



E U R I P I D E S '

ELECTRA

A COMMENTARY.

H. M. Roisman and C. A. E. Luschnig

Euripides' *Electra*

OKLAHOMA SERIES IN CLASSICAL CULTURE

Oklahoma Series in Classical Culture

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H. M. ROISMAN
AND
C. A. E. LUSCHNIG

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA PRESS : NORMAN

This book is published with the generous assistance of
The McCasland Foundation, Duncan, Oklahoma.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Roisman, Hanna.

Euripides' *Electra* : a commentary / H. M. Roisman and C. A. E. Luschnig.

p. cm. — (Oklahoma series in classical culture ; v. 38)

Commentary in English, text in Greek.

Includes full text of Euripides, *Electra*.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-8061-4119-0 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Euripides. *Electra*. 2. Greek drama (Tragedy)—History and criticism. 3. Greek drama (Tragedy)—Criticism, Textual. 4. *Electra* (Greek mythology)—Drama.

I. Luschnig, C. A. E. II. Euripides. *Electra*. III. Title.

PA3973.E5R65 2011

882'.01—dc22

2010000149

Euripides' Electra: A Commentary is Volume 38 in the Oklahoma Series in Classical Culture.

The paper in this book meets the guidelines for permanence and durability of the Committee on Production Guidelines for Book Longevity of the Council on Library Resources, Inc. ∞

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For

Yossi, Elad, and Shalev Roisman



Emma and Arlene Eaton

And in memory of John Eaton and Jim Eaton

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PREFACE

Euripides' *Electra* is a favorite text for classroom reading. The purpose of our commentary is to provide material we deem useful for enhancing the experience of both undergraduate and graduate students, whether early in their studies or more advanced. Although the text is not very difficult as Greek texts go, its gripping story, variations on the traditional myth, ideas about fifth-century Athenian thought, manners, and morals, attitudes toward the gods, and its almost contemporary feel are among many aspects that provide endless fodder for discussion and exploration. It repeatedly calls for comparisons with Aeschylus' and Sophocles' treatments of the story of the revenge taken against Agamemnon's murderers by Electra and Orestes. Our Introduction serves as a brief guide to the myth as it is presented in epic, lyric, and tragedy.

We have tried to accommodate the various levels of students who are likely to read this play in Greek. Our notes give rudimentary grammatical help and syntactical reviews to fortify their language skills, but these are confined to appendices, allowing more advanced students to ignore them, while giving the less experienced a place to look for review and be saved from the frustration of the odd verb form that is hard to find. We have also provided a general vocabulary as an aid to students reading their first Euripidean play or for those whose aim is a rapid reading. On the assumption that our readers have limited experience in reading Greek tragedies, we try to make clear what is common to tragedy in general or to Euripides and what is rare, unusual, or specific to this play.

We also introduce students to such tools and terms of scholarship as scholia, *obeli*, interpolation, and literary or linguistic expressions. At the same time we address various readings of the manuscripts and offer explanations for our reading versus the manuscripts or the variously offered emendations.

Our notes include ample literary interpretations coupled with anthropological and cultural commentary (see, for example, the notes *ad* 83 on *pistos*, *xenos*, and *philos*). The Introduction relates the conventions of the Greek theater specifically to this play and we comment throughout on stage business to help our readers visualize the scenes and participate mentally in the spectacle. We have also included references to secondary scholarship in the commentary to encourage students who would like to research further certain scenes or topics. These are tied to a full bibliography. Attention is given to meter throughout, including a concise general introduction, descriptions of the meters of each ode, an appendix of metrical analyses, and discussions of resolutions and the dramatic contexts of meter.

In our earlier collaboration on a commentary on Euripides' *Alcestis* (*Euripides' Alcestis with Notes and Commentary* by C. A. E. Luschnig and H. M. Roisman [Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003]), we offered our differing interpretative views of the play in a separate section following the commentary. This time, however, we have found that we agree on most of the major issues of *Electra*, from its date to the attitude expressed toward matricide. For this reason, in the section titled "Discussions," we examine a few of the many significant topics about *Electra*, some of which have not often been treated independently, ending with descriptions of the literary afterlife of the play in theater and film. This material is provided both for classroom dialogue and as a starting point for research.

Our collaboration was carried out entirely over e-mail and we were geographically separated throughout the writing. Thus our thanks go to separate individuals or groups of people who have helped us in different locales. First our students (whether at Colby College or the University of Idaho) have earned our gratitude. Their probing questions and vital interest in the play not only prompted us to think about producing a commentary, but have also guided us in examining new corners and facets of interpretations of this play and Greek tragedy in general. Both of us also owe thanks to Karen Gillum of Colby College for helping us with the metrics and editing and to the readers for the University of Oklahoma Press, for providing many helpful comments and suggestions. Hanna Roisman extends her great thanks to the Department of Classics at the University of Cincinnati for the Margo Tytus Fellowship that enabled her to work at the magnificent Blegen Library, and to the library's staff for their helpful support in finding material. She is most grateful to her friend Toby Mostysser, not only for contributing to the readability of her part of the commentary, but also for many insights and comments about the play. To Suzanne Jones of Colby College, she gives thanks for the reliable,

thoughtful, and generous administrative help one needs when one writes a book, and last but not least, she owes thanks to the dedicated team of librarians at the interlibrary loan department of Miller Library at Colby College who spared no effort in getting her any article or book she requested. Zeev and Nadia Rubinsohn, and Beatrice Rosenberg were always there for her. Her deepest thanks are to her husband Yossi Roisman and her sons Elad L. Roisman and Shalev G. Roisman, on whom she knows she can always rely and to whom she dedicates her work. Cecelia Luschnig would like to thank her friends on the library staff at the University of Idaho, especially Hannah Etherton and Jesse Thomas for their expertise, and good cheer, and willingness to wink at an overdue book from time to time. Her heartfelt thanks as always goes to Lance Luschnig, who during the January 2009 floods diverted a rivulet from her basement study and who always helps her out of her computer woes.

January 2009

ABBREVIATIONS

GREEK AUTHORS AND WORKS

| | |
|----------------|--|
| frg. | fragment |
| ms, mss. | manuscript, manuscripts |
| Aelian | |
| <i>VH</i> | <i>Varia Historia</i> |
| A. | Aeschylus |
| <i>Ag.</i> | <i>Agamemnon</i> |
| <i>Cho.</i> | <i>Choephoroi (Libation Bearers)</i> |
| <i>Eum.</i> | <i>Eumenides</i> |
| <i>PB</i> | <i>Prometheus Bound</i> |
| <i>Sept.</i> | <i>Septem contra Thebas (Seven against Thebes)</i> |
| <i>Suppl.</i> | <i>Supplices (Suppliant Women)</i> |
| Anacr. | Anacreon |
| Apoll. | Apollodorus |
| Arist. | Aristotle |
| <i>Col.</i> | <i>Colors (de Coloribus)</i> |
| <i>HA</i> | <i>Historia Animalium</i> |
| <i>Probl.</i> | <i>Problems (Problemata)</i> |
| Aristoph. | Aristophanes |
| <i>Acharn.</i> | <i>Acharnians</i> |
| <i>Eccl.</i> | <i>Ecclesiazusae</i> |
| <i>Plut.</i> | <i>Plutus (Wealth)</i> |
| <i>Thesm.</i> | <i>Thesmophoriazusae</i> |
| E. Euripides | |
| <i>Alc.</i> | <i>Alcestis</i> |
| <i>Andr.</i> | <i>Andromache</i> |

| | |
|----------------|--|
| <i>Bacch.</i> | <i>Bacchae</i> |
| <i>El.</i> | <i>Electra</i> |
| <i>Hec.</i> | <i>Hecuba</i> |
| <i>Hel.</i> | <i>Helen (Helena)</i> |
| <i>Heracl.</i> | <i>Heracleidae (Children of Heracles)</i> |
| <i>Hipp.</i> | <i>Hippolytus</i> |
| <i>HF</i> | <i>Heracles (Hercules Furens)</i> |
| <i>IA</i> | <i>Iphigenia at Aulis</i> |
| <i>IT</i> | <i>Iphigenia among the Taurians</i> |
| <i>Med.</i> | <i>Medea</i> |
| <i>Or.</i> | <i>Orestes</i> |
| <i>Phoen.</i> | <i>Phoenissae (Phoenician Women)</i> |
| <i>Supp.</i> | <i>Suppliants</i> |
| <i>TW</i> | <i>Trojan Women (Troades)</i> |
| H. | Homer |
| <i>Il.</i> | <i>Iliad</i> |
| <i>Od.</i> | <i>Odyssey</i> |
| Hes. | Hesiod |
| <i>WD</i> | <i>Works and Days</i> |
| <i>Theo.</i> | <i>Theogony</i> |
| Hdt. | Herodotus, <i>History of the Persian Wars</i> |
| Hipp. | Hippocrates |
| <i>Mul.</i> | <i>Diseases in Women (γυναικεῖα)</i> |
| Men. | Menander |
| <i>mono.</i> | monostichoi (one-liners) |
| Pind. | Pindar |
| <i>O.</i> | <i>Olympian Odes</i> |
| <i>Isthm.</i> | <i>Isthmian Odes</i> |
| <i>N.</i> | <i>Nemean Odes</i> |
| Plutarch | |
| <i>Lys.</i> | <i>Lysander</i> |
| <i>PMG</i> | <i>Poetarum Melicorum Graecorum Fragmenta (Davies)</i> |
| <i>POxy.</i> | <i>Oxyrhynchus Papyri</i> |
| Ps.-Dem. | Pseudo-Demosthenes |
| S. | Sophocles |
| <i>Ai.</i> | <i>Aias (Ajax)</i> |
| <i>Ant.</i> | <i>Antigone</i> |
| <i>El.</i> | <i>Electra</i> |
| <i>OC</i> | <i>Oedipus Coloneus (Oedipus at Colonus)</i> |

| | |
|--------------|--|
| <i>OT</i> | <i>Oedipus Tyrannus (Oedipus the King)</i> |
| <i>Ph.</i> | <i>Philoctetes</i> |
| <i>Tr.</i> | <i>Trachiniae (Trachinian Women)</i> |
| <i>Thuc.</i> | <i>Thucydides, Peloponnesian War</i> |

REFERENCE WORKS

- G&G (Goodwin and Gulick) Goodwin, W. W. and Charles B. Gulick. 1930. *Greek Grammar*. Boston: Ginn & Company.
- GP Denniston, J. D. 1934. *Greek Particles*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- GMT (Greek Moods and Tenses) Goodwin, William Watson. 1890. *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses of the Greek Verb*. Boston: Ginn & Company.
- K-G (Kühner-Gerth) Kühner, R. and B. Gerth. See bibliography.
- K. Kühner, R. and F. Blass. See bibliography.
- LSJ Liddell, H. G., R. Scott, and H. S. Jones. 1940, etc. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Smyth Smyth, Herbert Weir, revised by Gordon M. Messing. 1956. *Greek Grammar*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- TrGF *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*. (See bibliography under Kannicht, Snell, Radt.)

GRAMMATICAL TERMS

| | | | |
|-------|----------------|-------|-------------|
| acc. | accusative | neut. | neuter |
| act. | active | nom. | nominative |
| aor. | aorist | opt. | optative |
| dat. | dative | pass. | passive |
| fem. | feminine | pf. | perfect |
| fut. | future | pl. | plural |
| gen. | genitive | plpf. | pluperfect |
| impf. | imperfect | pres. | present |
| m-p | middle-passive | sg. | singular |
| masc. | masculine | subj. | subjunctive |
| mid. | middle | | |

Euripides' *Electra*

INTRODUCTION

1. The Three Tragedians
2. The Myth
3. Euripides' *Electra* and the Conventions of the Greek Theater
4. Nature and Survival of the Text
5. Meter and Prosody
6. The Date of Euripides' *Electra*
7. Definitions of Literary Terms used in the Commentary

1. THE THREE TRAGEDIANS

The tragedies that have survived from classical Greece were all written during the fifth century B.C.E. in Athens and are the work of only three playwrights, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.¹ A popular legend has it that Aeschylus fought in the battle of Salamis (480 B.C.E.), Sophocles led the boys' chorus in the paean of victory after the battle, and Euripides was born on Salamis on the very day of the battle. Though its veracity is doubted, the story helps us remember the relative chronologies of the three great dramatists.



Aeschylus was born at Eleusis in Attica ca. 525 B.C.E. and died in Sicily ca. 456 B.C.E. He fought in the battles of Marathon (490) and Salamis (480). Of the eighty-two plays he is believed to have written, seven (or six if *PB* is by someone else) have survived:

1. Only three playwrights as far as we know. In fact the authorship of *PB*, which has come down under Aeschylus' name, and that of *Rhesus*, attributed to Euripides, have been disputed, meaning that we may have complete plays by as many as five tragedians, though we do not know the names of the other two possible authors.

Persians (*Persae*, 472 B.C.E.)

Seven against Thebes (*Septem*, 467 B.C.E.)

Suppliant Women (*Supplices*, no firm date, but known to have been in competition with Sophocles)

Oresteia (458 B.C.E.): *Agamemnon*, *Choephoroi* (or *Libation Bearers*), *Eumenides*

Prometheus Bound (date unknown, thought by many not to be by Aeschylus)

Aeschylus is the only one of the three tragedians to have used the connected trilogy (see "Conventions"), which allowed scope for his grand vision, his fondness for the spectacular, and the visualization of his images through staging. He is considered by many to be the most optimistic and religious of the three, especially in that he gives cosmic meaning to social and political customs and institutions.



Sophocles was born at Colonus, a suburb of Athens, in 496 B.C.E. and died in 406. He was a prominent citizen of Athens, was twice elected to the board of generals, and served on the committee in charge of cleaning up after the Sicilian disaster. He is known to have written 123 plays and won first prize twenty-four times. Sophocles never came in third. The *Oedipus Tyrannus*, which was used by Aristotle as the exemplary tragedy and is in our time the most widely read Greek play, actually came in second. Seven of Sophocles' plays survive:

Ajax

Antigone

Electra

Trachiniae (*Trachinian Women*)

Oedipus Tyrannus (*Oedipus the King*)

Philoctetes (409 B.C.E.)

Oedipus at Colonus (406 B.C.E.)

Only the last two are firmly dated.

Sophocles concentrated more on the characters than on the mythical grandeur of the stories, creating men and women of heroic stature and temperament: Oedipus became the model for "the tragic hero" with his or her "tragic flaw." Sophocles was the master of the perfectly made play and of tragic irony.



Euripides was born at Phlya, east of Hymettus, in Attica ca. 480 B.C.E. and died in Macedonia in 406. He was not prominent as a soldier or in politics, but Aristophanes portrayed him as a character in several comedies. It is said that he was a loner and wrote his plays in a cave on the island of Salamis.

Nineteen (out of as many as ninety-two) plays survive under Euripides' name, of which ten were preserved in the canon of plays that were taught in school, and nine survived by chance as part of a collection of his plays in alphabetical order (limited to the titles beginning with H through K, marked below with an asterisk; see below under "Nature and Survival"). *Electra* is in the latter group. Instead of *Electra* (which goes over the same basic material as Sophocles' version), *Orestes*, which departs from the traditional story, found its way into the canon. Of the seventeen serious plays certainly by Euripides, eight can be dated with a fair degree of certainty. The other ten have been arranged among them according to metrical analysis (see "Date"):

Alcestis (438 B.C.E., a "pro-satyr" play)

Medea (431 B.C.E.)

*Heracleidae**

Hippolytus (428 B.C.E.; first prize)

Andromache

Hecuba

*Suppliants** (in Greek, *Hiketides*)

*Electra** (422–413 B.C.E.; see "Date")

*Heracles**

The Trojan Women (415 B.C.E.)

*Iphigenia in Tauris**

*Ion**

*Helen** (412 B.C.E.)

Phoenician Women

Orestes (408 B.C.E.)

Bacchae (405 B.C.E. with *IA*)

*Iphigenia at Aulis** (405 B.C.E.; with *Bacch.*, first prize, awarded posthumously)

In addition:

Rhesus (believed by many not to be the work of Euripides)

*Cyclops** (a satyr play of unknown date)

Euripides won first prize only four times in his lifetime. He won a fifth first prize with his last plays (including *IA* and *Bacchae*), which were produced posthumously. He was known for his portrayal of unheroic heroes and for his prominent women. Euripides was clearly interested in the intellectual movements of his day and was called in antiquity the "philosopher of the stage." He was closely associated with Socrates by Aristophanes and other comic playwrights. His characters act and speak like his contemporaries and use more idiomatic language than those of the other tragedians.

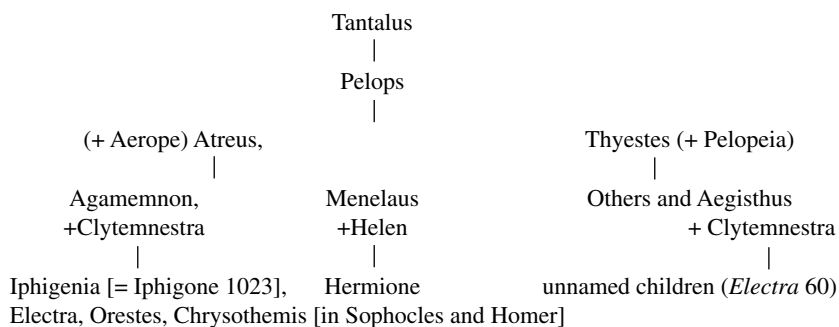
A play about the revenge Orestes and Electra perpetrated on their father's killers, Aegisthus and their mother Clytemnestra, survives by each of these three playwrights: Aeschylus' *Choephoroi*, the second play in his *Oresteia*, and an *Electra* by each of the other two. The different essences of these plays in treatment of the myth, the characters, the settings, and the meaning of the matricide, show that reliance on well-known myths with known ends, far from hampering the playwrights' creativity, allowed them ample scope for innovation and even surprise, prompting them to play with the audience's expectations by ringing changes on tragic figures and incidents that had already been staged.

2. THE MYTH

With the exception of Aeschylus' *Persians* (which treats an event in recent history), the extant Greek tragedies draw their plots and characters from myths and legends that were familiar to the audience. The main characters are heroes (male or female) from the distant mythical past, the plots are based on traditional exploits, and both characters and action are invested with the archetypal quality inherent in myth.

The *Electra* plays are based on myths recounting the succession of afflictions that befell the House of Atreus. Although there is no fixed canonical version of this legend, the basic story (as it appears in tragedy) can be summarized as follows. The early generations of the family receive only mentions in the extant plays: Tantalus tested the gods' omniscience by inviting them to dinner and serving them his son, Pelops, in a fricassee. Pelops was restored to life through divine intervention. He too was later cursed for an act of treachery. He cheated in a chariot race in which he had to beat Oenomaus to win the hand of his daughter Hippodamia. He bribed Myrtilus, his potential father-in-law's charioteer, to remove the linchpin from one of the wheels, causing Oenomaus' death. He then murdered Myrtilus (instead of fulfilling his promise to let him lie with Hippodamia). With his dying breath Myrtilus cursed Pelops and his descendants. In the next generation, Pelops' sons, Atreus and Thyestes, disputed the kingship of Argos, and Thyestes seduced Atreus' wife (see 699–746 and "Commentary"). In revenge Atreus (taking a page from his grandfather's cookbook) invited his brother to a conciliatory dinner and served him the flesh of his own sons. When Thyestes realized what he had eaten, he called down his own curse on Atreus' house.

This brings us to the generation of characters who are the principal actors in the first play of the *Oresteia*. Menelaus and Agamemnon, Atreus' sons, also had dysfunctional family relationships. Menelaus' wife, Helen, left him for Paris, prince of Troy, precipitating the Trojan War, and Agamemnon, chosen Panhellenic general, sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia (whether forced to do so by Artemis, as is alleged in Sophocles' *Electra*, or out of ambition as in Euripides' *IA*) en route to Troy. Upon his return home Agamemnon himself was murdered by his wife, Clytemnestra, and her lover, Aegisthus (as dramatized in *Agamemnon* and retold in the *Electra* plays). Clytemnestra and Aegisthus were killed in their turn, by Agamemnon's son Orestes, with the support (whether verbal or physical) of his sister Electra. The three *Electra* plays focus on the last installment in this curse: the revenge taken by Agamemnon's children on their mother and her lover.



Family tree from Tantalus through the children of Agamemnon (as named in the tragedies).

Euripides begins with Tantalus as one of the names in the Farmer's prologue speech (11), and after the denouement the chorus sums up (1174–5):

There is no house unhappier than that
of Tantalus' descendants, nor has there ever been.

Pelops is not named in Euripides' version, but he figures in both Aeschylus (*Cho.* 503) and Sophocles (10, 504–15, 1498). Sophocles makes oblique reference to the infamous chariot race with the words "Pelops' ancient horsemanship" (504) and perhaps in the false tale of Orestes' death in a chariot race (745–8).

Although Aeschylus recalls Atreus' butchery of Thyestes' children and the cannibalistic feast in the hair-raising lyrics sung by Cassandra (Ag. 1090–2, 1095–7; see also 1219–22, 1242), neither Euripides nor Sophocles alludes to them. On the other hand, neither Aeschylus in the *Oresteia* nor Euripides in his *Electra* mentions another sister, Chrysothemis. She is named in Homer, and Sophocles gives her a minor, but important role. Euripides names her at *Or.* 23 and at *IA* 1164, he attests to three daughters of Clytemnestra. These few comparisons should be enough to make it clear that the tragedians were free to highlight some details of the story and to obscure or omit others (see Roisman 2008, 7–15).

Much of the traditional material available to the tragedians, like most of the tragedies themselves, has been lost, making it difficult to know which details are allusions and which are invented by the individual playwright. The only complete works that have come down to us that refer to the revenge for Agamemnon's murder and the events leading up to it are the *Odyssey* of Homer and Pindar's ode to Thrasydaeus (*Pythian* 11), composed several centuries later. Though Orestes' act of revenge comes up several times and from the lips of several speakers in the *Odyssey*, Homer's is by no means a detailed treatment. The other literary treatments of which we know are fragments, citations from literary works, and summaries by later writers. Thus we have only the most partial knowledge of what Euripides had at his disposal when he wrote his *Electra*. One of the most fascinating questions, of course, is whether in fact he had Sophocles' play (see "Date").

The purpose of the multiple accounts in Homer is to provide an example for Telemachus on how to deal with the suitors who are harassing his mother and consuming his father's goods while Odysseus is away. Aegisthus is drawn as a villain, a seducer and murderer without redeeming qualities (*Odyssey* 3.194–8, 256–61, 4.524–37). The murder of Agamemnon is described as an ambush carried out at a homecoming banquet arranged by Aegisthus.

One of the most vexed issues in all three tragic treatments of the revenge is the question of Clytemnestra's culpability. In the *Odyssey*, Clytemnestra is presented from several perspectives. Nestor, describing her seduction by Aegisthus, depicts her as a woman of "understanding mind," who succumbed only after "the doom of the gods bound her so that she must submit," but then notes that she was led to Aegisthus' house "as willing as he [Aegisthus] was" (*Odyssey* 3.265–72). Athena and Menelaus describe her as a treacherous woman who took part in the plot (3.234–5, 4.90–2). Agamemnon, in his underworld meeting with Odysseus, describes her as a shameless and treacherous woman who was actively involved in the murder and so pitiless and

hard-hearted that she would not even close his eyes after he died (11.409–10, 421–34, 454–6). In Homer, then, we find the basis for Clytemnestra's depiction as Aegisthus' consort and as a participant in the murder.

Her guilt becomes more explicit in the seventh-century *Oresteia* written by Stesichorus of Himera in Sicily (640–555 B.C.E.). Only a few fragments of the poem have come down to us, in passing references in other works, mostly by ancient Greek commentators. From these, we learn that Stesichorus' *Oresteia* described Clytemnestra's dream of Agamemnon's revenge. "She dreamt there came a snake, with bloodstained crest, and out of it there appeared a king of the line of Pleisthenes" (Davies, *PMG* 219; Pleisthenes was an obscure member of the family tree: Fraenkel *ad A. Ag.* 1569). The anxiety-ridden dream, related in different forms by both Aeschylus (*Cho.* 32–41, 523–53) and Sophocles (*El.* 417–30), points to Clytemnestra's fear of retribution for her role in the murder.

By the fifth century, the age of Classical Greek tragedy, Clytemnestra is depicted not only as an active participant in her husband's murder, but also as threatening her son's life. Two fifth-century vase paintings show her brandishing an ax in the direction of Orestes, who has just killed Aegisthus (Prag, C18, C19). Pindar, in a brief aside in his ode in praise of Thrasydaeus, describes Clytemnestra as a ruthless and treacherous woman from whom Orestes had to be rescued after she killed his father (*Pythian* 11.17–21).

At the same time, motives other than lust also emerge for Clytemnestra's actions, first appearing in two poems from what came to be called the Epic Cycle, the *Cypria* (ca. 776 B.C.E.) and the *Nostoi* (ca. 750 B.C.E.). With the exception of a few fragments, all that remains of these poems are short summaries composed in the fifth century C.E. by Proclus. The *Cypria* recounts events that led up to the Trojan War, including Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia (which is not found in Homer), though as far as we can tell the story is not linked to Agamemnon's murder. Nonetheless, the story of Iphigenia raises the possibility that Clytemnestra's motive for killing Agamemnon was not lust alone, but vengeance for her daughter's murder. Another possible motive is suggested in the *Nostoi*, which recounts the heroes' return from Troy and tells of Agamemnon's bringing Cassandra home as a concubine. This allows us to infer jealousy as a motive (already in *Od.* 11.421–3 Agamemnon's ghost is tormented by his memory of Cassandra's cries as Clytemnestra slaughtered her over his fallen body).

Both these possibilities are present in Pindar's ode to Thrasydaeus. The ode does not specifically name jealousy as a motive but it does say

that Clytemnestra killed not only Agamemnon but also Cassandra (*Pythian* 11.17–22). More explicitly, it goes on to wonder whether Clytemnestra's motive for killing Agamemnon was anger at Iphigenia's slaughter or a desire to continue her adulterous relationship with Aegisthus undisturbed (*Pythian* 11.22–8).

Orestes is consistently drawn as the dutiful son who did what he was honor bound to do in avenging his father's murder. Different accounts, however, deal differently with his role as a matricide. The *Odyssey* tells us clearly that he killed Aegisthus but leaves his role in the killing of his mother vague, while adding that Clytemnestra was buried at the same time as Aegisthus (*Od.* 3.309–10), a narrative strategy that allows the poet to avoid presenting Orestes as a matricide, which could raise questions about his morality and undermine his heroic stature.

As Clytemnestra's culpability is highlighted in subsequent works, Orestes' killing of his mother comes into sharper relief as well. The fragmentary pseudo-Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* of the sixth century B.C.E. is the first known source to state clearly that Orestes killed not only his father's murderer (Aegisthus) but also his "man-slaying mother" (frg. 23 (a) Merkelbach and West: 13–30). In *Nostoi* and Pindar (*Pythian* 11.36–7) he also kills both Aegisthus and Clytemnestra.

The attribution to Clytemnestra of an active role in Agamemnon's death provides a measure of justification for the matricide, as does the depiction of her as threatening Orestes' life. Yet, even as Clytemnestra is presented as deserving death and Orestes' revenge as just, the horror of the crime makes further exculpation necessary. This is provided by the inclusion of Apollo in the treatments of the myth. As Jebb (1894, repr. 2004, 17) argues, Apollo, the god of light and all-seeing arbiter of purity, had the power to grade the degree of homicidal guilt and to free persons of the defilement and of the punishment that ensued after the shedding of kindred blood. All three tragedians have Apollo's oracle authorizing the vengeance and instructing Orestes in whether and/or how to carry it out. Apollo may have been first associated with the story in the *Nostoi*, which recounts how Pylades of Phocis helped Orestes kill his father's murderers. In the mid-fifth century B.C.E., Phocis controlled Delphi, the seat of Apollo's oracle. Stesichorus of Himera has Apollo giving Orestes a bow to fend off the Erinyes (Furies), the primal powers that punished the murder of kin.

Electra, the central figure of both Sophocles' and Euripides' tragedies, comes into the myth relatively late. The *Iliad* says that Agamemnon had three daughters (9.144–5, 286–7), Chrysothemis, Laodice, and Iphianassa,

but does not name Electra among them. The summary of the *Cypria* names four daughters, Chrysothemis, Laodice, Iphigenia, and Iphianassa. The first known reference to Electra is in the now lost *Oresteia* by the seventh-century B.C.E. poet Xanthus, who, according to Aelian (third-century C.E. miscellanist), claimed that Electra was Homer's Laodice and that Laodice was given the name "Electra" because she remained so long unmarried (i.e., *alektros* in Greek). The pseudo-Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* identifies Electra as the daughter of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon, and Orestes as their son. Stesichorus' *Oresteia*, according to *POxy.* 2506 (Davies, *PMG* 217), mentioned the recognition by a lock of hair. This places Electra firmly in the story of the revenge and suggests that she played a role in it along with her brother. We do not know from these sources, however, how her participation was depicted: how active, how passive, and whether commended or criticized.

The post-Homeric, pre-tragic sources thus show the motifs of the sacrifice of Iphigenia, the murder of Agamemnon, the sheltering of Orestes by Strophius, king of Phocis and father of Pylades, Orestes' return home with Pylades, Clytemnestra's dream, Electra's recognition of her brother by his lock of hair, the revenge, and Apollo's sanction of it. With much the same material to draw on, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides all wrote very different plays. Each places the action in a different setting, and each depicts key characters and their interactions in his own, unique way.

3. EURIPIDES' *ELECTRA* AND THE CONVENTIONS OF THE GREEK THEATER

Classical Greek tragedy was formal, stylized, non-realistic, and consciously removed from the everyday. It is sometimes said to be a theater of convention rather than a theater of realism. The conventions, at least, differ from those of the nineteenth to early twenty-first century with which we are familiar.



1. **Performance.** All the Greek tragedies were written for a *single* performance and for competition in public dramatic festivals. Of these the most important was the City (or Great) Dionysia held in early spring at which three days were devoted to tragedy, one day to each of three tragedians selected to compete that year. The festivals were religious, cultural, and educational but also popular entertainment for the masses and a grand spectacle. The survival of the extant plays depended upon their being revived

and performed by troupes of professional actors. It is likely that there was a revival of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* not long before the production of Euripides' *Electra*, making Euripides' parody of the older playwright's script meaningful to his audience. The most revered and popular plays made it into the canon for reading in school. (See below on "Nature and Survival.")



2. Trilogy. At the festivals the tragedies were presented as parts of trilogies, that is, three tragedies were produced to be presented in a series at the competition by each of three selected playwrights. In order to compete, the tragedians had first to be "awarded a chorus" by the *archon eponymos* (one of the chief administrative officers of the Athenian democracy). Each set of three tragedies was followed by a shorter, lighter play, most often a satyr play (a play in tragic diction on a mythological theme with a happy ending, using a chorus of men costumed as satyrs), but there were other possibilities for the fourth play: *Alcestis* was in the fourth position and *Rhesus* may have been. The group of three tragedies (a trilogy) with the satyr play, or other lighter drama, is called a tetralogy.

The three plays of the trilogy were not always even loosely connected. Although the connected trilogy was the form characteristic of Aeschylus, there is no evidence that any other Athenian playwright composed them. Euripides may, however, have produced a "Trojan trilogy" for 415 B.C.E., three plays that take incidents and characters from the Trojan War as their theme. The *Oresteia* of Aeschylus is the sole surviving example of a trilogy that takes the same story through three successive stages. There is, however, both internal and external evidence that *Seven against Thebes* and *Suppliants* were parts of connected trilogies. When we know what plays were performed in sequence at a festival, it is possible to speculate about connections or lack thereof among that day's tragedies. Unfortunately we do not know what plays were performed with Euripides' *Electra*, and there is no reason to suppose that they were connected.



3. Poetic Drama. All parts (both dialogue and choral parts) of classical Greek tragedies are in verse (see "Meter"). The distribution of spoken and sung parts in *Electra* is unusual. There are only three STASIMA (or formal choral odes), but *Electra* sings a monody (or solo) before the entrance of the chorus, and there are two choral celebrations, one right after the recognition of Orestes (585–95) and another after the messenger's speech announcing the death of Aegisthus (859–65, 873–9). A greeting to Clytemnestra (988–97) and a choral ode interrupted by Clytemnestra's death cries (1147–71), which blends into

the *kommos* (a lyric exchange between actors and chorus, 1177-237), are also sung, and, finally, the anapestic ending (1292-1359) is chanted (see the structural outline below).



4. Acting and the “Rule” of Three Actors. All roles, whether of characters or chorus, were played by males. There are no more than three speaking actors on stage at one time (not including the chorus): all parts of a tragedy are divided among the *protagonist* (first actor), the *deuteragonist* (second actor), and the *tritagonist* (third actor). Some plays use only two speaking actors, including the plays of Aeschylus before *Oresteia* and Euripides’ *Alcestis* and *Medea*. In *Electra*, Electra is obviously the protagonist; Orestes the deuteragonist; all the other characters would probably be played by the tritagonist, although it is possible that the actor playing Orestes also plays the messenger of his heroic deed. There are a number of non-speaking extras (*mutae personae*): Pylades is on stage with Orestes but speaks not a word; Orestes also has (probably) two servants; Clytemnestra comes on with (probably) two women in the carriage with her and at least two male attendants who manage her carriage and horses; a silent Polydeuces accompanies Castor. The three-person scenes in the *Electra* occur at the end of the first episode when the Farmer enters upon the scene between Electra and Orestes (341-400); in the second episode when Orestes enters on the scene between Electra and the Old Man (her father’s aged *paedagogus* or childhood attendant, 549-692); in the *EXODOS* (last scene) when the Dioscuri arrive. The treatment of the third actor in each of these scenes is different. In the first the Farmer is ignored by Orestes, who never addresses him, though he gives a speech in reaction to him. In the second, Orestes mocks the Old Man but soon joins him in a conspiracy, and the three actors fully engage with each other. In the third, Castor speaks from the *mēchanē* (see below), high above the scene. The distinction in class or power is obvious in all three three-actor scenes. In the dialogue sections of the play the chorus-leader (*koryphaios*) rather than the whole group speaks, but does not count as one of the three actors.

Of the qualities required of an actor, the most important was a strong and versatile voice. The huge size and open air venue of the Theater of Dionysus meant that the actors had to project very well in order to be heard. To play multiple roles, they also needed to have a voice versatile enough to endow each character—of whatever age or gender—with his or her distinct vocal signature. Versatility of voice was required to compensate for the limitations created by the use of masks and the distance between audience and

actors. Though the mask for each character has a single fixed expression, emotion can be conveyed through gesture, gait, and posture, and the way the head is held can change the appearance and expression of the mask. Still, the ability to express emotion through variations in vocal tone and cadence was essential. The protagonist was not necessarily the actor with the most lines, but the one whose part required the greatest flexibility of voice. He was expected to manage all the meters: the sung lyrics, the recitative, and the spoken meters. The second and third actors were probably given only recitatives and spoken lines.



5. **Use of masks.** Bewigged masks covering the actor's head were worn by both actors and chorus. There were certain distinguishing features for types of characters, a shorthand for identifying them generically. Orestes and Pylades would be masked as young nobles, Electra as a young woman in mourning with hair cropped like a slave. It has been suggested (England, 103) that the Old Man wore the mask, not of a generic elderly slave, but one identifiable as Aeschylus himself to enhance the parody of the recognition scene in *Cho.* Though mocking recognizable contemporary figures was a common feature of comedy, it does not seem to have been practiced on the tragic stage.

Elaborate or at least stately costumes were used. Both men and women of the upper classes wore the long chiton (no longer in fashion for men in Euripides' day) and might have a himation or a traveler's cloak over it; rural slaves (and in *Electra* the farmer) might wear working men's tunic and cloak. In *Electra*, until the arrival of Clytemnestra, only the poverty of the characters' clothing is marked verbally, though Orestes has a fine cloak (820). Electra speaks of her clothing as rags (τρύχη 185; see 304) as does the Old Man of his own (501). Her mother and even her mother's slaves meanwhile are splendidly attired and adorned, in prospect and in fact (314–18, 966, 1140).



6. The **Chorus** is visually and spatially the center of the action and thus provides much of the spectacle of the drama. After its entrance the chorus usually remains in the orchestra as a witness and participant in the drama until it files off at the end of the play, and so it does in *Electra*. Because choral drama (other than in musicals) is alien to most twenty-first century westerners, some discussion of the role of the chorus is in order.

The chorus participates in the action, often with advice or information. In *Electra*, the chorus brings news of and an invitation to the festival

of Hera. Though declined by Electra, this festival can still be imagined to take place on the day after tomorrow, after all the tragic events have been enacted, adding to the timelessness of the rural setting with its calendar of regular seasonal events and to the normalcy of the Chorus, which contrasts with the singularity of Electra and her kin. They announce the approach of Electra's husband (339–40) and notify her of the offstage sounds they hear at the end of the murder of Aegisthus (747–50). As important as the chorus is, it is sometimes ignored by the characters. In *Electra*, Orestes does not seem to notice that there are fifteen women standing around overhearing his conversation with Electra until 272. Electra addresses the chorus, but she can also ignore its presence. The Chorus' heart is brimming with expectant joy when the strangers enter the house, but Electra ignores their kind remarks and turns to excoriate her husband for inviting guests into their poor home (401–5). Later she confides in them (694–5). They participate in the *kommos* and in the dialogue with the Dioscuri.

Being spatially central, the chorus acts as intermediary between characters and audience and makes the distant affairs of kings, queens, heroes, heroines from myth a concern to the citizens or ordinary people. Thus a continuum is formed of characters, chorus (inner audience of persons not individuated but known to at least some of the characters), and spectators (outer audience). The Chorus has clearly come to offer sympathy to Electra. Their enthusiasm for the festival and concern for Electra highlight her social and spiritual alienation and her aloofness from everyday life. They also display the feminine perspective. In the three surviving Electra plays, all the choruses are of women (palace slaves in *Choephoroi*, Mycenaean women in the two *Electras*), even though it is a traditional male heroic story. Perhaps women were used because the story concerns the family more than the kingship, or the private sphere more than the public, or simply because the character of Electra could only be supported by a female chorus. Euripides shows a preference for female choruses, calling for males in only four of his extant tragedies (*Alcestis*, *Heracleidae*, *Heracles*, and *Rhesus*: elders in the first three and soldiers in the last). Sophocles, on the other hand, in the extant plays shows a preference for male choruses—even in *Antigone*, despite the prominence of the title character (whether as protagonist or deuteragonist), using women only in his *Electra* and *Trachinian Women*.

The chorus comments on the action and often sides with one party or another: in *Electra* the Chorus sides with the children against their mother. They are very critical of both daughters of Tyndareus (213–14, 480–1, 1051–4) and continue in their bias right up to the murder of Clytemnestra,

but then turn on the murderers (especially 1203–5). Their greeting to Clytemnestra is almost a curse, as they praise her excessively for her good fortune as if to call down divine envy, ending with a hint that her fortune is about to receive the surgeon's knife.

The chorus fills in background and extends the story in time and space. The first ode takes us back to a beginning, just before the sailing to Troy. The second also looks to a more remote past but draws a close parallel to what is taking place offstage in the play's time as they sing.

The chorus provides lyrical relief and directs emotions through music and dance: following a tense scene in which Orestes is on the verge of revealing himself but which ends with Electra scolding her husband, the first stasimon offers the sharp contrast of a romantic song about Achilles. After the recognition they sing a brief, joyous song of victory, and again, after the messenger's intensely descriptive speech, they sing and dance excitedly.

We cannot expect a unified point of view from the chorus. In *Electra* they are both traditionally pious in urging Electra to pay respect to the gods (190–7) and skeptical about the truth of the traditional stories (737–44).

The chorus at this period was made up of fifteen citizens (all men, and not professional actors). No classical Greek tragedy is without a chorus. The chorus was an indispensable element of the tragedy. Each song has meaning in the context of what immediately precedes and what follows and for what it adds to the whole.



7. Parts of plays. Greek tragedies are not divided into scenes or acts: the division is into spoken parts and songs accompanied by dance.

PROLOGUE: everything before the entrance of the chorus. *Electra* has a particularly long and complex prologue, introducing the background, the scene, and the characters severally.

PARODOS: entrance song of the chorus as they file in along the *parodoi*. In *Electra* the parodos is preceded by a solo sung by Electra and includes her responses to the chorus.

EPISODES: scenes of dialogue between choral songs

STASIMA (sing. *stasimon*): choral songs with dance movements

Strophe & Antistrophe: metrically equivalent stanzas, usually following each other in a stasimon. It is believed that the chorus danced similar patterns in strophe and antistrophe but perhaps in opposite directions. An antistrophe may be followed by an *epode*, a stanza that is not metrically balanced to another.

EXODOS: everything after the last stasimon.

The structure of Euripides' *Electra* does not follow the usual pattern of four or five odes and as many episodes. The parts blend into each other so that an outline of the structure could be drawn in several different ways. This is one possible way to divide the play into parts:

Prologue 1–166

1–53 The Farmer's monologue

54–81 Electra and Farmer

82–111 Orestes arrives with Pylades and states his business

112–66 Electra's lament, a monody that blends with the chorus' entrance song

Parodos 167–212 with responses from Electra

First Episode 213–431

213–340 Orestes and Electra

341–431 Farmer, Orestes, and Electra

First Stasimon 432–86 The Achilles ode

Second Episode 487–698

Part 1 Recognition

487–552 Tokens: Old Man and Electra

553–84 Recognition scene: Orestes, Electra, Old Man

585–95 Choral Celebration

Part 2 596–698 Murder Plot: Orestes, Electra, Old Man

Second Stasimon 699–746 Thyestes and the golden lamb

Third Episode 747–1146

Part 1 The Death of Aegisthus

747–858 Messenger and Electra

859–79 Celebration of Orestes' achievements

880–958 Orestes, Electra and body of Aegisthus

Part 2 The Death of Clytemnestra

959–87 Murder plot: Orestes and Electra

988–97 Choral welcome

998–1146 Clytemnestra and Electra: the central *agōn*

Third Stasimon 1147–71 (murder of Clytemnestra): the ode blends with Clytemnestra's death cries and with the *kommos*

Exodos 1172–1359

1172–1232 *Kommos*

1233–1356 Arrival of the Dioscuri, Castor's speech to and dialogue with Orestes and Electra, farewells

1357–9 Choral tag



8. Other common elements of Greek tragedies.

KOMMOS: a lyric lament shared by chorus and actors. In *Electra* the *kommos* occurs after the murder of Clytemnestra, in repentance for and revulsion at the deed of matricide. In *Oresteia* a long *kommos* precedes the revenge and serves to strengthen the resolve of Orestes and his helpers and to summon help from the chthonic spirit world. The arrival of the Dioscuri in *Electra*, spirits from the sky, contrasts with the dark interchange in the earlier play.

STICHOMYTHIA: dialogue in which single lines are spoken alternately by two or more characters. The convention of alternating, matched lines sometimes makes the dialogue sound a bit stilted. For sustained stichomythic dialogue, see the scene between Electra and Orestes (220–89), the recognition (547–81 with effective variations), and the murder plots (612–84), for shorter patches, see the lines just before Orestes' reluctant exit into the house (962–84) and the end of the *agōn* (the rapid sequence from 1111–31 with variations).

AGŌN: a formal debate with matched speeches, perhaps more natural to the Athenians than to us, inclined as they were to speechifying in the assembly and the courtroom. Euripides is particularly fond of these, and they are often brilliant rhetorical displays, but again the perfect balance of the speeches makes them seem unrealistic at times. The *agōn* in *Electra* is between Electra and her mother. Neither's argument is particularly strong. Clytemnestra manages to surprise us but she weakens her argument by voicing regret and even human feeling.

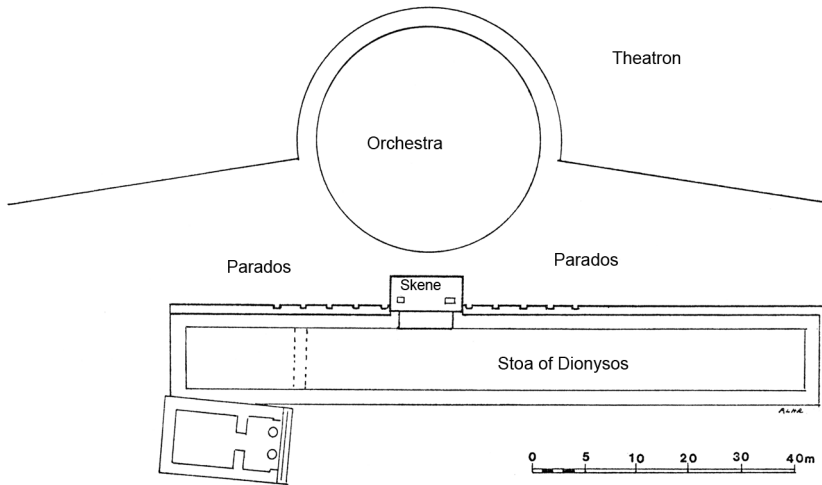
ANGELOS and EXANGELOS: messengers, from the outside and from the house respectively. Almost every play has a messenger scene. Their speeches are wonderful narrative displays allowing the poet scope for a different kind of writing. Violence is avoided on stage and transferred to language. The fact that some deaths are enacted on stage (for example in *Alcestis*, *Hippolytus*, *Ajax*) casts doubt on the speculation that there was a taboo against showing death in the theater. The messenger in *Electra*, one of Orestes' servants, fleshes out Aegisthus through direct quotation, turning him into another character in what is almost a play-within-the-play. Through the details of the sacrifice, first of the bullock and then of Aegisthus, Euripides shows his verbal brilliance.

9. The Greek Theater and its fixtures. The action of a Greek tragedy takes place outdoors in broad daylight, in front of a building (usually a palace, sometimes a military hut or a temple; in Euripides' *Electra*, a farmer's

cottage). Reference is made to interiors (the farmer's house, the palace of the Atreidae, the building on Aegisthus' property) and other exteriors (the fields of the farm, the highway, the tomb of Agamemnon, Aegisthus' property). Euripides' *Electra* begins in the dark before dawn, as we know from references in the play to the time of day (54 Electra addresses the "black night"; 78–9 the Farmer says he must drive his team to the fields "with the day"; 102 Orestes sees "the white face of dawn"). We may imagine the day passing as the play progresses: the farmer comes back from his morning chores; Aegisthus prepares a sacrifice, probably intended for a late afternoon meal that would stretch into the evening (Aegisthus invites the travelers to stay over, 786–7). Clytemnestra makes a detour on her way to that sacrifice to visit her daughter.

ORCHĒSTRA (dancing floor): the center of a Greek theater and perhaps the oldest or at least the original part. The earliest known orchestra was circular. It is here that the chorus does its routines of singing and dancing. At least some of the action also takes place in the orchestra. It is very likely that an altar was a permanent fixture in the orchestra. The use of painted scenery is still being debated. There may have been movable placards to show changes in scene (as in the *Eumenides*). According to Aristotle, Sophocles invented scene-painting (*skēnographia*). This may mean the representation of architectural elements in perspective (Simon, 22). In *Electra*, Orestes, Pylades, and (probably) two servants are able to conceal themselves when they catch sight of Electra returning from the stream. Would an altar be large enough for such a crowd? They may have hidden behind the scenery (109) or hovered close to the house (216) in the dim morning light: the wording is ambiguous.

SKĒNĒ (stage building; lit. *tent, hut* > scene). A flat-roofed building, probably with double doors, stood at the back of the orchestra, where actors changed costumes and masks and from which or to which appropriate entrances and exits were made. In Euripides' *Electra* the *skēnē* represents the poor home of a small farmer. There may have been a slightly raised platform (or stage) separating the actors from the chorus, but it cannot have been raised so high as to prevent interaction between actors and chorus. For example, in *Electra* the chorus and characters interact during the parodos and just after it, when Electra tells the chorus to run back down the road while she runs into the house. The chorus greets Clytemnestra when she alights from her carriage in the orchestra. The individual chorus members might surround the two women during the *agōn* and follow Clytemnestra



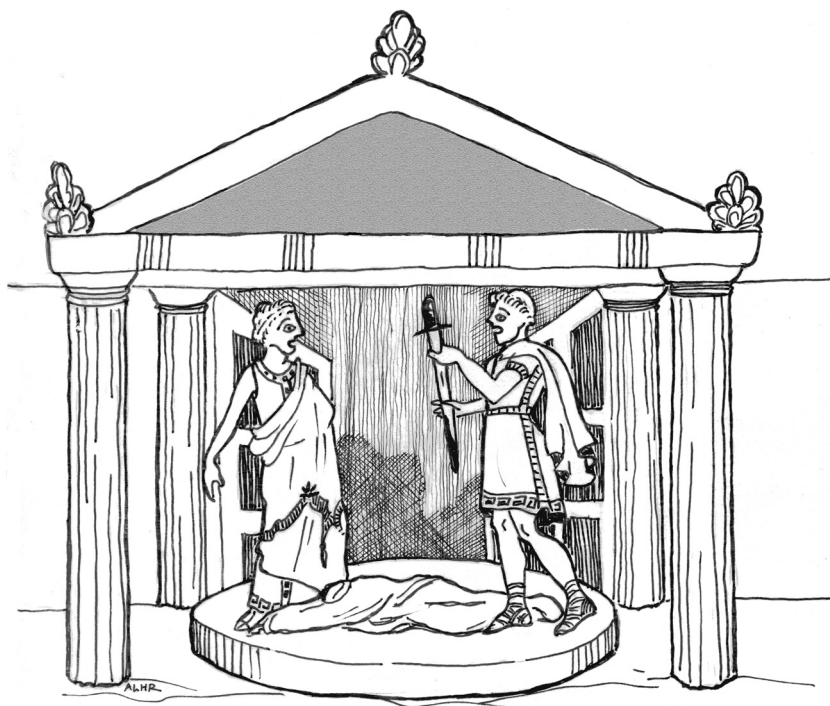
Theater of Dionysus in Athens, mid-fifth century B.C.E. Redrawn by A. L. H. Robkin from figure 7 in Ernst Fiechter, *Das Dionysos-Theater in Athens*.

ominously toward the doors, then withdraw in horror during the murder and its aftermath. Whether or not there was a stage, the action among the actors is concentrated in front of the *skēnē*.

