



*Didaskalia is an electronic journal dedicated to the study of all aspects of ancient Greek and Roman performance*

# DIDASKALIA

## Volume 15 (2019)

<http://didaskalia.net>  
ISSN 1321-4853

## About Didaskalia

Didaskalia (διδασκαλία) is the term used since ancient times to describe the work a playwright did to teach his chorus and actors the play. The official records of the dramatic festivals in Athens were the διδασκαλῖαι. *Didaskalia* now furthers the scholarship of the ancient performance.

*Didaskalia* is an English-language, online publication about the performance of Greek and Roman drama, dance, and music. We publish double blind, peer-reviewed scholarship on performance as well as reviews of the professional activity of artists and scholars who work on ancient drama.

We welcome submissions on any aspect of the field, and we provide a uniquely friendly venue for publishing sound, image, and video evidence. If you would like your work to be reviewed, please write to [editor@didaskalia.net](mailto:editor@didaskalia.net) at least three weeks in advance of the performance date. We also seek interviews with practitioners and opinion pieces. For submission guidelines, go to [didaskalia.net](http://didaskalia.net).

---

### Current Staff

Editor-in-Chief:	Mike Lippman	<a href="mailto:editor@didaskalia.net">editor@didaskalia.net</a> +1 402 472-2460
		Post: <i>Didaskalia</i> Department of Classics and Religious Studies University of Nebraska-Lincoln 305 Louise Pound Hall Lincoln, NE 68588-0037 USA
Emerita Editor:	Amy R. Cohen	
Associate Editor:	C.W. (Toph) Marshall	
Assistant Editors:	Nichole Brady	<a href="mailto:assistant-editor@didaskalia.net">assistant-editor@didaskalia.net</a> <a href="mailto:intern@didaskalia.net">intern@didaskalia.net</a>
Interns 2018:	Ellen Kratzer Halle Jenke	

---

### Editorial Board

Caterina Barone	Peter Meineck
Dorota Dutsch	Tim Moore
Mary-Kay Gamel	Nancy Rabinowitz
Mark Griffith	Brett Rogers
Mary Hart	John Starks
Fiona Macintosh	J. Michael Walton
Willie Major	Paul Woodruff

---

### Copyright

Readers are permitted to save or print any files from Didaskalia as long as there are no alterations made in those files. Copyright remains with the authors, who are entitled to reprint their work elsewhere if due acknowledgement is made to the earlier publication in *Didaskalia*. Contributors are responsible for getting permission to reproduce any photographs or video they submit and for providing the necessary credits.

**DIDASKALIA**  
**VOLUME 15 (2019)**  
**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

---

15.01	<b>Review - Aristophanes in Motion: Onassis Cultural Center's <i>heirids</i></b> Fiona Harris Ramsby	1
15.02	<b>Review - Euripides' <i>restes</i> at Hellenikon Idyllion</b> Richard Hutchins	8
15.03	<b>Review - <i>ntigone</i>: A First for the American Shakespeare Center</b> C. Michael Stinson	13
15.04	<b>Review - Euripides, <i>erakles</i> by Barnard Columbia Ancient Drama</b> Timothy J. Moore	19
15.05	<b>Review - Euripides' <i>Medea</i> at Randolph College</b> A. C. Duncan	28
15.06	<b>Article - <i>e uba</i> A Film Record</b> Patrick Wang	44
15.07	<b>Review - Aeschylus' <i>resteia</i> at Watts Theater</b> Larua Gawlinski	56
15.08	<b>Review - Sophocles' <i>ntigone</i> at Hartke Theater</b> Patricia M. Craig	63
15.09	<b>Review - Ellen McLaughlin's <i>resteia</i> at Shakespeare Theater Company</b> Jocelyn R. Moore	74
15.10	<b>Review - Louis Alfaro's <i>Mo ada</i> at The Public Theater</b> Emily Jusino	84

---

**Note**

Didaskalia is an online journal. This print representation of Volume 15 is an inadequate approximation of the web publication at [didaskalia.net](http://didaskalia.net), which includes sound, video, and live hyperlinks.

