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### WOMEN AT THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE BRIDGE OF ARTA: CONSTRUCTING DOMESTIC DRAMATURGY IN THE BELLE ÉPOQUE

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KONSTANTINA RITSATOU

**WOMEN AT THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE BRIDGE OF ARTA:  
CONSTRUCTING DOMESTIC DRAMATURGY  
IN THE BELLE ÉPOQUE\***

Α δε στοιχειώσετε άνθρωπο, γιοφύρι δε στεριώνει·  
και μη στοιχειώσετε ορφανό, μη ξένο, μη διαβάτη,  
παρά του πρωτομάστορα την όμορφη γυναίκα,  
πόρχεται αργά τ' αποταχύ, και πάρωρα το γιόμα.<sup>1</sup>

[Unless you sacrifice a human, the bridge will never stand.  
And don't you sacrifice an orphan, nor a stranger, nor a passer-by,  
But only the master mason's beautiful wife,  
Who comes late in the morning and early in the afternoon.]

Folk (δημοτική, demotiki) poetry, argued Nikolaos Politis, is «the surest starting point and the most solid foundation of all creation of Greek art».<sup>2</sup> The studies of the founder of Greek folklore aimed to document the unity of the Greek nation over the course of three thousand years, «from Homer’s epics to the folk song».<sup>3</sup> What is known as the Generation of 1880 stepped on the solid foundation created by the scholar’s positions and began not only to collect the “wildflowers”—a characterization used by Alexandros Rizos Ragavis—of folk tradition, but also to create an original literary production that found in this womb its inspiration. Psycharis drew attention to the linking of this trend with domestic dramaturgy and persuaded his fellow travellers to implement the exhortation *Για το Ρωμαίικο θέατρο* [*For the Romeiko (Greek) Theatre*], on the threshold of the 20th century.

\* The present study complements an aspect that was not explored in my recently published book, Konstantina Ritsatou, *Mothers Speak: Aspects of the Theatrical Role in the Emergence of "Socialist" Ideas in Greece*, Papazisis, Athens 2025. The text benefited from the editorial care of Elisavet Kostaki-Psoma, to whom I extend my warm appreciation.

<sup>1</sup> Νικόλαος Γ. Πολίτης, *Δημοτικά τραγούδια. Εκλογαί από τα τραγούδια του ελληνικού λαού*, [Nikolaos G. Politis, *Folk songs. Choices from the songs of the Greek people*], Editions Historic Research, Athnes, n.d.

<sup>2</sup> Πολίτης, «Πρόλογος», *Δημοτικά τραγούδια* [Politis, «Prologue», *Folk songs*], p. e.

<sup>3</sup> Θόδωρος Χατζηπανταζής, «Ρωμαϊκός Συμβολισμός». Διασταύρωση εγχώριας λαϊκής παράδοσης και ευρωπαϊκής πρωτοπορίας στο νεοελληνικό θέατρο ή Θέατρο και εθνική ταυτότητα στην Ελλάδα [Thodoros Hadjipantazis, «Romeiko (Greek) Symbolism». Intersection of domestic folk tradition and European avant-garde in modern Greek theatre or Theatre and national identity in Greece], Crete University Press, Heraklion 2018, p. 145.

Three Greek dramatists singled out the ballad «Του Γιοφουριού της Άρτας» [The Bridge of Arta] and, on the canvas of the oft-sung, uneven fifteen-syllable verses of the folk song built their own bridge, before the first decade of the new century ended. Elias Voutieridis (1874-1941) wrote *Το γιοφύρι της Άρτας* [The Bridge of Arta] before mid-1905.<sup>4</sup> About a year and a half afterwards, Pantelis Horn (1881-1941) published *Το Ανεχτίμητο* [The Priceless] (1906).<sup>5</sup> Petros Psilorititis (the pen name of Nikos Kazantzakis) also wrote *Θυσία* [Sacrifice] which secured him the prize at the Lassanio Dramatic Competition of 1910.<sup>6</sup> In the same year, the play was published in *Panathinaia* (Παναθήναια) under the title *Ο Πρωτομάστορας* [The Master Mason], while the identity of the author, Nikos Kazantzakis (1883-1957), was already known.<sup>7</sup> The plays embroider on the same topic and have long been the subject of theatrical research.<sup>8</sup> More recent studies

<sup>4</sup> Ηλίας Βουτιερίδης, «"Το γιοφύρι της Άρτας", τραγωδία, σε συνέχειες» [Elias Voutieridis, «"The Bridge of Arta", tragedy, serials»], *Noumas*, year III, iss. 148, 15 May 1905, p. 3-6 / iss. 149, 22 May 1905, p. 4-6 / iss. 150, 29 May 1905, p. 3-6 / iss. 151, 5 June 1905, p. 2-6.

<sup>5</sup> Παντελής Χορν, *Το Ανεχτίμητο*, δράμα με τρία μέρη - *Ο ξένος*, δραματική σκηνή [Pantelis Horn, *The Priceless*, drama with three parts - *The stranger*, dramatic stage] Noumas' Offices, Athens 1906 (<http://theatrokaiparadosi.thea.auth.gr>) and in the volume: Παντελής Χορν, *Τα θεατρικά* [Pantelis Horn, *The Plays*], vol. A', in.-ed. Efi Vafiadi, Goulondris Horn Foundation, Athens 1993, p. 183-267.

<sup>6</sup> Κυριακή Πετράκου, *Οι Θεατρικοί Διαγωνισμοί* [Kyriaki Petrakou, *The Theatrical Competitions*] (1870-1925), Ellinika Grammata, Athens 1999, p. 230-232. The study describes the stir caused by the author's attitude towards the award and cites relevant sources.

<sup>7</sup> Πέτρος Ψηλορείτης [Νίκος Καζαντζάκης], «Ο Πρωτομάστορας (τραγωδία)», *Παναθήναια*, [Petros Psilorititis [Nikos Kazantzakis], «The Master Mason (tragedy)», *Panathinaia*], iss. 233-234, 15/30 June 1910, p. 131-144 (<http://theatrokaiparadosi.thea.auth.gr>). The work, Γιώργος Θεοτοκάς, *Θεατρικά έργα Α'. Νεοελληνικό λαϊκό θέατρο: Αντάρα στ' Ανάπλι, Το γεφύρι της Άρτας, Όνειρο του Δωδεκάμερου, Το Κάστρο της Ωριάς, Το παιχνίδι της τρέλας και της φρονιμάδας, Συναπάντημα στην Πεντέλη, Το τίμημα της λευτεριάς* [Giorgos Theotokas *Theatrical plays A'. Modern Greek folk theatre: Mist in Nauplio, The Bridge of Arta, A Dream of Twelve Days, The Castle of Oria, The game of madness and wisdom, Encounter at Penteli, The price of freedom*] Estia Bookstore, Athens 1965, is not included because it does not belong to the Belle Époque.

<sup>8</sup> The first approach is by George P. Pefanis, «The song of *The Bridge of Arta* as a bridge between folk poetry and drama (I. Voutieridis, P. Horn, N. Kazantzakis, G. Theotokas, et al.)», *Parousia*, School of Philosophy, University of Athens, vol. XIII-XIV (1998-2000), p. 273-323. The same scholar examined in other works the relationship between dramaturgy and folk tradition: Γιώργος Πεφάνης, «Λαϊκοί βάρδοι και θεατρικοί συγγραφείς: το ζήτημα της δραματοποίησης των παραλογών. Τρεις περιπτώσεις: Εφταλιώτης, Παπαντωνίου, Αλιθέρσης», *Θέματα Λογοτεχνίας* [George Pefanis, «Popular bards and playwrights: the question of dramatizing the absurd. Three cases: Eftaliotis, Papantoniou, Alithersis», *Themes of Literature*], vol. 8 (1998), p. 92-109. Γιώργος Π. Πεφάνης, «Η δραματοποίηση των Παραλογών Β' (Του Μαυριανού και της αδελφής του). Τέσσερις περιπτώσεις: Κ. Γ. Ξένος, Ν. Ποριώτης, Γαλ. Καζαντζάκη, Γ. Θεοτοκάς», *Πόρφυρας* [George P. Pefanis, «The dramatization of the Absurdities II (*Mavrianos and his sister*). Four cases: K. G. Xenos, N. Poriotis, Gal. Kazantzaki, G. Theotokas», *Porfyra*] iss. 88 (1998), p. 250-274. Γιώργος Π. Πεφάνης, «Το τραγούδι της Λιογέννητης. Τρεις περιπτώσεις: Βουτιερίδης, Περγιάλης, Κωτσόπουλος», *Παρουσία* [George P. Pefanis, «The song of Liogeniti. Three cases: Voutieridis, Pergialis, Kotsopoulos», *Parousia*], Faculty of Philosophy, University of Athens, vol. XV' (2001-2003), p. 309-353. See, also, Έφη Βαφειάδου, «Το ανεχτίμητο. Δράμα σε τρία μέρη (1906)», *Εισαγωγή στην δραματολογία του Παντελή Χορν* [Efi Vafiadou, «The priceless. Drama in three parts (1906) », *Introduction to the dramaturgy of Pantelis Horn*], ed. Thesis, Aristotle University of

have complemented the landscape, but the interpretative interest has not yet been exhausted.<sup>9</sup>

In the present approach, we will neither further illuminate the figure of the master mason nor seek the analogy between the Τραγουδιστής (Singer) in Kazantzakis' work and Nikaros in Palamas' *Τρισεύγενη* (*Trisevgeni*), a character who has been interpreted as an embodiment of the esthète, decadent artist, since he is «young, handsome, pale» and «goes to the harvest playing his flute».<sup>10</sup> We will not concern ourselves with areas that have been explored, such as the dialogue –not only among the three works, of course, but among numerous literary texts – with Nietzsche's *Übermensch*.<sup>11</sup> Nor will we deal with the obvious influences from the craftsman of Hauptmann's *Die versunkene Glocke* [*The Sunken Bell*], which was being performed in Athens at the time.<sup>12</sup> The Athenian circle of

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Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki 1994, p. 112-124. Walter Puchner, «Η παραλογή και το δράμα. Μια προτίμηση», *Το θέατρο στην Ελλάδα. Μορφολογικές επισημάνσεις*, [«Ballads and drama. A preference», *Theatre in Greece. Morphological notes*], Pairidis, Athens 1992, p. 307-330.

