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Athens Journal of Mediterranean Studies

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The *Athens Journal of Mediterranean Studies (AJMS)* is an Open Access quarterly double-blind peer reviewed journal and considers papers from all areas of Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, Business and Law, Urban Planning, Architecture and Environmental Sciences. Many of the papers published in this journal have been presented at the various conferences sponsored by the [Center for European & Mediterranean Affairs \(CEMA\)](#) of the [Athens Institute for Education and Research \(ATINER\)](#). All papers are subject to ATINER's [Publication Ethical Policy and Statement](#).

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The current issue is the third of the eighth volume of the *Athens Journal of Mediterranean Studies (AJMS)*, published by the [Athens Institute for Education and Research](#).

Gregory T. Papanikos
President
ATINER



Athens Institute for Education and Research

A World Association of Academics and Researchers

16th Annual International Conference on Mediterranean Studies 3-6 April 2023, Athens, Greece

The [Center for European & Mediterranean Affairs](#) organizes the 16th Annual International Conference on Mediterranean Studies, 3-6 April 2023, Athens, Greece sponsored by the [Athens Journal of Mediterranean Studies](#). The aim of the conference is to bring together academics and researchers from all areas of Mediterranean Studies, such as history, arts, archaeology, philosophy, culture, sociology, politics, international relations, economics, business, sports, environment and ecology, etc. You may participate as stream leader, presenter of one paper, chair a session or observer. Please submit a proposal using the form available (<https://www.atiner.gr/2023/FORM-MDT.doc>).

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- **Dr. Yannis Stivachtis**, Director, Center for European & Mediterranean Affairs and Associate Professor, Jean Monnet Chair & Director of International Studies Program, Virginia Tech - Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, USA.

Important Dates

- Abstract Submission: **31 August 2022**
- Submission of Paper: **21 February 2023**

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- Social Dinner
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- Exploration of the Aegean Islands
- Delphi Visit
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Details can be found at: <https://www.atiner.gr/fees>



Athens Institute for Education and Research *A World Association of Academics and Researchers*

20th Annual International Conference on Politics 13-16 June 2022, Athens, Greece

The [Politics & International Affairs Unit](#) of the ATINER will hold its **20th Annual International Conference on Politics, 13-16 June 2022, Athens, Greece** sponsored by the [Athens Journal of Mediterranean Studies](#) and the [Athens Journal of Social Sciences](#). The aim of the conference is to bring together academics, researchers and professionals in private and public organizations and governments of Politics and International Affairs and other related disciplines. You may participate as stream leader, presenter of one paper, chair of a session or observer. Please submit a proposal using the form available (<https://www.atiner.gr/2022/FORM-POL.doc>).

Important Dates

- Abstract Submission: **DEADLINE CLOSED**
- Acceptance of Abstract: 4 Weeks after Submission
- Submission of Paper: **16 May 2022**

Academic Member Responsible for the Conference

- **Dr. Yannis Stivachtis**, Director, [Center for European & Mediterranean Affairs](#) and Associate Professor, Jean Monnet Chair & Director of International Studies Program, Virginia Tech - Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, USA.

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March, October, the Yoke and the Arch: A Study of Boundaries in Ancient Roman Belief

*By David P. Wick**

This study attempts an alternate look at what is sometimes a quick study of an ingrained “Roman aggression” placed in the opening chapter of a typical Roman history, re-evaluating the “us-them” element in Roman thinking during their primeval “homesteading” era, and some of the motives often imputed to tribal Roman culture that have been used to explain their expansion in Italy (and after). From the pomerium, or spiritual/physical boundary of the farm or the community, the frequently cleansed and inspected line between the settled and peaceful homesteaded or urbanized place and the dangerous, unsettled outlands beyond, where potential raiders or enemies – hostes – and the spirit that animated them dwelt. Romans punctuated this boundary with shrines, openings (carefully guarded by archaic spiritual means) and, at key moments during the year, by religious activity intended to keep them safe. These activities and checkpoints are clues to the way Romans saw the boundaries, and may even correct some false impressions we have of important features in their urban landscape. The checkpoints of passage through this boundary between human community and outworld were gate-like temples (guarded by Janus) or a similar structure called a “iugum,” and both underlie the structure we today call a “triumphal arch.” Understanding how Romans (or archaic Italians) felt about community boundaries may help correct the image we have of this arch, and what it meant, and in fact our image of them. Early Roman boundary-passage customs use these artifacts for related forms of expiation, cleansing and pacification, a character shared by the treatment of defeated armies and infected persons, even meaning in the triumphal procession, which had much more to do with cleansing the contagious guilt (or infected violence) of a returning army than it did with celebrating a victory. More than a century ago the Roman historian-anthropologist William Warde Fowler attempted clear modern perspectives on early Romans, aggression-defense, and their ideas of boundaries. This article is also a tribute to some of his key, forgotten insights.

Keywords: *ancient urban studies, Archaic Italy, Roman rituals, Roman anthropology, Roman aggression*

There was a wonted rite in Latium’s realm
Hesperian, holy held from age to age
By Alba’s cities, as today by Rome...
There are twin gates of War--so named and known--
By holy fear and terror of fell Mars
Made venerable: ...
Nor Janus on the threshold slacks his guard.

*Director, Arts, Humanities and Education Division, ATINER & Retired Professor of History, Gordon College, USA.

Here, be the father's will on battle bent,
 The Consul in Quirinal robe arrayed
 And Gabine cincture, the harsh-grinding valves
 Himself unbars, himself invokes the fray,
 Then all the war-host follow, and with one throat
 The brazen clarions blare their hoarse assent.
 (Virgil, *Aeneid* vii, 607 ff)

In the ancient agricultural world of old Latium and primeval Rome the month of March was a chancy one, full of the winds of beginnings and danger. The year began, the countryside thawed and began to reawaken and everywhere-- deep among the trees of the borderlands that surrounded the Latin farmland--the god who gave the month its name began itself to stir and move. His symbols woke with him: the forests, the wolves (if they had ever slept), the woodpeckers, and the spear.¹ The numen Mars itself was a *hostes*, a will in nature never (until the time of Augustus) worshipped inside the city wall of Rome (Wissowa 1912, p. 131 and sources in note),² and for reasons inexplicable unless some Roman had perhaps failed in due ritual or vow, the spirit of hostility began in turn to stir in some of the men or beasts outside the settled farmstead lands of the outpost town. Its farmers, priests, and warriors turned resolutely to the task of counteracting and defending themselves from those influences.

Lines of demarkation abruptly took on an unnerving importance. The Arval Brethren, whose duty during the year was to safeguard (and at certain times to purify and determine) the bounds of the settled lands of Rome (Henzen *repr* 2010, p. xxv of the exordium, and also Fowler 1920, esp. pp. 58–61), made their prayers to both the Lares that marked the line of the pomoerium and to the “outlander” Mars: “Neve luerve Marmor sins incurre in pleores, satur fu fere Mars!” (cf Henzen, *op cit*, p. 26)³ Within the bounds of the pomoerium (that is from the shrines of the *lares compitales* inward) all gods--if the farmer and the priest had done their jobs justly--should have been naturalized, settled “homely” as *di indigetes* into the relationship between the Roman community and its land. The uncertain forces of the “outlander” Mars pressed in on this community as the farming months began. Cato in his *Res Rustica* describes how a farmer rather further from the city, faced with the necessity of turning his livestock into the neighboring forest to graze during the hot months, should conduct his purification of his own farm (especially the animals to be at risk in the forest). He is himself to go *in silva* after sacrificing the *suovetaurilia* (just as in Rome), and to pray “Martem Silvano in silva interdus in capita singula boum facito” (Cato, *Res*

¹Some good examples can still be usefully found collected in (Frazer 1913, iii, 123, n. 3). See also (Fowler 1911a, pp. 131–134). The name Mars is in fact found almost everywhere in ancient Italy, and usually connected to similar wild or woodland things; the confusion sometimes caused by trying to reconcile Mars and agriculture stems from a failure to recall that Latian (proto-Latin) farming relied far more on the herding of cattle, sheep, pigs, etc., than that of some other classical civilizations. On Mars and the springtime worries of the farmer see also Varro, *Res Rustica* ii, 2 ff.

²See also (Fowler 1899-2014, p. 39, n.) and (Fowler 1911a, p. 133). (Scullard 1981, 84–97), deals with the rural and then urban rituals separately, and emphasizes the festive nature of the “new year” setting, but concentrates on a later period in the Republic.

³Cf. the notes on the passage from Cato (in n.5) in (Beard et al. 1998, p. 152 ff.).

Rustica, ll. 141 ff.). It was the business of Mars thereafter to deal justly with the cattle.

And as with cattle threatened by wolves, so with the people of early Rome threatened by enemies. The story of the month March in the oldest layers of inscriptions making up the *Fasti anni Romani* (Fowler 1911a, p. 95 f, & *note here*),⁴ is a tight weave of the two themes of war and lines of boundary. It has the authentic feel of an agricultural community learning to think like the military frontier-town Latium may have intended Rome to be.⁵ The “gate” of Janus (I shall return to it in more detail later) stood off at the northeast entrance to the Forum, untouched by any wall but standing symbolically at the threshold of the city's heart. From the hearth-temple of Vesta (which, perhaps, was the heart) one could see if the twin openings beneath it stood open that the City felt a danger of some kind from outside. And Rome had hardly ever a year in which it could honestly close those gates.

Presuming the gates were open, the consul charged with leading an army to face Rome's enemies went to the Regia, very near the temple of Vesta, and entered a special room kept private and *sacer* to either Janus or Jupiter. He found there a set of special, antique Latin, combat regalia--spears and shields belonging to the warrior-priests of Mars. They were perhaps the one offense against the immemorial rule that the ritual of Mars be confined wholly outside the city. Clashing one of these spears and shields together he cried out “Mars vigila!”--meaning (as I understand it) not that he had “awakened” Mars (the numen would then have to have been disastrously resident within the city after all), but that “Mars was watching.” Mars outside the bounds of Rome was awake and aware, the consul could in a sense feel the eyes moving now just beyond the veil of the *pomoerium* and he was himself moving to respond.⁶ The spear he held was “sacred” in the Roman sense to the god (it was part of the *ancilia* belonging to the *Salii*) and the consul was now perhaps *sacer* himself. His business lay with Mars and no longer within the City. The campaigning year had begun.

The rest of the month of March then became (rather oddly for those who think of Romans only as a practical, judicial and hard-nerved people) a series of rituals by which Rome tried rather elaborately to press an army of its own folk and gods through a narrow aperture between its own soil and the outland world where its enemies lurked. Those “warrior-priests” of Mars (the *Salii*) went first into action, clashing their *ancilia* (the spears and shields taken from the Regia after the consul's visit). They both called the men of fighting age to report for muster and confused the eyes or spirits beyond the *Ager Romanus*.

The pageant then unfolded on the “Field of Mars,” just north outside the walls, and on the side facing the direction from which Rome was generally

⁴The *Fasti* have been dated pretty securely since (Mommsen 1918 i.², p. 297 ff.) to between 31-51 AD in detail, which places them into the general range of the Augustan revival of authentic bits of the antique Roman religious system (at least as it was being rebuilt by antiquaries), and in their general form to a very early period of the Republic.

⁵See for example the *fasti* quoted by Wissowa (at the end of *Rel. und Kult.*) and by (Fowler 1911a, p.38 ff).

⁶Servius, on the third line of *Aeneid* viii (*utque impulit arma*) seems to confirm this, though it may be a late account since Servius mentions a statue.

threatened rather than the side facing the heart of Latium. On the 14th (unless this is an error, and it also occurred next day with the Anna Perenna, per Wissowa, 1912, p. 131). Rome held the Equirria, at which it celebrated and purified the horses of the army (they were, like the cattle belonging to Cato's farmer, about to enter alien country (Fowler 1911a, pp. 96 ff. and n. 8; pp. 215 ff.).⁷ On the following day it celebrated the new year by sending its working populace out onto the Campus Martius to rough it for a day in primitive huts (Ovid, *Fasti*, iii, 525 ff. Tibullus II, v, 89 ff. and perhaps Tibullus II, i, 1-24). On the 19th the Salii purified their *ancilia* (at the Quinquatrus, symbolizing perhaps the weapons of the army now beginning to form in outside the walls in the Campus Martius).⁸ Finally, on the 23rd, the trumpets of the new legions got their own purification at the Tubilustrum (Fowler 1911b, pp. 96–97).

And then, having in some sense made every piece of the army *sacer* or private to the god Mars (the Campus Martius was beyond, though close against, the walls of Rome), the consul inserted his host into the world outside. After a ceremony at the Ara Martis (it will perhaps have been only a *fanum* with an altar of turf in the earliest centuries of the outpost town), the army marched across a hallowed running brook called the Petronia amnis (Von Domaszewski 1909-1975, pp. 222 ff, Jordan and Hülsen 1871-2015, iii, 494)⁹ and through an opening--probably the left-hand opening--in another double gated and freestanding archway: the Porta Triumphalis (Josephus, *Jewish Wars*, VII, v, 4, Cf. Fowler 1913). The "gate of Janus" beside the Forum may have been the original of this (and perhaps the Porta Carmentalis, which was also double-arched, its immediate predecessor as the city grew), but the real curiosity of this whole elaborate process is often lost in scholarly argument about the meaning of the returning process of "triumph" later in the year. The army had to be made *sacrum* since it was now to risk its life (and perhaps the survival of its city) in the realm of the *profanum*. It had also become, by comparison in some sense with the city, itself profane.

The legions, while they defended the city in the regions outside the Ager Romanus were to be very likely involved in the business of killing, and killing (whatever one's opinion of later Roman character might be) seems rather to have unnerved the old and agricultural Latian psyche. I do not have time here to re-argue the point, once well-remembered in studies of Roman religion but now perhaps somewhat clouded by the popularity of Etruscan lore, comparative anthropological methods, and the gloom of Italian Romanists in the 20th century, that the primitive Romans had a strong distaste for blood, and bloody ritual, and for the bloody side of life in general. I leave some reference starting-point for those who doubt at this point (Phillipson 1979, vol. 2, pp. 253 ff).¹⁰ Suffice it to say here that blood in a ritual implied something dangerous and unusual and

⁷The almost invariable rule of the fasti was that even-numbered days were *nefas*, and so unchancy choices for such a festival.

⁸See the article "Salii" in the *Dictionary of Antiquities* (which has the advantage of giving the bare data without immediately introducing arbitrary "parallels" in comparative anthropology as some online resources do).

⁹According to Festus (Lindsay edtn. 1913, p. 296), water must have been running direct from a spring if it were to be any use for purification. See Livy i, 45–46.

¹⁰For an example of the feeling, Livy ix, 3.

infectious to a Roman. The *di indigetes*--the naturalized gods of the Roman *ius divinum* -- almost invariably did not demand it. That Mars did demand such a thing as the *suovetaurilia* slain before allowing an army or a cattleherd safely into his territory was one of the things that made him a chancy (we might now say a *numinous*) god. Bloody ritual as a matter of ordinary business was the thing that distinguished Graecus ritus from the home-grown variety (Fowler 1911a, p. 180 ff. and 196 n. 36). And yet, if they were to defend their city, the legions of early Rome would be (unless they were destroyed in the field) unavoidably destined to come home tainted by violence and blood.

