12 | *Oedipodea*

ETTORE CINGANO

Being placed after a *Theogony* and/or a *Titanomachy* which dealt with cosmic forces and battles between divinities, the *Oedipodea* was the first poem of the epic cycle to deal with stories of heroes. In this respect, it can safely be taken as the opening poem not just of the Theban cycle, but of the entire thematic and chronological sequel which covered four generations of heroes (five, if one includes Laius), starting with Oedipus in the Theban epics, and ending with Telemachus and Telegonus, the sons of one of the main heroes in the Trojan epics, Odysseus. Three generations of heroes out of four were covered by the Theban cycle, in spite of the smaller number of poems involved in the narrative, whereas the Trojan cycle covered only two generations: in fact, the third generation was shared by both traditions, since some of the heroes who conquered Thebes in the expedition of the Epigonoi set off to Troy a few years later. In the construction of the epic cycle the wars at Thebes and at Troy took place in the span of a few years; they were welded into one sequential string of events, according to the *akolouthia tōn pragmatōn* (Phot. *Bibl.* 319a 30);[1] the manufacture was effected probably by the Alexandrian grammarians but may have started even earlier, in pre-Hellenistic times, in the milieu of the school of Aristotle at Athens, although no piece of evidence remains to corroborate this possibility.[2]

In spite of the great popularity enjoyed from the archaic age throughout antiquity by the myths of Oedipus and of the Seven against Thebes and the Epigonoi, the precise sequence of events and the handling of characters and episodes in the Theban epics are difficult to reconstruct. The fragments of the *Oedipodea* and of the *Epigonoi* in particular are very scanty to say the least: altogether they amount to less than ten with only three verbatim fragments totalling four lines. Besides, differently from the poems of the Trojan cycle, no prose summary has survived from the second-century AD grammarian (or fifth-century AD Neoplatonist) named Proclus – who was drawing on an older source – recalling the main episodes in each poem.[3] Originally a précis

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[1] On which see Introductio, above in this volume, p. 000 and Fantuzzi, below, p. 000.
[2] On this issue see, most recently, Burgess (2001: 12–33); West (2013: 21–5); West, above in this volume, p. 000, and Introduction, above, p. 000.
[3] For Proclus' summaries, see Introduction, above in this volume, p. 000.

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of each poem of the Theban epics was also available, as can easily be inferred from the introductory statement by Proclus in the summary of the first poem of the Trojan cycle, the *Cypria* (arg. lines 80–1 Severyns): Ἐπιβάλλει τούτοις τὰ λεγόμενα Κύπρια ἐν βιβλίοις φερόμενα ἕνδεκα ('this is succeeded by the so-called *Cypria* in eleven books'), transmitted in 11 books'; τούτοις here cannot but refer to the *Epigonoi*, the last poem of the Theban cycle preceding the *Cypria* in the narrative of events.[4] But the summary of the Theban epics was dropped by Photius, who was only interested in the Trojan sequence of events.

AUTHORSHIP

The poem is variously quoted by the few extant sources as ἡ Οἰδιπόδεια, ἡ Οἰδιποδία and τὰ Οἰδιπόδια, a title indicating that it was centred on the deeds of Oedipus. Although the Theban epics were closely connected in matters of content, the *Oedipodea* seems to have been a self-contained poem, independent from the *Thebaid* and from the *Epigonoi*. It is never associated with them, and – differently from these two poems – it was ascribed by one source to another epic poet than Homer, Cinaethon of Lacedaemon; the name occurs in an inscription in the *Tabula Borgiana* (*IG* 14.1292 = *SEG* 35.1044 = *Tab. Il.* 10 K, first century AD), whose panels are the only ones to draw mainly on Theban mythology amongst the series of pinakes of early Imperial age known as *Tabulae Iliacae*: καὶ τ]ὴν Οἰδιπόδειαν τὴν ὑπὸ Κιναίθωνος τοῦ [Λακεδαιμονίου πεποιημένην προαναγνόν]τες ἐπῶν οὖσαν ͵ϛχ′ ὑποθήσομεν Θηβαΐδα... ('reading first the *Oedipodea* [that was composed] by Cinaethon [the Lacedaemonian] in 6,600 verses we will put down the *Thebaid*')[5] Elsewhere Cinaethon is qualified as Lacedaemonian, and credited with the authorship of other poems such as the *Ilias parva*, a *Heraclea*, genealogical epics and, according to Eusebius, the *Telegony* (Cinaeth. *PEG* T 2 = T 1 D., p. 250 W.; see also *PEG* F 1–7 = F 1–5 D., W.).

