THE MOTIVES OF HAEMON IN SOPHOCLES' ANTIGONE

Abstract: After briefly outlining the history of interpretations concerning the character of Haemon, the author focuses on the question of his motives, which is of considerable importance to our understanding of Sophocles' Antigone. Arguments taken from psychology as well as the history of literature and culture (tragic conventions, the function of Attic tragedy) are used to support the thesis that Haemon is driven by a complex of motives, which may be divided into personal (love for Antigone) and supra-personal ones (concern for his father's welfare, desire to act reasonably). With the development of the plot – Antigone's condemnation and death – they are expanded with a new set (regret for having missed Creon, remorse for having contemplated patricide, vengeance for Creon's crime), while the frustration of the original ones (love for Antigone) exacerbates Haemon’s despair to the point of suicide. An important aspect is that, for psychological and especially ethical reasons, he can use only one group – the supra-personal motives – as arguments in his discussion with Creon. The psychological action has a singular theological background: Eros, urging Haemon to save Antigone (although the young man does not cite love as his reason), indirectly promotes, at least originally, the rights of the underworld gods, thus indeed functioning as their πάρεδρος – the philologically problematic label attached to the god by the chorus (v. 797).

1. Haemon’s Character, Dramaturgical Function, and the Problem of His Motivation

Haemon, Creon’s son and Antigone’s doomed husband-to-be, is probably one of the most complex and intriguing minor characters of all Sophoclean tragedies. In his conflict with Creon, recent studies have discovered reflections of contemporary cultural and social statuses and relationships,1 as well as of anthropological schemes.2 The

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1 These include (Haemon’s) status of an ephēbe (or pre-hoplite), as well as the junior-senior relations associated with this issue; cf. Tyrrell and Bennett (1998) 88–93. On the institution of the ephēbeia in general, see Chrysis Pélekidis, Histoire de l’éphēbie attique des origines à 31 avant Jésus-Christ (Paris. 1962); P. Vidal-Naquet, Black Hunter. Baltimore and London 1986, 106–28.

latter would have influenced the original spectators’ perception of the moral dimensions of Haemon’s and Antigone’s actions and views, and consequently their evaluation of the heroine’s deed. While the prominence of Haemon’s dramaturgical functions alone makes him stand out in the host of minor characters, the complexity of his character even brings him close to some of the major ones. On the one hand, he acts as an advocate of practical wisdom with fully developed views on a humanly civilised existence – one based on openness and attention to the external – and urges “giving due recognition to the complexities of the world”; on the other hand, he goes to his death exhibiting clear symptoms of madness, which suggests that he dies as a victim of passion. His character complexity is hinted at in his very first words (cf. 635–38), and at the end he experiences “his special tragedy: unlike either Creon or Antigone he has a full understanding of the values of both. His concern for Creon and the polis are complemented by an appreciation of both personal and family love. [...] Creon has placed him, like Antigone, in a dilemma to which the only solution is death.”

3 Cf. the interesting observation by von Fritz (1962. 228 and 483 n. 5) that Sophocles deliberately gives his protagonists no Nebenzüge unconnected to the main plot, while endowing the minor characters, such as the φύλαξ in Antigone, with a three-dimensional quality “durch eine Fülle von kleinen Zügen”. This economy is understandable: the minor characters’ secondary features enrich their existence, which is not allotted much space in the main plot, while the major characters’ features, by contrast, propel the plot forward, so that the introduction of secondary traits would hamper its consistency and flow. Nevertheless, character complexity in the proper sense of the term can only be ascribed to the latter, since it is they who experience fatal dilemmas and reversals. Yet they also possess traits which are difficult to classify as essential or as secondary ones: one such example is the violence of Oedipus’ emotional reactions (anger), which sometimes even leads him astray in his quest for truth (his condemnation of Creon) but at the same time reinforces the uncompromising quality of his character, which enables him to persist with his search of Laius’ murderer.

4 Nussbaum (1986) 80–81. According to her, “Haemon urges on Creon what Aristotle will urge on his Platonist opponents: a practical wisdom”. She rightly compares Haemon’s criticism to Tiresias’: the external world is not only “natural”, but “the mystery and specialness of the external, of the passions that take one to those mysteries” should be preserved as well. Cf. also Ronnet (1969) 83; Jebb (1906) xiii.

5 Cf. vv. 1231–36; Haemon’s behaviour as described in these lines is explicitly interpreted as a symptom of insanity by Jebb (1906). ad 1232, and Griffith (1999), ad 1228–30 and 1233–34.

6 From the perspective of phenomenology, these incongruous traits may also be explained as select, dramaturgically relevant facets of a quasi-real character, which are highlighted to express Haemon’s psychological complexity. Such (quasi-)phenomenal human complexity allows him to have a dynamic inner life and thus fulfill a variety of dramaturgical functions – in other words, it contributes much to a complex yet coherent dramatic situation.

An intricate topic which has not been adequately addressed so far is the question of Haemon’s motives. While belonging to the domain of psychology, it is also important for the understanding of Antigone’s system of ideas and values, and it cannot be answered without considering the value horizons of tragedy and certain meta-theatrical circumstances. In the history of interpretation, Haemon did not receive much attention until the study by Kurt von Fritz; he was considered a typical episodic character whose role does not concern the fundamental issues of the play but merely links together the overall dramaturgical structure, the only motive for his actions being love: the existence of a son who is in love with Antigone enables a personal punishment to strike the Theban ruler at the end of the play. His one-dimensional (according to this reading) dramaturgical function and oddly one-sided love relationship with Antigone have sometimes also provoked reservations. Considering that Haemon’s actions generally exert little direct influence on the course of events, this view is hardly surprising. Von Fritz, however, notes that Haemon never