This is echoed by the way the tale of the month October in the Roman *fasti* reverses or mirrors the processes of March. At the end of the campaigning season the army returned in one manner or another (whether victorious or not) through that same free-standing gate in the Campus Martius, again probably by the opening on their left hand as they returned. The triumph itself, which they would have celebrated if they returned through victorious, I will defer for a moment. Let us simply bring them *intra pomoerium* again for a moment and follow the process. They recrossed the Petronia amnis and re-entered the city. Spoils (having been purified) were dedicated. Vows were paid. The movement with accompanying rites from the porta through the Campus Martius into the City and finally to the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol was one by which the various taints of blood shed during the season's campaign, and the unguessable hostile forces from the "outlands" beyond the boundary that have clung to the returning warriors, were gradually shed away.¹¹

On October 15th (the Ides, recalling the Anna Perenna and the Equerria), after a horse-race in the Campus Martius, the winning horse was sacrificed to Mars in a primitive, perhaps cthonic ritual (which must have seemed at least as harsh and eerie to the livestock-herding Roman farmer in his way as it is to us in ours). It was made *sacer*, killed, and its tail carried by the fastest means possible to the Regia, where its blood was dripped onto the sacred hearth (Fowler 1911a, 241 ff. and also the discussion in 1911b, Scullard 1981, 84–97). Its blood, in fact, moved to the only religious place where the sort of violent objects proper to Mars were allowed within the city walls. The *ancilia* were very shortly about to be sealed away there for the winter again. Was this part of the process of sealing or protection?

In any case, on the 19th of October the army itself (which at this point is breaking up to return to its farms) had its weapons cleansed at the Armilustrum (Wissowa 1912 p. 131). The Salii, at the end of this ceremony, hid their own ceremonial shields back within the seclusion of that sacrarium or shrine at the Regia where the consul would go to find them next spring.¹² The army had in fact been reabsorbed from a very dangerous world back into the agricultural family

¹¹For the route into the city (Livy ii, 49). For items of the month in general (Scullard 1981, pp. 189–195).

¹²Which in fact causes one to wonder whether these spears (having been consecrated with so much energy early in the year and then put away with such ritual at the end of it) had not something to do in the intervening months. Might they (or something equivalent to them) have gone with the armies, or even formed the side-posts (when needed) of the *iugum* under which a defeated army might pass?

and the carefully maintained *pax deorum* of the old frontier town of Rome. As a last act, if all went ideally (as it never seemed to do) the gates of Janus would have closed against the “vigilant” sight of Mars. The old and mysterious Roman god of entrances would have had for a short time been able symbolically to bar the uncanny and malignant forces of the outland from the heart and hearth of Rome.

The “Triumph” itself and the pageant of the triumphing consul is a rather trickier (though an even more intriguing) part of this whole process, but I can deal with it here only in passing. The issue can be followed in more detail in the religious studies of W. Warde Fowler and L. Deubner, and the thin and shifting hoard of raw material available on the topic mined in H.S. Versnel’s rather newer (but otherwise less helpful) study *Triumphus* (Versnel 1970). It will be obvious even before I attempt a finishing word about the triumph that the picture toward which I am shading this sketch is one of a purification or expiatory rite (or “magical” if the reader prefers, given the culture in which early Rome developed). I must first quickly mention one or two other Roman rituals which seem to me – despite the recent re-emergence of some old objections – tied equally to the entry of blood-tainted or dangerously “infected” persons out of the realm of the *profanum* into that of the *sacrum*.

According to a legend preserved by bits and chunks in Livy (i, 26), Festus (Lindsay edtn. 1913 p. 380), and Dionysius of Halicarnassus (III, xx, 7), the antique Roman hero Horatius, returning over-proud from his victory against the Alban army (while, in fact, the danger and infection of the violence still clung to him), killed his sister in a moment of rage. The Roman people acquitted him of premeditated murder, but the taint of blood guilt remained and while it remained Horatius, though he was idolized as a hero, was nonetheless an infectious danger to every other citizen of Rome. After a variety of expiatory rites performed by his *paterfamilias*, Horatius was brought to a steep street on the slope of the Carinae, a little south of the heart of the old city, called the *vicus Cuprius*. A small beam or bar of timber had been slung there in the manner of a makeshift “gate” across two other upright staves of wood, and Horatius--his head covered in the Roman manner of civilized submission--passed beneath it and was cleansed of the remainder of the taint (*scelus*) that clung to him (Fowler 1920, pp. 71–72). According to Livy (i, 26), the Roman bystanders understood it as a form of the “yoke” of submission.

The significance of this almost offhand (and apparently natural) connection ought to be quite clear before I go on. The version of the Horatius legend given in the rural Italian Livy feels very “Horatian.” It spares the pulling of very few stops in its adulation for the victor at the bridge, and even manages almost to praise him for a murder about as shocking as a Roman could imagine, yet it is willing for a moment to picture Horatius subjected to an indignity which by its own testimony is equivalent to the treatment of a defeated foe, a *hostes*. And the story of the humbling purification was in fact apparently treasured, in particular by the family themselves. Thereafter the Horatii out of their own resources replaced the famous and expiatory beam across the *vicus Cuprius* whenever it decayed, allowing it to stretch between the walls of two houses when the street “built up” (Livy I, 26, Dionysius of Halicarnassus iii, 22, cf. Holland 1961, pp. 77ff), and Livy could say

it still existed (as an institution at least) in the time of Augustus. It was called the *tigillum sororium*.

It is also worth mentioning before leaving this “beam” or “crosspiece” that Janus, since he was god of all other entrances, was also god of this one, under the name Janus Curvatus (Scullard 1981, p. 190f, Marrett 1909-1914, p. 126 f, Marquardt 1885-2019, iii, 145, Fowler 1911a). Once again something caught into the world of the malevolent or “profane” had to find a point of entry where it could pass (by whatever humbling) back into the world of the safety.

So what in turn was the “yoke of submission” that the ancient Romans thought of so readily when confronted with a rite like that used to purify Horatius? It is not in fact mentioned very often in Roman records and most fully – when at all – in Livy (iii, 28; ix, 6; x, 36, cf. Van Gennepe 1961 ch. 2. pp. 19 ff). The occasion seems most regularly to have been a Roman victory when by some chance a hostile army fell more or less entire into their hands (Livy x, 36, cf. Fowler 1911a, p. 126). The strong tradition against wholesale or unnecessary bloodshed would have prevented the Roman officials from outright slaughter of the captives, and yet a simple farming culture, surrounded (even among their more advanced neighbors) by fairly primitive economies, forbade either the enslaving of the entire host or selling them as slaves. The alternative seems to have been a regular process of rendering the army harmless and then letting it go. In each case (Livy gives a variety) the Roman commanders negotiated a surrender and terms binding on the opposing state. As in the case of Horatius’ acquittal, this ought for a modern mind to be end of it. The opposing army were however still at least spiritually dangerous – remember the infection that clung to Horatius, a sort of *influenza* he caught from dangerous ground and events even though he was defending his people and victorious. Something had made the enemy “enemy” – *hostes* – in the first place, and that something might still cling to them and might just as likely be infectious to the legions of Rome still camped at the battlesite.

Two spears, as Livy describes it, were fixed vertically in the ground and a third fastened crosswise atop them. Beneath this makeshift arch or gateway the conquered army submitted to passing one by one, barely clothed and having first given up their weapons. Livy himself describes this only as a sort of pantomime degradation, though if that were the whole story one might expect to find at some point a discussion of whether such practice wouldn’t likelier have sent home intact and hostile armies in a more warlike mood than before they were defeated. In fact, Livy says, it forced a “final confession of absolute defeat”—“*ut exprimaturs confessio subactam domitamque esse gentem*” (iii, 28).¹³

Livy as a rural, but transplanted Latian northerner, is of course an excellent witness to the meaning this ceremony had for Augustan scholars or soldiers, and even to the meaning it likely had during the age of the Punic Wars when chronicles on such events were beginning to be written down, but I suggest that based on the sketch I have been building thus far that the “yoke” or “*iugum*” here in question was in fact an improvised but very real gateway. It was an entryway

¹³The images in the small Appendix are meant to suggest both the nature (and the confusion later classicists had about) the *iugum* and its formation. The image of the arch at Rimini is meant to illustrate the evolution of the improvised form into something permanent.

created (in several senses) by military means--and so a "military porta" if you will--by which a host of enemies that were formerly part of the dangerous and unruled outland surrounding the Roman world now entered the outskirts of the ruled and orderly universe of the City's *ius divinum*. They were stripped in the process (hopefully, though of course in the real world it seldom "took") of the contagion they had carried with them, or that had in fact carried them, into battle.

All this brings me round full circle back to the triumph and to the end of this sketch. What captives the victorious Roman commander did think he could afford to bring back with him came through the *porta triumphalis* with the celebrating army. So did the loot brought home, though a great deal of it in the early centuries would, from the same concern about contagion and the desire placate the hostile forces in the outcountry, have been dedicated and/or burned in the field (Reinach 1923 vol. iii, p. 233 ff). The feminine force who received such things was at least in the later years of the early Republic named Lua. What the commander did carry into the city often went in dedication or the payment of a vow to the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol, where the triumphal procession ended.

The "*triumphator*" himself came through the porta in the Campus Martius and on into the city in royal regalia, his face painted with red minium or lead pigment, and the meaning of it, accompanied by the fact that the Jupiter he went in to pay his vows to at the end of the procession had its face reddened in like fashion (Versnel 1970, pp. 56–58, Reid 1916, pp. 177 ff, Fowler 1916 (30), pp. 153 ff). The fact is that upon the completion of this ceremony the paint came off, and the *triumphator*, having himself been cleansed and admitted (beneath an arch) back into the body politic and *ius divinum* of Rome, went home a famous but still a very human figure. He would even, by the nearly invariable rule of the old Republic, have to wait some ten years before he could again hope for a chance to gain such a victory as allowed a "triumph" in the field.

The reason, I suggest (somewhat timidly, for a storm of controversy brewed by scholars with real auctoritas is always blowing round this topic) might be a fairly simple one. Warde Fowler laid the groundwork for it years ago by proving quite compellingly--so far as I can still see--that an antique Roman commander cannot, on the evidence we have, be supposed to have been imitating or playing the part of Jupiter (as he is supposed to in Versnel 1970 pp. 78–84). H. Wagenvoort put a good course of stone on that pavement by noticing the general agreement among many of the ancient sources that a certain amount of blood had to be shed in the field before a "triumph" would be allowed (Wagenvoort 1947, p. 167). I suggest that the words "would be allowed" be changed to "need be allowed" (in the culture of early Rome, remember), and that therein lies a clue. We are dealing not with exultation but with the laying to rest of a spiritual anxiety.

The returning consul had taken an army into the wild borderlands of the Roman world and brought it back victorious but contagious until it were cleansed. He had himself exercised in its most classic and old-fashioned form the right of imperium, which in such cases (and put simply) is the right under the *ius* to shed blood. He carried that blood-right and bloodstain back with him, and as he returned by various stages and rituals of entry into the bounds of the city of Rome he carried in himself momentarily the flush of his army's success, and on himself

(momentarily) the weight and contagion of his army's bloodshed.

Wagenvoort (1947) also suggested, as one or two others have, that the red pigment on the face of was meant to imitate, or to have been a substitution for, or symbolic of, blood (Fowler 1911a, pp. 33–34, 180–181, cf. Williams 1969, pp. 119–122). There is no need, though--given the very Roman attitude toward blood which makes this suggestion plausible in the first place--to suppose that actual blood would ever have necessarily been a part of the ritual. The red lead pigment was the symbol of the contagion of the blood, at least until the triumphator were cleansed and had paid his vows. The deity to whom he paid them as consul and leader of his state was Jupiter, and in the last of the rites of re-entry into the life of the city, the statue (or form, if it were not at first a true statue) of the god wore the stains of the blood for the moment as well as his dedications and payments were accepted.

The state, and consul, and god, bore for a moment the weight of the death they had dealt in surviving for the moment against the forces that pressed in from outside the *pomoerium*, and then they went (purified) back each to their business. Relationships were restored, community re-established, anxiety laid to rest, though only for the winter. March would come too soon again.

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(with a particular nod to the value of rediscovering the work of William Warde Fowler)

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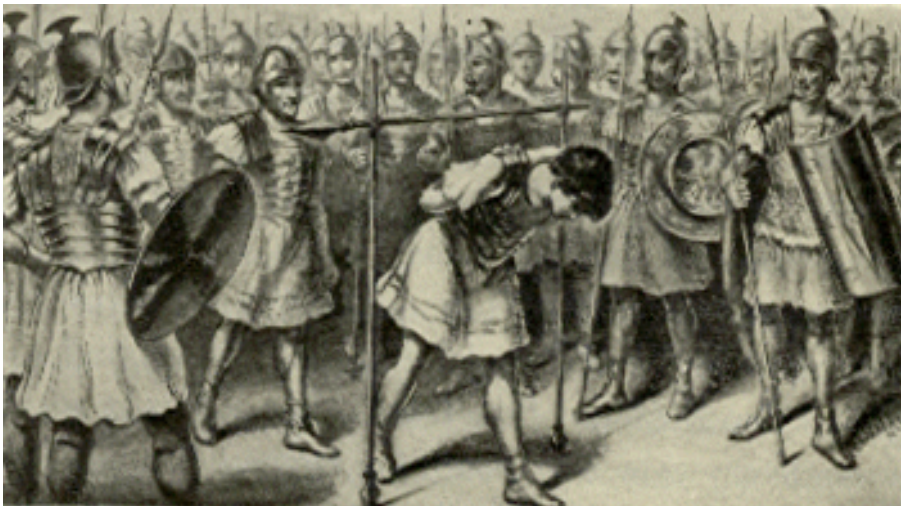
Appendix

Figure 1. *The Arch Constructed by Augustus at Rimini*



Note: Almost certainly the oldest authentic “triumphal arch” remaining to us from the Roman era. Its construction is far simpler than that used in later arches, and emphasizes a pair of vertical “posts” connected by a “lintel.”

Source: From the *Phaidon Cultural Guide*.

Figures 2-3. Early Modern Depictions of the Archaic “Iugum” in Action

Note: The first shows a Roman army being made to “pass under the yoke” by Italian (Samnite) mountaineers after the defeat at the Caudine Forks. It was with the primeval natives of central and highland Italy, not with the more sophisticated (and academically seductive) armies of Etruria that Rome shared the rudiments of this custom. The second is an early 19th century impression, confusing the religious device with an agricultural yoke, though the artist of the third image (same era) has depicted it correctly. This image (of the Horatius story) allows the main figure his armor.

Sex before Stigma: Making Sense of the Absence of Stigmatization in the Spiritual Aspect of Sacred Prostitution in the Ethical Systems of the Ancient World

*By Syed Waqas**

Sex, when discussed in a public setting, turns out to be a controversial subject within the context of the hypersensitive inner workings of modern society. It often touches simultaneously upon both extremes of humanity's rational disposition towards sex, namely sex being a matter of free choice on the one hand and being a cultural taboo on the other. One cannot freely talk about sex or practice sex in the public sphere in order for maintaining a sense of civic decency and public morality. This article attempts to look behind the notion of guilt associated with sex in the Judeo-Christian civilization of the West and rise above the prevailing pietistic cultural framework that came to dominate the globe after the conversion of the Byzantine Empire to Christianity. I will, therefore, treat sex as the enshrinement of the said concept in the sanctuary of human religious practice through history. Ritual sex is an artifact of the prehistoric times, which, within the fringes of pagan spirituality, wields an unprecedented influence on the religious life of historic times as well and thus needs to be investigated on a rather larger scale than the amount of scholarship typically dedicated to it to the end of understanding various strands of cultural and religious thought-processes involving sex among the ancient societies. This article will investigate the latter, for it is the ritual-sex-niche of the ancient culture that it is set to explore with maximum effort invested to keep a modern bias from entering the following pages. Besides, a point of focus in the article is the reconstruction of the phenomenology of the sacred and the spiritual articulated through the mystical expression of sexual communion, which will reverberate throughout the article.