Whatever one makes of the attribution to Cinaethon, the dating before the middle of the eighth century BC by Eusebius is too early: the date and

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[4] At the beginning of the summary of the *Iliou Persis* by Proclus a nearly identical expression, ἔπεται δὲ τούτοις, refers to the preceding poem, the *Ilias parva*; the same applies to συνάπτει δὲ τούτοις ('this is succeeded by...'), referring to the *Iliou Persis* at the beginning of the summary of the *Nostoi*: see Welcker (1882: 499); Introduction, above in this volume, p. 000; n. 000 above.

[5] The fillings in the lacuna are conjectured by West (2013: 3). The scepticism expressed by McLeod (1985: 157–63) on the reliability of the information conveyed by the Borgia plaque has been convincingly countered by the accurate analysis of Valenzuela Montenegro (2004: 377–80); Squire (2011: 44–7, 99, 192).

place of composition of the poem remain very uncertain, and the attempts by Bethe to posit a Boeotian origin rest on thin ground.[6] It can only be noted that the *Oedipodea* was the only poem of the Theban cycle centred mainly on Thebes and its territory, although no specific element points to a Boeotian origin. A tenuous Boeotian connection attesting the circulation of the *Oedipodea* in the first half of the fifth century BC can be posited, if one considers that at that time the final battle between Eteocles and Polynices at Thebes was represented by the painter Onasias on a wall of the temple of Athena Areia at Plataea, in Boeotia (Paus. 9.4.1–2). According to Pausanias (9.5.11), Onasias painted the queen mother bent down with grief because of the fight between her children, and named her Euryganeia, corresponding to the second wife of Oedipus in the *Oedipodea* (*PEG* F 2 = F 2 D., 1 W.).

THE STORY

The Borgia plaque informs that the poem was of considerable length: 6,600 lines, more than half of the *Odyssey*. Since the *Certamen Homeri et Hesiodi* (= *Theb. PEG* T 4 = 2 D.) informs that the *Thebaid* and the *Epigonoi* numbered 7,000 lines each, altogether, the Theban epics totalled more than 20,000 lines. As far as we can surmise from the titles, each poem of the Theban epics dealt with one generation of the family of Oedipus, the Labdacids.[7] In the absence of a prose summary by Proclus and given the paucity of fragments, the possibility of working out a more fully fledged account of the *Oedipodea* depends on the degree of authenticity and archaic flavour one is willing to see in the lengthy account found in the final scholium to Euripides' *Phoenissae*, whose authorship is ascribed to one Pisander at the beginning and at the end of the scholium (Σ Eur. *Phoen.* 1760 = Pisander, *FgrHist* 16 F 10). In particular, before relating diffusely the discovery of Oedipus' incest, the scholium connects the arrival of the Sphinx at Thebes with the sexual crime perpetrated by Laius, the unlawful rape of Chrysippus, which the Thebans left unpunished; it may also have motivated the fate impending over Laius, were he ever to have a child. Scholarly opinion on the reliability of the scholium as a source of the *Oedipodea* and on the identification of

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[6] See Bethe (1891a: 142–6); the same applies to the possibility, suggested by Legras (1905: 53), that the poem had a Corinthian origin.

[7] For different attempts to reconstruct the plot of the poem see for example Welcker (1882: 313–19); Severyns (1928: 211–16); Deubner (1942: 27–38); de Kock (1961: 15–18); Davies (1989c: 19–22); for a broader and updated account of the early story of Oedipus see Gantz (1993: 488–502).

Pisander has varied considerably since the interpretation offered by Welcker and Bethe, who were willing to use it as a source for the *Oedipodea*.[8] After the criticism expressed by Robert and the hypothesis put forward by Jacoby regarding Pisander, it is now commonly believed that the scholium, albeit containing very small amounts of information which can be traced back to the *Oedipodea*, rather consists in a multilayered account compiled from several (tragic and mythographical) sources and assembled by a Hellenistic mythographer named Pisander.[9]

Leaving aside Pisander, it can safely be conjectured that the *Oedipodea* dealt with the birth of Oedipus and his exposition on Mount Cithaeron; although nothing is known regarding the role of Delphi or of the seer Teiresias in the poem, it must also have mentioned the earlier oracular response, released to his father Laius, that the birth of a son would prove fatal for him.[10] Surely the *Oedipodea* narrated at length the killing of Laius at the hands of Oedipus at a three-way crossroads in the Phocis, his arrival at Thebes and the subsequent victory over the Sphinx who had settled on a hill nearby, and was destroying the lives of many; the killing (or suicide) of the Sphinx must have been followed by the incestuous marriage of Oedipus to his unrecognized mother, named Jocaste or Epicaste (as in *Od*. 11.271; cf. Σ Eur. *Phoen*. 13; Ps.-Apollod. *Bibl*. 3.5.7), which granted him access to the throne of Thebes. When Oedipus' parricide and incest were unveiled his mother committed suicide leaving the way open at some point, for Oedipus' second marriage to a woman named Euryganeia, the daughter of Hyperphas (see *PEG* F 2 = F 2 D., 1 W.);[11] she bore four children by him, Eteocles, Polynices, Ismene and Antigone.