<sup>9</sup> Χριστίνα Παλαιολόγου, *Παραμυθιακά στοιχεία και μοτίβα στην ελληνική δραματουργία του 20ού αιώνα* [Christina Palaiologou, *Fairytale elements and motifs in Greek dramaturgy of the 20th century*] (1890-1980), ed. Thesis, 2t., National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens 2012, p. 329-354; Κωνσταντίνα Ριτσάτου, *Αποτυπώματα της παράδοσης στο Νεοελληνικό θέατρο από τις αρχές της δεκαετίας του 1870 μέχρι τους Βαλκανικούς Πολέμους: μια πρώτη χαρτογράφηση, Σκηνή* [Konstantina Ritsatou, «Imprints of tradition in Modern Greek Theatre from the early 1870s to the Balkan Wars: a first mapping», *Stage*, v. 7 (2015), p. 244-274; Μπάμπης Δεμιρτζάκης, «Τα τρία "Γεφύρια της Άρτας" και το "Γεφύρι με τις τρεις κάμαρες"», *Φιλολογική* [Babis Demirtzakis, «The three "Bridges of Arta" and the "Bridge with the three arches"», *Philological* 75 (2001), p. 70-74.

<sup>10</sup> Αντώνης Γλυτζουρής, *Πόθοι αετού και φτερά πεταλούδας. Το πρώιμο θεατρικό έργο του Νίκου Καζαντζάκη και οι ευρωπαϊκές πρωτοπορίες της εποχής του. Συμβολή στη μελέτη της Παρακμής στη νεοελληνική δραματουργία των αρχών του εικοστού αιώνα* [Antonis Glytzouris, *Eagle cravings and butterfly wings. The early theatrical work of Nikos Kazantzakis and the European avant-gardes of his time. Contribution to the study of Decadence in Modern Greek dramaturgy of the early twentieth century*], Crete University Press, Heraklion 2009, p. 69.

<sup>11</sup> «Τα λογοτεχνικά έργα της εποχής, γύρω στα 1900, βρίθουν από επιχειρήματα υποστηρίζοντας ή αποδοκιμάζοντας την ιδέα του Υπερανθρώπου [...] Ένας αξιόλογος αριθμός λογοτεχνημάτων, ιδιαίτερα θεατρικών έργων, περιστρέφεται θεματικά γύρω από αυτές τις λεπτές ιδεολογικές διαφορές και τα κοινά οράματα», Χαράλαμπος-Δημήτρης Γουνελάς, *Η σοσιαλιστική συνείδηση στην ελληνική λογοτεχνία* [«The literary works of the time, circa 1900, are full of arguments supporting or disapproving of the idea of the Übermensch [...] A remarkable number of literary works, especially theatrical plays, revolve thematically around these subtle ideological differences and common visions», Charalambos-Dimitris Gounelas], *The socialist consciousness in Greek literature*, p. 106-114.

<sup>12</sup> See indicatively, Κωνσταντίνα Ριτσάτου, «Ο Χάουπτμαν στην Ελλάδα: τα άγνωστα χειρόγραφα μετάφρασης της Έλγας και η σκηνική τους τύχη» [Konstantina Ritsatou, «Hauptmann in Greece: the unknown translation manuscripts of *Elga* and their fate on stage» in: Areti Vassiliou, Konstantina Georgiadi, Andreas Dimitriadis and Konstantina Ritsatou (eds.), *History and Historiography of Modern Greek Theatre, Proceedings of the Scientific Conference in honour of Theodoros Hadjipantazis*, Rethymno 1-3 June 2018, Institute of Mediterranean Studies, Rethymno 2020, p. 204-222, with the relevant bibliography; Μήτσος Λυγίζος, «Το συμβολικό θέατρο και ο Συμβολισμός», *Το νεοελληνικό πλάι στο παγκόσμιο θέατρο. Δραματολογική ανάλυση-αισθητική και ιστορική τοποθέτηση* [Mitsos Lygizos, «Symbolic theatre and symbolism», *Modern Greek in*

New Romantics has been thoroughly mapped in the pages of Greek literary studies, and we can draw firm conclusions: «The investment of their (the intellectuals') hopes in the idea of progress had gone bankrupt; their faith in the structures, hierarchies, and regularity of reason had also been lost. Rational modernisation-Europeanisation had failed [...] Decadent, irrational, nihilistic, and anarchist tendencies were reversing the established belief in the rationalism, materialism, and liberalism of previous decades».<sup>13</sup>



Our focus is on the three women, whose blood can give birth to children, a power given by nature, but which in this case, creates strong, sturdy, and durable bridges, as patriarchal rule commands. In the early 1900s, when the wind of women's emancipation was blowing strong across Europe, within just five years, Smaragdo (Σμαράγδω), Flandreau (Φλαντρώ) and Smaragda (Σμαράγδα), women of the original dramaturgical production of the domestic Belle Époque, were built successively into the foundations of the bridge of Arta, by three dramatists, the last two very young and almost of the same age. In *The Bridge of Arta* and in *The Priceless*, the built-in women are the wives of the master mason, as described in the ballad. However, Voutieridis and Horn include in the list of dramatic figures of their plays, the mothers of the women who will be sacrificed, allowing them to occupy, in some scenes, the centre of the plot, as they try with all their might to prevent the scythe of Charos (the personification of Death) from falling on their offsprings. The result are dialogues charged with strong emotional charges for the reader and potential audiences of the two dramas. The words of these traditional mothers –as well as characters of other plays that draw from folk tradition– create the linguistic intimacy that dramatizes old sung sorrows. Moreover, Vourieridis, with poetic license, completes Smaragdo's identity with a decisive aspect: she is not only a wife but also a mother. Constrained but powerful within the two traditional roles, she is called upon to present her radiant self, before she is led to the bridge Arta. Only Kazantzakis chooses to place next to the master mason an unwed mistress, a girl who is neither a mother nor a wife and is not protected by the one who brought her into the world, she is motherless. The Cretan dramatist's orphan Smaragda, at first glance, seems to be walking the streets of the European avant-garde, emancipated, freed from the sacred bonds of marriage and motherhood. Smaragda gave not only her heart but also her body to her beloved, without the permission of the progenitor Georgios Chortatsis' Erofilis had done centuries before but unlike Smaragda she had been led to a secret marriage with

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*conjunction with world theatre. Dramalogical analysis - aesthetic and historical positioning*, iss. A, Dodoni, Athens, n.d., p. 174-175.

<sup>13</sup> Ευγένιος Δ. Ματθιόπουλος, *Η τέχνη πετροφυνεί εν οδύνη*. Η πρόσληψη του νεορομαντισμού στην Ελλάδα [Eugene D. Matthiopoulos, *Art flutters in pain*. The reception of neoromanticism in Greece], Potamos, Athens 2005, p. 68-70.



Panaretos. If we look more closely at the three texts, we will be convinced that this is not the case.

***The Bridge of Arta by Voutieridis: A hymn to motherhood***

«Ο θάνατος  
Γοργά μαρπάζει  
Τη δόλια, μόλις μάννα γίνηκα.  
Ωιμέ, παιδί μου, η αρφάνια σου με σφάζει» (p. 4-5)  
[Death  
grabs me fast  
Poor, pitiful me, I've just become a mother  
Alas, my child, your orphanhood tears me apart]

Voutieridis wrote fourteen plays, according to Pefanis' study.<sup>14</sup> On the same page of the literary magazine *Noumas (Νουμάς)*, where *The Bridge of Arta* began to be published, a long text by Psycharis –commenting on the terms of the revival of ancient tragedy, on the occasion of the Athenian performance of *Antigone* in the original language– was concluded.<sup>15</sup> Voutieridis himself takes part in the public debate that has opened up in the birthplace of tragedy, as the echoes of ancient drama performances in Europe have reached it.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, the author leads the trend for the intersection of antiquity with folk tradition.<sup>17</sup> The asterisk

<sup>14</sup> Γιώργος Π. Πεφάνης, «Ένα άγνωστο θεατρικό έργο του Ηλία Βουτιεριδίου: *Ο ιδεολόγος*» [George P. Pefanis, «An unknown theatrical play by Elias Voutieridis: *The idealist*»], *Parabasis* 5 (2004), p. 227-277.