PARODOI (side paths): The chorus and characters coming from and going to offstage elsewhere entered and exited along the two parodoi on either side of the orchestra. In this commentary we use the stage left (i.e., *left* from the actors' point of view) parodos for the far distance (the highway that leads to Argos, along which are found Agamemnon's tomb, Aegisthus' horse pastures, the turnoff to the Old Man's house), and the stage right parodos to represent the nearer distance (the stream, the farm).

In the Prologue, for example: the Farmer enters from the house; at the end of his opening monologue Electra enters from the house; they engage briefly in conversation; she exits first to go to the stream along the stage right parodos and he exits shortly after to the farm along the same parodos; Orestes enters with his entourage along the stage left parodos from the highway. He speaks to Pylades in the orchestra until he catches sight of Electra coming back from the stream (107-9). Then he and his companions either crouch behind some scenery or move into the shadows by the house.

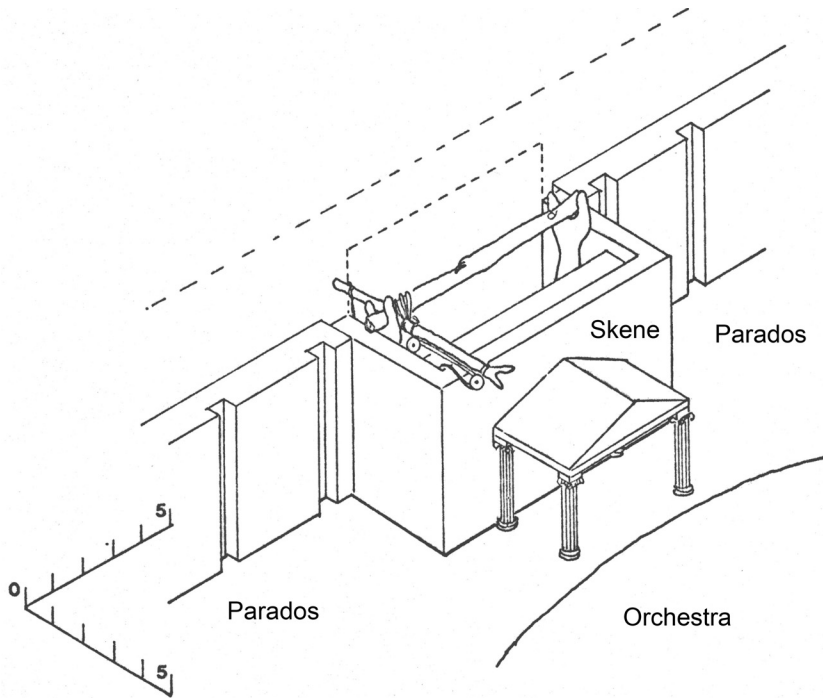
ECCYCLĒMA, (*ekkyklēma*, "thing rolled out"): a device rolled out of the *skēnē* to reveal what has taken place in the house. It was used for the death tableaux



Electra and Orestes with the body of Clytemnestra on the *eccyclēma* in front of the *skēnē*. Drawing by A. L. H. Robkin.

in *Agamemnon* and *Choephoroi*; perhaps in Sophocles' *Electra* for the body of Clytemnestra. In Euripides' *Electra*, Aegisthus' body is brought in on a litter and deposited, as Clytemnestra arrives, inside the *skēnē*. After the murder in the house, the two bodies, along with the perpetrators, are probably rolled out on the *eccyclēma* for the *kommos*. The scene would thus be reminiscent of the two scenes that follow the killings in the *Oresteia*.

THEOLOGEION ("god-platform"): the top of the stage building furnished another level of action. From here was delivered the prologue of the *Agamemnon* and the part of Medea in the exodos of her play. From here too the gods delivered speeches (as at the ends of *Hippolytus* and *Orestes*; in *Phoenician Women*, Antigone and her old slave discuss the hostile warriors gathered at the gates of Thebes from the rooftop platform). At the end of *Electra*, whether or not the *mēchanē* (see below) was used, the figures of Castor (speaking) and Polydeuces (mute) would appear on the rooftop.



Probable reconstruction of the *mēchanē* for the Theater of Dionysos in Athens, fifth century B.C.E. Drawing by A. L. H. Robkin.

MĒCHANĒ (“flying machine”: cf. *deus ex machina*): a crane used to fly in gods who take part in the plays. It was possibly used in Euripides’ *Medea*, *Orestes*, *IT*, *Helen*, *Heracles*, and *Bacchae* and Sophocles’ *Philoctetes*, as well as in *Electra* of Euripides. The uncertainty concerning its use comes about because, though gods appear in tragedy, they remain aloft and do not come down on stage to take part in the action on the human level as they sometimes do in comedy.



10. **Props.** Props vary from play to play. In Euripides’ *Electra*, as in the other *Electra* plays, props, especially vessels for liquids, are important. *Electra* enters from her house carrying a common *hydria* (water jug) such as women carried to streams and fountain houses. The Farmer might enter carrying the yoke for his oxen. Pylades and Orestes are armed with swords. The Old Man comes on with a sheep and laden with cheeses, a wine sack, and floral crowns.



11. **The audience.** The Greek tragedies were popular entertainment. Everybody went: men, women, children; free and slave; citizen and foreigner. Tickets were subsidized by the state. Wealthy citizens were called upon to finance the training of the chorus: this was a public service (*leitourgia*) of similar importance to the fitting out of a warship. There is some dispute over whether women attended, but the weight of the evidence suggests that they did.

4. NATURE AND SURVIVAL OF THE TEXTS

The manuscripts. The earliest manuscripts (none of which survive) would have been on papyrus rolls copied during Euripides' own lifetime, primarily as production copies, while a very few circulated among private citizens. On the appearance of such books, Page writes in the introduction to his edition of *Medea* (1938, xxxviii):

There will then be no division between words, no punctuation, no stage directions, no sign to denote change of speaker, no breathings and of course no accents: elided vowels are sometimes written, sometimes omitted. Lyric passages are written straight across the page like prose.

Though subsequent editors have added markings and worked out the stichometry, there are still no stage directions. Usually these can be inferred from what characters say on stage. For example the Farmer announces that he is leaving at 78–9. Orestes announces that he sees a “serving woman” coming with a water jug on her shaved head (107–8). We know Electra is dressed in rough clothing and is disheveled (184–5, 304–5) and that Orestes has a fine traveling cloak (820).

In the last third of the fourth century, official copies of the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides were made and housed in the city archives. By the third century a *paragraphos* (or long dash) began to be used to show a change of speaker. The story is that the Alexandrian librarian at the time of Ptolemy III Euergetes (third century B.C.E.) borrowed these books and instead of returning them, sent back a copy. The works thus came into the hands of the great Alexandrian scholars, including Aristophanes of Byzantium (ca. 200 B.C.E.) who wrote introductions and commentaries, and collated the

earlier mss. for an edition of the complete plays of Euripides. From his and later commentaries, dated up to the middle of the third century C.E., annotations were excerpted and put into the margins of the now book-form manuscripts. These are the SCHOLIA, a miscellany of notes of varied quality, ranging from glosses to descriptions of stage activity to literary criticism.

Seven plays each of Sophocles and Aeschylus, and ten of Euripides, formed the canon of the plays most read and studied in school. The survival of these plays was assured by the many copies that were made (though *Cho.* hangs by a thread; its opening lines, lost from the ms, have been filled in from Aristophanes' *Frogs*). For most of these plays, there are full scholia. But nine more plays of Euripides survive by a lucky chance, in a manuscript containing part of an alphabetical arrangement of the plays. *Electra* is one of these. It survives in two manuscripts of the fourteenth century, both in Florence.

codex Laurentianus xxxii, 2 contains all the extant plays of Euripides except *Trojan Women* but no scholia and only a few marginal notes (for those on *Electra* see Keene).

codex Palatinus 287 et Laurentianus 172 (two parts of one ms; *Palatinus* is in the Vatican) contains all the extant plays, but for *Electra* and the other alphabetical plays is a copy of L and therefore rarely has independent value.

papyrus Hibeh 7.10–22 contains lines 367–79.

The Text. We have followed the Oxford Classical Texts of Gilbert Murray (vol. 2, 1913) and James Diggle (vol. 2, 1983) with some alterations in matters of punctuation, stichometry, and reading. There are many places where we have chosen to keep the mss. reading over the emendation preferred by Diggle. We have also used extensively Martin Cropp (1988), J. D. Denniston (1939), and F. A. Paley (1874). The places where we differ substantially from Murray and Diggle are noted in the commentary.

5. METER AND PROSODY

Classical Greek plays are written in verse. The characters speak mostly in iambic trimeter, consisting of three double iambic units (— — — | — — — | — — — —) subject to various rules of resolution (see below). According to Aristotle, this is the meter closest to the spoken cadence (*Poetics* 1449a19). The choral odes are composed in lyric meters and sung (see Appendix 1: Metrical Analysis). So is *Electra*'s monody (112–66). The second half of the final scene (1292–1359) is in chanted anapests.

Greek meters are based on alternations of long and short syllables in regular patterns. A syllable is *long* if it contains either (a) a long vowel or diphthong or (b) a short vowel followed by either two or more consonants or a double consonant ξ, ψ, ζ). The two consonants need not be in the same word. A mute (π, β, φ, κ, γ, χ, τ, δ, θ) followed by a liquid (λ, μ, ν, ρ) may or may not cause the preceding vowel to count as long. A syllable is *short* if its vowel is short and is followed by only one consonant or by a mute + liquid. Also usually counting as short is the combination of a long vowel or diphthong at the end of a word followed by a vowel at the start of the next word. This is termed an *epic correction*. It occurs regularly in Homeric dactylic hexameter.

METRON: in Greek meter generally, this is the smallest unit of long and short syllables forming a repeating pattern typical of the particular metrical sequence. Several named types or metra are listed below.

IAMB – – (short long)

In dramatic verse iambs appear in groups of two (i.e., dipodic units) composing the metron. The most common line of dialogue consists of six iambs or three metra (iambic feet). Each metron thus consists of two iambic feet (– – – –).

The following substitutions are permitted:

SPONDEE – – (two longs) may replace the first iamb of each metron; it can thus be found instead of the iamb in the first, third, and fifth foot.

TRIBRACH – – – (three shorts) may be used instead of any of the first five iambs.

ANAPEST – – – (short short long) may be used anywhere a spondee is permitted.

DACTYL – – – (long short short) may be used anywhere a spondee is permitted.

A final short syllable in any line is counted as long (*syllaba anceps*, marked X).

RESOLUTION: the substitution of two shorts for either a long or a short in the iambic trimeter. The most common place for resolution is in position 6, otherwise termed the third *longum* (see Devine and Stephens, 66–67).

Examples from *Electra* :

1–3

ἦΩ γῆς παλαιὸν Ἄργος, Ἰνάχου ῥοαί

– – – – | – – – – | – – – –

ὅθεν ποτ' ἄρας ναυσὶ χιλίαις Ἄρη

– – – – | – – – – | – – – –

ἐς γῆν ἔπλευσε Τρωάδ' Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ.

– – – – | – – – – | – – – – resolution in position 8

1027–9

νῦν δ' οὔνεχ' Ἑλένη μάργος ἦν ὅ τ' αἶ λαβὼν

– – – – – | – – – – | – – – – resolution in position 4

ἄλοχον κολάζειν προδότιν οὐκ ἠπίστατο,

– – – – – | – – – – – | – – – – × resolution in positions 1 and 6

τούτων ἕκατι παῖδ' ἐμὴν διώλεσεν.

– – – – – | – – – – – | – – – – ×

The average frequency of resolutions in *Electra* (excluding trimeters in odes) is one per every 5.1 lines (hence 1:5.1). In the course of the play, their frequency varies both with the place and content of the speeches. With respect to place, Philippides (107) observes in her study of six of Euripides' plays that there is a higher clustering of resolutions at the beginning of a play, especially in the prologue, and lower counts toward its end. In *Electra*, which is not included in her study, we find partial confirmation of this observation. The Farmer's opening speech and first exchange with Electra (1–81) has a high concentration of resolutions (1:3.6), as does Castor's speech (1238–91) toward the end of the play (1:3.6). However, in Orestes' opening speech (82–111), which immediately follows Electra's and is still part of the prologue, the ratio drops significantly, to 1:6.

With respect to content, resolutions are generally concentrated in speeches of high drama, in which they help to convey emotional intensity or agitation (Philippides, 47–108, 136–48). Thus, the speech in which Electra tries to persuade Orestes' supposed emissary to urge him to hurry back to Argos (300–38) has a very high ratio of resolutions: 1:3.5. Several

other lines with highly charged content contain multiple resolutions. Line 61, where Electra first tells of Clytemnestra's treatment of her, has three; lines 310, 410, 497, 506, 763, 794, 833, 980, 1028, 1063 have two each. (For rejection of the supposition that Euripides avoids two or more resolutions in the same line, see Devine and Stephens, 64–5).

At several points in the play, Euripides juxtaposes speeches with low and high resolution ratios to emphasize differences in character and mood. Thus, the drop in resolutions in Orestes' opening speech helps to convey his calm (or lack of spirit) in contrast to his sister's emotionality. In the exchange between Electra and the Farmer regarding arrangements for hosting the "strangers," Electra's twelve-line speech (408–19) has a resolution ratio of 1:3, suggesting her anxiety about making a good impression, while the Farmer's reply (420–31) has only one resolution in twelve lines, suggesting his more relaxed attitude toward the matter.

A variation in the pattern can be found in the recognition scene. Here, the Old Man, winded from his climb up the steep path and excited to see Electra (487–502), greets her with a speech containing a high resolution ratio of 1:3. Electra returns his greeting in a reply (503–7) with an even higher resolution ratio: 1:1.25, and two resolutions in line 506. The Old Man's next statement, though, in which he tells Electra about his side trip to Agamemnon's tomb (508–23), has only one resolution per five lines, suggesting that he has calmed down.

There is a notable exception to the association between high emotionality and high resolution ratios. This is in *stichomythia*: 220–89 (1:10), 555–84 (1:6), 612–84 (1:6), 962–84 (1:6), and 1111–31 (1:7). In each stichomythic exchange, with the exception of 962–84, where Electra has four resolutions to Orestes' none, the resolutions are more or less divided among the speakers in proportion to the number of lines they have. Thus in these passages Euripides largely forgoes not only the heightened intensity provided by resolutions but also their use to distinguish the mood or temperament of the speakers. The reason may be that the *stichomythia* itself provides all the agitation that he considered appropriate.

Finally, much of the dialogue is in what may be termed "neutral" mode with respect to the resolution ratio. These sections include Orestes' cerebral reflection on the difficulties of predicting a person's virtue from his station in life (367–400; 1:4.25) and the Messenger's speech telling of Aegisthus' death (774–858, excluding 832–42; 1:4.5). More surprisingly, they also include the *agōn* (998–1146), where mother and daughter confront one another with little metrical agitation or contrast. Clytemnestra's

73 lines have a resolution ratio of 1:6.6, Electra's 70 lines, a ratio of 1:6.3. (See also 1011–50n and 1060–99n.) Electra's speech to Aegisthus' dead body (or, as some critics believe, his severed head, 907–56; 1:4.1) is also rather neutral metrically, though somewhat more agitated than the scene as a whole (747–958; 1:4.9).

6. THE DATE OF EURIPIDES' *ELECTRA*

Both the date of Euripides' *Electra* and whether it was written before or after Sophocles' *Electra* have been long debated, yet in the absence of conclusive evidence, these questions still remain unresolved.

Euripides' *Electra* has been placed between either 422–417 or 415–413 B.C.E. (Kamerbeek 1974, 6; Jebb 1894, lvii–iii; Cropp 1988, 1–li.). Scholars who argue for the earlier period rely primarily on metrical evidence. The play has no trochaic tetrameters, a meter that Euripides used as an archaizing device in the dialogues of all his later plays, beginning with *Trojan Women*, which is dated 415 (Aelian, *VH* 2.8). Moreover, the frequency of resolutions (two short syllables for one short or one long) in the play is closer to that found in the plays of the earlier than those of the later period. On the whole, Euripides made increasing use of resolutions as he developed. As Cropp and Fick state, Euripides' *Electra* has resolutions in 21.5% of the lines. This, they argue, would date it after the *Suppliants*, usually dated between 424–420, with resolutions in 17.3% of its lines, but before *Heracles*, usually dated at 417–416, with resolutions in 23.2% of its lines, and *Trojan Women*, with resolutions in 26.8%.²

Scholars who argue for the later period rely on what they read as allusions to contemporary events in the play's *exodos*. Lines 1278–83 refer to a version of the myth of Helen that ascribes the elopement with Paris to her *eidōlon*, or image, and have the real Helen living in Egypt during the Trojan War. Euripides dramatized this version in his play *Helen*, known to have been produced in 412. The contention is that the allusion prepares the audience for that production. Castor's statement in lines 1347–8 that he and his brother will go to the "Sicilian sea" to protect the ships is read as an allusion to Athens' expedition against Syracuse in 415.³ His assertion in

2. Cropp and Fick, *Resolutions and Chronology in Euripides*, 1–3. The percentages of resolutions here are based on this study.

3. Some think the lines may allude to Demosthenes' auxiliary expedition in the spring of 413 to rescue Nicias' forces after the abortive siege of Syracuse. Although it cannot be ruled out

lines 1350–5 that he and his brother, known as protectors of sailors, liberate and safeguard only those who adhere to what is right and holy is read as a barb at the sacrilegious mutilation of the *Hermiai* in Athens, allegedly instigated by Alcibiades, just before the departure of the first force.

Both types of evidence are problematic. Although resolution frequency generally increases in the course of Euripides' career, with examination of the resolutions in the plays whose dates are firmly established (only eight out of nineteen) by the hypotheses (ancient blurbs) and scholia, we see that the increase was a trend, not an absolute rule. Among Euripides' early plays, the *Alcestis*, firmly dated at 438, has a slightly higher resolution rate (6.7%) than the *Hippolytus* (6.1%), dated at 428. Among his later plays, *Orestes*, dated 408, has a higher resolution rate (49.3%) than the *Bacchae* (43.8%) and *Iphigenia at Aulis* (43.6%), which were performed posthumously in 405. It cannot be ruled out that the *Electra* may have been another variation in the trend, which would make a later date possible.

Another problem with the metrical evidence is that, as Philippides has demonstrated, the resolutions in Euripides' plays tend to be concentrated in "scenes of dramatic intensity" and avoided in "non-excited passages, narrative, rationalizing discourse and scenes of camouflaged plotting or lying" (107). This means that the percentage of resolutions alone, without respect to the types of scenes in which they occur, may be a misleading or inadequate basis for dating.

Finally, even if we do choose to rely on the resolution rate as a yardstick for dating, we must remember that neither the *Suppliants* nor *Heracles* is firmly dated. The 424–20 date for the *Suppliants* is an approximation, as is 420–16 for *Heracles*.

The evidence from allusions has been disputed. In a closely argued critique, Zuntz points out that the alternative myth of Helen was not Euripides' invention: its details are already present in earlier works. While the pre-existence of the version does not mean that Euripides could not have been announcing his forthcoming *Helen*, it makes it less certain that he was. On the other hand, Aristophanes in *Women at the Thesmophoria* (850), produced in 411, refers to this depiction of Helen as "a new Helen." With respect to the purported allusions to the Sicilian expedition, Zuntz argues that the "Sicilian sea" that Castor mentions in line 1347 refers not to the sea around Sicily but to "all the waters between South Italy and Greece as well as those

that the lines were inserted at the last minute, the reference to Demosthenes' expedition could not have been in the version of the play submitted to the *archon eponymos* the year before.

between Crete and Sicily.” He further argues that the other statements that are considered allusions to the expedition are linked to it most tenuously (64–71). On the other hand, we may wonder why, if Euripides’ purpose in this speech was merely to show the twin brothers in their conventional role as rescuers of ships in distress, he had Castor specifically mention the Sicilian sea rather than, say, the Aegean.⁴ There seems little reason for Euripides to have Castor specifically name the Sicilian Sea if he did not want an allusion to the Sicilian expedition. As Said points out, Euripides tends to insert contemporary politics into the mythical world through geographical details (1989, 116–17; see also “Commentary” 410–11n.).

The question of the order of the Euripidean and Sophoclean *Electra* plays arises because their many similarities to and echoes of each other suggest that one of them was either influenced by or responding to the other.⁵ It is naturally of interest to know which was which. The answer eludes us because even if we were able to date Euripides’ *Electra* with greater certainty, we have no reliable date for Sophocles’ play. Most scholars place Sophocles’ *Electra* between 420 and 410 on the basis of perceived similarities with *Philoctetes* and *Oedipus at Colonus*, which were performed in the last decade of the fifth century. Within this range, either play could have been written first.

Discussions of the order of the plays must be based on inferences from their similarities and differences, that is, on conjecture. Jebb (1894) deftly shows how each of the similarities that Wilamowitz (1883) marshals to support his claim that Euripides’ *Electra* was the earlier play could equally well support the precedence of Sophocles’ version.⁶ Summing up the scholarship, Finglass (3) observes that for some scholars the more developed or elaborate example of a common element must be the later; for others the handling of a motif in the later play seems inorganic, out of place, or trivial compared with its treatment in the former. Pointing out the common origin of many of the shared features of the two dramas in Aeschylus’ *Choephoroi*, Finglass aptly suggests that the differences between the *Electra* plays are often better understood as the result of different responses to Aeschylus

4. See Lesky, 291 in reference to Zuntz’ view: “And the specific mention of the Sicilian sea cannot be so easily taken as a general remark without particular significance.”

5. For the common features, see, for example, Cropp on 998–1096.

6. Jebb 1894, lii–lvi. Some years later, Wilamowitz 1899, 57–8 n2, changed his view. For a thorough discussion of the various views with the assumption that Euripides’ *Electra* must be placed in 413 and that of Sophocles in 418–415, see Vögler. Cf. Leimbach.

than as the later *Electra* reacting to the earlier. The fact that there was probably a revival of the *Oresteia* in the 420s may support this position.

Although we share this view, we would like to convey our own sense, based on the two plays' relation to the *Choephoroi*, that Sophocles' *Electra* was written first. Our argument assumes the prominence of character in Greek tragedy. Both Sophocles and Euripides depart radically from Aeschylus' rendition in their treatment of Electra. In Aeschylus' play, Electra is a slight, secondary figure, a compliant young girl bringing libations to her father's grave at the behest of her mother. She participates in the *kommós*, which follows the recognition scene with Orestes, but takes no active part in the revenge and leaves the stage, never to return, shortly after the play's midpoint (*Cho.* 584). Both Sophocles and Euripides place Electra at the center of their eponymously named plays. Both make her a grown woman who is the driving force behind the revenge and who participates in it as fully as her gender allows.

The difference is that whereas Sophocles created a character of enormous stature, Euripides created a reduced character driven by a very personal and almost petty vindictiveness. Sophocles' Electra is a rebellious, principled heroine, a fighter for justice, whose passionate idealism compels admiration (and revulsion) even as it is shown to be rigid, lacking in nuance, and deeply destructive of herself and others. Her deep grief for her father, albeit excessive, and her courage and self-sacrifice in pitting herself against the royal couple at the expense of her own comfort and security, make her a truly heroic figure. Euripides' Electra, who has been married off to a poor farmer so that her humbly born children will not grow up to take revenge, is depicted as full of resentment at having been rejected by her mother, expelled from her father's house, and wedded to a man beneath her station. Although these wrongs provide ample motive for her pursuit of vengeance, she is never shown as rising above or beyond her own concerns or endowed with any of the redeeming virtues (or excesses) of her Sophoclean namesake.

It seems to us that if a playwright goes to the trouble of elevating a minor character to a major role, he will depict her as heroic and tragic. Sophocles' play seems to be saying: "Aeschylus didn't do Electra justice. She's really a grand and heroic figure who merits a major role in my play." It is hard to envision Euripides saying: "Aeschylus gave Electra only a minor role. I'll make her my heroine in order to show her as really a rather petty and vindictive character who bullied her weak-willed, hesitant brother into killing his mother against morality and his better judgment." While we believe with Finglass

that both Sophocles and Euripides were responding to Aeschylus, we believe that Euripides was responding to Sophocles as well. Skeptical to the point of cynicism about human nature, Euripides' message seems to have been: "Sophocles gave Electra too much credit. I'll show what she was really like in this world without heroes and heroines."

The above argument does not dispute the common understanding that the personae of Greek tragedy were types rather than realistic, individualized figures. Nor does it dispute Aristotle's view that character was secondary to action in Greek tragedy (*Poetics* 1450a). However, the fact that so many of the tragedies are named for their chief persona points to the importance of character in the plays, while the many differences in the depictions of Electra, as well as of Orestes, Clytemnestra, and even Aegisthus, by the three playwrights is clear proof that each conceived of the types differently.

We recognize that our argument is as conjectural as all the others. In principle, it can also be argued that Euripides' simpler, less developed heroine would logically have preceded Sophocles' more complex one, though this strikes us as less likely. If the order we suggest is correct, it would be consistent with the later dating of Euripides' play, shortly before or, as we believe, more probably shortly after 415. Although neither the metrical evidence nor the evidence from the suggested allusions is watertight, they are plausible.

7. DEFINITIONS OF LITERARY TERMS USED IN THE COMMENTARY

(Numbers refer to lines in the text and notes.)

ALLITERATION: the repetition of consonant sounds in successive words or stressed syllables: 25.

ANADIPLOSIS: emotional or rhetorical repetition of one or more words: 112–13. For Euripides' use of *anadiplosis*, see Breitenbach, 214–21. For other occurrences see 137, 169, 485, 585, 594, 726, 1149, 1185, 1201 (Smyth 3009).

ANAPHORA: repetition of a word or group of words at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses, or verses: 130–3 (Smyth 3010).

ANTILABE: half-line stichomythia, in which each trimeter is divided between two speakers: 579–81. (See Mastronarde 2002, 78.)

APOCOPE: interior elision in the formation of compounds in which a final short vowel is lost before an initial consonant: most often the second syllable

of a disyllabic prefix is cut off for rhythmic convenience, often with assimilation: 288. E.g., ἀμπυχαί for ἀναπτυχαί 868 (Smyth 75D).

APOSIOPEISIS: a rhetorical device in which the speaker or writer deliberately stops short and leaves a statement unfinished, giving the impression that he or she is unwilling or unable to continue: 582 (Smyth 3015).

ASSONANCE: repetition of vowel sounds: 2.

ASYNDETON: omission of conjunctions where they would usually occur: 143–4 (Smyth 3016).

DEICTIC DEMONSTRATIVE: pointing use of the demonstrative to mean *here*: 6, 1343.

ECPHRASIS: a poetic description of a work of visual art: 452–77.

ENJAMBMENT: the carrying over of a word or phrase to the next line; the breaking of a syntactic unit between two verses: 12, 32, 35, 87, etc.

EUPHEMISM: use of an indirect expression to soften an unpleasant or painful one: see 85 in which Orestes intimates, without going into specifics, that his situation is difficult; also 289 (Smyth 3024).

FIGURA ETYMOLOGICA: the use of two or more words from the same root in close proximity: 234, 926.

HENDIADYS: (*one through two*) one idea expressed through two coordinate words, usually nouns connected by a copulative conjunction e.g., *my eye and its unfoldings* = *my open eyes*: 868 (Smyth 3025).

HYPERBATON: the separation of words that naturally belong together; used for emphasis: 4–5, 12 (Smyth 3026; see Mastronarde 2002, 95).

INTEGRAL ENJAMBMENT: “the sense is incomplete at line-end and what follows is indispensable to the completion of the sense. . . .” (Mastronarde 2002, 94): 12, 32.

LITOTES: a figure of speech in which something is stated by the denial of its opposite: 350, 749 (Smyth 3032).

METONYMY: the substitution of one word for another that is closely associated with it: 216; as “roof” for “house,” 1150–1 (Smyth 3033).

PARALEIPSIS: an intentional omission for rhetorical effect 1245–6 (Smyth 3036).

POLYPTOTON OR PAREGMEON: repetition of different forms of the same word in close proximity, a rhetorical device that can be used to reinforce the concept inherent in the repeated words: 39.

RESOLUTION: the substitution of two shorts for a long or short element in the iambic trimeter: 3 (see “Meter”).

RETICENT EUPHEMISM: see EUPHEMISM (cf. Smyth 3024).

STICHOMYTHIA, a rapid exchange of one- or two-line speeches, is a common means of conveying emotional agitation in Greek tragedy: 220–89, etc. (see also “Meter”).

SYNZESIS: two vowels, or a vowel and a diphthong, in two successive syllables uniting to form a single syllable in pronunciation but not in writing: 383 (Smyth 60–1).

Εὐριπίδου, Ἡλέκτρα

(based on the 1913 edition of Gilbert Murray,
supplemented by James Diggle's 1981 edition)

ΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

αὐτουργὸς Μυκηναῖος
Ἡλέκτρα
Ὀρέστης
Πυλάδης (κωφὸν πρόσωπον)
χορός
πρέσβυς
ἄγγελος
Κλυταιμῆστρα
Διόσκοροι

PROLOGUE (1–166)

Αὐτουργός

ᾧ γῆς παλαιὸν Ἄργος, Ἰνάχου ῥοαί,
ὅθεν ποτ' ἄρας ναυσὶ χιλίαις Ἄρη
ἐς γῆν ἔπλευσε Τρῳάδ' Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ.
κτείνας δὲ τὸν κρατοῦντ' ἐν Ἰλιάδι χθονὶ
Πρίαμον, ἐλὼν τε Δαρδάνου κλεινὴν πόλιν,
ἀφίκετ' ἐς τόδ' Ἄργος, ὑψηλῶν δ' ἐπὶ
ναῶν ἔθηκε σκῦλα πλεῖστα βαρβάρων.
κάκει μὲν εὐτύχησεν· ἐν δὲ δώμασι
θνήσκει γυναικὸς πρὸς Κλυταιμῆστρας δόλφ
καὶ τοῦ Θυέστου παιδὸς Αἰγίσθου χερί.
χὼ μὲν παλαιὰ σκῆπτρα Ταντάλου λιπῶν

5

10

ὅλωλεν, Αἰγίσθος δὲ βασιλεύει χθονός,
 ἄλοχον ἐκείνου Τυνδαρίδα κόρην ἔχων.
 οὓς δ' ἐν δόμοισιν ἔλιψ' ὅτ' ἐς Τροίαν ἔπλει,
 ἄρσενά τ' Ὀρέστην θηλὴν τ' Ἥλέκτρας θάλας, 15
 τὸν μὲν πατὴρ γεραίος ἐκκλέπτει τροφεὺς
 μέλλοντ' Ὀρέστην χερὸς ὑπ' Αἰγίσθου θανεῖν
 Στροφίῳ τ' ἔδωκε Φωκέων ἐς γῆν τρέφειν·
 ἥ δ' ἐν δόμοις ἔμεινεν Ἥλέκτρα πατρός,
 ταύτην ἐπειδὴ θαλερὸς εἶχ' ἥβης χρόνος, 20
 μνηστῆρες ἦτουν Ἑλλάδος πρῶτοι χθονός.
 δεῖσας δὲ μή τῳ παῖδ' ἀριστέων τέκοι
 Ἀγαμέμνωνος ποινάτορ', εἶχεν ἐν δόμοις
 Αἰγίσθος οὐδ' ἥρμοζε νυμφίῳ τινί.
 ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ τοῦτ' ἦν φόβου πολλοῦ πλέων, 25
 μή τῳ λαθραίως τέκνα γενναίῳ τέκοι,
 κτανεῖν σφε βουλεύσαντος, ὁμόφρων ὅμως
 μήτηρ νιν ἐξέσωσεν Αἰγίσθου χερός.
 ἐς μὲν γὰρ ἄνδρα σκῆψιν εἶχ' ὅλωλότα,
 παίδων δ' ἔδεισε μὴ φθονηθεῖν φόνῳ. 30
 ἐκ τῶνδε δὴ τοιόνδ' ἐμηχανήσατο
 Αἰγίσθος· ὃς μὲν γῆς ἀπηλλάχθη φυγὰς
 Ἀγαμέμνωνος παῖς, χρυσὸν εἶψ' ὃς ἂν κτάνῃ,
 ἡμῖν δὲ δὴ δίδωσιν Ἥλέκτραν ἔχειν 35
 δάμαρτα, πατέρων μὲν Μυκηναίων ἅπο
 γεγῶσιν — οὐ δὴ τοῦτό γ' ἐξελέγχομαι·
 λαμπροὶ γὰρ ἐς γένος γε, χρημάτων δὲ δὴ
 πένητες, ἔνθεν ἡϋγένει' ἀπόλλυται —
 ὥς ἀσθενεῖ δοὺς ἀσθενῇ λάβοι φόβον.
 εἰ γὰρ νιν ἔσχεν ἀξίωμ' ἔχων ἀνὴρ, 40
 εὖδοντ' ἂν ἐξήγειρε τὸν Ἀγαμέμνωνος
 φόνον δίκη τ' ἂν ἦλθεν Αἰγίσθῳ τότε.
 ἦν οὐποθ' ἀνὴρ ὅδε — σύνοιδέ μοι Κύπρις —
 ἦσχυεν εὖνῃ· παρθένος δ' ἔτ' ἐστὶ δῆ.
 αἰσχύνομαι γὰρ ὀλβίων ἀνδρῶν τέκνα 45
 λαβὼν ὑβρίζειν, οὐ κατὰξιος γεγώς.
 στένω δὲ τὸν λόγῳσι κηδεύοντ' ἐμοὶ
 ἄθλιον Ὀρέστην, εἴ ποτ' εἰς Ἄργος μολῶν
 γάμους ἀδελφῆς δυστυχεῖς ἐσόψεται.
 ὅστις δέ μ' εἰναί φησι μῶρον, εἰ λαβὼν 50

νέαν ἐς οἴκους παρθένον μὴ θιγγάνω,
γνώμης πονηροῖς κανόνσιν ἀναμετρούμενος
τὸ σῶφρον ἴστω καὶ τὸς αὖ τοιοῦτος ὦν.

Ἥλέκτρα

ὦ νῦξ μέλαινα, χρυσέων ἄστρον τροφέ,
ἐν ἧ τόδ' ἄγγος τῷδ' ἐφεδρεῦον κάρρα 55
φέρουσα πηγὰς ποταμίας μετέρχομαι —
οὐ δὴ τι χρεῖας ἐς τοσόνδ' ἀφιγμένη,
ἀλλ' ὡς ὕβριν δείξωμεν Αἰγίσθου θεοῖς —
γούους τ' ἀφίημι αἰθέρ' ἐς μέγαν πατρί.
ἦ γὰρ πανώλης Τυνδαρίς, μήτηρ ἐμή, 60
ἐξέβαλέ μ' οἴκων, χάριτα τιθεμένη πόσει·
τεκοῦσα δ' ἄλλους παῖδας Αἰγίσθῳ πάρα
πάρεργ' Ὀρέστην κάμει ποιεῖται δόμων.

Αὐτουργός

τί γὰρ τάδ', ὦ δύστην', ἐμὴν μοχθεῖς χάριν
πόνους ἔχουσα, πρόσθεν εὖ τεθραμμένη, 65
καὶ ταῦτ' ἐμοῦ λέγοντος οὐκ ἀφίστασαι;

Ἥλέκτρα

ἐγὼ σ' ἴσον θεοῖσιν ἡγοῦμαι φίλον·
ἐν τοῖς ἐμοῖς γὰρ οὐκ ἐνύβρισας κακοῖς.
μεγάλη δὲ θνητοῖς μοῖρα συμφορᾶς κακῆς
ἱατρὸν εὐρεῖν, ὡς ἐγὼ σὲ λαμβάνω. 70
δεῖ δὴ με κἀκέλευστον εἰς ὅσον σθένω
μόχθου πικροφίζουσας, ὡς ῥᾶον φέρης,
συνεκκομίζειν σοι πόνους. ἄλλης δ' ἔχεις
τάξωθεν ἔργα· τὰν δόμοις δ' ἡμᾶς χρεῶν
ἐξευτρεπίζειν. εἰσιόντι δ' ἐργάτῃ 75
θύραθεν ἡδὺ τᾶνδον εὐρίσκειν καλῶς.

Αὐτουργός

εἴ τοι δοκεῖ σοι, στεῖχε· καὶ γὰρ οὐ πρόσω
πηγαὶ μελάνθρων τῶνδ'. ἐγὼ δ' ἄμ' ἡμέρα
βοῦς εἰς ἀρούρας ἐσβαλὼν σπερῶ γύας.
ἀργὸς γὰρ οὐδεὶς θεοὺς ἔχων ἀνὰ στόμα 80
βίον δύναιτ' ἂν ξυλλέγειν ἄνευ πόνου.

Ὀρέστης

Πυλάδῃ, σὲ γὰρ δὴ πρῶτον ἀνθρώπων ἐγὼ
πιστὸν νομίζω καὶ φίλον ξένον τ' ἐμοί·
μόνος δ' Ὀρέστην τόνδ' ἐθαύμαζες φίλων,

πράσσονθ' ἅ πράσσω δεῖν' ὑπ' Αἰγίσθου παθών, 85
 ὅς μου κατέκτα πατέρα χῆ πανώλεθρος
 μήτηρ. ἀφίγμαι δ' ἐκ θεοῦ μυστηρίων
 Ἀργεῖον οὐδ' αὖ οὐδενὸς ξυνειδότος,
 φόνον φονεῦσι πατρὸς ἀλλάξων ἐμοῦ.
 νυκτὸς δὲ τῆσδε πρὸς τάφον μολὼν πατρὸς 90
 δάκρυά τ' ἔδωκα καὶ κόμης ἀπηρξάμην
 πυρρὰ τ' ἐπέσφαξ' αἶμα μηλείου φόνου,
 λαθὼν τυράννους οἱ κρατοῦσι τῆσδε γῆς.
 καὶ τειχέων μὲν ἐντὸς οὐ βαίνω πόδα,
 δυοῖν δ' ἄμιλλαν ξυντιθεῖς ἀφικόμην 95
 πρὸς τέρμονας γῆς τῆσδ', ἵν' ἐκβάλω ποδὶ
 ἄλλην ἐπ' αἶαν, εἴ μὲ τις γνοίη σκοπῶν,
 ζητῶν τ' ἀδελφὴν· φασὶ γάρ νιν ἐν γάμοις
 ζευχθεῖσαν οἰκεῖν οὐδὲ παρθένον μένειν·
 ὥς συγγένωμαι καὶ φόνου ξυνεργάτιν 100
 λαβὼν τά γ' εἴσω τειχέων σαφῶς μάθω.
 νῦν οὖν — Ἔως γὰρ λευκὸν ὄμμ' ἀναίρεται —
 ἔξω τρίβου τοῦδ' ἵχνος ἀλλαξώμεθα.
 ἦ γάρ τις ἀροτὴρ ἢ τις οἰκέτις γυνὴ
 φανήσεται νῶν, ἥντιν' ἱστορήσομεν 105
 εἰ τούσδε ναίει σύγγονος τόπους ἐμή.
 ἀλλ' — εἰσορῶ γὰρ τήνδε πρόσπολόν τινα,
 πηγαῖον ἄχθος ἐν κεκαρμένῳ κάρῳ
 φέρουσαν — ἐξώμεσθα κάκτυθώμεθα
 δούλης γυναικός, ἣν τι δεξώμεσθ' ἔπος 110
 ἐφ' οἷσι, Πυλάδῃ, τήνδ' ἀφίγμεθα χθόνα.

Ἥλέκτρα

σύντειν' — ὦρα — ποδὸς ὀρμάν· ὦ, STROPHE I
 ἔμβρα, ἔμβρα κατακλαίουσα·
 ἰὼ μοί μοι.
 ἐγενόμαν Ἀγαμέμνωνος 115
 καί μ' ἔτεκεν Κλυταιμῆστρα
 στυγνὰ Τυνδάρῳ κόρα,
 κικλήσκουσι δέ μ' ἀθλίαν
 Ἥλέκτραν πολιῆται.
 φεῦ φεῦ σχετλίων πόνων 120
 καὶ στυγεράς ζόας.

ὦ πάτερ, σὺ δ' ἐν Ἀΐδα
 κείσαι, σῶς ἀλόχου σφαγαῖς
 Αἰγίσθου τ', Ἀγάμεμνον.

ἴθι τὸν αὐτὸν ἔγειρε γόον,
 ἄναγε πολύδακρυν ἄδονάν.

MESODE 125

σύντειν' — ὦρα — ποδὸς ὁρμάν· ὦ,
 ἔμβρα, ἔμβρα, κατακλαίουσα·
 ἰὼ μοί μοι.

ANTISTROPHE 1

τίνα πόλιν, τίνα δ' οἶκον, ὦ 130

τλᾶμον σύγγον', ἀλατεύεις
 οἰκτρὰν ἐν θαλάμοις λιπὼν
 πατρώοις ἐπὶ συμφοραῖς
 ἀλγίσταισιν ἀδελφάν;
 ἔλθοις δὲ πόνων ἐμοὶ 135
 τᾷ μελέᾳ λυτῇρ,
 ὦ Ζεῦ Ζεῦ, πατρί θ' αἰμάτων
 ἐχθίστων ἐπίκουρος, Ἄρ-
 γει κέλσας πόδ' ἀλάταν.

θὲς τόδε τεῦχος ἐμῆς ἀπὸ κρατὸς ἐ-
 λοῦς', ἵνα πατρί γόους νυχίους
 ἐπορθροβοάσω,
 ἰαχάν, Ἀΐδα μέλος,
 Ἀΐδα, πάτερ, σοι
 κατὰ γᾶς ἐνέπω γόους
 οἷς αἰεὶ τὸ κατ' ἡμαρ 145
 λείβομαι, κατὰ μὲν φίλαν
 ὄνυχι τεμνομένα δέραν
 χέρα τε κρᾶτ' ἐπὶ κούριμον
 τιθεμένα θανάτῳ σῶ.

STROPHE 2 140

ἔῃ, δρύπτε κάρα·
 οἷα δέ τις κύκνος ἀχέτας
 ποταμίῳις παρὰ χεύμασιν
 πατέρα φίλτατον καλεῖ,
 ὀλόμενον δολίοις βρόχων
 ἔρκεσιν, ὥς σὲ τὸν ἄθλιον,
 πάτερ, ἐγὼ κατακλαίομαι, 155

MESODE 150

| | |
|---|---|
| λουτρά πανύσταθ' ὕδρανάμενον χροῖ κοίτα ἐν οἰκτροτάτῃ θανάτου. ἰώ μοι, <ἰώ> μοι πικρῶς μὲν πελέκεως τομῶς σῶς, πάτερ, πικρῶς δ' ἐκ Τροίας ὁδίου βουλᾶς· οὐ μίτραισι γυνή σε δέξασθ' οὐδ' ἐπὶ στεφάνοις, ξίφεσι δ' ἀμφιτόμοις λυγρὰν Αἰγίσθου λώβαν θεμένα δόλιον ἔσχεν ἀκοίταν. | ANTISTROPHE 2 160 165 |
|---|---|

PARODOS (167–212)

| | |
|---|---|
| Χορός | |
| Ἄγαμέμνονος ὦ κόρα, ἤλυθον, Ἥλέκτρα, ποτὶ σὴν ἀγρότειραν αὐλάν. ἔμολέ τις ἔμολεν γαλακτοπότας ἀνὴρ Μυκηναῖος ὀρειβάτας· ἀγγέλλει δ' ὅτι νῦν τριταί- αν καρύσσουσιν θυσίαν Ἀργεῖοι, πᾶσαι δὲ παρ' Ἥ- ραν μέλλουσιν παρθενικὰ στείχειν. | STROPHE 170 |
| Ἥλέκτρα οὐκ ἐπ' ἀγλαΐαις, φίλαι, θυμὸν οὐδ' ἐπὶ χρυσεῖς ὄρμοις ἐκπεπτόμαί τάλαιν', οὐδ' ἰστᾶσα χοροὺς Ἀργεΐαις ἅμα νύμφαις εἰλικτὸν κρούσω πόδ' ἐμόν. δάκρυσι νυχεύω, δακρῶν δέ μοι μέλει δειλαίᾳ τὸ κατ' ἡμᾶρ. σκέψαι μου πιναρὰν κόμαν καὶ τρύχη τάδ' ἐμῶν πέπλων, εἰ πρέποντ' Ἀγαμέμνονος κούρᾳ τᾷ βασιλείᾳ τᾷ Τροίᾳ θ', ἃ μοῦ πατέρος μέμναται ποθ' ἄλοῦσα. | 175 180 185 |

Χορός

μεγάλα θεός· ἄλλ' ἴθι, καὶ παρ' ἐμοῦ χρήσαι ANTISTROPHE
 πολύπηνα φάρεα δῦναι, 191
 χρύσεά τε χαρίσαι προσθήματ' ἀγλαΐας.
 δοκεῖς τοῖσι σοῖς δακρύοις
 μὴ τιμῶσα θεοὺς κρατή-
 σειν ἐχθρῶν; οὔτοι στοναχαῖς, 195
 ἄλλ' εὐχαῖσι θεοὺς σεβί-
 ζουσ' ἔξεις εὐαμερίαν, ὦ παῖ.

Ἥλέκτρα

οὐδεῖς θεῶν ἐνοπᾶς κλύει
 τᾶς δυσδαίμονος, οὐ παλαι-
 ῶν πατρὸς σφαγιασμῶν. 200
 οἴμοι τοῦ καταφθιμένου
 τοῦ τε ζῶντος ἀλάτα,
 ὅς που γὰν ἄλλαν κατέχει,
 μέλεος ἀλαίνων ποτὶ θήσσαν ἐστίαν, 205
 τοῦ κλεινοῦ πατρὸς ἐκφύς.
 αὐτὰ δ' ἐν χερνήσι δόμοις
 ναίω ψυχὰν τακομένα
 δωμάτων πατρίων φυγᾶς,
 οὐρέας ἀν' ἐρίπνας. 210
 μάτηρ δ' ἐν λέκτροις φονίοις
 ἄλλω σύγγαμος οἰκεῖ.

FIRST EPISODE (213–431)

Χορός

πολλῶν κακῶν Ἑλλησιν αἰτίαν ἔχει
 σῆς μητρὸς Ἑλένη σύγγονος δόμοις τε σοῖς.

Ἥλέκτρα

οἴμοι, γυναῖκες, ἐξέβην θρηνημάτων. 215
 ξένοι τινὲς παρ' οἶκον οἶδ' ἐφεστίους
 εὐνὰς ἔχοντες ἐξανίστανται λόχου·
 φυγῇ σὺ μὲν κατ' οἶμον, ἐς δόμους δ' ἐγὼ
 φῶτας κακούργους ἐξαλύζωμεν ποδί.

