli Painter, Basel: private collection, BAPD 209200.

³⁰⁶ For example, white-ground lekythos, c. 475-425, Athens, Kerameikos: 8956, BADP 21589.

many suggested meanings have been put forward. The birds have been understood to be pets, but symbolic meaning may also be read into these birds, which if consistent with the literary record discussed throughout this thesis, would include concepts surrounding vulnerability, death, and sexuality.³⁰⁷ Some of these ideas can be seen to be relevant to the funerary purpose of white-ground lekythoi, and therefore the use of birds with women as decoration could be drawing on a similar cultural ideology to the literary record to express ideas about women in both life and death.

One interpretation of these women with birds on white-ground lekythoi is to consider the birds as pets, especially when the birds are shown with girls or women with children. Oakley has considered the possible importance of companionship from pets and other women which an Athenian woman who spent most of her time at home may have sought.³⁰⁸ Small birds, especially those on grave monuments which feature small children holding a bird, are often interpreted as childhood pets and possibly therefore an iconographic marker of youth.³⁰⁹ Besides small birds which could have been kept caged, Oakley even suggests that the larger birds are also to be considered domesticated, for example, that the cranes which can be seen in domestic scenes may have served as watch dogs.³¹⁰ However, such an interpretation of large birds as household pets has been rejected by Lewis, stating that “the idea of large water birds, loose inside the house seems unlikely.”³¹¹ She considers the depiction of such birds in vase painting not to be indicative of reality, but rather to be symbolic of ideal feminine characteristics.³¹² To consider these birds as having symbolic or iconographic significance appears more likely than the more simplistic interpretation of taking the birds as being pets, or otherwise domestic birds within the house.³¹³ The use of the term “pet” to describe these

³⁰⁷ See chapters one, two and three.

³⁰⁸ Oakley 2004 p. 43.

³⁰⁹ For instance, Stears 1995 p.119, Lewis 2002 p.19-21, 159.

³¹⁰ Oakley 2004 p. 43

³¹¹ Lewis 2002 p.161

³¹² Lewis 2002 pp.161-3. As an example of ideal feminine characteristics, Lewis cites the associations of swans with Artemis and geese with Aphrodite.

³¹³ Especially considering that white-ground lekythoi clearly do not exclusively portray realism in their life scenes, for instance the depiction of hanging domestic items which would appear to indicate an interior

animals is also worth examining: Lewis' use of the word for children's birds is based on grave reliefs, and other evidence drawn on for "pets" includes fighting cocks, hunting dogs, and Alkibiades carrying a quail under his cloak.³¹⁴ To interpret children holding birds on grave reliefs as evidence for children having pet birds is circular reasoning at best, and there appears to be no distinction between animals kept for a particular purpose, such as hunting dogs, and those kept domestically for companionship, in the modern sense of the term "pet" as Oakley appears to be using the word.

As discussed in other chapters, birds are used in Greek literature to express a variety of ideas about female characters and women, whether the woman is imagined as a bird or in association with a bird. Some of these examples can be grouped as having erotic or sexual connotations, although generally without any explicitly clear meaning. For instance, Penelope's suitors are metaphorically geese in a dream,³¹⁵ and perhaps most overtly, in the *Bacchae*, Pentheus expects the women to be engaged in erotic behaviour like birds in a bush.³¹⁶ Also, as has previously been discussed, the use of birds to metaphorically define women often appears to describe vulnerability. This seems to be reasonably consistent from epic through to tragedy, with the hanged maids in the *Odyssey* described as birds in a trap³¹⁷ and Cassandra's assertion in the *Agamemnon* that she does not shrink with terror like a bird.³¹⁸ It is likely that this is related to expressing vulnerability, bird similes can also associated with death in women, such as the hanged maids in the *Odyssey*, and Cassandra is described as dying like a swan in the *Agamemnon*.³¹⁹ The use of bird imagery in tragedy is discussed by Thumiger, who demonstrates such metaphors indicate grief, victimisation and disorder.³²⁰ The use of bird metaphors in the literature to express various ideas about women is likely to be useful

setting is often used at depictions of the tomb. For example: Athenian white-ground lekythos, attributed to the inscription painter, c.500-450, Athens, National Museum: 1958; BAPD 209239.

³¹⁴ Lewis p.159, Plutarch *Alcibiades* 10.

³¹⁵ *Odyssey* 19.535-499.

³¹⁶ Euripides *Bacchae* 946-7.

³¹⁷ *Odyssey* 22.468-472. Also, *Iliad* 21.493-6 calls Artemis a pursued dove.

³¹⁸ Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1314. At 1140-5 Cassandra is also described as lamenting like a nightingale.

³¹⁹ Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1470.

³²⁰ Thumiger 2014 p.89.

for the interpretation of the women who are associated with birds on white-ground lekythoi, especially considering the intersection of themes relating to death and grief in literature, and the funerary purpose of white-ground lekythoi.

The motif of smaller birds at the grave can be interpreted as having similar symbolism to birds in literature when they are used to convey ideas about death and grief. For instance, an Athenian white-ground lekythos which depicts a woman holding a bird at a grave with a man closely associates the woman with the small bird.³²¹ However, such birds at the grave are not exclusively portrayed with women, and are sometimes held by men or are simply presented near the grave, such as another Athenian lekythos which depicts a woman holding a basket of fillets while a small bird perches on the stele looking up at a youth.³²² The inclusion of birds at scenes of a visit to the tomb, often represented with women, appears to be an established aspect of funerary iconography. Considering the funerary associations of white-ground lekythoi and the explicit depiction of grave scenes on some of these vases, one interpretation of why birds would be suitable decoration for these lekythoi is raised by Oakley: that birds were appropriate companions for the dead.³²³ Given that Thanatos and Hypnos, as well as *eidola* were also winged creatures which were imagined to be capable of moving between the spheres of the living and dead, an ancient viewer might also envision birds accompanying them after their death.³²⁴ The understanding of birds as capable of moving between the worlds of the living and the dead, if accepted, is possibly expressed in the representation of the soul-bird. Vermeule has commented on this concept existing in Greece until the late classical period, pointing to the expression of souls in art as human headed birds dating

³²¹ White-ground lekythos, c. 475-425, Athens, Kerameikos: 8956, BAPD 21589.