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8   This view is still shared by Bernabé, who (although cautiously) places the Pisander scholium before the fragments of the *Oedipodea* and takes it as an epitome of the poem, with the addition of later sources. It should be recalled that the account of the scholium shows inconsistencies which undermine the unity of the narrative.

9   On the *Phoenissae* scholium and the *Oedipodea*, and on the attribution to Pisander, see especially Welcker (1865: 91–5); Bethe (1891a: 4–12); Wecklein (1901 : 667–74); Robert (1915: 149–67); Kirchhoff (1917: 128–36); Jacoby, Kommentar *ad FgrHist* F 16, 493–4; 544–7; R. Keydell, *RE* s.v. 'Peisandros', cols. 144–7; Deubner (1942: 3–27); de Kock (1962: 15–37); Valgiglio (1963: 154–66); Mastronarde (1994: 31–6); Lloyd-Jones (2002: 2–10); Sewell-Rutter (2008: 61–5).

10   The fact that the Theban seer Teiresias is first attested in a key role in connection with Odysseus in the Trojan epics (see *Od*. 10.492, *passim*) attests to the archaicity of his status and presence in the Theban epics (see also 'Epigonoi', above in this volume, p. 000).

11   The name of her father is Periphas in Pherec. *EGM* F 95; in Σ Eur. *Phoen*. 53 the remark that according to some she was the sister of Jocaste is clearly concocted in order to make sense of the two wives.

The *Oedipodea* may have ended with the death of Oedipus at Thebes and with the funeral games held to honour him,[12] or with his marginalization from kingdom and power, epitomized by the curses he cast upon his sons Eteocles and Polynices for neglecting his royal prerogatives, as is known from the *Thebaid* (*PEG* FF 2–3 = D., W.).[13] In that poem Oedipus was still alive, and his strong reaction was triggered by what he took as an attempt by his sons to undermine his power and diminish his honour, i.e. his right to reign.[14] Through his curses he doomed them to mutual slaughter the day they would dispute royal succession, and the expedition of the Seven against Thebes ensued. In any case, the poem must have covered a considerable span of time after the suicide of Oedipus' mother, long enough for his sons from Euryganeia to grow up. The fact that in Euripides' *Phoenician Women* Oedipus is still alive and secluded behind locked doors in the royal palace at the time of the expedition of the Seven (*Phoen.* 60–8, 327–36), prevents us from drawing any conclusion as to his fate in the *Oedipodea*. In Euripides Oedipus survived both the mutual slaughter of his two sons and the suicide of Jocaste over their bodies (*Phoen.* 1454–9).

A more remote possibility must also be taken into account, that the *Oedipodea* encompassed the story of the quarrel between his two children and of the ensuing expedition of the Seven against Thebes, which ended in the mutual slaughter of the brothers. This assumption is justified if one connects the statement by Pausanias (9.5.10–11 = *Oedip. PEG* F 2 = D., F 1 W.) that in the poem Euryganeia was the second wife of Oedipus, with the next sentence where he recalls as additional evidence for her name a painting by Onasias mentioned above. If Onasias was actually drawing on the *Oedipodea*, it should be assumed that the narrative of the poem incorporated the expedition of the Seven, partly overlapping in content with the narrative of the *Thebaid*.[15] Such an overlapping would not be unique or surprising, considering that the Cyclic poems were originally independent one from the other. A case in point is provided by the *Ilias*

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[12] Cf. *Il.* 23.677–80; Hes. *Cat.* F 192 M.-W. = 135 M.; on the ending of the *Oedipodea* see Welcker (1882: 319).

[13] On the meaning and function of Oedipus' double curses against his sons see Cingano (2004b). The report by Pausanias (9.5.12) on the death of Oedipus and the consequences it brought about is undoubtedly taken from an archaic source.

[14] The report by Pausanias (9.5.12) on the death of Oedipus and the consequences it brought about is clearly based on an archaic source, since it closely (and uniquely) corresponds to the epic version.

