

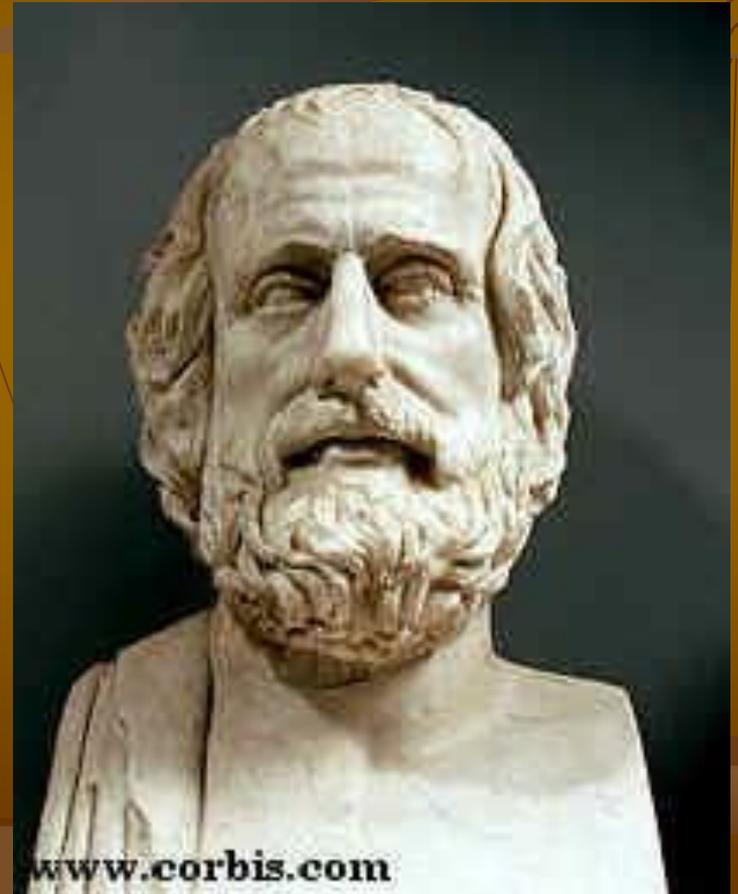


Euripides

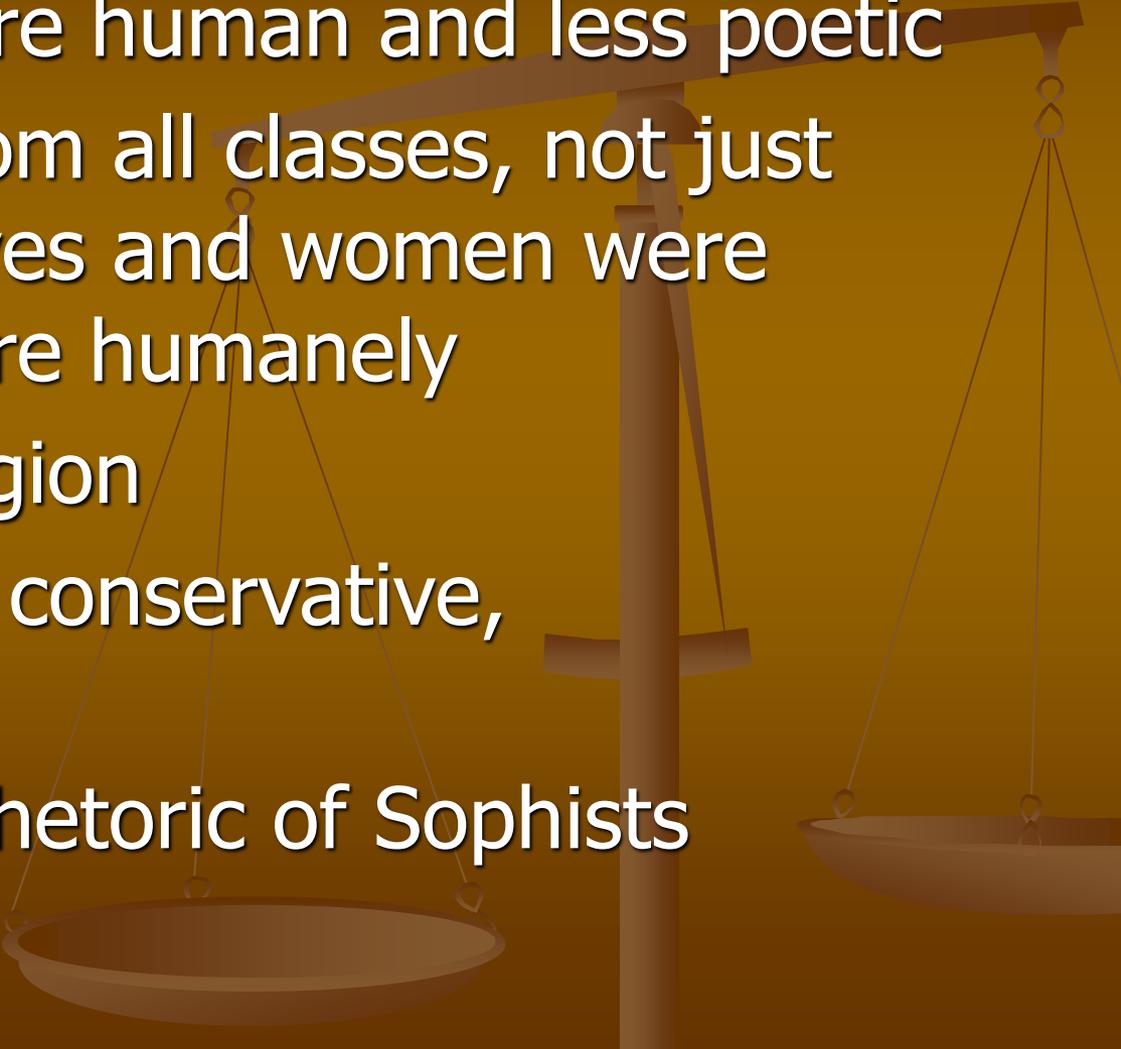
Alan haffa

Euripides, 480-406

- From Salamis
- Won only 5 competitions, probably because his poetry challenged societal norms
- Wrote *Bacchae* in Macedonia and died there