³²² White-ground lekythos, c. 450-400, attributed to the Painter of Munich 2335, Athens, National Museum: 14856; BAPD 215487.

³²³ Oakley 2004 p.211

³²⁴ Oakley 2004 p.211. See also appendix B on the sphinx as a winged creature which was associated with death.

back to Mycenaean art.³²⁵ Vermeule believes the Greek soul-bird to have been modelled on the Egyptian *ba*.³²⁶ The *ba* in Egyptian thought was considered to be the life force, and one aspect of the soul which manifested itself as a human headed bird which was capable of leaving the tomb and returning to the world of the living.³²⁷ The mobility of the *ba* was an important aspect of its conceptualisation, and if one does accept a point of similarity to the Mycenaean soul-bird, and assuming an influence of the soul-bird into classical Greek iconography, it would lend support to an interpretation of birds depicted at the tomb on white-ground lekythoi as related to the ability to move between the living and dead, as suggested by Oakley. It would seem that the smaller birds, in contrast to the larger water birds, were more appropriate for this function as they are often held in the hand at the tomb by either the deceased or a visitor to the tomb.³²⁸ The small size, in comparison to the larger water birds more commonly found in domestic scenes, also make the birds appear more vulnerable which would be appropriate in situations of death and grief.

While the literary associations of grief and vulnerability are logically compatible because the white-ground lekythos belongs in a death context, other complexities of bird comparisons do not align as clearly with the representation of birds and women on white-ground lekythoi in domestic rather than funerary scenes. While the purpose of such birds in domestic scenes is unclear, they do often occur in overtly domestic or feminine representations such as the inclusion of household objects.³²⁹ One such example is a lekythos which shows a seated woman with a suspended oenochoe and a

³²⁵ Vermeule 1979 p.18

³²⁶ Vermeule 1979 p.75. She also considered the *ba* to be the model for the Siren and Harpy who also had close ties to the dead.

³²⁷ This was in contrast to the *ka*, the physical double of the person. The ability of the *ba* to leave the tomb was significant enough for false doors to be incorporated into burial chambers to allow the *ba* exit and entry. Teeter 2015 pp.329-30.

³²⁸ It is often difficult to establishing with certainty whether any particular figure is a visitor or the dead, however the frequent association of these birds with women, and the established role of women in presiding over funerary matters would support an interpretation that the bird is simply a symbol of death, perhaps as an intermediary between the deceased and the bereaved, like the role of the Egyptian *ba*.

³²⁹ For instance, one depiction of a woman holding a plemochoe and chest, with a stork at her feet (white-ground lekythos, c. 475-425, attributed to the Lupoli Painter, Basel: private collection, BAPD 209200).

large bird, possibly a goose or swan, at her feet.³³⁰ A similar lekythos also depicts a seated woman in a domestic setting, although she has a smaller bird perched on her knee while she holds a wreath.³³¹ The similarity in iconography for depicting both domestic and funerary scenes is similar to the conflation between marriage, and therefore the domestic role of women, and death as expressed in literature.³³² A similar association between marriage and death can also be understood in the pottery and grave monument record. For instance, youths who died unmarried would often have their graves marked with *loutrophoroi*, which had strong marital associations.³³³ Women, and men, who died young and unmarried were often commemorated with larger and presumably more expensive grave monuments, suggested by Stears to be because of the lamentation that the deceased still had the potential to fulfil citizen life.³³⁴ For a woman, fulfilling citizen life would have primarily involved having and raising children, and so the attitudes towards death appear to have provided the ability to express social norms and ideologies.³³⁵ Oakley has even suggested that the reason for the frequent appearance of children on white-ground lekythoi is related to the loss of children in both the plague and the loss of population during the Peloponnesian war.³³⁶ Pericles' funeral oration does encourage parents to have more children to make up the population,³³⁷ so an emphasis on sexuality and families being expressed on lekythoi is possibly reflecting the cultural context of both the Athenian plague and Peloponnesian war driving a cultural focus on family during the classical period, which many of these lekythoi date to. A loose connection between the large birds on white-ground pottery and female sexuality could be read in a representation of Aphrodite and a goose,³³⁸ as a goddess with a strong sexual association, and also a lekythos which depicts

³³⁰ Athenian white-ground lekythos, c. 500-450, Oxford, Ashmolean Museum: 1895.73, BAPD 209229.

³³¹ Athenian white-ground lekythos, c. 500-450, attributed to the Syriskos Painter, Berlin: F2252; BAPD 202736.

³³² See chapters three and seven. Rehm 1994 relates the conflation of marriage and death in tragedy to the depictions on white-ground lekythoi, as some domestic scenes could be interpreted as either funerary or marital preparations (pp.33-36).

³³³ Stears 1995 p.116.

³³⁴ Stears 1995 p.117.

³³⁵ Eg Stears 1995 p.128

³³⁶ Oakley p.222

³³⁷ Thucydides 2.44

³³⁸ Attic white ground cup tondo, by the Pistoxenos Painter, c. 460 BC London D2 1864,1007.77.