8 Von Fritz (1934 = 1962).
9 Cf. Perrotta (1963) 105: “Egli è il legame tra la prima parte del drama (morte di Antigone) e la seconda parte (rovina di Creonte).”
10 Cf. Bruhn (1913) 25-27: Schadewaldt (1929) 66: Weinstock (1931) 124: the same may be inferred from the discussion by T. von Wilamowitz (1917) 42-44, who notes the absence of Haemon’s erotic motivation from his scene with Creon, but views it in accordance with his general theory as a proof that Haemon lacks psychological unity.
11 Even after the publication of von Fritz’ treatise, this line of thought was still pursued in the perspicacious and once influential study of Sophoclean drama by Waldock (1951) 124: “Haemon’s love (as we have seen) is a structural link: only through some such linkage could the punishment of Creon become personal – become dramatic, that is to say, and a fit subject for story. [...] If Creon had not had a son Haemon, and if Haemon had not loved Antigone, he might conceivably have gone scot-free.” For a more complex description of his function, cf. Kamerbeek (1978) 29-30.
12 Cf. ibidem: “The linkage is artificially forged. The play is not damned because of it, but it remains true that the structure is not of the tightest [...] It is very much of the nature of a postulate introduced by Sophocles for reasons of structure. But postulates in a drama have a slightly weakening effect.”
13 Creon turns a deaf ear to Haemon’s intercession for Antigone (635-765), revoking his prohibition of Polynices’ burial and Antigone’s death sentence only under the influence of Tiresias’ ominous prophecy (1063-86). Haemon’s attempt to kill his father fails as well (1231-34), and while his suicide with its consequences (his death leads to the suicide of his mother Eurydice, cf. vv. 1315-16) indeed causes Creon great mental pain, it is a result of the preceding events rather than the cause of new ones. Its primary function is to prove the truth of Tiresias’ somewhat enigmatic prediction of Creon’s fate (1064-67), thus affirming the seer’s authority on the interpretation of divine will (cf. vv. 1068-76) and establishing his criticism of Creon’s actions as definitive (1080-83).
expresses his love directly\textsuperscript{14} but represents to Creon the public opinion that Antigone had acted justly. This means that he does not intercede for her from personal motives but is focused on "the cause itself, on justice, and on the meaning of her act", in which he is no less concerned for his father and the cause than for Antigone.\textsuperscript{15} Thus von Fritz drew attention to a new dimension of Haemon’s character, which had been surprisingly overlooked until then:\textsuperscript{16} to the fact that his appearance in the play explicitly raises the question of a just government. This feature seems particularly important from the perspective of present-day literary criticism, which emphasises the political function and culture-forming nature of the institution of tragedy. A number of interpreters admitted the weight of von Fritz’s observation but rejected his complete exclusion of the erotic impulse from Haemon’s motivation as exaggerated.\textsuperscript{17} According to their (generally well-supported) interpretation, this impulse is undoubtedly a powerful or even decisive factor\textsuperscript{18} in the psyche of Creon’s son. And since love in Greek tragedy is not only a psychological phenomenon but always contains a "metaphysical" element as well, another "theological" dimension of the play came to the fore: the role played by Eros.\textsuperscript{19}

2. A Description and Classification of Haemon’s Motives and Their Foundations

In my proposed interpretation I will attempt to take into account the full range of motives discovered by various critics, as well as describe in more detail their individual natures and mutual relationships. The motives may be divided into personal and supra-personal ones. A personal motive is Haemon’s erotic passion, his love for Antigone, which only acquires a broader (ethical) significance in the particular context of this play. The concatenated supra-personal moti-
ves, on the other hand, are complex and connected with Haemon’s ethical values. In his view, the reason (ϕρένες) implanted in men by the gods is, in Jebb’s translation, “the highest of all things that we call our own” (683–84). Therefore he sees the principal value in rational behaviour, which is expressed in consideration for the “other”: in respect for the rights of the gods (cf. 743, 745, 749; this is also indirectly suggested by Haemon’s stance throughout his dialogue with his father) and in the willingness to engage in dialogue with men and to learn from them (707–22; 757). Yet he places no less value (ἀγαλμα) on his father’s welfare (701–2), even identifying a father’s good reputation (ἐοκλεῖα) as its manifestation with that of his children (703–4). This welfare, however (along with paternal authority and the significance of the primary family), crucially depends in his view on the former value: on the father’s reason, or wisdom (cf. 635–3820). These are Haemon’s genuine values,21 the implementation of which represents a complex of closely interwoven supra-personal motives. This term seems to be appropriate because Haemon inextricably associates his efforts for his father’s – and his own – personal welfare with respect for the rights of the (underworld) gods (74922), which is a universal condition for the personal welfare of man.23

It will be shown first that there is no persuasive argument for the exclusion of either personal or supra-personal motives. Having then described their implications, I will attempt to answer the

20 On the ambiguity of this passage, especially the participial structures σὺ [...] γνώμας ἐχων; σοῦ καλώς ἡγουμένου, cf. Bruhn (1913), Kamerbeek (1978) and Griffith (1999), ad loc.: Erbse (1991) 256–57. Cf. also Tyrrell and Bennett (1998) 85: “Haemon speaks his verb ἀπορθοῖς as an optative in a conditional sentence. Creon hears ἀπορθοῖς as an indicative, the more common mood for the inflection.”

21 This means that I consider sincere both his claim that he respects his father, even identifying the latter’s welfare with his own (635–38; 701–4), and his conviction that Antigone’s burial of Polynices is pleasing to the (underworld) gods as well as unanimously approved of by the people (cf. 732: Θήβης τήςδόμοτττολις λέωφ; to be discussed later).

22 Καὶ σοῦ γε κάμοι, καὶ θεῶν τῶν νερτέρων (sc. ὁ λόγος μοι πά ἐς). The inseparability of human welfare from the observance of divine rights is stressed through the syntax: Haemon strings together the objects of his pleading as parallel elements, expressing no distinction between men and gods. But of course he pleads for men in a different sense than for the gods: burial means the fulfilment of human duty and the observance of the divine right, while the consequences of its omission are suffered by men alone. Gods finally assert their rights even without men fulfilling their duties: for men, by contrast, neglect of duty and violation of the divine cosmos is – or may prove – fatal.

23 This is revealed at the end of the play, with the chorus’ explicit statement that it is respect for the gods which is an essential element of τό φρονείν (cf. 1347–50).
questions raised by this double motivation: what is the relationship between the motives, and what is their nature? How are they linked to Haemon’s “state of mind” at the various stages of the dramatic action? And, finally, what bearing does this have on the “theological” background of Antigone?

3. The Personal Motive – Love

The love between Antigone and Haemon appears problematic in several respects. Critics have noted the asymmetry of its impact on their respective fates: to Antigone’s fate, her relationship with Haemon is utterly irrelevant. She pursues her course quite independently, never mentioning either his name or her relation with him. She expresses an erotic feeling only in the “negative” terms of her pain and lamentations about her fate (cf. esp. vv. 810–16, 876–81, and 891–92). The terrifying picture of Acheron as her bridegroom contains no reflection of her erotic relationship with Haemon. For Haemon, by contrast, their relationship is fatal in the direst sense of the word, as has been noted by a number of the above-mentioned critics (cf. n. 17). Yet throughout the play neither ever gives utterance to love. Even Haemon’s behaviour, which is a clear manifestation of his erotic feeling for Antigone, is relayed to us indirectly, through the messenger’s words (cf. 1222–25). Regardless of how various critics have – justly – problematised the chorus’ claim that the quarrel between Haemon and Creon has been started solely by Eros, the erotic rela-


25 Yet even these expressions of her “human” nature, abstract as they are, are considered objectionable by Perrotta (1963) 115–18: according to him, the kommos breaks down the unity of Antigone’s character as it has emerged in the prologue and the scene with Creon, a character “too large to lapse into such ‘crises’”. Cf. also his severe criticism of Bruhn (1913) 21, who sees the scene as an expression of Sophocles’ realism. He likewise rejects the interpretation offered by Schadewaldt (1929) 82ff., according to whom Antigone, going to her death, realises the beauty of life and wavers in her absolute conviction that she is right. In Schadewaldt’s later work, this interpretation becomes even more radical (1992) 245.