[15] See Bethe (1891a: 25).

parva and the *Iliou Persis*, both featuring the episodes of the Wooden Horse and of the sack of Troy.[16]

THE FRAGMENTS

In spite of their brevity, the only two extant fragments from the *Oedipodea* allow a number of remarks. The only quotation fragment of the *Oedipodea*, replete with epithets, is found at the end of the above-mentioned Σ Eur. *Phoen.* 1760 (*PEG* F 1 = F 1 D. = F 3 W.), in a section preserved only by cod. Monac. 560:

> ἀναρπάζουσα δὲ μικροὺς καὶ μεγάλους κατήσθιεν, ἐν οἷς καὶ Αἵμονα τὸν Κρέοντος παῖδα ... οἱ τὴν Οἰδιποδίαν γράφοντες †οὐδεὶς οὕτω φησὶ† περὶ τῆς Σφιγγός·
>
> 'ἀλλ' ἔτι καλλιστόν τε καὶ ἱμεροέστατον ἄλλων
> παῖδα φίλον Κρείοντος ἀμύμονος, Αἵμονα δῖον'.

> (The Sphinx) seized and devoured great and small, including Haemon the son of Creon ... The authors of the Oedipodea say of the Sphinx:

> 'But also the handsomest and loveliest of all, the dear son of blameless Creon, noble Haemon'.

At line 1 two superlatives, *kalliston te kai himeroestaton*, stress the beauty and the youth of a prominent victim of the Sphinx, Haemon, son of Creon. The latter adjective is both the only epic occurrence of *himeroeis* in the superlative, and the only instance of attribution to a male person. The nearly erotic connotation of the line is confirmed by the occurrence of the same formula in Theognis 1365 (ὦ παίδων κάλλιστε καὶ ἱμεροέστατε πάντων ... 'Oh most handsome and desirable of all boys ... '), whereas at Theogn. 1117 it is referred to the god Ploutos.[17]

The baneful presence of the Sphinx, the hybrid creature daughter of Echidna and Orthos, in a hill at the western edge of the Theban territory, was known to Hesiod, who calls her with the Boeotian form (*Th.* 326 ἡ

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[16] Davies is the only recent editor of the epic cycle to include Pausanias' mention of Onasias as part of the fragment (= F 2 D.). For a comparison of the *Oedipodea* with the *Thebaid* Legras (1905: 37–63) is still interesting, although most of his arguments are untenable. For other cases of overlapping in content in the Cyclic poems see Burgess (2001: 21–5); West (2013: 15–16).

[17] On the relation between Theogn. 1365 and the *Oedipodea* fragment, see Reitzenstein (1893: 82–3); Wilamowitz (1913: 120 n. 1).

δ' (Ἔχιδνα) ἄρα Φῖκ' ὀλοὴν τέκε Καδμείοισιν ὄλεθρον 'she bore the deadly Sphinx, destruction for the Cadmeans': cf. Ps.-Hes. *Scut.* 33), and alluded to the killing of Theban citizens, as in the *Oedipodea*. Haemon was probably the last and most illustrious victim, thus preparing the way for Oedipus' arrival at Thebes and for the subsequent defeat of the Sphinx. Already in this version, Oedipus' marriage to his mother, the queen widow of Laius, and the kingdom of Thebes, were the likely reward proclaimed by Creon for pacifying the area, as can be gathered from the accounts of Ps.-Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.5.8 and of Pherec. *EGM* F 95.[18] The killing of Haemon is also recalled in the early part of the scholium to Eur. *Phoen.* 1760 quoting the *Oedipodea* fragment, with the additional information that the Sphinx devoured her victims;[19] this was the version known to Pindar, who mentions 'the riddle from the savage jaws of the maiden', αἴνιγμα παρθένοι' ἐξ ἀγριᾶν γνάθων (F 117d), and to Aeschylus (*Sept.* 541: Σφίγγ' ὠμόσιτον 'Sphinx eating raw meat').

The presence of Haemon in the early stage of the myth, before the arrival of Oedipus at Thebes, shows the strong difference between the epic version and the one rearranged by Sophocles in his *Antigone*. In the *Oedipodea*, Haemon belonged to the same generation as Oedipus and died in his youth, whereas Antigone – his fiancée in the Sophoclean version – was born to Oedipus from his second marriage to Euryganeia (*PEG* F 2 = F 2 D., F 1 W.); it follows that in the archaic version of the myth Antigone was not even born at the time of Haemon's death. Besides, contrary to what happens with Ismene, who enjoyed a (tragic) life of her own in archaic Greece, no trace of Antigone is found in Greek literature before the Attic tragedians.[20] The mention of Creon, the brother of Jocaste, in *Oed. PEG* F 1.2 (= F 1.2 D.,

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[18] Pherec. *EGM* F 95: Οἰδίποδι δίδωσι τὴν βασιλείαν καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα Λαΐου, μητέρα δ' αὐτοῦ Ἰοκάστην ('he gives Oedipus the kingdom and Iocasta, daughter of Laius and his mother'). According to Edmunds (1981), the Sphinx was a secondary element, introduced in the myth of Oedipus in order to motivate the hero's marriage to his mother; see also Edmunds (2007: 17–20), with bibliography.