Keywords: *temple prostitution, Greek, fertility cults, sacred sex, Orpheus, Dionysius, Artemis, Asherah, Aphrodite*

Introduction

There is little as appealing that draws a classical scholar's attention as the mysteries surrounding the institution of sacred prostitution in the times of antiquity. Historians agree that prostitution is one of the oldest professions in the world—if not the oldest (Ditmore 2006). The institutionalization of prostitution came about almost within the same timeframe as man's journey towards proto-civilization and acculturation progressed, because, sociologically as well as psychologically, easy access to sex has been one of the major drives of mankind

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after food and shelter in all human settings since primordial times (Lehmiller 2018). Sex is a powerful driving force, a motivation *par excellence*, in addition to being the only source of reproduction that has fundamentally played a crucial role in the development of mankind's collective consciousness, social practice, family structure, gender preference, and above all the ontogenesis and continuation of human race. Weismann's thesis, for instance, views sex as a powerful driving force, which is accepted in major biological circles. Weismann recognizes this powerful drive not only in humans, but also in all species that have evolved over time to adapt to the changes that have taken place in the environment of earth (Maxwell 2013). The global institutionalization of marriage in its various forms is a fundamental clue to man's ancient desire to mate with the opposite sex for both pleasure and reproduction, which often led members of both genders to so-called infidelity for various reasons, particularly under the sway of "physical attractiveness" and shopping for "good genes" (Barber 2009).

The institution of prostitution has offered man a niche to seek sexual pleasure beyond the normative bounds of society and without having been accountable for the obligations that come with the normative exercise of sex. From the point of view of social psychoanalysis, prostitution reflects a dystopian behavior of a society that is rebellious on the one hand and reflective of the moral corruption on the other. Things have not, however, always been the same as we perceive of the normative and the conventions in the world around us. As a matter of historical fact, prostitution is not only the oldest service-based institution of human history but also one that has never been rivaled by any other profession in terms of influence and attraction throughout the horizontal timeline of human civilization (Kingston 2014). Another driving force that, for instance, parallels—and oftentimes outweighs—sex is the socio-cultural construct of "power" itself. Power in its dynamics and end-goal, however, remains entirely different from sex, for sex is often employed to attain and retain power; contrarily, power in and of itself is the ceiling in a quest for the ultimate goal, whereas two major means to the end of achieving power happen to be sex and money (Ryken 2011).

The temple prostitution of antiquity forms an important part of the institution of prostitution, which, in fact, is a consecrated version of an originally uncontrolled greed for a consumer market that constantly creates a high demand for the product of sex, speaking in mercantile terms. In the ancient world, the temples of renowned gods and goddesses were important centers of religious, cultural, and even mercantile activity, and therefore such platforms of religious import would attract pilgrims and traders from all over the civilization within their sphere of influence. Such an activity would particularly reach its peak on the occasions of major events and festivals celebrated to honor the god or goddess of a certain temple cult (Eko 2016).

Since individuals did not always travel with their families—and if they did, spousal sex was not feasible *en route* or amidst crowds gathered for a festival—temples of antiquity frequently offered sacred space for the travelers to retire and address the bodily needs and sensual desires in exchange for holy donations to the temple. Christopher Faraone states in his book, *Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Ancient World*, that the sacred prostitution was primarily an economic activity, by

which “a deity would receive the money paid to buy or rent the prostitute’s body” (Faraone and McClure 2006). The sacred temple prostitution had, therefore, earned a divinely bestowed reputation of purity and sacredness for an otherwise scandalous profession (Silver 2019).

The story of the temple prostitution was not circumscribed within the geographical boundaries of the ancient Egyptian and Greco-Roman civilizations. The institution of prostitution, for instance, had also found sacred space in the temples of the ancient, post-Indus Valley Indian civilization, which somehow continues to this day in certain remote places. This system of sacred prostitution found in India, comprising and connecting a cluster of temple cults, is called the *devadasi* temple prostitution (Eko 2016). The Sanskrit compound term *devadasi* means “maid of god,” which is a term reserved for the girl given to a Hindu temple by making an offering who later “becomes a temple prostitute for upper-class members of the Hindu community where the temple is located” (Eko 2016). Eko insists that the Indian temple prostitution was in no way linked with or borrowed from the temple cults of the ancient Near East that also practiced temple-centered prostitution, primarily, because there was ‘no wall of separation between sex and religion’ in India (Eko, 2016).

Motifs of sex-themed religious art and the holy yoke of sex and spirituality in the understanding of the sacred also existed in other eastern philosophical systems and civilizations, such as the Sinic civilizations of Asia that covered a geography extending from China to Japan (Eko 2016). It is not difficult, therefore, to ascertain and understand the importance of sex in religious life prior to the transition of the religious environment of the world that took place under the ethical revolution wrought by the Judeo-Christian religion, which derives its bedrock from the holy scriptures of the Abrahamic tradition, the Bible (Ehrman 2006).

Speaking from the Greek literary perspective, Stephanie Budin, as quoted in Faraone and McClure (2006), notes that no known “direct testimonia of sacred prostitution” survives from the ancient Greece, which puts scholars in a difficult position in terms of ascertaining the reality of the case in its original time and space relying upon much later sources. It is, therefore, hard to apply the *sitz im leben* formula granted the lack of original sources, whereas a reconstruction of the sex life of the holy prostitutes in antiquity will remain, at its best, a result of historical speculation. In some cases, in fact, the classical scholars’ references to the sacred prostitution could be, in all likelihood, intended to denigrate the practices and beliefs of other ancient cultures (Kaltner and Stulman 2004). Such biases, therefore, cannot be overlooked in a historical-critical study of the ancient practice of ritual sex in order to look at the other side of the picture and rise above the present civic prejudice towards what is understood to be the ancient relic of sacred prostitution.

Cultic Background of Fertility and Mystery Orgies

Fertility orgies are a motif of pagan cultic ritual of the ancient fertility cults based in the prehistoric and proto-historic period, particularly in the post-Bronze

Age era, whose traces through the historic period can be confirmed in the form of archaeological remains (Bonanno 1985). The central idea of a fertility cult is the invocation of, and supplication to a particular or more gods through sacral sexual intercourse to secure the fertility of both land and womb (McKenzie 1955). These cults were, to a degree, the primitive forms of what, as the historical evidence suggests, later became mythologies and religions of developed agricultural societies. Ezekiel 8:14-15, for instance, reveals the “abomination” of the worship of Sumerian vegetation god, Tammuz, by the women of Jerusalem, whereas Ezekiel 16 echoes the practice of fertility rituals. This is in addition to several other vague references to the ancient cults found mentioned in the Bible, which we will discuss at a later stage. Such a practice was not limited to one particular geography or culture, but it was, in fact, widespread having reached across the known western world of the day from Greece to Egypt (Birx 2009). In the East, moreover, such orgies existed in the ancient and medieval India and farther beyond in the Far East (Eko 2016). Various temples in south and east India, for instance, harbor erotic art in the forms of sculptures, symbols, and sacred language, and thus showcase a fine example of the worship of sex through art, festive orgies, and sacred sex rituals (Eko 2016).

The orgy festivals of the Greek god Dionysius are particularly important to understand the entire system of the enthusiastic orgies of antiquity. The worship of Dionysius was introduced in northern Greece in 8th century BCE, which took a swift hold of the mainland Greece through its utopian ritualism involving frenzied ecstasy and sexual enthusiasm in which women in particular and men in general fell into a sacred mystical communion with the god Dionysius himself (Bury 2015). Another major movement of the sanctification of wine and ecstatic sexual intermingling was that of Orphic mystery religion, which British philosopher and historian Bertrand Russell summarizes in such a succinct way in his magnum opus, *A History of Western Philosophy* (1972), that his words merit direct quotation.

The Orphics were an ascetic sect; wine, to them, was only a symbol, as, later, in the Christian sacrament. The intoxication that they sought was of “enthusiasm,” of union with god. They believed themselves, in this way, to acquire mystic knowledge not obtainable by ordinary means.

This union with god, termed as “enthusiasm” in the Orphic system, is interesting for the same reason as the sacrament of communion, i.e., with God, happens to be interesting—and important—within Christian faith. Enthusiasm involved both drinking wine and participating in sexual orgies both symbolically representing a higher form of reality that only clads itself in mysteries. Russell (1972), furthermore, explains the mystery of the enthusiastic ecstasy of the Orphic religion, quoting early Greek classicist John Burnet, in the following paragraph:

Burnet goes on to state that there is a striking similarity between Orphic beliefs and those prevalent in India at about the same time, though he holds that there cannot have been any contact. He then comes on to the original meaning of the word “orgy,” which was used by the Orphics to mean “sacrament,” and was intended to purify the believer’s soul and enable it to escape from the wheel of birth.

Orpheus, the great Greek musician, according to the myth, was an ancient reformer of the Greek asceticism and spiritual mythos. It is said that he had become a monotheist towards the end of his life worshipping only Apollo and was therefore killed for his sin of forsaking and blaspheming his primary god, Dionysius (Burkert 1985). Orpheus left a huge mark on the reformed understanding of the element of the spiritual in Greek culture in the period to follow, particularly influencing the teachings of the Ionian philosopher, Pythagoras of Samos. This subsequently turned into a profound system of mystical *sophia* enmeshed within the greater vehicle of Greek philosophy; it in turn influenced such mighty philosophers as Plato and Aristotle, especially, in terms of their philosophical approach to feminism and violent emotionalism (Russell 1972).

Some of the ancient religious cults, particularly in Mesopotamia, celebrated the rites of *Hieros Gamos*, “sacred marriage,” which were royal rituals based on the divine truth or true myth that involved the consummation of the sacred-marriage of two deities in the temple (Goodison and Morris 1998). The inception of the original divine myths happens in the primordial—or more appropriately, fantastical—times. In the marriage, the main characters are usually supernatural—perhaps metaphysical is a better word—who engage in a symbolic intercourse that serves to explain why some natural events take place with or without a sequential order (Eko 2016). The sacred marriage in principle was between the heaven and the earth, when in its original form the male “Heaven” fertilized the female “Mother Earth” with rain symbolizing the semen, and thus the procreation of the two, greenery, sprang forth from her womb (Stol 2016). Such sexually explicit descriptions of heaven and earth’s love making for procreation were not an uncommon idea in the ancient world. Stol (2016), for instance, cites an ancient Sumerian literary text reflecting the marriage of the heaven and the mother earth in primeval times; the text reads:

An, mighty heaven, impregnated broad Earth,
 He poured into her the heroic seed of Wood and Reed,
 The good seed of Heaven was poured into Earth, the faithful cow.
 Earth, rejoicing over the plant of life, was ready to give birth,
 Earth, luxuriant, sprinkling wine and syrup, carried bounty.
 When Wood and Reed had been born, she shook the wine and syrup in the barn.

The subsequent development of *Hieros Gamos* would normally involve a sexual encounter between a sky god and an earth goddess both appointing humans as proxies for their participation in the enactment of the communion ritual that would explain various natural phenomena and what fruits such a natural order of things would bear. Some scholars believe that the original aetiological function of the sacred marriage was to explain storms, for a storm itself was understood to be a sexual encounter between the two and the rain was therefore the god’s semen that would fertilize the earth goddess and thus ‘vegetation’ would grow (Leeming 2005).

The Greek mythology, as ornate as it is, moreover, also bears a similar myth that involves the sacred marriage of two important deities. In Greece, typically in the city of Athens, the *gamos* of Zeus and Hera was enacted in the month of Gamelion as

part of the Greek version of the rituals of *Hieros Gamos* (Blundell and Williamson 1998). Such a scenario, therefore, gives an idea about how common such marriages were and that it was not a regional phenomenon by any means.

Sex, historically, expressed itself in so many mystical and intuitive forms in the ancient religion and spirituality that it was virtually impossible for a contemporary mind to separate sex from the sacred—at least the ritual aspect of it. A critical analysis of the multifaceted practice of sex in the ancient world would, therefore, reveal that sex was an inbuilt organ of the ancient societies reflective of their religious trajectory and their association with peculiar mythologies. It is most probably the reason why phallic worship came to occupy an important place in various ancient mystery and fertility cults through their association with the power of creation vested in gods, whereas phallic symbols continued to penetrate deep into other religious systems of the world and survived even the monotheistic, ultra-ethical revolution of the biblical religion (Burkert 1985).

Temples of Aphrodite and Other Goddesses

In the ancient Greece, as it turns out, it was largely the temples of Aphrodite that would offer a sacred niche for the enlightening union of the pilgrim and the temple nymph in the mystery of mythical salvation. In the “Eden” of Aphrodite, bringing in the biblical metaphor, services offered through the profession of prostitution had been consecrated and ordained to be institutionalized as a path of spiritual bliss for those going through the agony of a physical journey. It was intended to alleviate the ordeal of life by paying homage to the goddess of beauty and love (Parrottet 2004). The members of Aphrodite’s sex-rite cadre would faithfully offer themselves up to such pilgrims as wandering in the quest for spiritual ataraxy, worldly pleasures, and prosperity, all simultaneously, by seeking to earn the salvific favors of their beloved goddess. It is important to bear in mind that it was not only the female prostitutes that served the pilgrims but also the male prostitutes were available to those who had a taste for either bisexuality or homosexuality, or both (Faraone and McClure 2006). References to male prostitution at the temple of Astarte, the prototype of Aphrodite, also occur in the Hebrew Bible (Deuteronomy 23:7; 1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; Hosea 4:14). Moreover, a common word for the male prostitutes used in the Hebrew Bible is *eunuch*, which appears to be a commonplace concept among ancient Near Eastern people (Hadley 2000). The Christian New Testament’s only real life reference to prostitution, on the other hand, occurs in connection with the Corinthian temple prostitution, whereas other references, such as those found in Matthew 21:28-32, Luke 15:13, and Revelation 17:1-18, turn out, in their entirety, to be apocalyptic and figurative in nature. Paul’s criticism of the Corinthian Church’s involvement in the low-life indulgence of Greek culture’s immorality was, in fact, a bitter strike against the Greek *cultus* in addition to building a doctrinal-ethical paradigm for Corinthian Christians. 1 Corinthians 6, for instance, is a decisive read to substantiate the evidence in this context, which is both polemical and apologetic in the author’s tendentious approach. As a matter of historical fact, the members of

the Greek society were known for their sexual indulgence in both of its orientations, i.e., heterosexuality and homosexuality, beyond any compunctions a religious society would bear on its collective conscience. The great Greek philosopher, Plato, embraces this indulgence of the Greek *cultus* as a historically developed act of true pleasure and recognizes its naturalness without giving in to the moralists' stigmatization of sex (Faraone and McClure 2006).

The environment of belief in the Hellenistic world at the time of Paul, the epistemological outlook on contemporary ontology and cosmology, was characterized by the workings of various principalities and magical powers all ascribed to, and described in various gods and goddesses of the richly ornate Greco-Roman mythology. The forces of nature, in Hellenistic metaphysics, were thus transcribed in mythical language as various divinities of various cosmic orders engaged in a struggle sometimes interpreted as an epistemology of order and theomachy (Johnston 2004). The temples of Aphrodite, being originally concentrated in Cyprus, as well as those of various other goddesses of similar characteristics, for instance, spread along the eastern coastline of the Mediterranean and further deep inland. In Homer's *Odyssey*, for instance, Aphrodite's home is in Paphos, where an archaeological expedition has unearthed a monumental Mycenaean temple dating back to the twelfth century BCE that, according to Burkert (1985), came to be ascribed to Aphrodite, allegedly, after the Phoenician colonization of the island of Cyprus.