15.11	<b>Article - Re-Appropriating Phaedra: Euripides, Seneca, and Racine in Arava Sidirooulou's <i>Phaedra</i></b> Eleonora Colli	92
15.12	<b>Article - Robert Icke and the Gesher Theater's <i>resteia</i> 2018-19</b> Lisa Maurice	101
15.13	<b>Article: "Why We Build The Wall": Theatrical Space in <i>adesto n</i></b> Claire Catennacio	84 115
15.14	<b>Article - Behind the Schemes: UVM's Production of Euripides' <i>elen</i> (March 22-23, 2018)</b> John C, Franklin	132
15.15	<b>Review - Martha Graham Dance Company - Graham's Greeks</b> Nina Papathanasopoulou	158

## Euripides' Medea

Translated by Michael Collier and Georgia Machemer

Directed by Amy R. Cohen

October 5–7, 2018

The Randolph College Greek Play / Center for Ancient Drama

Mabel K. Whiteside Greek Theatre

2500 Rivermont Avenue

Lynchburg, Virginia

Review by Al Duncan

Assistant Professor of Classics, UNC Chapel Hill,

Research Fellow, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa

The latest in a remarkable series of original-practices productions mounted at Randolph College under the leadership of Dr. Amy R. Cohen, the Randolph Greek Play's October 2018 *Medea* demonstrated, once again, the value of historicizing stagecraft in our contemporary, political world. This *Medea* engaged with a number of pressing issues, but the show took place at a particularly charged time in the ongoing struggle for women's rights. Against such a background, even this most canonical of tragedies could not help taking on new meanings. The political force of Cohen's *Medea*, far from being diminished by its traditionalist form, was enhanced by the ostensible "distance" this stagecraft provided. In an era that will probably be remembered for its radically and progressively re-imagined *Medeas*, this Randolph Greek Play was more than a mere footnote or academic exercise, but a significant contribution to its own political moment and the play's performance history.

As its structure will suggest, in writing this review I have three goals. The first is to sketch some of the theatrical and cultural contexts in which the Randolph Greek Play *Medea* was situated. Timing is always essential in theater, but this *Medea* fell at peculiarly significant historical moment. A century after major milestones in the women's suffrage movement, a little more than a decade after Randolph College became coeducational, and in the midst of a heavily-reported background investigation into a Supreme Court nominee that brought cultural tensions regarding sexual assault, which had been simmering uncomfortably for two years, to the boiling point—the sweeping social forces enveloping Cohen's *Medea* were unusually palpable. My second goal is to document the performance itself, highlighting aspects significant not only to the immediate context of the production, but also within the play's longer history. Third, by way of conclusion, I consider whether this Randolph production was part of a new set of #MeToo *Medeas* and the ways in which Euripides' play continues to adapt to the political needs of its present.

## I. CONTEXT



*"The Mabel K. Whiteside Greek Theater at Randolph College"*  
 Photo Credit: Jill Nance

Cohen's *Medea* continued what, after an energetic initial push, has become a biennial string of productions of Greek drama in Lynchburg. The current series dates back to 2000, seven years before its hosting institution became co-educational and shortened its name from Randolph-Macon Women's College to Randolph College. Upriver from the looming brick towers of downtown Lynchburg, past stately historic homes, and within sight of the rolling Blue Ridge hills, the Randolph campus retains some sense of being historically a "women's space," although nearly 40% of enrolled students identified as male in 2018. As America inherits a popularized version of Judith Butler's critical theory and increasingly sees gender as a performative social construct, the institutional transition away from an exclusively women's college has made Randolph a space especially conducive to gender re-imaginings—a process aided and reflected upon, as so often, by theatrical performance.



*"The masked actors of the Randolph College Greek Play"*  
 Photo Credit: Jill Nance

This new chapter in Randolph's gendered history nearly coincides with Cohen's own reimagining of a fabled campus tradition. Inspired by Professor Mabel K. Whiteside's productions of Greek drama, which spanned the first half of the 20th century at the women's college, Cohen has rebooted the theatrical tradition for a new millennium. Since its reconstitution in 2000, what has come to be known as the Randolph Greek Play (RGP) has emerged, like its 20th-century forebear, as one of the longest-running classical drama programs in North America. Whereas Whiteside's performances were given in the original Greek, Cohen places historical emphasis not on language but on original production practices. Most notably, Cohen's troupe uses a full-head or "helmet" mask for actors and chorus members alike, a simple artistic decision that ramifies substantially in performance. As far as I am aware, in its absolute commitment to ancient performance practices, the renewed Randolph series is unique in the modern performance history of ancient Greek drama.<sup>1</sup> Over the past decade, Cohen has yoked to her distinctive productions an academic conference, Ancient Drama in Performance (abbreviated ADIP), where scholars of ancient Mediterranean theater from across the globe come to witness and discuss its performance. Like Whiteside's celebrated tradition, the historicizing performance of Greek drama under Cohen's tenure has once again connected this small Virginian school with global trends and debates in classical education.<sup>2</sup>