26 See Appendix.

27 The erotic motive of Haemon’s despair is made clear by the messenger’s description of his physical posture and the content of his lamentations (two references to love and marriage in two lines): it is hardly likely that he would embrace and lament his lost bride only out of admiration for her deed, as suggested by von Fritz (1962) 237.

The relationship between Antigone and Haemon is presented in a way which leaves no room for doubt. It is alluded to and variously evaluated by several other characters – Creon, Ismene, the chorus; the terms employed suggest that their union has been socially ratified as well.\(^{29}\) Why, then, do they not talk about it themselves? The critics have proposed various reasons for their reticence. Their personal relationship might be relegated to the background for dramaturgical reasons – to prevent the love theme from diverting attention from the central theme and deforming the heroine’s character\(^ {31}\) – or for thematic ones: Sophocles may have wished to emphasise “the theme of the opposition between the marriage-tie and the blood-tie”.\(^ {32}\) The fact that Antigone only speaks about herself, about her own erotic unfulfilment, might even be explained with psychological reasons, such as her self-centredness (revealed in her jealous denial of Ismene’s moral complicity in the burial of Polynices) or her sense of utter isolation (cf. 846, 850–51, 876–82). Our primary focus, however, is Haemon, whose reticence may likewise be ascribed to weighty psychological reasons. Probably it springs not only from his sense of propriety\(^ {33}\) but from the knowledge that his father is hardly susceptible to reasons of the heart, so that it would be tactically wiser not to mention love.\(^ {34}\) But there is more to it: Haemon is aware that allusions to his feelings, that is, to his personal gain, would also weaken his moral position in the polemic with his father.\(^ {35}\) This he does not want, and not merely because he can offer other, “objective” arguments why Antigone should be spared: he is not concerned only for her, but also for his father (and himself) and the just cause.\(^ {36}\)

Another important insight into the relationship between Antigone and Haemon is conveyed by a tiny detail – which is not surpris-

\(^{29}\) Cf. the chorus’ lines 627–30 (τῆς μελλονάμου μόρον, ἀπάτης λεχέων), Creon’s verse 633 (τῆς μελλονύμφου) and the whole dialogue with Haemon (630–779), and Ismene’s verse 568 (νυμφεῖα τού σαυτού τέκνου).

\(^{30}\) Winnigton-Ingram (1980) 92–93 notes that the most important themes in the Haemon scene are the “political theme, and the revelation of Creon’s mind in the political context”.


\(^{35}\) Von Fritz; Linforth (1961) 219.

\(^{36}\) These are considered to be his only motives by von Fritz (1962) 231. who explicitly rejects the thesis about Haemon’s tactical behaviour.
ing, given the specific economy of relatively short texts like Greek tragedies. This detail is Ismene’s single-line description of their relationship. Creon’s assertion that “there are other fields for Haemon to plough”, implicitly confirming that he will execute his son’s betrothed (v. 569), is countered by Ismene with the words: οὐ χ ος γ’ ἐκεῖνῳ τῇ δὲ τ’ ἂν ἡμοσμένα (570). Her reply is an indirect rejection of Creon’s – but what precisely does it mean? It was pointed out already by Jebb that ἄρμόζω may mean “to betroth”.37 If we decide on this meaning, which describes their union impersonally, merely as an institution, we should choose the second of the two possibilities proposed by Kamerbeek and place a colon after οὐχ. In this case ος γ’ would have the causative meaning: non ita: quippe ... (Ismene, after all, cannot mean to say that no other engagement can be like theirs “in a formal sense”). Thus Ismene would be saying: “No [sc. there are no other women for Haemon], since they [sc. Haemon and Antigone] are betrothed”, which would be absurd in this context as well as redundant, considering that she has already conveyed the fact of the engagement – a matter of public knowledge to begin with – through the term τα νυμφεῖα. There is a second, superficially likelier possibility with a similar emphasis on the formal and social character of their union: the term ἡμοσμένα might denote exclusively their mutual social suitability, since “as first cousin of a fatherless and brotherless heiress, Haimon is the most ‘suitable’ husband for Antigone”.39 (This reading is possible both with and without the colon; in the latter case, ος has a comparative meaning). But there is another woman who is an equally suitable social match for Haemon – Ismene. Given her character and Creon’s attitude to her, it is dramaturgically logical that she should not allude to this fact herself, but she must be aware of it nonetheless; thus she could hardly be thinking solely of legal or social suitability, seeing that it is certainly not unique and therefore presents a weak argument. She can only be adducing it as an additional argument to accompany the notion of a more personal harmony. This brings us back to the traditional interpretation: the term ἡμοσμένα, while possibly implying the social aspect of suitability as well,40 refers primarily to a “unique union of hearts” (Jebb),41 thus transcending

37 Jebb (1906) 109. ad loc.
38 Kamerbeek (1978) 114. ad loc.
41 Jebb’s actual translation of this line reads: “But there can never be such love as bound him to her.” Kamerbeek translates it as: “No, not in the same way as there was a close bond between him and her”, and Griffith as: “But <these other marriages will> not <suit> as well as this suited him and her.”
the social dimension and pointing to the individual (psychological and ethical) traits of the two characters.

The union of Antigone and Haemon may also contain a discreet hint that respect for the divine order and the welfare of the polis entails respect for the individual human being, since divine workings are often manifested in highly individual traits or psychological processes experienced by characters. An individual love relationship by itself is of course not crucial to the polis, and as such it can indeed be replaced in principle (cf. Creon’s words in v. 569); however, it can be crucial to a family. Antigone’s death seems to lengthen the shadow of demise hovering over the Labdacids, while the death of Haemon as the last of Creon’s sons suggests the fall of his house. But the implications of annihilating a love relationship in *Antigone* seem to reach even deeper. The reach of the power of Eros is universal in the sense that it can strike anyone. Still, the events in *Antigone*, as well as innumerable examples from Greek literature and myth, suggest that this power is manifested among men and gods precisely in the erotic need for one *particular* individual, who is thus – at least temporarily – irreplaceable for another individual(or individuals); since “Ἐρως, unconquered in the fight, spends the night on Antigone’s soft cheek” (cf. 783–84), she is irreplaceable for Haemon. Creon’s disregard of the divine source of love and of the way in which Eros operates, demonstrated in the dialogue with his son, may be interpreted as an offence against “the assessor of great laws”.

