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978-1-107-01566-1 - Euripides' Medea: A New Translation
Translated and Edited by Diane J. Rayor
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Euripides' Medea

Euripides' *Medea* comes alive in this new translation that will be useful for both academic study and stage production. Diane J. Rayor's accurate yet accessible translation reflects the play's inherent theatricality and vibrant poetry. She provides an analytical introduction and comprehensive notes. The book includes an essay by director Karen Libman.

The play begins after Medea, a princess in her own land, has sacrificed everything for Jason. She helped Jason in his quest for the Golden Fleece, eloped with him to Greece, and bore him two sons. When Jason breaks his oath to her and betrays her by marrying the king's daughter – his ticket to the throne – Medea contemplates the ultimate retribution. Euripides' most enduring Greek tragedy is a fascinating and disturbing story of how far a woman will go to take revenge in a man's world.

DIANE J. RAYOR is Professor of Classics at Grand Valley State University. She has written four translations of ancient Greek poetry and drama: *Sophocles' Antigone: A New Translation* (Cambridge, 2011); *Homeric Hymns: A Translation, with Introduction and Notes* (2004); *Sappho's Lyre: Archaic Lyric and Women Poets of Ancient Greece* (1991); and *Callimachus* with Stanley Lombardo (1988). She is co-editor of *Latin Lyric and Elegiac Poetry* (1995). In 2011, Rayor received the most prestigious faculty award at Grand Valley State University, the Glenn A. Niemeyer Outstanding Faculty Award for excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service. In 2010, Colorado College awarded Rayor the Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*.

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For Seth Schein
whose teaching combines philia with tikkun olam,
and whose teaching and scholarship have guided my own.

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Although my usual method of translation depends on many willing readers and listeners, I was very fortunate to work with the team of theater professionals who devoted their time and talents to this translation of *Medea*. I am grateful to the February 2012 *Medea* workshop participants: Steve Anderson, Sherryl Despres, Heather Hartnett, Todd Lewis, Karen Libman, Sarah LaJoye Milbratz, Donald Rice, and Scott Wright. Their voices and intelligent queries over three days helped shape the translation and supplementary material. Thank you to the Board of Directors of the Heritage Theatre Group for sticking to their mission of producing classic drama and taking a chance on an ancient Greek tragedy – with a singing chorus – for their summer 2012 season. During the extensive rehearsal period under the vibrant direction of Karen Libman, the talented cast, composer, and stage manager (listed on page xi) helped me see and hear every line and so turn a readable drama into a performable script.

I am thankful for the participation of my students from advanced Greek and mythology, and from the winter 2012 courses on ancient drama and women in the classical world, and Katie Liebig and E. Drake Parker, in the development of this book. Special thanks go to colleagues Barbara Flaschenriem and Gwendolyn Gruber for

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I deeply appreciate Grand Valley State University for granting me a sabbatical leave and funding from the Center for Scholarly and Creative Excellence, and the support of Charles Pazdernik (chair of classics) and Frederick Antczak (dean of the college of liberal arts and sciences).

My profound gratitude goes to my family of editors – Connie Rayor, David Hast, Janet Rayor, and Daniel Rayor Hast – who have helped me through yet another project. As always, a special thank you to my husband, the wordsmith.

The thoughtful care of Beatrice Rehl and Cambridge University Press has guided this *Medea* from beginning to end. I am grateful to the three anonymous referees whose valuable critiques influenced the direction of the translation. I especially thank C. Michael Sampson (University of Manitoba) for his detailed criticism, which improved the final product. As always, the remaining errors are my own.