"Audience seated in the Whiteside theater"  
Photo Credit: A. R. Cohen

It was among other ADIP conference-goers that I sat on the stone seats of the open-air Whiteside Theater on Saturday, October 6, to watch the second of three afternoon performances of *Medea*. As has become part of the tradition at Randolph, a weekend run of free and public performances was preceded by two "school shows" arranged for students from local K–12 institutions. To dismiss these mid-week performances as mere "previews," however, would be profoundly to miss the point. According to Cohen, in 2018 around eight hundred primary and secondary students attended *Medea*, a figure slightly greater than the six hundred "regular" weekend attendees she estimates. These impressive numbers are the result of an extensive and sustained outreach effort, and for her public-facing services on behalf of the discipline, Cohen was awarded the Society for Classical Studies Outreach Prize in 2016. With an audience ranging from eight-year-olds to octogenarian alumnae, academics

to amateur theater enthusiasts, Cohen's company must play to many tastes and competencies. That the Randolph Greek Players have managed to do this so successfully, and (re)build a storied program in the process, is a real achievement.

Before going further, I should note this is not the first review of a Randolph College Greek Play in *Didaskalia*. Jaclyn Dudek wrote a synoptic response to *Hecuba* in 2010, and Cristina P. Díaz offered a focused study of the chorus in 2014's *Oedipus the King*.<sup>3</sup> Nearly all of Dudek and Díaz's observations apply to the 2018 production, since Cohen's company had, as Aristotle might put it, "realized their telos" by 2010. It is thanks to Dudek and Díaz, as well as my own good fortune to have caught *Seven Against Thebes* in Lynchburg in 2012 and a road-show *Oedipus* in Baltimore in 2014, that I am now (and was then) able to focus on details peculiar to this *Medea*.

### A Century of *Medea*

Nearly two decades into the revamped series, I was surprised to learn that *Medea*—a tragedy with a household name, two prominent female roles, and a chorus of (comparatively) young women—had not yet seen the stage as part of Randolph's rebooted tradition. In conversation with Cohen I learned that, despite her own personal inclinations towards the play ("the first real Greek" she had read), several pedestrian factors kept *Medea* in the wings for almost two decades. In the end this delay was fortunate, since the play landed with particular impact in 2018.

*Medea* was Whiteside's third production in 1911, and may have seemed a daring choice after her *Alcestis* and *Antigone*, plays whose eponymous self-sacrificing heroines came much closer to Progressive-Era notions of "proper" woman's behavior than the notorious child-killer. But the 1911 *Medea* at Lynchburg was also part of an international *Zeitgeist* that kicked off an unparalleled century in the history of the play's reception. In Britain, the first unabridged performance of *Medea*, using Gilbert Murray's popularizing translation, had taken place just years before in London in 1907—an overtly political production Edith Hall has called a "Suffragette" *Medea*.<sup>4</sup> On this side of the pond, the story of *Medea* had been a hit across America over the nineteenth century, where the heroine's social isolation as a foreigner appealed to a growing nation of immigrants.<sup>5</sup> But the women's suffrage movement, which achieved critical mass in the first decades of the 20th century, cast the play in a new political light in North America as well. *Medea*'s isolation was soft-pedaled, and her solidarity with the women of Corinth emerged as the political focal point of the play. On both sides of the Atlantic, infanticide and all, *Medea* became a women's play in the early 20th century.