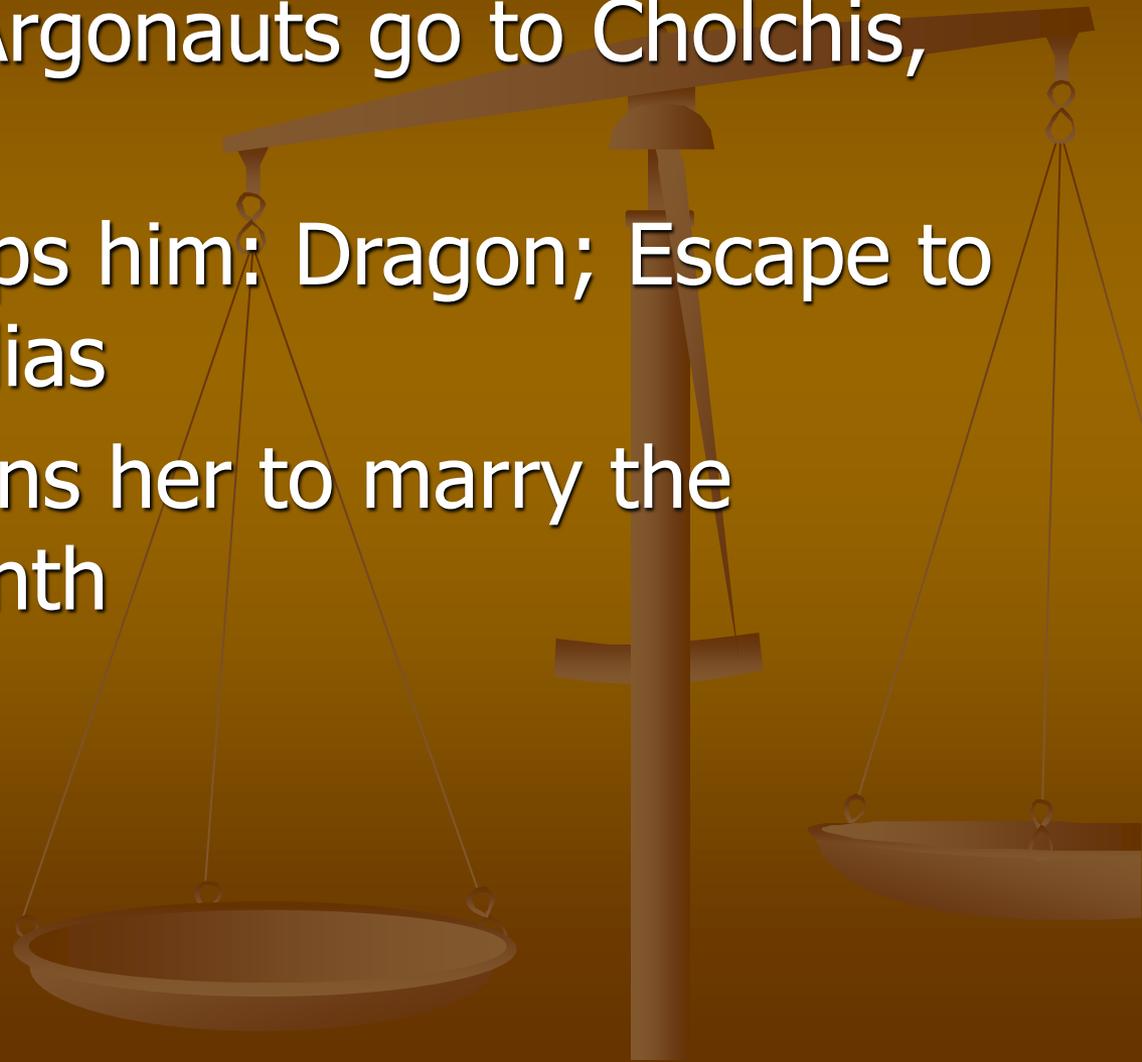


Euripides' Style

- Language is more human and less poetic
 - Heroes come from all classes, not just aristocratic; slaves and women were represented more humanely
 - Questioned Religion
 - Attacked by the conservative, Aristophanes
 - Influenced by Rhetoric of Sophists
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Medea

- Jason and the Argonauts go to Cholchis, Black Sea
- How Medea helps him: Dragon; Escape to Iolchis; King Pelias
- How he abandons her to marry the princess of Corinth



Is Medea a Sympathetic Hero?

- 225 ff: “But me—the blow you know of fell suddenly, soul-shattering. It is my ruin: I have lost all grace of life; I long to die, O friends. He, who was mine in all, my Lord, of all men has become the most base. Surely, of creatures that have life and intelligence, we women are of all unhappiest, who first, must buy, and buys the highest bidder, a husband—no, truly we do but win for our lives a master!...will the lord we gain be evil or good? Divorce? It is shameful to us; we may not even reject a suitor!
- Men have other options for love, but not wives
- She would rather fight in battle than battle in childbirth
- She asks the Chorus of Corinthian women to be silent about her desire for vengeance
- Chorus: “This will I do. For it is just that you, Medea, pay back your lord; no wonder that you grieve.”

Murder of Children Too Extreme

1280 ff

- Chorus after the Murder of the Children:

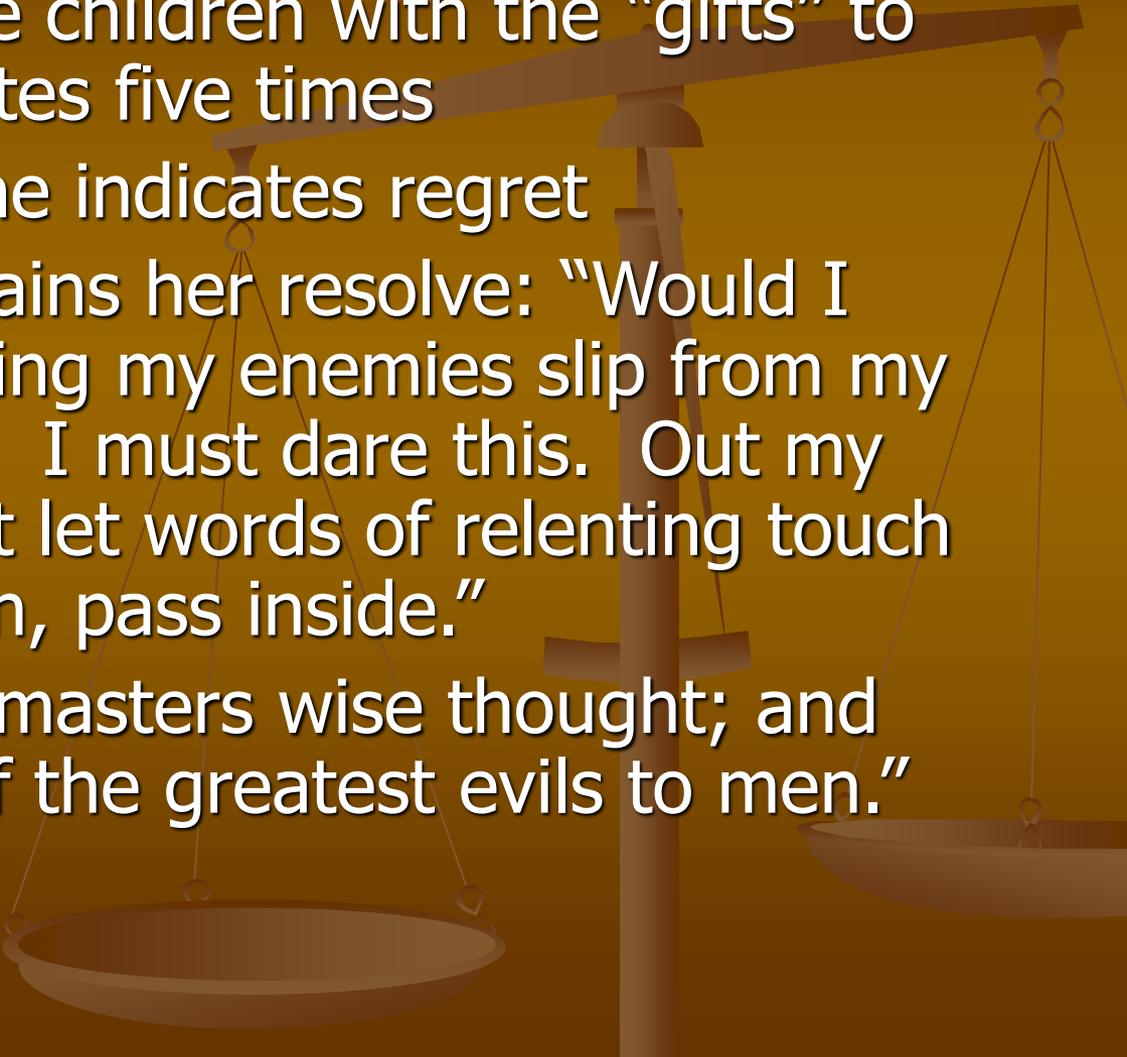
“Wretch! Of what rock is thy heart made? Of what steel is your breast moulded?

That the babes born by you, with the very same hands that with love have enfolded them, these, with these hands have you slain them?”

Chorus gives example of Ino and her children

“What more monstrous horror remains to be done? O bride-bed of women, with sorrow filled, what wound upon mortals before now have you brought? What multitude of evils?”

Does her Hesitation Prove her Humanity? (1041-1081)

- Before Sending the children with the “gifts” to Glauce, she hesitates five times
 - After they leave she indicates regret
 - Ultimately she regains her resolve: “Would I earn derision, Letting my enemies slip from my hand unpunished? I must dare this. Out my coward mood, that let words of relenting touch my heart! Children, pass inside.”
 - “But passion over masters wise thought; and this is the cause of the greatest evils to men.”
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The Gods?