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Premiere Cast List

Heritage Theatre Group presented the premiere production of this translation of Euripides' *Medea* at Spectrum Theater in Grand Rapids, Michigan, 12–21 July 2012. The production was partially funded by The Arts Council of Greater Grand Rapids and Grand Valley State University's Center for Scholarly and Creative Excellence. It was directed by Karen Libman, with stage management by Cindy Alberg, scenic design by John Despres, lighting design by Erik Alberg, and original music by Todd Lewis (including underscoring and choral songs). The cast was as follows:

NURSE	Kim McDaniel
TUTOR	Mark Moran
CHORUS	Amy Groen, C. J. Namenye, Stacy Lynn Schram
MEDEA	Sherryl Despres
KREON	Christopher R. P. Weaver
JASON	Michael Dodge
AIGEUS	Jerry Borths
MESSENGER	Scott A. Wright
JASON AND MEDEA'S SONS	Melinda Weaver, Stephen Weaver
SILENT ATTENDANTS	Mary Howing, Silas Kachman

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Introduction

The play begins sometime after Medea, a princess from Kolchis on the Black Sea, has sacrificed everything for Jason. She helped Jason and the Argonauts steal the Golden Fleece from her father, killed her brother in the process, and eloped with Jason to Greece. After they settled in Korinth and Medea bore him two sons, Jason broke his oath to her by marrying King Kreon's daughter – his ticket to the throne. The play delves into the abuse of power and the violation of trust in relationships. What happens when words deceive and those you trust most do not mean what they say? In a disturbing story full of deception and betrayal, Medea plans the ultimate revenge. Euripides' most read and performed Greek tragedy pits a woman with a complicated past against those who have become her enemies.

GREEK TRAGEDY

Festival to Dionysos

Greek tragedy was composed for performance at an annual Athenian festival honoring the god Dionysos. That six-day festival, called the Great Dionysia or City Dionysia, became fully integrated into the new Athenian democracy in the fifth century BCE. Athenian

playwrights wrote and directed all of the plays for a primarily Athenian audience of 15,000–20,000 that gathered together in an act of citizenship and community.¹

In addition to being a political event celebrating Athenian democracy and imperial power, the City Dionysia was a religious ceremony dedicated to the worship of Dionysos, the god of theater, ecstasy, inspiration, vegetation, wine, and dithyrambic (cult) song. Dionysian dithyramb involved song, dance, masks, and costume – all major components of Greek theater.

The dramatic competition was state organized and supported, with plays designed for a single performance at the City Dionysia. Playwrights applied in mid-summer for inclusion in the festival to be held the following March. The annual state official selected three playwrights, each of whom entered three tragedies and one shorter satyr play that provided some comic relief after the tragedies.² Having one's plays selected for production demonstrated a playwright's success. The three tragedies could be a unified trilogy, like Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, followed by a thematically connected satyr play, or they could be entirely separate plays. For three days, beginning at dawn, the audiences watched plays, with one tragedian presenting each day.³ At the end of the competition, a panel of ten judges ranked playwrights for their four plays, using a complicated system in which several judges were randomly discarded to prevent vote rigging. The panel then awarded a prize for the best production.

¹ In Aristophanes' comedy *Frogs*, Euripides claims that tragic poets should be respected because "we make people in cities better" (1009–10), that is, better citizens. The plays do that by "challeng[ing] their audiences (and readers) to rethink traditional institutions and values by evoking contradictions within (and between) them" (Schein 1990: 57).

² Satyrs – bawdy male creatures depicted with pointy ears, horse tails, and erect phalluses – were associated with Dionysos in myth.

³ Early on, a comedy was performed in the late afternoons; later, a separate day was added for comedy.

To fund dramatic productions and other expensive projects considered vital to the state, a special “liturgy” tax was imposed on wealthy citizens. The liturgies could fund warships or various public works or support and costume a chorus during its six-month rehearsal period. The wealthy patrons, who could choose which projects to fund, covered all of the expenses involving the chorus, whereas the state paid for the costs of at least one of the actors.⁴

Dramatists

The three playwrights of tragedy whose plays survive are Aeschylus (c. 525–456 BCE), Sophocles (c. 496–406 BCE), and Euripides (c. 484–406 BCE). Each wrote 80–120 tragedies, yet only 32 survive in total. In the fourth century BCE, some of the plays were performed again, so copies must have been available then. Of Euripides' work, 17 tragedies and 1 satyr play survive intact; recent discoveries of fragments have added to a sizable collection of approximately 60 lost plays.⁵

Theater Conventions

The plays were performed in the theater of Dionysos on the south slope of the Akropolis, near the temple of Dionysos. The theater consisted of tiers of benches for the audience (viewing place/*theatron*) arranged in a semi-circle around the dancing area at ground level for the chorus (*orchestra*), two side paths (*parodoi*) leading into the orchestra, and the scene building (*skēnē*) with central double doors, which was located at the back of the orchestra.⁶ The *skēnē* allowed actors to make entrances and exits; provided room for costume changes; and could represent a house, palace, or any interior

⁴ Ley (2006) 9.