<sup>15</sup> «Αν είτανε κοινή γνώμη στην Αθήνα, κοινή γνώμη δηλαδή που να σέβεται τους αρχαίους, τέτοια παράσταση δε θα την άφηνε να γίνη. Έγινε ωστόσο και συνάμα έγινε το μασκαραλίκι σωστό. Μασκαραλίκι να το πούμε, αφού η τραγωδία -και τι τραγωδία!- κατάντησε κωμωδία». [«If it had been the public opinion in Athens, that is, public opinion that respects the ancients, such a performance would have never been allowed to take place. However, it took place and at the same time it was a proper masquerade. We shall call it a masquerade, since tragedy – and what a tragedy! –became a comedy»]. Psycharis then passionately supports the translation of this «masterpiece» into demotic language for the needs of the performance. See *Noumas*, vol. 148, 15 May 1905, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> In 1904, *Noumas* was in a «polite» –as Yannis Sideris described it– war, with Georgios Mistrionis, who presented *Aiantas (Αίαντα)* in the original (Panos Kalogerikos, who belongs to the «mistes» of the New Stage, is Coryphaeus of the Chorus), at the Municipal Theatre of Athens, on 13 March 1904. Voutieridis judged kindly the performance, see *Noumas*, 21 March 1904. See indicatively, Κωνσταντίνα Ριτσάτου, «Πρωτότυπο ή μετάφραση; Η αναβίωση του αρχαίου δράματος στα τέλη της δεκαετίας του 1880» [Konstantina Ritsatou, «Original or translation? The revival of ancient drama in the late 1880s» in: *Proceedings of the Panhellenic Historical Conference, 25-27 May 2007*, Hellenic Historical Society, Thessaloniki 2008, p. 303-318; Κωνσταντίνα Ριτσάτου, «Παραστάσεις αρχαίας ελληνικής τραγωδίας “εις την ανερασμικήν προφοράν του Εράσμου”: κινήσεις για την κατάργηση της ερασμι(α)κής προφοράς στον ύστερο 19ο αιώνα» [Konstantina Ritsatou, «Performances of ancient Greek tragedy “in the unErasmian pronunciation of Erasmus”: movements for the abolition of the Erasmus pronunciation in the late 19th century» in: Konstantinos Kyriakos (ed.), *The ancient Greek theatre and its reception. Proceedings of the Fourth Theatrical Conference*, University of Patras, Department of Theatrical Studies, Patras 2015, p. 181-193, where the relevant bibliography can be found.

<sup>17</sup> Χατζηπανταζής, «*Ρωμαϊκός Συβολισμός*» [Hadjipantazis, «*Romeiko (Greek) Symbolism*»], p. 293-295.

in the genre classification «tragedy», from the pen of Voutieridis himself, leads to the note that the «story» of the play is set in «Medieval times and in Arta».<sup>18</sup> *The Bridge of Arta* is written in verse, in a variety of metric systems, without stage directions, without acts and scenes, and has Chorus, Messenger, and Oracle - Daphne- in place of Tiresias. The structural and features of form would suffice to establish the strong influence on both form and content from ancient tragedy, borrowings already commented on by scholars. The folk legend and folk song spread to the metrical and structural canvas of the dramatic texts of antiquity and create Voutieridis' academic proposal for the path that domestic dramaturgy should follow.

The dramatist, however, is not limited to the coupling of archetypal figures from ancient tragedy with the traditional material of folk songs, to the eclectic affinities especially with *Antigone*, (Αντιγόνη), *Alcestis* (Αλκηστη) and *Iphigenia at Aulis* (Ιφιγένεια εν Αυλίδι). It creates a strong core that is completely absent from the ballad of «The Bridge of Arta»: it places mother and daughter side by side. A dramaturgical movement similar to Eftaliotis' in *The Vampire* (Βουρκόλακα) (1894), a drama woven on the ballad of «The dead brother», the folk song where the power of the mother resurrects the dead firstborn son from the grave. Voutieridis gives an infant to the younger woman, the wife of the master mason, thus creating another mother, a figure who recalls the Blessed Mother, the infant holder of the post-Byzantine tradition. These are original elements that give special importance to Voutierides' *The Bridge of Arta* and form an image of motherhood which in its content, one could argue, is more akin to *Θυσίας του Αβραάμ* [*The Sacrifice of Abraham*] and much less to ancient tragedy.

The dialogue between the two mothers opens the tragedy. The elder, Chrysoula, Smaragdo's mother, speaks first and addresses her daughter who she sees sad, tilting her head and wonders what sorrow «eats away» her heart.

Σμαράγδω: Δεν ξέρω μάννα μου γλυκιά, τι μου βαραίνει/ Τα στήθια σαν κακός βραχνάς. Ο νους μου τρέμει/ Πως μαύρη συφορά το σπίτι μας θε νάβρη./ Βαριά η ψυχή μου θλίβεται χωρίς να ξέρω/ Το λόγο. Πούναι το παιδί μου να ξεχάσω/ Στο γέλιο του ταθώω τη θλίψη μου; να διώξη/ Η πρόσχαρη θωριά του της καρδιάς το φόβο; (p. 3).

[Smaragdo: I don't know my sweet mother, what burdens/ my chest and chokes me up. My mind trembles/ That black calamity will find our home. / My soul is heavy and saddens without me knowing/ The reason why. Where is my child so as to forget/ In his laughter my sadness? For him to cast away/ with his cheerful face the fear of the heart?]

The two women's great concern comes from the bridge that Smaragdos' husband, Thomas, has undertaken to build, but it does not «stand».

<sup>18</sup> Ηλίας Βουτιεριδής, «Το γιοφύρι της Άρτας, τραγωδία» [Elias Voutieridis, «The bridge of Arta, tragedy»], *Noumas* iss. 148, 15 May1905, p.3-6: 3. The pages of all quotations are from this first publication of the work. The word *mana* (mother) in the work is with two n.



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The master mason's wife shares with her mother the heavy premonitions that foreshadow evil, and the only balm that soothes the fears is the concern for her child. In the first verses of the tragedy, Smaragdo repeats the word «μάννα» (manna/ mother) **seven times** and even twice accompanies it with the adjectives «my sweet mother» and «my good mother». The daughter deeply sees the mother's soul:

Μάννα, γιατί στην άκρη του ματιού σου τρέμει/ Το δάκρυ; Μες τη λύπη σου κρυφοδιαβάζω/ Τη συφορά, που μέλλεται να μας σκεπάσει.../ [...] Μάννα μου, τρέχω για να δω· κακό φοβάμαι/ Τον άντρα μου αναπάντεχο μη βρήκε, κ' έχε/ Την έννοια του παιδιού μου εσύ μην κλάψη... (p. 4).

[Mother, why in the corner of your eye does / The tear tremble? In your sadness I secretly read/ The calamity that will befall us.../ [...] Mother, I run to see I fear evil / unexpectedly came upon My husband, and you/ take care of my child, not to cry...]

One mother seeks comfort from the other, and they share the care of the new life that the first has brought into the world. Raising an infant, from the beginning of the world, was not the concern of only a single woman, Engels has argued as early as 1884.<sup>19</sup> The exclusive care of the newborn by the wife-mother-nurse was established.... along with culture. And recently, anthropologists argue that nothing proves this need.<sup>20</sup>

The two mothers must take care of the child of the family for another reason: Thomas, the Nietzschean Übermensch, is clearly preoccupied with other concerns.

Σμαράγδω: Ω! Πέστε μου η συμπόνεση πού είναι κρυμμένη,/ Κλέφτρα να γίνω και σ' αυτόν να φέρω λίγη./ Αχ! Το παιδί μου ξύπνησε και με ζητάει!  
Θωμάς: Κακόμοιρο! Το ξέχασα κι αυτό. (p. 6).

[Smaragdo: Oh! Tell me where empathy has gone, / I'll be a thief, and to him I'll bring a little. / Oh! My child has woken up and asks for me!  
Thomas: Poor thing! I forgot about it, as well.]

In vain Smaragdo's mother, frozen with terror for her own offspring, utters the heavy curse that whoever confronts the beast of the river lays under... «with a human body» to sacrifice for it.

<sup>19</sup> Φρίντριχ Ένγκελς, «Πρόλογος στην πρώτη έκδοση του 1884», *Η καταγωγή της οικογένειας της ατομικής ιδιοκτησίας και του κράτους* [Friedrich Engels, «Preface to the First Edition of 1884», *Origins of the Family Private Property and the State*], n. tr., Modern Era, Athens 2019, p. 7 and 38-39.

<sup>20</sup> Agustín Fuentes *Φυλή, μονογαμία και άλλα ψέματα που σας λένε. Καταρρίπτοντας τους μύθους για την ανθρώπινη φύση* [Agustín Fuentes *Race, monogamy and other lies they told you. Busting myths about human nature*], tr. Theodoros Paradellis, Editions of the Twenty-First, Athens 2019, p. 242-247.