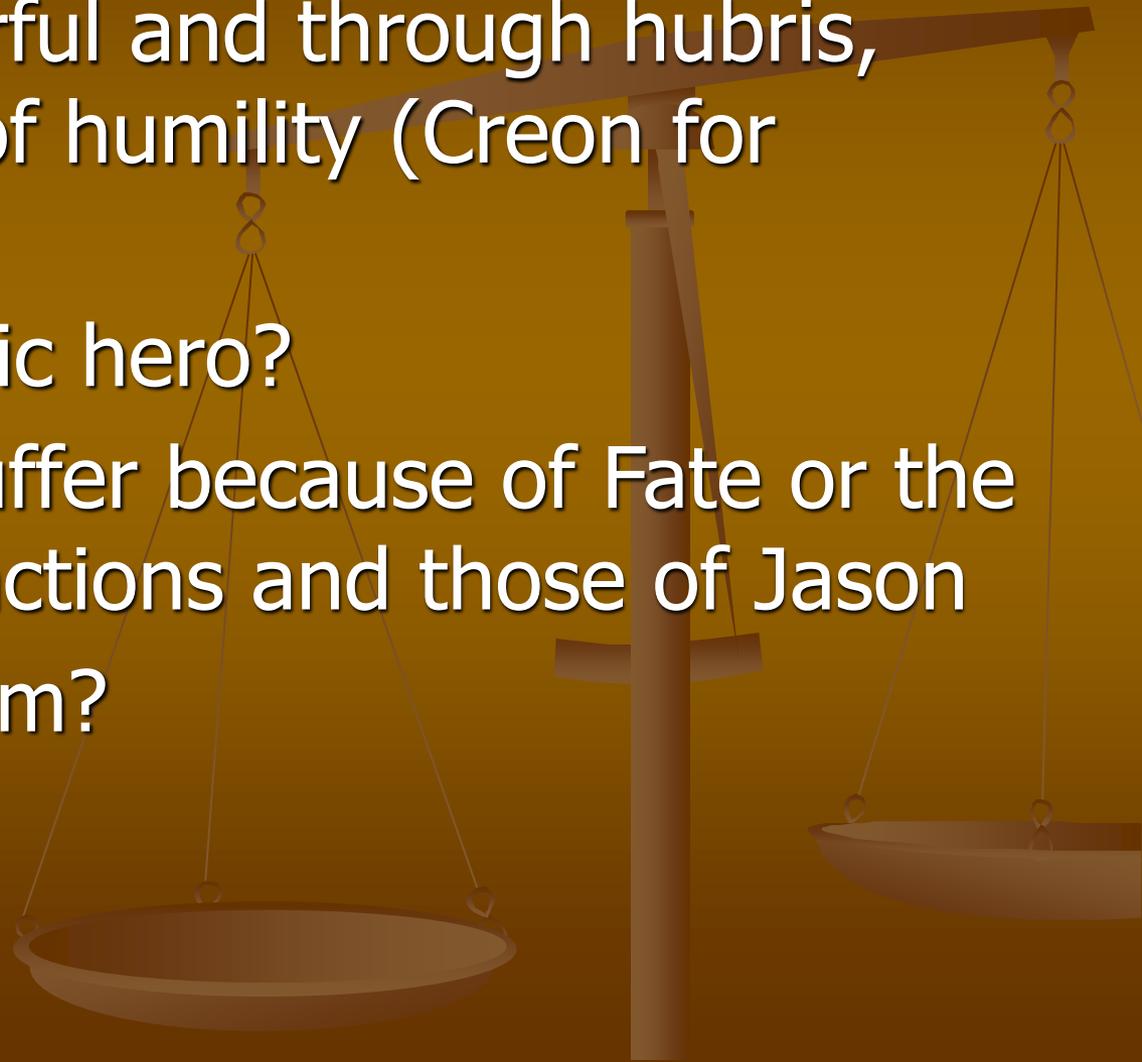
- There are few references to the gods
- No appearances of the gods
- Yet, the final words of the play, the Chorus seems to attribute the tragedy to the gods:

“All dooms be of Zeus in Olympus; it is his will to reveal them. Many things un hoped for, the Gods bring to fulfillment; And the things that we looked for, the Gods will Not to fulfill them; And the paths undiscerned of our eyes, the Gods unseal them.

So fell these Deeds.”