Suffragettes leant impetus to *Medea*'s rise, but the play lingered in the limelight well after the landmark legislative passage of the British "Representation of the People Act" in 1918 and, in America, the Congressional approval of the 19th Amendment in 1919. Euripides' *Medea* is about much more than gender, of course.<sup>6</sup> Over the long and revolutionary 20th century, as women and so many "others" gradually secured legal and political autonomy, *Medea* gravitated toward the center of the literary and cultural canon.<sup>7</sup> Canonicity, however, offers mixed blessings in the theater, and thanks to a spate of scholarly and lay engagements with the play, a certain *Medea* fatigue was ready to set in just as Cohen's series was getting off the ground.<sup>8</sup> But a lot has happened in the past two decades—indeed in just the two years preceding Cohen's production. It was against a rapidly shifting cultural backdrop that this *Medea* entered, once more, into urgent relevancy.



### *Medea* in the #MeToo Era

The October production of the 2018 *Medea* marked two notable anniversaries in recent American political and social life.<sup>9</sup> The first of these was the 2016 public release of what has become known as the “*Access Hollywood* tape,” a 2005 recording in which Donald J. Trump made self-incriminating comments about sexual assault which nearly upset the candidate’s presidential bid and ultimately catalyzed a movement that organized scores of Women’s Marches across the country. This *Medea* also marked the one-year anniversary of the initial publication from a Pulitzer Prize-winning *New York Times* investigation detailing decades of allegations of sexual harassment and assault against film producer Harvey Weinstein.<sup>10</sup> The allegations against Weinstein ignited widespread public debate about gender equity, elevating a hashtag first created by Tarana Burke, “#MeToo,” to a household phrase in America and around the world. Providing a forum and framework for discussing sexual injustice, the #MeToo Movement caught fire (and scores of headlines) during the next year as executives, entertainers, politicians, and other powerful men became embroiled in a series of scandals.

Outrage associated with #MeToo had hardly abated when, in August 2018, President Trump nominated Brett Kavanaugh to fill the seat in the U.S. Supreme Court vacated by Justice Anthony Kennedy. When Dr. Christine Blasey Ford, a San Francisco Bay-Area psychology professor, publicly accused Kavanaugh of sexual assault in the course of his confirmation hearings, the increasing pressure of the #MeToo Movement erupted into a fervor that ran all the way up to the steps of the U.S. Capitol. Ford’s allegations recalled those of Anita Hill against Clarence Thomas in 1991— a parallel that prompted the nation to take stock of its stalled progress on sexual harassment and assault over a quarter of a century. Ford’s claims, echoed by several other women but vociferously denied by Kavanaugh in his own public testimony, triggered an FBI background investigation into the nominee which began in late September. The scope, process, and reports of the Kavanaugh investigation dominated the news during *Medea*’s production week.

Entering into this cultural fray was Cohen’s original-practices *Medea*—a production that, at least at the level of form, could hardly be more detached from the present. The history of Greek drama in Lynchburg, however, illustrates how context is essential to the political and historical interpretations of dramatic performance. The historicizing production of ancient plays finds ways to speak to contemporary politics despite their traditionalist form. *Medea*’s themes of disputed memory, political ambition, oaths, and gender equity all felt unsettlingly resonant as the Senate prepared for its confirmation vote Saturday, October 6—right in the middle of the Randolph *Medea*’s public run.

## II. THE RANDOLPH GREEK PLAY MEDEA



*"The company behind the mask"*  
Photo Credit: A. R. Cohen

This *Medea* was a joy to watch, especially since the mostly amateur cast from a small liberal-arts college punched well above its weight. As Cohen noted in conversation with conference attendees, this was a particularly cohesive company, and their *esprit du corps* could be felt in performance. Liz Beamon, a third-year student who had danced as a choreut in Cohen's 2016 *Frogs*, stepped Thespis-like into the title role as protagonist. Beamon was in the midst of a theatrical *annus mirabilis* at Randolph, having just come off a gig as Lady Macbeth and breathlessly preparing for a major role in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Beamon was entirely convincing from her first off-stage cries, placed early in the Nurse's prologue in a bold departure from their transmitted position in the text. Medea is one of very few characters in Greek drama that we hear before we see, and Beamon's "stage presence" could be felt even in absentia.<sup>11</sup> It was only after she emerged from the skene door that the audience learned that Beamon—unlike the actors playing the nurse and tutor, already on stage—is black.