Ὀρέστης

μέν', ὦ τάλαινα· μὴ τρέσης ἐμὴν χέρα. 220

- Ἥλέκτρα
ὦ Φοῖβ' Ἀπολλων· προσπίτνω σε μὴ θανεῖν.
Ὀρέστης
ἄλλους κτάνοιμι μάλλον ἐχθίους σέθεν.
Ἥλέκτρα
ἄπελθε, μὴ ψαῦ' ὧν σε μὴ ψαύειν χρεών.
Ὀρέστης
οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅτου θίγοιμ' ἂν ἐνδικώτερον.
Ἥλέκτρα
καὶ πῶς ξιφήρης πρὸς δόμοις λοχῶς ἐμοῖς; 225
Ὀρέστης
μείνας' ἄκουσον, καὶ τάχ' οὐκ ἄλλως ἐρεῖς.
Ἥλέκτρα
ἔστηκα· πάντως δ' εἰμὶ σή· κρείσσων γὰρ εἶ.
Ὀρέστης
ἦκω φέρων σοι σοῦ κασιγνήτου λόγους.
Ἥλέκτρα
ὦ φίλτατ', ἄρα ζῶντος ἢ τεθνηκότος;
Ὀρέστης
ζῇ· πρῶτα γάρ σοι ἀγάθ' ἀγγέλλειν θέλω. 230
Ἥλέκτρα
εὐδαιμονοίης, μισθὸν ἡδίστων λόγων.
Ὀρέστης
κοινῇ δίδωμι τοῦτο νῶν ἀμφοῖν ἔχειν.
Ἥλέκτρα
ποῦ γῆς ὁ τλήμων τλήμονας φυγὰς ἔχων;
Ὀρέστης
οὐχ ἓνα νομίζων φθείρεται πόλεως νόμον.
Ἥλέκτρα
οὐ που σπανίζων τοῦ καθ' ἡμέραν βίου; 235
Ὀρέστης
ἔχει μέν, ἀσθενὴς δὲ δὴ φεύγων ἀνὴρ.
Ἥλέκτρα
λόγον δὲ δὴ τίν' ἦλθες ἐκ κείνου φέρων;
Ὀρέστης
εἰ ζῆς, ὅπως τε ζῶσα συμφορᾶς ἔχεις.
Ἥλέκτρα
οὐκ οὐκ ὀρᾶς μου πρῶτον ὡς ζηρὸν δέμας;

- Ὀρέστης
 λύπαις γε συντετηκός, ὥστε με στένειν. 240
 Ἥλέκτρα
 καὶ κρᾶτα πλόκαμόν τ' ἐσκυθισμένον ξυρῶ.
 Ὀρέστης
 δάκνει σ' ἀδελφὸς ὅ τε θανὼν ἴσως πατήρ.
 Ἥλέκτρα
 οἴμοι, τί γάρ μοι τῶνδ' ἐστὶ φίλτερον;
 Ὀρέστης
 φεῦ φεῦ· τί δαὶ σὺ σῶ κασιγνήτῳ δοκεῖς;
 Ἥλέκτρα
 ἀπὼν ἐκεῖνος, οὐ παρὼν ἡμῖν φίλος. 245
 Ὀρέστης
 ἐκ τοῦ δὲ ναίεις ἐνθάδ' ἄστεως ἐκάς;
 Ἥλέκτρα
 ἐγὴμάμεσθ', ὦ ξεῖνε, θανάσιμον γάμον.
 Ὀρέστης
 ὦμωξ' ἀδελφὸν σόν. Μυκηναίων τίνι;
 Ἥλέκτρα
 οὐχ ᾧ πατήρ μ' ἥλπιζεν ἐκδώσειν ποτέ.
 Ὀρέστης
 εἴφ', ὥς ἀκούσας σῶ κασιγνήτῳ λέγω. 250
 Ἥλέκτρα
 ἐν τοῖσδ' ἐκείνου τηλορὸς ναίω δόμοις.
 Ὀρέστης
 σκαφεύς τις ἢ βουφορβὸς ἄξιος δόμων.
 Ἥλέκτρα
 πένης ἀνὴρ γενναῖος ἔς τ' ἔμ' εὐσεβής.
 Ὀρέστης
 ἦ δ' εὐσέβεια τίς πρόσεστι σῶ πόσει;
 Ἥλέκτρα
 οὐπόποτ' εὐνῆς τῆς ἐμῆς ἔτλη θιγεῖν. 255
 Ὀρέστης
 ἄγνευμ' ἔχων τι θεῖον ἢ σ' ἀπαξιῶν;
 Ἥλέκτρα
 γονέας ὑβρίζειν τοὺς ἐμοὺς οὐκ ἡξίου.
 Ὀρέστης
 καὶ πῶς γάμον τοιοῦτον οὐχ ἥσθη λαβών;

- Ἥλέκτρα
οὐ κύριον τὸν δόντα μ' ἡγεῖται, ξένε.
Ὀρέστης
ξυνῆκ'· Ὀρέστη μή ποτ' ἐκτείσῃ δίκην. 260
Ἥλέκτρα
τοῦτ' αὐτὸ ταρβῶν, πρὸς δὲ καὶ σῶφρων ἔφυ.
Ὀρέστης
φεῦ·
γενναῖον ἄνδρ' ἔλεξας, εὖ τε δραστέον.
Ἥλέκτρα
εἰ δὴ ποθ' ἥξει γ' ἐς δόμους ὁ νῦν ἀπών.
Ὀρέστης
μήτηρ δέ σ' ἡ τεκοῦσα ταῦτ' ἠνέσχετο;
Ἥλέκτρα
γυναῖκες ἀνδρῶν, ὦ ξέν', οὐ παίδων φίλαι. 265
Ὀρέστης
τίνος δέ σ' οὔνεχ' ὕβρις' Αἴγισθος τάδε;
Ἥλέκτρα
τεκεῖν μ' ἐβούλετ' ἀσθενῇ, τοιῷδε δούς.
Ὀρέστης
ὥς δῆθε παίδας μὴ τέκοις ποινάτορας;
Ἥλέκτρα
τοιαῦτ' ἐβούλευσ'· ὦν ἐμοὶ δοίῃ δίκην.
Ὀρέστης
οἶδεν δέ σ' οὔσαν παρθένον μητρὸς πόσις; 270
Ἥλέκτρα
οὐκ οἶδε· σιγῇ τοῦθ' ὑφαιρούμεσθά νιν.
Ὀρέστης
αἶδ' οὖν φίλαι σοι τούσδ' ἀκούουσιν λόγους;
Ἥλέκτρα
ὥστε στέγειν γε τὰμὰ καὶ σ' ἔπη καλῶς.
Ὀρέστης
τί δῆτ' Ὀρέστης πρὸς τόδ', Ἄργος ἦν μόλῃ;
Ἥλέκτρα
ἥρου τόδ'; αἰσχρὸν γ' εἶπας· οὐ γὰρ νῦν ἀκμή; 275
Ὀρέστης
ἐλθὼν δὲ δὴ πῶς φονέας ἄν κτάνοι πατρός;
Ἥλέκτρα
τολμῶν ὑπ' ἐχθρῶν οἷ' ἐτολμήθη πατήρ.

- Ὀρέστης
 ἦ καὶ μετ' αὐτοῦ μητέρ' ἄν τλαίης κτανεῖν;
 Ἥλέκτρα
 ταὐτῷ γε πελέκει τῷ πατὴρ ἀπώλετο.
 Ὀρέστης
 λέγω τάδ' αὐτῷ, καὶ βέβαια τάπὸ σοῦ; 280
 Ἥλέκτρα
 θάνοιμι μητρὸς αἵμ' ἐπισφάξας' ἐμῆς.
 Ὀρέστης
 φεῦ·
 εἴθ' ἦν Ὀρέστης πλησίον κλύων τάδε.
 Ἥλέκτρα
 ἄλλ', ὦ ξέν', οὐ γνοίην ἄν εἰσιδοῦσά νιν.
 Ὀρέστης
 νέα γάρ, οὐδὲν θαῦμ', ἀπεζεύχθης νέου.
 Ἥλέκτρα
 εἷς ἄν μόνος νιν τῶν ἐμῶν γνοίη φίλων. 285
 Ὀρέστης
 ἄρ' ὃν λέγουσιν αὐτὸν ἐκκλέψαι φόνου;
 Ἥλέκτρα
 πατρός γε παιδαγωγὸς ἀρχαῖος γέρων.
 Ὀρέστης
 ὁ κατθανὼν δὲ σὸς πατὴρ τύμβου κυρεῖ;
 Ἥλέκτρα
 ἔκυρσεν ὥς ἔκυρσεν, ἐκβληθεὶς δόμων.
 Ὀρέστης
 οἴμοι, τόδ' οἶον εἶπας· — αἵσθησις γὰρ οὖν 290
 κακ τῶν θυραίων πημάτων δάκνει βροτούς.
 λέξον δ', ἵν' εἰδῶς σῷ κασιγνήτῳ φέρω
 λόγους ἀτερπεῖς, ἀλλ' ἀναγκαίους κλύειν.
 ἔνεστι δ' οἶκτος ἀμαθία μὲν οὐδαμοῦ,
 σοφοῖσι δ' ἀνδρῶν· καὶ γὰρ οὐδ' ἀζήμιον 295
 γνώμην ἐνεῖναι τοῖς σοφοῖς λίαν σοφὴν.
 Χορός
 καγὼ τὸν αὐτὸν τῷδ' ἔρον ψυχῆς ἔχω.
 πρόσω γὰρ ἄστεως οὔσα τὰν πόλει κακὰ
 οὐκ οἶδα, νῦν δὲ βούλομαι καγὼ μαθεῖν.
 Ἥλέκτρα
 λέγοιμ' ἄν, εἰ χρή — χρή δὲ πρὸς φίλον λέγειν — 300

τύχας βαρείας τὰς ἐμὰς κάμοῦ πατρός.
 ἐπεὶ δὲ κινεῖς μῦθον, ἵκετεῦω, ξένε,
 ἄγγελλ' Ὀρέστη τὰμὰ καὶ κείνου κακά,
 πρῶτον μὲν οἷοις ἐν πέπλοις αὐλίζομαι,
 πίνω θ' ὅσφ βέβριθ', ὑπὸ στέγαισί τε 305
 οἷασι ναίω βασιλικῶν ἐκ δωμάτων,
 αὐτὴ μὲν ἐκμοχθοῦσα κερκίσιν πέπλους,
 ἢ γυμνὸν ἔξω σῶμα καὶ στερήσομαι,
 αὐτὴ δὲ πηγὰς ποταμίους φορουμένη.
 ἀνέορτος ἱερῶν καὶ χορῶν τητωμένη 310
 ἀναίνομαι γυναῖκας οὔσα παρθένος,
 αἰσχύνομαι δὲ Κάστορ', ὃς πρὶν ἐς θεοὺς
 ἐλθεῖν ἔμ' ἐμνήστευεν, οὔσαν ἐγγενῇ.
 μήτηρ δ' ἐμὴ Φρυγίοισιν ἐν σκυλεύμασιν
 θρόνῳ κάθεται, πρὸς δ' ἔδραισιν Ἀσίδες 315
 δμῳαὶ στατίζουσ', ὡς ἔπερσ' ἐμὸς πατήρ,
 Ἰδαῖα φάρη χρυσέαις ἐξευγμέναι
 πόρπαισιν. αἶμα δ' ἔτι πατρὸς κατὰ στέγας
 μέλαν σέσηπεν, ὃς δ' ἐκείνον ἔκτανεν
 ἐς ταῦτ' αὖ βαίνων ἄρματ' ἐκφοιτᾷ πατρί,
 καὶ σκῆπτρ' ἐν οἷς Ἑλλήσιν ἐστρατηλάτει 320
 μαιφόνοισι χερσὶ γαυροῦται λαβών.
 Ἀγαμέμνωνος δὲ τύμβος ἡτιμασμένος
 οὔπω χοάς ποτ' οὐδὲ κλῶνα μυρσίνης
 ἔλαβε, πυρὰ δὲ χέρσος ἀγλαῖσμάτων. 325
 μέθη δὲ βρεχθεὶς τῆς ἐμῆς μητρὸς πόσις
 ὁ κλεινός, ὡς λέγουσιν, ἐνθρόσκει τάφῳ
 πέτροις τε λεύει μνήμα λάινον πατρός,
 καὶ τοῦτο τολμᾷ τοῦπος εἰς ἡμᾶς λέγειν·
 ποῦ παῖς Ὀρέστης; ἄρά σοι τύμβῳ καλῶς 330
 παρὼν ἀμύνει; — ταῦτ' ἀπὼν ὑβρίζεται.
 ἄλλ', ὦ ξέν', ἵκετεῦω σ', ἀπάγγελτον τάδε.
 πολλοὶ δ' ἐπιστέλλουσιν, ἐρμηνεὺς δ' ἐγώ,
 αἱ χεῖρες ἡ γλῶσσ' ἢ ταλαίπωρός τε φρὴν
 κάρα τ' ἐμὸν ξυρῆκες, ὅ τ' ἐκείνον τεκών. 335
 αἰσχρὸν γάρ, εἰ πατήρ μὲν ἐξεῖλεν Φρύγας,
 ὁ δ' ἄνδρ' ἐν' εἰς ὧν οὐ δυνήσεται κτανεῖν,
 νέος πεφυκὼς καὶ ἀμείνωνος πατρός.

Χορός

καὶ μὴν δέδορκα τόνδε, σὸν λέγω πόσιν,
λήξαντα μόχθου πρὸς δόμους ὠρμημένον. 340

Αὐτουργός

ἔα· τίνας τούσδ' ἐν πύλαις ὀρῶ ξένους;
τίνος δ' ἔκατι τάσδ' ἐπ' ἀγραύλους πύλας
προσῆλθον; ἦ μοῦ δεόμενοι; γυναικί τοι
αἰσχρὸν μετ' ἀνδρῶν ἐστάναι νεανιῶν.

Ἥλέκτρα

ὦ φίλτατ', εἰς ὑποπτα μὴ μόλης ἐμοί· 345
τὸν ὄντα δ' εἴσῃ μῦθον· οἶδε γὰρ ξένοι
ἤκουσ' Ὀρέστου πρὸς ἐμὲ κήρυκες λόγων.
ἄλλ', ὦ ξένοι, σύγγνωτε τοῖς εἰρημένοις.

Αὐτουργός

τί φασίν; ἀνὴρ ἔστι καὶ λεύσσει φάος;

Ἥλέκτρα

ἔστιν λόγῳ γοῦν, φασὶ δ' οὐκ ἄπιστ' ἐμοί. 350

Αὐτουργός

ἦ καὶ τι πατρὸς σὼν τε μέμνηται κακῶν;

Ἥλέκτρα

ἐν ἐλπίσιν ταῦτ'· ἀσθενὴς φεύγων ἀνὴρ.

Αὐτουργός

ἦλθον δ' Ὀρέστου τίν' ἀγορεύοντες λόγον;

Ἥλέκτρα

σκοποὺς ἔπεμψε τούσδε τῶν ἐμῶν κακῶν.

Αὐτουργός

οὐκοῦν τὰ μὲν λεύσσουσι, τὰ δὲ σύ που λέγεις. 355

Ἥλέκτρα

ἴσασιν, οὐδὲν τῶνδ' ἔχουσιν ἐνδεές.

Αὐτουργός

οὐκοῦν πάλαι χρῆν τοῖσδ' ἀνεπτύχθαι πύλας;
χωρεῖτ' ἐς οἴκους· ἀντὶ γὰρ χρηστῶν λόγων
ξενίων κυρήσεθ', οἳ ἐμὸς κεύθει δόμος.
αἴρεσθ', ὀπαδοί, τῶνδ' ἔσω τεύχη δόμων. 360
καὶ μηδὲν ἀντείπητε, παρὰ φίλου φίλοι
μολόντες ἀνδρός· καὶ γὰρ εἰ πένης ἔφυν,
οὔτοι τό γ' ἦθος δυσγενὲς παρέξομαι.

Ὀρέστης

πρὸς θεῶν, ὅδ' ἀνὴρ ὃς συνεκκλέπτει γάμους
τοὺς σοὺς, Ὀρέστην οὐ καταισχύνειν θέλων; 365

Ἥλέκτρα

οὗτος κέκληται πόσις ἐμὸς τῆς ἀθλίας.

Ὀρέστης

φεῦ·
οὐκ ἔστ' ἀκριβὲς οὐδὲν εἰς εὐανδρίαν·
ἔχουσι γὰρ ταραγμὸν αἱ φύσεις βροτῶν.
ἦδη γὰρ εἶδον ἄνδρα γενναίου πατρὸς
τὸ μηδὲν ὄντα, χρηστά τ' ἐκ κακῶν τέκνα, 370

λιμόν τ' ἐν ἀνδρὸς πλουσίου φρονήματι,
γνώμην τε μεγάλην ἐν πένητι σώματι.
πῶς οὖν τις αὐτὰ διαλαβὼν ὀρθῶς κρινεῖ;
πλούτῳ; πονηρῷ τᾶρα χρήσεται κριτῇ.

ἦ τοῖς ἔχουσι μηδέν; ἀλλ' ἔχει νόσον 375
πενία, διδάσκει δ' ἄνδρα τῇ χρεῖα κακόν.

ἀλλ' εἰς ὅπλ' ἔλθω; τίς δὲ πρὸς λόγχην βλέπων
μάρτυς γένοιτ' ἂν ὅστις ἐστὶν ἀγαθός;
κράτιστον εἰκῇ ταῦτ' ἐὰν ἀφειμένα.

οὗτος γὰρ ἀνὴρ οὗτ' ἐν Ἀργείοις μέγας 380
οὗτ' αὖ δοκῇσει δωμάτων ὠγκωμένος,
ἐν τοῖς δὲ πολλοῖς ὢν, ἄριστος ἠϋρέθη.

οὐ μὴ ἀφρονήσῃθ', οἱ κενῶν δοξασμάτων
πλήρεις πλανᾶσθε, τῇ δ' ὁμιλίᾳ βροτοὺς
κρινεῖτε καὶ τοῖς ἥθεσιν τοὺς εὐγενεῖς; 385

οἱ γὰρ τοιοῦτοι καὶ πόλεις οἰκοῦσιν εὖ
καὶ δώμαθ'· αἱ δὲ σάρκες αἱ κεναὶ φρενῶν
ἀγάλατ' ἀγορᾶς εἰσιν. οὐδὲ γὰρ δόρυ
μᾶλλον βραχίων σθεναρὸς ἀσθενοῦς μένει·
ἐν τῇ φύσει δὲ τοῦτο κἂν εὐψυχία. 390

ἀλλ' — ἄξιός γὰρ ὅ τε παρὼν ὅ τ' οὐ παρὼν
Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖς, οὐπερ οὐνεχ' ἤκομεν —
δεξώμεθ' οἴκων καταλύσεις. χωρεῖν χρεῶν,
δμῶες, δόμων τῶνδ' ἐντός. ὥς ἐμοὶ πένης
εἴη πρόθυμος πλουσίου μᾶλλον ξένος. 395

αἰνῶ μὲν οὖν τοῦδ' ἀνδρὸς ἐσδοχὰς δόμων,
ἐβουλόμην δ' ἄν, εἰ κασίγνητός με σὸς

ἐς εὐτυχοῦντας ἦγεν εὐτυχῶν δόμους.
 ἴσως δ' ἂν ἔλθοι· Λοξίου γὰρ ἔμπεδοι
 χρησμοί, βροτῶν δὲ μαντικὴν χαίρειν ἐῷ. 400

Χορός

νῦν ἢ πάροιθεν μᾶλλον, Ἥλέκτρα, χαρᾶ
 θερμαινόμεσθα καρδίαν· ἴσως γὰρ ἂν
 μόλις προβαίνουσ' ἢ τύχη σταίη καλῶς.
 Ἥλέκτρα
 ὦ τλῆμον, εἰδὼς δωμάτων χρεῖαν σέθεν
 τί τούσδ' ἐδέξω μείζονας σαυτοῦ ξένους; 405

Αὐτουργός

τί δ'; εἵπερ εἰσὶν ὡς δοκοῦσιν εὐγενεῖς,
 οὐκ ἔν τε μικροῖς ἔν τε μὴ στέρξουσ' ὁμῶς;

Ἥλέκτρα

ἐπεὶ νυν ἐξήμαρτες ἐν σμικροῖσιν ὦν,
 ἔλθ' ὡς παλαιὸν τροφὸν ἐμοῦ φίλον πατρός,
 ὃς ἀμφὶ ποταμὸν Τάναον Ἀργείας ὄρους
 τέμνοντα γαίης Σπαρτιάτιδός τε γῆς
 ποίμναις ὁμαρτεῖ πόλεος ἐκβεβλημένος·
 κέλευε δ' αὐτὸν τῶνδ' ἐς δόμους ἀφιγμένων
 ἐλθεῖν, ξένων τ' ἐς δαῖτα πορσύναι τινα.
 ἡσθήσεται τοι καὶ προσεύξεται θεοῖς,
 ζῶντ' εἰσακούσας παῖδ' ὃν ἐκσφάζει ποτέ.
 οὐ γὰρ πατρώων ἐκ δόμων μητρὸς πάρα
 λάβοιμεν ἂν τι· πικρὰ δ' ἀγγείλαιμεν ἂν,
 εἰ ζῶντ' Ὀρέστην ἢ τάλαιν' αἴσθοιτ' ἔτι. 410
 415

Αὐτουργός

ἄλλ', εἰ δοκεῖ σοι, τούσδ' ἀπαγγελῶ λόγους
 γέροντι· χώρει δ' ἐς δόμους ὅσον τάχος
 καὶ τᾶνδον ἐξάρτυε. πολλὰ τοι γυνὴ
 χρήζουσ' ἂν εὖροι δαιτὶ προσφορήματα.
 ἔστιν δὲ δὴ τοσαῦτά γ' ἐν δόμοις ἔτι
 ὥσθ' ἔν γ' ἐπ' ἡμᾶρ τούσδε πληρῶσαι βορᾶς.
 ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις δ' ἡνίκ' ἂν γνώμης πέσω,
 σκοπῶ τὰ χρήμαθ' ὡς ἔχει μέγα σθένος,
 ξένοις τε δοῦναι σῶμά τ' ἐς νόσους πεσὼν
 δαπάναισι σῶσαι· τῆς δ' ἐφ' ἡμέραν βορᾶς
 ἐς σμικρὸν ἵκει· πᾶς γὰρ ἐμπλησθεὶς ἀνὴρ
 ὁ πλούσιός τε χῶ πένης ἴσον φέρει. 420
 425
 430

| | |
|---|-----|
| ἄστρον τ' αἰθέριοι χοροί, Πλειάδες, Ὑάδες, Ἑκτορος ῥμμασι τροπαῖοι· ἐπὶ δὲ χρυσοτύφῳ κράνει Σφίγγες ὄνουξιν ἀοίδιμον ἄγραν φέρουσαι· περιπλεύρῳ δὲ κύτει πύρπνοος ἔσπευ- δε δρόμῳ λέαινα χαλαῖς Πειρηναῖον ὀρώσα πῶλον. | 470 |
| ἄορι δ' ἐν φονίῳ τετραβάμονες ἵπποι ἔπαλλον, κελαινὰ δ' ἀμφὶ νῶθ' ἔτετο κόνις. τοιῶνδ' ἄνακτα δοριπόνων ἔκανεν ἀνδρῶν, Τυνδαρίς, σὰ λέχεα, κακόφρων κούρα. τοιγάρ σέ ποτ' οὐρανόιδαι πέμπουσιν θανάτοις· ἦ σὰν ἔτ' ἔτι φόνιον ὑπὸ δέραν ὄψομαι αἶμα χυθὲν σιδάρῳ. | 485 |

EPODE

SECOND EPISODE (487–698)

Πρέσβυς

| | |
|---|-----|
| ποῦ ποῦ νεᾶνις πότνι' ἐμὴ δέσποινά τε, Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖς, ὃν ποτ' ἐξέθρεψ' ἐγώ; ὥς πρόσβασιν τῶνδ' ὀρθίαν οἴκων ἔχει ῥυσῶ γέροντι τῷδε προσβῆναι ποδί. ὅμως δὲ πρὸς γε τοὺς φίλους ἐξελκτέον διπλὴν ἄκανθαν καὶ παλίσροπον γόνυ. ὦ θύγατερ — ἄρτι γάρ σε πρὸς δόμοις ὀρῶ— ἦκω φέρων σοι τῶν ἐμῶν βοσκημάτων ποιμνῆς νεογνὸν θρέμμ' ὑποσπᾶσας τόδε στεφάνους τε τευχέων τ' ἐξελὼν τυρεύματα, παλαιὸν τε θησαύρισμα Διονύσου τόδε ὁσμῇ κατῆρες, μικρόν, ἀλλ' ἐπεσβαλεῖν ἦδὺ σκύφον τοῦδ' ἀσθενεστέρῳ ποτῶ. ἵτω φέρων τις τοῖς ξένοις τάδ' ἐς δόμους· ἐγὼ δὲ τρύχει τῷδ' ἐμῶν πέπλων κόρας δακρύοισι τέγξας ἐξομόρξασθαι θέλω. | 490 |
| | 495 |
| | 500 |

Ἥλέκτρα

τί δ', ὦ γεραιέ, διάβροχον τόδ' ὄμμ' ἔχεις;
μῶν τὰμὰ διὰ χρόνου σ' ἀνέμνησεν κακά;
ἦ τὰς Ὀρέστου τλήμονας φυγὰς στένεις
καὶ πατέρα τὸν ἐμόν, ὃν ποτ' ἐν χεροῖν ἔχων
ἀνόνητ' ἔθρεψας σοί τε καὶ τοῖς σοῖς φίλοις;

505

Πρέσβυς

ἀνόνηθ'· ὅμως δ' οὖν τοῦτό γ' οὐκ ἠνεσχόμην.
ἦλθον γὰρ αὐτοῦ πρὸς τάφον πάρεργ' ὁδοῦ
καὶ προσπεσὼν ἔκλαυσ' ἐρημίας τυχών,
σπονδὰς τε, λύσας ἀσκὸν ὃν φέρω ξένοις,
ἔσπεια, τύμβω δ' ἀμφέθηκα μυρσίνας.
πυρᾶς δ' ἐπ' αὐτῆς οἶν μελάγχχιμον πόκω
σφάγιον ἐσεῖδον αἰμά τ' οὐ πάλαι χυθὲν
ξανθῆς τε χαίτης βοστρύχους κεκαρμένους.
καθαύμας', ὦ παῖ, τίς ποτ' ἀνθρώπων ἔτλη
πρὸς τύμβον ἐλθεῖν· οὐ γὰρ Ἀργείων γέ τις.
ἄλλ' ἦλθ' ἴσως που σὸς κασίγνητος λάθρᾳ,
μολῶν δ' ἐθαύμας' ἄθλιον τύμβον πατρός.
σκέψαι δὲ χαίτην προστιθείσα σῇ κόμῃ,
εἰ χρῶμα ταῦτόν κουρίμης ἔσται τριχός·
φιλεῖ γάρ, αἶμα ταῦτόν οἷς ἂν ἦ πατρός,
τὰ πόλλ' ὅμοια σώματος πεφυκέναι.

510

515

520

Ἥλέκτρα

οὐκ ἄξι' ἀνδρός, ὦ γέρον, σοφοῦ λέγεις,
εἰ κρυπτόν ἐς γῆν τήνδ' ἂν Αἰγίσθου φόβῳ
δοκεῖς ἀδελφὸν τὸν ἐμόν εὐθαρσῇ μολεῖν.
ἔπειτα χαίτης πῶς συνοίσεται πλόκος,
ὁ μὲν παλαίστραις ἀνδρὸς εὐγενοῦς τραφεῖς,
ὁ δὲ κτενισμοῖς θήλυς; ἀλλ' ἀμήχανον.
πολλοῖς δ' ἂν εὖροις βοστρύχους ὁμοπτέρους
καὶ μὴ γεγῶσιν αἵματος ταῦτοῦ, γέρον.

525

530

Πρέσβυς

σὺ δ' εἰς ἵχνος βᾶς' ἀρβύλης σκέψαι βάσιν
εἰ σύμμετρος σῶ ποδὶ γενήσεται, τέκνον.

Ἥλέκτρα

πῶς δ' ἂν γένοιτ' ἂν ἐν κραταιλέῳ πέδῳ
γαίας ποδῶν ἔκμακτρον; εἰ δ' ἔστιν τόδε,
δυοῖν ἀδελφοῖν ποὺς ἂν οὐ γένοιτ' ἴσος
ἀνδρός τε καὶ γυναικός, ἀλλ' ἄρσῃν κρατεῖ.

535

Πρέσβυς

οὐκ ἔστιν, εἰ καὶ γῆν κασίγνητος μολών,

κερκίδος ὅτῳ γνοίης ἄν ἐξύφασμα σῆς,

ἐν ᾧ ποτ' αὐτὸν ἐξέκλεψα μὴ θανεῖν;

540

Ἥλέκτρα

οὐκ οἶσθ', Ὀρέστης ἡνίκ' ἐκπίπτει χθονός,

νέαν μ' ἔτ' οὖσαν; εἰ δὲ κᾶκρεκον πέπλους,

πῶς ἂν τότ' ὦν παῖς ταῦτά νῦν ἔχοι φάρη,

εἰ μὴ ξυναύξοινθ' οἱ πέπλοι τῷ σώματι;

ἀλλ' ἢ τις αὐτοῦ τάφον ἐποικτίρας ξένος

† ἐκείρατ', ἢ τῆσδε σκοποὺς λαβὼν χθονὸς †.

545

Πρέσβυς

οἱ δὲ ξένοι ποῦ; βούλομαι γὰρ εἰσιδὼν

αὐτοὺς ἔρεσθαι σοῦ κασιγνήτου πέρι.

Ἥλέκτρα

οἷδ' ἐκ δόμων βαίνουσι λαιψηρῷ ποδί.

Πρέσβυς

ἀλλ' εὐγενεῖς μέν, ἐν δὲ κιβδήλῳ τόδε·

πολλοὶ γὰρ ὄντες εὐγενεῖς εἰσιν κακοί.

ὅμως δὲ χαίρειν τοὺς ξένους προσεννέπω.

550

Ὀρέστης

χαῖρ', ὦ γεραῖέ. — τοῦ ποτ', Ἥλέκτρα, τόδε

παλαιὸν ἀνδρὸς λείψανον φίλων κυρεῖ;

Ἥλέκτρα

οὗτος τὸν ἀμὸν πατέρ' ἔθρεψεν, ὦ ξένε.

555

Ὀρέστης

τί φῆς; ὅδ' ὅς σὸν ἐξέκλεψε σύγγονον;

Ἥλέκτρα

ὅδ' ἔσθ' ὁ σώσας κεῖνον, εἵπερ ἔστ' ἔτι.

Ὀρέστης

ἔα·

τί μ' ἐσδέδορκεν ὥσπερ ἀργύρου σκοπῶν

λαμπρὸν χαρακτῆρ'; ἢ προσεικάζει μέ τῳ;

Ἥλέκτρα

ἴσως Ὀρέστου σ' ἥλιχ' ἥδεται βλέπων.

560

Ὀρέστης

φίλου γε φωτός. τί δὲ κυκλεῖ περίξ πόδα;

Ἥλέκτρα

καὐτὴ τόδ' εἰσορῶσα θαυμάζω, ξένε.

- Πρέσβυς
ὦ πότνι', εὐχου, θύγατερ Ἥλέκτρα, θεοῖς.
Ἥλέκτρα
τί τῶν ἀπόντων ἢ τί τῶν ὄντων πέρι;
Πρέσβυς
λαβεῖν φίλον θησαυρόν, ὃν φαίνει θεός. 565
Ἥλέκτρα
ἰδοῦ· καλῶ θεοῦς. ἢ τί δὴ λέγεις, γέρον;
Πρέσβυς
βλέψον νυν ἐς τόνδ', ὦ τέκνον, τὸν φίλτατον.
Ἥλέκτρα
πάλαι δέδορκα, μὴ σύ γ' οὐκέτ' εὖ φρονεῖς;
Πρέσβυς
οὐκ εὖ φρονῶ γὼ σὸν κασίγνητον βλέπων;
Ἥλέκτρα
πῶς εἶπας, ὦ γεραί', ἀνέλπιστον λόγον; 570
Πρέσβυς
ὀρᾶν Ὀρέστην τόνδε τὸν Ἀγαμέμνωνος.
Ἥλέκτρα
ποιον χαρακτήρ' εἰσιδὼν, ᾧ πείσομαι;
Πρέσβυς
οὐλὴν παρ' ὀφρύν, ἣν ποτ' ἐν πατρὸς δόμοις
νεβρὸν διώκων σοῦ μέθ' ἡμάχθῃ πεσών.
Ἥλέκτρα
πῶς φῆς; ὀρῶ μὲν πτώματος τεκμήριον. 575
Πρέσβυς
ἔπειτα μέλλεις προσπίτνειν τοῖς φιλτάτοις;
Ἥλέκτρα
ἀλλ' οὐκέτ', ὦ γεραιέ· συμβόλοισι γὰρ
τοῖς σοῖς πέπεισμαι θυμόν. — ὦ χρόνῳ φανείς,
ἔχω σ' ἀέλπτως —
Ὀρέστης
κάξ ἐμοῦ γ' ἔχῃ χρόνῳ.
Ἥλέκτρα
οὐδέποτε δόξασα.
Ὀρέστης
οὐδ' ἐγὼ γὰρ ἥλπισα. 580
Ἥλέκτρα
ἐκεῖνος εἰ σύ;

Ὅρέστης

σύμμαχός γέ σοι μόνος.
 ἦν δ' ἀνσπάσωμαί γ' ὃν μετέρχομαι βόλον . . .
 πέποιθα δ' ἢ χρὴ μηκέθ' ἡγεῖσθαι θεούς,
 εἰ τᾶδ' ἔσται τῆς δίκης ὑπέρτερα.

Χορός

ἔμολες ἔμολες, ὦ, χρόνιος ἀμέρα, 585
 κατέλαμψας, ἔδειξας ἐμφανῇ
 πόλει πυρσόν, ὃς παλαιᾷ φυγᾷ
 πατρίων ἀπὸ δωμάτων τάλας
 ἀλαίνων ἔβα.
 θεὸς αὖ θεὸς ἀμετέραν τις ἄγει 590
 νίκαν, ὦ φίλα.
 ἄνεχε χέρας, ἄνεχε λόγον, ἴει λιτὰς
 ἐς θεούς, τύχα σοι τύχα
 κασίγνητον ἐμβατεῦσαι πόλιν. 595

Ὅρέστης

εἶέν· φίλας μὲν ἡδονὰς ἀσπασμάτων
 ἔχω, χρόνῳ δὲ καὶ τοῖς αὐτὰ δώσομεν.
 σὺ δ' ὦ γεραῖε — καίριος γὰρ ἦλυθες —
 λέξον, τί δρῶν ἂν φονέα τεισαίμην πατρός;
 μητέρα τε <τὴν> κοινωνὸν ἀνοσίων γάμων; 600
 ἔστιν τί μοι κατ' Ἄργος εὐμενὲς φίλων;
 ἢ πάντ' ἀνεσκευάσμεθ', ὥσπερ αἱ τύχαι;
 τῷ ξυγγένωμαι; νύχιος ἢ καθ' ἡμέραν;
 ποῖαν ὁδὸν τραπώμεθ' εἰς ἐχθροὺς ἐμούς;

Πρέσβυς

ὦ τέκνον, οὐδεὶς δυστυχοῦντί σοι φίλος. 605
 εὖρημα γάρ τοι χρήμα γίγνεται τόδε,
 κοινῇ μετασχεῖν τὰγαθοῦ καὶ τοῦ κακοῦ.
 σὺ δ' — ἐκ βάθρων γὰρ πᾶς ἀνήρησαι φίλοις
 οὐδ' ἐλλέλοιπας ἐλπίδ' — ἴσθι μου κλύων,
 ἐν χειρὶ τῇ σῇ πάντ' ἔχεις καὶ τῇ τύχῃ, 610
 πατρῶον οἶκον καὶ πόλιν λαβεῖν σέθεν.

Ὅρέστης

τί δήτα δρῶντες τοῦδ' ἂν ἐξικοίμεθα;

Πρέσβυς

κατανὼν Θυέστου παῖδα σὴν τε μητέρα.

Ὅρέστης

ἦκω πὶ τόνδε στέφανον· ἀλλὰ πῶς λάβω;

- Πρέσβυς
 τειχέων μὲν ἔλθων ἐντὸς οὐδ' ἂν εἰ θέλοις. 615
 Ὀρέστης
 φρουραῖς κέκασται δεξιαῖς τε δορυφόρων;
 Πρέσβυς
 ἔγνω· φοβεῖται γάρ σε κοῦχ εὐδαι σαφῶς.
 Ὀρέστης
 εἶέν· σὺ δὴ τοῦνθένδε βούλευσον, γέρον.
 Πρέσβυς
 κάμοῦ γ' ἄκουσον· ἄρτι γάρ μ' ἐσηλθέ τι.
 Ὀρέστης
 ἐσθλόν τι μηνύσειας, αἰσθοίμην δ' ἐγώ. 620
 Πρέσβυς
 Αἴγισθον εἶδον, ἡνίχ' εἶρπον ἐνθάδε.
 Ὀρέστης
 προσηκάμην τὸ ρηθέν. ἐν ποίοις τόποις;
 Πρέσβυς
 ἀγρῶν πέλας τῶνδ' ἵποφορβίων ἔπι.
 Ὀρέστης
 τί δρῶνθ'; ὁρῶ γὰρ ἐλπίδ' ἐξ ἀμηχάνων.
 Πρέσβυς
 Νύμφαις ἐπόρσυν' ἔροτιν, ὥς ἔδοξέ μοι. 625
 Ὀρέστης
 τροφεῖα παίδων ἢ πρὸ μέλλοντος τόκου;
 Πρέσβυς
 οὐκ οἶδα πλὴν ἔν· βουσφαγεῖν ὠπλίζετο.
 Ὀρέστης
 πόσων μετ' ἀνδρῶν; ἢ μόνος δμῶων μέτα;
 Πρέσβυς
 οὐδεὶς παρῆν Ἀργεῖος, οἰκεία δὲ χεῖρ.
 Ὀρέστης
 οὐ πού τις ὅστις γνωριεῖ μ' ἰδὼν, γέρον; 630
 Πρέσβυς
 δμῶες μὲν εἰσιν, οἱ σέ γ' οὐκ εἰδόν ποτε.
 Ὀρέστης
 ἡμῖν ἂν εἶεν, εἰ κρατοῖμεν, εὐμενεῖς;
 Πρέσβυς
 δούλων γὰρ ἴδιον τοῦτο, σοὶ δὲ σύμφορον.
 Ὀρέστης
 πῶς οὖν ἂν αὐτῷ πλησιασθεῖν ποτέ;

- Πρέσβυς
 στείχων ὅθεν σε βουθυτῶν ἐσόψεται. 635
 Ὀρέστης
 ὁδὸν παρ' αὐτήν, ὡς ἔοικ', ἀγροὺς ἔχει;
 Πρέσβυς
 ὅθεν γ' ἰδὼν σε δαιτὶ κοινωνὸν καλεῖ.
 Ὀρέστης
 πικρὸν γε συνθοινάτορ', ἦν θεὸς θέλη.
 Πρέσβυς
 τοῦνθένδε πρὸς τὸ πίπτον αὐτὸς ἐννόει.
 Ὀρέστης
 καλῶς ἔλεξας. — ἡ τεκοῦσα δ' ἐστὶ ποῦ; 640
 Πρέσβυς
 Ἄργει· παρέσται δ' οὖν πόσει θοίνην ἔπι.
 Ὀρέστης
 τί δ' οὐχ ἅμ' ἐξωρμᾶτ' ἐμὴ μήτηρ πόσει;
 Πρέσβυς
 ψόγον τρέμουσα δημοτῶν ἐλείπετο.
 Ὀρέστης
 ξυνήχ'· ὑποπτος οὔσα γινώσκει πόλει.
 Πρέσβυς
 τοιαῦτα· μισεῖται γὰρ ἀνόσιος γυνή. 645
 Ὀρέστης
 πῶς οὖν; ἐκείνην τόνδε τ' ἐν ταύτῳ κτενῶ;
 Ἥλέκτρα
 ἐγὼ φόνον γε μητρὸς ἐξαρτύσομαι.
 Ὀρέστης
 καὶ μὴν ἐκεῖνά γ' ἡ τύχη θήσει καλῶς.
 Ἥλέκτρα
 ὑπηρετεῖτω μὲν δυοῖν ὄντοιν ὅδε.
 Πρέσβυς
 ἔσται τάδ'· εὐρίσκεις δὲ μητρὶ πῶς φόνον; 650
 Ἥλέκτρα
 λέγ', ὦ γεραῖέ, τάδε Κλυταιμῆστρα μολών·
 λεχὼ μ' ἀπάγγελλ' οὔσαν ἄρσενος τόκῳ.
 Πρέσβυς
 πότερα πάλαι τεκοῦσαν ἢ νεωστὶ δῆ;
 Ἥλέκτρα
 δέχ' ἡλίους, ἐν οἷσιν ἀγνεύει λεχῶ.

- Πρέσβυς
 καὶ δὴ τί τοῦτο μητρὶ προσβάλλει φόνον; 655
 Ἥλέκτρα
 ἥξει κλύουσα λόχιά μου νοσήματα.
 Πρέσβυς
 πόθεν; τί δ' αὐτῇ σοῦ μέλιν δοκεῖς, τέκνον;
 Ἥλέκτρα
 ναί· καὶ δακρύσει γ' ἄξιόμ' ἐμῶν τόκων.
 Πρέσβυς
 ἴσως· πάλιν τοι μῦθον ἐς καμπὴν ἄγε.
 Ἥλέκτρα
 ἐλθοῦσα μέντοι δηλὸν ὥς ἀπόλλυται. 660
 Πρέσβυς
 καὶ μὴν ἐπ' αὐτάς γ' εἶσι σῶν δόμων πύλας.
 Ἥλέκτρα
 οὐκοῦν τραπέσθαι σμικρὸν εἰς Ἄιδου τόδε;
 Πρέσβυς
 εἰ γὰρ θάνοιμι τοῦτ' ἰδὼν ἐγὼ ποτε.
 Ἥλέκτρα
 πρώτιστα μὲν νυν τῷδ' ὑφήγησαι, γέρον.
 Πρέσβυς
 Αἴγισθος ἔνθα νῦν θυηπολεῖ θεοῖς; 665
 Ἥλέκτρα
 ἔπειτ' ἀπαντῶν μητρὶ τὰπ' ἐμοῦ φράσον.
 Πρέσβυς
 ὥστ' αὐτά γ' ἐκ σοῦ στόματος εἰρηῆσθαι δοκεῖν.
 Ἥλέκτρα
 σὸν ἔργον ἤδη· πρόσθεν εἵληχας φόνου.
 Ὀρέστης
 στείχοιμ' ἄν, εἴ τις ἡγεμὼν γίγνοιθ' ὁδοῦ.
 Πρέσβυς
 καὶ μὴν ἐγὼ πέμποιμ' ἄν οὐκ ἀκουσίως. 670
 Ὀρέστης
 ὦ Ζεῦ πατρῷε, καὶ τροπαῖ' ἐχθρῶν ἐμῶν.
 Ἥλέκτρα
 οἴκτιρέ θ' ἡμᾶς· οἴκτρα γὰρ πεπόνθαμεν.
 Πρέσβυς
 οἴκτιρε δῆτα σούς γε φύντας ἐκγόνους.
 Ἥλέκτρα
 Ἦρα τε βωμῶν ἢ Μυκηναίων κρατεῖς

- Ὀρέστης
 νίκην δὸς ἡμῖν, εἰ δίκαι' αἰτούμεθα. 675
 Πρέσβυς
 δὸς δῆτα πατρὸς τοῖσδε τιμωρὸν δίκην.
 Ὀρέστης
 σὺ τ' ὦ κάτω γῆς ἀνοσίως οἰκῶν πάτερ
 Ἥλέκτρα
 καὶ Γαί' ἄνασσα, χεῖρας ἧ δίδωμ' ἐμὰς
 Πρέσβυς
 ἄμυν' ἄμυνε τοῖσδε φιλτάτοις τέκνοις.
 Ὀρέστης
 νῦν πάντα νεκρὸν ἐλθὲ σύμμαχον λαβών. 680
 Ἥλέκτρα
 οἵπερ γε σὺν σοὶ Φρύγας ἀνήλωσαν δορί
 Πρέσβυς
 χώσοι στυγοῦσιν ἀνοσίους μιάστορας. 683
 Ἥλέκτρα
 ἤκουσας, ὦ δεῖν' ἐξ ἐμῆς μητρὸς παθών; 682
 Πρέσβυς
 πάντ', οἶδ', ἀκούει τάδε πατήρ· στείχειν δ' ἀκμή.
 Ἥλέκτρα
 καὶ σοι προφωνῶ πρὸς τάδ' Αἴγισθον θανεῖν· 685
 ὥς εἰ παλαισθεῖς πτώμα θανάσιμον πεσῇ,
 τέθνηκα κἀγώ, μηδέ με ζῶσαν λέγε·
 παίσω γὰρ ἦπαρ τοῦμόν ἀμφήκει ξίφει.
 δόμων ἔσω βᾶσ' εὐτρεπὲς ποήσομαι.
 ὥς ἦν μὲν ἔλθῃ πύστις εὐτυχῆς σέθεν, 690
 ὀλολύξεται πᾶν δῶμα· θνήσκοντος δέ σου
 τάναντί' ἔσται τῶνδε· ταῦτά σοι λέγω.
 Ὀρέστης
 πάντ' οἶδα.
 Ἥλέκτρα
 πρὸς τάδ' ἄνδρα γίγνεσθαί σε χρή.
 ὑμεῖς δέ μοι, γυναῖκες, εὖ πυρσεύετε
 κραυγὴν ἀγῶνος τοῦδε· φρουρήσω δ' ἐγὼ
 πρόχειρον ἔγχος χειρὶ βαστάζουσ' ἐμῇ.
 οὐ γάρ ποτ' ἐχθροῖς τοῖς ἐμοῖς νικωμένη
 δίκην ὑφέξω, σῶμ' ἐμὸν καθυβρίσαι. 695

SECOND STASIMON (699–746)

Χορός

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| ἄταλᾶς ὑπὸ ἡματέρος Ἀργείων† | STROPHE 1 |
| ὀρέων ποτὲ κληδὼν | 700 |
| ἐν πολιαῖσι μένει φήμαις | |
| εὐαρμόστοις ἐν καλάμοις | |
| Πᾶνα μοῦσαν ἡδύθροον | |
| πνέοντ', ἀγρῶν ταμίαν, | |
| χρυσέαν ἄρνα καλλίποκον | 705 |
| πορεῦσαι. πετρίνοις δ' ἐπι- | |
| στάς κᾶρυξ ἰάχει βάθοις· | |
| Ἄγορὰν ἀγορὰν, Μυκη- | |
| ναῖοι, στείχετε μακαρίων | |
| ὀψόμενοι τυράννων | 710 |
| φάσματα †δείματα. | |
| χοροὶ δ'† Ἀτρείδαν ἐγέραιρον οἴκους. | |

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| θυμέλαι δ' ἐπίτναντο χρυσήλατοι, | ANTISTROPHE 1 |
| σελαγεῖτο δ' ἄν' ἄστρῳ | |
| πῦρ ἐπιβώμιον Ἀργείων· | 715 |
| λωτὸς δὲ φθόγγον κελάδει | |
| κάλλιστον, Μουσᾶν θεράπων· | |
| μολπαὶ δ' ἠϋξοντ' ἐραταί, | |
| χρυσέας ἀρνὸς ἐπίλογοι, | |
| Θυέστου· κρυφαῖς γὰρ εὐ- | 720 |
| ναῖς πείσας ἄλοχον φίλαν | |
| Ἀτρέως, τέρας ἐκκομί- | |
| ζει πρὸς δώματα· νεόμενος δ' | |
| εἰς ἀγόρους αὐτεῖ | |
| τὰν κερόεσσαν ἔχειν | 725 |
| χρυσεδόμαλλον κατὰ δῶμα ποίμναν. | |

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| τότε δὴ τότε φαεν- | STROPHE 2 |
| νὰς ἄστρων μετέβασ' ὁδοῦς | |
| Ζεὺς καὶ φέγγος ἀελίου | |
| λευκόν τε πρόσωπον αἰοῦς, | 730 |
| τὰ δ' ἔσπερα νῶτ' ἐλαύνει | |
| θερμᾶ φλογὶ θεοπύρῳ, | |
| νεφέλαι δ' ἐνυδροὶ πρὸς ἄρκτον, | |

ξηραί τ' Ἀμμωνίδες ἔδραι
 φθίνουσ' ἀπειρόδροσοι,
 καλλίστων ὄμβρων Διόθεν στερεῖσαι. 735

λέγεται, τὰν δὲ πί-
 στιν σμικρὰν παρ' ἔμοιγ' ἔχει,
 στρέψαι θερμὰν ἀέλιον
 χρυσωπὸν ἔδραν ἀλλαξάν-
 τα δυστυχίᾳ βροτείῳ
 θνατᾶς ἔνεκεν δίκας.
 φοβεροὶ δὲ βροτοῖσι μῦθοι
 κέρδος πρὸς θεῶν θεραπείαν.
 ὦν οὐ μνασθεῖσα πόσιν
 κτείνεις, κλεινῶν συγγενέτειρ' ἀδελφῶν. 740
 745

THIRD EPISODE (747–1146)

Χορός
 ἔα ἔα·
 φίλαι, βοῆς ἠκούσατ' — ἥ δοκῶ κενὴ
 ὑπῆλθέ μ'; — ὥστε νερτέρᾳ βροντῇ Διός;
 ἰδοῦ, τάδ' οὐκ ἄσημα πνεύματ' αἵρεται·
 δέσποιν', ἄμειψον δώματ', Ἥλέκτρα, τάδε. 750
 Ἥλέκτρα
 φίλαι, τί χρῆμα; πῶς ἀγῶνος ἥκομεν;
 Χορός
 οὐκ οἶδα πλὴν ἓν· φόνιον οἰμωγὴν κλύω.
 Ἥλέκτρα
 ἦκουσα καὶ γὰρ, τηλόθεν μέν, ἀλλ' ὅμως.
 Χορός
 μακρὰν γὰρ ἔρπει γῆρυς, ἐμφανὴς γε μήν.
 Ἥλέκτρα
 Ἀργεῖος ὁ στεναγμός· ἥ φίλων ἐμῶν; 755
 Χορός
 οὐκ οἶδα· πᾶν γὰρ μείγνυται μέλος βοῆς.
 Ἥλέκτρα
 σφαγὴν αὐτεῖς τήνδε μοι· τί μέλλομεν;
 Χορός
 ἔπισχε, τρανῶς ὥς μάθης τύχας σέθεν.