⁵ Euripides (2008) and (2009).

⁶ Ley (2006) 17–20.

space. Actors and the chorus also entered or exited on the side paths; each *parodos* could represent a different destination. In *Medea*, one path leads to the palace and the city of Korinth and the other to the city gates. Although the scripts mention some properties, sets and props were minimal, and the visible spectacle of the chorus and the power of language carried the play. The all-male chorus and actors wore long, colorful robes and full-head masks with wigs.

Choral performances, an ancient genre long predating drama, formed the initial core of dramas. Sophocles increased the chorus from 12 to 15 members, who sang and danced to the accompaniment of an *aulos* (double-reed pipe) and percussion. At some point before the fifth century, the playwright became the first actor, speaking to the chorus and possibly the audience. Aeschylus was credited with adding a second actor and Sophocles a third. Thereafter, the use of three speaking actors became standard practice, although there could be silent extras and children with limited or no lines. Because the three actors wore masks, they could play multiple characters. Euripides' *Medea* can be played with as few as two speaking adult actors on stage, which sharpens focus on the interaction between pairs of characters. The play consists almost entirely of Medea interacting with each of the five male characters (Kreon, Jason, Aigeus, Tutor, and Messenger).

Eventually, perhaps with the increased complexity of directing more actors and of acting roles that included song, the playwright continued to direct but no longer acted in his own plays. Even though the acoustics in Greek theaters were excellent, the actors and chorus would need very strong voices to carry them through the four plays all performed in a single day. Masks and large audiences negated any effect of facial expressions or small gestures. Scripts were not circulated widely in the primarily oral society, so audiences would be attuned to remembering spoken or sung verse. The surviving scripts do not include stage directions. Phrases such as “these here” (1370)

would indicate pointing or gestures. In general, the chorus or an actor announces or anticipates exits and entrances.⁷

Meter

The Greek of the plays is entirely in verse, with spoken lines primarily in iambic, choral songs in complex lyric meters, and chanted portions in anapests. In general, actors speak and choruses sing. The chorus sings in unison the complex lyric songs between scenes. In brief dialogue with actors within a scene, the chorus leader typically does not sing but speaks in the same meter as the actors. The chorus and actors also sometimes chant. The chorus in *Medea* chants at the exits of the kings Kreon and Aigeus, for a four-stanza interlude in place of a choral song, and at the end of the play. Medea (from offstage) and the Nurse use the chanted anapestic meter interspersed with the entrance song of the chorus in the first scene. Medea and Jason also chant their final exchange (from line 1389). The chanted exchange between actors has the effect of heightening the emotional tension, while the chanted four-stanza interlude by the chorus stands out as unusual and has a distancing effect in contrast to the choral songs.

The Play Structure

Scenes alternate with choral odes, which provide a hinge⁸ or link between two scenes. The chorus comments on the previous scene and introduces or sets the stage for the next one. During scenes, the chorus leader speaks briefly for the chorus, and its response can change the course of events. Although the chorus rarely takes action itself, it can question, advise, and urge characters for or against action. In *Medea*, the chorus of sympathetic Korinthian women

⁷ Taplin (2003).

⁸ Goldhill (2007) 50.

agrees from the beginning not to inform Jason or the king of Medea's intentions to take revenge. While the chorus presents the voice of a particular community with its own concerns, it helps guide audience perception.

Characters often deliver lengthy, virtuoso speeches alternating with rapid, impassioned, primarily single-line dialogue (*stichomythia*). Messengers also give long speeches, which report offstage action, especially violent action.⁹

Play Topics

With one exception (Aeschylus' *Persians*), the tragedies drew from the mythological past rather than current events. Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, other epics, and lyric poetry provided the tragedians with many versions of popular stories from which to choose. For instance, the late-seventh-century lyric poet Stesichoros is a source for Euripides' *Helen*, in which Helen never goes to Troy;¹⁰ the gods create a phantom Helen whom Paris kidnaps, while the real Helen remains chastely trapped in Egypt. Many dramatists used different versions of the same subject matter – witness the three extant *Electra* plays – and were free to create their own variants.