*"Liz Beamon as Medea"*  
Photo Credit: Jill Nance

I expect many of *Didaskalia's* readers to agree, at least in principle, that an actor's outward appearance should be immaterial when casting tales from Greek myth, especially when ancient concepts of ethnicity have little meaningful correspondence with modern, post-colonial, and exclusionary concepts of race. But since our modern social categories (not to say prejudices) cannot reasonably be ignored in performance, directors today face devilishly knotty problems when realizing ancient drama by means of diverse casts and before diverse audiences. If the script is followed without addition or alteration, today's racialized bodies must wordlessly inhabit roles not necessarily designed to reflect the complexities of the historical moment. If, however, the script is altered to account for an actor's race, a host of other issues arises. This catch-22, which David Wiles has described as "trying to live in 'the world of the play' while performing in the world of race," is perhaps one of the reasons why freer adaptations of ancient drama have resonated in our current cultural climate.<sup>12</sup>



*"Medea at the front of the chorus"*  
Photo Credit C. N. Cohen

Nevertheless, the figure of a "Black Medea"—as Betine van Zyl Smit, Kevin Wetmore Jr., and Melinda Powers, among others, have thoughtfully considered—has given fresh power to Euripides' play in a variety of contexts.<sup>13</sup> But Cohen, wisely I think, left the blackness of Beamon's Medea understated, a directorial decision enabled by a diverse chorus, amongst whom the tone of Beamon's skin (which, like all the actors, informed the paint color of her mask) could not simply be taken as a sign of Medea's foreignness. As befits a major nexus of ancient trade routes, the demographics of the chorus suggested a cosmopolitan *mise-en-scène* in Corinth. The pluralist polis enacted onstage, however, coexisted uneasily beside contemporary daily life in Virginia, where the fatal violence of a white supremacist rally in another college town, Charlottesville, still echoed. The racial dynamics of Cohen's production may have been subtle, but during this tumultuous period of American history, and especially in this region of the country, Beamon made the Randolph Greek Play much more than a #MeToo *Medea*.



*"Medea and the masked chorus"*  
*Photo Credit: Heather Laurence*

Beamon gave a stand-out performance in one of the most demanding roles in Attic drama, but by adhering to the ancient Greek "three-actor rule," the performance also rested heavily upon two other talented actors: Ho'ola Bush (Tutor, Jason) and Lily Tacke (Nurse, Creon, Aegeus, Messenger). A fellow conference attendee and I confided with one another that, had we not known to look for the practice, we might have missed that only three actors played all speaking roles. Not only did Bush and Tacke commit to each role in their bodily movement, but their average physiques also made it difficult to single out a specific actor beneath each costume.<sup>14</sup>



*"Ho'ola Bush as Jason"*  
*Photo credit: Jill Nance*

Playing a bumbling Tutor and braggadocious Jason, Bush brought comic relief to an intense tragedy at a tense time. Bush's lines, often delivered in a deadpan or with a knowing nod to the audience, received the most laughs in the show. Few would argue that Euripides' portrayal of Jason was ennobling in 431 BCE, but in recent decades it has become especially challenging to portray the Argonaut as a sympathetic tragic figure. For today's audiences, Jason's bravado comes much closer to the comedic stereotypes of inept but overconfident male partners. Bush's jaunty Jason was unthreatening, suggesting that his sneering chauvinism rested not upon his own capacity for violence but rather upon the established powers of a patriarchy whose foundations, after a year of #MeToo revelations, felt increasingly infirm.



*"Lily Tacke as Nurse, addressing the audience"*  
 Photo Credit: A. R. Cohen

Also noteworthy as seen through the lens of gender politics was that Creon and Aegeus, two famously impotent male characters, were played by a woman. Lily Tacke gave compelling performances in each role, balancing but not upstaging Beamon's lead. Aegeus' obtuse inability to interpret a sexual prophecy became, as often, a laugh line.<sup>15</sup> On the whole, however, Tacke's Creon and Aegeus both came across as sympathetically competent and entirely free from the insecurity of Bush's Jason.