In Egypt, on the other hand, the rituals otherwise associated with Aphrodite would also include orgies in festivals such as those taking place near or after the harvest season (Birn 2009). Aphrodite did not necessarily appear in her own personality in other parts of the world, but it was her character that made appearance in a variety of fertility cults concentrated on female divinities' temples among other nations. The supreme goddess of Canaan, Ashtoreth, for instance, can be taken as a case in point for the above study because Ashtoreth was perceived of as the goddess of all goddesses and worshipped as the female counterpart of Baal (Hadley 2000).

Beside the Egyptian cultic practice, the Semitic tradition, too, bore a similar character in its mythology that represented physical love in a vaguely deified manifestation. The Phoenician deity, Ishtar-Astarte, often confused with Ashtoreth, is said to have been the origin of the Aphrodite cult (Burkert 1985). Even though the historical picture is not clear, a suggestion can still be made at length with a relatively higher degree of certainty that it was the same deity as the Assyrians called Ishtar, the Greeks termed Astarte, and the Phoenicians named Ashtoreth in the first place (Smith 1881). Smith (1881) also suggests that it is the ideation of the same pagan deity referenced in the Old Testament under the same name, Ashtoreth (cf. Jer. 44:17, 25; 1 Kings 11:5, 33; 2 Kings 23:13; 1 Sam. 31:10). The name *Astarte* (or *Astarte*) appears to have been mentioned in Egyptian hieroglyphics, which, according to Smith (1881), is an evidence of the widespread worship of Ishtar-Astarte. He also insists that Astarte was associated with the planet Venus—as is the case in the Roman mythology as well—rather than with the moon being the moon-goddess, as many believed, and was later identified by various ancient authors with Aphrodite. Cornelius (2004) confirms the above fact listed by Smith (1881) as historical and confirms that the association of Ishtar-Astarte with Venus is

accurate. Nothing in this regard, however, can be said with absolute certainty, for such subjects of the history of mythology are relatively eclectic and depend therefore on excursus, which can easily get stretched and extrapolated between poles of interpretation with a desire for more details offering room to a stroke of imagination to those who attempt to determine a particular role for a certain mythical deity.

It is believed that the cult, along with its characteristic temple prostitution, spread westward with the Phoenician colonial expansion and the transmission of its cultic ideas influenced the existing pagan societies in the new territories. The ideal of fertility was, in fact, one of the primary motivations for the new folks to flock around it. The temple cult of Aphrodite arose in particular from the syncretism of Ishtar-Astarte cult and those local cults of the Hellenic pagan systems (Leeming 2005). The original motifs of the Ishtar-Astarte temple cult continued to be identifiable in the Aphrodite's temple orientation particularly in the doctrinal emphasis upon physical beauty, love, and sex vis-à-vis a physical manifestation of the goddess and her frontal nakedness covered with golden ornaments. Apart from various internal factors, moreover, the motif of garden and sea is equally present, that too obviously, in the exterior, which forms an important scenic part of the Ishtar-Astarte temples (Burkert 1985). Such similarities between different cults, as a matter of fact, yield a clue of the presence of some fundamental ideas in conjunction with interrelated practices that might well be traced back to a common origin.

Such cults, originally based in the agrarian societies of antiquity, helped to shape the contemporary world and its cultures around the significance of sex in the material and spiritual worldviews of mankind. As a result, therefore, the earthly abodes of the patron goddesses, the temples, became centers for offering the rationale to the followers of the cults for them to see a spiritual dimension in sex and subscribe to the holy idea of purity in sexuality.

Corinth: Heart of Temple Prostitution

Corinth was reportedly a city of immense sexual immorality in the first century when Christianity was in the process of becoming a global religious path to author the future history of mankind (Thaden Jr 2017). The city had been deeply immersed in the worship of wealth and sex for centuries before the birth of Christ. This is to clarify that the expression, birth of Christ, is employed here in a purely historical sense as a calendar denominator referring to the beginning of the modern man's calendar rather than in a religious fashion. The primary reason for the city of Corinth to have thrived in trade, commerce, and sex-market was its coastal location, at the strip of Isthmus, which the trading ships could not ignore in their both east and west-bound voyages (Diamond 2012).

When speaking of the ancient temple prostitution, it would defy reason to not speak of Corinth, the Greek port that is often depicted as the free-living "New Orleans or Amsterdam" of the ancient world (Long 2014). After landing at the Corinthian docks, sailors would apparently climb up thousands of zigzagging steps

to the top of a rock-crag acropolis called the Acrocorinth, “the upper Corinth.” Acrocorinth was the citadel of the city built in the 5th century BCE, which offered 360 degree view of the surrounding Mediterranean and was strategically designed with specifically defense functionality in mind (Murphy-O’Connor 2002). There they would pass beneath the marble columns of the Temple of Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty and love, within whose incense-filled confines some thousand comely girls and fine boys supposedly worked around the clock gathering funds for their deity, which, as references Murphy-O’Connor (2002), the historian Plutarch refers to as “a great army of prostitutes.” Since the Renaissance, as a matter of fact, this idea had gripped the antiquarians who liked to imagine that a physical audience with one of Aphrodite’s special servants would offer a mystical union with the goddess herself—uninhibited pagans coupling in ecstasy before her statue in the perpetual twilight of the temple. Such a classical view of Corinth still holds sway on a multitude of historians who like to portray the ancient life of the city in colorful details. This imagination of the classicists has also given birth to an English verb, namely *to corinthianize*, which means “to live a promiscuous life” and “participate in immoral sexual practices.” Thus, the verb etymologically represents the promiscuous life of the rich but immoral city of Corinth (Diamond 2012).

As a matter of historical fact, the above lusty vision of the city of Corinth was created entirely from a short report by the Greek geographer, Strabo, who is known among historians for his tendency of exaggeration. Strabo, as quoted in Murphy-O’Connor (2002), writes the following around CE 20:

And the temple of Aphrodite was so rich that it owned more than a thousand temple-slaves, prostitutes, whom both men and women had dedicated to the goddess. And also it was on account of these women that the city was crowded and grew richer. For instance, the ship-captains freely squandered their money and hence the proverb, “Not for every man is the voyage to Corinth.” Moreover, it is said that a certain prostitute said to the woman who reproached her with the charge that she did not like to work or touch wool, “Yet such as I am, in this short time I have taken down three webs.”

This particular culture of pagan religiosity that embraced mystical communion with the goddess and purgation of the soul and body through the holy ritual of sexual union with the divine maidens of the temple was so rich and profound that such devotion for Aphrodite emerged on a grand geographical scale and began being carried around by the pilgrims throughout Greece. In consequence to the widespread devotion for Aphrodite, which translates into a predictable sociological variable, the cult influenced the folk culture, arts, and literature of the ancient Greece, particularly in and around Corinth. A song associated with Pindar, for instance, is given a listing by Faraone and McClure in their book, *Prostitutes and Courtesans* (2006). The song goes as follows:

Young ones welcoming many strangers,
Handmaids of Persuasion in wealthy Corinth,
who burn amber tears, shoots of frankincense,

often flying to the heavenly mother of loves
 in thought, to Aphrodite.
 For you without blame she destined,
 O children, to cull the fruits of soft youth
 in amorous beds.

Under the Roman principality of Achaia in the first century, the city of Corinth had not changed much from its past centuries in terms of religion, demographics, and culture. It is noteworthy that, in the Christian New Testament, the Apostle Paul's first letter to the Corinthian Church sheds light on the subject of sexual immorality that, according to the author's statement in 1 Corinthians 5:1-11; 6:12-20, was rampant in the city of Corinth. This statement of Paul also corroborates the pagan sources, particularly what Strabo describes about Corinth. Archaeological records substantiate the evidence, as the first epistle to the Corinthians suggest, that Paul was in Corinth in the year CE 51 when Gallio, who gave a reasonably fair judgment in a case petitioned against Paul, was the Roman Proconsul of Achaia from July 51 to June 52 (Murphy-O'Connor 2002). Paul arrived in Corinth either as an evangelist or as a tentmaker during the popular Isthmian Games when the athletes and their supporters were pouring into the city of Corinth from across the Hellenistic world. He might have, it may be conjectured, come to Corinth even before his conversion to Christianity in the capacity of a tradesman and would have already established connections in the city with business and political communities. In fact, a reference to a certain sporting activity, quite probably Isthmian Games, can also be found in 1 Corinthians 9:24-25: "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever" (NIV 2011).

What is certain about Paul, nevertheless, is that he carried the message associated with the founder of Christianity, Jesus, the proclaimed Christ of the New Testament, wherever he went and in whatever capacity he traveled through the Roman world. Paul may have traveled to Corinth as a trader, but the end-goal of his mission did not disappear from his purview, namely putting an end to the immoral practice of sex inherited from the old world, as witnesses the New Testament. Based upon the new system of ethics introduced and developed by the Christian teachings of Paul, therefore, a reformed manual of morality was handed down to the members of Christian faith in Corinth that sought to preach sexual discipline emphasizing physical purity in spiritual union with Christ himself. We know from various sources including, but not limited to, those found in the New Testament that Paul visited the Jewish synagogue located on the Corinthian strip and reasoned with the Jews in there, participated in other social activities, visited temples of the local gods, preached Gospel to the crowds, and even made several individuals including the Roman treasurer of the city, Erastus, into his followers (Acts 19:22; Romans 16:23). Thus, a radical transition in the history of Corinth in particular and the Roman world in general was about to be set in motion, which would change the world of future forever, particularly in its disposition towards,

and exposition of the pagan world's conventions and practices surrounding sex. This revolution radically redefined sex and its role in human life.

Biblical References to Sacred Prostitution

The Holy Bible, quite surprisingly, is not in want of references to the so-called sacred pagan institution of prostitution in the ancient world. The Bible mentions several individuals and places that are directly or indirectly linked to such a practice of institutional prostitution that was deemed as acceptable—even blessed and honored at times—in the religious world of antiquity. The Bible, for instance, deals with the subject of prostitution in places such as Genesis 38:15, Leviticus 18:22; 19:29; 20:13; 21:9, Deuteronomy 22:21; 23:18, 1 Kings 14:24; 15:12, Proverbs 23:27-28, Isaiah 23:16, Jeremiah 3:6, Ezekiel 16:8-26, Nahum 3:4, Romans 1:24, 26, 1 Corinthians 10:14, and 2 Corinthians 6:14, 16-17; 7:1, etc. The Jewish Bible, which assumes the title of the Old Testament among Christians, houses majority of the references to the ancient Near Eastern fertility cults and the profession of prostitution associated with such pagan trajectories. Similarly, the Christian New Testament also makes allusions to the practice of prostitution, especially in the Pauline letters, as mentioned elsewhere.

There is a list of prostitutes named in the Bible, in the Old Testament in particular, which needs to be looked at in order to understand the response of the Israelite populace—as well as that of the divining oracle of Israel—to such a social process as the institutionalization of prostitution. The Bible involves *Yahweh*, the God of Israel, in the development of both its discourse and story about prostitution and sees divinity and humanity mutually interlocked on this critical subject. Gomer, for instance, was the prostitute Hosea married when God told him to pick a “whore” for a wife in the following explicit words:

When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, “Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the LORD.” (Hosea 1:2 ESV)

The reason, as it seems, is self-evident why God commands Hosea to marry a woman from such a culturally obnoxious and looked down upon background as prostitution. The connotation in the above verse is negative and the language is symbolic, for the divine voice addresses the land and the people of Israel along the same lines as one speaks of a brothel where loyalty, dedication, and faithfulness have little room (Evans 2018). Gomer, Hosea's wife does not, however, come from a temple prostitution background and only represents foreign nations in this case. We will not, therefore, concern ourselves with the story of Gomer here.

Furthermore, the nation of Israel is collectively referred to as a “whore” by Jeremiah, the 6th century BCE prophet of doom who made prophecy around the period of Babylonian invasion of the kingdom of Judah. He does cross conventional limits to record this rebuke, quite unapologetically, in his book, the Book of Jeremiah, which turns out to be the longest prophetic book of the Bible. Jeremiah, for instance, writes in 3:3, “Therefore the showers have been withheld,

and no spring rains have fallen. Yet you have the brazen look of a prostitute; you refuse to blush with shame” (NIV 2011). Again, Jeremiah uses the metaphor of prostitute for the city of Jerusalem a little later in his book in 13:27 and finds the character of the city as repulsive and ‘detestable’ as that of an unclean prostitute. Similarly, the Prophet Isaiah also lashes out on Jerusalem in an identical manner declaring the city a “harlot” in his book, the Book of Isaiah—a human analogy in divine speech. Importantly, the more modern *New International Version* of the Bible (2011) uses the word “prostitute” instead of “Harlot” when translating Isaiah 1:21. Within the religious ethos of the ancient Near East, critically speaking, such a course of employing explicit and disparaging epithets borrowed from the vernacular associated with the society of prostitution reflects biblical prophecy’s peculiar attitude towards the city of Jerusalem. We must not forget here that the city of Jerusalem was the station of the “Holy of holies” for the monotheistic faith of Israel and ironically the insults carried in the Bible were intended for the city of Jerusalem in particular and the nation of Israel in general. In the Bible, as we can see, Israel stands for a particular land and a particular people, both merged into one identity; the said people inhabit a “promised” piece of land as, allegedly, chosen for them by the God of Israel to transmit and preserve the message of monotheism, indicates the Bible (Arnold 2014). However, the alleged treacheries of the nation of Israel, both in religious and political terms, were taken on by the Israelite prophets, a class of individuals that represented the voice of the divine versus a group of corrupt kings and their associates, the noble oligarchy, who tended to criticize them in a most vitriolic manner that remains a major theme within the good and evil dialectics of the Bible.

Other individuals mentioned in the Bible with reference to the practice of prostitution are Jephthah’s mother (Judges 11:1), Moabite women (Numbers 25:1-3), Oholah and her sister Oholibah (Ezekiel 23), Tamar, the daughter-in-law of Judah (Genesis 28), the two prostitutes who go to the Solomon’s court to resolve the controversy of a newborn (1 Kings 3:16-28), and the prostitutes who take a bath in the pool where Ahab’s blood is washed (1 Kings 22:38). The Old Testament indeed houses several other references to the ancient prostitution, too, declaring the profession as immoral and unacceptable in its totality, which, suffices to say, are of little significance to the present topic after having provided the above list. The biblical impression gets more obvious in the light of the above references that there was a palpable presence of prostitution in the land of Israel vis-à-vis the surrounding world, which, from the point of view of an academic critique, represents an institutionalized contour of an occupation that receives an extraordinary amount of criticism and antipathy in the religiosity of the Bible as well as in moral framework of the civilization it gives birth to (Newsom and Ringe 1998).

Interestingly enough, one of the most significant female characters of the New Testament, Mary Magdalene, is often viewed with a high degree of likelihood by various theologians, historians, and critics of the Bible as being a prostitute in her pre-Christian background (Schaberg 2004). There is, however, no direct reference in the New Testament that may confirm the report of Mary Magdalene’s past life of being a prostitute. The legend of Mary Magdalene being a “penitent

prostitute” who earned “apostleship” has indeed been around from ancient times, which plays a dialectical role of depicting a contrite journey of an adulterous woman from being the outcaste and marginalized to being elevated as one of the most venerable. As a matter of historical fact, this legend, having borne a special appeal to the Christian reason for Christianity’s salvific cause, became particularly popular in the Catholic Church during the Middle Ages (Schaberg 2004). It can be said about the overall makeup and role of the legend, nonetheless, that it has served a particular function, especially in the popular cultures of each generation, despite the reality that such assertions have taken on the form of a story that resulted from the smashing of several traditions about different women named Mary together (Ehrman 2006).