[19] Σ Eur. *Phoen.* 1760 = Pisander, *FgrHist* 16 F 10 (2): . . . ἡ Σφίγξ . . . ἀναρπάζουσα δὲ μικροὺς καὶ μεγάλους κατήσθιεν, ἐν οἷς καὶ Αἵμονα τὸν Κρέοντος παῖδα . . . ('the Sphinx, snatching away children and adults as well was devouring then, among whom also Haemon the son of Creon'); see also Σ Eur. *Phoen.* 45; Ps.-Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.5.8. According to this evidence, the missing verb directing the accusative . . . Αἵμονα δῖον in *Oed. PEG* F 1 (= F 1 D., 3 W.) could refer to the Sphinx devouring her preys.

[20] Ismene appears as early as the seventh century in Mimnermus as the lover of one Periclymenus (or Theoclymenus), who was killed by Tydeus at the command of Athena when he caught the two lovers together (Mimn. *IEG* F 21; see also Pherec. *EGM* F 95); the scene is represented also on a Corinthian amphora (Louvre E 640; see Robert (1915: 121–6)) and on an Attic skyphos (Acropolis 603), both from the sixth century BC.

F 3.2 W.) provides the earliest evidence of his connection to the myth of Oedipus, where probably from the very beginning he played the essential role of *Reichsverweser*, handing over the kingdom to the hero who overcame the Sphinx.[21]

Paus. 9.5.10–11 (*PEG* F 2 = F 2 D., F 1 W.)

παῖδας δὲ ἐξ αὐτῆς οὐ δοκῶ οἱ γενέσθαι, μάρτυρι Ὁμήρωι χρώμενος, ὃς ἐποίησεν ἐν Ὀδυσσείαι παιδας (11.271–274)· ‘μητέρα τ’ Οἰδιπόδαο ἴδον, καλὴν Ἐπικάστην, / ἣ μέγα ἔργον ἔρεξεν ἀϊδρείηισι νόοιο / γημαμένη ὧι υἷι· ὁ δ’ ὃν πατέρ’ ἐξεναρίξας / γῆμεν· ἄφαρ δ’ ἀνάπυστα θεοὶ θέσαν / ἀνθρώποισιν’. πῶς οὖν ἐποίησαν ἀνάπυστα ἄφαρ, εἰ δὴ τέσσαρες ἐκ τῆς Ἐπικάστης ἐγένοντο παῖδες τῶι Οἰδίποδι; ἐξ Εὐρυγανείας δὲ τῆς Ὑπέρφαντος ἐγεγόνεσαν· δηλοῖ δὲ καὶ ὁ τὰ ἔπη ποιήσας ἃ Οἰδιπόδια ὀνομάζουσι.

That he had children by his mother, I do not believe; witness Homer, who wrote in the *Odyssey*, 'And I saw Oedipus' mother, fair Epicaste, who unwittingly did a terrible thing in marrying her own son, who had killed his father; and the gods soon made it known among people'. How did they soon make it known, if Oedipus had four children by Epicaste? No, they had been born from Euryganeia, the daughter of Hyperphas. This is made clear also by the poet of the epic that they call *Oedipodea*.

The second fragment of the *Oedipodea*, quoted by Pausanias, stirs up multiple problems which are still debated regarding the fate of Oedipus in the epic tradition after the discovery of his parricide and incest, the possibility that he remarried, the names of his wives and the offspring issued from them. In discussing the offspring of Oedipus, Pausanias (9.5.10–11) rejects the possibility that Jocaste/Epicaste ever bore a child to her son, on the assumption that – as is stated in the Homeric Nekyia – after their incestuous wedding '. . . straightaway the gods made it known among men (ἄφαρ δ’ ἀνάπυστα θεοὶ θέσαν ἀνθρώποισιν, *Od*. 11.273–4). The very meaning of ἄφαρ prompts Pausanias to find the proper answer to his own query: 'How could they have "made it known forthwith" if Epicaste had borne four children to Oedipus? But the mother of these children was Euryganeia, daughter of Hyperphas. Among the proofs of this are the words of the author of the poem called the *Oedipodea*; and moreover, Onasias painted a picture

