God-Hero Antagonism in the Hippolytus of Euripides

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For example:

God-Hero Antagonism in the Hippolytus of Euripides

February 14, 2015  By Gregory Nagy  listed under Gregory Nagy, H24H  Comments off  Edit This

2015.02.14 | By Gregory Nagy

§1. In hour 20 of The Ancient Greek Hero in 24 Hours (H24H), I wrote about the hero as a mirror of men's and women's experiences in the Hippolytus of Euripides with a focus on the key word telos, 'end, ending, final moment; goal, completion, fulfillment; coming full circle, rounding out; successfully passing through an ordeal; initiation; ritual, rite'.

§2. Today [= 2015.02.14] I'm writing to share an upcoming addition to H24H [editor's note, 2018.07.26: GN was referring here to a new edition that was already being contemplated in 2015.02.14] that has relevance for those of you who are reading and analyzing Hippolytus. This is not the final wording that will appear in the second edition of the book, but the gist is as follows:[1]

§3. For understanding the god-hero antagonism in which Hippolytus is involved, it is important to note that:

Both Aphrodite and Artemis are divine antagonists of Hippolytus, insofar as a couple of centuries earlier Aphrodite and Artemis were fused in their identities via the epithet Dios thugatér ‘daughter of Zeus’. [2]

The descriptions given by Pausanias about the places where Hippolytus is worshipped as a cult hero (Pausanias 1.22.1; 2.32.1-2 = Hour 20 Text E; 2.32.3-4 = Hour 20 Text D) regularly locate both Aphrodite and Artemis in conjunction with Hippolytus’s space. Note that Phaedra is co-located in this same space.

I must emphasize here that Phaedra is just as much “the hero” of this story as Hippolytus is.

§4. Here is an analogy that we may consider: In the case of Héraklēs, the pattern of *antagonism in myth* and *symbiosis in ritual* involves not only Hérâ but also Zeus as agents of divine antagonism/symbiosis (H24H 1545–46). It’s just that Zeus is more of a “good cop” and Hérâ is more of a “bad cop.”
Notes

[1] This formulation was first communicated to the students in my Harvard College course on ancient Greek heroes via email on December 10, 2014.


Tags: Aphrodite, Artemis, Euripides, god-hero antagonism, Hippolytus, Hour 20, Pausanias, Phaedra

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