Artemis with a swan, as Artemis was often associated with women in their transition from childhood to marriage and with the birth of their children.³³⁹

While the birds which occur on white-ground lekythoi have been interpreted as pets, this is largely too simplistic an approach to reading the decoration without consideration for potential symbolic meaning. The use of birds to express ideas about women in the literature can cover concepts such as feminine sexuality, vulnerability, and also death or grief. Similar ideas can be read into these lekythoi, although the parallel to the literary record is far from perfect. The funerary purpose of white-ground lekythoi is compatible with bird metaphors which explain death, as often women are depicted, at or preparing to visit, a grave with birds present. The related concept of vulnerability expressed in the literature is likely also to be relevant to the funerary associations of white-ground, as death does bring the vulnerability of the deceased and bereaved to mind. Additionally, the literary parallel of female sexuality can be seen in the funerary record as well. Grave monuments often emphasised the loss of a youth who had died unmarried, with reference to marital iconography. Perhaps the most compelling argument for a symbolic reading of these birds with women on lekythoi is the appropriateness of birds as a companion for the dead. The concept of the soul-bird in both Egyptian and Mycenaean cultures could have very plausibly influenced Greek art in the classical period and been seen as an appropriate iconographic expression of the deceased travelling between life and death.

³³⁹ White-ground lekythos depicting Artemis and a swan, Pan Painter, c. 500-490. St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum: 6 2363. *LIMC* Artemis 969, BAPD 206365; Artemis is explicitly named as presiding over childbirth, for example: Aeschylus *Suppliant Women* 676-7; Euripides *Hippolytus* 161-169; Euripides *The Suppliants* 958-9.

Appendix B

Woman-Animal Hybrid Monsters:

The Sphinx as *Parthenos* and Medusa as Mother

Unlike the other aspects of the associations between women and animals in Greek culture discussed throughout this thesis where women were considered to be animalistic, the creation of animal-woman hybrid monsters brings this association out of the metaphorical and more abstract realm in and into the visual “reality” created by the merging of animal and woman. The physical fusion creates an imaginative reality which takes the symbol of woman-as-animal beyond the level of comparison (woman-is-like-animal) to the point of hybridism (woman-is-part-animal).³⁴⁰ This point of difference is why such monsters have been excluded from the body of the thesis, but this field would be a logical development for further research about the representation of the association between women and animals in ancient Greek culture. Such an examination of these monsters may prove insightful into the less immediate associations by demonstrating a more immediate version of the conceptual merging of animal and women. While this appendix provides a selection of examples and some discussion of a small aspect of two such hybrid monsters, it is by no means to be considered as an exhaustive catalogue or comprehensive study. Rather, it intends to be a demonstration of how monsters such as the Sphinx and Medusa also fit into the cultural metaphor by which the space between girlhood and motherhood was ‘animalistic’ for women, because these monsters were characterised as *parthenoi* or with an emphasis on their femininity. The ability to

³⁴⁰ Such a contrast is still maintained in contrast to instances such as the *arkteia* or metamorphosis myths where it can be argued that while the women are considered to be animals in those circumstances by the face value of the texts (for example, “*I was a bear at the Brauronian festival ...*” in Aristophanes *Lysistrata* 645), however it would be reasonable to expect that the ancient Greeks would not have understood the little bears of the *arkteia* to have actually and literally been bears. Likewise, myths of women transforming into animals represent humans who become animalistic, rather than existing in a permanent state between woman and animal as the Sphinx, for example, is permanently a winged lion with a woman’s head.

apply the same conclusion reached for women who were only figuratively animalistic to the physical animalistic hybridism indicates that this research could potentially hold valid for a wider scope of instances than could be examined in the thesis.

The significantly feminine aspect of Greek monsters has been noted by Gould, and that although obviously not true of all monsters, “*the terrifying nightmare figures of Greek mythology-the Moirai, the Erinyes, Harpies, Graiai, Sirens, Skylla and Charybdis, Medusa and the Sphinx ... are, again, characteristically women.*”³⁴¹

Commenting almost a decade after the above passage, Just also added that these creatures are also uncanny, uncontrollable, mysterious forces which lie beyond the civilisation of men.³⁴² Just considered their femininity to be apt for the embodiment of the savage or the bizarre world of nature which threatens to destroy men’s minds as readily as their bodies.³⁴³ If femininity is so appropriate for monstrosity, it is worth considering how this feminine identity is constructed. This appendix will look at some descriptions of the Sphinx and Medusa as *parthenoi*, in so far as they are represented as feminine and existing in the space between sexual availability and motherhood.

The Theban Sphinx

Some of the most informative accounts of the Sphinx are those provided by Euripides in the *Phoenissae*:

... ὡς δ’ ἐπεζάρει

Σφίγξ ἀρπαγαῖσι πόλιν ἐμός τ’ οὐκ ἦν πόσις,

³⁴¹ Gould 1980 p.56

³⁴² Just 1989 p.218

³⁴³ Just 1989 p.218

Κρέων ἀδελφὸς τὰμὰ κηρύσσει λέχη,
ὄστις σοφῆς αἴνιγμα παρθένου μάθοι,
τούτῳ ξυνάψειν λέκτρα.³⁴⁴

When the Sphinx was oppressing our city by seizing people, and my husband was not there, my brother Kreon announced my marriage, saying that I would be married to whoever solved the riddle of the wise maiden.