The dramas concern royal houses normally located outside of the Athenian territory of Attica. Athens is spared in most tragedies, and bad things, such as incest and murders within the family, tend to happen elsewhere, usually in rival states such as Thebes or Korinth. However, although *Medea* is set in Korinth, Athens becomes implicated in the story through the visit of its king, Aigeus. Locating the stories in other places and in a mythical past provides a psychological

⁹ Goldhill (2007) 81ff. notes chorus, *stichomythia*, and messenger speeches as most problematic for modern performances.

¹⁰ Rayor (1991) 39, Stesichoros PMG 192: "This story is not true, / you did not sail in full-decked ships / nor reach the towers of Troy."

distance that enables all of the participants (audience and dramatists) to explore and question vital ethical issues. Greek tragedy serves a similar function for us today.¹¹

SOCIAL BACKGROUND

Women in Athenian Society

Women in Athens were lifelong legal minors, who exercised no political or financial rights. A woman was not a legally or morally responsible agent in Athens. Respectable female citizens left home only to attend religious rituals and funerals and to aid in childbirth. Fortunately, they had an active religious life and participated in the many Athenian festivals, including dramatic festivals. A woman's guardian (*kyrios*) – father, husband, son, or closest male relative – would be her representative for all legal and financial decisions.

Marriage

The Athenian polis (city-state) consisted of a collection of individual households, the *oikos*, which included the extended family, slaves, animals, and property. Each household needed a legitimate male heir for its continuity and strength. Therefore, a father or his representative *kyrios* would arrange a daughter's marriage to a man usually twice her age for the purpose of "sowing legitimate children." To ensure the legitimacy of heirs, girls were married right after puberty (13–15 years old), leaving their natal home to join their husbands' *oikos*. Once a

¹¹ Griffiths (2006) 112: In 1960s South Africa, Guy Butler's play *Demea* "adapts the myth of Medea to a new context, setting the Jason and Medea figures as husband and wife in a mixed-race marriage. The ambiguous status of the children raises issues about colour, race and position under the unforgiving rule of apartheid."

woman produced a son, her position as wife usually became secure. Barrenness was grounds for divorce, in which case the woman would be returned to her father.

Philia

Philia, the reciprocal relationship of friendship and kinship, “allows, even requires, that one person think of another as someone on whom he or she can rely and who can rely on him or her in return.”¹² The word *philos*, which occurs frequently in *Medea*, refers to “kin” (family bound by kinship) or to friends bound by ties of affection or oath. These categories are particularly important in the traditional heroic ethic, which valorizes helping friends (*philoï*) and harming enemies.¹³ Jason’s exploitation and violation of *philia* for power and Medea’s for revenge call into question the value of this double equation.¹⁴

Supplication

The expressions “by your beard” and “by your knees” refer to the sacred ritual act of supplication, in which one person requests a boon from another person. The Nurse’s “by your beard” to the Tutor is a standard, mild expression of verbal supplication accompanied by a gesture toward the chin of the man being supplicated. Likewise, saying “by your knees,” with a gesture toward the knees, is a fairly weak, merely verbal supplication. The physical form of supplication, however, is a powerful and binding ritual act, overseen by Zeus, god of suppliants. In this strongest gesture, the kneeling or crouching suppliant firmly clings to the knee or hand of the person supplicated, not breaking physical contact until that person consents to grant

¹² Schein (1990) 57–8.

¹³ Blundell (1989).

¹⁴ Foley (1989) 82; Schein (1990) 68.

the wish. Picture the left hand grasping behind the knee and the right reaching toward the chin, an extremely vulnerable position. The ritual act's physical contact forces acceptance.¹⁵ Supplication, like other pledges and oaths, provokes ethical obligations critical to civil society.