This disregard has certain parallels with his disrespect to Hades. In the *Antigone*, the welfare of the πόλις depends on veneration of

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42 The family represents an important value for Creon as well, and not only as an “ideological” model or the basis of the state’s power, cf. Benardete (1975a) 23; what defeats him conclusively are the disasters which befall his closest φίλοι: his family – or, as noted by Kamerbeek (1978) 31. Tiresias’ very prediction of these disasters.

43 Cf. Griffith (1999) 354, *ad* 1347–53: “Kreon is shattered, his family and that of Oidipous virtually obliterated.” To Ismene, who does survive, the text attaches no importance in this respect: cf. also her protestations that life is worthless for her without Antigone (548 and 566).

44 On the irreplaceability of individuals or “love objects”, cf. the brilliant observations of M. Nussbaum (1986) 173–74, which she argues precisely with Haemon’s case, citing (466 n. 22) the lucid thought of Epictetus (*Diss.* 1.28.13) “that if Menelaus had been able to think of Helen as just another woman, and a bad one at that, then ‘gone would have been the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as well’”. I can only echo her opinion “that it seems, therefore, superfluous to multiply literary examples”. Even Zeus’ notorious changing of paramours, which argues against their lasting irreplaceability, may be considered a proof of their *temporary* irreplaceability: at a given moment Zeus has to approach precisely this or that one. (Their individuality may also be reflected in the varying forms of his approach.)
this deity. It is a universal law that all the dead belong to Hades. This universality is manifested in the fact that Hades (or οἱ κάτωθεν θεοί, cf. 1070, or δαίμονες, 282) has care (πρόνοιαν ἵσχειν, cf. 283) for every individual corpse, even those of traitors (Polynices) and enemies (cf. 1081, where σπαράγματα denotes the corpses of the soldiers of the Argive alliance). People observe this divine law by burying their dead. The very fact that the corpse of a human being belongs to the nether gods regardless of his or her deeds and political opinions calls attention to “the universe of the undisputed or undiscussed” or “doxa”. To this sphere belong also the “unwritten laws”, the absolute validity of which represents the central theme of the play. What is rooted in the “universe of the undiscussed” sets a limit to political power; a good political ruler is indeed obliged to intervene actively in the life of the society, yet he must take care not to overstep this boundary, which means in practice that he should always consider the actual reality and adjust his measures to the claims of the divine law (of the “undiscussed”) in the concrete situation. In the other words he should “remain open to the claims and pulls of the external, to cultivate flexible responsiveness, rather than rigid hardness”. Creon, however, effaces every possible difference between the divine law and his political principles (cf. 280–314) and thus “das Wohl der Stadt mit der Demonstration und Bewährung seiner rechten Handlungsmaximen verwechselt”. This is the reason, why he neglects “the claims and pulls of the external” and is unable to form sober opinions about the present situation. Moreover, it is precisely his tendency to form mental generalisations, clearly reflected in his language, that hinders him from understanding the real meaning of the divine law in a concrete situation. Led by blind confidence in his εὐσέβεια, he transgress it and thereby threatens the very existence of his πόλις (cf. 1080–83, possibly hinting at the war of the Epigonoi).

45 In Antigone, the human part in fulfilling this universal requirement – the burial – clearly falls to the relatives, οἱ φίλοι (cf. 517); in e.g. Ajax, on the other hand, its fulfilment is advocated by others as well. even by the (former) ἔχθρος (cf. the relation Ulixes–Ajax).

46 Cf. des Bouvrie (1990) 191–92. who takes these terms from Bourdieu (1977) 168 to describe the proper sphere of the ἄρχουσα νόμιμα.

47 Nussbaum (1986) 80. Cf. the entire passage devoted to Haemon’s and Tiresias’ advice. 79–82.


Even before Haemon appears on stage (v. 635), he is portrayed by the other characters as Antigone’s betrothed, that is, as a lover (cf. Ismene’s words in v. 568, the chorus’ in vv. 627–30, and Creon’s in v. 633). If this image is true and he is indeed under the influence of Eros, he must have been so from the very beginning, including the scene with his father, in which he behaves with exceptional sobriety and rationality – in short, untypically of a victim of Eros on the tragic stage.\(^{51}\) His Eros only becomes destructive in connection with one of the central problems of the play, namely, his father’s stubborn insistence on leaving Polynices unburied and having Antigone executed (which are offences against the gods).\(^ {52}\) This suggests that he may not be drawn to Antigone only by sexual desire: rather, the word ἡρμοσμένα involves other aspects of harmony as well.\(^ {53}\)

### 4. The Supra-Personal Motives

Can we believe Haemon’s claim that he is motivated by concern for his father’s welfare, which requires the latter’s rational behaviour – that is, respect for the gods and acknowledgment of the people’s opinion? Or are all his protestations (cf. 740–41, 748–49) merely captatio benevolentiae, intended to help him gain his only end: the rescue of his betrothed?

Might not even Haemon’s appeal to the Theban people’s beliefs (cf. 733: Θήβας τῆς δ’ ὀμόπτολις λέως) be a mere ruse, a rhetorical device, to help him save Antigone?\(^ {54}\) In the light of the attitude of the chorus members – the only citizens whose voice is heard in the play – Haemon’s assertion is not quite accurate. Yet it cannot simply

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\(^{51}\) This is astutely noted by D. Lyons in her review of Ormand’s (1999) study: “It is Creon who insists on his son’s attachment to her in crudely erotic terms, while Haemon seems to be motivated by something more like loyalty or affection. cf. Bryn Mawr Classical Review 2000.02.25 [http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/bmer/2000/2000-02-25.html]).

\(^{52}\) This process, overlooked by Oudemans and Lardinois (1987) 180–81, is well described by Rohdich (1980) 136.