*"The chorus"*  
 Photo Credit: Jill Nance

The theatrical success of any Greek drama depends as much on the chorus as on the leads, and Beamon, Bush, and Tacke were supported by a dynamic chorus. As Díaz noted in her 2015 review, Cohen’s decision to maintain a masked chorus “can feel today more experimental and risky than conservative.”<sup>16</sup> In 2018, against a background of increased public scrutiny over acting across identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, etc.) and the cultural imposition of a narrowly-defined set of “classics,” Cohen’s chorus deserves particular praise for the savvy but subtle ways it models diversity and inclusivity. Certain recent historicizing productions have neglected modern social fault lines to their peril, but Cohen’s masks, uncannily outsized but uniformly splendid with tightly braided hair across a spectrum of colors, scrupulously avoid imposing or reifying racial difference or caricature.<sup>17</sup> Cohen’s masks managed to honor the actor underneath while placing the character seamlessly in the world of the play. The masks also exerted a democratic effect, their uniform materiality and quality mitigating the difference between lead and supporting roles. Furthermore, chorus members and supernumerary figures (which tradition suggestively calls *kōpha prosōpa*, or “silent masks”) were given individual, proper names in the playbill. In the Randolph Greek Play, the individual was rarely lost within the collective.

In some ways, however, the mask productively elided individual difference. I was struck by how effectively the mask’s acoustic resonance and fixed form blended disparate voices in song. It was difficult to isolate a single voice or to link it to a specific body in the playing space. In spoken performance, this peculiar aspect of a masked chorus can be bizarrely disorienting, but in song—the default vocal mode of the plural chorus—the effect is entirely different, blending quieter, less confident voices into the collective choral sound.<sup>18</sup> No modern masking practice can definitively resolve the most pressing historical questions of Attic stagecraft, but Cohen’s productions, year in and year out, remind viewers not only of the social but also the dramatic power of this quintessential dramatic device.



*“Medea pulled by dragons above the crowd”*  
 Photo Credit: Heather Laurence Photo Credit: Jill Nance

The chorus, however captivating, recedes into the margins during the play's famous final scene, in which the heroine returns to the play space, borne aloft in her divine grandfather's chariot. Few modern theaters, even purposively "Greek" ones, are equipped with the crane upon which Athenian dramatists relied to present such remarkable stagecraft. Contemporary directors almost uniformly settle for creative if inevitably less-spectacular alternatives, but Cohen tackled this difficulty head on, ingeniously placing a striking "dragon wagon" upon a strip of grass above the seating area. Emerging from a hillside copse stage right, two "serpents" sporting custom masks and cloaks pulled a good-sized cart decorated with volute green and yellow coils, modeled brilliantly on the monumental Cleveland Medea crater, to a prominent position above the seating area. The wagon's location, which demanded that spectators turn back and forth, was dramatically effective, placing the audience between a devastated Jason and a triumphant Medea. The heroine, perched high on her chariot, rose not only above her former husband and chorus, but also above the audience. Medea's final appearance punctured the theatrical frame, blazing a trail away from Jason's hallow male chauvinism along the same path attendees would soon take to leave the performance.

### III. CONCLUSION: #METOO MEDEA?

What has Euripides' *Medea* become in the #MeToo era? As the Roman playwright Seneca captured in his self-conscious phrase, *Medea fiam*, "I will *become* Medea," this Colchian heroine remains in a constant state of becoming as audiences serially receive her.<sup>19</sup> Medea's status as cultural outsider steered her portrayal in the 1990s and early 2000s, but now, in the later 2010s, Euripides' play seems in the midst of another distinct moment of cultural "becoming." Into what new artistic forms—and to what new social forums—is the play turning?

The Medea myth has proven fertile ground for recent radical and socially engaged re-imaginings. Cherríe Moraga, Rhodessa Jones, and Luis Alfaro (among others) have each in their own way broken free from the fetters of the Greek text in order to call attention to Medea's predicament as both woman and "other." But Medea's status as a woman—in society, in her family—remains the most inalienable component of her character. While the intersectionality of Medea's position remains crucial in this #MeToo era, Medea's solidarity with other women has once again become salient, in ways that echo the suffragette movement a century ago and hint at social changes to come.