μηδὲ τὸ παρθένιον πτερόν, οὐρειον τέρας, ἐλθεῖν
πένθεα γαίας
Σφιγγὸς ἀμουσοτάταισι σὺν ὤδαϊς,
ἅ ποτε Καδμογενῆ τετραβάμοσι χαλαῖς
τείχεσι χριμπτομένα φέρειν αἰθέρος εἰς ἄβατον φῶς
γένναν, ἃν ὁ κατὰ χθονὸς Ἄιδας
Καδμείοις ἐπιπέμπει.³⁴⁵

...If only that the winged maiden, the monster of the mountain, had not come as a misfortune to our country, the Sphinx with her unmusical songs, who once, skimming the city walls with her four clawed paws, carried off those born of the race of Kadmos up to the pathless light of the sky; Hades beneath the earth sent her against the Kadmeians.

³⁴⁴ Euripides *Phoenissae* 45-9.

³⁴⁵ Euripides *Phoenissae* 805-11

ἔβας ἔβας,
ὦ πτεροῦσσα, γᾶς λόχευμα
νερτέρου τ' Ἐχίδνας,
Καδμείων ἀρπαγά,
πολύφθορος πολύστονος
μειξοπάρθενος,
δάιον τέρας,
φοιτάσι πτεροῖς
χαλαῖσί τ' ὠμοσίτοις:
Διρκαίων ἄ ποτ' ἐκ
τόπων νέους πεδαίρουσ'
ἄλυρον ἀμφὶ μοῦσαν
ὀλομέναν τ' Ἐρινὺν
ἔφερες ἔφερες ἄχεα πατρίδι
Φόνια ...
ὁπότε πόλεος ἀφανίσειεν
ἃ πτεροῦσσα παρθένος τιν' ἀνδρῶν.³⁴⁶

*You came, you came, O winged creature, offspring of the Earth and of Echida of the lower world,
robber of the Kadmeans, ruinous and grievous half-maiden, destructive monster, with roving wings*

³⁴⁶ Euripides *Phoenissae* 1019-31, 1041-2.

and flesh-eating claws, you who from the region of Dirke took youths by singing a lyreless song, a destructive Erinys, and you brought, you brought woe to our country ... whenever the winged maiden carried off one of the men from the city.

In each of these passages, the sphinx is described as a *parthenos* – a wise maiden, a winged maiden, but also as a half-maiden (μειξοπάρθενος).³⁴⁷ ‘Winged maiden’ is also used by Sophocles to describe the sphinx (πτερόεσσ’ ... κόρα).³⁴⁸ The frequent use of this word to describe the sphinx suggests that it is likely to be a deliberate description rather than a coincidental common occurrence. It may serve to emphasize the female nature of the sphinx, however the use of ‘*parthenos*’ (and ‘*kore*’ by Sophocles) also carries the implication of an unmarried young woman while her monstrosity is being described, as by the descriptors such as ‘winged’ or ‘*meixoparthenos*’. *Parthenos* is also used by Euripides to describe the sirens, who are a relevant comparison as half-female hybrid monsters like the sphinx, who within three lines of *Helen* are thrice described with words indicating youthful femininity (νεάνιδες, παρθένοι, and κόραι).³⁴⁹ The construction of the sphinx, and also the sirens, as *parthenoi* would seem to place them into the role of unmarried young woman. They take the position of one who would not be under the control of a husband, perhaps referring to the power that these creatures instead hold over men. In contrast to the sphinx and siren, the gorgon Medusa can be considered as an animalistic unmarried woman, but she also becomes a mother through her death, leaving the role of *parthenos* as she loses her life.

The physical representation of such hybrid monsters, such as the sphinx, in the artistic record are also recognisably female. Usually depicted with feminine characteristics, such as long hair and

³⁴⁷ Euripides *Phoenissae* 1024. The word is also used in Herodotus 4.9.1 of a creature who is half-snake, half-woman.

³⁴⁸ Sophocles *Oedipus Tyrannus* 506.

³⁴⁹ Euripides *Helen* 167-9: Winged girls, virgin daughters of the earth, Sirens... (πτεροφόροι νεάνιδες,/ παρθένοι χθονός κόραι/ Σειρήνες ...).

occasionally represented with white skin as would be appropriate for women,³⁵⁰ the femininity of the sphinx is typically identifiable, although the predominantly leonine body and large wings are somewhat more prominent. Some representations of the sphinx carrying off Theban youths,³⁵¹ as was described in the *Phoenissae* passages above, allow for a possible reading of the sphinx as a seductress, which would highlight the sexual aspect of femininity.³⁵² Ambiguity exists in how one should interpret these scenes, Vermeule has suggested that such an image could recall a mother with her young, a lady with her lover, or a predator with her prey.³⁵³ While each of these may be valid depending on whether one focuses on the sexual or nurturing woman, or the predatory lion aspect of the sphinx, Tsiafakis has more recently commented that this late archaic image probably related to the Theban legend and depicts the fate of the youths who cannot answer the riddle, yet believes the erotic overtones in some depictions to be undeniable.³⁵⁴

Another concept which is found surrounding these hybrid monsters is their association with death. Sphinxes are found on archaic grave monuments, and sirens also make appearances on graves.³⁵⁵ This has frequently been interpreted as a representation of protection.³⁵⁶ Such an interpretation is clearly at odds with the explicit textual description of the sphinx as a deadly monster,³⁵⁷ however Sourvinou-Inwood has suggested a reconciling of these two ideas in that the sphinx as both

³⁵⁰ For instance, an Athenian black-figure skyphos depicting the sphinx on a column depicts her with white skin, c. 525 – 475, attributed to Theseus Painter, Athens, National Museum: 18720, BAPD 330704.

³⁵¹ For example, an Athenian red-figure lekythos shows the sphinx gazing at a youth she is carrying off while holding his nude body close to hers. C. 525 – 475, Kiel, Antikensammlung: B553, BAPD 9521.