\(^{53}\) Antigone does not tell where she has learnt that people secretly approve of her brother’s burial; this seems to be merely her assumption. Haemon is similarly vague about his own sources. What is interesting, however, is that both ascribe the same conviction to the citizens and appeal to it (there is no indication in the text that they might have communicated since the proclamation of Creon’s edict and, for example, agreed on this story). This parallel perhaps serves to reveal the similarity of the two characters’ beliefs about the fundamental religious and political problems treated in Antigone: that the burial of Polynices is a pious act, that the citizens share this opinion, and that public opinion is important in the state. If this is the case, Haemon and Antigone are “harmonised” in their views on the play’s central themes as well.

be dismissed as a lie either, for the chorus is definitely not portrayed as representative of the entire populace: as Creon informs its members, the Theban elders, in his opening address (cf. 164–69), he has summoned them \( \text{ék πάντων δίχα} \), out of all the Thebans, because of their continuing devotion to the royal house;\(^55\) we also learn from him that there is an opposing faction to the royal house;\(^56\) Haemon, moreover, claims that the people (\( \text{άνδρι δημότη, πόλις} \)), cowed by Creon’s severity (\( \text{δύμα δεινόν} \)), dare not voice their opinion aloud (690–700), and these words – a prelude to his later explicit criticism of Creon’s tyrannical attitude (733–39) – closely resemble Antigone’s description of the climate prevailing among the Theban citizens.\(^57\)

Judging by the chorus members’ behaviour, Haemon’s observation might in fact apply to them as well.\(^58\) What is certain is that these passages “draw attention to a crucial uncertainty: how are we to assess the true feelings of the Chorus, and of the citizens of Thebes in general?”\(^59\) Another difficult question is, of course, how to evaluate the truth of Haemon’s words.

An important consideration is that respect for the (underworld) gods, about which Haemon talks to Creon in connection with Antigone’s deed, turns out to be of fundamental importance to the welfare of the polis (cf. Tiresias’ words in vv. 1016–22, 1080–83). Is it likely, then, that a character would make up such truths or use them merely as a rhetorical device for his private ends – indeed, falsely attribute such beliefs to the entire populace for his personal gain? Such irony would be in bad taste, not only lacking a clear function but even weakening the effect of the play. Nor does it seem likely that Haemon would merely exploit the actual public opinion for his private purpose without identifying with it – even less so when his political views and the original meta-theatrical context of Antigone are taken into account. His statements against the one-man theory of the state (737, cf. also 739, 757) are fully consonant with the ideology of the Attic democracy, to which the institution of tragedy belonged; to change them into a means of serving private interests would be to devalue the

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\(^56\) This opposition has existed καὶ πάλαι: “even from the moment when the edict was proclaimed” (Jebb. 1906. 63, \( \text{ad loc.} \)). For a more detailed interpretation of the term, see Kamerbeek (1978) 77–78, \( \text{ad loc.} \), and Griffith (1999) 173, \( \text{ad loc.} \), who allow the possibility “that Kreon is referring to a period when he was acting as regent for Oidipous’ young sons”.

\(^57\) εἷ μὴ γλώσσαν ἠγκλήιοι φόβος (504): σοι δ’ ὑπίλλουσιν στόμα (509). Cf. also Antigone’s explicit criticism of tyranny in vv. 506–7.


\(^59\) Griffith (1999). \( \text{ad 504–5} \), cf. also 28–34, 54–58.
“democratic” ideal which they advocate. Or, more precisely: although Haemon is essentially offering merely an “Entwurf eines quasi-demokratischen Gegenmodells”, this would have been packed with meaning in the meta-theatrical context of tragedy. From the very beginning of the performance, the spectators at the Dionysus Theatre would have been led to compare the political system in the play (tyranny) with their own political reality, and the perceived contrast was meant to reinforce their identification with the democratic system. Just as Creon’s claim that a state was the property of its ruler (738) expressed the essence of an unacceptable political view, Haemon’s objections highlighted the basic idea of any democracy: the search for consensus. From the perspective of Athenian democratic ideology, an example of a good king would be Pelasgus of Aeschylus’ Supplices, since he (to the wonder of the barbarian girls) represents a good king because Argos seems to be “a democratic monarchy” under his rule – not formally but by his own wish, since his desire to avoid the criticism of the masses leads him to seek the willing consent of his subjects (cf. Suppl. 398–401, 483–85). An affirmative portrayal of the democratic traits in mythological kingdoms (perhaps even a hint at the “historical” tendency which found an ideal realisation in the Athenian πόλις?) deepened the civic political awareness of the Athenians, while impressing foreigners as a gesture of demonstrative

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60 Rosier (1980) 16.
61 Ibidem. 15.
63 Cf. Heath (1987) 76: “The one-man theory of the state is never acceptable in Greek (or, more precisely and more revealingly, in democratic Athenian) tragedy.” Such a theory is based on Creon’s self-will (ἀυθαδία, v. 1028), as is his decision to forbid the burial of Polynices. The latter is diagnosed by Tiresias as the cause of the impending destruction of Thebes, regardless of whether Tiresias’ words in vv. 1080–83 allude to the war of the Epigonoi or utter a general truth (Boeckh). cf. Jebb (1906). ad loc., and Appendix, ad 1080–83: Kamerbeek (1978), ad 1080–84. It is true that lawgivers like Solon in Athens or Lycurgus in Sparta, who had likewise laid down state laws by themselves, were honoured by the Greeks as benefactors of the community, but the character of Creon would have provoked a different response for several reasons. Firstly, those lawgivers were the authors of oligarchic laws (even Solon’s state was by no means a perfected democracy, but was in some respects rather a moderate oligarchy, and “his elegies are the compositions of an aristocratic leader talking down to his populace”. Hall, 1997, 95) and thus in many respects unacceptable to the ideology of 5th-century Athenian democracy. In political tragedies such as Antigone, moreover, it was precisely the “broadly accepted ideas” about human society in the non-democratic world that were often unfavourably portrayed and set against “democratic” phenomena (cf. e.g. Aeschylus’ Oresteia, Supplices). And, finally, one of Antigone’s central themes is the opposition between laws stemming from ἀνδρὸς φρόνημα (458–59) and ἀγραπτα νόμιμα, which have, as Antigone claims, always existed.
64 Heath (1987) 69.
Werbung and of promoting the democratic development. And since this (implied) democratic tendency is suppressed by Creon’s words but supported by Haemon’s, the latter could hardly have struck the audience as a mere fabrication.

But what if Haemon is simply using the actual belief of the people for his private purpose, with no “supra-personal” motive in mind? Objectively, his attempt to save Antigone is also an attempt to save his father (of which Haemon is aware, cf. 741, 748–49) and as such a practical expression of his filial concern, to which he refers as to one of his values. But could he be emphasising his concern for his father’s welfare merely for tactical reasons – because it might assist him in saving his betrothed? This interpretation is supported by no textual evidence; moreover, it would weaken the psychological effect of his disillusionment with his father, which springs from a sincere concern for the latter. And, finally, it would be a tasteless irony and dramaturgical nonsense (as well as most unlikely from the perspective of the original audience) for a character to point out positive religious, political and social (filial concern) and political values and abuse them in the same breath. In the light of all these considerations, it seems that Haemon’s supra-personal motives are to be taken seriously after all. The fact, however, that the saving of Antigone would have meant the saving of Creon has important theological implications.