MYTHIC BACKGROUND

The Greeks told many different versions of the myth of Jason, the Argonauts, and Medea centuries before Euripides. By the time of Hesiod (c. 700 BCE), the story was already well known. In Hesiod's *Theogony*, Medea's marriage to Jason occurs in the section listing goddesses bearing children to mortal men (993–1002). The goddess Medea marries Jason after he completes his labors, and she bears their son Medeios in Iolkos. In later versions, Medea is mortal but sometimes has a magical power of rejuvenation. In some stories, Medea marries Achilles in the underworld Elysian Fields after death.¹⁶ The poet Pindar and tragedians before Euripides, and the later epic poet Apollonios of Rhodes, develop many variations.¹⁷

Euripides seems to have introduced two surprises for his original audience in his *Medea*: one in the center of the play after the King of Athens, Aigeus, exits, and another in Medea's appearance in the final scene.¹⁸

¹⁵ Gould (1973) 75, 86.

¹⁶ Ibycus fr. 291, Simonides fr. 558, Apollonios of Rhodes' *Argonautika* 4.810–15.

¹⁷ Pindar's Pythian 4, Sophocles' lost *Kolchian Women*; Apollonios' *Argonautika* 3–4 develops the angle of Medea as helper-maiden bewitched by Aphrodite and Medea as powerful sorceress. See Gantz (1993) 340–73 or Griffiths (2006) 11–26 for summaries.

¹⁸ In order not to spoil the surprises for modern audiences, the relevant notes and note 1250 provide the details.

Background for Euripides' Medea

The story of the *Argo* is from a very early point on the heroic mythological timeline. Jason's father, Aison, was the legitimate heir to Iolkos in Thessaly, but his half-brother Pelias usurped the kingship. To protect Jason from Pelias, Jason's mother sent him to be raised by the immortal centaur, Chiron, who would also teach Achilles and the healer Asclepius. (Jason's name comes from the words for healing.) When Jason returned to Iolkos to claim the throne, Pelias sent Jason on the quest for the Golden Fleece as a condition of kingship, expecting that Jason would never return. Athena directed the building of the ship *Argo*, and the goddesses Hera and Aphrodite also favored and helped Jason. Jason gathered a crew of heroes, including Herakles and Pelias' son Akastos, as the Argonauts for the quest to Kolchis.

When Jason arrived in Kolchis, King Aietes presented Jason with impossible tasks to win the Golden Fleece: Yoke a pair of fire-breathing, bronze-hoofed bulls, plow a large field with them, sow the field with dragon's teeth, and kill the armed men who sprout up. King Aietes' daughter Medea pitied Jason and fell in love with him. Medea's name means counsels or plans. She is the paternal granddaughter of the sun god Helios and the maternal grandchild of Ocean (Okeanos).¹⁹ With her native powers, Medea instructed Jason on exactly what to do and anointed him with a salve to protect him from fire and metal for one day. To slay the dragon-teeth men, she counseled him to throw a boulder into their midst, which caused the men to kill each other. Because her father planned to kill him, Medea advised Jason to steal the Golden Fleece and flee. The flying, talking, golden ram had been sacrificed to Zeus; a sleepless dragon in a sacred grove to Ares guarded its fleece. Medea led Jason to the grove and, according to Euripides' play, Medea herself killed the dragon (480);

¹⁹ Medea's mother is the Oceanid Eidyia.

in other versions, she drugs the dragon. As a result, Jason bound himself to Medea with solemn oaths.

During the escape, either in Kolchis or on the *Argo*, Medea or Jason killed her brother Apsyrtos. According to Euripides' play, she killed her brother at home by her father's hearth (1334). In other versions, Apsyrtos is killed while leading his father's fleet in pursuit, or Medea kills her brother on board the *Argo* and scatters Apsyrtos' body into the sea, allowing the Argonauts to escape when Aietes stops to gather his son's body parts for burial.

While Jason was gone, Pelias killed Jason's parents and brother and then refused to give up the throne when Jason returned with the Golden Fleece. To win the kingship for Jason, Medea persuaded Pelias' daughters to kill their father in an attempt to rejuvenate him (lines 9–10). With Pelias' murder, however, his son Akastos became king and exiled Jason and Medea, who then fled to Korinth.