³⁵² Gantz 1993 concludes from similar black-figure representations of the Sphinx that in her early tradition, she specifically carries off male youths for whatever purpose, before the riddle can be attested in the tradition by Sophocles (p.496).

³⁵³ Vermeule 1979 p.171.

³⁵⁴ Tsiafakis 2004 p.80. Similarly, the sirens can be understood to be seductresses as their appeal lies in luring men to their island through their song. The offer of the sensual pleasure which the sirens provide is in keeping with the other female obstacles in the *Odyssey* who present attractive sensuality rather than outright horror.

³⁵⁵ For instance, the Sphinx e.g., New York Metropolitan Museum of Art 11.185d (c. 540 BC); Siren e.g., Athens National Museum 774 (early 4th century BC).

³⁵⁶ For example, Richter 1961 p.6; Sourvinou-Inwood 1995 pp.271-2; Cohen 2000 p.103.

³⁵⁷ Such as Euripides *Phoenissae* 1019-31, 1041-2.

protector and death-bringer is at another level an image of death itself.³⁵⁸ While it appears reasonable that as a dangerous monster the sphinx may be an image of death, the ideas surrounding the sphinx as a guardian seem to be largely based on subjective interpretation. Certainly, if one accepts the role of lions on grave monuments as symbols of power and protection³⁵⁹ then it may be reasonable to expect the transference of some qualities due to the lion element of the sphinx. However, the representations of lions and sphinxes would probably have carried separate iconographic meanings. Another interpretation which seems more likely is that suggested by Hoffmann who proposed that the use of sphinxes for funerary representation is related to the concept of boundaries.³⁶⁰ As sphinxes have bodies which straddle the boundaries of nature, they are suited to also straddle the line between life and death.³⁶¹ As creatures which also bring death to their victims they are again shown to be logically moving between the living and the dead, and a comparison may be pointed to where some *parthenoi* in tragedy are closely associated with death.³⁶²

Medusa

... τε Μέδουσά τε λυγρὰ παθοῦσα.

ἧ μὲν ἔην θνητή, αἶ δ' ἀθάνατοι καὶ ἀγήρω,

αἶ δύο: τῆ δὲ μῆ παρελέξατο Κυανοχαίτης

³⁵⁸ Sourvinou-Inwood 1995 p.271. For example, Pentelic marble funerary lion, c. 390, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts: 65.563. The Thebans also erected a sculpture of a lion to honour their dead after the Battle of Chaeronea in 338 BC (Pausanias *Description of Greece* 9.40.10).

³⁵⁹ Eg Sourvinou-Inwood 1995 p.273

³⁶⁰ Hoffmann 1997 p.79

³⁶¹ Hoffmann 1997 p.79. See also commentary on the significance of wings in liminality between life and death in appendix A.

³⁶² See chapter three; for instance, the apparent incompatibility of *partheneia* and sacrificial death, that the apparent loss of virginity in death by a cut throat conflates sex and death for women such as Iphigeneia and Polyxena. Similarly, the interpretations of the sphinx as both a death-bringer and *parthenos* could be drawing on a similar concept to the murderous *parthenoi* of Hippocrates' *Peri Parthenion*- see also chapter three, p.81.

έν μαλακῷ λειμῶνι καὶ ἄνθεσιν εἰαρινοῖσιν.

τῆς δ' ὅτε δὴ Περσεὺς κεφαλὴν ἀπεδειροτόμησεν,

ἔκθορε Χρυσάωρ τε μέγας καὶ Πήγασος ἵππος.³⁶³

...and Medusa suffering sorely. She was mortal, but they were immortal and ageless, those two. But the dark-haired one lay with her alone in a soft meadow with springtime flowers. But when Perseus cut off her head, out sprang the great Khrysaor and Pegasus the horse.

From the above passage, the tradition by which Medusa “gave birth” to Pegasus and Khrysaor after her decapitation is explicitly established in the literary record as early as Hesiod. The narrative is also visually represented by her children emerging from Medusa’s neck.³⁶⁴ Such a myth places Medusa’s femininity as an important aspect of her monstrous character: while she is alive she can be understood to be like a *parthenos*, in as much as she does not have children or a husband despite not being a virgin, like the sphinx above, but after her death she becomes a mother.³⁶⁵ A parallel between Medusa and the women in the metamorphosis myths discussed in chapter six can also be made. She also follows a story of a woman who has a sexual experience and is physically animalistic, although Medusa’s animalism is monstrous hybridity rather than a temporary transformation.

Topper has suggested the importance of Medusa’s role as a maiden in interpreting the representation of the moment of her death on a seventh-century pithos where Medusa is portrayed as half-equine.³⁶⁶ Topper equates Medusa to other tragic female figures such as Iphigeneia, and

³⁶³ Hesiod *Theogony* 276-281.

³⁶⁴ For instance: Pegasus is shown emerging from the dead Medusa on an Athenian red-figure white-ground lekythos, c. 500 – 450, attributed to the Diosphos painter, New York, Metropolitan Museum: 06.1070; BAPD 203101. Also in black-figure: an Athenian black-figure Siana cup, c. 575-525, Berlin, Schloss Charlottenburg: F1753; BAPD 300471.

³⁶⁵ This was briefly discussed in chapter seven.

³⁶⁶ Topper 2010; Medusa. Cycladic relief pithos, Paris, Musée du Louvre: CA 795.

concludes that such an image represents Medusa as a maiden like an untamed filly,³⁶⁷ who ought to be a candidate for marriage, not death.³⁶⁸ While there are many possible readings of this mythological tradition, Medusa is noted here because she fits into the cultural metaphor explored through this thesis, that of a woman (or female monster, as here) who is considered to be animalistic throughout her transition from *parthenos* to mother. By giving birth after her death, Medusa is shown to be an animalistic creature who is also not maternal during her life.