5. The Complex of Haemon’s Motives: Their Nature and Mutual Relationships

As critics have noted, Haemon has a variety of motives for his actions in the play. In the following section, I will attempt to specify the relationship between his personal and supra-personal motives, showing in greater detail why he makes explicit allusions only to the latter. Accepting S. Benardete’s thesis about the complexity of his

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65 Cf. Rösler (1980) 19, who is thinking primarily of the politically influential envoys from non-democratic states who would have attended the performance.

66 Strictly speaking, of course, the above observations are no more than interpretative hypotheses: with conclusive answers about Haemon’s actual purposes being beyond our reach, every new reading can prompt fresh hypotheses about his (and the other characters’) motives, for “it is the very elusiveness of the ‘inwardness’ of other people, real or fictive, that gives drama its extraordinary appeal”, cf. Easterling (1990) 99.

67 The duality of Haemon’s motives is described with particular conciseness by Linforth (1961) 219 and Ronnet (1969) 84.

68 A reflection on Haemon’s motives leads to still other questions which cannot be answered from the text itself: Why does Haemon come to Antigone’s
reasons for suicide,\textsuperscript{69} I will complement it by explaining how the motives for his other actions – his intercession for Antigone with Creon and his attempt at patricide – are complex as well,\textsuperscript{70} although to a lesser extent, as is appropriate to the different stages of the dramatic action. The complex of Haemon’s motives thus constantly varies in size, in the way how the motives are interconnected, and in Haemon’s experience of them. When he intercedes with Creon, he “translates” his supra-personal motives into arguments, while the personal one – love – remains merely an \textit{unspoken factor of motivation}, strengthening his will to save Antigone. His suicide, by contrast, committed in a state of derangement, is no longer based on rationally structured arguments, therefore he can simultaneously experience contradicting impulses (regret for having missed Creon, remorse for having contemplated patricide). In the course of the play, new motives are developed (vengeance, regret, remorse), while the original ones (love, concern for his father) degenerate into destructive impulses. Haemon has namely suffered defeat in every respect: he has lost both his betrothed and his faith in the possibility that his father could be a wise and respected ruler; indeed, Creon’s behaviour even jeopardises the welfare of the city itself. All these unrealised motives come to exert a negative influence on Haemon: the synergy of his dashed hopes (among which the hope for a union of love with Antigone is now uppermost) drives him into the paroxysm of despair in which he kills himself. His tragic fate stems from no conflict between the different values or impulses in his psyche, but rather from the culmination of defeats which he suffers in every respect. Just as his various values and motives have stimulated his campaign to save Antigone by their very harmony (a surprising one, for the world of Greek tragedy), so their “negative energies” combine and enhance each other in their turn.

\textbf{6. The Psychological and Theological Role of Eros}

In Haemon’s intercession for Antigone, eros as a psychological force is a kind of catalyst, speeding up a psychological process without
tomb with a sword? To rescue her or to kill himself by her side? A factor to be considered is that his state of mind seems greatly altered towards the end of the play; he is in a heat of passion, with his motives no longer logically ordered but all jumbled together.

\textsuperscript{69} Benardete (1975b) 180: “Haemon’s suicide seemed to have arisen from a compound of regret, remorse, vengeance, and love – regret for having missed Creon, remorse for having contemplated patricide, vengeance for Creon’s crime, and love for Antigone.”

\textsuperscript{70} Cf. v. 219; Ronnet (1969) 84; Winnigton-Ingram (1980) 92–98.
being affected by it. This is easily illustrated with an analogy: a footballer playing for his country’s team will play with particularly strong motivation, without breaking the rules of the game in doing so. Or, better yet: an attorney trying to save his wife from the death sentence would be particularly motivated to ferret out legal arguments (which do not include love, of course), although defeat might well drive him to irrational, extreme measures later, especially if the court ignored his arguments and violated the basic legal principles. This relationship between the motives, however, changes when it comes to Haemon’s suicide: the unrequited Eros is no longer a mere catalyst of Haemon’s despair caused by his father’s injustice, but becomes itself the immediate and main source of his despair. For Haemon, Antigone’s life is probably a prerequisite for a meaningful life of his own (cf. his ambiguous utterance in v. 763); Ismene makes a similar protestation (vv. 548 and 566), except that her statements have no erotic connotation.

If the way in which his erotic impulses combine with other psychological forces makes Haemon an uncommon tragic character, his way of experiencing love reflects the workings of Eros as a cosmic power which are no less singular. Initially, Eros does not deprive Haemon of his reason, that is, his ability to argue clearly, but even indirectly steers him towards a just action (the attempt to save Antigone) with which he defends the rights of the underworld gods and thus, by extension, himself, Creon and the entire polis—a fact which is, at the given stage of the dramatic action, quite contrary to the belief of several characters (Creon and perhaps the chorus as well). It is only with Haemon’s attempt at patricide and his suicide that Eros becomes destructive, but the destructiveness is “reactive” rather than “original”: from the “theological” perspective, it is the deity’s reaction to Creon’s violent interference with its right (the creation of a love relationship),71 while its original impulse acted—indirectly through Haemon—towards saving Antigone and the polis. This is one of the many instances of Sophoclean tragic irony in Antigone which play on the dramatic characters’ (and audience’s) expectations.

In this context, a question of particular interest to the present study is how clearly the original audience would have perceived the

71 In denying his son his bride, Creon comes into conflict with yet another powerful deity: cf. Méautis (1957) 209; Kitto (1956) 176f.; Winnington-Ingram (1980) 97. At the same time he is already in conflict with the gods of the underworld, on whose honour and rights he tramples obstinately and willfully. In the play, only the latter is explicitly referred to as that transgression or αὐθαδία (1029) because of which, according to Tiresias (cf. 1074–75), “the avenging destroyers, the Furies of Hades lie in wait for thee” (Jebb’s translation).
tragic irony of Eros’ role. Can we identify the chorus’ belief that Eros brings madness, seduces even just men into unjust actions, and functions destructively (vv. 791–95) with images already present among the audience, and if so, to what extent? Although it has been stressed that the image was an ancient one among the Greeks, the expectations or Erwartungshorizont of the original audience defy a reliable reconstruction for a number of reasons. Firstly, the role of Eros in pre-classical literature and myth varies widely, while the melic poetry of the archaic period focuses on the god’s contrasting, bittersweet nature, on the playfulness with which he drives his

72 According to K. von Fritz (1962) 235, for example, the chorus’ description of love as a form of illness or madness (790: ὁ δ’ ἔχων μέμηνεν) expresses “die sehr griechische – altgriechische – Ansicht”, which would have thus been familiar at least to part of the audience.