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The terrible news that asks for Smaragdo's sacrifice does not take long to come. Again, she calls her mother to save her – four times the word mother in just two verses. But her child's orphanhood is the double-edged sword that tears her apart:

Σμαράγδω: Ωιμένα! Ζωντανή σαν πέτρα να με χτίσουν;/ Πού να κρυφτώ να μη με βρουν;/ Μου φεύγει ο νους μου! [...] Πώς ζωντανή αρφανό να λέω το παιδί μου;/ Ακόμα τη χαρά δε γνώρισα της μάνας;/ Και με χωρίζουν απ' αυτό. Δεν κλαίω για μένα;/ Δεν ξεχειλίζει η λύπη μου για τη ζωή μου;/ Σου κλέβουνε παιδί μου τη χαρά της μάνας;/ Και τη λαχτάρα της αγάπης της, ωιμένα! (p. 5).

[Smaragdo: Poor me! Alive as stone to build me? / Where shall I hide so that they do not find me? My mind is gone! [...] How can I be alive and call my child an orphan? / I have not yet known the joy of being a mother/ And they take me away from it. I don't cry for myself/ My sorrow for my life doesn't overflow/ They steal from you, my child, the joy of having a mother/ And the longing for her love, Poor me!]

Voutieridis changes the metric system and coordinates his dramaturgical composition with the traditional laments:

Σμαράγδω: Μάννα μου πάει, τέλειωσε;/ κ' έφυγε κάθε ψέμα;/ Ο χάρος με θεμέλιωσε;/ Στου ποταμού το ρέμα./ Κλάψε με, μάννα, κλάψε με/ Κι' αποχαιρέτησέ με;/ Για πεθαμένη γράψε με/ Και νεκροστόλισέ με./ Φέρτε μου το παιδάκι μου/ Να το πρωτοφιλήσω,/ Πριν όλο το φαρμάκι μου/ Στα χείλη μου το χύσω (p. 6).

[Smaragdo: Mother, is done, it is over/ And all the lies are gone/ Charos has built me in the foundation/ In the current of the river./ Cry for me, mother, cry for me/ And bid me farewell/ think of me as dead/ And adorn me./ Bring me my child/ Let me kiss it first,/ Before all of my poison/ On my lips I pour.]

But nothing changes Thomas' decision. The last effort is made by the older mother who is still trying to save her child:

Χρυσούλα: Και θαρρείς πως θα σ' αφήσω/ Εγώ να τη στοιχίσω; [...] Πως είμαι μάννα/ Δε σκέφτεσαι, κι ότι μπορώ για του παιδιού μου/ Τη ζωή μ' όλον τον κόσμο να παλέψω μόνη; (p. 3).

[Chrysoula: And do you think I'll let you/ sacrifice her? [...] That I am mother/ Don't you think, and that I can fight for my child's/ Life with the whole world alone?]

Smaragdo calls upon her mother to be silent. She has made the decision to die, to become a pair with the ghost, a sacrifice for Thomas and her child, to save them from Charos. Once again, she calls on her mother not to grieve, in this bitter hour of eternal separation, because as a woman she is worth less than a man!

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«Σμαράγδω: Περήφανη, μάννα μου, νάσαι,/ Γιατί πεθαίνει η κόρη σου σώζοντας κόσμο. [...] Μονάχα στο παιδάκι μου/ Νάσαι γλυκιά μητέρα» [Smaragdo: Be proud, my mother, / For your daughter dies saving people. [...] Only to my little child / be a sweet mother] (p. 3). To Thomas she says: «Μον' το παιδί μου ναγαπάς ως σαγαπούσα» [Only love my child as I have loved you] (p. 3).

Smaragdo with verses almost unchanged from *Antigone* («Σε χαιρετώ, φως του ήλιου. Για στερνή φορά», [I greet you, sunlight. For the very last time], p. 4), bids farewell to the world. But the mother's anguish is drawn not from ancient tragedy but from traditional laments:

Ωιμένα! Ομπρός μου πια δε λάμπει/ Το γέλιο του παιδιού μου. Ο θάνατος/ Γοργά μαρπάζει/ Τη δόλια, μόλις μάννα γίνηκα./ Ωιμέ, παιδί μου, η αρφάνια σου με σφάζει./ [...] Παιδάκι μου, με χάνεις!/ Ποιος μέσα στην αρφάνια σου θα σε κοιμίσει;/ Μα όπως εγώ θρηνώ τώρα για σένα,/ Έτσι του κάθε περαστή κ' η μάννα να θρηνήση. (p. 4-5).

[Poor me! In front of me no longer shines / My child's laughter. Death/ grabs me fast/ Poor, pitiful me, I've just become a mother. / Alas, my child, your orphanhood tears me apart. [...] My little child, you lose me! / Who in your orphanhood will put you to sleep? / But as I mourn now for you, / So may every passer-by and every mother mourn.]

The mother's curses are contradicted by other mothers: «Β' Γυναίκα: Μάννα είσαι και πονείς: λυπήσου τις μαννάδες» [Second Woman: You are a mother, and you are hurting; pity the mothers] (p. 5). And Smaragdo will quickly replace the curses with wishes as it happens in folk songs. Her last words, however, not only submit to her husband but praise his power with Nietzschean overtones: «Νικήτρα βγαίν' η τέχνη σου/ Μαζί κ' η θέλησή σου/ Τη Φύση και τη Μοίρα νίκησες/ Με την αγαπημένη δόξα σου στολίσου» [Victorious comes out your art/ Together with your will; / Nature and Fate you have conquered/ With your beloved glory adorn yourself] (p. 6).

### **Pantelis Horn's *The Priceless*: The trap of sensual eroticism is neither a mother nor a wife**

Σκίσε τις σάρκες μας και πάρε τα κόκκαλά μας να τα στοιβάξεις για να στεριώσεις του αφανισμού το γιοφύρι...(p. 214)

[Rip our flesh and take our bones to stack them to set the bridge of annihilation...]

*The Priceless* was published, as we said, just a year and a half after Voutieridis' work on the same theme and was dedicated to Psycharis.<sup>21</sup> Instead of borrowings

<sup>21</sup> Χορν, *Τα θεατρικά* [Horn, *The Plays*], see *Το Ανεχτίμητο* [*The Priceless*], p. 183-267. The pages of quotations are from the edition edited by E. Vafiadi (1993). See also, Έφη Βαφειάδη, *Εισαγωγή στη*

from classical antiquity, Horn uses a combination of folk songs and folk tales, thus attempting to redefine the materials and sources of the new dramaturgy.<sup>22</sup>

It is Horn's first three-act drama, in «Psycharis' demotic» prose, divided into three parts, with stage instructions, a «theatrical fantasy», as the dramatist later described it, a work that never found its way to the stage.<sup>23</sup> Apart from the ballad of «The bridge of Arta», it borrows part of its erotically themed plot from a lesser-known ballad, «Κολυμπητή» (The Swimmer). But it is written «in the most horrible demotiki and presents long scenes of vulgar obscenity», characteristics that irritated the conformist Athenian scholarly world from the outset and caused the navy lieutenant writer great trouble.<sup>24</sup>

Therefore, it is not only the prose and the overall morphological elements of Horn's work that create a significant distance from Voutieridis' *The Bridge of Arta*, nor the fusion of the two ballads. *The Priceless* sets aside the model of ancient Greek tragedy in order to move more distinctly into the field of «Romeiko symbolism», as envisioned by Psycharis. The title of the work, and the central role of the master mason's wife's priceless ring, create a bridge with Yannis Kambysis' *Το δαχτυλίδι της μάνας* [*The Mother's Ring*], an influence that Xenopoulos had already pointed out at the time of the work's first publication.<sup>25</sup> *The Priceless* also has eloquent borrowings from European dramaturgy: from Hauptmann's *Die versunkene Glocke* [*The Sunken Bell*] which was staged in Athens at the Royal Theatre in January 1906, and from Ibsen's *En folkefiende* [*An Enemy of the People*] which was also performed by Christomanos' *New Stage* (Νέα Σκηνή) in 1902.<sup>26</sup> The above have been studied by the theatrological community, but this has not been the case with the position of motherhood, which is central to Horn's work.

In the first part –as the author himself describes it– the folklore substratum fully unfolds: Flandreau, the master mason's wife, Andreas, sits on the loom and weaves, while chatting with her mother, Kyra (Lady, Mistress) Vasiliki. This is not about two mothers; there are no constant references to an infant, as is the case in Voutieridis' play, but the mother-daughter dialogue also opens the first scene of this drama. The elder woman, the mother, knows the legends, reads the omens, believes in superstitions, is the voice that comes from another world, where the boundaries between the real and the «supernatural» are fluid and vague. The

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δραματουργία του Παντελή Χορν [Efi Vafiadi, *Introduction to Pantelis Horn's dramatic work*], PhD thesis, MNES, School of Philosophy, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki 1994.

<sup>22</sup> Χατζηπανταζής, «Ρωμαίικος Συβολισμός» [Hadjipantazis, «Romeiko (Greek) Symbolism»], p. 298-300.

<sup>23</sup> From Vafiadi's introduction to: Χορν, *Τα θεατρικά* [Horn, *The Plays*], p. 185 and p. 197.

<sup>24</sup> The quote from the publication, Δ. Τ., «Φαινόμενα και πράγματα. Κριτικά λιπάσματα» [D. T., «Phenomena and things. Critical fertilizers»], *Athens*, 7 October 1906 and republished together with καὶ D. P. Tagopoulos' reply to Noumas, vol. 217, 15 October 1906, p. 7, in Vafiadi's introduction to: Χορν, *Τα θεατρικά* [Horn, *The Plays*], p. 186-190.