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[21] In the Homeric and Hesiodic epics Creon is connected to Heracles, not to Oedipus: cf. *Od*. 11.269–70; Ps.-Hes. *Scut*. 1–56, 83. On the role of Creon in the Theban myth as multiple *Reichsverweser* to the Labdacids see Cingano (2002–3: 81–3). An echo of the early status of Haemon can be found in *Il*. 4.391–400, if he is to be identified with the father of the only Theban survivor of an attempted ambush at Tydeus; cf. Ps.-Apollod. *Bibl*. 3.6.5.

at Plataea of Euryganeia bowed with grief because of the fight between her children.'[22]

The lines of *PEG* F 2 = F 2 D., 1 W. can be analysed in relation to a limited, and yet telling, number of epic and mythographic texts. In the extended account of the myth of Oedipus presented by Odysseus in the *Odyssey* (11.271–80) incest, parricide and the suicide of Epicaste are the only themes mentioned; there is no allusion to the children issued from the incestuous marriage, no suggestion that Oedipus blinded himself and/or went in exile; on the contrary, it is specified that he continued to rule over Thebes, albeit confronted with many pains that the Erinyes of Epicaste brought about. Regarding his death at Thebes while still a king, the epic tradition is remarkably consistent and at variance with the version conveyed by the Attic tragedians. Apart from the *Odyssey*, a passage in the *Iliad* recalls the funeral games held at Thebes to honour him,[23] and the same version is implied in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*, F 192–3 M.-W. = 90 H., 135–6 M.[24]

The scepticism expressed by scholars in the past regarding the existence of a second marriage of Oedipus is matched by the attempts of some ancient mythographers and grammarians to account for the different wives reported for Oedipus; Carl Robert called the prospect of more than one marriage 'eine Scheußlichkeit', a dreadfulness, whilst J. Bremmer is at a loss in finding a plausible explanation: 'It is hard for us to understand that a poet could let Oedipus remarry . . .'.[25] Along the same lines, Davies (1989: 21–2), has revived the suggestion that Euryganeia might merely be an alternative name for Jocaste.[26] It must however be pointed out that the *Oedipodea* may not have been the only epic source attesting to the second marriage of Oedipus;

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[22] 'At once, straightaway, forthwith' is the usual meaning of *aphar* when it occurs at the beginning of a clause, followed by δὲ (see *LSJ* s.v.); on the use of *aphar* in epic poetry see R. Führer, *LfgrE* s.v., 1695–8; Tsitsibakou-Vasalos (1989).

[23] *Il.* 23.679–80: (Εὐρύαλος) . . . ὅς ποτε Θήβας δ᾽ ἦλθε δεδουπότος Οἰδιπόδαο / ἐς τάφον· ἔνθα δὲ ἐνίκα πάντας Καδμείωνας ('(Euryalus) who on a time had come to Thebes for the burial of Oedipus, when he died, and there had worsted all the sons of Cadmus').

[24] The burial of the much-suffering Oedipus at Thebes is one of the few facts which can safely be identified in Hes. *Cat.* F 193.3–4 M.-W. = F 90 Hirsch., 136 M. Interestingly, in his continuation of the story of the Labdacids (9.5.12) Pausanias is the one and only non-archaic source to relate the 'cyclic' version about Oedipus' death at Thebes as a king, probably drawing on an epic poem. The story of Oedipus was also dealt with in the *Cypria*, as can be gathered from Proclus' summary (*Cypr.* arg. lines 115–16 Severyns).

[25] See Robert (1915: 110); Rzach *RE* s.v. 'Kyklos', col. 2361; Bremmer (1987: 52).

[26] A trace of this conciliatory interpretation is found in the late *Etym. Magn.* s.v. Ἰοκάστη (Miller 1868: 169). Epimenides (*EGM* F 16) is the only source to call 'Eurycleia' the mother of Oedipus, while Σ Eur. *Phoen.* 13 credits Laius with two wives, Eurycleia and Epicaste: see Schneidewin (1852: 9–10).

if nothing is known about the version in the *Thebaid*, traces of a second wife of Oedipus surface in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*, where the woman alluded to in F 190.13–15/89 H./190 M. is likely to be Astymedousa, daughter of Sthenelus, listed as Oedipus' third wife by Pherecydes (*EGM* F 95), and as his second wife by Σ D *Il.* 4.376 and by Eust. 484.45–8 ad *Il.* 4.376–381.[27] Furthermore, apart from the *Oedipodea*, the existence of a second marriage of Oedipus to Euryganeia is well attested in a number of mythographic sources clearly drawing on an earlier tradition, and crediting Euryganeia as the mother of the four children universally known: see Pherecydes, *EGM* F 95;[28] Pisander, *FgrHist* 16 F 10 (8);[29] Σ Eur. *Phoen.* 13 and 53; Ps.-Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.5.8.[30]