- Ἥλέκτρα
οὐκ ἔστι· νικώμεσθα· ποῦ γὰρ ἄγγελος;
Χορός
ἥξουσιν· οὗτοι βασιλέα φαῦλον κτανεῖν. 760
- Ἄγγελος
ὦ καλλίνικοι παρθένοι Μυκηνίδες,
νικῶντ' Ὀρέστην πᾶσιν ἀγγέλλω φίλοις,
Ἀγαμέμνωνος δὲ φονέα κείμενον πέδῳ
Αἴγισθον· ἀλλὰ θεοῖσιν εὐχεσθαι χρεῶν.
- Ἥλέκτρα
τίς δ' εἰ σύ; πῶς μοι πιστὰ σημαίνεις τάδε; 765
- Ἄγγελος
οὐκ οἶσθ' ἀδελφοῦ μ' εἰσορῶσα πρόσπολον;
Ἥλέκτρα
ὦ φίλτατ', ἔκ τοι δείματος δυσγνωσίαν
εἶχον προσώπου· νῦν δὲ γινώσκω σε δῆ.
τί φῆς; τέθνηκε πατὴρ ἐμοῦ στυγνὸς φονεύς;
- Ἄγγελος
τέθνηκε· δὶς σοι ταῦθ', ἃ γοῦν βούλῃ, λέγω. 770
- Ἥλέκτρα
ὦ θεοί, Δίκη τε πάνθ' ὀρώσ', ἡλθές ποτε.
ποιῶ τρόπῳ δὲ καὶ τίνι ῥυθμῷ φόνου
κτείνει Θυέστου παῖδα; βούλομαι μαθεῖν.
- Ἄγγελος
ἐπεὶ μελάθρων τῶνδ' ἀπήραμεν πόδα,
ἐσβάντες ἦμεν δίκροτον εἰς ἀμαξιτὸν 775
ἔνθ' ἦν ὁ κλεινὸς τῶν Μυκηναίων ἄναξ.
κυρεῖ δὲ κήποις ἐν καταρρύτοις βεβῶς,
δρέπων τερείνης μυρσίνης κάρῃ πλόκους·
ιδῶν τ' ἀντεῖ· Χαίρετ', ὦ ξένοι· τίνες 780
πόθεν πορεύεσθ'; ἔστε τ' ἐκ ποίας χθονός;
ὁ δ' εἶπ' Ὀρέστης· Θεσσαλοί· πρὸς δ' Ἀλφεὸν
θύσοντες ἐρχόμεσθ' Ὀλυμπίῳ Δί.
κλύων δὲ ταῦτ' Αἴγισθος ἐννέπει τάδε·
Νῦν μὲν παρ' ἡμῖν χρή συνεστίους ἐμοὶ
θοίνης γενέσθαι· τυγχάνω δὲ βουθυτῶν 785
Νύμφαις· ἐῷοι δ' ἐξαναστάντες λέχους
ἐς ταὐτὸν ἥξेत'. ἀλλ' ἴωμεν ἐς δόμους —
καὶ ταῦθ' ἅμ' ἡγόρευε καὶ χερὸς λαβὼν

παρήγεν ἡμᾶς — οὐδ' ἀπαρνεῖσθαι χρεῶν ·
 ἐπεὶ δ' ἐν οἴκοις ἦμεν, ἐννέπει τάδε · 790
 λούτρ' ὥς τάχιστα τοῖς ξένοις τις αἰρέτω,
 ὥς ἀμφὶ βωμὸν στῶσι χερνίβων πέλας.
 ἄλλ' εἰπ' Ὀρέστης · Ἀρτίως ἡγνίσμεθα
 λουτροῖσι καθαροῖς ποταμίων ρεῖθρων ἅπο.
 εἰ δὲ ξένους ἀστοῖσι συνθύνειν χρεῶν, 795
 Αἴγισθ', ἔτοιμοι κοῦκ ἀπαρνούμεσθ', ἄναξ.
 τοῦτον μὲν οὖν μεθεῖσαν ἐκ μέσου λόγον ·
 λόγχας δὲ θέντες δεσπότην φρουρήματα
 δμῶες πρὸς ἔργον πάντες ἴεσαν χέρας ·
 οἱ μὲν σφαγεῖον ἔφερον, οἱ δ' ἦρον κανᾶ, 800
 ἄλλοι δὲ πῦρ ἀνῆπτον ἀμφὶ τ' ἐσχάρας
 λέβητας ὥρθουν · πᾶσα δ' ἐκτύπει στέγη.
 λαβὼν δὲ προχύτας μητρὸς εὐνέτης σέθεν
 ἔβαλλε βωμούς, τοιάδ' ἐννέπων ἔπη ·
 Νύμφαι πετραῖαι, πολλάκις με βουθυτεῖν 805
 καὶ τὴν κατ' οἴκου Τυνδαρίδα δάμαρτ' ἐμὴν
 πράσσοντας ὥς νῦν, τοὺς δ' ἐμοὺς ἐχθροὺς κακῶς
 — λέγων Ὀρέστην καὶ σέ, δεσπότης δ' ἐμὸς
 τάναντί' ἦρχετ', οὐ γεγωνίσκων λόγους,
 λαβεῖν πατρῶα δῶματ' ἐκ κανοῦ δ' ἐλὼν 810
 Αἴγισθος ὀρθὴν σφαγίδα, μοσχεῖαν τρίχα
 τεμὼν ἐφ' ἄγνον πῦρ ἔθηκε δεξιᾷ,
 κᾶσφαξ' ἐπ' ὤμων μόσχον ὥς ἦραν χεροῖν
 δμῶες, λέγει δὲ σῶ κασιγνήτῳ τάδε ·
 Ἐκ τῶν καλῶν κομποῦσι τοῖσι Θεσσαλοῖς 815
 εἶναι τόδ', ὅστις ταῦρον ἄρταμει καλῶς
 ἵππους τ' ὀχμάζει · λαβὲ σίδηρον, ὦ ξένε,
 δεῖξόν τε φήμην ἔτυμον ἀμφὶ Θεσσαλῶν.
 ὁ δ' εὐκρότητον Δωρίδ' ἀρπάσας χεροῖν,
 ρίψας ἀπ' ὤμων εὐπρεπῇ πορπάματα, 820
 Πυλάδην μὲν εἵλετ' ἐν πόνοις ὑπηρέτην,
 δμῶας δ' ἀπωθεῖ καὶ λαβὼν μόσχου πόδα,
 λευκὰς ἐγύμνου σάρκας ἐκτείνων χέρα ·
 θᾶσσον δὲ βύρσαν ἐξέδειρεν ἢ δρομεὺς
 δισσοὺς διαύλους ἱππίους διήνυσε, 825
 κἀνείτο λαγόνας. ἱερὰ δ' ἐς χεῖρας λαβὼν
 Αἴγισθος ἤθρει. καὶ λοβὸς μὲν οὐ προσῆν

σπλάγχνοις, πύλαι δὲ καὶ δοχαὶ χολῆς πέλας
 κακὰς ἔφαινον τῷ σκοποῦντι προσβολάς.
 χὼ μὲν σκυθράζει, δεσπότης δ' ἀνιστορεῖ· 830
 Τί χρῆμ' ἄθυμεις; — ὦ ξέν', ὀρωδῶ τινα
 δόλον θυραῖον. ἔστι δ' ἔχθιστος βροτῶν
 Ἀγαμέμνωνος παῖς πολέμιός τ' ἐμοῖς δόμοις·
 ὃ δ' εἶπε· Φυγάδος δῆτα δειμαίνεις δόλον,
 πόλεως ἀνάσσω; οὐχ, ὅπως παστήρια 835
 θοινασόμεσθα, Φθιάδ' ἀντὶ Δωρικῆς
 οἴσει τις ἡμῖν κοπὶδ', ἀπορρήξω χέλυν;
 λαβὼν δὲ κόπτει. σπλάγχνα δ' Αἴγισθος λαβὼν
 ἦθρει διαιρῶν. τοῦ δὲ νεύοντος κάτω
 ὄνυχας ἐπ' ἄκρους στάς κασίγνητος σέθεν 840
 ἐς σφονδύλους ἔπαισε, νωτιαία δὲ
 ἔρρηξεν ἄρθρα· πᾶν δὲ σῶμ' ἄνω κάτω
 ἥσπαιρεν ἡλάλαζε δυσθνήσκων φόνῳ.
 δμῶες δ' ἰδόντες εὐθὺς ἦξαν ἐς δόρυ,
 πολλοὶ μάχεσθαι πρὸς δύ'· ἀνδρείας δ' ὑπο 845
 ἔστησαν ἀντίπρῳρα σείοντες βέλη
 Πυλάδης Ὀρέστης τ'. εἶπε δ'· Οὐχὶ δυσμενῆς
 ἦκω πόλει τῇδ' οὐδ' ἐμοῖς ὀπάοσιν,
 φονέα δὲ πατρὸς ἀντετιμωρησάμην
 τλήμων Ὀρέστης· ἀλλὰ μὴ με καίνετε, 850
 πατρὸς παλαιοὶ δμῶες. οἱ δ', ἐπεὶ λόγων
 ἤκουσαν, ἔσχον κάμακας· ἐγνώσθη δ' ὑπὸ
 γέροντος ἐν δόμοισιν ἀρχαίου τινός.
 στέφουσι δ' εὐθὺς σοῦ κασιγνήτου κάρα
 χαίροντες ἀλαλάζοντες. ἔρχεται δὲ σοὶ 855
 κάρα· πιδείξων οὐχὶ Γοργόνος φέρων,
 ἀλλ' ὃν στυγεῖς Αἴγισθον· αἷμα δ' αἵματος
 πικρὸς δανεισμὸς ἦλθε τῷ θανόντι νῦν.

Χορός

θες ἐς χορόν, ὦ φίλα, ἵχνος,
 ὡς νεβρὸς οὐράνιον 860
 πήδημα κουφίζουσα σὺν ἀγλαΐᾳ.
 νικᾷ στεφαναφορίαν
 †κρεῖσσω τοῖς† παρ' Ἀλφειοῦ ῥεέθροισι τελέσσας
 κασίγνητος σέθεν· ἀλλ' ὑπάειδε
 καλλίνικον ᾧδαν ἐμῷ χορῷ. 865

Ἥλέκτρα

ὦ φέγγος, ὦ τέθριππον ἡλίου σέλας,
ὦ γαῖα καὶ νύξ ἣν ἔδερκόμην πάρος,
νῦν ὄμμα τοῦμὸν ἀμπτυχαί τ' ἐλεύθεροι,
ἐπεὶ πατὴρ πέπτωκεν Αἴγισθος φονεὺς.
φέρ', οἷα δὴ ἔχω καὶ δόμοι κεύθουσί μου
κόμης ἀγάλατ' ἐξενέγκωμαι, φίλαι,
στέψω τ' ἀδελφοῦ κρᾶτα τοῦ νικηφόρου. 870

Χορός

σὺ μὲν νυν ἀγάλατ' ἄειρε
κρατί· τὸ δ' ἀμέτερον
χωρήσεται Μούσαισι χόρευμα φίλον.
νῦν οἱ πάρος ἀμέτεροι 875
γαίας τυραννεύσουσι φίλοι βασιλῆες,
δικαίως τοὺς ἀδίκους καθελόντες.
ἀλλ' ἴτω ξύναυλος βοᾷ χαρᾷ.

Ἥλέκτρα

ὦ καλλίνικε, πατὴρ ἐκ νικηφόρου 880
γεγώς, Ὀρέστα, τῆς ὑπ' Ἰλίου μάχης,
δέξαι κόμης σῆς βοστρύχων ἀνδήματα.
ἦκεις γὰρ οὐκ ἀχρεῖον ἔκπλεθρον δραμῶν
ἀγῶν ἐς οἴκους, ἀλλὰ πολέμιον κτανῶν
Αἴγισθον, ὃς σὸν πατέρα κάμὸν ὤλεσε. 885
σύ τ', ὦ παρασπίστ', ἀνδρὸς εὐσεβεστάτου
παίδευμα, Πυλάδη, στέφανον ἐξ ἐμῆς χειρὸς
δέχου· φέρη γὰρ καὶ σὺ τῷδ' ἴσον μέρος
ἀγῶνος· αἰεὶ δ' εὐτυχεῖς φαίνοισθέ μοι.

Ὀρέστης

θεοὺς μὲν ἡγοῦ πρῶτον, Ἥλέκτρα, τύχης 890
ἀρχηγέτας τῆσδ', εἶτα καὶ ἐπαίνεσον
τὸν τῶν θεῶν τε τῆς τύχης θ' ὑπηρέτην.
ἦκω γὰρ οὐ λόγοισιν ἀλλ' ἔργοις κτανῶν
Αἴγισθον· ὥς δὲ τῷ σάφ' εἰδέναι τάδε
προσθῶμεν, αὐτὸν τὸν θανόντα σοι φέρω, 895
ὃν εἴτε χρήζεις θηρσὶν ἀρπαγὴν πρόθεσ,
ἢ σκῦλον οἰωνοῖσιν, αἰθέρος τέκνοις,
πήξας ἔρεισον σκόλοπι· σὸς γὰρ ἔστι νῦν
δοῦλος, πάροιθε δεσπότης κεκλημένος.

Ἥλέκτρα

αἰσχύνομαι μὲν, βούλομαι δ' εἰπεῖν ὅμως. 900

Ὀρέστης

τί χρήμα; λέξον· ὥς φόβου γ' ἔξωθεν εἶ.

Ἥλέκτρα

νεκροὺς ὑβρίζειν, μή μέ τις φθόνῳ βάλη.

Ὀρέστης

οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεὶς ὅστις ἂν μέψαιτό σε.

Ἥλέκτρα

δυσάρεστος ἡμῶν καὶ φιλόψογος πόλις.

Ὀρέστης

λέγ', εἴ τι χρήζεις, σύγγον'· ἀσπόνδοισι γὰρ
νόμοισιν ἔχθραν τῷδε συμβεβλήκαμεν.

905

Ἥλέκτρα

εἶέν· τίν' ἀρχὴν πρῶτά σ' ἐξείπω κακῶν,
ποίας τελευτάς; τίνα μέσον τάξω λόγον;
καὶ μὴν δι' ὄρθρων γ' οὕποτ' ἐξελίμπανον
θρυλοῦσ' ἅ γ' εἰπεῖν ἤθελον κατ' ὄμμα σόν,
εἰ δὴ γενοίμην δειμάτων ἐλευθέρα
τῶν πρόσθε. νῦν οὖν ἐσμεν· ἀποδώσω δέ σοι
ἐκεῖν' ἃ σε ζῶντ' ἤθελον λέξαι κακά.

910

ἀπώλεσάς με κῶρφανὴν φίλου πατρὸς
καὶ τόνδ' ἔθηκας, οὐδὲν ἡδίκημένος,
κᾶγματος αἰσχροῦς μητέρ' ἄνδρα τ' ἔκτανες
στρατηλατοῦνθ' Ἑλλήσιν, οὐκ ἐλθὼν Φρύγας.

915

ἐς τοῦτο δ' ἦλθες ἀμαθίας ὥστ' ἥλπισας
ὥς ἐς σέ ἐμὴν δὴ μητέρ' οὐχ ἔξεις κακὴν
γῆμας, ἐμοῦ δὲ πατρὸς ἡδίκεις λέχη.

920

ἴστω δ', ὅταν τις διολέσας δάμαρτά του
κρυπταῖσιν εὐναῖς εἴτ' ἀναγκασθῇ λαβεῖν,
δύστηνός ἐστιν, εἰ δοκεῖ τὸ σωφρονεῖν
ἐκεῖ μὲν αὐτὴν οὐκ ἔχειν, παρ' οἱ δ' ἔχειν.

925

ἄλγιστα δ' ὄκεις, οὐ δοκῶν οἰκεῖν κακῶς·
ἥδησθα γὰρ δῆτ' ἀνόνσιον γήμας γάμον,
μήτηρ δὲ σ' ἄνδρα δυσσεβῆ κεκτημένη.
ἄμφω πονηρῶ δ' ὄντ' ἀνηρεῖσθον τύχην

κείνη τε τὴν σὴν καὶ σὺ τοῦκείνης κακόν.

930

πᾶσιν δ' ἐν Ἀργείοισιν ἤκουες τάδε·

Ὁ τῆς γυναικός, οὐχὶ τάνδρὸς ἡ γυνή.
καίτοι τόδ' αἰσχρόν, προστατεῖν γε δωμάτων
γυναῖκα, μὴ τὸν ἄνδρα· κακείνους στυγῶ

- τοὺς παῖδας, ὅστις τοῦ μὲν ἄρσενος πατὴρ
 οὐκ ὠνόμασται, τῆς δὲ μητρὸς ἐν πόλει. 935
 ἐπίσημα γὰρ γήμαντι καὶ μείζω λέχη
 τάνδρὸς μὲν οὐδεῖς, τῶν δὲ θηλειῶν λόγος.
 ὃ δ' ἡπάτα σε πλείστον οὐκ ἐγνωκότα,
 ἡϋχέεις τις εἶναι τοῖσι χρήμασι σθένων·
 τὰ δ' οὐδὲν εἰ μὴ βραχὺν ὀμιλῆσαι χρόνον. 940
 ἢ γὰρ φύσις βέβαιος, οὐ τὰ χρήματα.
 ἢ μὲν γὰρ αἰεὶ παραμένουσ' αἶρει κακά·
 ὃ δ' ὄλβος ἀδίκως καὶ μετὰ σκαιῶν ξυνὼν
 ἐξέπτατ' οἴκων, σμικρὸν ἀνθήσας χρόνον.
 ἃ δ' ἐς γυναικάς — παρθένῳ γὰρ οὐ καλὸν
 λέγειν — σιωπῶ, γνωρίμως δ' αἰνίζομαι. 945
 ὕβριζες, ὥς δὴ βασιλικοὺς ἔχων δόμους
 κάλλει τ' ἀραρώς. ἀλλ' ἔμοιγ' εἴη πόσις
 μὴ παρθενωπός, ἀλλὰ τάνδρεϊοῦ τρόπου.
 τὰ γὰρ τέκν' αὐτῶν Ἄρεος ἐκκρεμάννυται, 950
 τὰ δ' εὐπρεπῇ δὴ κόσμος ἐν χοροῖς μόνον.
 ἔρρ', οὐδὲν εἰδὼς ὧν ἐφευρεθεῖς χρόνῳ
 δίκην δέδωκας. ὧδέ τις κακοῦργος ὧν
 μή μοι τὸ πρῶτον βῆμ' ἐὰν δράμη καλῶς,
 νικᾶν δοκέειω τὴν Δίκην, πρὶν ἂν πέλας 955
 γραμμῆς ἵκηται καὶ τέλος κάμψη βίου.
- Χορός
 ἔπραξε δεινὰ, δεινὰ δ' ἀντέδωκέ σοι
 καὶ τῷδ'· ἔχει γὰρ ἡ Δίκη μέγα σθένος.
- Ἥλέκτρα
 εἶεν· κομίζεин τοῦδε σῶμ' ἔσω χρεῶν
 σκότῳ τε δοῦναι, δμῶες, ὥς, ὅταν μόλη
 μήτηρ, σφαγῆς πάροιθε μὴ εἰσίδῃ νεκρόν. 960
- Ὀρέστης
 ἐπίσχε· ἐμβάλωμεν εἰς ἄλλον λόγον.
- Ἥλέκτρα
 τί δ'; ἐκ Μυκηνηῶν μῶν βοηδρόμους ὀρῶ;
- Ὀρέστης
 οὐκ, ἀλλὰ τὴν τεκοῦσαν ἢ μ' ἐγείνατο.
- Ἥλέκτρα
 καλῶς ἄρ' ἄρκυν ἐς μέσσην πορεύεται . . . 965
 καὶ μὴν ὄχοις γε καὶ στολῇ λαμπρύνεται.

- Ὀρέστης
 τί δήτα δρῶμεν; μητέρ' ἢ φονεύσομεν;
 Ἥλέκτρα
 μῶν σ' οἶκτος εἶλε, μητρὸς ὡς εἶδες δέμας;
 Ὀρέστης
 φεῦ·
 πῶς γὰρ κτάνω νιν, ἥ μ' ἔθρεψε κᾶτεκεν;
 Ἥλέκτρα
 ὥσπερ πατέρα σὸν ἦδε κἄμὸν ὤλεσεν. 970
 Ὀρέστης
 ὦ Φοῖβε, πολλήν γ' ἀμαθίαν ἐθέσπισας.
 Ἥλέκτρα
 ὅπου δ' Ἀπόλλων σκαιὸς ἦ, τίνες σοφοί;
 Ὀρέστης
 ὅστις μ' ἔχρησας μητέρ', ἦν οὐ χρῆν, κτανεῖν.
 Ἥλέκτρα
 βλάβητι δὲ δὴ τί πατρὶ τιμωρῶν σέθεν;
 Ὀρέστης
 μητροκτόνος νῦν φεύξομαι, τόθ' ἀγνὸς ὢν. 975
 Ἥλέκτρα
 καὶ μή γ' ἀμύνων πατρὶ δυσσεβῆς ἔση.
 Ὀρέστης
 ἐγὼ δὲ μητρὸς —; τῷ φόνου δώσω δίκας;
 Ἥλέκτρα
 τῷ δ' ἦν πατρώαν διαμεθῆς τιμωρίαν;
 Ὀρέστης
 ἄρ' αὖτ' ἀλάστωρ εἶπ' ἀπεικασθεὶς θεῷ;
 Ἥλέκτρα
 ἱερὸν καθίζων τρίποδ'; ἐγὼ μὲν οὐ δοκῶ. 980
 Ὀρέστης
 οὐδ' ἂν πιθοίμην εὖ μεμαντεῦσθαι τάδε.
 Ἥλέκτρα
 οὐ μὴ κακισθεὶς εἰς ἀνανδρίαν πεσῇ.
 Ὀρέστης
 ἀλλ' ἢ τὸν αὐτὸν τῇδ' ὑποστήσω δόλον;
 Ἥλέκτρα
 ᾧ καὶ πόσιν καθεῖλες, Αἴγισθον κτανών.
 Ὀρέστης
 ἔσειμι· δεινοῦ δ' ἄρχομαι προβλήματος 985

καὶ δεινὰ δράσω γε — εἰ θεοῖς δοκεῖ τάδε,
ἔστω· πικρὸν δὲ χηδὺ τὰ γώνισμά μοι.

Χορός

ἰώ,

βασίλεια γύναι χθονὸς Ἀργείας,

παῖ Τυνδάρεω,

καὶ τοῖν ἀγαθοῖν ξύγγονε κούροιν

990

Διός, οἳ φλογερὰν αἰθέρ' ἐν ἄστροις

ναίουσι, βροτῶν ἐν ἀλὸς ῥοθίοις

τιμὰς σωτήρας ἔχοντες·

χαῖρε, σεβίζω σ' ἴσα καὶ μάκαρας

πλούτου μεγάλης τ' εὐδαιμονίας.

995

τὰς σὰς δὲ τύχας θεραπεύεσθαι

καιρός. <χαῖρ', > ὦ βασίλεια.

Κλυταιμῆστρα

ἔκβητ' ἀπῆνης, Τρῳάδες, χειρὸς δ' ἐμῆς

λάβεσθ', ἵν' ἔξω τοῦδ' ὄχου στήσω πόδα.

σκύλοισι μὲν γὰρ θεῶν κεκόσμηνται δόμοι

1000

Φρυγίοις, ἐγὼ δὲ τάσδε, Τρῳάδος χθονὸς

ἐξαίρετ', ἀντὶ παιδὸς ἣν ἀπώλεσα

σμικρὸν γέρας, καλὸν δὲ κέκτημαι δόμοις.

Ἥλέκτρα

οὔκουν ἐγὼ — δούλη γὰρ ἐκβεβλημένη

δόμων πατρῶν δυστυχεῖς οἰκῶ δόμους —

1005

μητέρα, λάβωμαι μακαρίας τῆς σῆς χερός;

Κλυταιμῆστρα

δοῦλαι πάρειςιν αἶδε, μὴ σύ μοι πόνει.

Ἥλέκτρα

τί δ'; αἰχμάλωτόν τοί μ' ἀπώκισας δόμων,

ἡρημένων δὲ δωμάτων ἡρήμεθα,

ὥς αἶδε, πατὴρ ὀρφαναὶ λελειμμένοι.

1010

Κλυταιμῆστρα

τοιαῦτα μέντοι σὸς πατήρ βουλευόμενα

ἐς οὓς ἐχρῆν ἥκιστ' ἐβούλευσεν φίλων.

λέξω δέ· καίτοι δόξ' ὅταν λάβῃ κακὴ

γυναικα, γλώσση πικρότης ἔνεστί τις.

ὥς μὲν παρ' ἡμῖν, οὐ καλῶς· τὸ πρᾶγμα δὲ

1015

μαθόντας, ἣν μὲν ἀξίως μισεῖν ἔχη,

στυγεῖν δίκαιον· εἰ δὲ μή, τί δεῖ στυγεῖν;

- ἡμᾶς δ' ἔδωκε Τυνδάρεως τῷ σῷ πατρί
 οὐχ ὥστε θνήσκειν οὐδ' ἄ γειναίμην ἐγώ.
 κείνος δὲ παῖδα τὴν ἐμὴν Ἀχιλλέως 1020
 λέκτροισι πείσας ὥχετ' ἐκ δόμων ἄγων
 πρυμνοῦχον Αὔλιν, ἔνθ' ὑπερτείνας πυρᾶς
 λευκὴν διήμησ' Ἰφιόνης παρηίδα.
 κεῖ μὲν πόλεως ἄλωσιν ἐξιώμενος,
 ἡ δὲ μ' ὀνήσων τᾶλλα τ' ἐκσφύζων τέκνα, 1025
 ἔκτεινε πολλῶν μίαν ὑπερ, συγγνώστ' ἂν ἦν·
 νῦν δ' οὐνεχ' Ἑλένη μάργος ἦν ὅ τ' αὖ λαβὼν
 ἄλοχον κολάζειν προδότιν οὐκ ἠπίστατο,
 τούτων ἕκατι παῖδ' ἐμὴν διώλεσεν.
 ἐπὶ τοῖσδε τοίνυν καίπερ ἡδικομένη 1030
 οὐκ ἡγριώμην οὐδ' ἂν ἔκτανον πόσιν·
 ἀλλ' ἦλθ' ἔχων μοι μαινάδ' ἔνθεον κόρην
 λέκτροις τ' ἐπεισέφρηκε, καὶ νύμφα δύο
 ἐν τοῖσιν αὐτοῖς δώμασιν κατείχομεν.
 μῶρον μὲν οὖν γυναικες, οὐκ ἄλλως λέγω· 1035
 ὅταν δ', ὑπόντος τοῦδ', ἀμαρτάνῃ πόσις
 τᾶνδον παρώσας λέκτρα, μιμείσθαι θέλει
 γυνὴ τὸν ἄνδρα χᾶτερον κτᾶσθαι φίλον.
 κᾶπεται' ἐν ἡμῖν ὁ ψόγος λαμπρύνεται,
 οἱ δ' αἵτιοι τῶνδ' οὐ κλύουσ' ἄνδρες κακῶς. 1040
 εἰ δ' ἐκ δόμων ἤρπαστο Μενέλεως λάθρα,
 κτανεῖν μ' Ὀρέστην χρῆν, κασιγνήτης πόσιν
 Μενέλαον ὡς σώσαιμι; σὸς δὲ πῶς πατὴρ
 ἡνέσχετ' ἂν ταῦτ'; εἶτα τὸν μὲν οὐ θανεῖν
 κτείνοντα χρῆν τᾶμ', ἐμὲ δὲ πρὸς κείνου παθεῖν; 1045
 ἔκτειν', ἐτρέφθην ἦνπερ ἦν πορεύσιμον
 πρὸς τοὺς ἐκείνῳ πολεμίους. φίλων γὰρ ἂν
 τίς ἂν πατὴρ σοῦ φόνον ἐκοινώνησέ μοι;
 λέγ', εἴ τι χρήζεις, κἀντίθες παρρησίᾳ,
 ὅπως τέθνηκε σὸς πατὴρ οὐκ ἐνδίκως. 1050

Χορός

δίκαι' ἔλεξας· ἡ δίκη δ' αἰσχροῦς ἔχει.
 γυναικαὶ γὰρ χρὴ πάντα συγχωρεῖν πόσει,
 ἥτις φρενήρης· ἡ δὲ μὴ δοκεῖ τάδε,
 οὐδ' εἰς ἀριθμὸν τῶν ἐμῶν ἡκει λόγων.

- Ἥλέκτρα
 μέμνησο, μήτηρ, οὓς ἔλεξας ὑστάτους
 λόγους, διδοῦσα πρὸς σέ μοι παρρησίαν. 1055
- Κλυταιμῆστρα
 καὶ νῦν γέ φημι κοῦκ ἀπαρνοῦμαι, τέκνον.
- Ἥλέκτρα
 ἄρ' ἂν κλύουσα, μήτηρ, εἴτ' ἔρξαις κακῶς;
- Κλυταιμῆστρα
 οὐκ ἔστι, τῇ σῇ δ' ἡδὺ προσθήσω φρενί.
- Ἥλέκτρα
 λέγοιμ' ἄν· ἀρχὴ δ' ἦδε μοι προοιμίου· 1060
 εἴθ' εἶχες, ὦ τεκοῦσα, βελτίους φρένας.
 τὸ μὲν γὰρ εἶδος αἶνον ἄξιον φέρειν
 Ἑλένης τε καὶ σοῦ, δύο δ' ἔφυτε συγγόνω,
 ἄμφω ματαίῳ Κάστορός τ' οὐκ ἀξίω.
 ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἀρπασθεῖς ἑκοῦς ἀπώλετο, 1065
 σὺ δ' ἄνδρ' ἄριστον Ἑλλάδος διώλεσας,
 σκῆψιν προτείνουσ', ὥς ὑπὲρ τέκνου πόσιν
 ἔκτεινας· οὐ γάρ σ' ὥς ἔγωγ' ἴσασιν εὖ.
 ἦτις, θυγατρὸς πρὶν κεκυρῶσθαι σφαγὰς,
 νέον τ' ἀπ' οἴκων ἀνδρὸς ἐξωρμημένου, 1070
 ξανθὸν κατόπτρῳ πλόκαμον ἐξήσκεις κόμης.
 γυνὴ δ', ἀπόντος ἀνδρός ἦτις ἐκ δόμων
 ἐς κάλλος ἀσκεῖ, διάγραφ' ὥς οὔσαν κακὴν.
 οὐδὲν γὰρ αὐτὴν δεῖ θύρασιν εὐπρεπὲς
 φαίνειν πρόσωπον, ἣν τι μὴ ζητῇ κακόν. 1075
 μόνη δὲ πασῶν οἶδ' ἐγὼ σ' Ἑλληνίδων,
 εἰ μὲν τὰ Τρώων εὐτυχοῖ, κεχαρμένην,
 εἰ δ' ἦσσον' εἴη, συννέφουσιν ὄμματα,
 Ἀγαμέμνον' οὐ χρήζουσιν ἐκ Τροίας μολεῖν.
 καίτοι καλῶς γε σωφρονεῖν παρεῖχέ σοι· 1080
 ἄνδρ' εἶχες οὐ κακίον' Αἰγίσθου πόσιν,
 ὃν Ἑλλάς αὐτῆς εἴλετο στρατηλάτην·
 Ἑλένης δ' ἀδελφῆς τοιάδ' ἐξειργασμένης
 ἐξῆν κλέος σοι μέγα λαβεῖν· τὰ γὰρ κακὰ
 παράδειγμα τοῖς ἐσθλοῖσιν εἴσοψιν τ' ἔχει. 1085
 εἰ δ', ὥς λέγεις, σὴν θυγατέρ' ἔκτεινεν πατήρ,
 ἐγὼ τί σ' ἡδίκησ' ἐμός τε σύγγονος;

- πῶς οὐ πόσιν κτείνασα πατρώους δόμους
 ἡμῖν προσήψας, ἀλλ' ἐπηνέγκω λέχει
 τὰλλότρια, μισθοῦ τοὺς γάμους ὠνούμενη; 1090
 κοῦτ' ἀντιφεύγει παιδὸς ἀντὶ σοῦ πόσις,
 οὔτ' ἀντ' ἐμοῦ τέθνηκε, δις τόσως ἐμὲ
 κτείνας ἀδελφῆς ζῶσαν; εἰ δ' ἀμείψεται
 φόνον δικάζων φόνος, ἀποκτενῶ σ' ἐγὼ
 καὶ παῖς Ὀρέστης πατρὶ τιμωρούμενοι· 1095
 εἰ γὰρ δίκαι' ἐκεῖνα, καὶ τάδ' ἔνδικα.
 [ὅστις δὲ πλοῦτον ἢ εὐγένειαν εἰσιδὼν
 γαμῆι πονηράν, μῶρός ἐστι· μικρὰ γὰρ
 μεγάλων ἀμείνω σῶφρον' ἐν δόμοις λέχει.
- Χορός
 τύχη γυναικῶν ἐς γάμους. τὰ μὲν γὰρ εὖ,
 τὰ δ' οὐ καλῶς πίπτοντα δέρκομαι βροτῶν.] 1100
- Κλυταιμῆστρα
 ὦ παῖ, πέφυκας πατέρα σὸν στέργειν αἰεῖ·
 ἔστιν δὲ καὶ τόδ'· οἱ μὲν εἰσιν ἀρσένων,
 οἱ δ' αὖ φιλοῦσι μητέρας μᾶλλον πατρός.
 συγγνώσομαί σοι· καὶ γὰρ οὐχ οὕτως ἄγαν 1105
 χαίρω τι, τέκνον, τοῖς δεδραμένοις ἐμοί.
 σὺ δ' ὦδ' ἄλουτος καὶ δυσείματος χροά
 λεχῶ νεογνῶν ἐκ τόκων πεπαυμένη;
 οἴμοι τάλαινα τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων·
 ὡς μᾶλλον ἢ χρῆν ἤλασ' εἰς ὀργὴν πόσιν. 1110
- Ἥλέκτρα
 ὀψὲ στενάζεις, ἡνίκ' οὐκ ἔχεις ἄκη.
 πατὴρ μὲν οὖν τέθνηκε· τὸν δ' ἔξω χθονὸς
 πῶς οὐ κομίζῃ παῖδ' ἀλητεύοντα σόν;
- Κλυταιμῆστρα
 δέδοικα· τοῦμὸν δ', οὐχὶ τοῦκείνου, σκοπῶ.
 πατὴρ δὲ γάρ, ὥς λέγουσι, θυμοῦται φόνῳ. 1115
- Ἥλέκτρα
 τί δαὶ πόσιν σὸν ἄγριον εἰς ἡμᾶς ἔχεις;
- Κλυταιμῆστρα
 τρόποι τοιοῦτοι· καὶ σὺ δ' αὐθάδης ἔφυς.
- Ἥλέκτρα
 ἀλγῶ γάρ· ἀλλὰ παύσομαι θυμουμένη.
- Κλυταιμῆστρα
 καὶ μὴν ἐκεῖνος οὐκέτ' ἔσται σοι βαρύς.

- Ἥλέκτρα
φρονεῖ μέγ'· ἐν γὰρ τοῖς ἐμοῖς ναίει δόμοις. 1120
- Κλυταιμῆστρα
ὀρᾷς; ἂν' αὖ σὺ ζωπυρεῖς νείκη νέα.
- Ἥλέκτρα
σιγῶ· δέδοικα γάρ νιν ὥς δέδοικ' ἐγώ.
- Κλυταιμῆστρα
παῦσαι λόγων τῶνδε. ἀλλὰ τί μ' ἐκάλεις, τέκνον;
- Ἥλέκτρα
ἤκουσας, οἶμαι, τῶν ἐμῶν λοχευμάτων·
τούτων ὑπὲρ μοι θῦσον — οὐ γὰρ οἶδ' ἐγώ— 1125
δεκάτῃ σελήνῃ παιδὸς ὥς νομίζεται·
τρίβων γὰρ οὐκ εἴμ', ἄτοκος οὖς' ἐν τῷ πάρος.
- Κλυταιμῆστρα
ἄλλης τόδ' ἔργον, ἢ σ' ἔλυσεν ἐκ τόκων.
- Ἥλέκτρα
αὐτὴ ῥόχευον κᾶτεκον μόνη βρέφος.
- Κλυταιμῆστρα
οὕτως ἀγείτων οἶκος ἵδρυται φίλων; 1130
- Ἥλέκτρα
πένητας οὐδεὶς βούλεται κτᾶσθαι φίλους.
- Κλυταιμῆστρα
ἀλλ' εἰμι, παιδὸς ἀριθμὸν ὥς τελεσφόρον
θύσω θεοῖσι· σοὶ δ' ὅταν πράξω χάριν
τήνδ', εἴμ' ἐπ' ἀγρὸν οὐ πόσις θυηπολεῖ
Νύμφαισιν. ἀλλὰ τούσδ' ὄχους, ὁπάονες, 1135
φάτναις ἄγοντες πρόσθεθ'· ἥνικ' ἂν δέ με
δοκῇτε θυσίας τῆσδ' ἀπηλλάχθαι θεοῖς,
πάρεστε· δεῖ γὰρ καὶ πόσει δοῦναι χάριν.
- Ἥλέκτρα
χῶρει πένητας ἐς δόμους· φρούρει δέ μοι
μή σ' αἰθαλώσῃ πολύκαπνον στέγος πέπλους. 1140
θύσεις γὰρ οἶα χρή σε δαίμοσιν θύῃ.
κανοῦν δ' ἐνήρκται καὶ τεθηγμένη σφαγίς,
ἥπερ καθεῖλε ταῦρον, οὐ πέλας πεσῇ
πληγείσα· νυμφεύσῃ δὲ κἂν Ἄιδου δόμοις
ᾧπερ ξυνηῦδες ἐν φάει. τοσήνδ' ἐγὼ 1145
δώσω χάριν σοι, σὺ δὲ δίκην ἐμοὶ πατρός.

THIRD STASIMON (1147–1171)

Χορός

ἄμοιβαὶ κακῶν · μετάτροποι πνέου- STROPHE
 σιν αὔραι δόμων. τότε μὲν <έν> λουτροῖς
 ἔπεσεν ἔμους ἔμους ἀρχέτας,
 ἰάχησε δὲ στέγα λάινοί τε θριγκοὶ δόμων, 1150
 τὰδ' ἐνέποντος· ὦ σχέτλιε, τί με, γύναι, φονεύσεις φίλαν
 πατρίδα δεκέτεσιν σποραῖσιν ἐλθόντ' ἐμάν;

.

παλίρρους δὲ τάνδ' ὑπάγεται δίκη ANTISTROPHE 1155
 διαδρόμου λέχους μέλεον ἅ πόσιν
 χρόνιον ἰκόμενον εἰς οἴκους
 Κυκλώπειά τ' οὐράνια τείχε' ὄξυθήκτου βέλους
 ἔκανεν αὐτόχειρ, πέλεκυν ἐν χεροῖν λαβοῦσ'· ἅ τλάμων
 πόσις, ὅ τί ποτε τὰν τάλαιναν ἔσχεν κακόν. 1161
 ὀρεῖα τις ὥς λέαινα ὀργάδων
 δρύοχα νεμομένα, τάδε κατήνυσεν.

Κλυταιμήστρα <ἔσωθεν>

ὦ τέκνα, πρὸς θεῶν, μὴ κτάνητε μητέρα. 1165

Χορός

κλύεις ὑπώροφον βοάν;

Κλυταιμήστρα

ἰὼ μοί μοι.

Χορός

ᾧμωξα καὶ γὰρ πρὸς τέκνων χειρουμένης.
 νέμει τοι δίκαν θεός, ὅταν τύχη·
 σχέτλια μὲν ἔπαθες, ἀνόσια δ' εἰργάσω, 1170
 τάλαινα, εὐνέταν.

EXODOS (1172–1359)

ἄλλ' οἶδε μητρὸς νεοφόνους ἐν αἵμασι
 πεφυρμένοι βαίνουσιν ἐξ οἴκων πόδα,
 τροπαῖα δείγματ' ἀθλίων προσφαγμάτων.
 οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδείς οἶκος ἀθλιώτερος 1175
 τῶν Τανταλείων οὐδ' ἔφυ ποτ' ἐκγόνων.

Ὀρέστης

ἰὼ Γᾶ καὶ Ζεῦ πανδερκέτα
 βροτῶν, ἴδετε τάδ' ἔργα φόνι-
 α μυσάρᾳ, δίγονα σώματ' ἐν
 χθονὶ κείμενα πλαγᾷ
 χερὸς ὑπ' ἐμᾶς, ἅποιν' ἐμῶν
 πημάτων

STROPHE 1

1180

Ἥλέκτρα

δακρύτ' ἄγαν, ὦ σύγγον', αἰτία δ' ἐγώ.
 διὰ πυρὸς ἔμολον ἅ τάλαινα ματρὶ τᾷδ',
 ἃ μ' ἔτικτε κούραν.

Χορός

ἰὼ τύχας, σᾶς τύχας,
 μᾶτερ τεκοῦς' <ἄλαστα >,
 ἄλαστα μέλεα καὶ πέρα
 παθοῦσα σὼν τέκνων ὑπαί.
 πατρὸς δ' ἔτεισας φόνον δικαίως.

1185

Ὀρέστης

ἰὼ Φοῖβ', ἀνύμνησας δίκαι'
 ἄφαντα, φανερά δ' ἐξέπρα-
 ξας ἄχεα, φόνια δ' ὥπασας
 λάχε' ἀπὸ γᾶς [τᾶς] Ἑλλανίδος.
 τίνα δ' ἐτέραν μόλω πόλιν;
 τίς ξένος, τίς εὐσεβῆς
 ἐμὸν κάρα προσόψεται
 ματέρα κτανόντος;

ANTISTROPHE 1 1190

1195

Ἥλέκτρα

ἰὼ ἰὼ μοι. ποῖ δ' ἐγώ, τίν' ἐς χορόν,
 τίνα γάμον εἶμι; τίς πόσις με δέξεται
 νυμφικὰς ἐς εὐνάς;

1200

Χορός

πάλιν, πάλιν φρόνημα σὸν
 μετεστάθη πρὸς αὔραν·
 φρονεῖς γὰρ ὅσια νῦν, τότε οὐ
 φρονοῦσα, δεινὰ δ' εἰργάσω,
 φίλα, κασίγνητον οὐ θέλοντα.

1205

- Ὀρέστης
κατείδες, οἶον ἅ τάλαινα ἔξω πέπλων
ἔβαλεν, ἔδειξε μαστὸν ἐν φοναῖσιν,
ἰὼ μοι, πρὸς πέδῳ
τιθεῖσα γόνιμα μέλεα; τὰν κόμαν δ' ἐγὼ—
Χορός
σάφ' οἶδα, δι' ὀδύνας ἔβας,
ἰήιον κλύων γόον
ματρός, ἃ σ' ἔτικτεν. 1210
- Ὀρέστης
βοᾶν δ' ἔλασκε τάνδε, πρὸς γένυν ἐμὰν
τιθεῖσα χεῖρα· Τέκος ἐμόν, λιταίνω·
παρήδων τ' ἐξ ἐμᾶν
ἐκρίμναθ', ὥστε χέρας ἐμὰς λιπεῖν βέλος. 1215
- Χορός
τάλαινα· πῶς ἔτλας φόνον
δι' ὀμμάτων ἰδεῖν σέθεν
ματρός ἐκπνεούσας; 1220
- Ὀρέστης
ἐγὼ μὲν ἐπιβαλὼν φάρη κόραις ἐμαῖς
φασγάνῳ κατηρξάμαν
ματέρος ἔσω δέρας μεθείς. STROPHE 3
- Ἥλέκτρα
ἐγὼ δ' ἐπεγκέλευσά σοι
ξίφους τ' ἐφηψάμαν ἅμα. 1225
- Χορός
δεινότατον παθέων ἔρεξας.
- Ὀρέστης
λαβοῦ, κάλυπτε μέλεα ματέρος πέπλοις
<καὶ> καθάρμοσον σφαγᾶς.
φονέας ἔτικτες ἄρά σοι. ANTISTROPHE 3
- Ἥλέκτρα
ἰδοῦ, φίλα τε κοῦ φίλα
φάρεα τάδ' ἀμφιβάλλομεν. 1230
- Χορός
τέρμα κακῶν μεγάλων δόμοισιν.

ἀλλ' οἶδε δόμων ὑπὲρ ἀκροτάτων
φαίνουσι τίνες δαίμονες ἢ θεῶν

| | |
|--|------|
| τῶν οὐρανίων; οὐ γὰρ θνητῶν γ’ | 1235 |
| ἦδε κέλευθος· τί ποτ’ ἐς φανεράν | |
| ὄψιν βαίνουσι βροτοῖσιν; | |
| Διόσκοροι [ΚΑΣΤΩΡ] | |
| Ἄγαμέμνωνος παῖ, κλῦθι· δίπτυχοι δέ σε | |
| καλοῦσι μητρὸς σύγγονοι Διόσκοροι, | |
| Κάστωρ κασίγνητός τε Πολυδεύκης ὅδε. | 1240 |
| δεινὸν δὲ ναυσὶν ἀρτίως πόντου σάλον | |
| παύσαντ’ ἀφίγμεθ’ Ἄργος, ὥς ἐσείδομεν | |
| σφαγὰς ἀδελφῆς τῆσδε, μητέρος δὲ σῆς. | |
| δίκαια μὲν νυν ἦδ’ ἔχει, σὺ δ’ οὐχὶ δρᾶς· | |
| Φοῖβός τε, Φοῖβος — ἀλλ’ ἄναξ γάρ ἐστ’ ἐμός, | 1245 |
| σιγῶ· σοφὸς δ’ ὢν οὐκ ἔχρησέ σοι σοφά. | |
| αἰνεῖν δ’ ἀνάγκη ταῦτα· τάντεῦθεν δὲ χρή | |
| πράσσειν ἃ Μοῖρα Ζεὺς τ’ ἔκρανε σοῦ πέρι. | |
| Πυλάδῃ μὲν Ἥλέκτραν δὸς ἄλοχον ἐς δόμους, | |
| σὺ δ’ Ἄργος ἔκλιπ’· οὐ γὰρ ἔστι σοι πόλιν | 1250 |
| τήνδ’ ἐμβατεύειν, μητέρα κτείναντι σήν. | |
| δειναὶ δὲ κῆρές <σ> αἰ κυνώπιδες θεαὶ | |
| τροχληατήσους ἐμμανῆ πλανώμενον. | |
| ἐλθὼν δ’ Ἀθήνας Παλλάδος σεμνὸν βρέτας | |
| πρόσπτυξον· εἵρξει γάρ νιν ἐπτοημένας | 1255 |
| δεινοῖς δράκουσιν ὥστε μὴ ψάυειν σέθεν, | |
| γοργῶφ’ ὑπερτείνουσα σῶ κάρα κύκλον. | |
| ἔστιν δ’ Ἀρεώς τις ὄχθος, οὗ πρῶτον θεοὶ | |
| ἔζοντ’ ἐπὶ ψήφοισιν αἵματος πέρι, | |
| Ἀλιρρόθιον ὅτ’ ἔκταν’ ὠμόφρων Ἄρης, | 1260 |
| μῆνιν θυγατρὸς ἀνοσίων νυμφευμάτων, | |
| πόντου κρέοντος παῖδ’, ἵν’ εὐσεβεστάτη | |
| ψῆφος βεβαία τ’ ἐστὶν ἔκ τε τοῦ θεοῖς. | |
| ἐνταῦθα καὶ σὲ δεῖ δραμεῖν φόνου πέρι. | |
| ἴσαι δέ σ’ ἐκσώζουσι μὴ θανεῖν δίκη | 1265 |
| ψῆφοι τεθεῖσαι· Λοξίας γὰρ αἰτίαν | |
| ἐς αὐτὸν οἴσει, μητέρος χρήσας φόνον. | |
| καὶ τοῖσι λοιποῖς ὅδε νόμος τεθήσεται, | |
| νικᾶν ἴσαις ψήφοισι τὸν φεύγοντ’ αἰί. | |
| δειναὶ μὲν οὖν θεαὶ τῷδ’ ἄχει πεπληγμέναι | 1270 |
| πάγον παρ’ αὐτὸν χάσμα δύσονται χθονός, | |

- σεμνὸν βροτοῖσιν εὐσεβέσι χρηστήριον·
 σὲ δ' Ἀρκάδων χρὴ πόλιν ἐπ' Ἀλφειοῦ ῥοαῖς
 οἰκεῖν Λυκαίου πλησίον σηκώματος·
 ἐπώνυμος δὲ σοῦ πόλις κεκλήσεται. 1275
- σοὶ μὲν τάδ' εἶπον· τόνδε δ' Αἰγίσθου νέκυν
 Ἄργους πολῖται γῆς καλύψουσιν τάφω.
 μητέρα δὲ τὴν σὴν ἄρτι Ναυπλίαν παρὼν
 Μενέλαος, ἐξ οὗ Τρωϊκὴν εἴλε χθόνα,
 Ἑλένη τε θάψει· Πρωτέως γὰρ ἐκ δόμων 1280
 ἦκει λιποῦσ' Αἴγυπτον οὐδ' ἦλθεν Φρύγας·
 Ζεὺς δ', ὥς ἔρις γένοιτο καὶ φόνος βροτῶν,
 εἶδωλον Ἑλένης ἐξέπεμψ' ἐς Ἴλιον.
 Πυλάδης μὲν οὖν κόρην τε καὶ δάμαρτ' ἔχων
 Ἀχαιίδος γῆς οἴκαδ' ἐσπορευέτω, 1285
 καὶ τὸν λόγῳ σὸν πενθερὸν κομιζέτω
 Φωκέων ἐς αἶαν καὶ δότῳ πλούτου βάρος·
 σὺ δ' Ἰσθμίας γῆς αὐχέν' ἐμβαίνων ποδὶ
 χώρει πρὸς ὄχθον Κεκροπίας εὐδαίμονα.
 πεπρωμένην γὰρ μοῖραν ἐκπλήσας φόνου 1290
 εὐδαιμονήσεις τῶνδ' ἀπαλλαχθεὶς πόνων.
- Χορός [Ὀρέστης]
 ὦ παῖδε Διός, θέμις ἐς φθογᾶς
 τὰς ὑμετέρας ἡμῖν πελάθειν;
- Διόσκουροι
 θέμις, οὐ μυσαραῖς τοῖσδε σφαγίοις.
 Ἥλέκτρα
 κάμοι μύθου μέτα, Τυνδαρίδαι; 1295
- Διόσκουροι
 καὶ σοί· Φοίβω τήνδ' ἀναθήσω
 πρᾶξιν φονίαν.
- Χορός [Ὀρέστης]
 πῶς ὄντε θεῷ τῆσδέ τ' ἀδελφῷ
 τῆς καπφθιμένης
 οὐκ ἠρκέσατον κῆρας μελάθροισι; 1300
- Διόσκουροι
 μοῖρά τ' ἀνάγκης ἦγ' ἐς τὸ χρεῶν,
 Φοίβου τ' ἄσοφοι γλώσσης ἐνοπαί.
 Ἥλέκτρα
 τίς δ' ἔμ' Ἀπόλλων, ποῖοι χρησμοὶ
 φονίαν ἔδοσαν μητρὶ γενέσθαι;

- Διόσκουροι
κοινὰ πράξεις, κοινοὶ δὲ πότμοι,
μία δ' ἀμφοτέρους
ἄτη πατέρων διέκναισεν. 1305
- Ὀρέστης
ὦ σύγγονέ μοι, χρονίαν σ' ἐσιδὼν
τῶν σῶν εὐθύς φίλτρων στέρομαι
καὶ σ' ἀπολείψω σοῦ λειπόμενος. 1310
- Διόσκουροι
πόσις ἔστ' αὐτῇ καὶ δόμος· οὐχ ἥδ'
οἰκτρὰ πέπονθεν, πλὴν ὅτι λείπει
πόλιν Ἀργείων.
- Ἥλέκτρα
καὶ τίνες ἄλλαι στοναχαὶ μείζους
ἢ γῆς πατρίας ὄρον ἐκλείπειν; 1315
- Ὀρέστης
ἀλλ' ἐγὼ οἴκων ἔξειμι πατρὸς
καὶ ἐπ' ἀλλοτρίαις ψήφοισι φόνον
μητρὸς ὑφέξω.
- Διόσκουροι
θάρσει· Παλλάδος
ὀσίαν ἥξεις πόλιν· ἀλλ' ἀνέχου. 1320
- Ἥλέκτρα
περὶ μοι στέρνοις στέρνα πρόσαπον,
σύγγονε φίλτατε·
διὰ γὰρ ζευγνῦσ' ἡμᾶς πατρίων
μελάθρων μητρὸς φόνιοι κατάραι.
- Ὀρέστης
βάλε, πρόσπτυξον σῶμα· θανόντος δ'
ὥς ἐπὶ τύμβῳ καταθρήνησον. 1325
- Διόσκουροι
φεῦ φεῦ· δεινὸν τόδ' ἐγηρύσω
καὶ θεοῖσι κλύειν.
ἔνι γὰρ κάμοι τοῖς τ' οὐρανίδαις
οἴκτοι θνητῶν πολυμόχθων. 1330
- Ὀρέστης
οὐκέτι σ' ὄψομαι.
- Ἥλέκτρα
οὐδ' ἐγὼ ἐς σὸν βλέφαρον πελάσω.