73 In tragedy, the distinction between Eros and Aphrodite may be more or less ignored because they represent the same power without noticeable differences, which is especially evident in Trachiniae and Hippolytus. Cf. Barrett (1964). ad 1280–82: “The poet uses the two as indifferent alternatives to personify the power of sexual passion.” But, as noted by Sourvinou-Inwood (2003) 331, “the power of love is the power of Aphrodite, of Kypris – not an all-pervasive sex instinct defined by psychoanalysts, for which Aphrodite can be a metaphor”. In Aeschylus, Aphrodite may similarly assume a variety of manifestations and aspects (as a personal goddess, the universal power of sexuality, etc.). Cf. Sommerstein (1996) 380, who perceives Aeschylus’ gods as the “ultimate reality behind the universe”.

74 The story of the judgment of Paris and Aphrodite’s victory, which leads to Helen’s abduction and the destructive Trojan war, is certainly an ancient legendary motif (cf. Reinhardt, 1960, 16–36; Raab, 1972) reflected in II, III 380–446 (cf. Burkert, 1985, 153–54). In this sense, Aphrodite was a terrible goddess as well. Hesiod (cf. Theog. 122–206) describes Eros as a primordial deity with a cosmotheogonic role, clearly separate from – and older than – Aphrodite in both origin and function. For the various interpretations of this role cf. Fasce (1977) 73ff.: Vernant (1989) 153–57; Calame (1996) 202–4, esp. n. 4; and above all Rudhardt (1986), according to whom the role of the primordial (sexless) Eros is to unfold into a distinct plurality (in the form of numerous offspring) that which had been implicitly and vaguely contained in the ancestor. The role of a creative, demiurgic force which “both unifies and separates” (Calame, 1996, 205) is likewise ascribed to Eros by certain philosophical writers. e.g. by Parmenides (see frg. 28 B 13 D-K), while Empedocles, who refers to it by different names (Φιλία, Φιλότης, Αφροδίτη), casts it as the eternal principle of the fusion of the four primordial elements. A similar creative and demiurgic function is ascribed to Eros in the theological speculation of Pherecydes of Syros (frgs. 7 B 1, a 2, and 3a D-K). The Orphic theology, as far as it can be reconstructed (by comparing the parabasis in Aristophanes’ Birds and frg. Orph. 1 Kern), presented Eros as a hermaphroditic being.

victims into battle,\textsuperscript{76} and on his violent effects on the human psyche;\textsuperscript{77} these may include madness as well, but it is often described in half-jesting tones.\textsuperscript{78} By contrast, Eros is portrayed as a strikingly destructive influence on the individual or even the entire community in some of the tragedies,\textsuperscript{79} particularly \textit{Trachiniae} and Euripides' \textit{Hippolytus}; for chronological reasons, however, it is doubtful or even impossible that these two plays could have influenced the \textit{Erwartungshorizont} of the target audience at \textit{Antigone}'s first performance.\textsuperscript{80} Moreover, it is only in \textit{Trachiniae} that Eros (or Aphrodite), conceived as an indissoluble duality of divine force and human passion, truly causes the fall of the city – Oechalia – and thus of both protagonists, Heracles and Deianira.\textsuperscript{81} In the case of \textit{Hippolytus}, the first cause of his (and consequently Phaedra's) catastrophe is his excessive rejection of Aphrodite, that is, of erotic impulses; and since "his" goddess Artemis promises him ritual honours despite this offence, he may also be considered the victim of an insoluble conflict \textit{within} the Olympian pantheon.\textsuperscript{82} In spite of this variety of representations, however, allusions to Haemon's love may well have activated a set of negative associations in the audience as well – the image of the lover as

\textsuperscript{76} E.g. Alcm. 58 Davies: Anacr. Frg. 358 Page.
\textsuperscript{79} The role of Aphrodite in Aeschylus' \textit{Danaides} (frg. 44 Radt) is difficult to assess; according to Sommerstein's hypothetical interpretation, she would have acted as a peacemaker, helping to establish order and the rule of Lynceus and Hypermestra in Argos (cf. Sommerstein. 1996. 149–51). For some of the tragic heroines, the activity of Eros (Aphrodite) is the cause of their sufferings (e.g. for Medea or Io in \textit{Prometheus Bound}), and the erotic element is at least implicitly present in the weddings which take place at the end of some tragedies (e.g. \textit{Trachiniae}, \textit{Andromache}, \textit{Orestes}) or in the reunions of married couples (\textit{Helena}).
\textsuperscript{80} Calame (1996) 166 interprets role of Love in tragedy as "la tyrannie funeste d' Eros et d' Aphrodite".
distracted from ordinary rational behaviour and therefore a potential transgressor.\textsuperscript{83}

The “otherness” of Eros of \textit{Antigone} is largely dictated by the situation: its purpose is probably to underline the unacceptability of Creon’s self-sufficiency, his attitude (in the first part of the play) to the gods, and, finally, his edict. If the \textit{ἀγραπτα νόμιμα} of Zeus, which are violated by Creon, apply to the human world as a whole, even in its historical dimension (cf. 456–57: \textit{οὐ γάρ τι νόν γε κάχθεξς, ἄλλ’ ἀεί ποτε/ζη ταύτα, κούδεις οἶδεν ἐξ ὅτου ἕφαν}), the domain of Eros is even more “universal”, containing the worlds of animals and gods into the bargain.\textsuperscript{84}

The reading discussed above sheds new light on the philologically problematic word \textit{πάρεδρος} in the chorus’ statement that \textit{ίμερος} – here a synonym for Eros (or Aphrodite) – is \textit{τῶν μεγάλων πάρεδρος ἐν άρξαίς θεσμών} (797–98). The expression \textit{πάρεδρος} is dubious not only in terms of metre but also and especially of content: the third choral ode describes Eros primarily as a force at odds with the laws, whereas \textit{πάρεδρος} suggests cooperation, harmony.\textsuperscript{85} Thus it would seem that an emendation is required.\textsuperscript{86} If, on the other hand, the traditional reading is to be preserved, I see two possible interpretations. If the chorus singers “deny that Eros has any ethical content whatsoever, but give it certain solemnity and note its invincible power and mockery”,\textsuperscript{87} \textit{πάρεδρος} might simply indicate its grandeur, its power which equals that of the great laws.\textsuperscript{88} Given the more common meaning of ‘assessor’ or ‘fellow-councillor’, however, their choice of this word would unwittingly hint at cooperation (and thus at the primarily positive ethical impulse of Desire/Eros in \textit{Antigone}). But the second possibility is that the chorus does not act unwittingly: “the

\textsuperscript{83} Just as certain associations would have been triggered, for example, by the anthropological scheme father–son, cf. Sourvinou-Inwood (1989) 144–46.