<sup>25</sup> Γρηγόριος Ξενόπουλος, «Τα βιβλία. Παντελή Χορν, *Το Ανεχτίμητο*, δράμα με τρία μέρη. Ο ξένος, δραματική σκηνή» [Grigorios Xenopoulos, «The books. Pantelis Horn, *The Priceless*, three-part drama. *The stranger*, dramatic stage»], *Panathinaia* (1906-1907), p. 28. The text is republished in: Χορν, *Τα θεατρικά* [Horn, *The Plays*], p. 258-260.

<sup>26</sup> From Vafiadi's introduction to: Χορν, *Τα θεατρικά* [Horn, *The Plays*], p. 196-197.

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mother recognizes, respects, and fears the power that lies beyond human limits and comes from Nature that refuses to be bridled to the ghosts that avenge the arrogance of man. This voice, the one that sounds irrational to the ears of the rational craftsman, expresses the popular wisdom.

From the same mouth come terrible words that escalate the emotion and thrill of the reader and potential member of the audience:

Ε, θα ρουφήξει και το αίμα μας... (Στον Αντρέα). Βάλε με το νου σου τι κάνεις... Σκίσε τις σάρκες μας και πάρε τα κόκκαλά μας να τα στοιβάξεις για να στεριώσεις του αφανισμού το γιοφύρι... (p. 214).

[Well, it will suck our blood too... (To Andreas). Think about what you're doing... Rip our flesh and take our bones to stack them to set the bridge of annihilation...]

Emotions loosen and peel off the bodies. The two women do not express elusive, intangible ideas; they act.

The mother, who has Flandreau as her last and only refuge, begs her daughter not to run after her husband anymore, to stop obeying the man her daughter recognizes as the pillar of her home. But it is too late for such begging. Kyra Vasiliki herself has raised her daughter to abide by patriarchal rules:

Μάνα, άμα παντρεύτηκα τι μούπες; Τώρα από την αγκαλιά μου φεύγεις και στου άντρα σου πηγαίνεις; θα 'σαι πια δικιά του, η λύπη του θα 'ναι πόνος σου κι η χαρά του πανηγύρι... (p. 215).

[Mother, when I got married, what you'd said? Now you leave my embrace and go to your husband's; you will be his, his sadness will be your pain and his joy a celebration...]

Before the first part is finished, Thomas yields somewhat and describes the «bridge of love», which may be enough to be happy with his wife. Flandreau is sure: «Άνοιξε την αγκαλιά σου ν' ανοίξω τη δικιά μου και χτίστηκε» [Open your arms to open mine and it is built] (p. 218).

The entire second part of the drama delves into the roots of the fairy tale: goblins, fairies, elves, on the banks of the river, under a moonlit sky. The Ghost of the River, transformed into an «ωριό κοράσι» (beautiful lassie), seduces the master mason (p. 232-234). Within the landscape of Aestheticism, lustful eroticism unfolds, and here there is no room for hallowed motherhood. This woman who promises the master mason the conquest of the summit and drags him to the edge of the precipice, into the midst of destruction, cannot be a mother as well –not, at least, in the domestic dramaturgy of that time. She is a European femme fatale, and her reflection can be found in Kazantzakis' Smaragda. The seductress of *The Priceless* is not the master mason's wife. The woman who seduces and leads the male astray, the great craftsman, is not the one who shares his bed. Sin lies beyond the marital home.

In the third part of the drama the sacrifice takes place. The beautiful Flandreau, the «beautiful wife of the master mason» (p. 241), is led to her doom,

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like Voutieridis' *Smaragdo*, both following the path of Euripides' *Alcestis*, who sacrifices herself for the sake of her husband, but also of Sophocles' *Antigone*. The great womb of the willingly sacrificed women of the theatre is found in ancient tragedy. When Kyra Vasiliki learns that her daughter is going to give away the «priceless» ring, she realizes that there is no turning back. That "in her dark old age" she will be left alone. «Demonic ruckus, death calls», voices, deep, unspeakable pain, a stage image in the centre of which is the all-time tragic figure, the mother saying goodbye for the last time to her child (p. 252-253).

When Flandreau's voice cries out for help, it is the mother who cries out:

Αχ! Ζει... Κόρη μου, Φλαντρώ μου... Σώστε τη... σώστε τη... Αχ! Μη, την έρμη λυπηθείτε με... Πρωτομάστορα, στοιχειώνουν την ώρα σου γυναίκα [...] Ο χάρος πέρασε κι όλα γύρω μου τα γκρέμισε [...] Έλεος!... Έλεος!... στη δύσμοιρη (σ. 253-254).

[Ah! She lives... My daughter, my Flandreau... Save her... Save her... Ah! No, have mercy on poor me ... Master mason, they immure your beautiful wife [...] Death has passed and shattered everything around me [...] Mercy... Mercy!... in me the misfortunate one].

It is true that Andreas tries to save his wife, but the other craftsmen prevent him from doing so. Yet the master mason's change is limited to words alone. The "Übermensch" Andreas, like Thomas in Voutieridis' tragedy, succumbs to the collective command: «Γω μονάχος θα θεμελιώσω το γιοφύρι και το έργο μου αλάκαιρο πάνου στην αγάπη μου, εγώ θα ρίξω την πρώτη πέτρα» [I alone will establish the bridge and all my work upon my love; I will lay the first stone] (p. 256). «The weak body» -according to the stage instructions- of Kyra Vasiliki, with all the strength it has left, is still trying to stop it: «Don't ... For God's sake... Don't...», until the voice on her lips is cut off and she collapses (p. 256). Then the lyrics of the folk song come out of the mother's and daughter's mouth unchanged. The final stage instruction concerns Kyra Vasiliki: «Πνίγεται η φωνή της κι άψυχο το κορμί της σωριάζεται στη γης. Από μέσα ακούγονται των ξωτικών τα γέλια» [Her voice is drowned, and her lifeless body collapses to the ground. From inside, the laughter of the elves can be heard] and the curtain falls (p. 257).

Mother and daughter die together. This heartbreaking epilogue, which does not exist in the ballad, is added by Horn in his drama. Together Areti and her mother die, in *Eftaliotis' Βουρκόλακα* [*Vampire*], in the final scene of the play, which was written more than a decade earlier. Since the first publication of *The Priceless*, Xenopoulos had pointed out the dramaturgical power of the closing scene. In the mother-daughter dialogue, «the very words of the folk song resonate, being so well matched –it's a very powerful scene and gives the thrill of being tragic».<sup>27</sup> We can only agree.

<sup>27</sup> Ξενόπουλος, «Τα βιβλία. Παντελή Χορν, *Το ανεχτίμητο*» [Xenopoulos, «The books. Pantelis Horn, *The priceless*»], p. 28.



**Kazantzakis' *Master Mason*: Sin is the body of the unwed woman**

Εγώ 'μαι που τον πλάνεψα και τούκανα γητειές και ξόρκια και δεν του άφηνα δύναμι και νου να χτίσει το γιοφύρι (p. 141)

[It is I who seduced him and cast spells and charms on him that left him no strength and mind to build the bridge]

In the same year *The Priceless* was published, Petros Vlastos, commenting on Horn's work, submitted important reflections on a burning issue of the time, one that has not lost its timeless importance: How can folk tradition fertilize domestic dramaturgy? On what terms does it become an inspiration and a "sunlit" path, and when does it take on the weight of the iron clad and becomes a noose leading to a dead end? What Vlastos writes seem to be taken into serious consideration by Kazantzakis when composing his own *Πρωτομάστορα* [*Master Mason*], since we find that he dresses his own faces with some of the characteristics described by the columnist:

Ήθελα τον Πρωτομάστορα πιο λεβέντη,<sup>28</sup> πιο πεισματωμένο, πιο κακό. Να χτίζει ο ίδιος τη γυναίκα του κι ας νιώθει μέσα του την αγάπη να φρικιάζει. Τον ήθελα κουφό στα νυχτερινά γητέματα που του κάνει "τ' ωριό κοράσι". Θα προσωποποιούσα μάλιστα τη Μοίρα και θα την έβαζα στη θέση του Στοιχειού. Αυτή δείχνοντας του Πρωτομάστορα τη δόξα της μεγάλης θυσίας που για το καλό της ανθρωπότητας όλα τα αφανίζει τα ακριβά και τα πολυαγάπητα, θα τον έσπρωχνε να χτίσει με το ίδιο το χέρι του τη γυναίκα του για να θεμελιώσει το Γιοφύρι της Άρτας -το Γιοφύρι της Μεγάλης Ζωής. Ήθελα κιόλας να καταλάβαινα πιο γυναίκα του πρωτομάστορα τη Φλαντρώ. Να αγαπά μα να φοβάται. Να ρίχνεται στο θάνατο μα να της λείβεται ο αμίλητος ηρωισμός. Κάτι ορμητικό και πλάνο. Κάτι που δεν ξέρει καλά-καλά αν το αίμα του είναι δικό του και πού σκλάβο το παραδίνει της ασυλλόγιστης αγάπης. Έπειτα βρίσκω πως οι μαστόροι έχουν περισσευούμενη πολυλογία. Οι θυρματισμένοι τους διάλογοι καταντούνε κουραστικοί. Ωστόσο με όλα τα ψεγάδια που αράδιασα μου φαίνεται το *Ανεχτίμητο* να είναι το πιο ζωντανό από τα δημοτικά δράματα που διάβασα ύστερα από το Βουρκόλακα του Εφταλιώτη. Με πιο φιλοσοφική δούλεψη και πιο συμμαζεμένη μορφή και με λιγότερη ευλάβεια για την παράδοση μπορούσε να υψωθεί σε ζηλευτό στυλοβάτη. [...] Δράμα πάνω στο ίδιο θέμα έχει γράψει κι ο κ. Βουτιεριδής. Καθώς θυμούμαι, το έργο του, αν και στολισμένο με ωραίους γνωμικούς στίχους, παρουσίαζε το σημαντικό ψεγάδι να παραξαπλώνεται σε περιττούς λυρισμούς».<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> «Είμαι ο Ξανθός Λεβέντης», δηλώνει ο Πρωτομάστορας του Καζαντζάκη [«I am the Blonde Fine Man», states Kazantzakis' *Master Mason*], (1910), p. 137.