- Ὀρέστης
τάδε λοίσθιά μοι προσφθέγματά σου.
- Ἥλέκτρα
ὦ χαίρε, πόλις·
χαίρετε δ' ὑμεῖς πολλά, πολίτιδες. 1335
- Ὀρέστης
ὦ πιστοτάτη, στείχεις ἤδη;
- Ἥλέκτρα
στείχω βλέφαρον τέγγουσ' ἀπαλόν.
- Ὀρέστης
Πυλάδη, χαίρων ἴθι, νυμφεύου 1340
δέμας Ἥλέκτρας.
- Διόσκουροι
τοῖσδε μελήσει γάμος· ἀλλὰ κύνας
τάσδ' ὑποφεύγων στείχ' ἐπ' Ἀθηνῶν·
δεινὸν γὰρ ἵχνος βάλλουσ' ἐπὶ σοὶ
χειροδράκοντες χρῶτα κελαιναί, 1345
δεινῶν ὀδυνῶν καρπὸν ἔχουσαι·
νῶ δ' ἐπὶ πόντον Σικελὸν σπουδῇ
σώσοντε νεῶν πρῶρας ἐνάλους.
διὰ δ' αἰθερίας στείχοντε πλακὸς
τοῖς μὲν μυσσαροῖς οὐκ ἐπαρήγομεν, 1350
οἷσιν δ' ὅσιον καὶ τὸ δίκαιον
φίλον ἐν βιότῳ, τούτους χαλεπῶν
ἐκλύοντες μόχθων σφάζομεν.
οὕτως ἀδικεῖν μηδεὶς θελέτω
μηδ' ἐπιόρκων μέτα συμπλείτω· 1355
θεὸς ὦν θνητοῖς ἀγορεύω.
- Χορός
χαίρετε· χαίρειν δ' ὅστις δύναται
καὶ ξυντυχίᾳ μὴ τινι κάμνει
θνητῶν, εὐδαίμονα πράσσει.

NOTES AND COMMENTARY

1–166 PROLOGUE: The PROLOGUE is the part of the play preceding the entrance of the chorus (Aristotle, *Poetics* 1452b19–20). It paints the scene, gives information about where and when the action is occurring, provides the audience with whatever mythic-historical background they may require to follow the action, and introduces key characters and themes: in short it tells us what part of the myth is to be enacted. Euripides' prologues, unlike Sophocles', do not drop the audience *in medias res*. Typically, they begin with a monologue, often by a minor character, who provides a more or less straightforward, chronological account of the events that will drive the subsequent action, a glimpse into the motives of the characters who will carry it out, and an ethical perspective from which to view matters. Thus in *Electra*, the Farmer, delivering the opening monologue, tells of Agamemnon's murder by Clytemnestra and Aegisthus and how they banished Orestes and married Electra off to himself, a poor but free landholder. His account of his refusal to take the virginity of his nobly born wife calls attention to the royal couple's selfishness and contrasts the morality of the wealthy and the poor (although the Farmer, too, is well-born, 37–8). Electra's invocation of Night (54) and Orestes' observation that the day is breaking (102) suggest that the play may have been written for performance in the first position of the day's tragedies (cf. 140–2). If so, the natural transition from darkness to light would heighten the conspiratorial atmosphere as Orestes and Pylades hide in the early dawn shadows to eavesdrop on Electra's monody.

The prologue of *Electra* is in four scenes. The first three are marked by the successive entrances of the Farmer (1), Electra (54), and Orestes with his silent companion Pylades (82). The entrance speeches are in iambic trimeter, and each of the three characters begins with an address: the Farmer to Argos, Electra to the dark night, and Orestes to Pylades, who does not reply.

The fourth scene consists of Electra's monody in lyric meters (112–66). With the exception of the brief dialogue between Electra and the Farmer (64–81), the characters engage with themselves or the audience more than with one another. Orestes' address to the silent Pylades provides some variety and dramatic effect (Denniston, 55; Stanford; Grube, 63–73; Erbse, esp. 157–77), but does not change the pattern.

1 ὦ γῆς παλαιὸν Ἄργος, Ἰνάχου ῥοαί . . . / “Earth's timeless soil, Inachos' streams . . .” **παλαιὸν Ἄργος**: Diggle marks this as corrupt with daggers (called in Latin *obeli*, hence “to obelize” *mark as spurious*, from Greek *obolos*, *spit*): †παλαιὸν Ἄργος†. These were used in ancient manuscripts to mark doubtful passages and originally looked like dashes (–).

The prologue begins with the Farmer's invocation to the Argolid region, in which the cities of Argos and Mycenae were located. All the extant Greek tragedies on the Electra story are situated in Argos, even though Homer identifies Agamemnon as king of Mycenae. At various points of his play, Euripides' characters conflate the two cities (e.g. 35, 674, 708, 761, 776). The Argives destroyed Mycenae in 468–7. The invocation of place is a method for setting the scene that Euripides uses in other plays as well. (Cf. *E. Alc.*, which starts with an invocation of Admetus' house, and *Andr.*, with its appeal to Thebes.) A difficult line to start with: “Ancient *argos/Argos* of earth.” Is *argos* a common noun, meaning *land* (Denniston) or the proper noun, *Argos*? Murray (defended by Denniston) prints a lower case παλαιὸν ἄργος and takes ἄργος as a common noun, meaning *plain* or *waterer*. Only Paley seems to accept the text as is, with upper case *Argos*, which he finds “much more poetical” than any of the emendations. He takes γῆς to mean *this land*, that is, *the land of Hellas*. In his commentary, Denniston translates, “ancient plain of our land.” Other conjectures are ἄγκος (Camper) *bend*, *hollow* and, therefore, *mountain* or *glen*; ἄνθος (Keene) *flower*; ἔρκος (Vitelli) *enclosure*, *defense*; παλαιὸς ἀρδμός (Herwerden) *watering*, *irrigation*, none of which is convincing enough to have been accepted by most editors. Cropp considers Herwerden's emendation, “ancient watering place,” plausible in conjunction with the streams mentioned, although to us it seems redundant. Nonetheless, Ἄργος as a proper noun cannot be ruled out. The Farmer would then be addressing both the city and the surrounding country. Nor do any of these emendations contribute to the ethos of the Farmer. Strabo (8.6.9) says that “the plain (πεδίον) is called ἄργος in the more recent [writers],” but not in Homer. Perhaps the Farmer in Euripides' play is made

to equate the vista of the Argolid he sees around him with a generic word for ground. As a farmer he naturally addresses the land and water. Although this generic use accords well with the mention of the streams, there is no evidence for this meaning of the word before the second century B.C.E.

In Sophocles' *Electra*, Orestes' servant (after a bombastic address to his master as the son of the commander at Troy) also opens with a reference to the setting and also uses the expression παλαιὸν Ἄργος. He points out the sights in his native land to the young man. There the imaginary vista is wide but specific, filled with sacred sites and the familiar places of Orestes' childhood. The Farmer in Euripides' version evokes a grander landscape, but unmarked by men or gods except for the river Inachos.

The Farmer addresses the ground of his ancient homeland, the dirt his ancestors have tilled for generations, through the cycles of the seasons as well as economic vicissitudes and political upheavals in town. He is the one who belongs to this land and to whom the particular piece of land we imagine as abutting the *skēnē* belongs. *Electra* and Orestes and their crowd of famous (named) mythological characters are the intruders here whose presence needs to be explained. The separation of this hard-working man from his ancestral landscape and soil, which is to come among the divine dispensations at the end of the play, is a small, nearly unnoticed, tragedy within the tragedy. What makes it noticeable at all is this unusual opening in which the playwright presents the Farmer's attachment to the land, his pride in his heritage (35–6) and acceptance of his toil (78–81). The play ends with a diaspora. All the named characters and even the Farmer will leave. Only the dead and the land remain behind. Bernand (1985, 249) calls *Electra* a play of the *chora* (country) not of the *polis*. See Said (1993) for Argos in tragedy. References to country matters and manners occur throughout the play.

Inachos (now known as the Panitsa) is the main river of the Argolid. Like most rivers he is a god and has a genealogy: son of Oceanus and Tethys, father of Io (see A. *PB*) and the mythical founder of the Argive people. Near the beginning of A. *Cho.*, Orestes, standing at his father's mound, offers a first lock of hair to Inachos as a thank-offering for his nurture and a second as a token of mourning to his father (6–7). Inachos figures in the opening of Sophocles' *Electra* where Orestes is reintroduced to his homeland by his old *paedagogos* (the slave who tends a child) who points out the sights, including the "grove of Inachos' gadfly-stung daughter" (that is, Io, S. *El.* 5). The river god's mythology is stressed in Sophocles. His existence as a natural phenomenon is all that is present in Euripides.

In his 49-line narrative, the Farmer uses 36 proper nouns, a rather large number even considering that he is situating the audience in the plot. He shows an interest in the ancestors of the various actors in the story, taking the generations back to Dardanus, Tantalus (11), and Tyndareus (13). The tension between celebrity and anonymity is already at work.

2 ἄρας ναυσὶ χιλίαις Ἄρη: note the ASSONANCE (repetition of vowel sounds) in ἄρας . . . Ἄρη. ἄρας < αἶρω (ἀείρω) is used of raising troops, as in A. Ag. 45–7. **ναυσὶ χιλίαις:** one thousand is the traditional number (already found in A. Ag. 45, στόλον . . . Ἀργείων χιλιοναύταν, “the thousand-shipped force of the Argives”) and is the number of ships named elsewhere in Euripides (*Andr.* 105, also *IA* 174, 355, *IT* 10, *Or.* 352). For greater specificity, see Homer’s Catalogue of Men and Ships in *Il.* 2.492–877 and Thuc. 1.10.4 (who comments on Homer’s numbers): πεποίηκε γὰρ χιλίων καὶ διακοσίων νεῶν τὰς μὲν Βοιωτῶν εἴκοσι καὶ ἑκατὸν ἀνδρῶν, τὰς δὲ Φιλοκτήτου πενήτηκοντα . . . “for of twelve hundred ships he (Homer) has represented those of the Boiotians at one hundred twenty men, those of Philoctetes at fifty.” An even one thousand is more memorable and less prosaic than the more detailed Homeric 1186 or Thucydides’ 1200. **Ἄρη:** Ares is the god of war. His name can be used to mean *war* and *slaughter*, *the warlike spirit*, and the *forces of war*, and so it is a poetic equivalent to στόλος or στρατός.

3 Τρῳάδ’ (= Τρῳάδα) with γῆν is used to mean Troy and the region around it, the Troad. The name, according to the ancient etymology, comes from Tros, an early king of Troy. **Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ:** the Homeric designation of Agamemnon as warrior king. See “Meter and Prosody” in the Introduction (hereafter “Meter”), for a discussion of RESOLUTION (the substitution of two shorts for a long or short element in the iambic trimeter), its frequency in the play and its dramatic function. In this speech and the Farmer’s exchange with Electra, there are 22 resolutions with a ratio of one resolution per 3.6 lines. The resolutions are in positions: 1(23, 33, 69), 2 (5, 13, 48, 61), 4 (35), 6 (14, 17, 20, 43, 52, 56, 61), and 8 (3, 4, 12, 13, 41, 52, 61).

4–5 κτείνας . . . Πρίαμον: according to other sources that have come down to us, it was Neoptolemos who killed Priam. This is the only known attribution of the act to Agamemnon and may be taken figuratively rather than literally, referring to the well-known fact that Agamemnon was the commander who led the Argive assault on Troy. **τὸν κρατοῦντ’ . . . Πρίαμον:** this is an

instance of HYPERBATON, in which words that naturally belong together are separated; see Mastronarde 2002, 95. Ἰλιάδι: dat. of Ἰλιάς, -άδος adj. used with and without χώρα, γῆ, or χθών to mean *Ilios*, *Ilion* [*Ilium*], *Troy*. *Ilios* is the form most used in Homer; *Ilion* is used in tragedy. The name is traditionally derived from Ilus, son of Tros. Ilus was Laomedon's father and founded Troy/Ilion.

5 Δαρδάνου κλεινὴν πόλιν: this is yet another way of saying *Troy*. Dardanus was a son of Zeus by Electra, daughter of Atlas. He ruled in Arcadia but left after the flood and came to the Troad from Samothrace. Dardanus was grandfather of Tros, great-great-grandfather of Laomedon (*H. Il.* 20.215–41), and great-great-great-grandfather of Priam, and so is also considered one of the founders of Troy. The Trojans are frequently referred to as Dardanians from Homer onward.

6 ἐς τόδ' Ἄργος: the DEICTIC (or pointing) use of the demonstrative, *here*, as the Farmer indicates the sweep of the land. Argos here is not the city but the whole area of the Argolid.

6–7 ὑψηλῶν δ' ἐπὶ / ναῶν . . . σκῦλα: σκῦλον is used mostly in the pl. to mean *arms stripped from dead warriors*. In the sg. it can mean *prey* or *carriion* and is used in that sense at 897 when Orestes brings back the body (or head) of Aegisthus for Electra to do with as she pleases. At 1000 σκῦλα is used, as here, of the spoils dedicated in the temples. On the practice of nailing the captured armor to the temples, see *H. Il.* 7. 81–4. See also Hdt. 5.95.1 in which the poet Alcaeus of Mytilene has escaped with his life, τὰ δέ οἱ ὅπλα ἴσχουσι Ἀθηναῖοι, καί σφεα ἀνεκρέμασαν πρὸς τὸ Ἀθήναιον τὸ ἐν Σιγείῳ, “but the Athenians got his armor and hung it up on the temple of Athena in Sigeion (Sigeum).” See also *A. Ag.* 577–9, *E., Andr.* 1121–2, *TW* 575–6, *IT* 74. Dedicating spoils of war as thank-offerings in temples seems to have been a customary act on the part of victorious war heroes and to have been viewed as the right and pious thing to do. In no other known treatment of the myth is Agamemnon said to do this. ἐπὶ: a preposition at the end of a line is not common in Euripides (cf. 852). Here it divides an “enclosed phrase,” whose order is attribute and substantive, for which cf. *Alc.* 66–7, *Andr.* 149, 887, *Ion* 262, *IA* 420 (Parker 2007 on *Alc.* 66–7). Division with the order of substantive, preposition, attribute is not found in Euripides.

9 Κλυταιμήστρα: *Klytāimēstra*, the spelling without the *n* seems to be the original: it appropriately means *renowned schemer*, rather than *famously courted*.

9–10 δόλφ and **χερί** are instrumental datives. The Farmer names Aegisthus seven times, Agamemnon four times, Electra and Orestes each three times. In the flow of his narrative Agamemnon is eclipsed (killed actually) by Aegisthus, and Aegisthus (last named at 42) by Orestes. Who killed Agamemnon? In Homer treachery is attributed to both Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, but Aegisthus is the killer, abetted by Clytemnestra, though her involvement varies; for example: *Od.* 3. 234–5 (see also 4. 91–2, 11. 452–3, 24. 97):

ἦ ἐλθὼν ἀπολέσθαι ἐφέστιος, ὥς Ἀγαμέμνων
ὤλεθ' ὑπ' Αἰγίσθοιο δόλφ καὶ ἥς ἀλόχοιο. 235

... than coming home to die at the hearth like Agamemnon
who died through Aegisthus' treachery [δόλφ] and that of his wife.

In A. Ag. we hear the cries as the king is struck by his wife, 1343, 1345. Clytemnestra is revealed with the body. She describes what we have just heard at 1380, 1384–7. In S. *El.* both Clytemnestra and Aegisthus are called the murderers (34, 203–7, 262–4). They killed him with an ax (“as woodmen fell oak [they] cleft his skull” 97–9).

10–11 καὶ τοῦ Θυέστου παιδὸς Αἰγίσθου / . . . Ταντάλου: Thyestes, his son Aegisthus, and their primogenitor Tantalus are some of the sufferers in this particular unhappy family. The best stories are about wrongdoing and suffering in the family as Aristotle noted (*Poetics* 1453b9): these are timeless stories everybody can relate to. In lines 10–11 Aegisthus is carefully placed between his infamous forebears, Thyestes and Tantalus.

11 παλαιὰ σκῆπτρα Ταντάλου: the scepter of Agamemnon has a long history, told in H. *Il.* 2.102–9: it was made by Hephaestus and given by him to Zeus, who passed it on to Hermes, who gave it to Pelops. From Pelops it passed to his sons, Atreus first and then Thyestes, and finally to Agamemnon. The scepter is the symbol of the ruler and is widely used to symbolize Agamemnon's rule in the poetry and iconography of Electra's story (cf. S. *El.* 417–23). Once the king dies, his scepter passes to his heir.

Here, ironically, it is passed on to the king's murderer. Tantalus, yet another of Zeus' sons, is not referred to in the Homeric account. His mention here as the owner of the scepter may remind the audience that he is the father of Pelops and progenitor of this family line and recall the curse that was inflicted on it in consequence of his crime against the gods. While the *Iliad* passes over the quarrel between Thyestes and Atreus, Euripides alludes to it by having the Farmer identify Thyestes as Aegisthus' father. Since the audience would have known that at the time of Atreus and Thyestes the throne was contested, this may have been Euripides' way of reminding the audience that Aegisthus actually had some right to the scepter (see the second stasimon, 699–746 and notes).

12 ὄλωλεν: *is dead*, here intransitive. The INTEGRAL ENJAMBMENT, where the word that stands in enjambment (i.e., is carried over to the next line) is indispensable to the completion of the previous line, adds emphasis (e.g., 32, 35); see Mastronarde 2002, 95–6. **Αἴγισθος δὲ βασιλεύει χθονός:** while the *Oresteia* depicted Clytemnestra as the ruler and Aegisthus as the weaker partner, Euripides draws Aegisthus as the master of Clytemnestra and ruler of the kingdom. Aegisthus ruled for seven years until Orestes came back (from Athens, according to Homer) and slew his father's murderer (*Od.* 3. 305–8).

13 ἄλοχον ἐκείνου Τυνδαρίδα κόρην ἔχων: in Euripides' *IA* (49–50), Leda (Tyndareus' wife) had three daughters, Phoebe, Clytemnestra, and Helen. Only the latter two are mentioned in *Electra*.

14–15 οὗς δ' refers to the children, Orestes and Electra. **δόμοισιν ἔλιφ'**: Seidler's correction of the ms reading δόμοις ἔλιπεν does not change the meaning, but eliminates a single-word tribrach (—), which would have left the line without a caesura (a pause where a word ends within a foot). **θῆλό τ' Ἠλέκτρας θάλος:** a periphrasis for Electra, analogous to Homer's βίη, ἴς, μένος, σθένος plus a proper name in the gen., used as a periphrasis for a warrior ("the might of" for "the mighty," etc.), e.g., *Il.* 3.105, 13.770, 2.658; cf. δύο μὲν ἄρσενας, Ἐτεοκλέα κλεινὴν τε Πολυνείκου βίαν, "two male children, Eteocles and the famous force of Polynices," *E. Phoen.* 55–6. Instead of naming Electra directly the Farmer gives a characteristic of her, here, her womanly youth and fertility, literally "the female shoot that consists of Electra." **θάλος** (θάλλος) and the words related to it (θάλλω, θαλερός, θαλία) have to do with growing, blooming, thriving, abundance,

in contrast with the dried up stick Electra feels she has become. There is also a play on the word θῆλυ (*female*). See below θαλερός . . . ἥβης χρόνος (20): the Farmer has respected Electra's virginity, but the fact that she is a woman in the prime of her youth has not gone unnoticed. E. *El.* does not mention Chrysothemis, Agamemnon's third daughter. She is mentioned in H. *Il.* 9.145, 297 and plays an important role in S. *El.* Paley believes line 15 is spurious, since Euripides mentions the two names of Orestes and Electra in 17 and 19.

16–17 τὸν . . . Ὀρέστην: a long hyperbaton (4–5n) starting with an article for emphasis. We know from a previous verse (15) that he refers to the “male Orestes”; here the Farmer chooses to emphasize what was happening to Orestes. Paley cites E. *Hel.* 1025 for the hyperbaton (τὴν μὲν σ' ἐᾶσαι πατρίδα νοστήσαι Κύπριν “[ask] Cypris to allow you to return home”). It is worth noting that the Farmer attributes the plot to murder Orestes solely to Aegisthus and does not mention Clytemnestra. Deleting line 17, as Nauck suggests, would weaken the differentiation between the two siblings.

16 πατὴρ γεραιὸς . . . τροφεὺς: a character called πρέσβυς, *Old Man*, in the *dramatis personae*, but see 287 where he is called πατρός . . . παιδαγωγὸς ἀρχαῖος γέρων and at 409 παλαιὸν τροφὸν ἐμοῦ φίλον πατρός. In A. *Cho.*, Orestes has an old female nurse (τρόφος), referred to by the geographical term Cilissa (*Cilician woman*). Although she is not said to have brought him to his uncle in Phocis or to have saved his life, like the male *paedagogi* (in Sophocles and Euripides), she serves as the connection to Orestes' childhood. In Euripides' play the unnamed *paedagogus* (or *tropheus*) is a retainer who looked after Agamemnon as a child (488, 506–7), lived in the palace, saw Orestes being injured as a child (573–4), and, above all, saved Orestes from being murdered (286–7). In Sophocles' version his counterpart opens the play and reintroduces Orestes to his homeland. He rescued Orestes (we learn later in Sophocles' play that Electra handed the young Orestes over to him, 296–7, 1125, 1348), accompanied him into exile, brought him up to be his father's avenger, and, as the play opens, has come back to Argos with him to assist in and oversee the murder. See “Discussions.”

18 Στροφίφ: *Strophius* was married to Agamemnon's sister Anaxibia. He was king of Crisa in Phocis, in central Greece where the Delphic sanctuary was located. In A. *Ag.*, Clytemnestra explains to the returning Agamemnon that Orestes has been sent away to his ally (δορύξενος), Strophius the

Phocian (880–5) to ensure that he survives as an heir in case of a rebellion. In *Cho.* Orestes attributes his lie that Orestes is dead to Strophius (679). Strophius' son Pylades was Orestes' cousin. The two grew up together and were inseparable (*IT* 918, *Or.* 1233). The family relationship is not mentioned in this play. Pylades is a presence in all three of the *Electra* plays, but has a speaking part (of three lines) only in *A. Cho.* (900–2).

19 ἡ δ' ἐν δόμοις ἔμεινεν Ἥλέκτρα πατρός: the word order plants Electra inside her father's house, as is appropriate to both her character and her status as an unmarried daughter.

21 μνηστήρες ἦτουν Ἑλλάδος πρῶτοι χθονός: Electra is briefly a Helen figure. See, for example, *E. IA* 51–2. In *IA* Tyndareus, in a rather enlightened (or foolhardy) move, lets his daughter choose among her suitors. Obviously Aegisthus cannot let his stepdaughter choose someone to father his own murderer. It was customary for fathers to select their daughters' husbands, but there are several stories of suitors competing for the hand of a high-born bride: in addition to Helen (*IA* 49–70), there are Penelope (*H. Od. passim*), Hippodemeia (*Pind. O.* 1), and Agariste (*Hdt.* 6.126).

22–3 παῖδ' ἀριστέων and ποινάτορ' are plausible emendations of the mss. readings παῖδας ἀργείων and ποινάτορας. As Denniston suggests on 22, Ἀργείων must have slipped in because the play is about Argos. Following this mistake, a copyist “who knows some meter writes παῖδας to avoid the hiatus, and a copyist who knows no meter writes ποινάτορας to accord with παῖδας.” Aegisthus' fear is that if Electra married a man of noble birth, any son she bore would avenge Agamemnon's murder. This fear was based on heroic notions of honor, whereby the male descendants of persons who were wronged were bound to take vengeance against the culprits. See for example Nestor's words to Telemachos (*H. Od.* 3.196–8):

ὥς ἀγαθὸν καὶ παῖδα καταφθιμένοιο λιπέσθαι
ἀνδρός, ἐπεὶ καὶ κείνος ἐτίσατο πατροφονίᾳ,
Αἴγισθον δολόμητιν, ὃ οἱ πατέρα κλυτὸν ἔκτα.

So it is a good thing that a son is left after a man's death,
because the son took revenge on his father's murderer,
the deceitful Aegisthus, for he had killed his father.

Cf. *Cypria* frg. 25 Allen: νήπιος ὃς πατέρα κτείνων παῖδας καταλείπει
“He is a simpleton who kills the father and lets the children live”; *S. El.*

964–6; E. *Heracl.* 468–70, 991–1008, *Andr.* 519–22, *HF* 165–9, *TW* 721–3 (cf. 1158–66), and the plot of Euripides' lost *Cresphontes* (Hyginus 137). In marrying Electra off to the Farmer, Aegisthus hoped to avert such vengeance. Cf. Donzelli 1978, 144–5. No attempt on Electra's life is attributed to Aegisthus in either of the other two plays on the myth, though in *S. El.* she is threatened with immurement (380–2).

23–4 εἶχεν ἐν δόμοις / Αἴγισθος οὐδ' ἤρμοξε νυμφίῳ τινί: throughout her life a woman was under the guardianship of a male relative, her κύριος (*guardian*). This would naturally have been her father or, if her father was dead, another adult male of her family, until a man was chosen for her and she married and came under the authority of her husband. Dynastic marriages were made by the male head of the family (the *kurios*), who chose the partners of those in his charge, and especially of the women (Lacey, 107–9; J. Roisman 2005, 29). Once Orestes came of age, he was the rightful *kurios*, and Aegisthus' choice of Electra's husband is yet another act of usurpation. Electra's case is difficult because her brother is in exile. The Farmer does not see Aegisthus as the proper guardian and does not accept the marriage (43–9). At the end her maternal uncles (the Dioscuri) will command Orestes to give his sister in marriage to Pylades (1249), restoring the appropriate guardianship and making a suitable alliance, at least for mythological and aristocratic characters. Marriage to a first cousin was not uncommon. In New Comedy, on the other hand, marriage across economic strata is common and desirable. See also 259n.

25 φόβου πολλοῦ πλέων: *p*-sounds are often used for ALLITERATION (the repetition of consonant sounds in successive words or stressed syllables), for example, 30, 56, 151–3, 199–200, 221, 276, 357, 361, 384, 391, 409, 430–1, etc.

25–9 Euripides informs the spectators early in the play that Aegisthus' fear of revenge has not abated, even though years have passed since the murder. The Farmer's statement that until recently Aegisthus feared that Electra would find a way of avenging her father's murder prepares the spectator for the Messenger's parallel account in 831–3 of Aegisthus' continuing fear of Orestes.

26–7 σφε and νιν: for the acc. of the third person pronoun, the tragic poets use the enclitics σφε and νιν for masc. and fem., sg. and pl. See appendix of grammatical constructions. Here both refer to Electra.

27 βουλεύσαντος: see appendix of grammatical constructions.

27–8 ὠμόφρων ὄμως / μήτηρ νιν ἐξέσωσεν: “her mother—cruel minded as she was—saved her.” This dual perspective on Clytemnestra runs through the play. While Electra and the Chorus tell of her cruelty, Euripides has the queen present herself as a wronged woman, whose husband murdered their daughter to retrieve his brother’s unfaithful wife and then, on his return from war, brought a second woman into their home (86–7n). In Greek tragedies, the opinions of humble and nameless figures (e.g., farmer, slave, chorus) convey a view the playwright wants the audience to consider. Cf. the views of the Nurse in *Med.*, for which see esp. Mastronarde 2002, 17n.

29 ἐς μὲν γὰρ ἄνδρα σκῆψιν εἶχ’ ὀλωλότα: Clytemnestra’s excuse shifts from play to play and even within an individual play, as is natural: motivation is rarely pure. Is it out of a spirit of vengeance or grief for her daughter, love or lust for Aegisthus (who in Euripides’ version is said to be handsome and a good dancer, 945–51), or desire for power that she brings herself to kill Agamemnon? When Euripides gives her a voice, she says the last straw was when her husband expected her to live in a ménage à trois with Cassandra as a co-bride (1032–4). That was what drove her to kill him, whether from sexual jealousy or outrage at the impropriety is unclear. Still, she is not altogether happy about her past actions and somewhat bewildered by the resentments that drove her to them (1105–10).

29–30 The Farmer suggests that Clytemnestra believed she could get away with killing her husband, but not her children. Although he does not indicate what Clytemnestra’s motives for killing Agamemnon might have been, the term σκῆψιν (*pretext, excuse*, cf. 1067) implies that, as far as he is concerned, none of the justifications she offers—neither Agamemnon’s sacrifice of Iphigenia nor his bringing Cassandra home as his mistress (1002–3, 1018–29, 1030–4)—was a legitimate reason. Clytemnestra’s fear of popular resentment is anchored in the importance of public opinion to the society in which the play was written, and well before that age. In the *Odyssey*, Penelope cites the “voice of people” (δήμοιό τε φῆμιν) as a reason for not remarrying (H. *Od.* 19. 527, cf. 16.75). Cf. A. *Ag.* 456, 938. In Euripides’ play, the Old Man further refers to Clytemnestra’s concern over people’s opinion of her at 643, and she herself mentions it at 1013–17. Electra, too, was concerned about what people would think of her (902–4).

This public voice, also referred to as φημή (*rumor*), was conceptualized as an ethical force and sometimes as a divinity (cf. Hes. *WD* 760–5). As a divine force it is connected to two terms: νέμεσις, which refers to indignation aroused by the sight of someone committing a wrongful act; and αἰδώς, the feeling of shame that restrains a person from doing wrong (cf. Hes. *WD* 197–201). In having enough shame and self-awareness to save Electra’s life, Euripides’ Clytemnestra differs from Sophocles’. She leaves her children’s continued survival to the mercy of Aegisthus, however, allowing him to marry Electra off to a lowly farmer and to put a price on Orestes’ head. For the alliteration in 30, see 25n.

31 ἐκ τῶνδε: *on the basis of this*. This generalizing expression summarizes the reasons for Aegisthus’ decision.

32 Αἴγισθος: for the integral enjambment, see 12n. This enjambment, with Aegisthus as the subject of the verb in line 31, draws attention to Aegisthus as the person responsible for offering a reward for murdering Orestes and perhaps highlights the difference between his behavior and Clytemnestra’s. Nonetheless, the speech implies that Clytemnestra goes along with Aegisthus’ plan to murder her son, even though she had blocked his intention to murder her daughter. φυγάς: is a necessary emendation of the mss. φύλαξ, which would require γῆς as an attribute and read “warden of the land.” But the verb ἀπηλλάχθη requires the gen. γῆς and reads “departed from this land.”

33 The price on Orestes’ head is juxtaposed with Electra’s marriage. The marriage brings into prominence the fact that Agamemnon’s children have grown up, and makes the danger which Orestes poses to the royal couple more imminent. For the omission of the antecedent, see the grammatical appendix.

34 ἡμῖν: for the use of the “sociative” pl. for the first-person sg. in fifth-century Greek poetry, see Bers 49–54. As Bers defines it, this pl. “expresses the unity of meaning that is obscured by the two terms . . . *pluralis maiestatis* and *pluralis modestiae*”—probably the latter here. Using a pl. for a sg. and changing from sg. to pl. are common features of tragic diction; cf. 57–9. ἡμῖν δὲ δὴ δίδωσιν Ἥλέκτραν ἔχειν: up to this point the audience would be wondering who this person is. He is not a mythological figure, part of the traditional story, but an outsider, a person from real life, masked and dressed as

such. This is an absolutely extraordinary fact: ordinary people, unless they are household slaves or soldiers, do not find themselves in Greek tragedy. Imagine how awkward the situation would be for every aspect of your life if you came home from work and found that a royal princess had come to live in your modest dwelling. This explains why Electra's husband's reaction was not to say "How lucky I am." Rather, it is she who counts herself lucky (69–70). Making a farmer of small means (or any quotidian person other than a personal slave) a character in a tragedy is one of the things that gives Euripides a reputation for being an innovator but also for demeaning the tragic art.

35–8 The lines suggest a certain self-consciousness about his poverty on the Farmer's part, who claims to have nobility (εὐγενεία) derived from true-born Mycenaean ancestors. The claim to social status based on ancestry must have resonated among the Athenian spectators, whose citizenship and political rights depended on both their parents having Athenian citizenship. At the same time, the question of the relative importance of descent, wealth, and character in measuring a person's worth was much debated in ancient Athens, as was the relation between character and the other two attributes. In the seventh century, when many of the landed nobility lost their wealth and claim to noble status, the incompatibility of poverty and high social standing became proverbial. The aristocrat Alcaeus quoted the saying (frg. 360, Lobel & Page): "Money is the man, and a poor man / is neither good nor honorable." Cf. H. *Od.* 17.415–44, Pind. *Isthm.* 2.9–12, E. *Phoen.* 438–42, *Erechtheus* 362. 14–18 (Kannicht *TrGF* vol. 5.2). The theme is frequent in the elegies of Theognis. Cf. also Denniston, 253n; Cropp, 35–8n. The Farmer distinguishes between the quality of a man's character and his social and financial status, cf. 362–3n. The weakness he attributes to himself is in status, not in moral character. The farmer's claim to illustrious parentage is consistent—within the framework of his self-respect—with his respect for Electra's virginity. Euripides' depiction of him as a decent man highlights the moral contrast between the simple but decent farmer and the royal couple, whose wealth and position do not endow them with moral stature.

35 δάμαρτα: for the enjambment, see 12n. **πατέρων μὲν Μυκηναίων:** the Farmer is obviously an Argive. Perhaps with the tonier word *Mycenaeans*, he is suggesting that his ancestors were connected to the city or were once better off. He belongs to the class of "the respectable poor" and, therefore, a world apart from the mythical elite of Electra and her kin.

36 οὐ δὴ τοῦτό γ' ἐξελέγχομαι: "I am not to blame in this."

37 δὲ δὴ: δὴ enlivens δέ, cf. 44, 236, 237, 276, etc. *GP* 257–9. The reading γε μὴν "Yes, but destitute of possessions" is possible but from a less reliable authority (Stobaeus), and, as Denniston maintains, would emphasize the poverty too much (*GP* 347–50).

38 ἔνθεν ἡὐγένοι' ἀπόλλυται: is it that the poor do not have εὐγένεια, or do they not need it? Wealth and nobility go together (practically, if not ethically). If the farmer's family has lost its property it has ceased for all practical purposes to be wellborn. Later (253) Electra will say of him that he is poor but γενναῖος ἔς τ' ἔμ' εὐσεβής, and Orestes will comment only on his piety. Orestes, perhaps because he himself has suffered want, realizes that poverty is not a virtue, but can teach a man to be bad (376). At 45–6 the Farmer implies that he is not worthy of Electra or, at least, not appropriate.

39 ἄσθενεῖ . . . ἄσθενῇ: this repetition of different forms of the same word in close proximity, POLYPTOTON or PAREGMENON, is a rhetorical device that can be used to reinforce the concept inherent in the repeated words; cf. 89n, 233n. See Denniston on 337. Here, the wordplay highlights the connection between the Farmer's weakness and the fact that Aegisthus can weaken his own anxieties by marrying Electra off to him. Indirectly, it also draws attention to the intensity of Aegisthus' fear. ἄσθενής and its compounds can refer not only to weakness in body or power, but also in property and status. One meaning of ἄσθενέω is *to be too poor to pay taxes*. See Breitenbach, 221–6.

40 ἔσχεν . . . ἔχων: this play on the verb ἔχω is of interest because the two forms have different meanings. In the aor., the meaning is *got her* (viv) *in marriage* (cf. 166); in the pres. participle, simply *having*.

41 εὐδοντ' ἂν ἐξήγειρε τὸν Ἀγαμέμνωνος / φόνον . . .: see A. Ag. 346–7 where Clytemnestra, after announcing the defeat of Troy and the destruction of the land and its people, ends with fear of retribution in case "the suffering of the dead should turn out to be awake" (see Roisman 1986):

ἐγρηγορὸς τὸ πῆμα τῶν ὀλωλότων / γένοιτ' ἂν . . .

and *Eum.* 280–1, in which Orestes tells of his journey toward purification:

βρίζει γὰρ αἷμα καὶ μαραίνεται χερός,
μητροκτόνον μίασμα δ' ἔκπλυτον πέλει. . .

For the blood on my hands is sleeping and begins to fade
and the matricidal stain is washed away . . .

Even more cogent to these lines is the scene in *Eum.* when the chorus of Erinyes is awakened by the ghost of Clytemnestra (140–1):

ἔγειρ' ἔγειρε καὶ σὺ τήνδ', ἐγὼ δὲ σέ.
εὔδεις; ἀνίστω . . .

Wake up, wake up; and you wake her as I wake you.
Are you still sleeping? Get up . . .

The metaphor of spilled blood, or any other transgression, slumbering or awakening from its sleep appears also at *Eum.* 280, cf. 94–142, *E. Supp.* 1147, and. *S. OC* 511.

43 ἀνὴρ ὅδε: see 6n and grammatical appendix. Tragic characters tend to refer to themselves with a demonstrative pronoun: “this man” or “this woman” or “this” plus a name, cf. 84, 489; *S. Ai.* 78, *Ph.* 1036, 1375, *Ant.* 1034, *OC* 1329, *E. Alc.* 331, 690, *Med.* 1337, *Andr.* 313, *Hec.* 621, 992. *K.* II. i. 630, *Smyth* 1242.

44–6 ἡσχύνεν . . . αἰσχύνομαι: the repetition highlights the motifs of shame and disgrace. It also draws attention to the two-directionality of the verb, resulting from the grammatical voice—one can shame/disgrace others, and also feel ashamed and be disgraced oneself—and to the close connection between dishonoring another and dishonoring oneself. The emotional force of the Farmer’s position is intensified by the fact that the verbs αἰσχύνειν and ὑβρίζειν belong to the vocabulary of rape and adultery. This word choice simultaneously conveys the Farmer’s morality in not taking what is not rightfully his, because of his poverty, and the royal couple’s immorality in marrying Electra off to a man beneath her station (see 23–4n). Orestes uses κατααἰσχύνειν to describe the Farmer’s refusal to disgrace or shame him by consummating the marriage to his sister; cf. 365n. Disgrace would have resulted both from bringing someone of lower status into the family and from challenging his position as head of the family.

44 *παρθένος δ' ἔτι ἔστι δῆ*: “she is still in fact a virgin.” Both Aeschylus and Sophocles depict Electra as unmarried. Sophocles has her say that she has no child or bridegroom (*El.* 164–5) or husband to protect her (187–8). In emphasizing Electra’s virginity, Euripides lets the spectators know that he has not strayed too far from the traditional depiction; and perhaps also that they should expect Electra to exhibit the emotional instability and other features that were believed to characterize sexually inactive young women. See King 1993, 111–5.

47–9 *στένω . . . ἐσόψεται*: the Farmer’s description of himself as “groaning” for the “wretched” Orestes testifies to his sympathy for him. His calling Orestes “brother-in-law in words only” indicates that he understands that he is not a genuine part of the family (cf. 248). While Electra (130–4, 201–6, 233, 505) and the Chorus (587–9) sympathize with Orestes as an exile, the Farmer pities him for “his sister’s hapless marriage,” that is, for his unsuitable family tie with himself, a poor man.

50–3 Like many speeches in tragedy, this one ends with moralizing. The Farmer is especially given to ending his speeches sententiously (see his exit lines at 80–1 and 426–31; also 406–7). Electra, too, ends her second speech with what could be a fine trope for a working-class family of an earlier age (73–6). His sententious ending is not just a proverb, however. For one thing, it sets his personal thoughts and himself apart from the main narrative of his speech: he is obviously not one of those urban, royal interlopers to whom he refers throughout. Still, he shows that he has been thinking over the possibilities of his status and marriage and has come up with a response to “what people might say” (see also 36–8 where he might be thought of as considering the other possibility).

53 *καὐτὸς αἶ τοιοῦτος*: the accusation goes back to the accuser (cf. *S. Ant.* 469–70).

54–64 Electra enters from the house. She is carrying a water jug on her head like a rural woman or slave (at 107 she is mistaken for a slave). Whether or not she is accompanied by a slave has been much discussed among the commentators. She and Euripides make a more credible case if she has no slave. Later she will tell her mother that she gave birth alone (1129). At 107 Orestes sees a “slave” woman approaching. To him Electra—with her close-cropped hair—appears to be a slave. If there were two women (Electra and an extra

playing her slave) they would be indistinguishable to him in status and he would say “I see slave women,” because he does not yet know that this is his sister, to be discriminated from a mere extra, playing her slave. Euripides was not such a bad manager of his scripts (*Poetics* 1453a10). The slaves in Orestes’ entourage are addressed (360, 394), but Electra does not address a slave of her own (unless, as has been argued, at 140). At the beginning of Euripides’ *Med.* the slave addresses her sorrows to earth and sky (1–45, cf. 56–8). Electra’s outcry here is a verbalization and unburdening of her thoughts in a similar vein. There is no one to hear or help her. She is also often criticized for becoming obsessed with her loss and with getting even, and especially for consistently putting herself and her wrongs first. In her defense, it should be noted that her expectations in life have been taken from her. What does she have left that would allow her to get over the loss of home, family, future? Her husband’s goodness and self-imposed celibacy assures that she cannot even have a normal married life and children. She has only her career as lonely mourner to occupy her. Another thing that disturbs Electra is the fact that her mother is continuing to bear children to Aegisthus (62, as in Sophocles’ version 588, 655). This could only increase Electra’s sense of abandonment, isolation, and alienation from her family that is growing by the addition of new children to replace her and her brother. Later (1001–3) her mother will display her own shallowness by referring to her lovely Trojan slaves as a replacement for the lost Iphigone (Iphigenia). In her turn Electra catches her mother in hypocrisy, but also shows her longing to belong to the family in her pitiful request to take her mother’s hand (1006) and in her argument (1086–9) that Clytemnestra ought to have treated the remaining children better if she was truly grieved over the sacrifice of Iphigone. There is a recognizable human being revealed wearing the Electra mask, but here and always a complex person with a mass of mixed feelings and motivations.

Electra’s address to the night sets the time of the action. It contrasts with the address of Sophocles’ Electra to the “holy light and air” (86). Electra’s entrance here resembles those of other protagonists who enter talking to themselves and initially fail to notice other character(s) who are on stage with them (*E. Suppl.* 87–92, *HF* 523–30, *Hel.* 528–45, 1165–80, *Phoen.* 261–73, *Bacch.* 215–47). It differs from these, however, in that Electra is the only one who has to be actively prompted before she realizes that she is not alone. The Farmer calls attention to himself by addressing her. Electra’s failure to notice him, or her choice to ignore him, may call attention to the absorption in her own suffering and pursuit of vengeance

that will characterize her. Or it may show that the two characters have different pursuits and different life stories, the Farmer preparing for the day's toil, his wife rehearsing her lament. This address to the night is not a mere aside, as is sometimes claimed. For other tragic heroes who address a divinity on first speaking or appearing on stage, see A. *PB.* 88, E. *Med.* 160, *Hipp.* 73. Stage convention did not require that characters be announced as they emerged from the stage door. However, dressed as a slave woman and carrying a jug of water on her head, Electra may not have been immediately identifiable to the audience. She reveals her identity gradually in the course of her speech, by referring to her father, mother, and brother in succession. (Bain 1977, 33–4, 61–5, Mastronarde 1979, 26–8, Halleran, 6.) Since there was a revival of the *Oresteia* in the 440s, and probably also in the 420s (see also Aristoph. *Frogs* 868), Hammond (379–82) believes that this first entrance of Electra with an *empty* urn on her head is Euripides' parody on Aeschylus' Electra's entry, also dancing but with an urn of libations on her head.

54–9 The difficulty of these lines rests with the unacceptable indicative impf. ἀφίην (*I was uttering*) found in 59 in L and P:

| | |
|--|----|
| ὦ νύξ μέλαινα, χρυσέων ἄστρον τροφέ, | 54 |
| ἐν ᾗ τόδ' ἄγγος τῷδ' ἐφεδρεῦον κάρα | 55 |
| φέρουσα πηγᾶς ποταμίας μετέρχομαι, | 56 |
| οὐδὲ τί χρείας ἐς τοσόνδ' ἀφιγμένη, | 57 |
| ἀλλ' ὥς ὕβριν δείξωμεν Αἰγίσθου θεοῖς | 58 |
| γούους τ' ἀφίην αἰθέρ' ἐς μέγαν πατρί. | 59 |

O black night, nurse of golden stars, / in which, carrying this pitcher on my head, / I go for water from the stream, / I have come to this not because of some need, / but to show the gods my mistreatment at Aegisthus' hands, / and I was uttering laments to the wide skies for my father.

Neither of the two emendations that have been offered is entirely satisfactory. Portus' optative ἀφείην leaves us with a final optative ("to utter," "that I might utter") and a final subjunctive (δείξωμεν), both dependent on a pres. main verb (μετέρχομαι). Denniston (59n) finds this syntactic construction extremely bothersome, but not unacceptable; cf. Paley 59n. He finds Riske's emendation to the indicative pres. τὰφίημι, with the punctuation at 58 it necessitates, impossible. He also believes that Wilamowitz'

deletion of τ' (*and*) does not solve the problem, because it wrongly makes it appear that Electra cries to her father only “*in order* to manifest to the gods Aegisthus’ brutality,” when, in fact, she does it both “to enlist heaven’s sympathy for her degraded estate by performing menial tasks and to enter into spiritual communion with Agamemnon.” However, Electra does not cry out to her father, but laments him. Diggle reads τ’ ἀφίημι(ν) in the pres. indicative, for primary sequence with the subjunctive, which is acceptable; but hoping “to steer for safety,” as he puts it (1969, 51–2), he places line 59, telling of Electra’s laments for her father, after line 56. He translates: “O black night, in which I carry this pitcher on my head to the stream and pour forth laments to heaven for my father —not that I have been reduced to this necessity. . . .” He justifies this transposition with the claim that: “. . . The slight suspension of thought is not troublesome, and it suggests a cause why 59 may have been dislodged from its intermediary place.” The transposition, however, separates the act of fetching water from its explanation, and also makes the explanation more salient. Coming between her account of her two actions, it was a parenthetical statement. Placed at the end of the account, it makes an important point: that she was not compelled to demean herself by doing servant’s work, but has chosen to do so of her own free will. The original line order therefore is preferable. Some view Electra’s explanation of her conduct as spurious, inserted in anticipation of 125 ff., see Bain 1977, 33 n.3. Nauck believed 57–8 to be spurious.