EURIPIDES' *Medea*

Euripides first competed in the Dionysia in 455 BCE; he won 4 first prizes out of 22 or 23 competitions, far fewer first-place wins than Sophocles and Aeschylus. Although the edginess of plays like *Medea* may have contributed, Euripides' losses for most of his career were against Sophocles, whose competitive record was astounding. Two surviving plays, *Bacchae* and *Iphigenia at Aulis*, were produced posthumously and awarded first prize. Euripides may have spent his final years in Macedonia with other cultural icons.

Euripides' *Medea* was first performed in Athens in 431 BCE, on the cusp of the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta, in which Korinth allied with Sparta. Although set in the mythological past, the issues in *Medea* were topical in fifth-century BCE Athens at the peak of its democracy at home and empire abroad and on the verge of a disastrous, lengthy war. The play explores notions of identity

and the *other* (Greek and barbarian, civilized and uncivilized, male and female, hero and monster, human and divine) and language in relation to manipulation, deception, and integrity – particularly the disparity between a person's words and deeds. Does a person mean what he or she says? How can we distinguish honest leadership from self-serving rhetoric? As Medea says,

O Zeus, why did you give humans signs
 to clearly identify counterfeit gold,
 but no mark on a man's body
 to distinguish the bad among men? (516–19)

Different among Women

At the beginning of the play, Jason and Medea have been King Kreon's guests in Korinth for long enough for them to have two sons (maybe 7–10 years old), but Jason has recently abandoned Medea and his sons to marry King Kreon's daughter.

At least initially, the chorus empathizes with Medea because she is a woman deserted by her husband after sacrificing everything for him. Modern readers, too, tend to respond sympathetically to Medea's plight at the beginning of the play. She is like a modern woman who worked to put her husband through medical or business school, only for him to replace her with a trophy wife when he becomes successful, or to desert her to marry into power.

Medea's marriage, however, began in a starkly different manner from the marriages of typical Greek women, and her life up to settling in Korinth differs markedly from the townswomen of the chorus. In helping Jason accomplish his labors, Medea actively advanced his interests. In eloping with Jason, Medea chose her husband, gave herself away, and bound Jason to her with the formal oaths given between men of equal status. Once married, Medea expects the same

unswerving loyalty she gives. Unlike other women, Medea cannot return to her natal home once Jason divorces her because she betrayed her father by taking the Golden Fleece and killing her brother. Instead of having a fixed polis with its safety net of obligation, Medea depends entirely on Jason for status and security. Abandoned by Jason, Medea is set adrift.²⁰

That she is a barbarian (non-Greek) also separates her from the Korinthian women, although “there remains a question . . . as to how important Medea’s non-Greek status is as compared with her unusual position as one who has participated in heroic adventures, saved men, contracted an oath-bound relationship as an equal, and otherwise appropriates male values and language.”²¹ While Euripides keeps Medea’s position as a betrayed wife at the forefront, much of Medea’s language and insistence on respect reflects male heroes.²² Yet what happens when a woman, a mother, emulates the violent behavior of male heroes, such as Herakles, Agamemnon, Ajax, or Achilles? How can human society and personal relationships survive breeches in ethical obligations, actions, and trust?²³ That “Medea is presented to us not only as a hero, but also, at the end of the play, by her language, action, and situation, as a *theos* [god] or at least something more than human”²⁴ is even more disconcerting for audiences – ancient and modern.

²⁰ Friedrich (1993) 236.

²¹ Mastrorarde (2010) note 252.

²² Boedeker (1997) 136: “Euripides emphasizes the paradox of a character who aspires to male heroism within the confines of what are presented as inescapably female concerns.”

²³ Mendelsohn (2008) 424: The play “ends with a monstrous ethical lesson: Jason is forced, as his wife had once been forced, to taste exile, loss of family; forced, like her, to live stranded with neither a past nor a future; is made to understand, at last, what it feels like to be the *other* person. . . .”

²⁴ Knox (1997) 304. See Knox’s analysis of Medea as woman, hero, and god, as well as for the complicity of the chorus.