Against the backdrop of the Kavanaugh investigations in October 2018, it was perhaps inevitable that the Randolph *Medea* became a #MeToo story, even as its historicizing stagecraft promised to transport viewers back to a time and society quite different from our own. As I sat in the theater, overwhelmed both by the week's news and the play's contemporary relevance, I wondered whether we all sat on the cusp of a new period in the play's reception: an era of #MeToo Medeas. When the #MeToo hashtag went viral, it elicited a wide range of personal histories. From stories of sexual assault to indecent innuendo, from quid-pro-quo propositions to more insidious forms of workplace injustice, the unifying power of the hashtag—whose phrase simultaneously presumes and creates community—was key to the movement's success.

Although it is inseparably linked with women's struggle for equity, the boundaries of #MeToo are somewhat ill defined. Not unlike the evolving reception of Euripides' *Medea*, the battle lines of the #MeToo Movement will shift over time. Medea's quest for social autonomy resonated forcefully with first-wave feminism in its mission to remove legal barriers to women's political and economic involvement, but the play has arguably had less to offer subsequent, "later-wave" feminisms. For Medea to become fully "#MeToo" and directly challenge our received patriarchal social and sexual mores, it must overcome the substantial gulf between fifth-century and twenty-first-century social attitudes. This gap is sometimes bridged through small but significant changes in the story, and Medea's precarity as an immigrant is particularly open to incorporating stories of abuse.<sup>20</sup> Still, in the right circumstances and with the right talent, even a traditional performance such as Cohen's can resonate powerfully with contemporary social movements. The recent spate of *Medea* productions, several of which have been reviewed in this journal, suggests that the heroine and her avenging serpents are being summoned, once more, to the front lines of our ongoing culture wars.<sup>21</sup> As a story of an aggrieved woman using gender solidarity to seek righteous retribution from the men who have wronged her, Medea is likely to leave audiences saying "Me too" for some time.



## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Similar and current long-running (annual) North American series of which I am aware include The Barnard-Columbia Ancient Drama Group, which has put on original-language productions since 1977, and the Classical Greek Theatre Festival of Utah, which under the directorship of James K. Svendsen has presented modernized but historically-informed and regularly open-air productions since 1970. Performance traditions, especially those of the late 19th and early 20th century, were at pains to present historically-informed costumes and movement, as in Eva Palmer Sikelianos' remarkable productions at Delphi, discussed in Leontis 2019. Masks feature recurrently in some series, but not elsewhere with the consistency of Cohen's tradition at Randolph.

<sup>2</sup>On the trans-Atlantic phenomenon of "Ladies' Greek," in the Victorian era, see Prins 2017.

<sup>3</sup>Dudek 2011, Díaz 2015.

<sup>4</sup>Hall 1999.

<sup>5</sup>Foley 2012, 190–228.

<sup>6</sup>For a rich overview of the play's performance history, see the free e-book published by the Archive for the Performance of Greek and Roman Drama (APGRD). (Didaskalia link: [https://www.didaskalia.net/medea\\_ebook\\_index.html](https://www.didaskalia.net/medea_ebook_index.html))

<sup>7</sup>At the time of Cohen's production in October 2018, the OpenSyllabus project ([opensyllabusproject.org](https://opensyllabusproject.org)) ranked *Medea* as the 72nd most frequently assigned text in American collegiate classrooms. It stood as the 12th most assigned work from classical antiquity, the 3rd most assigned Greek drama (after *Oedipus* and *Antigone*), and the 6th most assigned drama (after the listed and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, *Tempest*, and *Henry V*, barely edging out *Macbeth* and *Othello*).

<sup>8</sup>Scholarly publication is at best a peculiar measure of public appeal, but *Medea* received a remarkable amount of attention around the turn of the millennium, including notably Clauss and Johnston 1997; Hall, Macintosh, and Taplin 2000; Hine 2000; and Mastronarde 2002. The theatrical culmination of this wave of interest, Deborah Warner's Abbey Theatre production starring Fiona Shaw, may not have presented a definitive version of the play, but it was at least one of such stature that it could not lightly be followed by another. On Warner's production, see Mendelssohn 2002 and Scodel 2003.

<sup>9</sup>The Randolph Greek Play's biennial October productions fall on even years, and therefore coincide with the most heated period of the American election cycle. These two anniversaries were not entirely accidental, as this is the time when an "October surprise" is most likely to commandeer the news and, with it, much of the public discourse.

<sup>10</sup>The story broke October 5, 2017.