<sup>29</sup> Έρμονας, «Κριτικές αναποδιές. Το *ανεχτίμητο*» [Ermonas, «Critical setbacks. *The priceless*»] *Noumas*, iss. 222, 19 November 1906, p. 1-2. With minor changes the same text in: Πέτρος Βλαστός, *Κριτικά ταξίδια* [Petros Vlastos, *Critical travels*], «Estia» Printing House, K. Meissner, and N. Kargadouri, Athens 1912, p. 106-110. Also republished in: Χορν, *Τα θεατρικά* [Horn, *The Plays*], where the quotation here comes from pages 266-267.

[I wanted the Master Mason to be more of a fine man, more stubborn, more evil. To immure himself his wife despite the love in him becoming distraught. I wanted him deaf to the nocturnal enchantments from « the beautiful lassie». I would even personify Fate and put it in the place of the Ghost. Showing the Master Mason's glory of the great sacrifice that for the good of humanity destroys everything that is dear and loved, she would push him to build with his own hand his wife in to establish The Bridge of Arta - the Bridge of Great Life. I also wanted Flandreau the master mason's woman to come across as more of a woman. To love but to fear. To be thrown to death but to pine away in unspoken heroism. Something impetuous and seductive. Something that does not even know for sure if her blood is her own and when she surrenders it to foolish love. I also find that there is excessive verbiage with the masons. Their shattered dialogues become tedious. However, with all the flaws I have uncovered, it seems to me that *The Priceless* is the most vivid of the folk dramas I read after Eftaliotis' *Βουρκόλακα* (Vampire). With more philosophical work and a more orderly form and with less reverence for tradition it could rise to an enviable pillar. [...] A drama on the same theme has been written by Mr. Voutieridis. As I recall, his work, though adorned with beautiful gnomic verses, had the major flaw of overspreading into unnecessary lyricism.]

When Kazantzakis' *Πρωτομάστορας* [*Master Mason*] was published, Voutieridis accused Horn of being his imitator and Kazantzakis of plagiarism for the "*Τριτομάστορα*" [*The Third Mason*].<sup>30</sup> Later scholars have described the work as the «cornerstone» of all Kazantzakis' tragedies.<sup>31</sup> They find that Kazantzakis' early dramas reveal the reception of avant-garde and European ideas, as they land in the wider field of modern Greek fin-de-siècle. And they note the intensity and variety of "the 'shocks' of consciousness created in the mind of the young provincial man during this turbulent decade."<sup>32</sup> Convincing arguments substantiate the author's attempt to break with Romanticism, as well as his contempt for Realism.<sup>33</sup> Kazantzakis rejected French Symbolism in favour of Wagnerism, and especially in *The Master Mason* influences from Wagner's operas have been highlighted, especially from the *Der Ring des Nibelungen* [*The ring of Nibelung*] and *Lohengrin*.<sup>34</sup> An article and a portrait of Nietzsche on the next page of the publication of the work in *Panathenaia* are very revealing elements of eclectic affinities.

<sup>30</sup>The statements are made by Voutieridis in an interview with the newspaper *Athens*, 4-6-1911. For the purpose of noting, see Minutes and Vafiadi's introduction to: Horn, *The Plays*, p. 185-186.

<sup>31</sup> Κυριακή Πετράκου, *Ο Καζαντζάκης και το θέατρο* [Kyriaki Petrakou, *Kazantzakis and the theatre*], Miletus, Athens 2005, p. 187.

<sup>32</sup> Γλυτζουρής, *Πόθοι αετού και φτερά πεταλούδας* [Glytzouris, *Eagle cravings and butterfly wings*], p. xiv. See also, «Όψεις της παραδοσιακής ταυτότητας σε μεταβατικό στάδιο» [«Aspects of traditional identity in transition»], *ibid*, p. 139-154.

<sup>33</sup> Γλυτζουρής, *Πόθοι αετού και φτερά πεταλούδας* [Glytzouris, *Eagle cravings and butterfly wings*], p. 3-33.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, p. 44-45. See, also, «The distance from the symbolist theatre», *ibid*, p. 35-63.

The Choruses of the Reapers -both Men and Women- and the Chorus of the Craftsmen, the old Mother-oracle as seer Tiresias, the central heroine's invocation to the sun, and the analogies with Antigone and Iphigenia, reveal links with ancient tragedy as well. However, the body of the text is written in prose and an intermedio, a structural element of the works of the Cretan Renaissance, separates the two parts of the tragedy. The unmarried Master Mason here – a decisive departure from the same themed ballad – has an illicit carnal relationship with the daughter of the Άρχοντα (Lord), Smaragda, a situation that creates a huge distance from the Voutierides' heroine, but also of Horn's. A «Mother», with a capital and no name, is placed on the list of persons, but she is not the woman who gave birth to the lover of the anonymous Master Mason. The daughter of the Lord – also without a name, as in fairy tales – has only a father-master.

The love-struck Singer announces the arrival of Smaragda, and the first words of the Women Chorus are very characteristic -as well as the author's stage instructions:

Χορός Γυν. (ξεσπούνε με πείσμα και φθόνο) Α! η κόρη του Άρχοντά μας! Η Πριγκιπέσσα! –Την είδες πάλι και μέθυσες! – Την είδες κ' έστριψε το μυαλό σου, ανεραϊδοχτυπημένε (p. 133).<sup>35</sup>

[Women Chorus, (burst out with stubbornness and envy) Oh! the daughter of our Lord! The Princess! –You saw her again and got drunk! You saw her and turned your mind, you fairystriken man]

The descriptions of Smaragda from Kazantzakis' pen not only do not refer to the devoted wives of the previous dramatists, but present from the beginning a fiery femme fatale, who will quickly evolve into a woman-elf, a female-spider. The words of the Master Mason leave no doubt about the erotic passion that has ignited between the two young people, but also about the first signs of its disastrous consequences in the worthy hands of the Master Mason: «Αγάπη μου! Αγάπη μου! Πόσο σε πεθύμησα σήμερα ολημέρα! Τα χέρια μου τρέμουνε από την επιθυμία, γιατί θυμούνται το κορμί σου!» [My Love! My Love! How I've missed you all day today! My hands tremble with desire because they remember your body!], (p. 134). In the pages of the Cretan writer the rights of the flesh certainly rise. At the same time, however, the temptations generated by a woman's body and the sin that accompanies them are planted. The Master Mason is presented as proud and imperious, -as Vlastos wanted him- and the loved woman as a seductress, a poisonous flower, the female.

The bridge collapses once again, when suddenly out of the ruins of the right arch comes the old Mother, the «saint of the village» comes who lives in a cave of the river, like its «ghost». She has white hair, is fierce and imposing. A little «pale» girl leads her (p. 137). This is how the dramatist describes the entrance of the

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<sup>35</sup> The pages of the quotations are from the first publication of the work in *Panathenaia*, in 1910, see above.

Mother and everyone calls her, reaching out with their hands, expecting from her «consolation», «mercy», salvation. «Μια κοπέλα: Μάνα, γλυκειά μας Μάνα! Κάτω στα πόδια σου τρεμουλιαστές στριγμώνουνται όλες οι ελπίδες!» [A girl: Mother, our sweet Mother! Down at your feet, trembling, all hope is squeezed!] (p. 137).

The Mother will reveal the «sin» that weighs the Master Mason:

Δεν είναι αγνός! Δεν είναι αγνός! Τα φιλιά της γυναίκας τριανταφυλλένια υφαίνουνε αντάρα μπροστά από τα μάτια του και δεν τον αφήνουν ν' αγναντέψει καθαρά κι αλάργα! [...] Το κορμί της γυναίκας οληνύχτα υψώνεται και λαμποκοπά μπροστά του, σαν Πύργος φιλντισένιος! [...] και το σώμα του τρικλίζει από την επιθυμία, κ' είναι τα μάτια του βαρειά κ' είναι κι ο νους του αλλού [...] Καμαρώστε τον! Και θέλει να στερεώσει και γιοφύρια! [...] Μα στερέωσε πρώτα απάνω στ' αντρίκια γόνατα το κορμί σου κ' ύστερα έλα να καταπιάνεσαι με τα μεγάλα έργα! (p. 138).