In order to comprehend the conceptualization of prostitution among the Israelites, it will be equally important to explore the semantic range behind the Hebrew concept in question. It goes without saying that both terminology and semantics play an important role in shaping a people’s worldviews and informing a culture on various social, political, and religious phenomena. It is particularly true of the Semitic languages because of the design of the languages within this linguistic family. *Qedeshah*, for instance, is an important Hebrew word in this particular context employed in the Bible, which is often taken to mean as a “sacred prostitute” or a “temple prostitute” (Raver 2005). The word *qudsu* or *quds* (q-d-s) refers to God’s holiness and transcendence, whereas *qedeshah* is derived from the same root word as that of *qudsu* (Faraone and McClure 2006). Quite probably the word in question originally referred to the “consecrated maidens” who were employed in the Canaanite and later Phoenician temples devoted to the worship of Ashtoreth. As such, the biblical writers came to associate the fertility rites of Ashtoreth worship with sacred prostitution, and the Hebrew word *qedeshah*, therefore, came to be used as a pejorative term for the “prostitute” involved in the sex rites. According to Lings (2013), the masculine version of the word is *qedesh*, which probably refers to a male prostitute or a eunuch.

The *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1998) states that a goddess by the name of *Qedeshu* was worshipped in Egypt, who was considered the “Lady of Kadesh,” the present day Syria. This particular term and the concept associated therewith came to bear peculiar implications for the post-Exodus Hebrew culture, which evidently deviated from its original Egyptian context in the process of transmission, reception, and exposition.

A more common Hebrew word for the prostitute is *zonah*. It appears to be a more regularly used term that transmits the meaning of selling one’s body with a particularly negative connotation, whereas the word *qedeshah*, on the other hand, is not identifiable with the defilement caused by selling one’s own body for the sexual pleasure of others (Lings 2013). The latter word, *qedeshah*, almost exclusively occurs within the framework of religious vernacular.

Another relevant question, moreover, that begs attention within the confines of the debates surrounding the word *qedeshah* is: who is *Asherah*? The Hebrew word *Asherah* is an adjectival noun that means “happy” or “upright”; some even suggest “sacred place” (Faraone and McClure 2006). Another word, *qedeshim*, the plural of *qedeshah*, appears in 2 Judges 23:7 where the context seems to suggest

some association between the Hebrew *qedeshim* and the women dedicated to the job of weaving for the Canaanite goddess, *Asherah* (Faraone and McClure 2006).

The term *Asherah* appears 40 times in the Hebrew Bible, usually in conjunction with the definite article *ha*, “the.” The definite article in Hebrew is similar in function to the English definite article, which does not appear with personal names. It is, therefore, an obvious linguistic fact that *Asherah* cannot be a personal name if the definite article precedes the word. It does not, however, eliminate the possibility concerning the word in question being a category of beings, i.e., a particular type of goddesses. According to Smith (1881), there were as many *Asherahs* as *Baals* in the ancient Near East. He also argues that *Ashtoreth* was the actual personal name of the principal goddess, whereas, contrarily, *Asherah* was the name given to the image or symbol of the same goddess (Smith 1881).

This personification of the goddess *Ashtoreth* is also known from several other ancient Near Eastern cultures. As an Ugaritic goddess, for instance, she is known with the title “Lady Athirat of the Sea,” whereas another version of this title is “she who walks on the sea” (Niditch 2016). *Athirat* is a cognate name for *Asherah*, who is the mother of 70 children, the Mother Goddess, and surprisingly this mythical concept of 70 children of a royal divine mother relates to the Jewish idea of the 70 guardian angels of the nations in the Book of Daniel (Niditch 2016). Moreover, arguments have been made that *Asherah* is an important figure in the Egyptian, Hittite, Philistine and Arabic texts. Various Egyptian representations of *Qudshu* (or *Qedeshu*), which could potentially be the Egyptian name for *Asherah*, portray her as naked with snakes and flowers on her body, often standing on a lion (Hadley 2000).

In the end, it is important to understand that a discussion on *Asherah* is essentially a discussion on *Ashtoreth*, *Ishtar*, *Astarte*, and *Aphrodite*, all representing physical love, beauty, and fertility (Niditch 2016). Broadly speaking, they are all fundamentally different faces, forms, and versions of the same original mythical concept—a deity that evolved with slight variations in various parts of the ancient Near East and the Greco-Roman world. This female deity of antiquity is primarily responsible for the institutionalization of fertility rites and offering of sexual pleasure within spiritual environment lending sacred space to the profession of prostitution within the house of the goddess, the temple.

Conclusion

The temple prostitution cult, speaking of it as a collective movement within the alchemy of human civilization, earned legitimization, as we have seen above, under the mythical concept of an all-powerful female deity, say one out of many available goddesses to the ancient world such as *Ashtoreth*, *Ishtar*, *Astarte*, *Aphrodite*, etc. These goddesses, protectors of their female devotees, had been ascribed the sovereign powers of womanhood to—I would personally prefer the informal expression, femalehood. Such a goddess, being the embodiment of a perfect lady, would appear in control of all physically oriented passions, sexual imagery bearing elements of human feelings, and the romantic dispositions of

personality, all signifying the frailty of humanity through a natural desire for love, sex, fertility, and prosperity. Prostitution would simply emerge as a byproduct of the entire process of bringing desire and passion in meeting, which a feminist commentator of the Bible likes to call a “necessary evil” of the ancient society (Newsom and Ringe 1998). Eroticism and spiritual elation, moreover, were not divorced from each other as we see them apart in today’s world, while since the divinities and deities would often engage in incessant romance and sex, hence so would do the humans in imitation of their gods and goddesses (Stol 2016). It was, therefore, understood to be sufficient of a ground for the justification for the temples to operate and promote forms of worship that would involve sex—pilgrims’ sexual engagement with the devoted sex oracles of the temple goddess.

It suffices to say that ritual sex was, more often than not, deemed as a holy and spiritually uplifting experience and would have the same effect on the mind of a performer as would a partaker of the Christian communion feel about, and experience in the sacrament. Prostitution organized by the temple associated with a fertility goddess was, therefore, a means to earning a sense of gratification marked with the blessings of the overseeing deity that would—especially, though not exclusively—be sprinkled in the purity of devotion by her ordained devotee: the temple prostitute.

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Antigone – A Clashing of the Stereotypical and the Archetypal

*By Bratislav Milošević**

The paper engages with Antigone's steadfast resistance to and ultimate rejection of the female, Ismene-like stereotype into which she refuses to be typecast by the socially prescribed and patriarchy-tailored norms of gender essentialism. Guided by the natural and eternal laws as defined by Thomas Aquinas, Sophocles' heroine stands up against the society's distortion and violation of the universal, unwritten laws (natural, eternal, archetypal laws). Relying on the Jungian insightful archetypal criticism, I approach Antigone as the archetypal Earth Mother in its dual nature (the loving, self-sacrificing mother as well as the destructive, vengeful mother) in order to better understand the heroine's brave act and its aftermath. In this way, the paper demonstrates the uninhibitedly consistent female challenge and critical choice to stereotypical gender ideologies of the Sophoclean time, proving that the archetypal dimension is always already more powerful than any of the man-made laws.

Keywords: *stereotypical, archetype, Earth Mother, free will, human/divine*

From the very beginning of the play, the reader is presented with an almost prescriptive design of the Greek tragedy in which man's/woman's "fate is bound up with the divine order of the world, and tragedy occurs by the clash between that divine order and human disorder" (Ehrenberg 1954, p. 24). In the tragic play of Sophocles', it is Antigone who "upholds a divine principle" (Lardinois 2015, p. 63) and sets out on a mission to put order into what she perceives as human disorder. In this line, she assumes the socially counter-stereotypical role for a woman and openly defies Creon's, king of Thebes', proclamation which forbids proper burial of her brother Polyneikes. Therefore, it is in the opening scene that Sophocles centre-stages the unmarriageable conflicting polarities such as individual/state, human/divine, emotionality/rationality, fate/free will in the manner of a typical Greek tragedy which "takes as its primary concerns the collision of various points of views, the incommensurability of different kinds of speech, and the semantic ambiguity of its language" (Barrett 2002, p. 6). Acting in dissonance with the woman's stereotypical role of obedience and passivity paradigmized in her sister Ismene's character, Antigone bravely steps out of the Theban society's gender-orchestrated prescriptive formula in which the fear-stricken, safe-minded Ismene remains typecast for good:

"Remember, we're women. How
can we fight men? They're stronger.
We must accept these things – and worse to come.

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I want the spirits of the Dead
to understand this: I'm not free.
I must obey whoever's in charge.
It's crazy to attempt the impossible." (Sophocles 2012, pp. 75–81)

Unlike Ismene, who is “essentially obedient to her womanhood, the sort of woman the Athenians understood and respected” (Ferguson 1972, p. 164), Antigone is resolute “to attempt the impossible” (Sophocles 2012, p. 81) and provide her brother a proper burial¹. Unflinchingly forging forwards in the name of laws higher than the laws imposed by society and enforced by Creon-like rulers, Antigone evolves into a female opposing self and exhibits her greater-than-life character:

“I'll bury Polyneikes myself. I'll do
what's honorable, and then I'll die.
I who love him will lie down
next to him who loves me -
my criminal conduct blameless! -
for I owe more to the dead, with whom
I will spend a much longer time
than I will ever owe to the living.” (Sophocles 2012, pp. 85–92)

It is at this early stage in the play that “we have an excellent scene. First, it establishes the situation, clearly and concisely, and points to the plot. Second, Ismene and Antigone are both beautifully sketched. It was a brilliant idea of Sophocles, repeated in *Electra*, to produce a normal woman to offset his central character” (Ferguson 1972, p. 164). Importantly, the scene shows not only how absolutely fearless Antigone is but it also points to what extent she feels herself indebted to the familial, to the ancestral² and, most importantly, to the human laws. Her instinctive drive and knowledge are conducive to her arising self-knowledge and to the realization of the self, i.e., her own individuality. Believing that her resolution to bury the dead brother, Polyneikes, is biologically justifiable in the sense that “for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Genesis 3:19), she is essentially guided by an innate sense of truth which breaks down the rigid barriers of ego-centricity and demonstrates her primal, instinctive alignment with the natural, eternal and archetypal. Hardly surprisingly, therefore, it is upon the civic arrest of the naturally and archetypally attuned Antigone that nature erupts

¹Creon, the Theban ruler, has forbidden the proper ritual rite for the dead Polyneikes because he is regarded as a traitor who has betrayed his native polis, Thebes, by raising the Argive army and fighting against his own people. Consequently, Polyneikes's corpse is left to rot in the open and to be slaughtered by scavengers.

²Antigone's ultimate respect for and overriding commitment to the ancestors is something which she never questions no matter how tyrannical the power structures she opposes may be and how dangerous the consequences of ultimately pursuing her own individual feat: “Antigone's allegiance with the dead rather than the living could suggest a reactionary faith in custom and tradition against the forces of modernism and secularism embodied in the figure of Creon...Antigone represents, for Hegel, an ethics based on absolute obedience to the pre-political customs and institutions of the family” (Barker 2009, p. 29).

and strikes back with vengeance upon those who are naturally and archetypally unattuned.

The emotionally and psychologically overwrought³ scene in which Creon's guard catch Antigone in the act of re-burying the unburied Polyneikes is precluded by the tumultuous weather conditions. Everything is terror-inducing: a whirlwind is throwing up the dust, the leaves are being torn from the trees and the grasslands are being choked. The momentary cataclysm is "churning up grit all around" (Sophocles 2012, line 264) and, in this way, turning everything into an unsettled 'intermediary' zone between the living and the dead. Antigone's piercing, bird-like scream, which largely re-echoes Polyneikes's or 'a white-feathered Eagle screeching' (Sophocles 2012, p. 248), makes auditory a strong metaphysical bond between the sister and brother: "Their avian kinship does not dislodge their human kinship. The former supplements the latter" (Robert 2015, p. 31). In line with this, the bird, which is archetypally associated with "the spiritualized anima" (Yoshida 2007, p. 45), only reaffirms the reading of Antigone's scream as the last dying cry of Polyneikes' soul. What is more, the wailing, sisterly cry of Antigone over the unburied dead body acquires another dimension. It is also a motherly cry or the cry of the caring archetypal mother who is in distress over the loss of her baby son; it was "a piercing scream like a bird homing to find her nest robbed" (Sophocles 2012, p. 264). Whatever relationship is more operable or pronounced at this stage, sisterly or motherly, it is certain that Antigone has stood up in the name of the laws and values which seem to be biologically justifiable, archetypally patterned and universally well grounded.

In this way, the Sophoclean heroine has aligned herself not only with the biological but also with the natural and eternal laws – they all are convergent and share the same semantic axis, which is archetypal in design. Put differently, she asserts Thomas Aquinas' claim that: "Eternal law is the set of divine archetypes contained in the divine mind. Natural law is the set of moral principles based on human nature, which is an instantiation of the archetype of human nature in the divine mind" (Lisska 2012, p. 623). Being in accord with the dictates of moral principles, Antigone instantiates quintessentially human nature as partaking in the divine through her divine mindedness: "the law we have in us by nature is a sharing in the eternal law and [...] *puts perfect order into things*" (McDermott 1998, p. 419). It follows, therefore, that her decision to bury Polyneikes is in accord with both natural and eternal laws (divine archetypes). By degrees, she is ascribing herself the archetypal dimension of the Earth Mother through the caring, self-sacrificing aspect of a woman/a mother as well as through her perfecting tendencies towards the society's imperfection. In the former aspect, the archetypal imago springs so naturally and spontaneously whereby "[t]he qualities associated with it are maternal solicitude and sympathy; the magic authority of the female; the wisdom and spiritual exaltation that transcend reason; any helpful instinct or impulse; all that is benign" (Jung 2003, p. 15). In the latter aspect, "she is the incarnation of the promise of perfection; the soul's assurance that, at the conclusion of its exile in a world of organized inadequacies, the bliss that once was

³"This outgoing emotion, as opposed to introverted self-absorption, is characteristic of Greek tragedy, and most (perhaps all) great tragedy" (Taplin 2005, p. 122).

known will be known again” (Campbell 2008, p. 92). Bliss in Antigone’s case is the bliss of transcendence of those organized inadequacies and the bliss of the mystic reunion with the dead family member, her brother, and the subsequent restoration of umbilical connection: “I owe more to the dead ... than I will ever owe to the living” (Sophocles 2012, p. 246). Unafraid of death, she ultimately believes that her fate, which is primarily outlined by the exercise of her free will, will be god-like just like Niobe’s and that being the archetypal image of the Earth Mother she will go on living through nature – the womb is equated with the tomb and vice versa:

“I once heard that a Phrygian stranger,
Niobe, the daughter of Tantalos,
died a hideous death on Mount Sipylus.
Living rock, clinging like ivy,
crushed her. Now, people say,
she erodes – rainwater and snow
never leave her alone - they keep on
pouring like tears from her eyes,
drenching the clefts of her body.
My death will be like hers,
when the god at last lets me sleep.” (Sophocles 2012, pp. 903–912)

The outcome of the society’s disorderly, imperfect conduct in relation to the perfectly orderly cosmic rhythm of natural cycles triggers not only the surfacing of the divine, archetypal Mother figure in the Sophoclean heroine but also the heroine’s nurturing of the free will within the coordinates of the social imperfections and strictures. No matter how socially defiant and transgressive Antigone’s purely instinct-driven act may seem from the stance of the hegemonic Creon-like rulers, it is important that her free-willed act does not meander away from the natural, eternal, divine and archetypal:

“I did. It wasn’t *Zeus* who issued me
this order. And Justice – who lives below –
was not involved. They’d never condone it!
I deny that your edicts – since *you*, a mere man,
imposed them – have the force to trample on
The gods’ unwritten and infallible laws.
Their laws are not ephemeral – they weren’t
made yesterday. They will rule forever.
No man knows how far in time they can go.
I’d never let any man’s arrogance
bully me into breaking the gods’ laws.
[...]
My own death isn’t going to bother me,
but I would be devastated to see
my mother’s son die and rot unburied.
I’ve no regrets for what I’ve done.” (Sophocles 2012, pp. 487–506)

It is through the repetitive use of the personal pronoun *I* that Antigone most exemplarily demonstrates her indomitable free will. As the dramatic narrative develops, it becomes clearer that the crux of the narrative structure lies in the opposition of an individual to the social standards rather than the opposition of an individual to fate: “free will is seen in her self-imposed status of the ‘dramatically other’ in opposition to a glorified Athens” (Rehm 2003, p. 27). In this context, the free-willed and self-willed Antigone stands up against what she perceives as the injustice of the polis, its edicts and against Creon who “has attempted to isolate the polis as a realm of autonomous, rational human control” (Segal 1998, p. 121). Openly defying Creon’s will in the name of some higher, infallible, unwritten laws, she manages to shake off the social burdens of stereotypically perceived woman and to showcase that “[m]en’s efforts to subordinate women’s roles, functions, and influence, their efforts even to appropriate these for themselves, are only partially successful, even in the most ideologically driven documents, such as Plato’s *Symposium* and *Phaedrus* or almost any of the tragedies or comedies” (Zeitlin 1996, p. 8).