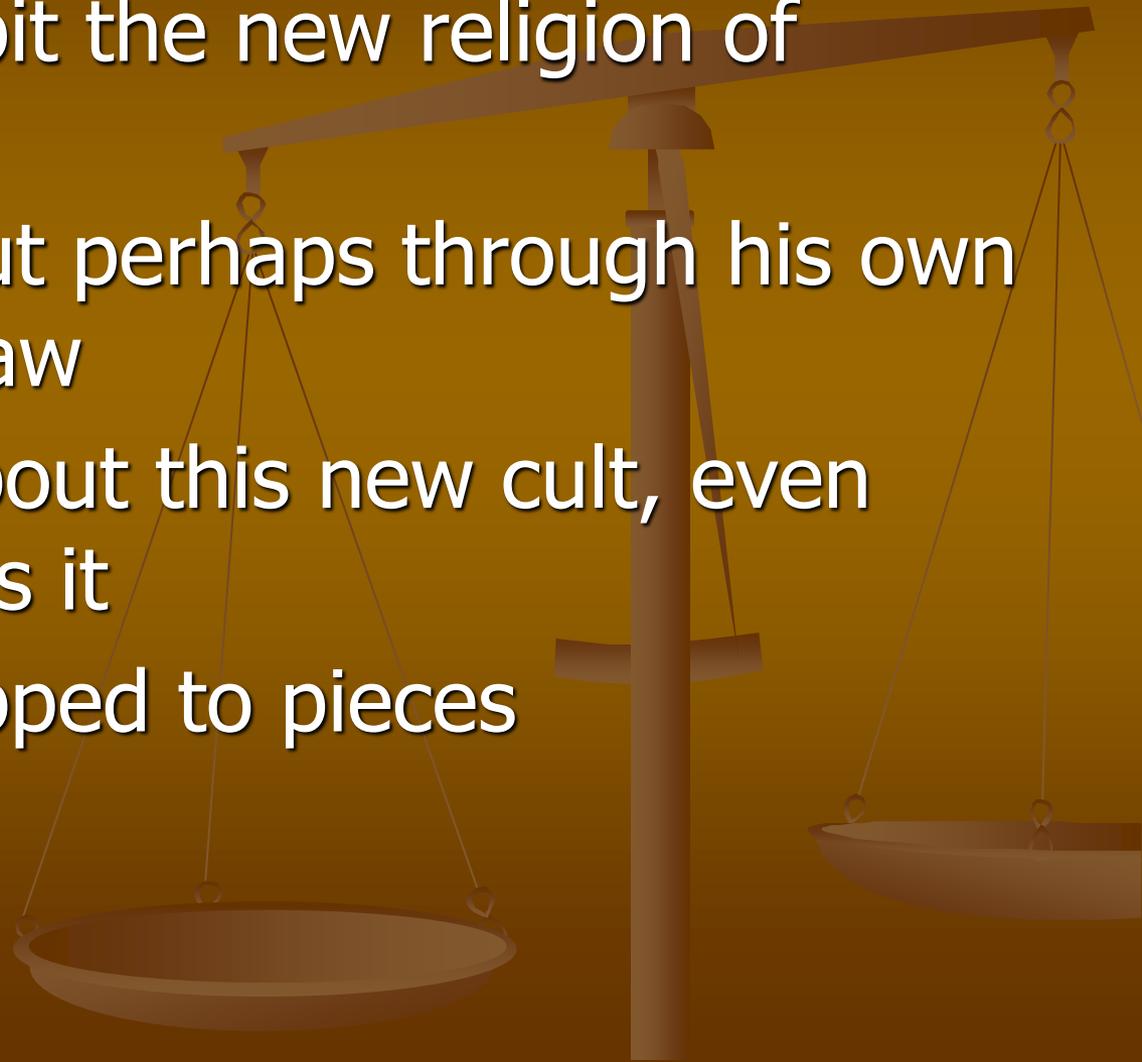
Traditional Tragic Hero

- Starts off powerful and through hubris, falls to a state of humility (Creon for example)
- Is Medea a tragic hero?
- She does not suffer because of Fate or the Gods; it is her actions and those of Jason
- Pre-Existentialism?