It follows that the existence of a second marriage of Oedipus in the *Oedipodea* can hardly be denied: it also brings about further considerations. The marriage to Euryganeia can be accounted for in expanding on Bremmer's remark that 'The earliest stages of the Indo-European languages did not have a word for "widower" . . . to be a widower was not a permanent male status. So Oedipus had to remarry.'[31] This anthropological approach is all the more convincing if one considers that in the epic version (*Od.* 11.275–6) Oedipus went on reigning at Thebes after the death of Jocaste, a clear indication that – with no other successor left – the throne of the Labdacids could not be left vacant. Since, according to the *Oedipodea*, the four children of Oedipus were born to him by Euryganeia, the main purpose of introducing a second wife is that she secured legitimate children – untainted by incest – to the *genos* of the Labdacids. This version can be

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[27] For Astymedousa as the wife of Oedipus in the *Catalogue of Women* see Merkelbach-West, apparatus *ad* F 190.13ff.: 'Stheneli filia Astymedusa nupsit Oedipodi'; West (1985: 110–11). Since his mother Epicaste/Jocaste is always present as Oedipus' first wife, it can be safely assumed that in this poem too Astymedousa was his second wife.

[28] . . . ἐπεὶ δ᾽ ἐνιαυτὸς παρῆλθε, γαμεῖ Οἰδίπους Εὐρυγάνειαν τὴν Περίφαντος, ἐξ ἧς γίνονται αὐτῷ . . . ('when the year passed, Oedipous marries Euryganeia the daughter of Periphas, from whom to him were born . . . '). On the archaic flavour of the detailed *EGM* F 95 by Pherecydes, who also mentions two otherwise unattested sons (Phrastor and Laonytos) begotten to Oedipus by Jocaste, see Cingano (1992b: 9–10); his juxtaposition of three wives reflects the wish to record all the versions available: . . . ἐπεὶ δὲ Εὐρυγάνεια ἐτελεύτησε, γαμεῖ ὁ Οἰδίπους Ἀστυμέδουσαν τὴν Σθενέλου ('after Euryganeia died, Oedipous marries Asymedousa the daughter of Sthenelus').

[29] To be precise, the mention of Euryganeia as the second wife of Oedipus and mother of his four children is inserted in the final section ascribed to Pisander, but it is clearly taken from another source: φασὶ δὲ ὅτι μετὰ τὸν θάνατον τῆς Ἰοκάστης . . . ταῦτά φησι Πείσανδρος ('they say that after the death of Iocasta . . . this is what Pisander says').

[30] As was noted long ago by Müller (1844: 221), the strange silence on the children of Oedipus and Epicaste in *Od.* 11.271–80 may imply that Homer was in agreement with the version of the *Oedipodea*, that Oedipus begot them by Euryganeia.

[31] Bremmer (1987: 52).

connected to the importance of genealogies in Greece in historical times, when aristocratic families claimed descent from heroic lineage. A tradition cleared of the disturbing feature of ancestors born from incest could help in linking aristocratic families with the Labdacid dynasty, as is attested by a few cases in the fifth century. In tracing his genealogy back to Thersander the son of Polynices, Theron of Acragas apparently did not feel affected by the gloomy events of the Labdacids for many generations past (see Pind. *Ol.* 2.40–7). In Sparta, the Aegeids also claimed descent from the Labdacids (see Paus. 9.5.14), whereas at Thebes descent from Oedipus' family was boasted by the family of the Cleonymids (Pind. *Isthm.* 3.15–17).[32]

The presence in the *Oedipodea* of Euryganeia as the mother of Eteocles and Polynices shows that the shame and the burden of incest fell upon the shoulders of Oedipus' mother, Jocaste/Epicaste, whereas he went on to rule at Thebes and form a new family. Theoretically, a second marriage of Oedipus may also be assumed in the Lille papyrus of Stesichorus (*PMGF* 222b): here, the queen mother of Eteocles and Polynices, unnamed in the fragment, is alive and – before Polynices sets off in exile – she tries her best to work out a solution in order to avoid the smouldering conflict between her sons. Since no evidence is available, it remains controversial whether in the sixth century BC Stesichorus was in agreement with the version in the *Oedipodea*, and the queen mother should therefore be identified with Euryganeia, or whether he was anticipating the version found in Euripides' *Phoenissae*, where the one and only wife and mother of Oedipus, Jocaste, outlives her sons only to kill herself on the battlefield, over their bodies.[33] The image bears similarity to the scene painted by Onasias at Plataea, representing Euryganeia in grief as she watches the fight between Eteocles and Polynices.[34]