It is noteworthy that Electra’s flaunting her demeaned social position in order to advertise Aegisthus’ mistreatment of her contrasts with the Farmer’s efforts not to detract from her royal status.

54 ὃ νύξ μέλαινα, χρυσεῶν ἄστρον τροφέ: cf. the importance of night and night’s children (the Furies, among others) in the *Oresteia*. Later, Electra greets the news that Aegisthus is dead as a light dawning (866–7). “O earth and night,” she says there, “which I used to look on,” reminding us of her opening words. Timing is explicit: E. *El.*, like A. *Ag.* and *Cho.* and S. *El.*, starts at night (just before dawn); in this play day dawns with the arrival of Orestes, who addresses its “white face.” In A. *Ag.* the signal flashes that announce victory in war come just before dawn. In *Electra*, Orestes, once recognized, is the signal fire (586–7), but ironically he has kept his identity hidden until it is revealed as a “bright mark” (559) to Electra. The darkness and light in this play are strangely barren (like the characters, except for Clytemnestra). Night is nurse of the stars (ἄστρον τροφέ), as if the darkness of the night makes the stars grow and appear brighter. On the idea of pouring out one’s heart to the elements, see E. *Med.* 56–8.

55 τὸδ' ἄγγος: Electra's pot. A vessel of some kind is present as a conspicuous prop in all three Electra plays, here a common *hydria*; in A. *Cho.* libation vessels, and in S. *El.* a libation vessel and a funerary urn. See "Discussions."

57–8 Much has been made of Electra's motivation for working on the farm, as evidence of her character (or *ethos*). She offers, directly and indirectly, various reasons for doing what she does. She wants to show how much she suffers and how bad Aegisthus and her mother are. In her second speech (67–76) she offers a second motivation, to ease her husband's load. Both are believable and human. Here she makes herself the *τεκμήριον*, the evidence on which one may draw a conclusion: her condition attests the hubris of Aegisthus.

58 ὕβριν: interpersonal hubris occurs when one in a position of power (even if only momentary or situational) uses that power to hurt one who is weaker or subordinate to himself or herself. Electra dwells on Aegisthus' hubris toward her, not on his motives. Her aim is to show the gods Aegisthus' abuse of his power. Carrying water in public was a task performed by slaves. In Hdt. 3.14, we are told that Cambyzes of Persia tried to humiliate the deposed pharaoh Psamennitus by having him watch his daughter and other noble Egyptian girls dressed as slaves and carrying water in public. Cf. E. *TW* 205–6.

60 ἡ γὰρ πανώλης Τυνδαρίς, μήτηρ ἐμή: Electra does not leave herself unidentified for long. *πανώλης:* Orestes calls Clytemnestra *πανώλεθρος* (86).

61 ἐξέβαλέ μ' οἴκων: Electra ignores the fact that her mother saved her life, see 29–30n. *χάριτα* (instead of *χάριν*): see grammatical appendix. The variant is probably used for metrical reasons. For the idiom *χάριν τίθεσθαι*, see E. *IT* 602, *Hec.* 1211, *Ion* 1104. This line has three resolutions, see 3n.

62 πάρα = ξυνεύδουσα, sleeping with, according to Denniston. Clytemnestra in S. *El.* (588–90, 655) also continues to bear children in her second liaison. Electra blames her mother for having other children by Aegisthus and casting out her former offspring. For the possible children from this union, see Jebb 1894, 589n.

63 πάρεργ' δόμων: "by-products of the house." By giving Aegisthus heirs, Clytemnestra deprives Orestes and Electra of their right to succession. It is Orestes' fate, of course, that is more relevant here.

64–6 “Why are you slaving away for my sake, poor thing, / taking on chores, though you were brought up well / and why don’t you stop, even when I ask you to?” **ταῦτα** is probably the direct object of λέγοντος, since καὶ ταῦτα with an adverbial force (“and that too,” “and more than that,” “besides”) rarely appears with a finite verb (ἀφίστασαι). Dobree’s reading πόνους <δ’>, makes καὶ ταῦτα adverbial to ἐμοῦ λέγοντος: “and besides/and that too, when I tell you, you do not stop.” Strictly speaking, Electra answered the Farmer’s question in lines 57–9. On this basis, Denniston, (64–6n) assumes that the Farmer had gone into his cottage and then come out again. However, the cottage could hardly be big enough for him not to have met Electra on her way out. See also Bain 1977, 34, n2. The question seems to show, rather, the Farmer’s sorrow and consternation at her voluntary labor. The lines also add the information that he had asked her not to perform these laborious tasks, and thus point up Electra’s willfulness and distress.

65 **πρόσθεν εἰς τεθραμμένη**: the Farmer is a sympathetic character because he shows the greatest human understanding. Here he points up the contrast between Electra’s then and now, making the audience/reader more sympathetic to her plight. Her life is stuck in the mythical past and so she suffers the contrast more.

67 **ἐγώ σ’**: the use of the first person personal pronoun in the nom. is often redundant in Greek because it is already contained in the verb’s ending. It usually functions to emphasize the person, somewhat as the English reflexive “I myself” would. Here the emphasis is further augmented by the position of the σ’ right after ἐγώ. Electra repeats the same *I-you* sequence in 70 (ἐγώ σέ). **ἴσον θεοῖσιν ἡγοῦμαι φίλον**: as we learn from the opening lines of a poem by Sappho, φαίνεται μοι κείνος ἴσος θεοῖσιν . . . ὑπακούει (frg. 31.1: “He seems to me equal to gods, the man who sits across from you and from close by listens to your sweetly talking . . .”), there is nothing improper in Electra’s comparing the Farmer to the gods. Cf. H. *Od.* 8.467–8; E. *IA* 973–4. Electra’s great praise for the Farmer, not only as equal to the gods in friendship to her, but also as a healer of her plight (69–70), may be read either as a sincere expression of gratitude and esteem or as a way of placating him while continuing to act contrary to his expressed wishes (71). Cf. 83n. Electra’s enthusiasms are always too strong. Here what is noteworthy is that she reverses the folktale motif: a mortal, especially a poor man, must always watch out for divine visitors. If he treats them well he is rewarded. In this case the heroic visitor calls her host a god.

69–70 This sentiment is almost a cliché. For a more mundane expression of the idea see: λύπης ἰατρός ἐστὶν ὁ χρηστὸς φίλος. “A loyal friend is physician of grief,” Menander, *Monostichoi*, 577. For a more poetic/dramatic context, A. *Cho.* 698–9.

71–3 Earlier, Electra had explained her carrying water as aimed at showing the gods Aegisthus’ hubristic conduct toward her. Now she explains it as an act aimed at sharing and lightening her husband’s heavy labors.

72–3 μόχθου ἵκουφίζουσαν . . . πόνους: μόχθου: separative or partitive gen. (see grammatical appendix). It can also qualify πόνους, “labors of toil,” in which case πόνους would be the object of all three verbs (Cropp 72n), although ὡς ῥῶον φέρης makes the former more likely (Denniston 72n).

74 τᾷξωθεν ἔργα· τάν δόμοις: typically the male and female spheres of activity. The space outside the house is the man’s to negotiate. When the Farmer returns he finds that Electra has usurped this space and his prerogatives (341–4, 348, 404–5, 408 vv.). The inverse division in S. *OC* 339–41: “For there [in Egypt] the men sit weaving in the house, but the wives go out to provide the necessities of life”—is presented as an aberration.

77 καὶ γάρ: *in fact*; cf. 295. πρόσω: it is rare to find a prepositional adverb ending a line with its dependent phrase wholly in the following line. Cf. 955 πέλας; E. *Alc.* 366 πέλας, *Heracl.* 200 πάρος (Reiske’s supplement).

77–8 “If it seems best to you, go. For actually the spring is not far from this house.” The Farmer’s matter-of-fact response contrasts with the intense emotion of Electra’s utterances. It may variously convey the grounded, down to earth quality of his character, the acceptance of toil that comes with his poverty and social position, and his awareness that there is no point in arguing any further with this strong-willed woman.

78 ἄμ’ ἡμέρα: this line (see also 54 and 102) gives the time of day (just before daybreak) for the play’s opening. It is to be imagined as still dark. The Farmer plans to leave with the oxen at the same time that Orestes intends to leave the main road and ask some farmer or serving woman where Electra lives (102–6). Cf. 102–6n.

80–1 “For no idle man just by keeping the gods on his lips, can gather a living without labor.” This is perhaps the ancient Greek equivalent of “God

helps those who help themselves.” For the Farmer’s tendency to end his speeches with gnomic statements, see 50–3n, 426–31. Cf. also Electra’s final words to Aegisthus’ corpse, 953–6. This particular reflection is consistent with the connection Hesiod makes between idleness and hunger (*WD* 298–319) and with his instructions to start work in the field at dawn (*WD* 576–81). One of the marginal scholia in *L* cites here the proverb: σὺν Ἀθηνᾷ καὶ χέρρα κίνει “Stir your arm along with Athena.”

82 Πολάδῃ: the scene is empty. The characters are introduced one by one. Orestes enters by the *parodos* (stage left, the opposite to that by which Electra and the Farmer exited) with Pylades and perhaps two slaves. He is wearing a traveling cloak and perhaps a broad-brimmed hat (commonly used in vase paintings to identify travelers). His address to Pylades identifies him as Orestes (also 84 where he gives his name). As in Sophocles’ version, Pylades is a silent character (κωφὸν πρόσωπον) and present throughout Orestes’ stage-time. At the end he is not forgotten (as he is in the other versions) but given a role as Electra’s husband and a destination to return home to Phocis (1249, 1284–5). Orestes’ esteem and affection for Pylades go a long way in humanizing them both. Other than these loaded words (πρῶτον, πιστόν, φίλον ξένον τ’ 82–3) we are given nothing but the biographical details: Pylades of Phocis, son of Strophius.

Pylades is the son of Strophius, king of Crisa in Phocis, and Anaxibia, Agamemnon’s sister (cf. 18n) and Orestes’ aunt. Orestes was reared in their home. In keeping with common practice, Orestes, as a new character, identifies both himself (84) and his interlocutor. His repetition of Pylades’ name toward the end of the speech (111) is unusual. It frames the speech and gives Pylades a certain prominence. For most of the play, Pylades’ presence is very subdued. He does not speak; he is not mentioned again until 821, when the Messenger says that he helped Orestes strip the slaughtered calf at the sacrifice Aegisthus conducted. No character other than Orestes addresses him until Electra greets him (887). Toward the end of the play, Euripides again briefly foregrounds Pylades by making Castor tell Orestes to give Electra to his friend in marriage, and take her and the Farmer to Phocis (1249, 1284–7). Pylades is also Orestes’ companion in *A. Cho.* and in *S. El.* It is only in *Cho.* 900–2, where he reminds Orestes of Apollo’s oracle, that he actually speaks. He appears as a speaking character in Euripides’ *IT* and *Orestes*. See “Discussions.”

πρῶτον: when *πρῶτος* is used in conjunction with an adjective, it means *above all others*.

Orestes' speech has 5 resolutions, with a low ratio of one resolution to 6 lines. Resolution occurs in positions 1 (82), 2 (91), 4 (104, 111), and 6 (86), see 3n.

83 πιστόν: Euripides here uses πιστός to mean *loyal*, not merely *reliable*. Orestes' reference to Pylades also as *xenos* and *philos* suggests that Pylades meets the two conditions for loyalty found in Homer and the tragedies: being in a close relationship with the person to whom one is loyal and having affection for him (Roisman 1984, 23–9). Cf. *IA* 45, 114. Orestes will use the adjective again when he and Electra part company after the matricide, when he addresses her as πιστοτάτη (1336) *most loyal* (sister). The adjective is usually applied to men, but see *A. Ag.* 606, where Clytemnestra terms herself γυναῖκα πιστήν. φίλον ξένον τ': in calling Pylades a friend and a host, Orestes binds himself to Pylades in two reciprocal relationships in which each member is committed to the other. These relationships were maintained from generation to generation and served the ancient Greeks as ethical models for male solidarity and love, as exemplified in the bond of *philia* between Patroclus and Achilles. Although Euripides' plays tend to undercut the most basic human relationships—e.g., between spouses (*Med.*), father and son (*Hipp.*), and mother and child (*Med.*)—by making them dependent on circumstances, the intimate ties between friends withstand all trials. Witness the relationship between Theseus and Heracles in *HF*, between Medea and Aegeus in *Med.*, and between Orestes and Pylades in *IT*. The strength of Pylades' friendship and loyalty in *El.* is emphasized in 605–7, where the Old Man tells Orestes that it is a rare thing when a friend stands by one in adversity as well as in good fortune. Electra also acknowledges the friendship (*philia*) of her partner/husband (67). The stress that Orestes and Electra place on friendship emphasizes the intense sense of abandonment they harbor. Exiles, who were homeless and poor, were proverbially friendless; see 236, 352; *Med.* 561, *HF* 302–7; Theognis 209, Tyrtaeus frg. 10.2–12 (West²). It is of note that the play makes no mention of the fact that Pylades is Orestes' cousin, given that he is to marry Electra; cf. 18n.

84 τόνδ': see 43n. ἐθαύμαζες: θαυμάζω here implies both admiration and honor. Cf. 519; *Med.* 1144.

85 πρόσσονθ' ἃ πρόσσω: “faring as I fare,” a reticent EUPHEMISM (the use of an indirect expression to soften an unpleasant or painful one), in which Orestes intimates, without going into specifics, that his situation is

difficult. Cf. 289n; Denniston, 1141n; Mastronarde 2002, 889n, 1011n. For the rhetorical figure, see Johnstone. **παθόν**: δεινὰ πάσχειν serves as a pass. of δεινὰ ποιεῖν, cf. 682. Smyth 1593.

86–7 πανώλεθρος μήτηρ: in contrast to Aeschylus, Euripides does not depict Clytemnestra as the only or even as the main culprit responsible for the evils of the household. The Farmer tells us that she took part in the murder, but protected her children from the same end (28–30). Orestes attributes his suffering and his father’s murder first to Aegisthus (85–6) and mentions Clytemnestra’s role only afterward, although the enjambment of the word *mother* at the start of line 87 sounds a note of bitterness. His use of the pl. φονεῦσι (89), *murderers* and τυράννους (93), *rulers* seems rather to deflect attention from his mother, than imply that he sees both his mother and Aegisthus implicated equally in the murder. Unlike Electra, who hates Clytemnestra unreservedly, Orestes never forgets that she is his mother and he is tormented by the thought of having to kill her. See “Discussions.”

87 ἐκ θεοῦ μυστηρίων: from the Delphic oracle, here called “the god’s sacred rites/mysteries” (usually called χρηστήριον). Euripides relies on the audience’s knowledge of the legend, which has it that Orestes consulted Apollo’s oracle at Delphi about avenging Agamemnon’s murder. See “Discussions.”

87–8 ἀφίγμαι δ’ . . . Ἀργεῖον οὐδας: only in Euripides’ version does the action take place away from the palace. Orestes gets to the border and no further. As a matricide he will never set foot on the streets of his native city (1250–1). Recovering his patrimony, a goal of every Orestes, is out of the question in Euripides’ version. **ξυνειδότης**: wary of being recognized, Orestes makes sure to arrive in Argos unseen and incognito. Ironically, though, it is his recognition by an old servant of Agamemnon that saves him from being killed after he murders Aegisthus (852–3). For Sophocles’ Orestes, hiding his identity is a premeditated action fulfilling the oracle’s injunction to avenge his father’s murder by the use of cunning (δόλοισι *El.* 37; Macleod, esp. 33–8, 157–9). Euripides’ Orestes, in contrast, hides his identity out of fear. Electra, from whom he keeps his identity hidden for some time, implicitly defines his behavior as cowardly when she tells the Old Man that her “courageous brother” would not steal into Argos furtively (524–6).

89 φόνον φονεῦσι: *polyptoton*, see 39n. In this tragedy, Orestes is more prone than any of the other characters to indulge in wordplay. See 94 βαίνω

πόδα vs. ἐκβάλω πόδα (96); 389 σθENAρὸς ἀσθENOῦς; 391 ὅ τε παρὼν ὅ τ' οὐ παρὼν; 394 δμῶες, δόμων; 398 εὐτυχοῦντας . . . εὐτυχῶν; 584 τᾶδικ' . . . δίκης; 985–6 δεινοῦ . . . δεινὰ. See also the assonance in οὔδας οὐδενοῦς (88), χωρεῖν χρεών (393). A similar abundance of rhetorical figures is characteristic of personae whom Euripides presents as sophistic, insincere, or manipulative. See, for example, Admetus' stylistic predilections in *Alc.* (Luschnig and Roisman, esp. 334–5n, 343–6n, 1008–35n, pp. 209, 211–13, 220).

90 νυκτὸς τησδε: “this last night.” We meet Orestes and Pylades at dawn after their sacrifice at the tomb. Cf. *S. El.* 644, where Clytemnestra recounts the vision she saw the previous night: νυκτὶ τηῖδε. The reason for the nocturnal sacrifice is given in 93, where Orestes says that he was **λαθὼν τυράννους**, *hiding from those who rule the land*. Since we are not told what Orestes heard at Delphi, we do not know whether they made the sacrifice on Orestes' initiative, which would cast him as a pious young man, or, as in *S. El.* 51–3, at the direction of Apollo. The sacrifice is corroborated later by the Old Man (513–15). On Orestes' libations: see “Discussions.” **πρὸς τάφον:** in *A. Cho.*, Agamemnon's grave is central to the action. It is where Orestes and Electra meet, and it assumes symbolic powers in their prayer for justice. Here it is sidelined and thus further removes Agamemnon from the act of vengeance. The grave is outside the city walls; the Old Man passes it on his way from the hills to Electra's cottage (509–19). It is also mentioned at 288–9, 323–31, but becomes relevant to the plot only in the dialogue between the Old Man and Electra that prepares for the recognition scene.

91 ἀπηρξάμην: ἀπάρχεσθαι *to make a beginning*, esp. in sacrifice; also used for giving the first-fruits. With the gen., κόμης, it means to start a sacrifice by offering a lock of one's hair. This lock of hair will play a part in the recognition scene later on (515–23). In many stories about heroes, initial offerings of hair were made at funerals or tombs: for Agamemnon, here and at *A. Cho.* 6–7; *S. El.* 448–51, 900–4. Cf. *E. Phoen.* 1524–5; *Or.* 96, 113, 128–9. On Orestes' hair-offering, see Blumenthal 135; in general, see Burkert 1985, 70.

92 “Over the altar I have shed the blood of a slain sheep.” The double reference to slaughter (ἐπέσφαξα, φόνου) creates some awkwardness. It was not unusual, however, to use αἶμα as an internal acc. object with this verb, see 281; cf. *Sthen.* frg. 661.17 Kannicht *TrGF* vol. 5.2: αἶμ' ἐπισφάξας νέον; Arist. *Col.* 796a15: αἵματος ἄρτίως ἐπεσφαγμένου. The idea of the

internal object is already implied in the verb, which literally means *slaughter over/upon* (Smyth 1554).

πυρᾶ: instead of βωμός. The altar is called πυρᾶ either because burnt offerings were frequently made on it, or because it was erected on the spot where the dead person was cremated. **μηλείου:** this attributive adjective is equivalent to a possessive gen. noun τοῦ μήλου, cf. 456–7, 741–2; K-G 1. 261–3. Animals offered to the Olympian gods were white, those offered to the dead black. The throats of the animals offered to the dead were cut from underneath, so that the blood drained through a trench down to the earth, after which their corpses were burned on the altar. From Homer onward, the assumption was that the dead feasted on the blood and gained strength from it (cf. *Od.* 11.35–50, 95–9, 152–4, 228–34).

94 τειχέων: the ending of open or uncontracted forms can count either as two syllables, as here and in 101, or as one by synizesis (383n), as in 615. **οὐ βαίνω πόδα:** “I do not set foot/take a step.” Euripides seems fond of this idiom: he uses it again in 1173. In both cases one can see πόδα as either redundant, since the idea of walking is already clear in the verb (see Jebb 1900 on *OC* 113), or as an internal acc., because the kindred idea of the object is already implied in the verb (Smyth 1554). Dale (1961 on *Alc.* 1153) takes the phrase as an extension of βαίνω βάσιν “take a step / walk.” Cf. *HF* 802: ἐκβὰς πόδα “having dismounted / taken a step down.” See Parker 2007 on *Alc.* 869, 1153.

94–101 Orestes has no qualms about the precautions he takes to avoid being recognized, unabashedly admitting that he will not set foot in the city (where the royal court is, along with the royal guard) and that he is sticking close to the border so that he can easily escape if he is identified. His addition of a second motive for choosing to stay in the countryside—that this is where he has heard his sister lives—does not dispel the impression that he is a timorous youth. His furtive entry enables him to test whether he is recognizable before proceeding further, while his sentence structure, with the purpose clause preceding the protasis of the conditional (which lacks an apodosis), might lead the audience to infer that he is anxious about the upcoming deed. Both Aeschylus’ and Sophocles’ Orestes enter the city without trepidation. See “Discussions.”

95–7 δυοῖν δ’ ἄμιλλαν ξυντιθεῖς: “reconciling the struggle with / my eager desire for these two things.” The choice of the word ἄμιλλα, which literally means *struggle*, indicates that Orestes does not regard his two reasons

for keeping close to the border—to be able to escape if he is recognized and to find his sister, who is said to live there—as complementary. This may be because if he has to escape he will not be able to look for Electra, and/or because of the danger that his identity will be revealed as he looks for her (someone he asks might guess who he is or tell someone who can guess), which will make escape necessary and jeopardize his revenge. In addition, he will have to disclose his identity to Electra in order to make her an accomplice in his revenge, as he hopes to do (100–1), which may also jeopardize his ability to carry it out. The renditions of this statement by Vermeule (“double purpose”) and Cropp (“joint purpose”) blur the inconsistency of Orestes’ two aims, as well as the inner struggle that is suggested by his choice of the word ἄμιλλα here. ἵν’ ἐκβάλω ποδί: if we retain ποδί, ἐκβάλω must be intransitive: *depart*, which is a rare use of this verb; see LSJ. πόδα is an emendation of the ms reading ποδί, which would mean lit. “so that I thrust my foot out.” εἴ μέ τις γνοίη σκοπῶν: σκοπῶν can be understood as either a pres. participle (Cropp) “should someone spot and recognize me,” or a gen. pl. (Denniston), “should one of the lookouts/guards recognize me.” In either case, Orestes seems overly concerned with a highly unlikely event, since he was exiled as a boy of about ten years old (cf. 573–4n), before his stature or features would have borne much resemblance to those he bears as a young man. The only possibilities of recognition would be the scar on his eyebrow that he acquired while still in his father’s house (573–4) or a general resemblance to his father. Yet, though the Old Man and an elderly servant in Aegisthus’ entourage (852–3) recognize him, neither Electra nor Aegisthus does. Cf. 88n. Denniston’s interpretation makes Orestes suppose that there are guards or patrols along the borders (cf. 546 which, however, seems to be corrupt and is daggered by Diggle).

98–100 Orestes wants Electra to collaborate with him in murdering their mother (cf. 274–82), and he hopes she can give him information about the rulers. He makes no mention of how she will recognize him or he her.

98–9 φασὶ . . . μένειν: “they say she dwells yoked in wedlock and is no longer a virgin.” A certain redundancy is characteristic of tragic language, but the statement that Electra is no longer a virgin is also functional. It shows the difference between what Orestes believes and what the outer audience, who have heard the Farmer say that he has not taken her virginity (32–46), know; and it prepares for his surprise when he learns the truth

(255–6). It also highlights how anomalous Electra’s situation is, both in her forced marriage to a working man and in the matricide in which she will soon participate. On the subject of virginity, see 44n.

100–1 ὥς . . . μάθω: “so that I may meet her, and having taken her as an accomplice in murder, at least learn clearly what is happening in the city.” Kells (1966, 51) is correct in pointing out that one would have expected Orestes to use the word *πόνου* *toil*, rather than *φόνου*, *murder*, which “is too specific, too strong for the occasion,” while *πόνος* is general enough to include both the murder and Electra’s informing him of what is going on inside the city walls. Orestes may however be using *φόνος* in a general way to refer to everything that has to be done to commit the murder. His mention of the murder for the second time in this not very long speech may indicate his preoccupation, and his use of the particle *γε* may suggest that he is not all that certain that Electra will join him in his revenge. It gives his speech a hesitant quality (*GP* 140–4).

The passage of knowledge is a minor but constant theme in the play. Paradoxically, Orestes has come to the border in order to learn what is going on inside the walls. Electra knows little more than what the Farmer has already told us and a few additional, perhaps half-forgotten details from the past. It takes outsiders to tell us what is current.

102–6 As day begins to break, Orestes proposes leaving the main road, which he and Pylades must have taken from Agamemnon’s tomb, to watch for a farmer or serving woman to query about Electra. His assumption seems to be that he will find such people on their way to work in the fields. Leaving the highway may also have had the advantage of making it less likely that he would meet someone who knew the royal family and would report the arrival of a stranger.

102 The ms has *ἔως* (often printed as *Ἔως*, *Dawn* personified), “Dawn is lifting up her white face,” taking *ἀναίρεται* as *mid*. A suggested emendation reads: *ἔω γὰρ λευκὸν ὄμμι*: *ἔω* is *gen.* of *ἔως*. The term “white face” seems to refer to the first gray-white light of dawn before the rays of the sun emerge. Contrast with Homer’s “rosy-fingered dawn.”

103 *ἔξω τρίβου . . . ἀλλαξώμεθα*: “Let us move out of the high road.” Cf. *ἀλλάσσειν πόδα*, *to walk, to go*.

105 ἥντιν’: the compound relative pronoun ὅστις *whoever* can denote a person or thing in general, but also mark the class, character, quality or capacity of a person: “some serving woman of whom we shall inquire whether. . .” (Smyth 2496). The use of the fem., instead of the more inclusive generic masc. (ὄντιν’ to agree in gender with ἄποτήρ), prepares for the encounter with Electra.

107–9 πρόσπολόν . . . φέρουσιν: the emphasis on the fact that Electra is seen as a servant carrying water is achieved by the unusually long hyperbaton (cf. 16–17n. See also Kells 1961, 1962, 1973, 13–14) enhanced by the integral enjambment of φέρουσιν (cf. 13n). Unlike Aeschylus’ Electra, who brings a lustral offering onstage in *Cho.*, Euripides’ Electra brings a water jug (Luschnig 1995, 89–91, Easterling 1997, 168–9). This changes the character from one shown performing a religious act out of respect for the dead to one shown doing menial labor. Electra reenters from the right, where she and the Farmer had exited after line 81.

109 ἐξώμεσθα: *let’s sit down* (a stage direction). Orestes urges Pylades to take cover close to the house (on “hiding-scenes” see Taplin 334–6), but it is not clear whether behind bushes, behind an altar, or close to the stage building (see also 216–17n). Their crouching makes them look rather undignified, all the more so because it is provoked by the appearance of Electra, whom Orestes does not recognize and wants to question about his sister’s whereabouts (104–5). The situation borders on the comic. In Aristoph. *Thesm.* 36, Euripides, as a character in the comedy, urges Mnesilochus: ἀλλ’ ἐκποδὼν πτήζωμεν “but let us crouch down” to hide from Agathon’s slave. The first known example of the dramatic convention in which a character hides in order to observe unnoticed the activity of another character occurs in A. *Cho.* 20–1, where Orestes urges Pylades: σταθώμεν ἐκποδὼν “let us stand apart,” so that he can learn the identity of the approaching band of suppliant women, among whom, unbeknownst to him, is Electra; cf. S. *OC* 111–16.

109–10 κάκπυθώμεθα δούλης γυναικός: could this be a metatheatrical moment? Other plays may not be part of the characters’ universe, but they are part of the audience’s and of course the playwright’s. In Aeschylus’ version Orestes had expected that his sister would be among the women entering from the palace. By implying that he expects to learn something from this woman, he sets up the next scene, but does not do the expected thing, which is to reveal his identity to her once he knows who she is.

109–11 **κάκπυθώμεθα . . . χθόνα:** apparently Orestes wants to learn ἐφ’ οἷσι, “about the business he came for,” but does not consider how he will do this without disclosing his own identity. Even though Electra soon reveals who she is in a song, Orestes at first sight would have had no reason for expecting her to do this. On the other hand he may hear her song as he sees her approaching in the new light.

112–66 ELECTRA’S MONODY

Electra’s monody comes as the last scene in the prologue and is the play’s first song. In its combination of grief, rage, and defiance, it picks up the emotions Electra briefly expressed in her apostrophe to Night (54–63), but raises them to a fevered pitch through its lyric meters. Electra’s impassioned voice contrasts with both the moderate reasonableness of the Farmer and the cautious deliberateness of Orestes. The monody is almost entirely a personal lament for her murdered father. In lines 125 and 141, she refers to it as a γόος. Literally, γόος means wailing or screaming and refers to the principal act accompanying the *prothesis* (lying-in-state), the part of the funeral ritual right after the death when the corpse was put on a bier in the house or courtyard. It also refers to personal lament in general. While the emotionalism of her tone is appropriate to both meanings of the word, it heightens the impression she conveys of being absorbed in her misery and preoccupied with her father’s murder and its consequences for Orestes and herself.

This aeolic monody consists of two strophic pairs. Electra sings and dances the first pair carrying on her head the water jug she had filled at the spring (see “Discussions” and 107–9n). Each strophe and antistrophe is separated by a mesode consisting of a self-exhortation to proceed with the lamentation. The mesodes were probably sung without accompanying movement.

Euripides was famous for his monodies, which were parodied by Aristoph. (*Frogs* 1330–63) (this monody does not have any of the parodied features). Not all of his extant tragedies have a monody, but some have two or more (*Ion*, *Hec.*, *TW*, and *Phoen.*). Typically the singer of a monody tries to elicit the audience’s pity and compassion for herself or himself, as does Electra. (See Barlow, 43–5, 54–5; W. Barner in Jens, 277–320; and H. Popp in Jens, 268–70.)

Electra’s monody directly precedes the PARODOS, the first choral ode. Placing an emotionally charged song before the choral ode seems to be largely a Euripidean practice, found also in his *Hecuba*, *Trojan Women*, and *Ion*. From the limited evidence of the extant tragedies, it appears that

Aeschylus does not do this at all, and Sophocles uses this arrangement only in his *Electra*. Of the Euripidean monodies that precede the entrance of the chorus, only this one is strophic and entirely in lyric meters.

Her solo song blends with the parodos, encroaching, it is sometimes said, on the part of the Chorus. Every morning Electra sings these lamentations. After herself, she mourns her father and then her brother, the wanderer (or the slave, depending on the reading of 131). She removes the pot from her head so she can keen for her father: such mourning requires gestures as well as words and cries. Though she begins with her own sufferings, sadness for her father is prominent in the second part of the song. Paley calls her monody “an artless and natural expression of her feelings” (321).

On long -α- for -η- in tragic lyrics, see appendix on grammatical and rhetorical constructions.

Meter 112–66

Aeolic meter does not run on any regular metron-scheme, as iambic trimeter, to take only one example, does. But in every aeolic line there is an essential nucleus, consisting of a *choriamb* – $\sim\sim$ –, which is sometimes expanded by a succession of choriambes or a dactylic series. The nucleus can also be preceded by short and/or long syllables and/or followed by long and short syllables.

Both stanzas open with heavy spondaic anapests that accord with Electra’s labored and arduous walk with the jar of water on her head. The second mesode is much longer than the first, with a complex image that extends through the first two verses of the second antistrophe. The large number of short syllables in the two mesodes conveys Electra’s intense emotional excitement, while the very limited variation in their meters lends an urgent, compulsive quality to her lamentation. The two introductory lines of the second strophe and antistrophe are dactylic, the meter of epic. This sharp departure from the meter of the mesodes produces a slowdown in Electra’s speech (which may have given the impression of some abatement in her excitement) before it resumes the aeolic pattern.

There is close correspondence in content between the first strophe and antistrophe. In 112–14~127–9 Electra encourages herself to keep walking even while lamenting; in 115–19~130–4 she gives details of her own and then of Orestes’ past. In 120–1~135–6 she mentions her toils; and in 122–4~137–9 she mentions her father Agamemnon. For an analysis of the meter (with some emendations of the ms), see Denniston, 213–16; Dale 1969, 3; 1981, 91–2, 95. See appendix for detailed metrical analysis.

112–13 ~ 127–8 **σύντειν**: σύντονος (nominal form of συντείνω) is used for vigorous movement and of a forced march. “Quicken (it is time), your urgent step. March on, march on in lamentation.” It is generally accepted that these and the other imperatives in the monody (125–6, 140, 150), with the possible exception of the **θέξ** in 140, are self-exhortations, since Orestes sees only a single servant woman come on stage (104). None of the other imperatives in this play, which abounds in commands (73 imperatives, 6 first-person exhortatives 103, 109, 219, 787, 872, and two second-person prohibitions 220, 983), is directed in this way toward the speaker. Euripides also uses the device of self-exhortation in Hecuba’s monody in *TW*. Here, Electra’s self-exhortations can be seen as a transference from the structure of the formal lament, in which professional mourners (“leaders of the dirge,” θρήνων ἑξαρχοι, *H. II.* 23.721) led, and the female relatives responded. Electra can be seen acting out both roles—as an *exarchos* who leads herself in her own lament. See further 140n. In addition, her self-exhortations may be seen as an angry and defiant flaunting of her demeaned status. **ἔμβα, ἔμβα**: ANADIPLOSIS, emotional or rhetorical repetition of one or more words (Smyth 3009). For Euripides’ use of anadiplosis, see Breitenbach, 214–21. For other occurrences see 137, 169, 485, 585, 594, 726, 1149, 1185, 1201.

115–16 **ἐγενόμαν . . . ἔτικτε**: “I am the daughter of Agamemnon by descent, and Clytemnestra bore me (and is my mother).” Instead of the impf., one would expect the aor. ἔτεκεν (L) here, which would indicate the bare fact of giving birth. Barrett 1966, 419–21n, suggests that the impf. might also point to the outcome of giving birth. We should understand then that Electra points not only to the fact that Clytemnestra gave birth to her, but also to their relationship as mother and daughter. Cf. 1184, 1212. **κούρα**, found in the ms (L) after Ἀγαμέμνονος, is probably a gloss, added to make Electra’s status as Agamemnon’s daughter more explicit. Cf. the insertion of πατέρων or τοκέων after ὃ γενέθλα γενναίων in *S. El.* 129.

118–19 **κικλήσκουσι δέ μ’ ἄθλίαν / Ἠλέκτραν πολιῆται**: “the people/our townsfolk/ the citizens call me wretched Electra.” Electra acts as if the audience have not yet heard of her and need a formal introduction. She uses ἄθλία as a fixed epithet of herself (cf. 366) as τλήμων (850) is for Orestes in *E. Orestes*. Her tendency to accentuate her misery is also suggested in her insistence on burdening herself unnecessarily with chores (64–76) and in her refusal to participate in the festival to Hera under the excuse that she does

not have the right clothing and grooming (175–89), an excuse that the Chorus quickly dismisses (190–2). See also 311n. Barlow, 55; contra: Lloyd, 6–7.

The first stanza of her monody is a self-definition, her memoir as it were, and perhaps in our age of memoir-writing she will seem less morbidly self-absorbed than she did to readers and critics of the last century. In these lines she breaks down the distinction between how she is and how she is seen. Ironically, out in the country, far from the sight of the citizens, her posturing would go unseen but for the eyes of the theater-goers. In each of the first two stanzas she manages to center herself: here as the object of the citizens' apt appellative ἄθλίαν, though now out of their sight in the country. In the next stanza she has been left in her father's halls, but as the word order shows, actually left outside: οἰκτρὰν . . . ἀδελφάν surround the words for father's chambers (132–4).

122–4 ὦ πάτερ . . . Ἀγάμεμνον: the lengthy hyperbaton (see 16–17n) emphasizes the name Agamemnon, mentioned here for the second time in ten lines (cf. 115).

123 σφαγαῖς: this emendation is preferable to σφαγεῖς in the mss., which would entail an anomalous gen. of agent (ἀλόχου). The pl., “by the slaughters done by your wife and Aegisthus,” emphasizes the enormity of the murder.

124 Αἰγίσθου τ', Ἀγάμεμνον: in Aeschylus' treatment, Clytemnestra murdered Agamemnon by herself. Euripides and Sophocles have her share responsibility with Aegisthus. Placing the two names in a single verse highlights the contrast between the two men: the one Electra hates, and the other she loves.

125 ἔγειρε γόον: Electra bids herself start a *goos*. Technically, this refers to the main part of the first segment of the funeral ritual, or *prothesis* (lying-in-state). Traditionally, the *goos* was the province of the female family members, who were free to choose their words as they pleased, and generally focused on the common experiences the mourner shared with the deceased, and on the bitterness of the loss. Up to the early sixth century, women tore their hair and cheeks during the *prothesis*, when the *goos* was performed, and men beat their heads. Proscription of lacerating the flesh during this part of the funeral, in order to temper its emotional display, as well as limiting participants to family members, is attributed to Solon. The

corollary of the *goos*, the *thrēnos*, was a formal dirge, sung by professional mourners. In the vocabulary of tragedy, however, and especially in Euripides, the distinction between the two is not always maintained. Plutarch, *Solon* 21.4; Ps.-Dem. 43.62; Alexiou 5–6, 11–14, 102–3, 182–4, 225, n.6; Garland 2001, 29–30. γόος is also an onomatopoetic word for wailing or the sounds and signs of grief (see line 59). In A. *Cho.*, Electra sings of pouring forth πολύδακρυν γόον while hidden in her chambers (449). The word is prominent in *Cho.*: 321, 330, 449, 502; at *Cho.* 330 the γόος is called “just” and is said to search—search for the dead? Electra’s γόος here is less effective, but it does bring Orestes out of hiding and identify Electra to him. Her prayer that he come (135) is to be answered—in fact is already answered—but first the Chorus comes on to try to distract her from her interminable grief and then Orestes appears, but reveals himself as a stranger and as only a friend of her brother. He tries to be an anonymous functional character (a herald, a guest) which is what he always has to be in his encounters with Aegisthus. Here he extends this role even to his sister.

126 πολύδακρυν ἄδονάν: the pleasure of tears is common in Homer and tragedy. See for example, H. *Il.* 23.97–8; *Od.* 19. 213, 251.

130–3 τίνα πόλιν . . . ἀλατεύεις: “You live a vagrant life in what city, in what household?” Orestes is defined by his wandering and exile (139, 203–5, 1113); this makes ἀλατεύεις a convincing emendation of L’s λατρεύεις, *you are a slave*. An exile is an alien in any community he lives in (J. Roisman 1981, *passim*). On “wandering” as “exile” see Denniston, 202–4n. τίνα . . . τίνα δ’: ANAPHORA, repetition of a word or group of words at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses, or verses. For δέ in anaphora, see *GP* 163–4. Electra is not opposing city and household, but moving from general to specific as she considers where Orestes might be. Given the fact that the Farmer knows (and therefore she doubtless does, too) that Orestes was taken to Strophius in Phocis (18), her question might be read either as rhetorical, referring more to the nature of exile than to Orestes’ particular plight, or as suggesting that she suspects Orestes has left Strophius’ household and is wandering elsewhere. οἰκτρὰν . . . λιπὸν . . . ἀδελφάν: Orestes had not literally “left” Electra, but was whisked away by his father’s old *paedagogus* to save his life. The long hyperbaton (see 16–17n), in addition to the superlative ἀλγίσταισιν, emphasizes Electra’s misery.

137 ὦ Ζεῦ Ζεῦ: before the matricide, Zeus is called on only here and at 671 (which is part of a pale and highly abridged version of the long, frightening

kommos in *Cho.*). The gods are not much on anyone's lips in this play. The presence of Orestes, crouching behind whatever scenic element is in the orchestra (109), must add to the audience's enjoyment of this prayer. His failure to identify himself must become more and more irksome or dismaying.

137–8 αἱμάτων ἐχθίστων or αἰσχίστων: the emendation αἰσχίστων for L's reading ἐχθίστων also makes sense in the context of calling for an avenger (to counter the shame of the murder). The pl. emphasizes the horror of the murder (cf. 123, 1172). The reference is not merely to Agamemnon's black-clotted blood as in 318–20, but to bloodshed. Agamemnon's murder is brought up repeatedly: by the Farmer (9, 42) Orestes (86), and especially Electra, who refers to it using a variety of words and phrases: 123, 154, 158, 160, 162, 164–5, 200, 301.

139 ἀλάταν: the noun is sometimes used adjectivally, as here “wandering/wanderer's step.” Cf. 167n. K-G 1.271–3.

140 Electra may be imagined to have reached her starting place in front of the hovel (*skēnē*) and the centering of herself is complete. In this stanza she stands alone before the audience and describes in detail what she is doing. **θές:** Electra needs both hands free to enact the gestures of lamentation, clawing at her neck and beating her head, that she mentions in 146–50. Scholars disagree, however, about whether she actually addresses this imperative to a slave who has come out of the house (e.g., Schadewaldt, 215n3; Denniston, 112–13n; Cropp, 140n) or to herself (e.g., the scholiast quoted below; more recently: Luschnig 1995, 115n76; Rehm 2002, 369n91). Denniston focuses on the possessive ἐμῆς, claiming that Electra's statement “Put down this pot from *my* head” would sound awkward if it were addressed to herself. It is true that talking to a slave sounds more natural, and there is nothing to preclude a slave coming out of the house to help. It might be the same attendant who comes to take the basket of food from the Old Man (500), if there is such an attendant. See also 112–13n. If she is talking to herself, then only she and Hecuba in *Trojan Women* perform their pre-choral monody in complete solitude. But people in distress talking to themselves often confuse their pronouns. For the pronouns a tragic actor uses in talking to herself, see Medea's last speech before killing her children (1240–50), where she addresses various body parts for heroic and dramatic effect. In *Med.* 1056–8 there is a similar confusion of pronouns that parallels the protagonist's state of mind. Electra's more quotidian situation does not call for

a direct address to her hand: “Take, oh hand of mine, this jug from my head” would sound overblown. We need also to consider the action itself as it would be done by an actor. Electra is holding the *hydria* on her head. Why would she need someone else to take it off her head? If a servant is accompanying her to the stream, would she not also be carrying a water jug? It would be carrying her self-pity and obsession with showing off Aegisthus’ outrage to an almost comic extreme if Electra was portrayed having a slave go with her only for the purpose of lifting the jug onto her mistress’ head and off again once they reached home. The scholion *ad* 140 reads πρὸς ἑαυτὴν τοῦτο φησὶ ἢ ἡλέκτρα ἀφελούσα/ἀφελῶς, “Electra says this to herself after taking it off/artlessly” (Keene 432).

141 γόους νυχίους: another reminder (54, 78) that the play began in the dark and that Electra gets up before daybreak. Electra does not miss mentioning anything that may augment the impression of her misery: Denniston (141–2n) suggests that the early dawn is the only time that Electra can wail aloud. Electra’s references to night link her laments to her brother’s nocturnal sacrifice on their father’s tomb. But see 145n.

142 ἐπορθοβοάσω: although this verb is found nowhere else in surviving ancient Greek texts, it is a compound of standard form, *to raise a high cry*. The emendation ἐπορθρεύσω (Dindorf) *sing in the twilight*, although semantically plausible, is from a verb that we do not find in texts preceding the first century C.E.

143–4 ἱαχάν ἀοιδὰν μέλος / Ἀΐδα: in this sequence of asyndetic nouns, Electra offers a *shriek* and a *song* and a *chant* of Hades to her father. Without any grammatical subject, verb, or connectives, the statement is highly compressed. When the terms have a similar sense, as they do here, the *ASYNDETON* (omission of conjunctions) tends to convey both pathos and vehemence (cf. E. *Hec.* 811; *Med.* 255, S. *Ph.* 1018; Mastronarde 2002, 92). These lines, however, do not correspond metrically to their parallel in 160–1. Since the syntax of 160 seems reliable, we should probably suspect that 143–4 are corrupt.

145 ἀεὶ τὸ κατ’ ἡμᾶρ: “continually day by day” creates the impression that Electra mourns not only at night, as she intimates in 141, but round the clock, as Sophocles’ Electra does.

146 **λείβομαι**: Wecklein's emendation of ms **διέπομαι**: [in which] *I am engaged*.

146–9 “Cutting with my nail(s) this neck of mine and beating my shorn head because of your death. Oh! Oh! Tear my head!” Electra acts out the ritualistic mourning at the *prothesis* (112–66n). These common signs of grief are known as early as the *Iliad* (19.284–5). Cf. A. *Cho.* 22–5; see detail of *prothesis* on the Dipylon Amphora (ca.750 B.C.E.) and on the Hirschfeld Krater (ca. 740 B.C.E.), Athens, National Archaeological Museum 804, 990 (Cook 6a, 6b). Reenacting this ritual years after a person's death, as Electra does, was not the norm, however, but rather a sign of obsession.

151 **κύκνος**: the swan was fabled in Greek lore for its song. See Aristotle *HA* 9.615b2, “They [swans] are musical, and sing chiefly at the approach of death; at this time they fly out to sea, and men, when sailing past the coast of Libya, have fallen in with many of them out at sea singing in mournful strains, and have actually seen some of them dying” (trans. by D’Arcy Thompson, *The Internet Classics Archive*: <http://classics.mit.edu/>). Electra's comparison of herself to a swan on a river is enhanced by the fact that she has just come from a stream where she fetched water. The swan's singing, whether in mourning or otherwise, was also often cited as particularly beautiful, cf. Alcman, 100–1, E. *Ion* 170. **ἄχέτας** (= Attic ἡχέτης) is used of the sound the cicada makes—a shrill droning—and in fact the male cicada is called ὁ ἄχέτας, *the chirper* [LSJ s.v.]. Perhaps it seems mournful because of the incessant droning. In films the song of the cicada is used, among other effects, to represent pathos. “Like a droning (or *mournful*) swan”: birds, and especially swans, were admired for their filial piety. The swan was thought to sing in mourning and even in sorrow for its own impending death. On the mourning of the swans, see A. *Ag.* 1444–5, Plato, *Phaedo* 84e–85a; on a chirpier note (*tio-tio-tio-tio-tio-tinx*), Aristoph., *Birds* 769–75. Agamemnon was snared by his wife, caught in deadly netlike cloths in A. *Ag.* (see also Prag for vase painting, esp. Pl. 3). Electra is suggesting that he was netted like a bird. There is no evidence that the Greeks snared swans as they did thrushes and doves (H. *Od.* 22. 468). On the myth of the singing of the swans, which in nature breed in Iceland and other northern haunts and only sing during breeding season, see Pollard: “Possibly the birds whooped in flight harmoniously, or more probably the Ancients were impressed by the whistling sound made by their wings” (144–5). See *Hymn to Apollo* 21.1: Φοῖβε, σὲ μὲν καὶ κύκνος ὑπὸ πτερύγων λίγ’ αἶδε. . . .

Phoebus, of you the swan sings clear from beneath/to the accompaniment of its wings. . . . ἄθλιον: Electra creates a parallel between her own suffering and her father's by using the same adjective in the same position in the metrical pattern to describe herself (118) and Agamemnon.

157 Finally, in the last stanza of the monody, Electra turns away from her own troubles—except for an obligatory *ἰώ μοι* or two—to concentrate on her father's death. *λουτρὰ πανύσταθ' ὕδρανάμενον*: Agamemnon's last bath: was the murder scene the bath or banquet? Washing the body was one of the funeral duties of women (Alexiou, 3; Garland 2001, 24), but Clytemnestra bathed her victim before killing him in the bath in A. Ag. 1107–35. In H. *Od.* 4. 534–5, 11. 410–11, and S. *El.* 203–7, 270, Agamemnon is killed at a banquet. Euripides follows Aeschylus (Ag. 1148–9). Sophocles chooses the more masculine and public setting.

159–61 The supplement < *ἰώ* > makes 159 correspond with 142. Line 161 does not match 143 metrically, as would be expected of the antistrophe. Diggle daggers ἐκ Τροίας ὁδίου βουλᾶς, the meaning of which is unclear: “the (bitter) planning of your return from Troy.” The question is to whose “planning” Electra refers. As Denniston (161–2n) points out, it is not likely to have been Agamemnon's, but must have been Clytemnestra's and Aegisthus' plan to murder the returning king.

160–1 *πικρᾶς μὲν πελέκεως τομᾶς σᾶς, πάτερ, πικρᾶς* and 164 *ξίφεσι δ' ἀμφιτόμοις*: “bitter, bitter ax blow”: was the weapon an ax or a sword? The ax is associated with Clytemnestra (at *Cho.* 889 she calls for one when she realizes Orestes has returned). In Homer, Agamemnon dies by the sword of Aegisthus (*Od.* 11. 424). What weapon Clytemnestra used is not so clear in Ag., but from *Cho.* 1011, one can conclude that she used Aegisthus' sword. In art Aegisthus is usually depicted wielding a sword; Clytemnestra sometimes is shown with a sword and sometimes with an ax. In Sophocles the instrument used by both Clytemnestra and Aegisthus is an ax (97–9, 193–6, 483), making the death more inhuman and unmanly. In Euripides, Clytemnestra uses an ax (160, 279, 1160; *Hec.* 1279; *TW* 361), but Aegisthus wields a sword (164). It is possible that we are to believe that Clytemnestra killed him with an ax and Aegisthus mutilated him with the sword: on the mutilation, see *Cho.* (439), S. *El.* (444–6), E. *El.* (165 *λόβαν*, *outrage*). The ax may also have been the weapon she used against Agamemnon in

Stesichorus' *Oresteia* (cf. *PMG* 219). **πικρᾶς . . . τομᾶς**: gen. of exclamation, often following an interjection, as here, gives the cause or origin of the expressed emotion. See Dale 1960, *E. Alc.* 832n, cf. *S. El.* 920: φεῦ τῆς ἀνοίας "Alas for thy folly!" (Jebb); Smyth 1407; K-G 2.388–9. **πελέκεως**: synizesis (-εως counts as one syllable, see 383n).