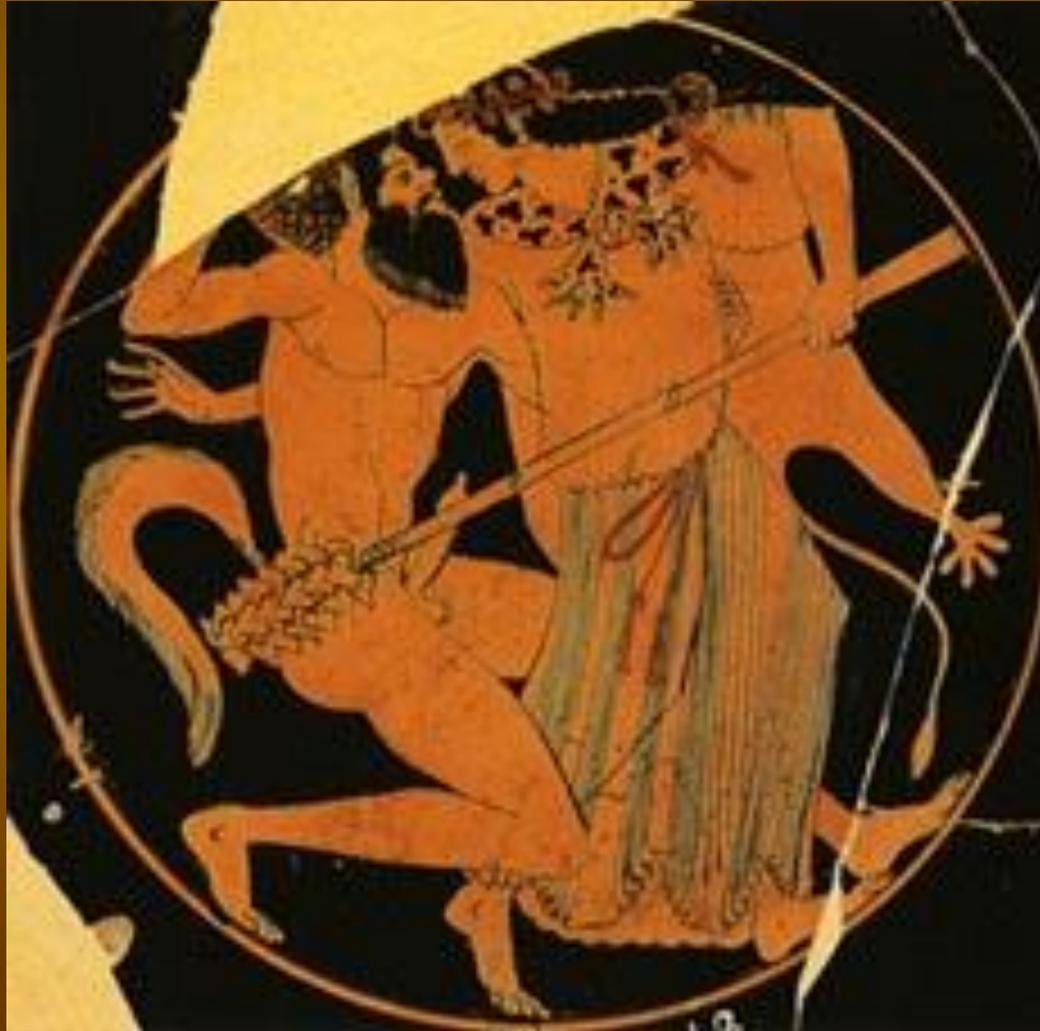


Bacchae: Hubris of King Pentheus

- Strove to prohibit the new religion of Dionysus
- Is destroyed, but perhaps through his own psychological flaw
- He is curious about this new cult, even while he outlaws it
- He is literally ripped to pieces