\textsuperscript{84} This conception of Eros recurs throughout Greek literature in a variety of genres: for an illustrative selection of examples with commentary, see Calame (1996) 201 n. 1.


\textsuperscript{86} E.g. \textit{ὡστε πέρο δράν} (Semitelos’ emendation): “[the \textit{ίμερος} prevails] so that one transgresses the great \textit{θέσμοι}” (Jebb, \textit{ad loc.}), or \textit{παραβασίασιν} (Griffith): “through transgressions of the laws”.

\textsuperscript{87} Burton (1980) 117.

\textsuperscript{88} Cf. Kamerbeck (1978), \textit{ad loc.}, who prefers the latter reading and quotes the translations by Mazon: “le Désir, dont la place est aux côtés des grandes lois, parmis les maîtres de ce monde”, and by Masqueray: “associé dans leur empire aux lois suprêmes du monde”. Cf. also Jebb’s translation: “a power enthroned in sway beside the eternal laws”. It is a fact, however, that \textit{πάρεδρος} followed by the genitive almost always expresses an idea of harmony, cooperation, support.
chorus’ words on the unopposable power of Love may sound ominous to the knowing audience and the chorus may even seem to be hinting at Creon’s stubbornness. "Calling ἦμερος (i.e. "Ερως) “an assessor of” or “a partner among” θεσμοί of course strengthens this hint. In that case, the choral ode would (although somewhat vaguely) criticise both Creon and Haemon (cf. 791–94), just as the chorus had clearly supported the views of both in the preceding dialogue (cf. 680–81 and 724–25).

Appendix: An unspoken love? On the attribution of 572

Throughout the play neither Haemon nor Antigone ever gives utterance to love. With regard to Antigone, this is a point of controversy among critics and editors; it revolves around the various attributions of line 572, which are supported by a number of diverse arguments. The line is attributed to Antigone by Aldus, Böckh, Campbell, Jebb, Pearson, Vollgraff, Kitto (1956) 162, Müller, Dawe, and Kamerbeek, whereas other scholars – Brunck, Dain-Mazon, Letters (1951) 166–67, Schmid (1934) I 2.352.2, Pohlenz (1954) 187, Schwinge (1962) 74 n. 1, Fraenkel (1963) 114, MacKinnon (1984) 24, Kirkwood (1993), Zimmerman (1993), Lloyd-Jones and Wilson (1997) and Griffith (1999) – assign it to Ismene. The latter reading is in accordance with the manuscript tradition, but see Lloyd-Jones and Wilson (ad loc.) and J. C. B. Lowe (1962) on this issue. As for attributing the line to Antigone, the most exhaustive argument is put forward by Kamerbeek (1978): (1) this is a way of having Antigone express her feelings for Haemon at least this once; (2) her love for him cannot be denied because otherwise v. 570 becomes meaningless; (3) Ismene would hardly address Haemon as φίλτατος in Antigone’s presence; (4) in some of the manuscripts, this passage contains yet other “mistakes” in the attribution of lines, specifically in the attribution of line 576 to Ismene instead of the chorus. This last argument is problematic because recent text studies have argued persuasively that line 576 might indeed be spoken by Ismene (cf. Lloyd-Jones and Wilson, 1997, ad loc.: Ismene is trying to save Antigone, and the rhetorical question, with its blend of despair and disbelief, fits well both her episodic intervention and her character in general; cf. also Griffith, 1999, 217, ad 572–76). It is true, on the other hand, that “an expression of affection for Haemon coming from Ismene is irrelevant” (uttered by her, the term φίλτατος would have no erotic connotation, since both dramaturgical and psychological reasons preclude the idea

that such words could arouse Antigone’s jealousy in her situation. And while such an exclamation on Antigone’s part might weaken her psychological consistency in this particular scene, it would certainly be “a gain in connection with the latter part of the play if Antigone may once be allowed to give utterance to her love for Haemon”.

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POVZETEK

Branko Senegačnik, THE MOTIVES OF HAEMON IN SOPHOCLES' ANTIGONE

Avtor najprej skicira zgodovino interpretacij Hajmonovega lika in se potem osredotoči na vprašanje njegovih motivov, ki je precejšnjega pomena za razumevanje Sofoklove Antigone. S psihološkimi, pa tudi literarno- in kulturnozgodovinskimi argumenti (konvencije tragiške uprizoritve, socialna funkcija atiške tragedije) podpre tezo, da Hajmona vodi kompleks motivov, ki jih lahko razdelimo na osebne (ljubezen do Antigone) in nadosebne (skrb za očetovo blaginjo; želja po pravičnem delovanju). V teku razvoja dramskega dejanja - ko je Antigona obsojena na smrt in odvedena v skalnati grob - se kompleks razšri še z novimi motivi (maščevanje nad Kreontom za uboj Antigone; obžalovanje, da mu ni uspelo ubiti očeta; kesanje zaradi poskusa očetomora), medtem ko frustracija zaradi neuresničenja izvirnega osebnega motiva (ljubezen do Antigone) in nadosebne (skrb za očetovo blaginjo; želja po pravičnem delovanju). V teku razvoja dramskega dejanja - ko je Antigona obsojena na smrt in odvedena v skalnati grob - se kompleks razšri še z novimi motivi (maščevanje nad Kreontom za uboj Antigone; obžalovanje, da mu ni uspelo ubiti očeta; kesanje zaradi poskusa očetomora), medtem ko frustracija zaradi neuresničenja izvirnega osebnega motiva (ljubezen do Antigone) tako zaostri Hajmonovega osebja, da stori samomor. Pomembno je, da iz psiholoških in zlasti eitičnih razlogov lahko samo ene (nadosebne) motive uporabi kot argumente v diskusiji s Kreontom. Psihološko dogajanje ima neobičajno teološko ozadje: Eros, ki Hajmona spodbuja k rešitvi Antigone (čeprav ljubezen ne navede kot razlog za to), vsaj prvotno posredno deluje za pravice (podzemnih) bogov, torej dejansko kot njihov πάρεδρος, kakor se glasi filološko problematična oznaka zbora (797).