Not neglecting the role of fate⁴, however, within the grand design of the drama, Antigone’s opposition is still primarily social and fate is certainly not a precluding or predetermining factor in the tragedy of the Sophoclean heroine: “Fate is not predetermined as in the case of Oedipus, rather the wills and actions of characters determine it” (Khare 1998, p. 213). In other words, “fate has become the inner necessity of man, that is, the constituent part of his character for which he is personally responsible” (Jerotić 2000, p. 15). Moreover, there has long been a

“misconception that Greek tragedy basically shows the working of Fate, of men fastened to the puppetry of higher powers [...] Most cultures have their expressions of fatalism; they are one of our chief sources of solace in the face of the pointless waste of ill fortune: ‘che sera, sera’, ‘God’s will be done’, ‘his number was up’, ‘it is written’.... The ancient Greeks were as prone as any to resort to such notions, though, naturally enough, after rather than before the event, and after disaster rather than good fortune. And like most cultures, for a pattern or purpose behind catastrophe they looked to superhuman forces, personal or impersonal. But this tendency does not, within the whole compass of a drama, preclude the free will of the characters or their responsibility, nor does it render their whole life puppetry. Most of the time they are presented as free agents working out their own destinies – as a rule disastrously, since this is a tragedy.” (Taplin 2005, pp. 120–121)

It follows that even though Antigone’s free will is outlined by the fatalistic context, its pervasive operability is certainly undeniable: “[t]he claim of free will operating at the same time as fate may seem contradictory, but it is not so far removed from the modern view of man being genetically and environmentally determined yet also having a measure of free choice and of responsibility within that narrow framework” (McDonald 2003, p. 53). Though the space of free agency

⁴In *Antigone*, fate resides within nature and is its ordering principle. Still, the fact that Antigone exercises free will and has a critical choice of her own seem to subsidize the fatalistic patterning of the drama and the death of Antigone. In other words, she demonstrates the possibility of achieving an essentially individualized selfhood against the backdrop of largely de-individualizing polis.

might be limited and difficult to access, it is always already inside every one of us. It is from this space that the defiant Antigone bravely rises up and proves to her sister and others that there is always an inner zone of choice and freedomness: “You made the choice to live. I chose to die” (Sophocles 2012, p. 72). Importantly, this liberating zone empowers her to oppose the dehumanization of her own self in the context of both Creon’s absolutely logocentric regime and inescapable fatalism. She makes it all less dehumanizing and more self-satisfactory.

Fundamentally, Antigone cannot reverse either the fatalistic or social clockwork mechanism of her own destruction. However, the very fact that she pursues her free indomitable will, sticks to her unflinching choice and makes the zone of free agency visible transforms her into a very complex female character. The complexity lies in the dyad of her being tragic and heroic, defeated and victorious like the classic Sophoclean hero/heroine:

“Sophocles creates a tragic universe in which man’s heroic action, free and responsible, brings him sometimes through suffering to victory but more often to a fall which is both defeat and victory at once; the suffering and the glory are fused in an indissoluble unity. Sophocles pits against the limitations on human stature great individuals who refuse to accept those limitations, and in their failure achieve a strange success. Their action is fully autonomous.” (Knox 1983, p. 6)

Despite the fact that the autonomy of Antigone’s act leads to her live burial “in a hollow cave” (Sophocles 2012, p. 286), she sets an example of the tragic hero⁵ – the coinage which has become an essential feature of tragic narratives ever since and

“It is precisely this fact which makes possible the greatness of the Sophoclean heroes; the source of their action lies in them alone, nowhere else; the greatness of the action is theirs alone. Sophocles presents us for the first time with what we recognize as a ‘tragic hero’: one who, unsupported by the gods and in the face of human opposition, makes a decision which springs from the deepest layer of his individual nature, is *physis*, and then blindly, ferociously, heroically maintains that decision even to the point of self-destruction.” (Knox 1983, p. 5)

The only thing Antigone genuinely mourns upon her procession to ‘heaped-up rock-bound prison (Sophocles 2012, p. 289) is that she has not got married and given birth to a child: ‘I’ll go hearing no wedding hymn to carry me to my bridal chamber’ (Sophocles 2012, p. 287). The Chorus of Theban elders, the representatives of the legal *vox populi* of Thebes, do sympathize with the victimized woman on the one hand; on the other hand, though, they are judgemental towards her because she has disrespected the law of Thebes:

“Your pious conduct might deserve some praise,
but no assault on power will ever

⁵In his tragedies, both men and women (Antigone, Electra, Ajax) are presented as tragic and heroic at the same time: guided by their free choice and autonomous will, they show noncompliance with and opposition to the entrapping, limiting boundaries of linguistic and social discourses.

be tolerated by him who wields it.
It was your own hotheaded
willfulness that destroyed you.” (Sophocles 2012, pp. 957–961)

Eventually, they “disliked Creon’s edict, and they admire the fidelity and piety of Antigone’s act of burial [...] though they think the deed should have been done, they do not like the fact that it was done contrary to law. Hence their judicial attitude toward Antigone” (Kirkwood 1994, p. 53). Not even Creon’s son Haemon, who is planning to get married to Antigone, can successfully appeal to his father to revoke the edict:

“Be flexible. Not rigid. Think of trees
caught in a raging winter torrent: Those
that bend will survive with all their limbs
intact. Those who resist are swept away.
Or a captain who cleats his mainsheet
down hard, never easing off in a blow –
he’ll capsize his ship and go right on sailing,
his rowing benches where his keel should be.
Step back from your anger. Let yourself change.” (Sophocles 2012, pp. 788–796)

The two images, the image of the tree and that of the ship, speak powerfully of the importance of an alternative perspective which is not one-sidedly solipsistic but rather flexible and more open; conversely, the outcome is bound to be fatalistic and self-destructive. Just as the tree which steadfastly refuses to bend its branches will certainly be uprooted so will a person of exclusively and absolutely unbending disposition meet a fatal end. Similarly, the image of the ship is “a definite conveyance that takes people somewhere to pursue certain characteristic aims and ends. It does not and cannot simply go with every current and every wind that bears upon it; it has its own orderly way and its own course. Haemon⁶ has not, then, urged on Creon an abnegation of the human activity of choosing the good and striving to realize the good. What he says is, that it is important, in pursuit of one’s human ends, to remain open to the claims and the pulls of the external, to cultivate flexible responsiveness, rather than rigid hardness” (Nussbaum 2001, p. 80).

It is in this scene in the play that we witness not only a revisiting of the two conflicting attitudes to life, Creon’s and Antigone’s, as an ultimately unmarriageable pair of opposites but also a heralding of the tragic outcome of Creon – the captain who ‘never eases off in a blow’ and is lacking in ‘flexible responsiveness’. Thus, “[t]ragedy recognizes the ultimate failure of the logical model, the elusiveness and ambiguity of reality” (Segal 1999, p. 21) whereby Creon’s future downfall is the consequence of his purely reason-driven decisions as opposed to Antigone’s human(e)-driven ones.

⁶Unlike Antigone and Creon who pursue their own one-sided perspectives to the limits of destruction/self-destruction, “Haemon has at least tried to satisfy multiple and complex passions for his lover, his father, and the city” (Barker 2009, p. 39).

It follows, therefore, that “Antigone shows a deeper understanding of the community and its values than Creon does when she argues that the obligation to bury the dead is an unwritten law, which cannot be set aside by a particular ruler” (Nussbaum 2001, p. 66). Unlike Creon’s morally limited agency, Antigone’s mind, her conduct and her action are reflective of true though tragic nobility⁷.

Knowing that nobility and self-sacrifice are among the most heroic elements of a Greek tragedy, Antigone ultimately essentializes a tragically noble heroine: “[t]he ‘nobility’ that makes heroes willing to risk their lives is not exclusively male – in Euripides, this exultation of noble death is found in women who sacrifice themselves and is unequivocally admirable. Against it, however, is the good sense, a form of *sophrosyne*, that should restrain people from ignoring the limits of their power” (Scodel 2010, p. 109). In Antigone’s case, nobility and noble death mirror not only her self-sacrificing idealism but also a kind of self-fatalistic altruism. Consistently throughout the play, she is ready to die a noble death and sacrifice herself for the sake of the higher ideals in which she steadfastly believes. What makes her own sacrifice even grander and nobler is her decisiveness and firmness to meet her death alone, isolated and unassisted: “Antigone’s pursuit of virtue is her own. It involves nobody else and commits her to abusing no other person [...] Antigone’s pious actions are executed alone, out of a solitary commitment. She may be strangely remote from the world; but she does no violence to it” (Nussbaum 2001, p. 66). Undoubtedly, she dies for the high ideals she has not only proudly pursued but also lived out:

“My tomb, my bridal bedroom, my home
dug from rock, where they’ll keep me forever –
I’ll join my family there, so may of us dead,
already welcomed by Persephone.
I’ll be the last to arrive, and the worst off,
going down with most of my life unlived.
[...]
I won’t hear bridal songs, or feel the joy
of married love, and I will have no share
in raising children. No, I will go grieving,
friendless, and alive to a hollow tomb.” (Sophocles 2012, pp. 983–1013)

In this way, the tragedy “shows a type of idealism which implies a belief in higher values to the point of sacrificing one’s life to achieve them” (McDonald 2003, p. 55) whereby the only heartfelt regret is over the unfulfilled married love and unrealized maternity. As her life slowly draws to its fatal closure, Antigone seems to have achieved the stance which is far more self-illuminating than self-sacrificing. First, in life there are some ideals such as unconditional compassion for its closest family members which far outreach any limiting earthly boundaries. Second, it is always possible to make a choice and challenge the power structures which we find dehumanizing and self-dispossessing. Third, free will, as in

⁷“The contrast with Creon is not aimed at solving a problem of conduct but is meant to reveal the nature of Antigone’s high-minded conduct and to point up the difference between nobility and the lack of it; and the course of nobility always partakes of ultimate rightness” (Kirkwood 1994, p. 53).

Antigone's case, is a reassertion of the freedom of expression and, primarily, self-expression in line with the natural, eternal, archetypal. In this light, Antigone is the manifestation of one aspect of the Earth Mother – the loving, self-sacrificing one. However, she does not only represent the aspect of the archetypal Earth Mother which is nurturing and outgoing to the utmost but she also articulates its destructive, punishing, vengeful downside in the Earth Mother's essential duality: "But if my judges are at fault, I want *them* to suffer the pain they inflict on me now" (Sophocles 2012, pp. 1021–1022).

The subsequent tragic deaths of Haemon and Creon's wife ultimately point to Antigone's downright righteousness, the judge's "hotheaded willfulness" (Sophocles 2012, pp. 960–961) as well as to a close connection between the physical and the metaphysical, the earthly and the divine, the individual and the archetypal, etc. In the context of Antigone's symbolic representation as the archetypal Earth Mother, their deaths advocate retributive justice as well as the cosmic, divine, reciprocated intervention upon Creon's most beloved.

The play concludes that Creon "could have escaped with a lighter penalty but the bitterness is that his judgement was wrong, and that Antigone's instinct was right; and in the end he has less to cling to than she" (Kitto2002, p. 131). Throughout the play, the Sophoclean heroine has remained honest to her innermost self – she has been guided by pure instincts and the archetypally designed law of righteousness. Eventually, "Antigone, in a situation which meant death or the betrayal of her noblest instinct, chose death and made the better choice: Creon, who loved power more than righteousness, was smitten through the woman whose powerlessness he had wronged, and so learned righteousness through suffering" (Sheppard2011, p. 116).

Despite the fact that Antigone might seem as a usurper of the ordered society challenging its value system and triggering the downfall of Creon as its chief advocate, her heroic act is a true manifestation of how the cosmic, macrostructural framework of archetypal laws resurfaces and overridingly solidifies itself over the rather fragile, microstructural framework of man-made laws. Chaotic and unjust though the world could temporarily appear to be, the final scene advocates a promise of the restoration of order in Thebes once Creon has suffered his wrongdoing to gods:

"Through such endings tragedy places before us a vision of the world as a place of potential chaos and threatens the human need for order, hope, and reasonableness. Yet tragedy – Greek, Elizabethan, or contemporary – rarely suggests that chaos is the final result. The justice of Creon's end and his own acknowledgement of his responsibility vindicate Antigone and leave us with that punitive justice of the gods of which Tiresias has warned." (Segal 1998, p. 136)

Unlike Antigone who has pursued the impossible to its limits and has ultimately defied self-dispossession at least metaphysically, Creon's belated realization that his acts have been those of "a wretched coward, awash with terror" (Sophocles 2012, pp. 1464–1465) makes him dispossessed of his son and wife who "are destroyed by Creon's obduracy" (Walton 2015, p. 81). For these reasons, the Sophoclean play has by the end evolved into a well-rounded "cautionary tale about

political tyranny and resistance, about the essential role of women in the family and the city, about the proper relationship between the living and the dead” (Rehm 2003, p. 28) and about the eternal conflict between an autonomous, free-willed individual and the authoritarian restrictions of the state. Also, it is the triumph of the autonomy of the person acting archetypally and it demonstrates that the body may be lethally vulnerable but some higher idea(l)s that we consistently fight for outlive and outreach the tyranny of the one-sided, rationality-centered perspective⁸. What is more, the moral strength of Sophocles’ heroine and the archetypal dimension of the Earth Mother that she largely paradigmatises make the metaphysical magnitude of her act far greater than the dehumanizing punishment that she is unjustly sentenced to.