This introduction provides a background to the play, whereas the notes provide detailed explanations of words, lines, and connections more apparent in the Greek. The bibliography lists a very small selection of the extensive fine resources available on ancient Greek drama and performance and specifically on *Medea*.

TRANSLATION

My goal for this *Medea* has been to produce an accurate translation that reads well and works well as a script for performance. I have aimed for precision, clarity, and fluidity. The experience of reading the translation should be as close as possible to that of reading and hearing the Greek text. Rather than narrowing the range of meaning, it is the translator's responsibility to allow for options of interpretation as open and rich as those available to readers of the original Greek. Cultural conventions such as supplication (see earlier text) and nautical imagery (pervasive in the Greek original and appropriate to the Argonauts' sea voyages) have not been left out, adjusted, or updated.

For performance, the language must be clear and work in speech. The actors must be able to say their lines and the audience needs to understand them – in a single hearing and at the tempo at which they should be spoken or sung.

This translation was tempered in the fire of a community production and in college courses (mythology, ancient drama, and women in the classical world). All the supplementary material is based on what students, teachers, actors, director, composer, stage manager, and reporters needed or wanted to know. If people had questions, I either adjusted the translation or added information to the introduction or notes.

Heritage Theatre Group in Grand Rapids, Michigan, committed to produce the premiere production of this translation of *Medea*

for its summer 2012 season. In February 2012, a talented group of actors (including director, producer, and music composer) participated in 12 hours of workshoping on the *Medea* drafts. They read the play aloud, asked questions, discussed meanings and confusions, and made suggestions. Over the course of three days, I listened, took notes, and tried out new lines. After extensive revisions, the script was then tested in the casting process. The many different voices helped me hear the lines anew and led to more changes.

In late May, rehearsals began for the mid-July opening. During approximately eight weeks, I attended nearly every rehearsal to make large and small ongoing changes in the script. If someone stumbled on a phrase or unconsciously changed a line or word, the line would be re-cast. Working closely with director and actors, I fine-tuned the translation into an actable script. Some lines seemed satisfactory on paper but did not sound right when spoken by actors. Hearing lines aloud and in action triggered most of the revisions. For example, while the Nurse's "may I grow old in security" looks fine, in the rehearsal process it sounded like "insecurity." The cast of ten was remarkably generous in helping develop (and memorize) a shifting script. They called me on any inconsistencies in language or tone, which led to the exclusion of *Medea* swearing to "take them out with poison" or calling herself "clueless" in her deception of Jason. Although accurate representations of the Greek words, these attempts interrupted the mood. The characters' language should be contemporary, without breaking into short-lived slang.

For this production, the six choral odes were put to original music and sung, which led to some adjustments, as did audience reaction. The rhythms of speech, song, and interaction shaped the translation.

I use the more common Latinized spelling of some names for the sake of familiarity (Jason, Scylla); otherwise, I use the Greek forms (Kreon). For the Greek text, I followed Donald J. Mastronarde's *Euripides: Medea* (Cambridge, 2002).

Scene List

Opening Scene 1–130

Nurse

Tutor

Medea (offstage)

Entrance Song of the Chorus 131–213

Chorus (sung)

Nurse

Medea (offstage)

Scene Two 214–409

Medea

Chorus

Kreon

Second Song of the Chorus 410–45

Scene Three 446–626

Medea

Jason

Chorus

Third Song of the Chorus 627–62

Scene Four 663–823

Medea

Aigeus
 Chorus

Fourth Song of the Chorus 824–65

Scene Five 866–975

Medea
 Jason
 Chorus

Fifth Song of the Chorus 976–1001

Scene Six 1002–80

Tutor
 Medea

Chanted Interlude 1081–1115 (in place of choral song)

Scene Seven 1116–1250

Messenger
 Medea
 Chorus

Sixth Song of the Chorus 1251–92

Scene Eight 1293–1419

Jason
 Chorus
 Medea

Characters enter and exit through the doors into Medea's house (*skene*) or on the wing side paths (*parodoi*). One path leads from the city center and palace (City Path) and the other from the port or city gates (City Gates). The chorus enters and exits on the *parodoi*.