<sup>11</sup>*Medea*'s extra-metrical cries are traditionally placed post 95, 110, 143.

<sup>12</sup>Wiles 2000, 170.

<sup>13</sup>van Zyl Smit 2014; Wetmore 2013; Powers 2018, 17-49. See also Andújar 2018.

<sup>14</sup>An obscure joke in Aristophanes' *Frogs* (Ar. Ran. 55) refers to an actor, Molon, of apparently unusual size. Cohen's production suggested to me that actor's stature may have been especially important in Attic drama, where masks and costumes obscured most other aspects of personal appearance.

<sup>15</sup>E. *Med.* 679–81.

<sup>16</sup>Díaz 2015: 57.

<sup>17</sup>For instance, a March 2019 production of Aeschylus' *Suppliants* at the Sorbonne was blocked by protestors responding to the use of darkening stage-makeup in past performances and some publicity materials, a use they reasonably decried as blackface.

<sup>18</sup>On the mask as a "musical instrument," see Wiles 2007, 153–180.

<sup>19</sup>Sen. *Med.* 171, following Hine 2000. There are other readings of this line: see Hine's discussion ad loc.

<sup>20</sup> When adapting the Medea myth to our contemporary cultural moment, theater makers have often had cause to introduce sexual assault into the heroine's backstory, as in Alfaro's *Mojada: A Medea in Los Angeles*, which debuted in Chicago in 2013 and will have its New York premier at the Public Theater in July 2019.

<sup>21</sup>See Andújar 2018, Jenkins 2018, Olive 2018.

## Works Cited

- Andújar, R. 2018. *Medea*: Oxford's first BAME play. *Didaskalia* 14. 42-48.
- Claus, J. J., and S. I. Johnston. 1997. *Medea: Essays on Medea in Myth, Literature, Philosophy, and Art*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Díaz, C. P. 2015. *Oedipus the King* at Randolph College. *Didaskalia* 12: 56–58.
- Dudek, J. 2011. *Hecuba* at Randolph College. *Didaskalia* 8: 13–15
- Foley, H. P. *Medea's Divided Self*. *Classical Antiquity* 8: 61–85.
- — —. 2012. *Reimagining Greek Tragedy on the American Stage*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hall, E. 1999. *Medea* and British Legislation Before the First World War. *Greece & Rome*. 46: 42–77.
- Hall, E., F. Macintosh, and O. Taplin. *Medea in Performance: 1500–2000*. Oxford: Legenda.
- Hine, H. 2000. *Seneca: Medea*. Warminster: Aris & Philips.
- Jenkins, T. E. 2018. *Medea: Stimmen* at Deutsches Theater. *Didaskalia* 14. 49-52.
- Leontis, A. 2019. *Eva Palmer Sikelianos: A Life in Ruins*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Mastrorarde, D. J. 2000. *Medea*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mendelsohn, D. 2003. The Bad Boy of Athens. *The New York Review of Books*. February 13, 2003: 24–28.
- Olive, P. 2018. *Medea: Written in Rage* at Theatre Royal, Brighton. *Didaskalia* 14. 52-57.
- Powers, M. 2018. *Diversifying Greek Tragedy on the Contemporary US Stage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Prins, Y. 2017. *Ladies' Greek: Victorian Translations of Tragedy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Rehm, R. 1989. *Medea* and the Logos of the Heroic. *Eranos* 87: 97–115.
- Scodel, R. 2003. Warner and Shaw's *Medea*. *The American Journal of Philology* 124: 469–471.
- Swallow, P. 2018. *Women's Aristophanes: Old Comedy, Gender and Social Change in Early Twentieth-Century Britain*. Paper presented at the KCL-UNC Graduate Student Colloquium, Chapel Hill, NC, September 1.

---

van Zyl Smit, B. 2014. Black Medeas. In *Looking at Medea*, edited by D. Stuttard. 157–166. London: Bloomsbury.

Wetmore, K. 2013. *Black Medea: Adaptation for Modern Plays*. Amherst: Cambria.

Wiles, D. 2000. Burdens of Representation: The Method and the Audience. In *Method Acting Reconsidered: Theory, Practice, Future*, 169–78. New York: St. Martin's Press.———. 2007. *Mask and Performance in Greek Tragedy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.