Conclusion

Antigone deviates from the stereotypical Greek tragedy in which there is “an implicit norm and tragedy often reminds its audience of or abides by contemporary standards. Thus female characters can be admonished to stay in their place within and keep silent; men express outrage at a female challenge; aberrant women are labelled as masculine” (Foley 2001, p. 7). The Sophoclean heroine is an autonomous, free-willed, self-reliant woman who is unafraid to challenge and question what she perceives as the violation of the higher laws.

Opposing the stereotypical admonishment and silencing of the social apparatus, *Antigone* has taken on the role of an antistereotypical, challenging, archetypal woman and given memorable “speeches of absolute devotion to her brother, individual defiance against paternalistic governmental repression, and allegiance to divine authority” (Griffith 2005, p. 91). Illustrating *Antigone*’s counteractive standpoint towards the typicality and stereotypicality, the paper has also shown how her individuality and counter-stereotypicality align well with the archetypal which is in turn well attuned with both natural and eternal laws. Unlike the largely silenced Ismene-like women who are cloistered within the rigid boundaries of the male-centered and male-dominated rationalistic Athenian society, the antipodean figure of *Antigone* has mapped out her territory of activity and persisted in being an assertive, disruptive, transgressive and unsilenceable woman until her own physical death. In this context, the Sophoclean *Antigone* has showcased how the “tragedy represents the inability, impossibility, and even undesirability of eradicating the body and the irrational. It is a genre frequently concerned with the disruptive power of the body, emerging and erupting from a repressed and sublimated position in some Athenian ideological discourses, reasserting itself in drama” (Cawthorn 2008, p. 26).

⁸The Chorus of Theban elders, which have been mostly cautious in taking sides and in being judgemental throughout the play, “do intervene at a critical point in Creon’s life, when he asks them for advice about what to do when confronting Tiresias’ threats of doom. At this point they are far from mere commentators on the action” (Bushnell 2008, p. 36).

Sophocles' "particular contribution to dramatic structure is the staging of conflict, in particular conflict between opposing forces rigid in attitude and uncompromising in action" (Walton 2015, p. 78) whereby the Chorus of Theban elders "appear to be afraid of both antagonists, wary of Antigone's extremism but also concerned over speaking out in the face of Creon's anger" (Bushnell 2008, p. 36) throughout most of the play. Antigone's heroization and resistance shown in the dramatic, conflicting situation have proven that "there are discursive practices that turn silence into expression of freedom, responsibility, and care" (Clair 1998, p. 68). Her discursive practice throughout the play, which has been atypical of a woman of the fifth-century Thebes, has been a powerful way of transforming the silencing zone into a speaking, woman-empowering and self-affirming territory. Ignorant and defiant of the society's laws which infringe on the burial rites, Antigone has buried her dead brother, Polyneikes, and has valiantly demonstrated her unbounded freedom of expression. Additionally, her discursive practice has not only been within the boundaries of the caring, loving archetypal mother figure; it has also reached the other end of the pendulum swing through her manifestation of the vengeful aspect of the Earth Mother – Antigone's curse on Creon – and it has shown how "[c]ivilized discourse gives way suddenly to curse or bellow" (Segal 1999, p. 53). Therefore, Antigone's, the archetypal mother's, self-sacrifice in the name of love for the dead brother and her subsequent live burial also trigger the surfacing of the vengefully destructive aspect of the Earth Mother through the death of Creon and his family.

To a large extent, *Antigone* has justified the act of an individual who refuses to be reduced either to a mere subject of the polis and its laws or to a passive, servile, unquestioning woman's role based on the discriminatory binary of gender essentialism. On the road of her own individuation or self-realization Antigone has outgrown the ego-centrism and one-sided perspective of the Creon or Ismene type and embraced life in its primal totality and indeconstructible wholeness compounded of the natural, eternal and archetypal laws. Antigone's self-realization, manifested through her role of the archetypal Earth Mother in its duality, has been made possible due to her deeper, more complex understanding of essential human nature: "The Self is not only the centre, but also the whole circumference, which embraces both conscious and unconscious; it is the centre of this totality, just as the ego is the centre of consciousness" (Jung 1968, p.41). On the one hand, the Sophoclean heroine's fundamentally biological and instinctive drive to provide the dead brother an adequate burial is the symbolic representation of the aspect of the archetypally caring mother figure acting in accordance with both natural and eternal laws. On the other, we can see how the other (Other) aspect of the archetypal Earth Mother, which is vengeful and destructive, is likewise exploited and personified in the figure of Antigone: the enraged Earth Mother's curse befalls those closest to Creon whereby life and (re)productivity are reduced to death and sterility: "By corrupting funeral rites and exposing the corpse of Polyneices, Creon allows the pollution to spread. With the loss of ritual purity comes the loss of fertility. The deaths of the bride and groom lead to the destruction of the house" (Nagy 1998, p. XI).

Importantly, Sophocles' play, which is fundamentally about taking two overridingly divergent and one-sided perspectives to the level of the extreme and the absolute "is not aimed at solving a problem of conduct but is meant to reveal the nature of Antigone's high-minded conduct and to point up the difference between nobility and the lack of it; and the course of nobility always partakes of ultimate rightness" (Kirkwood 1994, p. 53). Eventually, the play questions the validity of the laws which go against the natural, eternal and archetypal and condition people culturally, ideologically and socially. What has been rejected in the play's transgressive narrative is the logic of the superior nature of the social laws, the society-orchestrated typecasting of people and, finally, the unquestionable stereotyping of people's behavioural patterns for the sake of the wellbeing of the city-state. "Even when the end of the tragedy resolves the conflict, the essence or mainspring of the tragic situation itself is in the questioning" (Segal 1999, p. 22). Very much in the manner of great Greek tragedies, *Antigone* concludes that the perception of the world as compounded of polarities is a sort of human condition wherein a hero/heroine is supposed to come up with new ways of confronting the essential duality or polarity. The point is in the constant questioning of the duality and, more importantly, of the self in the context of this duality. The interrogatory mode of the tragic narrative as we find in *Antigone* is also implicit of a certain much-needed reassessment of the role of the stereotypical and the archetypal in the context of the polarized sides and of the possibility of the expression of some degree of free will within the overly deterministic and fatalistic nomenclature. Ultimately, although Sophocles' play reaffirms that "[t]ragedy is the form of myth which explores the ultimate impossibility of mediation by accepting the contradiction between the basic polarities that human existence confronts" (Segal 1999, p. 22), there is still a certain degree of operative free will which makes Antigone's fate less solipsistic and her determined zone of activity less deterministic.

The uncompromising clash between the stereotypical and the archetypal, which forms the nucleus of the play, has unavoidably necessitated the multiple losses and deaths by the end and yet Antigone's tragedy has acquired heroic dimensions:

"The power of Sophocles' tragic heroism lies in its passionate and fearless openness to the forces that challenge and threaten the orderly framework of human existence: time, death, hatred, love. For this reason the tragic hero is always in some sense beyond the pale of civilization, which can exist only by blocking out or delimiting those forces. It is part of the greatness of the fifth century that it allows the dialogue between the two sides to develop so fully." (Segal 1999, p. 201)

Ultimately, it seems that the stereotypical-archetypal clash has been an eternal and at times literally unavoidable in the context of great individual, familial and social injustices. Still, no matter how conflicting, unmarriageable and warring the opposites may be it is the dialogue which should always be resorted to with a view to coming up with a life-saving alternative to the fatalistic extremism of exclusively one-sided perspective – be it individually or socially propelled.

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The War in Ukraine and the MENA Countries

By Gregory T. Papanikos*

On the 24 February 2022, Russia-Belarus invaded Ukraine, sending a shockwave all around the world. The countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) found themselves unprepared to deal with this new development. For some of them, Russia supports their own political cause making it difficult to make an open condemnation of the invasion. In addition, many MENA countries depend on Russia and Ukraine for their food supplies, i.e., wheat. However, the majority of countries from the Middle East used the occasion of the 11th United Nations (UN) Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly to denounce the invasion. This paper looks at the MENA countries' stance in the UN and role in the Russian-Belarus invasion of Ukraine. A general conclusion which emerges from this discussion is that the MENA's political stance very much depend on their own analogous historical experiences with wars and invasions. However, most importantly, their stance depends on their current alliance with Russia and/or their current relations with the USA. The latter is the most important determinant of their role in the conflict.

Keywords: Ukraine, Russia, Belarus MENA, Syria, Turkey, Israel, war, energy, food, wheat, international relations

Introduction

Is the Russian-Belarus¹ invasion of Ukraine undermining the international order that emerged after the 2nd World War?² Definitely not. Is this the first time that a sovereign country member of the United Nations invades another sovereign country, also a member of the UN? Definitely not. Is this the first time this has happened in Europe after the 2nd World War? Definitely not. On the contrary, Turkey—a European country—invaded another European country, that of Cyprus, in 1974 and still today occupies 40% of its territory. In 1992 and 1999, NATO bombed Bosnia and Serbia respectively. The world's reactions were different and what really makes a huge difference this time is the threat of an escalation which will force all countries to take sides. This is definitely the case with the MENA countries which is the focus of this paper.

In Papanikos (2000), I described an international economic order of three blocks: American, Asian, and European. The current war in Ukraine does not reject my analysis. In Papanikos (2005), I edited a collection of essays of research on global affairs, which looked at the international order, including a chapter on

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¹I include Belarus as well because it is part of the invasion. As a matter of fact, the UN declaration condemned both Russia and Belarus.

²In a series of papers, I have examined this issue both from an international perspective Papanikos 2022a, 2022b) and from a strictly Greek perspective (Papanikos 2022c, 2022d).

Russia's policy towards Ukraine (Kaloudis 2005). The conclusion is that these issues were considered very important for global security, but nobody expected that a war would be the solution.

A common characteristic was the dominance of one country in each block: USA, Japan and Germany. Twenty years after, Japan has been overtaken by China. This is to be expected, but it is quite possible that, by 2050, China will be overtaken by India. However, as I have argued in a series of papers concerning the Ukrainian War (see fn. 2 above), the USA not only dominates its own region/ continent, but leads the rest of the world as well. Russia and China are not in a position to threaten the hegemony of the US. The international order will continue to be shaped by the US's strategic interests; the most important of which are its own economic interests. The US can dominate by acting alone. However, many countries willingly or unwillingly align themselves with the strategic global interests of the US. The Ukrainian War is not an exception. In the conclusions of Papanikos (2022b), I briefly mentioned how the world reacted to the Ukrainian War by geographical areas. The aim of this paper is to look at one of these areas, namely the MENA countries.

This study looks at the stance of the MENA countries on the war in Ukraine. I do emphasize the voting behaviour in the UN; both their rhetoric and their actions thereafter of selected countries. It seems to me that their stance stands out as examples of ambiguous foreign policy actions, primarily because they have strategic and economic difficulties in choosing sides. Of particular interests are countries like Israel and Turkey. These two countries have had a more direct role in the conflict by offering their services to mediate between the two fighting sides. This role, which historically is not unique, explains the two countries' stance: verbally condemning the invasion at the UN level, but refraining from taking any action such as imposing sanctions. These issues are examined below.

Including this introduction, the paper is organized into five sections. The following sections select a few points made by the UN resolution and relates them to Turkey's and Israel's past violations of international law and UN Charter. The third section discusses in some detail the voting behaviour of the MENA countries during the UN General Assembly meeting on 2 March 2022. The fourth section looks at the EU-MENA relations and how these are affected by the Ukrainian War. The last section concludes.

The United Nations' Role

The United Nations (UN) plays a very limited role in settling international disputes, even in cases that there is no direct involvement of the permanent members of the Security Council. Thus, it did not come as surprise that the Security Council failed to condemn Russia's invasion given the veto power of Russia. However, the issue was discussed in the General Assembly which met for the 11th time in an emergency special session on 1 March 2022. In total, 141 countries followed the US in condemning the Russian-Belarus invasion of

Ukraine, 35 abstained and 5 were against. This shows that the US is an indisputable leader in world affairs, but not with unlimited power.

The main purpose of this paper is to briefly discuss how the MENA countries voted in the UN resolution. This issue is taken up in the next section of the paper. In the remainder of this section, I discuss some important issues mentioned in the UN declaration of the “Aggression Against Ukraine”, which relates very much to the issue of the MENA’s countries positions vis-à-vis the Russian-Belarus invasion.

The UN declaration recognizes that this invasion is a joint action by both Russia and Belarus. In the declaration, it is clearly stated that the General Assembly of the UN, “*Deplores* the involvement of Belarus in this unlawful use of force against Ukraine, and calls upon it to abide by its international obligations.” Therefore, it is legitimate to use the term “Russian-Belarus Invasion” of Ukraine, as I did in all my previous papers on this issue.

In the UN declaration there are many points made which, if they are assumed that they are applied in the rest of the world, will have a direct effect on the MENA countries’ historical past.

It is claimed that the UN is “*Reaffirming* that no territorial acquisition resulting from the threat or use of force shall be recognized as legal.” It is of interest to note here that two countries which voted in favor of this statement and offered their kind services to mitigate and end the conflict –Turkey and Israel— have been historical violators of this principle. Both countries occupy lands by the use of force, and despite the various UN resolutions, do not oblige to their international responsibilities which as the UN declaration states, “*Bearing in mind* the importance of maintaining and strengthening international peace founded upon freedom, equality, justice and respect for human rights and of developing friendly relations among nations irrespective of their political, economic and social systems or the levels of their development.”

Now both countries ask Russia not to use force to acquire territories. Russia could have replied by asking these two countries to give up territories which were obtained by the use of force. As a matter of fact, the Russian foreign minister did make a link with Turkey’s territorial invasion and occupation of 40% of Cyprus by the use of force. And they are right. Both invasions and occupations have been justified using exactly the same rhetoric and in violation of International Law and the UN Charter. Why then is Turkey so against the Russian-Belarus invasion?

Relative to the issues discussed in this paper are the impacts of the conflict on food and energy supply.³ In the words of the UN declaration, “*Expressing concern* also about the potential impact of the conflict on increased food insecurity globally, as Ukraine and the region are one of the world’s most important areas for grain and agricultural exports, when millions of people are facing famine or the immediate risk of famine or are experiencing severe food insecurity in several regions of the world, as well as on energy security.”

³On the latter issue and relative to the Mediterranean countries’ energy policy, see Papanikos (2017).

These two issues of food supply and energy are directly related to the stance that the MENA countries have taken on the Russian-Belarus invasion of Ukraine. Both issues are discussed in the next sections of the paper.

The MENA Countries Stance in the UN Resolution on Ukraine

The positions of each country are based on a policy brief released by The Washington Institute for Near East Policy as a *Policy Analysis* document on 2 March 2022 and the official stances of individual countries, if available, obtained from various sources.

Table 1 compares votes and percentages of all countries with the MENA countries. The resolution was sponsored by 96 countries; 4 of which were from the MENA region (see Table 2). In total, 181 countries participated in the vote out of 193 UN member states. From these, 141 countries voted in favor, 5 against (Belarus, North Korea, Eritrea, Syria and Russia), while there were 35 abstentions.

As far as the approval rate is concerned, the MENA countries' voting behaviour was similar to the voting of all UN members. Of those whom voted, 78% of the UN members approved the resolution;⁴ the same approval rate was achieved by the MENA countries. If the abstentions are included, then 74% of the MENA countries approved the resolution, which is one percentage point higher than the overall UN approval rate.