163–4 οὐ μίτραισι . . . ἐπὶ στεφάνοις: headbands and garlands were presented to and worn by victorious athletes and generals, cf. 880–2.

164 Since Euripides has just given an ax to Clytemnestra (160), the two-edged sword seems to belong to Aegisthus. The audience was aware of the mutilation of Agamemnon's corpse, as told in *A. Cho.* 439, to which the noun λῶβη must refer. Here the act is attributed to Aegisthus. See 9–10n. on this play's version of the story.

166 δόλιον ἔσχεν ἀκοίταν: cf. 40n where ἔσχεν *got in marriage* is used for the male. Electra elsewhere emphasizes Aegisthus' inferiority as a husband, especially when compared to her father: 916–17, 925–35, 1081–2; cf. *A. Cho.* 905. Cassandra, at *Ag.* 1258–9, calls Aegisthus a wolf who shares the bed of a lioness. By linking Clytemnestra's marriage to Agamemnon's murder, Electra also seems to be accusing her mother of murdering her father in order to marry Aegisthus.

167–212 The parodos (entrance song of the chorus) is shared with Electra. The Chorus enters the orchestra along one or both of the side entrances or *parodoi* and is made up of young country women, neighbors of Electra, who come already formed into a group with a purpose (unlike some choruses, such as that of *Med.*, who arrive separately, as if from different parts of the city, and form a group onstage). Most of the choral parts in tragedies are divided into strophes and matched antistrophes, in which the chorus dances equal measures; sometimes there is an extra part at the end (epode) or between matched pairs (mesode). This parodos is rather short, (having only one strophe-antistrophe set, both parts shared with Electra) perhaps because Electra has already sung a long solo. The Chorus' exchange with Electra seems to convey both sympathy for her plight and reservations about the extremity of her misery. Their invitation to her to participate in the festival of Hera and their offer to lend her their own clothing and jewelry, when she turns down the invitation on the grounds that she lacks the proper attire, extend the portrait of Electra's unalleviated misery, while their reminder that

the gods require worship, not tears alone, suggests a gentle reproach. While there is no question that the women of the Chorus are rural, it is not clear whether they are virgins or married women. Electra calls them γυναῖκες (215, 694); which can mean both *wives* and *women*, referring solely to gender without indicating marital status (cf. S. *Tr.* 225, 385, 663, 673, where maidens are termed γυναῖκες). The Messenger addresses both Electra and the Chorus as *young women* (παρθέναι, 761). On the other hand, Cropp (167–212n) suggests that their offer to lend Electra clothes and jewelry for the festive occasion better suits married women, and that they will join the procession of maidens (174) only as spectators. The Chorus' address to Electra as *child* (ὦ παῖ, 197) may also suggest that they are older married women, although in A. *Sept.* 686, the chorus of virgins (110, 171) addresses the ruler, Eteocles, as τέκνον, *child* (Hutchinson, 686n). The vagueness as to the Chorus' marital status and, by extension, their age may focus attention more independently on their message and interaction with Electra.

Meter 167–212

This is a lyric exchange between the Chorus and Electra in a strophic pair: 167–89 ~190–212. In both strophe and antistrophe, the Chorus addresses Electra and she sings her response. In the strophe, the Chorus invites Electra to participate in the festival of the Argive goddess Hera (167–74). Electra declines the invitation, giving as her reasons her grief, poor attire, and lack of interest in entertainment and finery (175–89). In the antistrophe, the Chorus stresses the futility of tears and the need for reverence and prayer (190–7). Electra parries summarily with the two-line statement that the gods do not care about her and her family, before returning to her contemplation of her murdered father, her exiled brother, and her own sorry state (198–212). Metrically, the parodos starts with a brief dactyl-based sequence, then continues with an aeolic pattern in a mix of choriambes, glyconics, and pherecrateans. Its aeolics recall the meter of the preceding monody. On occasion, the antistrophe departs from the syllabic pattern established in the strophe. Plutarch says (*Lys.* 15.3) that in 404 B.C.E. the Spartan and allied generals were dissuaded from razing Athens to the ground and enslaving the Athenians upon hearing this parodos sung at a banquet. Once they heard the song, “they were all moved and thought it was a merciless thing to destroy and ruin so famous a city that produced such poets.”

Strophe (167–189) 1. The Chorus brings news of and an invitation to festivities in honor of Hera. The *Heraia* was a major festival in Argos. The

procession they mention is for unmarried girls (174). 2. Electra has no desire to attend the festival. Her life is mourning. Her hair is dirty and she has nothing to wear. Her ambiguous status, neither girl nor wife, alienates her from both matrons and maids.

Antistrophe (190–212) The Chorus tries to persuade Electra by appealing to the gods' expectations of honor, but Electra feels she has been abandoned by the gods. Despite the fact that Electra is often criticized for putting herself first, her thoughts (at 205) are about her brother, whom she imagines living like herself in diminished circumstances. The comparison with her mother's luxury and adultery, excess in contrast to her own and her brother's loneliness and deprivation, is natural.

167 Ἀγαμέμνωνος ὃ κόρα . . . Ἠλέκτρα: the Chorus' address to Electra first as Agamemnon's daughter and then by name, echoes the sequence with which Electra had identified herself in her monody (115–20) before the Chorus entered the orchestra. ἀγρότειραν αὐλάν "rustic abode": ἀγρότειραν is a fem. noun (from ἀγροτήρ, *countryman*) used adjectivally, as is required by the meter, which the adjective ἀγρότερος (cf. 463) would not fit. For substantives ending in -τηρ and the formation of their fem., see K. I. ii. 270–1. For similar adjectival use of nouns, see θήσσαν ἐστίαν "hearth of hired laborers" (205, cf. E. *Alc.* 2), χερνήσι δόμοις "day laborer's cottage" (207).

169 The epistemological question, how we know things, is a theme in *Electra*. In the parodos, the Chorus explains how the story was passed, not so much—or at least not only—to account for how they got the information and thus verify its accuracy, as to show how in general the knowledge of remote things is passed from ear to ear. How do we know and how can we trust that what we know is true? ἔμολέ τις ἔμολεν: This kind of doubling or repetition (anadiplosis: see 112–13n) involves the repetition of one or several words for the purpose of emotional intensification. It is found more commonly in Euripides' later plays than in his earlier ones, and is ridiculed by Aristoph., *Frogs* 1329–63 (Dover, 1329–63n); see Mastronarde 2002, 111n. γαλακτοπότας ἀνὴρ: a milk-drinking man. Herodotus says of the Massagetae around the Caspian Sea (1.216): γαλακτοπόται δ' εἰσὶ ("and they are milk-drinkers") and of the nomadic Libyans (4.186) εἰσὶ κρεοφάγοι τε καὶ γαλακτοπόται Λίβυες ("they are meat-eaters and milk-drinkers"). Like the Cyclopes in the *Odyssey*, the mountain man (170, ὀρειβάτας) lives off his flocks and drinks no wine. In *Bacch.* grain and

grape (gifts of Demeter and Dionysus) are the symbols of civilization and life itself (272–85). This rugged individual bears little resemblance to the old slave of Agamemnon who, though exiled to the hills to tend sheep, when he comes onstage, brings not only meat and cheese but special wine and garlands for the feast (494–500). We are told that the informant is a γαλακτοπότας ἄνῃρ because milk-drinkers are less sophisticated and, therefore, perhaps more trustworthy.

170 Μυκηναῖος ὄρειβάτας: *a mountain walker*. Orestes' name means *mountain man*. Dindorf's emendation of P's οὐρειβάτας and L's ὄρειβάτας brings the line into metrical accord with 193.

171–2 τριταῖαν: *the day after tomorrow*, that is *the third day* including today. Adjectives in -αῖος indicate distance inclusively (K. I.i.624, Anm. 2), with the count starting from the current day, place, etc.

171–4 He announced that in Argos they are proclaiming a sacrifice the day after tomorrow; all the maidens will go in a procession to the temple of Hera.

173–4 παρ' Ἡραν μέλλουσιν παρθενικαὶ στείχειν: the festival of the Heraia Hecatombaia has remained famous because of Herodotus' story (1.31) of the priestess and her sons, Cleobis and Biton. Hera was associated with Argos, as Athena was with Athens (cf. E. *IT* 221–2, H. *Il.* 4.8, 50–2, 908, Pind. *N.* 10.2). The reference here is to the Ἡραῖα, a New Year's festival, known also as Ἑκατόμβαια, the hundred-oxen festival celebrated at her temple, the *Heraion*, situated on Mount Euboia, between Argos and Mycenae. It included a sacrificial procession from Argos to the shrine, with Hera's priestess driven to the temple in an oxcart (Hdt. 1.31). The Argive maidens presented Hera with a new robe, which they had woven for her; and ephebes (late adolescents or young men in their military training) competed in athletic contests. Since Hera was worshipped both as the maiden and as the wife, and was also the goddess of childbirth, married women must also have played a part in the festival. The celebrations probably included some ceremony of the sacred marriage, ἱερὸς γάμος, of Zeus and Hera. See Farnell Vol. 1, 213–19; Burkert 1983, 162–4; 1985, 131–5; Calame, 113–23; Avagianou, 43–5.

175–80 Participating in a festival entails fine clothes, jewelry, and dancing. Electra has no interest in those or, by implication, in the festival.

176–7 χρυσέοις ὄρμοις: women and goddesses used golden necklaces as instruments of erotic enticement (e.g., *H. Il.* 14.73–4). Electra, then, might be not only refusing religious entertainment but confirming her abstinence from sexual pleasure, too (Buxton, 36–7).

178 τάλαιν: Euripides uses the adjective τάλας remarkably fewer times than Sophocles in his *Electra*. Sophocles uses it twenty-one times in his play, out of which in ten cases Electra calls herself τάλαινα. There are only seven occurrences of the adjective in this play (178, 220, 419, 588, 1109, 1183, 1162), out of which Electra refers to herself as τάλαινα only twice. The less frequent reference to herself as *wretched* indicates the different dramatic strategy used in this play to point to Electra's self-pity. **ἰσῆσα χοροῦς:** ἴστημι can indicate both organizing and participating in a choral performance. The word choice suggests that Electra assumes that if she participates in the festival, she will not only have to be an integral part of the choral ensemble, but also take responsibility for setting up and leading it, as would be expected of a princess. According to Calame, 26–30, 58–74, 89, 258–9, the ensemble would have consisted entirely of Electra's age-mates.

179 Ἀργείαις ἅμα νόμφαις: “with Argive brides.” Electra now refers to the maidens she mentioned in 174 as brides. For the age of the female choruses, see Calame, 26–30. The festival to Hera celebrates her marriage to Zeus and adds to the theme of Electra's ambiguous marital status.

180 εἰλικτὸν κρούσω πόδ' ἐμόν: Greek dance, associated with religious festivals and celebrations, has a long history from prehistoric to modern times. The vocabulary here suggests a lively circular dance of a type that is still common in Greek folk dances. While lyric choruses generally danced in a circle, tragic ones grouped themselves in a rectangle. Calame, 34–8. Cf. *IT* 1145. For the foot stamping, cf. *HF* 1304, *IA* 1043.

181 μοι μέλει: keeping Agamemnon alive through her tears is Electra's occupation. Electra's emphasis on the tears she sheds night and day is not lost on the Chorus. See 193–5.

184–5 Electra's dirty hair and tattered clothing are not genuine impediments to her attending the festival, as both could be easily remedied. Her filthy state (cf. 305) has been attributed to Euripides' tendency to dress his heroes in rags to elicit pity (cf. Aristoph. *Acharn.* 410–35, *Frogs* 1061–7).

Electra's raggedness may also be part of her characterization, showing her clinging to her misery. The Old Man's reference to his ragged clothes in 501, however, does not seem to be aimed at evoking pity as much as his tears do.

186 *πρέποντ'* = *πρέποντά ἐστι* *are seemly, befit, are worthy of.*

188 *τῷ Τροίᾳ*. Troy has infected the life of everyone. As Faulkner said "the past is not dead, it is not even past." Electra must even be worthy of the city that no longer exists, so as not to demean its grandeur and destruction. Her claim that her dirty hair and torn clothing are unfit for the daughter of the conqueror of Troy reflects the view, common in Greek and Roman literature, that a sacked city is even further demeaned if the person who conquered it or his family is disgraced; for parallels, see Denniston 184–9n.

190 "Great is the goddess" suggests the importance that the Chorus attributes to the worship of Hera, protector of wives and childbirth.

191 On casual borrowing by women, see Aristoph. *Eccl.* 446–50. Had Electra wanted to attend the festivities and alleviate her misery, she could have taken up the Chorus' offer to lend her appropriate clothing and jewelry. It is of note that neither Electra nor the Chorus mentions her cropped hair: signaling either that she was a slave or in mourning, it would have disqualified her from joining in the festivities. The Chorus perhaps acknowledges that Electra's perpetual grieving goes beyond the customary length of mourning. *πολύπηνα φάρεα*: *having many threads > close-woven* (and therefore of high quality) or perhaps *of varied threads* (and therefore richly colored with embroidery).

192 *χάρισιν*: the Chorus suggests that she borrow golden accessories for the graceful finery. L's reading *χαρίσαι* "do me a favor [and accept] golden accessories of finery" or "golden ornaments to grace its beauty" is acceptable as well. Denniston (191–3n) points out that the copyists' insertion or omission of the -ν (*χάρισιν*) is unpredictable, and does not affect the meaning or meter in any way. Since the meter of the strophe and antistrophe must be identical, the removal here of the movable -ν requires its removal at 169, *ἔμολεν*.

193–7 The Chorus' admonition resembles cautions Sophocles' chorus gives against excessive grief (*S. El.* 137–44), but adds that the gods are

essential to Electra's future victory over her foes. While the Farmer had noted the importance of action over prayer (80–1), the Chorus notes the necessity of prayer for action to be effective.

198–200 Hyllus in *S. Tr.* 1264–74 also complains about the gods' apathy toward his suffering. In contrast to the Homeric epics, in which gods move freely among human beings, in tragedy the gods are distant and ethically removed. With few exceptions (such as Apollo in *Alc.*) they make themselves felt mainly by punishing transgressions and interfering in human lives.

198 οὐδείς θεῶν ἐνοπᾶς κλύει: Electra feels abandoned by the gods, who play, at best, an ambiguous part in this play, as in many others.

200–6 ἀλάτᾳ: although Denniston indicates that ἀλάτᾳ and ἀλαίνων 202–4n, may indicate exile rather than movement from place to place, ποτὶ θῆσσαν ἐστίαν “to the hearth of laborers” probably refers to movement, cf. 588–9. For the adjectival use of the noun, see 167n. τοῦ: in lyric verse the article retains something of its original demonstrative force: *that* (Smyth, 1099, 1104).

205 ποτὶ θῆσσαν ἐστίαν: see *E. Alc.* 1–2. In Athens, the *thetes* were the lowest class of free persons, *laborers*, *hired hands*. Cf. *H. Od.* 4.643–4 where they are in contrast to both well-born young men and the domestic slaves: κοῦροι . . . Ἰθάκης ἐξαίρετοι, ἦ ἐοὶ αὐτοῦ / θῆτῆς τε δμῶές τε; “Ithaca's chosen youth or his own hired hands and slaves?”

207 ἐν χερνῆσι δόμοις: “in a day-laborer's cottage.” For the adjectival use of the noun, see 167n, 205, and Denniston 443–4n.

209 φυγᾶς: banished from the palace in Argos to the remote mountains, Electra sees herself as an exile, little different from Orestes (cf. 1008–10). Cf. *A. Cho.* 132, 254, 337, where Electra refers to herself and Orestes as exiles even as she is living in her father's palace.

211 ἐν λέκτροις φονίοις. . . οἶκεῖ: can be read either “lying in a blood-stained bed” or “lives in murderous wedlock,” as Cropp has it. The difference seems to be in senses of λέκτροις *bed* or *marriage* and φονίοις *bloody* or *murderous*. φονίοις: Barnes' correction of L's φόνιος is necessary for agreement with λέκτροις.

213–431 FIRST EPISODE, in two parts: 213–340 Orestes, Electra; 341–431 Farmer, Orestes, Electra.

214 σῆς μητρὸς Ἑλένης σύγγονος: Why is Helen brought up here? Her name comes up again in the scene with Clytemnestra (1027, 1063, 1083) and in the exodos (1280, 1283) where she is exonerated. Throughout, her wantonness has been assumed even by her family (e.g., 1027). The ancient literature presents different views of Helen. The *Iliad* draws her as a lonely woman attached to the unworthy Paris (Roisman 2006); and Priam exculpates her with his statement that not she, but the gods are responsible for the Trojan War (3.164). Euripides himself exculpates her in his play *Helen*. Following the *Encomium of Helen* by the sophist and orator Gorgias, that play shows her marooned in Egypt throughout the Trojan War, trying to remain faithful to Menelaus, while the Greeks and the Trojans battle over her *eidōlon*, her *image* or *phantom*. In the *Odyssey*, on the other hand, Odysseus blames Helen for the evils of the war, and Clytemnestra for the murder of Agamemnon (11.436–9). For Helen’s guilt, see H. *Od.* 14.68–71; A. *Ag.* 1455–9; E. *Andr.* 248; *Hec.* 943–51; TW 1213–15; IT 439–46; *Or.* 130–1. At the end of these lines, Orestes and Pylades emerge from their hiding place, either behind Apollo’s altar or in the shadows of the house. Their slaves must be seen behind them.

215 ἐξέβην θρηνημάτων: “I must break off these laments.” The so-called “dramatic” aor. in the first person sg. is usually translated as the pres. tense. It is used with some frequency in the dialogues of both tragedy and comedy. Usually, it signifies the speaker’s current state of mind (Smyth 1937). Similarly see 248, 260, 275, 617, 622, 644. Here, by the time Electra utters these words, it is clear that she has stopped the lament in which she had been engaged.

216–17 ἐφεστίους εὐνὰς ἔχοντες: “who have been in hiding near my hearth,” i.e., near my home. ἐφεστίους has undergone various emendations for no good reason. Electra points to the men who are emerging from their hiding places near the cottage where she lives, for which the *hearth* is METONYMY (the substitution of a word for another that is closely associated with it). Since the stage device where they hid had to be large enough to hide not only Orestes and Pylades, but also at least two attendants, the words need not be taken to mean “at the altar and the hearth,” as Denniston and Diggle (*Studies* 1981, 33–4) claim. Diggle believes that the altar was next

to the statue of Apollo *aguius* (protector of the house-entrances). Denniston also assumes there was a statue of Apollo (221n). The assumption is based mainly on Electra's words in 221. However, there is no need to assume that she turns to the statue and invokes the god; she may exclaim as she does in 137 ("Zeus! Oh Zeus!"). Hammond (377) rightly points out that an altar and a statue would not be enough—even for the not-too-realistic Athenian stagecraft—to hide this rather large company of men. There must have been a larger stage prop to serve as an ambush: (cut) bushes, decrepit shed (as Hammond suggests), a rock, etc., or they might have hidden by the house in the shadows of early dawn.

218–9 Using the pl., Electra addresses the Chorus Leader, though she directs her words to the Chorus as a whole. Such alternation between sg. and pl. is common; see, for example 175–84. The lines raise the possibility that the Chorus will leave their place in the orchestra and flee down the *parodoi* (such an exit happens in *E. Alc.* and *Hel.*, though not so shortly after the chorus' arrival; they traditionally exit along these side passages only at the end of the play), and that Electra will leave the stage and enter the Farmer's cottage. None of this happens. Arnott (53–4) points out that Euripides toys with the audience by playing with the dramaturgical conventions of Greek tragedy. Another way of viewing Electra's suggestion is that its very departure from convention reinforces for the audience what they already know: that since the stranger is none other than Orestes, there is no cause for flight.

219 *φῶτας κακούργους*: does her assumption that these travelers are bandits say anything about her character? Or is it a natural surmise given the strangeness and abruptness of their appearance, coupled with the fact that they are armed. Her house is so remote that even the young women of the Chorus are more in the know than she. The lack of neighbors makes her calling on her mother's help later believable.

220–89 *STICHOMYTHIA*, a rapid exchange of one- or two-line utterances, is a common means of conveying emotional agitation in Greek tragedy. After her initial fright, Electra exchanges words with Orestes without knowing that he is her brother. Strictly speaking, she is acting outside the conventions that looked askance on women who were not chaperoned by a male relative talking to men who were not family members (see 343–4, and *E. Heracl.* 474–7, *Andr.* 876–8, and *Hec.* 974–5). Under the circumstances,

however, with her husband away and the supposed stranger bearing news of her brother, her conduct is understandable and largely condoned in the play. The exchange between Orestes, who knows Electra is his sister, and Electra, who does not know her interlocutor's true identity, is rife with dramatic irony, especially in lines 227ff: as her *kurios*, Orestes indeed has complete power over his sister.

This stichomythia contains 7 resolutions, with a low ratio of 1:10, in positions 1 (257), 2 (234), 4 (214, 279), 6 (242, 276), and 9 (234); see 3n.

221 ὦ Φοῖβ' Ἀπολλων: Apollo is prominent in all the Electra/Orestes dramas. Electra may be turning to the statue guarding her home. **προσπίτνω σε μὴ θανεῖν:** Electra is praying to Apollo as she tries to escape Orestes, but Orestes' answer in 222 indicates that he takes her plea to be addressed to him.

222 μᾶλλον: the adverb can be understood either with the verb: "I should rather kill," or as strengthening the comparative ἐχθίους, i.e., "I would rather kill persons who are much, much more hated than you are." Smyth 1084.

223 The two imperatives in this line are in different tenses but might not indicate two separate aspects. The pres. and aor. imperatives are to be found in close proximity at times and with no discernable difference in sense. If there is a difference in aspect it would usually result from the aspect of the verb rather than tense. See Donovan 1895, 145–9; 289–93; 342–6. **μὴ ψαῦ' ὦν σε μὴ ψάψειν χρεών:** Perhaps at line 222 Orestes reaches out his hand toward Electra to raise her from the supplicating position. It is clear from 224 that he continues to approach her. Women were secluded, though obviously a woman living on an isolated farm did not have to be accompanied at all times. For a decent man's reluctance to touch a woman not related to him, see the scene in E. *IA* where Clytemnestra accosts Achilles, believing that he is betrothed to her daughter (819–38).

225 καὶ πῶς ξιφήρης πρὸς δόμοις λοχῆς ἑμοῖς: The fact that he is armed does not increase Electra's confidence. See E. *Alc.* 39 where Death is suspicious of the armed Apollo. A man would not go wandering the roads unarmed. Orestes and Pylades would naturally carry their swords when they go to find Aegisthus. Thucydides reports that in ancient times the Greeks carried arms for self-protection (Thuc. 1.6.1). The practice is evident in the *Odyssey*, where Odysseus' palace had a special rack for guests to put their spears upon entering the house (1.126–9). Euripides' audience would have

regarded the Homeric period as the remote past and considered it fitting for Orestes to bring a sword along in his travels. However, Orestes is not simply bearing a weapon; he is apparently holding it in his hand. **καὶ πῶς**: indicates indignation (*GP* 309–11). Electra justifiably fails to understand how an armed man who has been lurking outside her house has the right to touch her.

226 οὐκ ἄλλως ἐρεῖς: “you will not say otherwise,” that is “you will agree with me;” referring to his claim in 224 that he had every right to touch Electra.

227 ἔστηκα: *I stand, I stay*. **πάντως δ’ εἰμὶ σή· κρείσσων γὰρ εἶ**: Electra gives in to the more powerful man, a stranger whom she quite naturally fears because of her isolation and his unorthodox approach (and who, for her, is *not* Orestes), because she has no choice.

228 Orestes misses his first opportunity to identify himself. He has already hinted at the closeness of their relationship in his evasive stichomythia at 222 and 224.

229 ὃ φίλτατ’ see also 345, 767, 1322. For all her supposed paranoia, Electra is free and open with her affections, often bestowing them on whoever appears as a substitute for her brother or father, i.e., the Farmer, the Old Man, and the Messenger, and finally directly on her brother. **ζῶντος ἢ τεθνηκότος**: the genitives continue the syntax of the previous line, as often happens in stichomythia.

232 νῶν ἀμφοῖν: *both of us*. Since Electra does not realize that the speaker is Orestes, Euripides is playing on the difference between her understanding of his words and the audience’s.

233 τλήμων τλήμονας: for *polyptoton*, see 39n, used here by Electra to express her concern for Orestes’ sufferings in exile. Cf. 203–4. ἔχων looks back to the subject of ζῆ in 230 as well as to τλήμων. See 229n.

234 νομίζων . . . νόμον: **FIGURA ETYMOLOGICA**: the use of several forms of the same root in close proximity, a device of which Greek is fond.

235 οὐ πον: *surely he is not . . . ?*, frequently appears “in incredulous or reluctant questions” in Euripides (*GP* 492).

236–7 ἔχει: ἔχω used absolutely (without an object) can be understood as “he has enough.” ἄσθενής: Euripides has Orestes describe himself to Electra using the same adjective the Farmer used in presenting himself to the audience (39). Electra will use the same adjective to refer to any children she might bear the Farmer (267) and to describe Orestes to the Farmer in 352. δὲ δὴ: Greek shows no inclination to avoid repeating particles (*GP*, lxii–iii). In both lines the repetition serves for emphasis: “but the rub is that an exile is helpless. Let’s get to the point, what is the *message* you bring from him?”

238 Elmsley’s emendation of ὅπου to ὅπως is appropriate. Orestes does not ask Electra *where* she is, but *how* she is; and this is the question Electra answers in the next line. Although Electra expects a message about Orestes, Orestes redirects her attention to her own condition.

239 οὔκουν: often introduces a question at the opening of an answer, and is characteristic of the lively and emotional style of tragedy: “Well, don’t you see. . .” *GP* 431: “Often the starting point [of the question] is, not what the previous speaker has said, but the fact that he has said it.” ξηρόν δέμας: “parched body.” Electra’s body would be *parched* by hard work, especially outside in the sun, by insufficient food, and by grief. Since female “dryness” may also allude to sexual inactivity, the term may also refer to her continued virginity. Women are associated with water in ancient Greek thought, men with fire (*Hipp. Mul.* 1.2; *Arist. Probl.* 4.25.879a33–34; cf. 4.28.88a12–20).

241 ἐσκυθισμένον ξυρῷ: *scalped with a razor* (like a victim of the Scythians). Herodotus 4.64.2–3 gives a description of the technique of scalping and several uses to which the Scythians allegedly put these gruesome remains of their dead enemies. For another compound of the verb see *E. TW* 1025–7 where Hecuba tells Helen: ἦν χρῆν ταπεινὴν ἐν πέπλων ἐρειπίοις, / φρίκη τρέμουσαν, κρᾶτ’ ἀπεσκυθισμένην / ἐλθεῖν . . . “You should have come with head bowed, in torn clothes, quivering in fear, with hair cut close . . .”

244 φεῦ φεῦ: Orestes utters exometric φεῦ after 261, 281, 366, and 968. It amounts almost to a gasp, whether of shock or admiration. τί δαὶ σὺ σφ κασιγνήτῳ, δοκεῖς: δαί is colloquial for δὴ in Attic and is used after interrogatives (*GP* and *LSJ*). Here it appears in its connective function, in a question motivated by what precedes (*GP* 262–3). In 243 Electra asks

what is dearer to her than her father and brother. Orestes answers: “Well, and what are *you* to *your brother*, do you think?” i.e., “Don’t you suppose your brother feels the same way?”

247 ἐγημάμεσθ', ὃ ξεῖνε, θανάσιμον γάμον: gratitude goes only so far. The marriage is social death to Electra and it leaves her utterly unfulfilled as a woman. Electra speaks here as a noblewoman to a nobleman; her statement does not necessarily detract from her appreciation of the Farmer’s kindness (67).

248 Μυκηναίων: implies nobility, see 35. For the time being, Orestes tactfully makes no mention of the low social status to which Electra has been demoted, which is harshly obvious from her poor clothing and the hovel in which she lives.

251 τηλορός: the characters’ views of the setting vary with their background and expectations. Coming from the palace, Electra and Clytemnestra see it as wilder, more remote and poorer than the Farmer does. See Roy, 104–10.

252 σκαφεύς τις ἢ βουφορβός: these would be descriptions of laborers who hired themselves out (and were, therefore, lower on the social scale) rather than of a landowner. Electra’s husband is called αὐτουργός [lit. self-working] *one who works for himself* or *one who works his own land*, as we have seen the Farmer preparing to do. Larger and richer estates were worked by slaves.

253 γενναῖος ἔς τ' ἔμ' εὐσεβής: Electra is loyal to her husband. Her admiration for him is sincere. See also 67–70, 257, 259, 261. Denniston points out that Euripides often places two antithetical adjectives together, with or without an accompanying noun, unseparated by an adversative particle. Cf. 394–5: πένης . . . πρόθυμος . . . ξένος, 1098–9: μικρὰ . . . σώφρονα λέχη.

254 σὺ πόσει: πόσις is used of the lawful spouse. It comes from the I-E root poti- *powerful*, related to Latin *potis*, *posse*, *potens*; Greek πότνια, δεσπότης *master of the house* (from the roots dems- *house, home* and pot-).

256 ἄγνευμ' ἔχων τι θεῖον: sex could taint a person’s purity. See Parker 1983, 147–51. Aegeus takes an oath of temporary sexual purity, E. *Med*.

678–81 (Mastronarde 2002); on abstinence from sex see E. *Hipp.* 10–14, 102, 1003–6, and Theseus’ charge of Orphism (953).

257 γονέας ὑβρίζειν τοὺς ἐμοὺς: it would be her family that would be shamed more than Electra herself, as in the case of honor killings in traditional societies that obsess over the sexuality of the women in the family. The wife was a symbol of the status of the parents.

259 κύριον: κύριος referred to the head of a household, which includes both family and servants (see also 23–4n). His authority covered all the women in the household. He was effectively their guardian, protector of their property and honor, and responsible for their betrothal and marriage. The κύριος was usually the father or, where there was no father, the brother. Once a woman married, her husband usually became her κύριος. Agamemnon was Electra’s κύριος and, after his murder, Orestes. See J. Roisman 2005, 26–34, 49.

260 Orestes seems to be well aware of his position as his sister’s κύριος.

261 In view of her description of her marriage as deadly in 247, Electra’s persistence in her opinion that the Farmer’s respect for her virginity is motivated by his natural goodness, more than by his fear of reprisal, is noteworthy.

265 Electra has limited experience of the world, but from it she has learned to be cynical about family relationships: women care more for their men than their children, a claim that contrasts with other claims in Greek tragedy, e.g., E. *Phoen.* 355–6, *IA* 917–18, *S. El.* 770–1. See also 227 where she accepts that the weak belong to the strong.

268 ὥς δῆθε παῖδας μὴ τέκοις ποινάτορας; For fear of heroes’ sons, cf. the murder of Astyanax in E. *TW* (713–25, esp. 723). δῆθε: this form of the particle δῆθεν is found only here. It conveys indignation and contempt for Aegisthus’ plan: “So that, I suppose, you may not have children who will take vengeance?” (*GP* 264–6).

272 αἶδ’ οὖν φίλαι: Orestes notices the women of the Chorus for the first time.

274 δῆτα: denotes a question arising from the previously established points. “Then what should Orestes do about this if he comes to Argos?” (*GP* 269).

274–5 ἦν μόλη: Orestes is saying “if he comes” because he does not want Electra to know that he is already there or to suggest that as Orestes’ messenger he has obtained a commitment that Orestes will come. As far as Electra is concerned, however, he is asking two separate questions: will Orestes come? and what will Orestes do if he comes? (Denniston *ad loc.*). As the ensuing exchange indicates, Orestes is fully aware of the difficulty of carrying out the revenge. Electra follows the sequence of his questions. She answers the first question (what he should do) with indignation: “Do you ask?!” and rebukes his question about the arrival: “Isn’t it high time?” The impression is that, like the Sophoclean Electra, the Euripidean one also seems to identify Orestes’ arrival with the act of revenge. See Roisman 2000, 190–9. For similar emphasis on the right timing, see the Paedagogus’ words in S. *El.* 21–2.

275 ἥρου τόδ’; αἰσχρόν γ’ εἶπας· οὐ γὰρ νῦν ἀκμή; It does not occur to Electra that Orestes would not know what to do.

276 δὲ δῆ: see on 236–7. “Well, when he does come, how . . . ?”

277 οἱ’ ἐτολμήθη πατήρ: “such acts as were dared against our father,” “such acts of daring as our father was subjected to.”

278 μετ’ αὐτοῦ μητέρ’ ἄν τλαίης κτανεῖν; As Denniston perceptively points out, Orestes is already, with this line, seeking his sister’s help, which is what he has come for. **ἦ καί:** ἦ or ἦ καί can have an interrogative function that adds eagerness to the inquiry: “Is the case also that . . . ?”, “Is it also likely that . . . ?” Similarly 351. (*GP* 285.)

279 τῷ: the forms of the definite article with τ are found as relatives (epic usage) in the dialogue of tragedy only when required by the meter. Denniston gives as exceptions: A. *Supp.* 265; S. *OC* 35; E. *Andr.* 810.

281 ἐπισφάξασα: the prefix can mean *in addition to*: “May I die once I’ve shed my mother’s blood as well”: that is, in addition to Aegisthus’. This understanding would indicate that Electra already thinks that Aegisthus will be killed first, which is the safer course, as Denniston argues. However, as the plot develops, it becomes clear that the sequence of the murders has been left to chance. ἐπι- can also mean *upon*, i.e. an altar, as in a ritual sacrifice: “once

I've shed my mother's blood like a ritual sacrifice (for revenge)." For similar thought, see Aegisthus' words in A. Ag. 1610 and Orestes' in *Cho.* 438.

282 φεῦ· εἴθ' ἦν: εἴθε with the impf., expresses an impossible wish: "Ah! / If only Orestes were nearby to hear this." Although Orestes was hoping to have Electra as his accomplice in murder (100), it is difficult to tell whether he is relieved to hear her resoluteness or, in keeping with his subsequent reluctance to pursue the matricide (967–84), is taken aback by her bloody-mindedness.

284 νέα . . . νέου: *polyptoton*, see 39n. The harsh hyperbaton (see 16–17n) created by the insertion of οὐδὲν θαῦμα may suggest Orestes' emotional upheaval: "*No wonder*, for you were young when separated from him who was also young." Their relationship is that of children. All they have or ever will have is in the past except for the brief embrace in the curtailed recognition scene postponed here by Orestes.

285 εἰς ἃν μόνος νιν τῶν ἐμῶν γνοίη φίλων: sets up the recognition scene. It is curious that the old man referred to here is the only one who would know Orestes. He was the last to see him, but Orestes has changed so that his sister does not know him and neither does his stepfather. The Old Man presumably has changed less than Orestes, and yet Orestes does not recognize him. Is it because nobody pays any attention to slaves as persons? They are cancelled presences, as waiters, salespeople, and farm workers often are in our own lives. Medea's old slave is able to obtain classified information just by pretending not to listen (E. *Med.* 68).

286 In S. *El.*, it is Electra herself who rescues Orestes and gives him to the Paedagogus to take to safety (295–8, 1348–52). In attributing Orestes' rescue entirely to his elderly slave, Euripides somewhat deflates his heroine, while, on the practical level of stagecraft, preparing for the recognition scene.

288 Why Orestes takes so long to reveal his identity to Electra is a mystery. Aeschylus' Orestes discloses his identity as soon as Electra tells the chorus that the lock of hair and footprints that she found at her father's graveside must belong to her brother. In Sophocles' play, the revelation is delayed until Orestes takes pity on his sister's unbearable grief when she believes she is

holding her brother's ashes in her arms. Although Euripides' Orestes would know that this woman is Electra as soon as she identifies herself (115-19), he takes his time in revealing himself. It may be that Euripides is trying to attain some of the emotional impact that the delayed recognition creates in Sophocles' play. Alternatively, he may be drawing Orestes as a hesitant, overly cautious character or one unwilling to take up the burden of killing that accompanies being Orestes. In Aeschylus the matricide was problematic; in Euripides it is both unnecessary and wrong.

288 ὁ καθανὼν δὲ σὸς πατὴρ τύμβου κυρεῖ; Orestes asks about the tomb, but he already knows the answer because he has been there. Electra answers evasively. **καθανών:** APOCOPE of the prefix (the loss of one or more sounds in a word: the second syllable of the prefix is cut off for rhythmic convenience, Smyth 75d).

289 ἔκρυσεν ὥς ἔκρυσεν, ἐκβληθεὶς δόμων. Electra's tautology suggests that her father's body was not treated right, but we already know from Orestes' words (90) that he has a tomb and its upkeep is unremarkable. **ἐκβληθεὶς:** *thrown out*, (a reticent euphemism; cf. 85n.) implies that Agamemnon did not have the traditional *ἐκφορά* (*carrying out of the body*) required for a decent burial. Orestes' question, Electra's answer, and Orestes' distress on hearing it (290-1) are all odd in view of Orestes' earlier (reported) visit to his father's graveside, which would mean that both Pylades and the play's outer audience know that Agamemnon has a marked, identifiable grave. Euripides may have intended to remind the audience of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, which had seen a revival a few years earlier. In *Cho.* 429-50, we are told that Clytemnestra forbade weeping at Agamemnon's funeral and mutilated his corpse (cf. *S. El.* 445). The oblique, circuitous form of the statement resembles that of the comment made by Sophocles' Clytemnestra about Orestes: "You're certainly not well off, but he, as he is, is well off" (*El.* 791). Since both Clytemnestra and Electra, to whom she is speaking, believe that Orestes was killed in a racing accident, Clytemnestra's "as he is" (ὥς ἔχει) implies that she believes that Orestes is well off dead. In both cases, the audience knows that the situation is different from what the speakers imply. In both cases the form of the statement gives it a deprecatory and offhand ring. Cf. *E. Med.* 889, 1011; *TW* 630; *IA* 649; *S. OT* 1376; *OC* 335-6.

290-1 αἰσθησις . . . θυραίων πημάτων: "feeling for the misfortunes of strangers." Orestes feels the need to justify his distress (οἴμοι). For the

opposite sentiment, see A. Ag. 836–7. With respect to the adjective *θυραῖος*, in *Cho.* 115, the Chorus refers to Orestes as *θυραῖος*, one who is *abroad*, cf. Ag. 1608. The primary meaning of *θυραῖος* is *outside the door*, with all the possible ramifications, *from abroad* and *away* (A. Ag. 837, 1055; S. Tr. 595, *El.* 313, 518, *Ph.* 158; E. *Heracl.* 342, *Ion* 702), to *foreign* or *strange* in the meaning of *not of one's family*, as it is used here (A. *Eum.* 864; E. *Or.* 805, *Andr.* 422, *Phoen.* 848, *Hipp.* 395, 409). Euripides also uses the word in this last sense in *Alc.*, in the scene where Heracles agrees to have a good time in Admetus' home because he believes Admetus' assertion that the funeral he was conducting was that of a *γυνή θυραῖος* (805) “a woman from outside,” i.e., not of his family. The phrase occurs twice in *Alc.* (778, 1014: *θυραίου πῆματος*), both times referring to persons who, in fact, are not strangers. In all its other appearances in *Alc.* (811, 814, 828), the phrase is used deceptively, and the person termed *θυραῖος* is actually one of the family, as in *El.* 832. *γάρ* explains the consternation expressed by οἶμοι (Denniston). Orestes continues to insist that he is not Orestes, trying to make up some reason that he should care about the misfortunes of this family. This time his concern is Agamemnon's supposed lack of burial, or at least the shoddy treatment of his remains (implied by Electra at 289).

294–6 ἀμαθία . . . σοφοῖσι δ' ἀνδρῶν . . . τοῖς σοφοῖς λίαν σοφῆν: These lines add a personal note to Orestes' request (292–3) for the full details. The relation between knowledge and virtue is a prominent theme in Greek philosophy. See Dover 1974, 120 on the use of *sophia* and its relations in tragedy: (though it often refers to expertise not in the purview of the many) “it is also freely used of wise, sensitive and virtuous decisions and attitudes in the conduct of life.” “There is no pity in ignorance but only in wise/discerning men.” After expressing his distress, Orestes tries to get a clearer idea of what Electra meant by her cryptic statement in 289. He justifies his further questioning, which would be inappropriate in a stranger, by bringing up the accepted view that moral feelings, like pity, are associated with being well educated. *σοφός* here means *well educated*, and is antithetical to *ἀμαθής* or elsewhere to *σκαῖός*, *unlearned*. The association between moral capacity and wisdom comes up again in 970–2. Aristotle will share Orestes' views in this regard. See Konstan 2001 *Emotions*, 130. **γνώμην . . . λίαν σοφῆν:** Orestes again tries to justify his probing, inappropriate for a stranger, by attributing it to his “too discerning mind.” The hyperbaton (see 16–17n) adds emphasis.

297–9 κάγω . . . νῦν δὲ βούλομαι κάγῳ μαθεῖν: The desire to know the story is the beginning of literature. Here the poet admits that literature is a kind of gossip for those whose lives are more mundane and less filled with incident than the intense, heroic characters of legend. The women of the Chorus live far from the city, but no farther than Electra. All she can tell them is what they can already see and old news. But she has a past in the city and that is the stuff of legend.

300–38 A similar speech is found in Sophocles' *El.* 254–309, where Electra tells the Chorus what led to her incessant grieving and lamentation. Unlike her Sophoclean namesake, however, Euripides' Electra addresses, along with the Chorus, the as yet unidentified stranger whom she believes to be her brother's agent. Following Orestes' statement in 294–5 and the choral response in 297–9, her purpose is not so much to explain her misery as to give the supposed emissary information that will enable him to persuade Orestes to hurry back to Argos to carry out the revenge. Moreover, while Sophocles' Electra emphasizes the royal couple's misdeeds and her mother's abuse of her, Euripides' Electra emphasizes her own sufferings (τὰς ἐμὰς 301, τὰμὰ 303): her poverty and life of labor as the wife of a poor farmer. After a short introduction (303), she focuses on her wretched lot (304–13): her poor clothes, her impoverished abode, her toiling at the loom and fetching water from the river, the oddity of her being a wife and yet a virgin, and her shame before the deceased nobleman who had been her fiancé, because of her husband's lack of status. She ends this section with her spiritual and social deprivation (302–13). This leads to a comparison with her mother's luxury (314–18) ending with her father's blood blackened on the palace floor (318–19). And then she naturally thinks of Aegisthus (not named in her speech), handling her father's things and taunting him (319–31), as if the two murderers are standing over the blood and laughing at their victim.

These 39 lines have 11 resolutions: 1 (323), 2 (310, 325), 4 (310, 332), 5 (314), 6 (306, 309, 318), 8 (302, 335), with the highest ratio so far, 1:3.5, indicating Electra's great agitation. Line 310 has two resolutions which is not very common. See 3n.

300 λέγοιμ' ἄν, εἰ χρή—χρή δὲ πρὸς φίλον λέγειν: "I'm prepared to speak." Electra's use of the optative mood (literally, "I may speak") suggests that she is reluctant to talk. She seems to be justifying her loquaciousness as a response to the interlocutor's urging. She overcomes her (feigned?) hesitation to go over the details of her suffering. Of the speech, which he considers

in Euripides' "best style," Paley writes, "It may be doubted if, on the whole, either of the rival plays on this subject contains a finer outburst of heart-felt eloquence than the present speech."

302 κινεῖς μῦθον: see *S. El.* 18, where the bright light of the sun is said to "stir up the clear morning songs of birds" κινεῖ φθέγματα.

303 τὰμὰ καὶ κείνου κακά: "the evils that are mine and his." For a similar yoking of herself and her sister, see *S. El.* 987–8: παῦσον ἐκ κακῶν ἐμέ, / παῦσον δὲ σαυτήν "free me from evil, / and free yourself too."

304 ἀυλίζομαι is used of birds, sheep, and cattle and of a soldiers' encampment.

306 βασιλικῶν ἐκ δωμαίων: "after (living) in royal halls." LSJ s.v. II.2. Denniston suggests *Hec.* 55 as a comparison.

307 In Homer, both the kings' concubines and their wives worked at the loom (e.g., Chryseis, *Il.* 1.31; Penelope, *Od.* 1.357; Helen, *Il.* 3. 125–8, *Od.* 4.131–5; Arete, *Od.* 6.306; cf. E. *TW* 199–200). Weaving was an integral part of a wife's tasks in classical Athens, although the drudgery would have been left to the servant women (Xenophon, *Oeconomicus* 7.6, *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* 1.3–4; cf. E. *Hec.* 363–4).

307–9 The necessity to do manual work, despite the Farmer's acceptance of it, is further evidence of Electra's fall from her proper estate and legitimate expectations. Physical labor was despised by Athenians of the leisured classes. Electra may have been complaining about doing the work that would have been done by servants. See Pomeroy, 30, 199–200.

309 αὐτή: the anaphora (130–3n) of the pronoun in 307 here effectively emphasizes the burden of chores she carries. However, we should remember that her husband tried to convince her that there was no need for her to fetch water (64–6, 77–8).

310–11 The punctuation follows Diggle. The thought in 311 belongs with that of 312. Electra is turning from her drudgery to the festivities. For further discussion of the possible punctuation of lines 310–11, see Denniston.

312–13 αἰσχύνομαι δὲ Κάστορ: αἰσχύνομαι suggested by Page for ἀνάινομαι of the manuscripts, Denniston: "I am ashamed before Castor,

who before going to the gods was suitor to me, his kinswoman” is preferable to the ms version. The scribe’s mistake of DITTOGRAPHY (repeating the same word, in the same place in line 311) can be easily understood. Since Castor is dead, it would make no sense for Electra to *shun* him. But her marriage to a man of a lower class is an affront to Castor’s honor, as he had been her fiancé before he died. Castor and Polydeuces (Pollux) were the twin sons of Zeus and Leda (*Dioscuri*; in Latin, *Gemini*), one mortal, one divine. When Castor died they were allowed to share immortality as stars and protectors of sailors. See 990n. **ὃς πρὶν ἐς θεοὺς / ἔλθεῖν ἔμ’ ἐμνήστευεν**: Nauck’s emendation for ὃ πρὶν ἐς θεοὺς / ἔλθεῖν ἔμ’ ἐμνήστευον, the ms reading, which is taken to mean “to whom they [my parents] betrothed me.” On the other hand in Nauck’s version, the idea is lost that Electra’s parents betrothed her, as is proper (in contrast to the false marriage arranged by Aegisthus). As far as we know, Castor’s wooing of Electra is Euripides’ invention. **οὖσαν ἐγγενῇ**: Castor was Electra’s maternal uncle, but that was a degree of consanguinity allowed by Athenian marriage practice (Just, 76, 79–82). On ἐγγενής implying a relation not as close as συγγενής, see Denniston *ad* 311–13. Endogamy was more common and desirable than exogamy. However, in *A. Supp.*, the Danaids flee Egypt to avoid marriage with their cousins (cf. also *A. PB.* 855–6: φεύγουσα συγγενῇ γάμον ἀνεπξιώων, “fleeing kindred marriage with their cousins”). It may be that the allusion to *A. Supp.* is a jibe at Aeschylus, much like the later parody of the recognition tokens in *A. Cho.* 520–44. The mention of the close relationship between Electra and Castor may also prefigure Castor’s intervention at the end of the play.

314–18 Clytemnestra’s abundant riches, as Electra describes them, contrast starkly with her own poverty, and serve to bring home her mother’s moral turpitude. Cropp points out the “oriental” quality of Clytemnestra’s wealth and luxury. The fifth-century Greeks, self-idealized as a courageous and law-abiding people who abjured luxury and ostentation, contrasted themselves with non-Greeks, whom they conceived as hubristic and as indulging in excessive wealth (cf. Hdt. 7.102). The Sophoclean Electra complains about her mother living with the murderer of her father and giving birth to his children while mistreating her children by Agamemnon, but she hardly ever mentions her father’s wealth (260–2).

316 **στατίζουσι**: στατίζω occurs only three times in the extant tragedies. In *Alc.* (90) Euripides uses it in the act. to mean *to place*. So apparently

Sophocles in *Inachus*, 269c.43 (Radt, *TrGF* vol. 4). But here, Euripides uses the act. voice intransitively to mean *they are stationed*.

317 Ἰδαία φάρη: for the beauty and opulence of Trojan clothing, see the description of Paris in E. *IA* 73–4, ἀνθηρὸς μὲν εἰμάτων στολῇ / χρυσῷ δὲ λαμπρός, βαρβάρῳ χλιδήματι, “decked out (lit. *flowered*) in the gaudiest attire / glittering with gold in his oriental fashion.” **ἐξευγμέναι:** see verb appendix.

319 Nowhere in her speech does Electra refer to Aegisthus by name. This differs from the Sophoclean Electra, who names Aegisthus in her parallel speech (267).