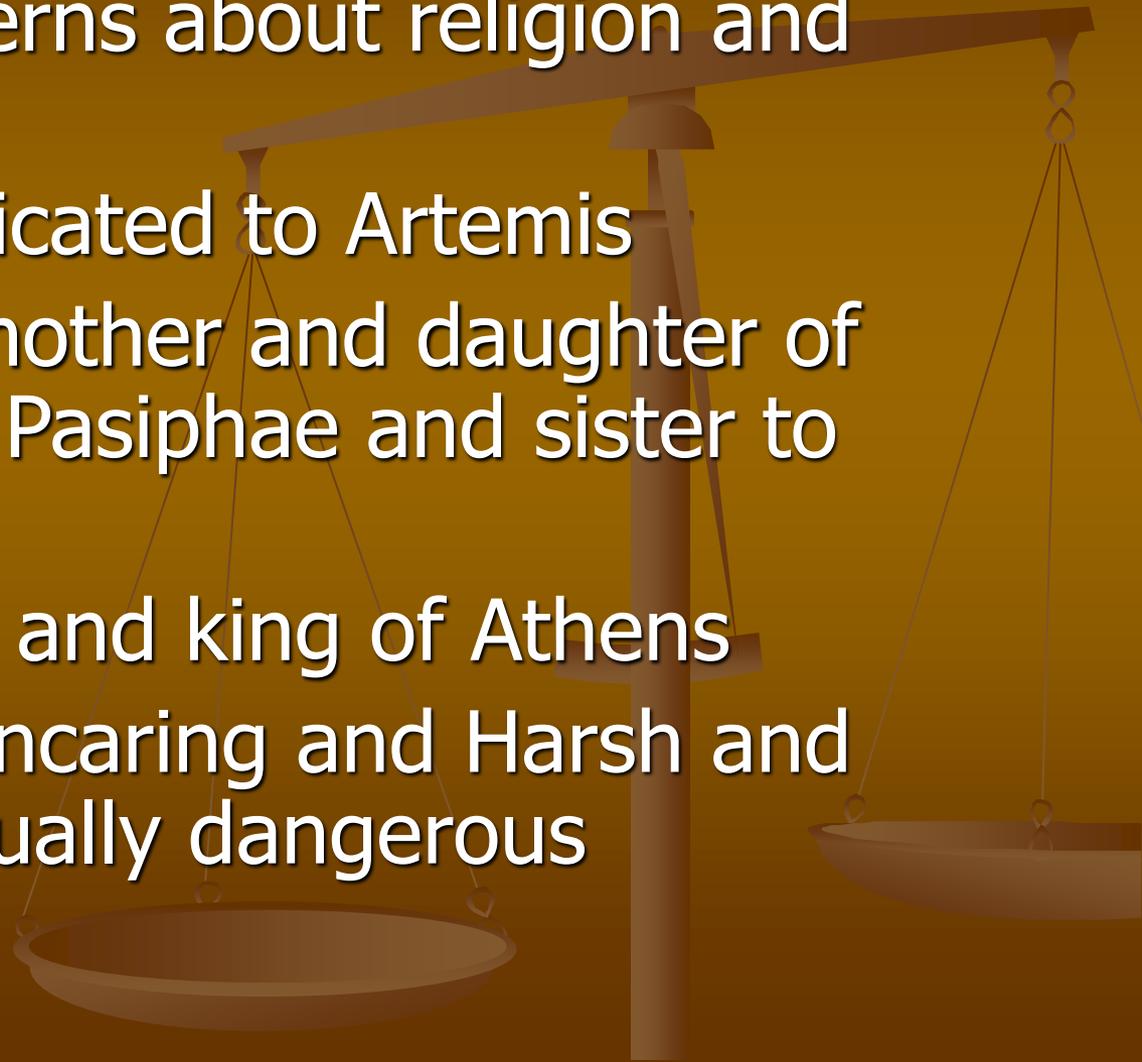


Bacchae: Maenads = Madness



Hippolytus

- Expresses concerns about religion and Women
- Hippolytus, dedicated to Artemis
- Phaedra, step-mother and daughter of King Minos and Pasiphae and sister to Ariadne
- Theseus, father and king of Athens
- The Gods are Uncaring and Harsh and Women are sexually dangerous



Conclusions

- Religion was part of Theater from the start in terms of the setting (near temple to Dionysos) and purpose: to Honor Dionysos
 - Aeschylus endorses traditional Gods and Religion as Symbols of Order;
 - Sophocles Questions Gods (Oedipus and Prophet Teiresias); Fatalism Supercedes Traditional Gods
 - Euripides: Parody of Gods; Gods (Dionysos) shown to be Cruel and Damaging to Civil Order; OR, Moral Story: Obey and Trust the Gods
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