The feminine component of these hybrid monsters is clearly important, with the sphinx being explicitly identified as *parthenos*, and Medusa being represented as a mother and the emphasis on feminine attributes in artistic representations. This then raises the question of what there is to fear in the feminine which allowed the creation of various womanly monsters, and why in some instances feminine animalism is relatively benign yet elsewhere is horrific. An explanation to such a question is not hypothesized because a wider exploration of other female-animal hybrid monsters would be required. Such monsters do not fall within the scope of women being represented as metaphorically animalistic, but rather in hybridism between women and animals, and so such further inquiry does not fit the purpose of this thesis. However, the male dominance over the female animalism seen in other expressions of the 'woman as animalistic' metaphor is also consistent with hybrid monstrosity, as it is also expressed by the male heroes who kill or defeat the feminine part-animal monsters. One plausible conclusion for such stories of feminine monsters who are defeated by a male hero has been suggested by Forbes Irving:

³⁶⁷ See chapter seven for the unwed young woman as an untamed horse.

³⁶⁸ Topper 2010 p.116.

*“The assertion of male dominance over a superhuman woman, especially a dangerous woman who threatens to upset the established male order, is a fantasy that is at the heart of these stories. ... and taming of a woman reflects a social reality.”*³⁶⁹

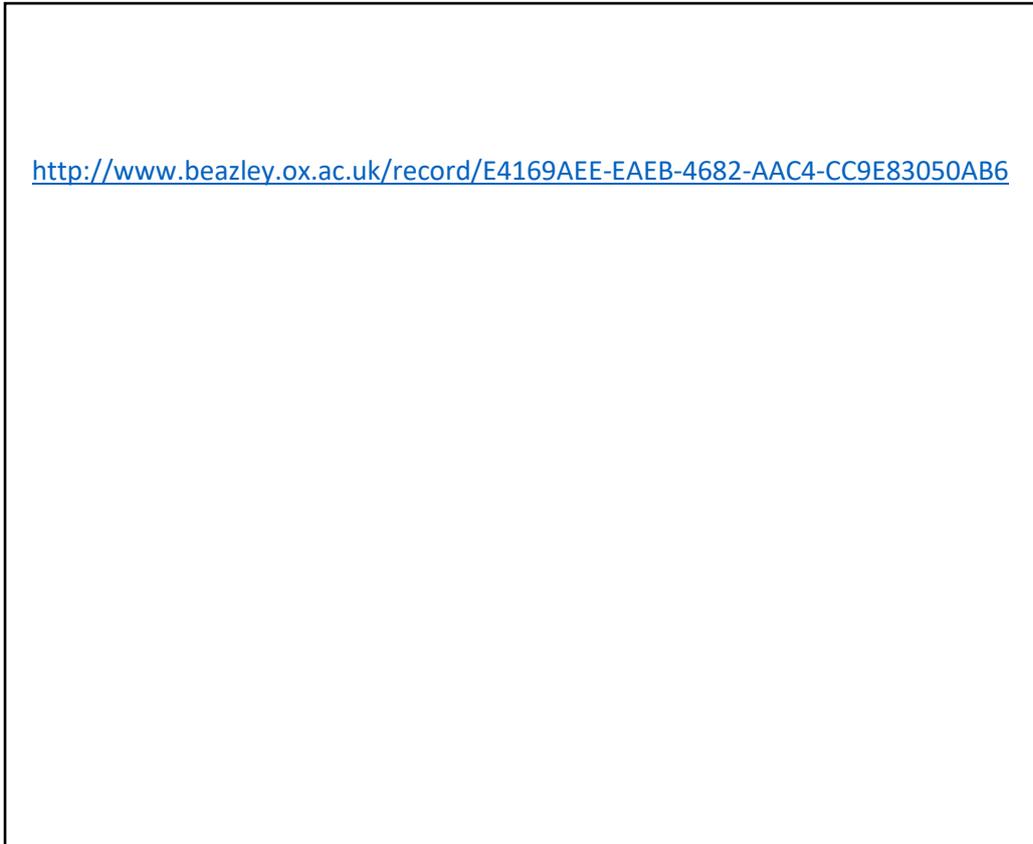
If even supernatural and monstrously animalistic women are able to be defeated, then it may have been reassuring to men that even a “wild” wife could be tamed. The social reality which Forbes Irving mentioned can be guessed at through the literature and artistic record which consistently imagines even presumably historic women (as opposed to just literary characters) to be animalistic,³⁷⁰ and therefore able to be subdued.

³⁶⁹ Forbes Irving 1990 p.190

³⁷⁰ Such as the wife who is told she should be like a bee in Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus* 7; See chapter seven: Courtship as Hunting

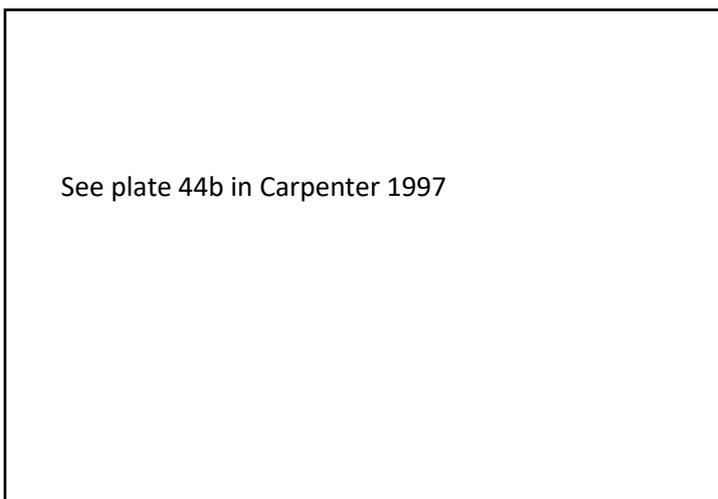
Illustrations

Figure 1:



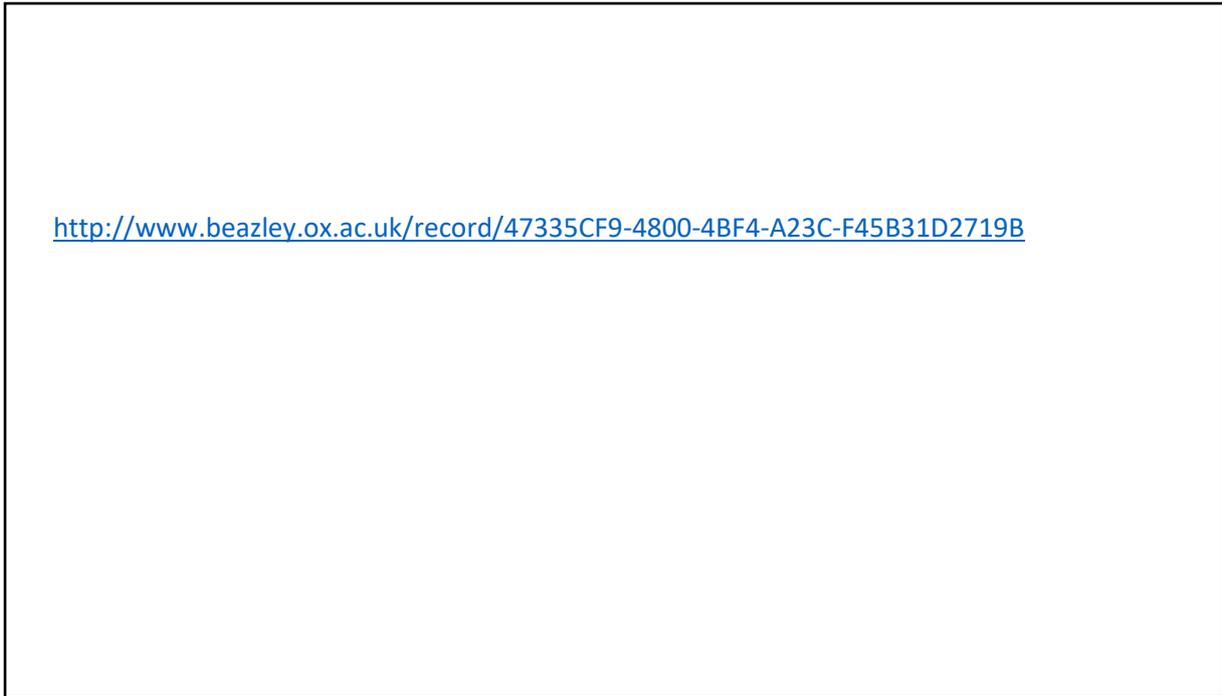
Athenian black figure amphora, c. 525-475, University (MS), University of Mississippi, University Museums: 77.3.58. BAPD 361412 (image source: BAPD).

Figure 2:



Paris, Cabinet de Médailles 357 (image source: Plate 44b in Carpenter 1997).

Figure 3:



Athenian red figure cup, c. 525-475, attributed to London E 2 Painter by Beazley, Paris, Musée du Louvre: G93. BAPD 202289 (image source: BAPD).

Figure 4a:

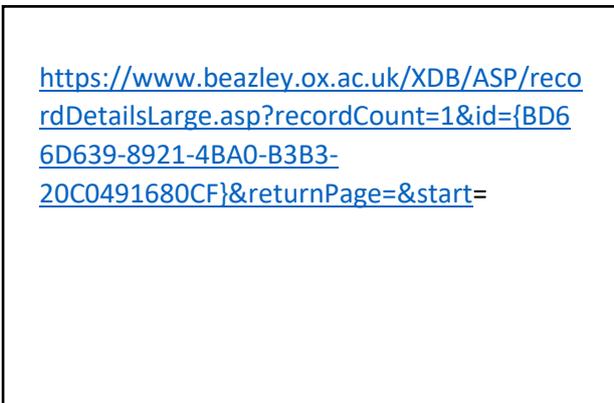
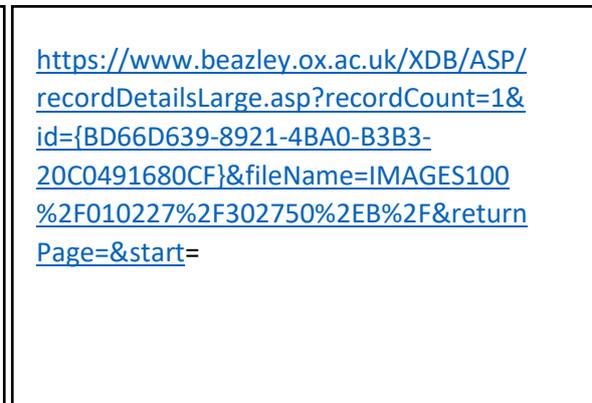
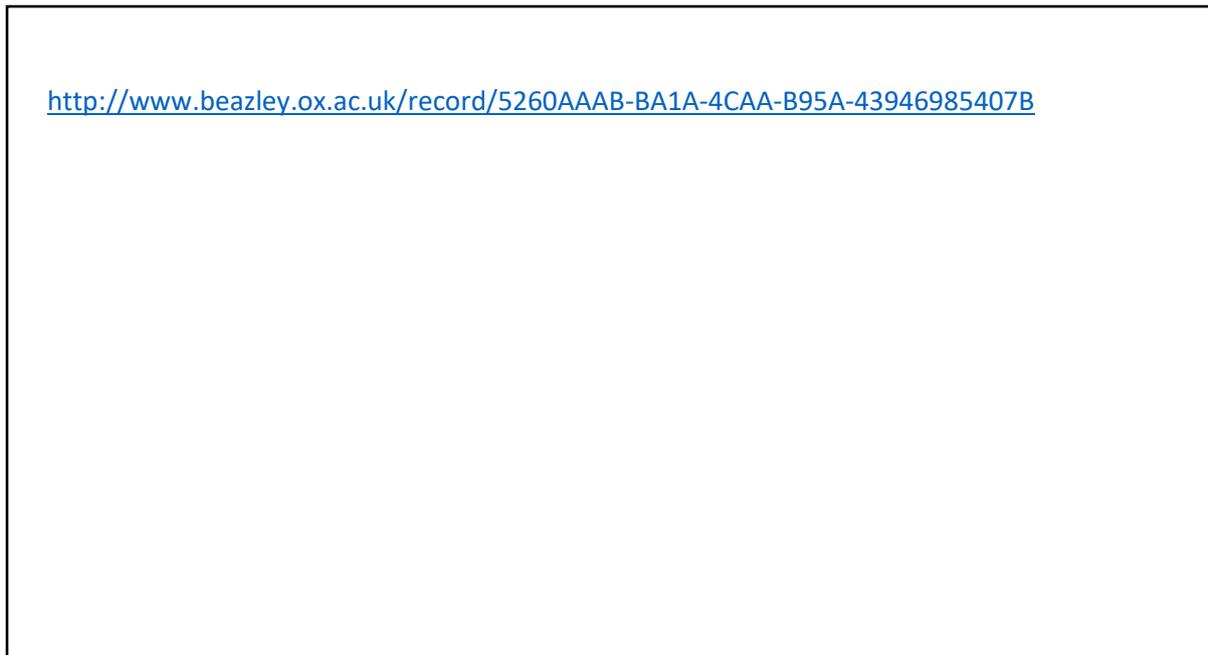


Figure 4b:



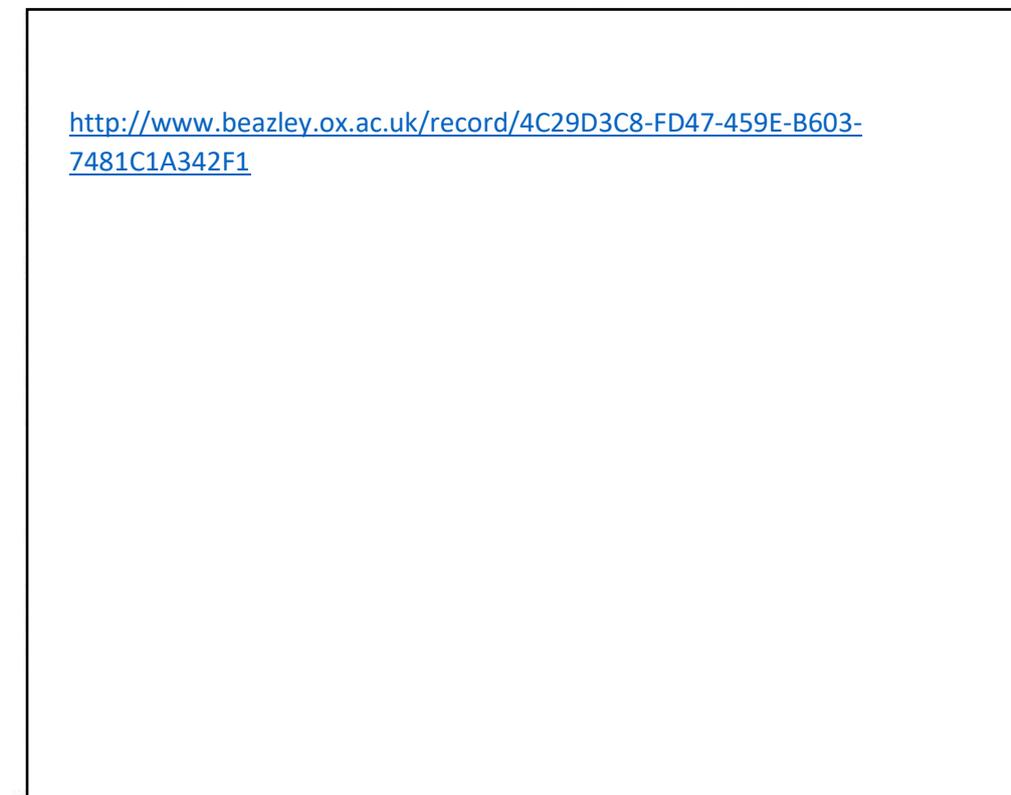
Athenian black figure amphora, c. 550-500, attributed to Nikosthenes as potter, Vatican City, Museo Gregoriano Etrusco Vaticano: 17716. BAPD 302750 (image source: BAPD).

Figure 5:



Athenian black figure skyphos, c. 525-475, attributed to the Painter of Munich 2100 by Beazley, Athens, National Museum: 12584. BAPD 302665 (image source: BAPD).

Figure 6:



Athenian black figure amphora, c. 550-500, attributed to the Painter of Munich 1519 by Beazley, Los Angeles (CA), County Museum: A5933.50.28. BAPD 302958 (image source: BAPD)

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³⁷¹ <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>

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