[He is not pure! He is not pure! The woman's rosy kisses weave angst in front of his eyes and do not let him gaze clearly and far! [...] The woman's body rises all night long and glitters in front of him, like an ivory tower! [...] and his body trembles with desire, and his eyes are heavy, and his mind is elsewhere [...] I hope you are proud of him! And he wants to set bridges too! [...] But first be back on your feet, and then come and deal with the great works!]

The Mother in Kazantzakis has embodied the almighty power of patriarchy, and her arrows are clearly directed against the bosom of the woman who drowns the big, the «manly». The man, the *Übermensch* who wants to walk the great walks, does not look back and does not seek the soft warmth in the arms of the female. Smaragda's body is responsible for the Master Mason's plight. Not only does the Mother not kneel asking for her offspring to be spared, as we saw in the previous two works, but she herself asks for the great sacrifice, the one and only that will stabilize the bridge:

Η γυναίκα που τον πλάνεψε και δεν τον αφήνει να κοιμηθεί οληνύχτα. Αυτή πρέπει να σκοτωθεί και να λείψει για να λευτερωθούν τα μπράτσα του Πρωτομάστορα και να μην τρέμουνε όταν χαράζουνε το σχέδιο του γεφυριού [...] Απάνω στο κορμί της μόνο θα σιδεροχτιστεί γιοφύρι! [...] Πρωτομάστορα! Σκίσε τα στήθια σου και βγάλε την καρδιά σου και βάλε την θεμέλιο στο γιοφύρι, αν θες να στερεώσει (σ. 139).

[The woman who seduced him and doesn't let him sleep all night. She must be killed and be gone so that the arms of the Master Mason can be freed and not tremble when they carve out the design of the bridge [...] Only upon her body the bridge shall be strongly built! [...] Master Mason! Rip your breast and pluck your heart and lay it foundation to the bridge if you want the bridge to stand.]

Only the literal uprooted heart is not about the male horseman of life.

The unholy matching, the carnal marriage that has not been blessed, brings ruin, and the cleansing of this terrible sin must come. Shocking is the cruelty that

like hot liquid lead covers the words of this Mother. No compassion, no mercy, no hesitation. The kindness, affection and tenderness that traditionally clothe the image of the woman who brings life to the world, from Sarah of *The Sacrifice of Abraham* to Christina Anagnostopoulos in the same themed tragedy by Ioannis Zambelios, are characteristics that are characteristically absent from the figure of the Mother in *Kazantzakis' Master Mason*.

The mason's unwed woman will voluntarily bear the entire responsibility:

Εγώ 'μαι που τον πλάνεψα και τούκανα γητειές και ξόρκια και δεν του άφηνα δύναμι και νου να χτίσει το γιοφύρι [...] Εμένα και το κορμί μου ο Πρωτομάστορας χαιρότανε οληνύχτα! (p. 141).

[It is I who seduced him and cast spells and charms on him that left him no strength and mind to build the bridge [...] Me and my body, the Master Mason, revelled in all night!]

«Παραλυμένη» (Paralyzed), «νυχτοφιλημένη» (night kissed) and «ξεδιάντροπη» (shameless) she will be called by the Chorus (p. 141). Only the deeply in love singer will defend the twenty-year-old Smaragda, with Schillerian poetic fervour: «Τι θ' απογενούμε εμείς εδώ, ορφανεμένοι από τη Σμαράγδα: Μια τρίχα των μαλλιών της αξίζει πιο πολύ απ' όλα σου τα γιοφύρια! » [What will become of us here, orphaned by Smaragda: A hair of hers is worth more than all your bridges!] (p. 143).<sup>36</sup>

On the contrary, her beloved, at the eleventh hour, when as another Antigone, Smaragda bids farewell to the sun, he will utter with inconceivable lack of compassion: «Τέσσερα πελέκια αγκωνάρια βάλετε αντί για δυο! [...] Και δέσετέ τα με μολύβι και με σίδερο!». [Put four elbow joints instead of two! [...] And tie them with lead and iron!]. The Master Mason, according to the stage instructions, «throws a large stone» (p. 143), in order to receive the indisputable reward of the Chorus, which condenses the premise of victory, as the author perceives it in many of his plays: «Νικητής και καβαλάρης πέρασες τα στενά της νιότης, όπου ορθόστηθη παραμονεύει και σκοτώνει η Γυναίκα! » [Victorious and riding, you have passed through the straits of youth, where firm breasted the Woman with lurks and kills!] (p. 144).

The shift Kazantzakis attempts, from the point where the two previous dramatists had left the wife of the master mason, is shocking. The Cretan dramatist nowhere does he invoke the fundamental, primordial mother-child relationship,

<sup>36</sup> «Φερδινάνδος: Η πατρίδα μου βρίσκεται εκεί όπου μένει η δική μου, η Λουίζα. Εκεί όπου η Λουίζα μου με αγαπάει. Και το αποτύπωμα του ποδιού σου στην έρημη αμμουδιά είναι το πιο αξιοθέατο πράγμα για μένα από όλα τα καμπαναριά της πατρίδας μου», Φρειδερίκου Σίλλερ, *Έρωτας και ραδιουργία*, μια αστική τραγωδία σε πέντε πράξεις [«Ferdinand: My homeland is where my Luisa, lives. Where my Louisa loves me. And the imprint of your foot on the deserted sandy beach is the most sight-worthy for me from all the bell towers of my homeland», Friedrich Schiller, *Kabale und Liebe [Love and Intrigue]* An urban tragedy in five acts. Translation T. D. Frangopoulos, Dodoni, Athens – Giannina 1991, p. 92.



as is the case in Voutieridis' play and less, but still enough, in Horn's *The Priceless*. Motherhood has no place in the *Master Mason*, neither biological nor social-environmental, as we understand it today. Kazantzakis portrays a mother who was drenched in the bile of patriarchy, as in Lorca's much later *Bernarda Alba*. This Mother adopts traits from *Erofili*'s ruthless father and not from the merciful Nena, the so affectionate nurse of the same-name heroine who defied the patriarchal rule. She is a person characterized by cruelty and even savagery necessarily imposed by the stereotypical identity of the man-hunter-tyrant, at best, predator of great deeds that supposedly to build the future of mankind. Kazantzakis' Mother unequivocally condemns the Master Mason for straying directly to Smaragda's bosom and leaves him but only one solution.

The woman, as Kazantzakis creates her, whose «body smells like a blooming orchard» (p. 142), cannot be a mother. Motherhood not only is not sanctified but is forbidden. Or if we look at the picture from another perspective, the otherworldly Mother, the supernatural figure, has no erotic desires, could not be a sexual partner and temptation. Kazantzakis in *Smaragda* creates his own femme fatale, with materials taken from Aestheticism, a domestic version of Salome, without seeking the slightest connection with motherhood. The dramatist does not depict any dialectical relationship between the variety of roles of a single character (wife, mother, mistress, etc.). He does not reveal different aspects of the same female face but hastens to project onto the female the characteristics of the evil demon. The author, although trying to assimilate avant-garde trends, does not elaborate on the internal contradictions of the roles and in this light is far from his contemporary European dramaturgy of theatrical Modernism.



At the turn of the 20th century, Freud had already formulated psychoanalytic theory, discussing the fundamental conflicts that structure the different aspects of the human psyche and focusing on the dramatic figures that marked the course of dramaturgy.<sup>37</sup> The theatre of European Modernism was influenced by the scientific landscapes that explored the psyche. Inevitably, theatrical art contributed decisively, it co-created reality. During the interwar period, Moreno (Jakob Levy Moreno 1889-1974), the father of psychodrama, argued that roles do

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<sup>37</sup> Indicatively: For the Freudian reading of the Shakespearean plays, *Richard III*, and *Macbeth*, see Freud, «Some Character-Types Met within Psycho-Analytic Work», in: *Dostoevsky and parricide*. (tr. Yiannis Kallifatidis – Iliana Angeli), Patakis, Athens 2014, p. 104-171: 112-116 and 126-144 respectively. Especially for the Oedipus complex, see *ibid*, p. 44-53. See also, Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (tr. Niki Mylona), Hellenic Education Publications S.A., Athens 2011 and Sigmund Freud, *Group psychology and the analysis of the Ego* (tr. Niki Mylona), Hellenic Education S.A., Athens 2012.



not emerge from the self, but the other way around.<sup>38</sup> Carlson (Marvin Carlson 1935-) in developing the theories of "social representation" points to Moreno's positions:

A child is born into the world with a drive for spontaneity that allows it to maintain itself as a functioning Organism but it at once encounters auxiliary egos and objects that form its "first environment the matrix of identity." The first such role assimilated is the mother role, itself a clustering of roles, and as the child develops more roles are integrated as a "self" is built.<sup>39</sup>

It can be argued that the three Greek dramatists examined are taking some steps forward while at the same time looking back. For the first two, the connection with folk tradition places motherhood at the centre, giving a central stage presence to mothers, a trend that appears on the modern Greek dramaturgical horizon beginning with *The Sacrifice of Abraham*.<sup>40</sup> Woman certainly remains subservient to patriarchy; the solution of the three dramas would suffice to substantiate this conclusion: woman's blood always solidifies the bridge. Yet in the works of Voutieridis and Horn – much more so in the former – the body that has given birth retains the glamour of sacred motherhood, that of the Blessed Mother holding a baby that prevailed in literary and artistic depictions more in the East. rather than in the West.<sup>41</sup> Images devoid of any hint of eroticism.