Another controversial issue in the *Oedipodea* (which also applies to the *Thebaid*) centres on the question whether Oedipus became blind after the discovery of parricide and incest; as noted above, he surely is not blind in the *Odyssey* passage, and in the fragmentary evidence from the archaic age no clear-cut evidence favours this possibility.[35] According to epic usage, the verbs φράσθη in *Theb. PEG* F 2.5 (= D., W.) and ἐνόησε in *PEG* F 3.1 (= D., W.) may refer both to seeing and to perceiving with other senses. In the (para)tragic fragment which is a clear parody of the second curse narrated in the *Thebaid*, the verb γιγνώσκειν refers to recognizing an object

[32]   On this point see also Lloyd-Jones (2002: 9).
[33]   See above, p. 000.   [34]   See above, p. 000.
[35]   Contrary to what is assumed for example by Severyns (1928: 212), who – relying on Legras (1905) – claims that in the *Oedipodea* and in the *Thebaid* Oedipus blinded himself.

by touching it (*TrGF* 458.7: ἔγνω 'παφήσας); in the following lines the blindness of Oedipus is explicitly stated (cf. *TrGF* 458.10: τυφλός· οὔ τι γνώσεται), although this detail might be a later conflation from tragedy, most of all from Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*.[36]

On the contrary, his second marriage to Euryganeia, the begetting of children and most of all the fact that he went on ruling Thebes, point to the fact that the early epic tradition did not represent Oedipus as a blind king, and it may added that blindness does not seem to befit the status of a king in Greek archaic epic;[37] the weakening of his power at some stage may have been connected to other reasons, such as old age and the disrespectful behaviour of his two sons, with the aim of replacing their father on the throne. The only passage running against this interpretation occurs at the end of the Pisander scholium, where it is stated that '. . . after the death of Jocaste and his blinding he married Euryganeia' (φασὶ δὲ ὅτι μετὰ τὸν θάνατον τῆς Ἰοκάστης καὶ τὴν αὐτοῦ τύφλωσιν ἔγημεν Εὐρυγάνην παρθένον . . . ταῦτά φησιν Πείσανδρος, Σ Eur. *Phoen.* 1760 = Pisander, *FgrHist* 16 F 10 (8)). Yet the passage is garbled and wrongly inserted within the context referred to Pisander; it should be better considered a conflation of the epic motif of Oedipus' second marriage with the tragic motif of his blinding.[38]

The attribution to the *Oedipodea* of a third fragment which tells the riddle of the Sphinx, proposed by West (*Oed.* F 2* W. = Asclep. *FgrHist* 12 F 7a), is purely conjectural: it rests on the fact that the Sphinx's riddle in hexameters (ἔστι δίπουν ἐπὶ γῆς καὶ τετράπον, οὗ μία φωνή . . . 'there is a two-footed and four-footed creature with a single voice . . . ') is quoted by Asclepiades of Tragilus (fourth century BC) who, according to West (2003c: 41 n. 1), may have taken it from the *Oedipodea*. As a matter of fact the riddle may well have been earlier, as is shown by the Vatican cup (Vat 16541: first half of the fifth century BC) representing Oedipus and the Sphinx, with the beginning of an inscription which reads καὶ τρι[. It has however been noted that, although the hexameter form of the riddle could point to epic verse, in his work called *Tragoidoumena* (in eleven books) 'Asklepiades generally takes his stories from tragedy, and hexameter is the meter used for riddles on the stage.'[39] To this it may be added that evidence is also missing of the way by which Oedipus overcame the Sphinx in the *Oedipodea*: although the riddle is implied in an earlier hydria in Stuttgart (65/15) dating from

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[36] On this point see also Torres-Guerra, below in this volume, p. 000.

[37] In the Sanskrit epic *Mahabharata* controversy arises over the right of the prince Dhritarashtra to rule as a king, because of his blindness from birth (I owe this point to the courtesy of G. B. D'Alessio).

[38] See on this point Valgiglio (1963: 163–4).   [39] So Gantz (1993: 496); Simon (1981: 29–30).

about 530 BC, the possibility remains that an earlier alternative tradition represented Oedipus fighting with the monster and finally killing her with a sword. Along with a number of vases dating from the second half of the fifth century which show the fight, an interesting piece of evidence is provided by the Boeotian poetess Corinna, who portrayed Oedipus as a 'héros civilisateur' who liberated the Theban territory from monsters: he 'killed not only the Sphinx, but also the Teumessian fox' (Corinna, *PMG* 672).[40]

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[40] See also below, p. 000. See most recently Edmunds (1981: 19–21); March (1987: 124); Gantz (1993: 495–8); Lloyd-Jones (2002: 5). For the representation of Oedipus and the sphinx on vases see most recently Simon (1981); Moret (1984); Krauskopf (1986); Krauskopf (1994).