Table 1. *Voting on the UN Resolution on Ukraine (2 March 2022)*

Voting	Number of Countries	Percentage of those Voted	Percentage of the total UN Members	MENA Countries	Percentage of the MENA Voted	Percentage of the MENA Members
Approval	141	78%	73%	14	78%	74%
Against	5	3%	3%	1	6%	5%
Abstain	35	19%	18%	3	17%	16%
Absent	12	-	6%	1	-	5%
Total	193	100%	100%	19	100%	100%

Note: Percentages may not add up due to rounding.

The conclusion which emerges from Table 1 is that the voting behaviour of the MENA countries is no different from the overall vote of the UN members. This might come as a surprise given the direct interests and the historical experiences and ties of these countries. The most important interests are economic and security-defense.

Table 2 presents how the individual MENA countries voted during the emergency special session of the UN General Assembly on 2 March 2022. MENA countries may vote very similar to the world average, but the justification of their vote shows that there are differences. This explains their actions and rhetoric

⁴However, the opposite is true if countries voting is weighted by their population. Then, only 36% of the world's population condemned the Russian-Belarus invasion of Ukraine. Two-thirds of the world's population either abstained or voted against the resolution.

which were expressed during the UN meeting and the following days as the war progressed.

For example, Turkey and Israel voted in favor and cosponsored the resolution (see Table 2). However, this voting behaviour did not prevent these two countries to play a leading role in trying to bring the two sides of the conflict together, and through a peaceful dialogue, solve their differences.

Turkey and Israel used very strong language in condemning the Russian-Belarus invasion of Ukraine. According to Turkey's position in the UN, "...In today's resolution, the UN emphasizes loud and clear that it stands against egregious violations of the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political unity of fellow member states."

Turkey used the same arguments in favor of Libya, as I have explained in Papanikos (2020b). What is of interest here is that Turkey is guilty of violating international law when it invaded Cyprus in 1974. However, Turkey wants to play the role of a mediator with the hope that this will improve its relations with the neighboring countries, EU and most importantly with the US. In addition, Turkey is facing an economic crisis and next year (2023) an election is forthcoming.

Turkey's historical role,⁵ at least in the previous century, was always wait and see. It did not participate in the 1st and the 2nd World Wars when all of Europe was in flames. It appears that it wants to follow a similar line by not taking an active role in condemning Russia, even though in the UN resolution was very critical of the invasion and no action followed this rhetoric.

Turkey abstained from voting on Russia's expulsion from the Council of Europe and refrained from following the EU and US in imposing economic and other sanctions. Russia is Turkey's biggest economic partner. Turkey depends on Russia for its gas and wheat needs. It is also a great destination for Russian tourists. On the other hand, Ukraine is an important trade partner of Turkey, especially in the supply of military equipment.⁶ This explains why Turkey finds itself in a very difficult position.

Similarly, Israel strongly condemned the invasion and call for a respect of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine. At the same time, they offer their services to find a diplomatic solution; in their own words, "Given our deep ties with both sides, we are willing to contribute to the diplomatic effort if so requested, and have been trying to do so in the last couple of weeks. Israel expresses its concern for the safety of the people of Ukraine, including the numerous Israeli citizens living there and the sizable Jewish communities in the affected areas."

But as was the case with Turkey, Israel has also been condemned for exactly the same violation as Russia in international law and the UN charter. As in the case of Turkey, Israel faces many dilemmas over the Russia-Belarus invasion of Ukraine. Israel wants to maintain its good relation with Russia so that it can operate with relative freedom over the Syrian skies. In addition, both countries of the conflict have strong Jewish communities; part of which is the current President of Ukraine.

⁵On the role of Turkey, I have written a number of papers; see Papanikos (2020a, 2021a).

⁶The military spending issue is discussed in Papanikos (2015).

These two countries are examples, if nothing else, of the hypocrisy of the countries' stance when it comes to international affairs. The international law and the principles of the UN are accepted and used if and only if it serves the present interests of the countries. This is what history teaches us starting from the father of history, Herodotus, but above all the greatest historian of all time, Thucydides.⁷

Table 2. *The MENA Countries Vote in the UN General Assembly (2 March 2022)*

	Country	Formal Vote	Justification	Stance/Tone
1	Algeria	Abstain	Dialogue	Neutral
2	Bahrain	In favor	Dialogue	Pro-USA
3	Egypt	In favor	Dialogue	Pro-USA
4	Iran	Abstain	Dialogue	Anti-USA
5	Iraq	Abstain	Dialogue	Pro-Russian
6	Israel	In favor – Cosponsored	UN Charter International Law Israeli Citizens	Pro-USA
7	Jordan	In favor	UN Charter International Law	Pro-USA
8	Kuwait	In favor – Cosponsored	UN Charter International Law	Pro-USA
9	Lebanon	In favor	UN Charter International Law	Pro-USA
10	Libya	In favor	N/A	N/A
11	Morocco	Absent	N/A	N/A
12	Oman	In favor	N/A	N/A
13	Qatar	In favor – Cosponsored	UN Charter International Law	Pro-USA
14	Saudi Arabia	In favor	N/A	N/A
15	Syria	Against		Anti-USA
16	Tunisia	In favor	Dialogue	Pro-USA
17	Turkey	In favor – Cosponsored	Very strong anti-Russian position	Pro-USA
18	United Arab Emirates	In favor	Dialogue	Pro-USA
19	Yemen	In favor	N/A	N/A

Syria's justification of its vote is of great interest. It voted against the resolution for a number of reasons. Firstly, it voted against because it wanted to reject the west's hegemony. Secondly, it voted against because Israel continues to occupy Arab lands. Thirdly, it voted against because Turkey and the US have violated the sovereignty of Syria. However, it does not say anything about Turkey's occupation of Cyprus which is similar to Israel's and Turkey's occupation of Arab and Syrian lands respectively. However, the biggest contradiction is what Turkey did to Syria –invasion and occupation—and is exactly what Russia and Belarus did to Ukraine, i.e., invasion and occupation. Thus, if someone did not know that the Syrian regime is a puppet of Russia, one would have concluded that Syria is against the resolution not so much because it favors the invasion, but because the UN did not do anything in other similar cases in the area (not to mention all of them but the

⁷On how to use history to explain current affairs see Papanikos (2015b, 2016, 2020a, 2020c, 2020d, 2022e).

ones which has an interest to them). A crystal-clear position would have been that Syria is against the resolution because it is in favor of the Russian-Belarus invasion. This is not clear from the official Syrian position. This is common to many other MENA countries' stance on the issue as is shown below. All of them use the invasion as another excuse to attack the US and the west.

Three MENA countries abstained from voting even though they have strong ties with either side of the conflict. These were Algeria, Iran and Iraq. Even though they had a common stance on the UN voting, their motivations for their voting stance however, is different as discussed below. As a general rule, one may interpret the abstaining vote as echoing divisions within the country itself.

Algeria abstained, but the language used in its position in the UN can be considered as pro-US. It called for "peaceful coexistence" and "international peace and security". Algeria's position is really surprising because of its own struggle against the French occupation which ended in 1962. However, Algeria's position can be explained albeit it is a very complicated one. Most probably, the majority of Algerians would support Russia based on historical reasons that go back to the Soviet Union. On the other hand, the recent developments have found Algeria to collaborate with NATO by participating in the last twenty years in the NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue with many other countries of the region, including Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, and Israel.

Apart from these strategic and security explanations there are strong economic reasons that Algeria could not ignore. Firstly, the invasion increased energy prices benefiting Algeria's economy because it is a large supplier of energy to Europe through pipelines to Spain and Italy. These huge increases would compensate Algeria for the dramatic decreases in energy prices due to the pandemic. However, there is a serious tradeoff. The war increased energy prices but at the same time it increased the price of staple foods. Algeria is one the world's largest importers of wheat. All these are short-to-medium-term effects. In the long-term, if the Europe's shift to politicize its economic relations, then Algeria might be included in the list of those countries with authoritarian regimes which Europe would want to exclude from its international trade relations. All these reasons might explain why Algeria decided to abstain, and instead make a vague statement about peace and especially peaceful co-existence between Russia and the other countries which have a direct interest in the conflict which is the case with the EU.

Iran abstained, blaming the US and NATO for the invasion. It was the US that provoked the Russian invasion, Iran claimed in justifying its abstention in the UN. It nevertheless called for an immediate ceasefire and a peaceful resolution through a dialogue. Such stances are contradictory in nature. If the US is to blame for the Russian-Belarus invasion, how then will this be served by an immediate ceasefire if the Russian concerns are not met. All countries suggest a dialogue. By definition, a dialogue requires at least two parties. There is no doubt that one party is Russia. Who is going to represent the second part of the dialogue? This is not clear in many of the positions of the countries in the UN, irrespectively of how they voted. Iran is one of many such countries. Iran's stance most probably reflects internal divisions within the country and power bickering among the Office of the

Supreme Leader, the Presidency, and the Revolutionary Guards. Further research based on inside information is needed to shed light on Iran's position.

To nobody's surprise, Iraq argued and voted in a similar manner as Iran. However, there is a difference. Iraq did not accuse the US and NATO as provoking the invasion. Its justification makes no sense though. It claims that, "Iraq has decided to abstain because of our historical background in Iraq and because of our sufferings resulting from the continuing wars against our peoples." The justification would fit a vote against the Russian-Belarus invasion because this is what broke a war and endangers further escalation in Europe and elsewhere.

Of interest are the positions of the other MENA countries as well. Lebanon issued a strong statement condemning the Russian invasion which brought a strong reaction from the Russian ambassador in Beirut. Similarly, Kuwait, the only Arab country to co-sponsor the resolution, condemned Russia.

The United Arab Emirates –the only Arab country to hold a seat in the UN Security Council—abstained from condemning the Russian-Belarus invasion at the Security Council level, but voted in favor of the resolution in the UN General Assembly meeting.

The other Arab countries like Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia (as well as Algeria examined above) depend on Russia and Ukraine for their huge wheat imports and they wanted to follow a more neutral approach despite how they voted in the UN meetings.

In concluding this section and taken into consideration the active role of some MENA countries, it is evident that Turkey and Israel have used their good relations to act as mediators in the conflict, despite the fact that both countries condemned Russia for its invasion in Ukraine. Given the dominance of the US in world affairs –as this is actually demonstrated by the overwhelming majority of supporting resolution suggested by US itself—one may infer that these two traditional and strong allies of the US, such as Turkey and Israel, would never have taken these bold initiatives without the "permission" of the US. The US never condemned Turkey or Israel either for showing such a great interest.

The second overall conclusion of the MENA countries' stance on the issue is that, despite their stance in the UN, countries such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar would have been more willing to increase the supply of energy resources to Europe given the latter's decision to disentangle it from its dependency on Russian sources. It appears that there is a strong readiness all across Europe to make a permanent shift away from its dependency on Russian energy supplies to the great satisfaction of US officials. The US has committed to supply oil and gas at an affordable and competitive price. In this context, Qatar will play a leading role. This brings the discussion into the EU-Mena relations examined in the next section.

The EU-MENA Relations

To the surprise of many, the EU's stance on the Russian-Belarus invasion was united, and most importantly, it acted very fast in imposing economic and other

sanctions. The economic sanctions are imposed not only on Russia, but Belarus as well. The measures taken by the EU are unprecedented and reveal a strong disposition to move away from its past, characterized by unwillingness and indecisions to act, resulting in endless deliberations. In the case of the Russia-Belarus invasion, the EU acted quickly in closing its aerospace to Russian aircrafts, but most importantly the EU decided to deliver weapons to Ukraine. The EU is pushing other countries in the world to follow its example and the MENA countries are no exception.

As mentioned above, the EU countries are determined to end their dependency on Russian oil and gas. The EU is eager to restore the Iran Nuclear Deal of 2015 which Russia wanted to use it to pressure the US and EU by demanding that the sanctions will not undermine its economic and military relations with Iran. US vehemently rejected the Russian proposal. Once the deal is revived, then the EU will have another rich source of energy available to cut off its dependence on Russian energy supply. However, a deal is not an easy one, and even if it is achieved new challenges may emerge such as Russia using Iran to evade the EU- and US-imposed sanctions. It is well known that sanctions are easily imposed on paper but very difficult to enforce when it comes to effective implementation of them. In addition, Russia sells weapons to Iran and a deal is negotiated between the two countries to sell Russian warplanes and submarines. All these will affect the EU-MENA countries' relationships and not only with Iran.

The second important new development in the EU-MENA relations is the enhanced role of Turkey. Turkey has aspirations for an eventual EU entry—something that many member states reject for various reasons including political (lack of democracy⁸), economic integration and global stances on various issues including the threat on member states, and the Turkish invasion of Cyprus and its occupation of the 40% of the island's territory. Cyprus is a full member of the EU which includes the eurozone. Turkey is a member of NATO and therefore, at least on paper, is committed to defend any member country of NATO in the occasion of being attacked by any other country, which of course includes Russia.⁹ Currently NATO is deploying its military resources in countries like Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary and Slovakia. In the unfortunate event of a NATO-Russia war, Turkey cannot play a neutral role without costs. In addition, and relevant to the EU's

⁸The arguments of democracy have been used in the Ukrainian War as well. Many pro-US positions were based that this war is not only a war of Ukrainian versus Russia, but a war of democracy and freedom against autocracy. The notion of democracy at the theoretical level and its practical implications is discussed in Meydani (2022), Papanikos (2020e, 2022f, 2022g) and Petratos (2022).

⁹Turkey finds itself in another awkward position. Turkey is a member of NATO and in many occasions has threatened Greece with war. In such a case, NATO will find itself in the difficult position to defend a NATO member against the possible aggression of another NATO member. This might explain why the EU and the US are trying very hard to prevent such an unfortunate event. Despite the claims made in both Greece and Turkey, it is more than evident that the EU, and especially the US, has no any strategic interest to support one country against the other. Greeks blame US as being pro-Turkish while the opposite is the case with Turkey which blames the US for being pro-Greek. In the case of the EU, the situation is different because Turkey is not a member of the EU.

interests, Turkey can play an important role with Georgia which has formally applied to become a member of EU.

The next critical EU relations are with the Gulf countries. In particular, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Even though they voted in favor of the UN resolution and therefore against Russian invasion, they nevertheless think they have been left out from the EU and especially from US in their security concerns. A weaker Russia will not help their anxieties of long-term security. The EU, obviously, depends on these countries if they want to decrease their dependency on Russia. On the other hand, these countries have vital economic interests with Russia because the latter co-determines energy policy and pricing as a member of OPEC+.

The last important EU relations are with Israel which refused to follow the EU in imposing sanctions on Russia and cut ties. On the contrary, Israel will come into conflict with the EU if it continues its relations with the Russian oligarchs. Another potential source of conflict will arise if the EU reaches an agreement in Vienna, then Israel will be prompted to attack Iranian nuclear installations.

Summarizing, the EU will face many difficulties with its relations with the MENA countries. These countries do not speak with one voice and their interests are so diverse and, in many cases, antithetical, which makes EU's foreign policy with the region a very difficult one. One thing is certain: the war in Ukraine did not help in improving the EU-MENA relations.

Conclusions

The general conclusion which emerges from the above discussion is that despite the fact that the MENA countries' vote in the UN which was very similar to the overall UN voting, the differences and the strategic interests of the MENA countries in the Russian-Ukraine conflict are so diverse that one cannot explain this similarity. All countries are irrelevant in how they voted and their calls for a ceasefire and instead finding a peaceful solution via the process of a dialogue. As a matter of fact, two countries of the MENA region –Turkey and Israel—have offered their services as mediators. This is despite the fact that both countries condemned Russia for its invasion.

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