Kazantzakis is certainly closer to the modernist trends of Hesperia. However, the pre-modern perceptions of the Cretan environment where he grew up have left their mark on the creator. Their combination, with the ideas of Nietzsche, with the claims of the European Avant-garde, of Aestheticism on the one hand and of the feminist wave on the other, the contact with the aroma of Decadence and "degeneration", create a motley amalgam in Kazantzakis' dramaturgy.<sup>42</sup> An amalgam that exacerbates the stereotypical devaluation of women and places the male patriarch back on an even higher pedestal. The man-eating woman of the fin de siècle, the menacing femme fatale appears in Greek

<sup>38</sup> J. L. Moreno, *Who shall survive? Foundation of Sociometry, Group Psychotherapy and Sociodrama*, Beacon House, New York 1953. Κωνσταντίνος Μπακιρτζής, *Η δυναμική της Αλληλεπίδρασης στην επικοινωνία* [Konstantinos Bakirtzis, *The dynamics of interaction on communication*], Gutenberg, Athens 2003, p. 59-92. Lia Zografou (ed.), *Το Ψυχόδραμα, θεωρία και πρακτική* [Psychodrama, theory and practice], tr. Alexandra Pentaraki, University Studio Press, Thessaloniki 2002.

<sup>39</sup> Marvin Carlson, *Performance: A Critical Introduction*, Routledge, London 1996, p. 46.

<sup>40</sup> Margaret Alexiou, «Λογοτεχνία και λαϊκή παράδοση» [Literature and Folk Tradition] in: David Holdon (ed.), *Λογοτεχνία και κοινωνία στην Κρήτη της Αναγέννησης* [Literature and Society in Renaissance Crete], p. 293-336. See especially the subchapter, «Η Θυσία του Αβραάμ: προς την ενοποίηση της λογοτεχνικής, θρησκευτικής και λαϊκής παράδοσης» [«The Sacrifice of Abraham: towards the unification of literary, religious and folk tradition»], *ibid*, p. 322-334.

<sup>41</sup> Alexiou, «Η Θυσία του Αβραάμ: προς την ενοποίηση της λογοτεχνικής, θρησκευτικής και λαϊκής παράδοσης» [«The Sacrifice of Abraham: towards the unification of literary, religious and folk tradition»] p. 333.

<sup>42</sup> Glytzouris, *Πόθοι αετού και φτερά πεταλούδας* [Eagle cravings and butterfly wings], p. 68-136. See also, «Οι αντιφάσεις της νεοτερικότητας και το πρόβλημα του ατομικισμού» [«The contradictions of modernity and the problem of individualism»], *ibid*, p. 443-483.

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dramaturgy, but she still has no chance of emancipating herself or even establishing her equal, next to the masculine, feminine existence.

Mother, wife, or mistress are all «immured», three women in the foundations of «The bridge of Arta», are sacrificed in order to build the new domestic dramaturgy.



## ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

### ΓΥΝΑΙΚΕΣ ΣΤΑ ΘΕΜΕΛΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΓΙΟΦΥΡΙΟΥ ΤΗΣ ΑΡΤΑΣ: ΧΤΙΖΟΝΤΑΣ ΤΗΝ ΕΓΧΩΡΙΑ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΥΡΓΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΜΠΕΛ ΕΠΟΚ

Την περίοδο της Μπελ Επόκ, όταν στην Ευρώπη προχωρά δυναμικά η γυναικεία χειραφέτηση, μέσα σε μόλις πέντε χρόνια, η Σμαράγδω, η Φλαντρώ και η Σμαράγδα, γυναίκες της πρωτότυπης δραματουργικής παραγωγής, χτίζονται διαδοχικά στα θεμέλια «Του γεφυριού της Άρτας», όπως συμβαίνει στο πασίγνωστο δημοτικό τραγούδι, απ' όπου εμπνέονται τρεις δραματουργοί. Η μελέτη φωτίζει αυτές τις τρεις γυναίκες που μέχρι σήμερα βρισκόταν κάτω από τη βαριά σκιά του πρωτομάστορα, θαμμένες στις επαφές του, με τη νιτσεϊκή θεωρία του Υπεράνθρωπου και την ευρωπαϊκή πρωτοπορία. Στο *Γιοφύρι της Άρτας* (1905) του Ηλία Βουτιεριδίου και στο *Ανεχτίμητο* (1906) του Παντελή Χορν, οι εντοιχισμένες γυναίκες είναι σύζυγοι του πρωτομάστορα, όπως περιγράφονται και στην παραλογή. Οι δύο συγγραφείς όμως, τοποθετούν δίπλα στη καθεμιά τη μάνα της –πρόσωπο ανύπαρκτο στο δημοτικό τραγούδι. Επιπλέον, ο Βουτιεριδίου συμπληρώνει την ταυτότητα της Σμαράγδως: είναι κι εκείνη μάνα. Μόνο ο Πέτρος Ψηλορείτης [Νίκος Καζαντζάκης] στον *Πρωτομάστορα* (1910) επιλέγει να τοποθετήσει πλάι στον ομώνυμο χαρακτήρα μια «αστεφάνωτη» ερωμένη. Και για κακή της τύχη, ο Κρητικός συγγραφέας δεν τοποθετεί δίπλα της τη γυναίκα που την έφερε στον κόσμο. Η μελέτη εξετάζει βήμα-βήμα τους διαλόγους των γυναικών, που το αίμα τους δεν γεννά παιδιά –δύναμη που τους έδωσε η φύση– αλλά στεριώνει γεφύρια, όπως επιβάλλει ο πατριαρχικός κανόνας. Παρατηρεί τις ρήξεις με το δημοτικό τραγούδι, τις ομοιότητες και τις διαφορές μεταξύ τους, τους δραματουργικούς χειρισμούς, που επιτρέπουν σ' αυτές τις γυναίκες να αποκτήσουν φωνή, να κατακτήσουν, σε μερικές σκηνές, το κέντρο της πλοκής. Ακούμε με προσοχή τα λόγια τους, που αποκαλύπτουν την διαφορετική στόχευση των συγγραφέων, αλλά σε κάθε περίπτωση παραδίνουν ισχυρά συγκινησιακά φορτία στον αναγνώστη και δυνητικό θεατή.



## ABSTRACT

### WOMEN AT THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE BRIDGE OF ARTA: CONSTRUCTING DOMESTIC DRAMATURGY IN THE BELLE ÉPOQUE

During the Belle Époque, when women's emancipation was dynamically advancing in Europe, within just five years, Smaragdo, Flandro, and Smaragda, women of original dramatic production, are successively built into the foundations of «The Bridge of Arta», as happens in the famous folk song which inspired three playwrights. The study illuminates these three women who, until today, remained under the heavy shadow of the master builder, buried in his connections with the Nietzschean theory of the Übermensch and the European avant-garde. In *The Bridge of Arta* (1905) by Ilias Voutieridis and *The Priceless One* (1906) by Pantelis Horn, the immured women are the master builder's wives, as described in the ballad. However, both authors place the mother of the immured woman next to her—a character absent from the folk song. Furthermore, Voutieridis complements Smaragdo's identity: she is also a mother. Only Petros Psiloreitis [Nikos

Kazantzakis] in *The Master Builder* (1910) chooses to place an «unmarried» mistress next to the eponymous character. And, unfortunately for her, the Cretan author does not place the woman who brought her into the world next to her. The study examines, step-by-step, the dialogues of the women whose blood does not bring forth children –a power given to them by nature– but solidifies bridges, as dictated by the patriarchal rule. It observes the breaks with the folk song, the similarities and differences between them, and the dramaturgical manipulations that allow these women to acquire a voice and, in some scenes, claim the center of the plot. We listen carefully to their words, which reveal the different aims of the authors, but in every case, deliver powerful emotional charges to the reader and potential spectator.



### Η ΣΥΓΓΡΑΦΕΑΣ

Η Κωνσταντίνα Ριτσάτου είναι Καθηγήτρια στο Τμήμα Θέατρου της Σχολής Καλών Τεχνών του Αριστοτέλειου Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης. Έχει εκδώσει τα βιβλία: «*Με των Μουσών τον έρωτα...*». *Ο Αλέξανδρος Ρίζος Ραγκαβής και το νεοελληνικό θέατρο*, Πανεπιστημιακές Εκδόσεις Κρήτης, Ηράκλειο 2011. *Ο Δημήτριος Γρηγορίου Καμπούρογλου και το ελληνικό θέατρο: στα χνάρια της Ιστορίας και της Παράδοσης*, Πανεπιστημιακές Εκδόσεις Κρήτης, Ηράκλειο 2022. *Αντανακλάσεις των φυλετικών θεωριών στη δραματολογία: Οι Πέρσες της Δύσης - Les Perses de l' Occident του Σωτήρη Σκίπη*, μτφ. του έργου από τα γαλλικά Γεωργία Νυχά, Κάπα Εκδοτική 2024. *Μάνες Μιλούν: Όψεις του θεατρικού ρόλου στην ανάδυση των «κοινωνιστικών» ιδεών στην Ελλάδα*, Παπαζήσης, Αθήνα 2025.



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