323–5 Electra is unaware that Orestes has just placed a lock of hair and poured sheep’s blood over the altar (90–2, 513–15), but the audience knows that Electra is mistaken in her claim that Agamemnon’s tomb has never been tended. Later the Old Man stops by the tomb on his way to Electra’s hovel, pours a libation of wine, and places sprays of myrtle around it (509–12). Also, the play gives the impression that the tomb is not very far from Electra’s hovel. It is thus unclear why Electra has not gone and tended her father’s tomb herself, unless, as the Old Man intimates at 516–17, there was some danger in doing so. The Old Man weeps over the isolation of the tomb (510) confirming Electra’s insistence that it is not treated as it should be. For illustrations of Electra and Orestes at the tomb of Agamemnon, see Prag, Plates 34–6a, which give an idea of what the audience would imagine the tomb looked like. They show a column or stele (sometimes with myrtle tied around it) with an altar or base (often with one of the characters sitting on it). That we are to imagine Agamemnon’s tomb having an altar is clear from 513, πυρῶς.

325 ξέρσος ἀγλαΐσμάτων: “dry of adornments.” A hybrid description. While dryness would imply an absence of libations and blood of sacrificial victims, in A. *Cho.* 193, S. *El.* 908, ἀγλαΐσμα refers to hair-offerings.

326–8 Electra continues to avoid Aegisthus’ name. Her reference to him as τῆς ἐμῆς μητρὸς πόσις is sarcastic and foreshadows her later mocking statement to his corpse (see 854–7n) that he was known among the Argives as “the queen’s husband” (ὁ τῆς γυναικὸς 931). κλεινός is sarcastic, as in S. *El.* 300. Electra has just referred to Aegisthus as “my mother’s husband,” a

demeaning title (see 931–3; also 366 of Electra’s husband). Denniston is correct to assume that taking it with ὥς λέγουσιν “would greatly weaken the irony.” ὥς λέγουσιν goes with the predicate, describing Aegisthus’ alleged activities at the tomb. Electra’s account of Aegisthus’ abuse of her father’s tomb is based on anonymous hearsay (“as people say”). Thus it cannot be ruled out that she has invented the story. Of her description of Aegisthus’ supposed activities, especially at the tomb, Ferguson (387) writes, “These are pathological imaginings and not to be trusted.” If Aegisthus actually did jump on Agamemnon’s tomb and pelt it with stones, he must have done so when he was at his country residence, not in the city of Argos. The information that the Old Man was able to see Aegisthus visiting his pastures when he made a side trip to Agamemnon’s tomb on his way to Electra’s hovel indicates that the tomb must be near Aegisthus’ lands. **μνῆμα λάτινον**: *memorial/sign of stone*. The usual sign of a tomb in Homeric times was an empty urn. A marker made of stone is characteristic of the fifth century. See Kurtz and Boardman 85–8, 121–41, 218–46; Sourvinou-Inwood 1995, 108–47; Garland 2001, 34–7. For anachronisms in Greek tragedy, see Easterling 1985, Knox 1957, 61. For leaping on a person’s grave as abuse, see *H. Il.* 4.177. In *S. El.*, Clytemnestra, who is portrayed as much crueler than her Euripidean counterpart, is the one to abuse the memory of Agamemnon by instituting a festival to mark the day of his murder (277–81; cf. *A. Cho.* 483 on establishing feasts in Agamemnon’s honor once he is avenged).

329–31 The picture of Aegisthus abusing Agamemnon’s tomb and addressing Orestes hubristically is part of Euripides’ tendency to down-play Clytemnestra’s evil by showing Aegisthus as the person who carries out the reprehensible acts after the murder. In *S. El.* it is Clytemnestra who screams abuse at Electra (289–99).

330 **ποῦ παῖς Ὀρέστης**: this is also Electra’s question.

331 Electra dwells on the antithesis between παρών (*present*) and ἀπών (*absent*), as in 245. Electra reinforces her rebuke of Orestes’ absence by claiming that Aegisthus taunts him on this ground. The *mise-en-scène* is of course ironic: the words are spoken to Orestes, who is present.

332–8 She ends with a touching plea to her brother, whom she still addresses as ξέγε.

333 πολλοὶ δ' ἐπιστέλλουσιν, ἑρμηνεύς δ' ἐγώ: as awkward as these lines (333–5) have seemed, they are lifelike and heart wrenching. Her hands, her tongue, her broken heart, and shaved head need an interpreter to let them speak, which she has done and is doing. There is, however, an anomaly in Electra's saying that she speaks for her tongue, which is usually said to speak for the person (E. *Supp.* 203–4). She adds her father to what Cropp calls the “*mélange*” to prepare for the next lines. See E. *Hec.* 836–40 for the appeal to the voiceless body parts, which is more touching, perhaps, but no less awkward in what it asks these inarticulate members to do:

εἴ μοι γένοιτο φθόγγος ἐν βραχίοσι
καὶ χερσὶ καὶ κόμαισι καὶ ποδῶν βάσει
ἢ Δαιδάλου τέχναισιν ἢ θεῶν τινος,
ὥς πάνθ' ὁμαρτῇ σὼν ἔχουσιν γουνάτων
κλαίοντ', ἐπισκῆπτοντα παντοίους λόγους.

If only through the craft of Daedalus or some god I had a voice in my arms and hands, in my hair and feet, so all together in tears they could grasp your knees and with multitudinous pleas overwhelm you.

The mental image these lines conjure up is astonishing and wonderful.

335 κάρα τ' ἐμόν ξυρήκεις: “my head cropped as with a razor.” Cf. E. *Alc.* 427, *Phoen.* 372.

336–8 Although Electra is speaking to the “stranger,” whose identity she has not yet discovered, her contrast between the son's limited accomplishments and the father's greater ones fits the situation.

337 ἔν' εἷς: for the *polyptoton*, see 39n. The contrast Electra draws between Agamemnon, who fought all of Troy, and Orestes, who will have to face only one man, both points to the greater ease of Orestes' task and indicates that he has not yet accomplished it. It is yet another argument that Electra gives the “stranger” to help him persuade Orestes to hurry back to Argos. For other occurrences where *polyptoton* (39n) enhances meaning, see E. *Alc.* 471, *HF* 125. For the occurrences of *polyptoton* as merely tragic mannerism, see Denniston. Cf. 361.

338 **κάξ ἀμείνωνος πατρός:** “and from a better father.” This is the traditional comparison between Agamemnon, the conqueror of Troy, and Aegisthus, the cowardly man who stayed home. Cf. H. *Od.* 3.250, and A. *Ag.* 1625.

339–66 These lines contain 6 resolutions: 1 (359), 6 (343, 353, 366), 8 (361, 355), with a ratio of 1:4.7. See 3n.

339 **τόνδε:** explained by σὸν λέγω πόσιν as the Chorus catches sight of the Farmer returning from his fields by the parodos leading to the country (stage right).

340 **ὄρμημένον** *having set out* or as suggested by Paley ὀρμώμενον *on his way?*

341 **τίνας τοῦσδ’:** combines *whom do I see?* with *who are these that I see?*, showing the Farmer’s excitement at this unexpected sight, as does his word order, saving ξένους for the end. The repetition of forms of πύλαι (commonly used of the house door in tragedy), though Denniston considers it inelegant, may also be an attempt at verisimilitude in the Farmer’s speech. His calling the door of his humble dwelling by the loftier term used of the double doors of the *skēnē* may be a sly Euripidean reference to stage business (cf. Electra’s desperate ποῦ γὰρ ἄγγελοι; 759, just before the arrival of the messenger). At 357 he orders the gates of his house opened to the strangers. πύλαι is also used of the gates of Hades, as in the exchange between Electra and the Old Man at 661–2.

343–4 see 223n.

345 **εἰς ὕποπτα μὴ μόλης ἐμοί:** “do not be suspicious of me.” Literally “do not go into suspicion toward me.” For the use of neut. adjectives as abstract nouns, see H. *Od.* 11. 456.

348 **σύγγνωτε:** another irony of Electra’s ambiguous position is that in spite of her loyal defense of her husband earlier, she now feels that she must apologize for his manners in suspecting the strangers and upholding traditional morality (or etiquette).

349 **ἀνήρ ἔστι καὶ λεύσσει φάος:** *living and seeing the light* (as opposed to flitting about in the shadowy realm of Hades) are synonymous in Greek.

350 οὐκ ἄπιστ’: *not unbelievable*. In this short conversation with the Farmer, Electra uses LITOTES (a figure of speech in which something is stated by the denial of its opposite) twice, here and in 356: οὐδὲν . . . ἐνδεές: “they are not deficient in these things.” Cf. S. *Ph.* 375. The strangers have gained this much of Electra’s trust, that she believes the message that Orestes is alive, but see 557, just before the recognition, where she says to Orestes “if he is still [alive]” and πῶς μοι πιστὰ σημαίνεις τάδε; and 765 where she does not recognize the messenger as Orestes’ servant and needs reassurance.

357 The ‘p’ sound is repeated three times in this line.

358–9, 361 The Farmer addresses Orestes directly. In his reply Orestes continues to address Electra and in his monologue to speak of, but not to, the Farmer. Mastronarde 1979, 88 comments on the disparity in social status revealed by the lack of contact between Orestes and the Farmer:

A deft portrayal of the different social etiquettes which characterize the farmer and Orestes is attained by the distance and lack of contact between the two when they share the stage. . . . Electra acts as an intermediary. She apologizes to Orestes for the farmer’s suspicion and then is engaged in a dialogue by her “husband” in 349–357. The farmer finally addresses Orestes and Pylades with an invitation in 358–359 and gives an order to their attendants in 360, but the attendants apparently do not move. . . . Nor does Orestes address himself to the farmer at all; instead he asks Electra a question, monologizes, and then tells the attendants to go in (393–394).

This “discontinuity” highlights the alienation and strange distance all the characters in this scene maintain from one another. The husband is not really a husband. The brother pretends to be somebody else. Only Electra cannot hide who she is, nor does she desire to.

358–9 ἀντὶ γὰρ χρηστῶν λόγων / ξενίων κυρήσεθ’: for their good news they will receive hospitality. In all the Orestes/Electra plays, Orestes is welcomed with hospitality, but usually it is for bringing the opposite message, that Orestes is dead. That message, of course, requires him to pretend to be someone else. This Orestes does not have that excuse for pretending to be someone else. See “Discussions.”

360 αἵρεσθ', ὅπαδοί, τῶνδ' ἔσω τεύχη δόμων: deleted by Barrett. The objections are that the Farmer would not give orders to Orestes' servants; that the command is not carried out until after Orestes himself addresses his servants (there called δμῶες) at 393–4; and that it is parenthetical between two invitations to Orestes and Pylades (Cropp). Mastronarde (1979, 106) commenting on the delay in execution writes:

. . . there may be more stage-action not described in the text (do the attendants, for instance turn to Orestes for a sign of approval of the order?). In any case Orestes' lack of contact with the farmer represents a course of action which postpones specific reaction to the invitation, until at 393 he endorses the original order. . . .

ὅπαδοί: the Farmer addresses Orestes' attendants or servants. This would not be the right term for his own slaves, if he has any. In Homeric times even slaves owned slaves, as did Eumaeus (*Od.* 14.449–50). See Garland, 29–37. **τεύχη:** see A. *Cho.* 675 οἰκεῖα σαγῆ (with my personal baggage, kit, knapsack).

361 “And don't say no”: implies that the attendants are hesitant and await their master's approval to proceed and enter the humble abode. It is clear from 393–4 that they do not obey the Farmer until Orestes tells them to go in.

362–3 As Cropp points out, there is a similar scene in H. *Od.* 14.56–9, 80–1, etc. where the swineherd Eumaeus offers hospitality to the disguised Odysseus, his master, and similarly states that he can give only as much as he has. See Roisman 1990, *ICS*.

367–400 Orestes' speech. Impressed by the Farmer's character, Orestes launches into a general discussion of virtue. Such speeches in Euripides have a role that is both dramatic and subversive. Dramatically, they demonstrate the rhetorical ability of the speaking character. As subversive, they reveal the dependence of ethical categorizations on accepted norms. Cf. Medea's speech in *Med.* 214–66 and Hippolytus' in *Hipp.* 616–68. Various parts of this strange speech (more strange, perhaps, to us than to Euripides' original audience) have been suspected by various editors. Diggle brackets 373–9 and 386–400. Without ever directly addressing him, Orestes expresses gratitude to the Farmer and even admiration of him. The man's spontaneous hospitality inspires this pretentious speech. As an exile, Orestes

has become an expert at being a guest at others' hearths and tables. We have already seen his dismay at the poverty of this house (252). Throughout, his classist snobbery is evident. Gregory (124) cites this passage as one of her examples of Euripides' unravelling of the aristocratic assumptions equating lineage with excellence of character. Sometimes generalizing speeches like this will accumulate additional examples from producers, actors, critics, teachers. See Page 1934, 74–5. Cropp calls it a “snowball process.” Some of the parts Diggle finds fault with might well fit into this category. Orestes personalizes his first comments (ἦδη γὰρ εἶδον 369) as if his conclusions are based on his experience on the road. Lines 373–9 are much more impersonal and seem almost thrown in to heap up examples (esp. 377–8 but 375–6 are inappropriate to the case in point—though not necessarily to Orestes' experience—because Electra's Farmer is poor but of noble character). At 380 he moves directly to the particular, to the Farmer, and follows with three lines of general application. Lines 386–90 are again less personal and relevant. Still, enough merit has been found in them to unbracket them (see Denniston); 391–400, however, are once again personal and are needed to get Orestes and his men offstage and to round off the speech.

Orestes' speech contains 8 resolutions: 1 (376, 392), 4 (372, 388), 6 (373, 389, 391, 393), with ratio of 1:4.25. (See 3n.)

367–79 A papyrus fragment of the third century B.C.E., called the Hibeh papyrus (I.7) from the site in Egypt where it was found, contains these lines. If they are a later addition made by a producer or actor they were interpolated early. We have chosen not to bracket them.

367 “There is no clearcut way of measuring manly worth.” In a society like that of ancient Athens in which *philia*, friendship, was a major value, this complaint was traditional. Since personal relationships depended on the trustworthiness and loyalty of one's friends, questions of how one could judge the virtues of another must have been raised constantly. The current question was whether virtue was part of one's nature or could be acquired. See J. Roisman 2005, 89–94, 102–4.

367–72 Orestes raises questions about the contemporary societal assumptions that nobility of character stemmed from nobility of birth and that nobility of birth issued in nobility of character. None of the counter-examples that Orestes gives, however, actually applies to the Farmer, who himself tells

us he is of respectable lineage (35–9), though Orestes does not know this (381). Thus, while Orestes questions the assumed link between nobility of character and nobility of birth, Euripides' characterization of the Farmer actually supports it. Sophocles similarly explored the relation between character and birth in his play *Philoctetes*, where Philoctetes voices the view that they are linked (*Ph.* 971–2, 1310–11). For the idea that good parents do not necessarily have good children, see 550–1; cf. Theognis 435–8. For the idea that wealth does not assure virtue, see Sappho frg. 148 (Page *LG*), Solon frg. 15 (West²), Theognis 149–50, 315–22, 699–700, Bacchylides 1.161, A. Ag. 772–81, E. *HF* 671–2.

373–9 Diggle follows other scholars in regarding these lines as an interpolation. We do not see a need to excise. Orestes is in a contemplative mood, and such rhetorical twisting is not alien to Euripides. After noticing what he views as behavior that is out of character for a man of the Farmer's status, he tries to find some rules that would make it easier to know what kind of person an individual is, but gives up, as there seem to be none. His analysis shows us a youth trying to understand the world, even as he is immature in his generalizations. For other reasons for keeping the lines, see Denniston.

373 αὐτά: refers to qualities raised in the previous lines: the good and the bad.

376 κακόν: as Denniston observes, the thought ("teaches a man to be evil") is proleptic. The more common thought, found in Theognis 386–92, 649–52, would be relayed by κακά, "teaches a man evil." Should we wonder whether Orestes recites ideas he was taught, but does not do this with precision?

377–8 ἔλθω: the first person is natural here; there's no need to emend to ἐλθόν. Without actually rejecting the traditional view that a man's behavior on the battlefield shows his virtue and courage, Orestes refutes the idea that it can serve to reveal a man's nature. Since soldiers are too busy with the actual fighting to see how their fellows are performing, there's no one to vouch for anyone's conduct on the front. See E. *Supp.* 846–56. For the opposite view, see Tyrtaeus 12, 13 West². For discussion of the courage of hoplites and their class, see Hanson, 122–39, 138–40; van Wees, 47, 182, 192–3, 239–40; Boëldieu-Trevet, 48–54.

383 οὐ μὴ ἄφρονήσεθ': "Do not be foolish!" οὐ μὴ with the fut. indicative expresses a strong prohibition. The litotes (350n) amounts to an emphatic "be sensible!" Note SYNIZESIS of μὴ ἄ-, two vowels, or a vowel and a diphthong, in two successive syllables uniting to form a single syllable in pronunciation but not in writing; see E. *Supp.* 304, 421; TW 981.

386–90 Excised as interpolations by some scholars who regard the lines as irrelevant. However, such an outburst might well be made in the heat of an argument. We should remember that only the wealthy trained as athletes. Thus, the opposition between athletes and morally superior poor men is not off the topic.

391 ὃ τε παρών ὃ τ' οὐ παρών: a play on words. Does ὃ τε παρών refer to the Farmer or to Orestes in the person of his supposed ambassador? See line 331 and note.

393–4 χωρεῖν χρεών, δμῶες, δόμων: this kind of phonetic and etymological wordplay is characteristic of Orestes. See 89n.

397–8 What he means by this remark is that for her brother's sake he wishes Electra were better off, and Orestes too, for her sake.

398 εὐτυχοῦντας . . . εὐτυχῶν : See 89n.

399 ἴσως δ' ἂν ἔλθοι: like so many other liars, Orestes is in something of a bind. Though still pretending to be a stranger, he refers to the oracles to which only Orestes and his most intimate friend would be privy and which have been mentioned before only to Pylades (87). Thus he concludes this rambling speech about the uncertainty of knowledge with one certainty he claims to have: the oracles of Apollo (399–400), which indeed turn out to be true oracles of the god but bad advice. He introduces them (399) with a prediction that cannot fail to come true, since Orestes is already here. In the other versions, getting Orestes into the stage building is crucial and depends on the lie that Orestes is dead. Here Electra would prefer to keep him outside because of the lie that he is not Orestes. Of course he goes through the fatal door too early because there is no one inside and it is the wrong house. The intended victims will have to be carried or summoned to it.

399–400 “Although I dismiss the divination of mortal men”: Orestes came at the bidding of a god, after consulting the oracle at Delphi, and not at the directive of a seer. The contempt for seers, who based their divinations on their readings of the flight of birds or the entrails of sacrificial animals, is found already in *H. Il.* 1.105–8, cf. *S. Ant.* 1055, *E. Hipp.* 1055–9, *Bacch.* 255–8. Unlike *A. Cho.*, which gives great emphasis to Apollo’s prophecy, Euripides’ *Electra* avoids underscoring it. Seers are an easy target. In *E. Phoen.* (954–9) the seer Teiresias himself attacks prophecy as the profession of fools.

401–19 The scene between Electra and the Farmer illuminates the gulf between their two worlds and how disturbing it is when those two worlds impinge upon each other. Everyday life cannot survive the onslaught of myth with its insistent truth that sweeps away ahistorical reality (that is, life as it is lived day to day, with its returning cycles of seasons, in which people get up and go to work, plowing the fields, drawing water, cleaning and cooking—in short, not the stuff of myth). To the Farmer the visitors are just strangers. To his wife they are young men of Orestes’ age and status, the type of young men who under normal circumstances would have been her suitors. As it turns out, one of them (her cousin Pylades) is to be her husband. Even if they had been identified by name, they would still be strangers to the Farmer because he does not belong to their world. He leaves to fetch the old *παιδαγωγός* (or *τροφεύς*, *nurturer*) of Agamemnon. He does not return. Dramatically there is no role for him. He was there to provide a contrast between what is and what Electra had every right to expect. In his closing remarks he shows how little he cares for the riches that will be heaped on him at the end. Not only did he get a princess he cannot touch, but he will win the lottery, as it were, money he has little use for.

401–3 The Chorus leader speaks to mark the transition between the exit of Orestes and his entourage and the domestic scene between Electra and her husband. The optimism of the Chorus, though banal, is natural, but it is ignored by Electra.

403–31 In this altercation, Electra emerges as much less noble in spirit and more concerned with status and appearance than her husband. The Farmer’s 14 lines (406–7, 420–31) in his exchange with Electra have only one resolution: 1(429) compared with 4 resolutions in Electra’s 14 lines (404–5, 408–19) : 4 (410), 6 (409, 410, 412) with a ratio of 1:3.5, the same

as in lines 300–38, where Electra hopes to convince the supposed emissary of Orestes to persuade him to hurry back to Argos. Line 410 has two resolutions. See 3n.

404 ὦ τλῆμον is censorious; cf. τάλαινα in 220. Electra feels her poverty more now because it can be seen by others. This argument between husband and wife is a scene from real life and is recognizable to everyone. It is part of the ethos of Euripides' version of the myth and its characters. When figures from myth find themselves in ordinary circumstances, the glamor of being, for example, a Mycenaean princess or prince is unsustainable.

408 Denniston points out that νυν is hardly found in tragedy except in commands, and ἔλθε follows in 409.

409 τροφός is usually fem. Elmsley emended to the more usual masc. τροφε' (τροφέα < τροφεύς).

410–11 ἀμφὶ ποταμὸν Τάναον: the Tanaus river, which is not mentioned in either Aeschylus' or Sophocles' treatment of the myth, is politically significant. It flows through Thyreatis, a region claimed by both Argos and Sparta in the Peloponnesian War (Thuc. 5.41). The words "where it cuts the borders of Argive and Spartan land" must have reminded Euripides' audience of the battles that the Argives and Spartans fought around 417/416 B.C.E. As Said points out (1989, 116–17), such interpolation of contemporary politics into the mythical world through geographic details is typical of Euripides' tragedies. To locate the Old Man's abode where he did, Euripides created a glaring time lapse in the action. The Tanaus river is about thirty-five kilometers south of the Farmer's home, yet the to-and-fro journey of seventy kilometers is completed (one lap by the Farmer and the other by the Old Man) within the time of the choral ode. Although such time lapses are immaterial in the tragedies, the incongruity underlines the importance Euripides attached to the political allusion.

413 ἐς δόμους ἀφιγμένων:

Murray gives: κέλευε δ' αὐτὸν τῶνδ' ἐμουσαφιγμένων [= ἐμοὶ ἐσαφιγμένων]

Diggle (Willink, Vitelli, Weil): κέλευε δ' †αὐτὸν τόνδ' ἐς δόμους ἀφιγμένον†

Paley: ἐς δόμους ἀφιγμένον. The sg. ἀφιγμένον would refer to the Old Man.

The gen. pl. ἀφιγμένων or ἐσαφιγμένων would refer to the strangers (Orestes and Pylades) in a gen. absolute.

415 τοι: encouraging, *to be sure, surely* (the “wheedling particle,” as Gildersleeve called it), reassures the Farmer, who might show reluctance or hesitation about asking the Old Man to come all this way (or about leaving his work for this errand), by including him in Electra’s certainty that her father’s old caregiver will be delighted at the news. See also at 422; *GP* 540–1.

416, 419 ζῶντ’: keeping Orestes unidentified to Electra and the Chorus makes it possible to continue to speak of news that he is alive. News of him never reaches the palace. In the other *Electra* plays, the crucial item of news is that Orestes is dead.

417–19 Electra’s assumption reflects her hostility toward her mother more than Clytemnestra’s actual conduct. In fact, Clytemnestra will meet her death when she agrees to a request that Electra makes of her. The queen’s situation is actually rather complex. She has to get along with Aegisthus; she fears Orestes’ revenge (1114–15); and she expresses remorse for having killed Agamemnon (1105–10) and concern for her daughter’s condition. Cf. the contrast between Orestes’ and the Paedagogus’ expectation that Clytemnestra will receive the report of his death as pleasant news in *S. El.* 56–7, 666–7, cf. 804–6 and her actual ambivalence, *S. El.* 766–71; see also *A. Cho.* 696–9, 734–41.

420 εἰ δοκεῖ σοι: “if this seems best to you.” Cf. 77. The Farmer is depicted as a man who always does his wife’s bidding. This uncharacteristic male attitude in fifth-century Athens conveys his respect for Electra’s higher station.

420–31 Though given to moralizing, the Farmer’s tone is more down to earth than Orestes’ had been in his generalizing remarks.

421–3 χῶρει δ’ ἐς δόμους: the Farmer gets in the last word, giving an order to Electra. He makes the traditional distinction between male and female roles: a woman can always whip something up *inside* (τᾶνδον). He exits along the parodos leading to the highway (stage left).

425 βορᾶς: the food of carnivores and sometimes of cannibals (see A. Ag. 1220, of Thyestes' children). Sometimes βορά is used of simple food, such as would be the everyday fare in the Farmer's house.

426–431 What good is money? The Farmer rarely thinks about it. Rich and poor are the same once their bellies are full. His attempt at radical egalitarianism, however, is not borne out by what happens in the play. The grand characters have different needs from the ordinary folk (such as the *autourgos* and the Chorus).

429–31 For this sentiment, cf. Solon 24 (West²) = Theognis 719–28.

432–86 FIRST STASIMON (the first major choral song): This is a dithyrambic ode consisting of two strophic pairs followed by an epode. Like the dithyrambic songs that were sung at the Great Dionysia, the play's two dithyrambic stasima (this and the second stasimon) are each devoted to a single myth, presented in a pictorial manner as a distant historical background to the dramatic action. They can serve as ornamental devices to the dramatic action (e.g., the depiction of the night that Troy was sacked in E. *Hec.* 905–52) or as dramatic contrasts (e.g., the wedding of Peleus and Thetis set against the horror of Iphigenia's false marriage and sacrifice, E. *IA* 1036–97). Here the escapist subject of sailing to Troy contrasts with Agamemnon's return from Troy, his murder, and the revenge that takes place in the plebeian reality removed from the idealistic mythic background. The epic-Ionic diction of the ode gives it a Homeric flavor. Metrically, the ode continues in the aeolo-choriambic mode of the monody and parodos. A glyconic-based pattern dominates in the first pair; the second has dactylic sequences interspersed, which are appropriate to the epic description of the armor. The epode has iambs in 478–81 when the Chorus makes its accusations against Clytemnestra.

Called the "Achilles Ode," the first stasimon is a reminiscence of the early days of the Trojan War, beginning with the sailing of the Greeks (453; see the Farmer's account, 2). The ode draws the audience from a scene of tense expectation that Orestes will soon reveal his identity to a sparkling imaginary description of the army's departure for Troy; from the poverty of the Farmer's hut in the arid countryside to "glorious ships" that sailed to Troy with music, dolphins leaping, and Nereids dancing. The first two stanzas create the impression that this is an escape ode by which the Chorus lyrically transports the audience to the happier time when Agamemnon headed the

Greek expedition to Troy. It focuses on Achilles, the exemplary hero, and his armor, recalling the great description of the making of his arms in Homer (*Il.* 18. 468–613), but with monumental changes. The myths (Perseus, the Sphinx, the Chimera) worked into this set of armor offer other tales of monsters to be set beside the one we are seeing. By the end, the glowing descriptions of the voyage and of the magnificence of Achilles' shield underscore Agamemnon's greatness as a leader and highlight the magnitude of Clytemnestra's crime in murdering him. Why, we may ask, is the ode about Achilles rather than Agamemnon? The answer to that may be obvious. Agamemnon does not cut as romantic or even heroic a figure as Achilles, though he is a workmanlike warrior in Homer. In modeling Agamemnon's greatness in terms of Achilles' heroism rather than his own, Euripides ignores the enmity between the two that is at the heart of the *Iliad*. For discussion see Morwood, Mulryne. The heroic song is in sharp contrast to the unheroic, quotidian scene from domestic life and poverty we have just witnessed. The mood becomes increasingly somber as the general movement passes from heroic glamor to the brutality of war and murder.

Strophe 1 (432–41) gives a lyrical, almost romantic, picture of Achilles' ships escorted by the Nereids (sisters of his mother Thetis) sailing to the music of pipes. Achilles, the graceful young hero, the best of the Achaeans, overshadows Agamemnon. The two named together at the end of the first stanza might bring to mind their quarrel that opens the *Iliad*.

Antistrophe 1 (442–51) presents an earlier scene, before Achilles has left Pelion where he was educated by the noble centaur Chiron, who taught various heroes the arts, including medicine. The Nereids bring the armor from Hephaestus' forge.

Strophe 2 (452–63): The Chorus has not seen the armor but has heard about it from someone who had reached the port of Nauplia from Troy. Frightening images are circled by Perseus holding the Gorgon's head.

Antistrophe 2 (464–75): In the center of the shield the sun in his chariot and the stars are there to terrify Hector or perhaps to blind him with their brightness. On the helmet and breastplate are other monsters (sphinxes, the Chimera), fearsome female death-bringers.

Epode (476–86): By the time the Chorus reaches the sword of Achilles (the only item of his armor that has its counterpart onstage, for Orestes is armed with a sword, 225), the description of the armor has become a description of the battle itself.

434 πέμπουσai χοροὺς μετὰ Νηρηίδων: To the rhythm of the oars the ships escort the dances, with the Nereids who rise from the sea to accompany Achilles' voyage. The presence of the Nereids may remind us of Achilles' inevitable death, already past, of course, in the play. They are named in *H. Il.* 18 (beginning at 39) when they rise from the sea to accompany Thetis when she goes to Troy to comfort her son, heartbroken over the loss of Patroclus, knowing that his own death will soon follow (18.35–144). For χοροὺς μετὰ: Diggle reads χορεύματα (*choral dances*, see 875). We prefer Denniston's livelier picture of the ships, Nereids, and dolphins all dancing together.

435 ὁ φίλαυλος ἔπαλλε δελφίς: dolphins were known to love music (as in the story of Arion, the singer-songwriter saved by a dolphin in *Hdt.* 1.23–24.8).

439 κοῦφον ἄλμα ποδῶν Ἀχιλῆϊ: Achilles' most frequent Homeric epithet is πόδας ὠκύς, *swift-footed*. This variation means "light in the spring of his feet," "swift of foot in respect to his leap," a reference to his youth and speed that fits in with the skipping movements in the rest of the strophe. See also ταχύπορον πόδ' 451.

442–51 The account of Achilles' armor resembles that in *E. IA* 1071–9, where the original arms are said to have been made by Hephaestus and given to Achilles by Thetis (not at Chiron's cave, as here, but at his father's home). It differs from the account in *H. Il.* 16.40, 17.194–7, 18.82–5, in which Achilles inherited his first set of armor from his father, Peleus, who had been given it when he married Thetis. Hephaestus made a new set for Achilles after the original armor had been taken from Patroclus' corpse by Hector. It is unclear whether Euripides invented the account found here or was following a known version. In either case, the version Euripides uses here suits this choral ode, because it focuses on the start of the war, while in the *Iliad*, Hephaestus makes Achilles' second set of armor more than nine years into the war.

442–4 Νηρηίδες . . . ἔφερον: in Homer Thetis herself hefts the armor and carries it to her son (*Il.* 18.616–17, 19.10–11).

445 ἀνά τε Πήλιον: Pelion is the site of the wedding of Peleus and Thetis (*E. IA* 705) and the home of Chiron (πατήρ ἱππότηας τρέφεν 448–9), the centaur

who reared and educated Achilles (*IA* 208–9, 708–10, 926–7) “so that he would not learn the ways of wicked men” (709).

445–6 ἐρυμνᾶς (*sheer, steep*) agreeing with Ὀσσας is generally accepted for the mss. πρυμνᾶς which would mean “at the foot of the mountain” and agree with νάπας.

448–9 πατήρ ἱππότας: the mountain scenery (Ossa, Pelion) may allude either to Peleus driver of horses, Achilles’ father (*H. Il.* 7.125), or to the centaur Chiron. The latter, in turn, suggests a parallel between Achilles’ teacher and Agamemnon’s *paedagogus* (the Old Man) who will open the next scene.

449 Ἑλλάδι φῶς: on the “light of salvation,” see *Med.* 482 (φάος σωτήριον). Achilles as the best warrior is a “light to Hellas” and to the sons of Atreus (451).

450 Θέτιδος εἰναλίας γόνον: the mss. reading εἰνάλιον is odd in using the epithet *in the sea* of Achilles since he lived on land. The gen. εἰναλίας or εἰναλίου (another suggested emendation) agrees with Thetis.

452–77 These lines are an ECPHRASIS, a poetic description of a work of visual art. The details have rich thematic and symbolic significance. Achilles’ armor is similarly described in symbolic detail in *H. Il.* 18. 478–613; elsewhere Agamemnon’s armor is described more briefly (*Il.* 11.15–44). See also the detailed description in the pseudo-Hesiodic *Shield of Heracles*. In tragedy, *A. Sept.* 369–685 describes the shield-emblems of the seven attackers and seven defenders, with both explicit and latent symbolic meanings. See Hardie, Roisman 1990. Achilles’ armor consists of shield, helmet, corslet, and sword. On the shield’s outer circle is an image of Perseus in flight with Medusa’s head, accompanied by Hermes. At its center are the Sun, Pleiades, and Hyades. On the helmet there are Sphinxes carrying prey, on the corslet, Pegasus attacking the Chimera. The sword handle is embellished with galloping horses. The detailed description emphasizes the beauty and great value of the golden armor and, by implication, aggrandizes Agamemnon, who had a hero with such magnificent armor under his command.

452–3 Euripides tends to specify geographic details. Thus instead of having the Chorus relate that the man who told them about Achilles’ armor

disembarked on the coast or shore, he has them say more precisely that he disembarked in Nauplia. See also 410n.

452 Ἰλιόθεν δ' ἔκλυόν: the Chorus, of course, did not actually see the armor, but they heard it described by someone who had put in at Nauplia, the port of Argos. Denniston suggests it was a Trojan captive, but perhaps a merchant is more probable (see Hdt.1.1 on women going down to examine the wares brought into port and S. *Ph.*, 547–8, for ships going back and forth from Troy). The women of the Chorus may live far from the city (297–9), but still they are not as poor as Electra and would visit town sometimes on market days or when a merchant vessel arrives. This is another reference to the way that stories are spread. In a similar vein, the chorus in *Hipp.* 121–30, tells of how they heard gossip about the queen when they were doing laundry.

454 The direct address to Achilles, like the one to the “glorious ships” (432) before it and to Clytemnestra (480) afterward, heighten the ode’s vividness and immediacy.

459–60 Περσέα . . . ἵσχειν still depend on ἔκλυόν. Perseus is often depicted aloft on his winged sandals, holding the Gorgon’s head. λαιμοτόμαν has been taken to agree with Perseus to mean *throat-cutter* or with φυάν to mean *with throat cut*. φυὰν Γοργόνος: a periphrasis for *Gorgon* like “might of Heracles” or “head of my sister.” Diggle (following Herwerden) reads πεδίλοις κορυφὰν (*head*). The images on the shield are evocative of other tales of violence and suggest parallels to the myth being enacted. The Gorgon’s severed head, obviously meant to frighten the enemy, will be recalled verbally when Aegisthus’ body is brought back, 856; and visually when Orestes stabs his mother in the neck, 1222–3. The Gorgon’s actual head was placed on Athena’s shield or aegis. At the end of the drama it is foretold that she will hold it over Orestes to frighten the Furies away (1257).

461–2 σὺν Ἑρμῇ, τῷ Μαίας ἀγροτῇρι κούρῳ: see 167–8 (ποτὶ σὰν ἀγρότειραν αὐλάν). Perseus of Argos decapitated the Gorgon Medusa under the guidance of Hermes and Athena. Medusa’s gorgon-sisters pursued him ([Hes.] *Shield of Heracles* 216–37), but to no avail. The rusticity of Hermes connects this heroic description with the rustic setting of the play and foreshadows the arrival of Agamemnon’s old caregiver, himself both messenger and tender of animals.

464 φαέθων: participle of φαέθω, *shine, be radiant*, but perhaps the word is also meant to remind the hearer of Phaëthon, Helios' son who was killed when he tried to drive his father's chariot.

465–8 κύκλος ἀελίοιο / ἵπποις ἄμ πτεροέσσαις / ἄστρον τ' αἰθέριοι χοροί / Πλειάδες, Ὑάδες: the sun and constellations would fill the shield's round center and complement the heroic tales of monster slayings with themes reminiscent of didactic nature poetry. This is a direct reference to H. *Il.* 18.484–9 in which, along with the sun and moon, Pleiades and Hyades (486), other constellations are also named, Orion and Ἄρκτος (the Bear, *Ursa Major*) also called Ἀμαζα (the Wain or Wagon), as decorating the shield of Achilles. Why exactly would the astronomical images terrify Hector? Is it because these icons were on the Homeric shield and we are being plunged into the final stages of the battle between Achilles and Hector, when Hector runs in terror? Into the midst of their description of the armor as it was before the battle, the Chorus injects an actual viewer who is outside their picture, a living man looking at what they are describing, who is by now in fact already dead (see King 1980, 203–5). The frightened man adds poignancy to their description. Or does their brightness blind him?

465 ἀελίοιο (Aeolic form) or ὀλίοιο (Doric form; Wilamowitz' reading) = ἡλίου. -οιο: epic gen.

466 ἄμ = ἀνὰ before words beginning with π, β, φ, or μ.

471–2 Σφίγγες ὄνουξιν αἰοίδιμον ἄγραν / φέρουσαι: the Sphinx is a bird-woman who brings death. The Theban Sphinx sang a riddle and seized and devoured men who could not solve it until Oedipus guessed it right. She is common as a shield device. See A. *Sept.* 510–44. The reference to the human prey of the Sphinx may make us think of Orestes, who will be the object of the Furies' pursuit.

474–5 δρόμφ λέαινα χαλαΐς / Πειρηναῖον ὀρῶσα πῶλον: the lioness is the Chimera; the colt of Peirene is Pegasus, the winged horse that sprang from the Gorgon (Medusa) when Perseus beheaded her. The spring Peirene at Corinth was created by the horse's hoof. See Hes. *Theo.* 319–25.

476–86 The ode began with peaceful, music-loving dolphins leaping about the prows of the ships; now four-footed horses, drawing the chariots of war,

are leaping on the sword *and* in the dusty field of battle. The *stabbing* or *bloody* sword has already been used to kill. “The king of those great men in arms / your marriage killed, / evil-minded daughter of Tyndareus” (479–81): the Chorus has finished its oblique allusions and in the epode makes a specific comparison with the things being done now, or done in recent history, and also foreshadows events to come. Where are the parallels between past and present, the ode and the action of the drama? In the bloodied sword of Perseus that struck the Gorgon’s neck? Achilles’ blade which cut down countless Trojans? The sword of Orestes which will slash Clytemnestra’s throat? In the horse-drawn chariot that will bring Clytemnestra—like a bride, but also like a conquering hero with spear-won prizes from the Trojan War—to the country dwelling of her daughter, who will engage her in verbal and then mortal combat? If Achilles and Orestes are the parallels, Achilles shows up Orestes as less of a hero, but Orestes tarnishes Achilles’ glitter by being less romantic and by turning the icon of the Gorgon on Achilles’ shield into the action of matricide that repulses even its agent.

478–9 τοῖωνδ’ ἄνακτα δοριπόνων ἔκανεν ἀνδρῶν: the Chorus leaves Achilles and turns abruptly to Agamemnon and then to the killing of Clytemnestra to get the story back on track. The use of the pl. shows that Achilles is but one example of the great men who fought with Agamemnon and, along with the heroes in the illustrations on his armor, an example for Orestes. See King 1980, 209 on Clytemnestra as a “mythic monster and epic victim” against whom the violence “seems to grow out of” the earlier descriptions of young heroes killing female monsters (the Gorgon, the Sphinx, the Chimera).

480 Τυνδαρίς: nom. for voc.; voc. Τυνδαρί is equally acceptable. Which daughter of Tyndareus is referred to, Helen or Clytemnestra? Both were too often married and are considered responsible for the deaths of men. The fact that the song is about the Trojan War makes it natural to understand Helen, but only in a convoluted way is Helen responsible for Agamemnon’s death. Clytemnestra is more likely.

481 κακόφρων κόρυς: Diggle (following Radermacher and Dindorf, respectively) reads κακόφρον κόρυς.

483–4 θανάτοις ἢ σάν: Schenkl’s emendation of mss. θανάτοισι κἄν. The pl. θανάτοις for a single death may be a lyric hyperbole, as if one death were

not enough (see LSJ for examples). Pl. for sg. is common in tragedy (see 34n, 123n, 137–8n). Diggle emends to: *τοιγάρ σοι ποτ' οὐρανίδα / πέμψουσιν θανάτου δίκαν*. The expression *θανάτου δίκαν*, however, meaning *death penalty, sentence of death* seems too legalistic and prosaic for the context.

487–698 SECOND EPISODE, in two parts: recognition 487–95; planning 596–698

487–595 Part 1 Recognition in three parts: 487–552 the tokens, Old Man and Electra; 553–84 Recognition, Orestes, Electra, Old Man; 585–95 Choral Celebration.

After 486 the Old Man enters along the *parodos* that leads to/from the highway. He has visited the grave of Agamemnon and so would enter by the same route as Orestes had in the prologue. England (101) suggested that the Old Man was fitted out with a mask to make him recognizable to the audience as Aeschylus, because through him the Aeschylean recognition scene is parodied. He is pulling (or carrying) a lamb and is out of breath. This character has been mentioned as the only one who could recognize Orestes, as if Orestes is aware that he is always recognized by some token (a weaving or a ring or, in the present case, a scar). See “Discussions” for a comparison of the Old Man, Orestes’ Paedagogus in *S. El.*, and the Nurse in *A. Cho.* The 98 lines of this scene have 22 resolutions: in positions 1 (488, 496, 497, 502, 507, 508); 2 (493, 506, 514, 539, 580); 4 (504, 506); 6 (503, 526, 533, 545, 555, 561, 563); 8 (497, 571), roughly one resolution for every 4 lines. The Old Man’s speech (487–502), however, contains 6 resolutions, which makes one resolution for every three lines. This high ratio must have made him sound very agitated. See 3n.)

487 ποῦ ποῦ: The repetition conveys the Old Man’s agitation (cf. *E. Tr.* 190–2, *IT* 1435, *Or.* 278, 470) and is less pathetic than impatient. The Old Man comes into view hoping he has finally arrived at the right spot on his long uphill trek. **πότνια δέσποινά τε:** Denniston points out that *πότνια* denotes the ordinary relationship between mistress and slave, while Euripides usually applies *δέσποινα* to divine beings or semi-deified abstractions (*χθών, νύξ, λήθη, αἰδώς, τύχη, ἀνάγκη, σοφία*). Cf. *E. Andr.* 492, *Or.* 1249, *S. Tr.* 405–9.

490–2 It is typical for old people to be aware of the various parts of their bodies because of the pain they suffer. The Old Man mentions three in just three lines: his feet, back, and knee.

490 ῥυσφ̣ γέροντι τῷδε . . . ποδί: the datives have been variously interpreted as reference (*for*) or instrument (*with*) or one of each. The phrasing is also difficult: does τῷδε go with γέροντι or ποδί? Possibilities include: “for a shriveled old man like me to get to on foot” or “for a wrinkled old man to get to with this foot.” τῷδε: see also 43n.

492 διπλὴν ἄκανθαν: *double thistle*, i.e., his spine is bent double. ἄκανθα is properly a thorn or thorny plant, but comes to mean also the *backbone* of a fish or of a human. Dryness and prickliness are its essential features.

493 ὦ θύγατερ: the Old Man is more informal with Electra than he was in talking about her to the Chorus.

495 ποίμνης νεογνὸν θρέμμ' ὑποσπᾶσας τόδε: the lamb he brings prefigures the golden lamb in the next ode, which according to the myth is the sign of the rightful king. The Old Man will in the course of the scene “discover” Orestes, expected to be the rightful king.

496 στεφάνους: garlands of flowers or leaves are worn at banquets by the guests, to make the occasion festive (E. *Alc.* 344, 796; Anacr. 75). τευχέων: synizesis (see 383n). τυρεύματα: on early cheese-making, see Homer's account of the Cyclops' cave, *Od.* 9.218–20; 244–9.

498–9 The ancient Greeks generally mixed one measure of wine with two of water (Alcaeus 163, Anacr. 76), but the proportions could vary depending on the potency of the wine and how strong a drink was wanted (Anacr. 33, 46). In the *Odyssey*, Maro's famously strong wine was mixed with twenty measures of water (H. *Od.* 9. 209–10). It is not entirely clear whether by “a less potent drink,” the Old Man means jokingly “water” or “weaker wine” that needed to be mixed with his good wine of higher concentration and bouquet.

500 τις: does he actually give a command to someone who is visible to the audience, and is his command carried out? Or do his commands, like the Farmer's, go unheeded? If the Farmer has a slave or two, why would they be hanging around the house awaiting a random command rather than helping in the fields?

501 τρύχει τῷδ' ἐμῶν πέπλων: the ragged garments of the Old Man indicate the lack of care that the royal couple exhibits to those who were

close to the murdered Agamemnon. See 185 where Electra refers to her clothes with similar words.

503–7 Electra’s five-line reply is emotionally laden, recalling her own, her brother’s, and her father’s suffering. It has five resolutions in positions 1 (507); 2 (506); 4 (504, 506); 6 (503). See 3n.

504–8 Cropp suggests a comparison to the lament of the old woman slave in A. *Cho.* 744–53.

504 **κακά**: Diggle emends to κακῶν gen. object after ἀνέμνησεν, to dissimilate it from τὰμὰ (see Diggle 1977, 115–16, cf. 1981, 37 and *comparanda*). This seems awkward because κακῶν would have to mean *your* (i.e., the Old Man’s) *troubles*: why would “my situation remind you of (your) troubles”? The vaguer “remind you of troubles” is lame. On the other hand, the emendation suggests that Electra is asking whether her troubles and her family’s misfortunes reminded the Old Man of his own troubles; after all he was cast out of the city by Aegisthus. τὰμὰ κακά as the subject would give us “Do my troubles remind you?” Remind him of what? Denniston suggests that ἀνέμνησεν is used absolutely (without an object) to mean something like “stir a memory (in you).” None of the emendations being entirely satisfactory (see also Cropp) we have chosen to retain κακά.

505 Denniston points out that the hissing sound effect of the sigmas in this line illustrates τὸ σίγμα τὸ Εὐριπίδου which the comic poets poked fun at (Plato, frg. K 29 [30], Eubulus frg. K 26 [26.27]).

507 **ἀνόνητ’**: *without profit*. Were Agamemnon alive, he would have taken care of his slave in his old age, much as Achilles took care of Phoenix. Men were responsible for looking after their *paedagogi* in their old age, just as children were responsible for taking care of their elderly parents. Cf. S. *El.* 1058–62, E. *Med.* 1029–35.

508–23 The story the Old Man tells Electra has only one resolution (position 2, 514), suggesting that he has calmed down and caught his breath (see 3n). It is unclear why Denniston thinks this must have been the Old Man’s first visit to Electra and the tomb. **διὰ χρόνου** “after so long” (504) is an indicator of indeterminate time and need not mean that they have not seen each other since the murder. Indeed, the speed with which Electra dispatched

her husband to get provisions from the Old Man and the promptness with which he came actually suggest a close relationship between them: he refers to her as “daughter” (493) or “child” (516).

508 ἀνόνηθ’: answers Electra’s ἀνόνητ’ of 507. See Mastronarde (1979, 41–2) on chiasmic responses, those that link the reply to the last words in a multiple question. “Electra’s main question is ‘why are you crying?’ (503), to which she adds a surmise-question (504–7) suggesting three possible objects of pity. . . . The Old Man’s response picks up the final comment.” (Mastronarde 1979, 42). “Yes, unprofitable. Still I did not endure this one thing.” The thought is a bit fuzzy. **τοῦτο**: highlighted by γε, points forward to what he is about to tell Electra. He turns quickly from the notion of his own profit or lack thereof to the neglect of Agamemnon’s tomb. **ἦνεσχόμεν**: see appendix of verbs.

509 πάρεργ’ ὁδοῦ: see line 63 where Electra claims that she and Orestes are turned into πάρεργα by her mother’s liaison with Aegisthus. This gives another hint about the location of Agamemnon’s tomb. We already know that it is outside the city because Orestes, though he is staying near the border and has not entered the city, has visited his father’s grave. Tombs are usually outside the city; epitaphs often address wayfarers. See S. *El.* 893–915 for another version of a visit to the tomb with opposite reaction.

510 ἐρημίας τυχών: cf. S. *El.* 897–8.

512 τύμβω δ’ ἀμφέθηκα μυρσίνας: myrtle is an aromatic evergreen shrub (genus *Myrtus*), native to the Mediterranean region. It was (and still is) a favorite plant for various kinds of ceremonial decoration. It was sacred to Aphrodite. In E. *Alc.*, it is mentioned (172), as part of Alcestis’ preparation for her own funeral (see Luschnig & Roisman). Later (778) Aegisthus cuts myrtle for a crown for his own head in preparation for his sacrifice to the Nymphs, at which he himself will soon be sacrificed.

517 οὐ γὰρ Ἀργείων γέ τις: because local people are afraid of Aegisthus. Cf. A. *Cho.* 173, 187–91. Chrysothemis in S. *El.* 909–15 thinks that only a close relative would make a hair-offering.

518 ἀλλ’ ἦλθ’ ἴσως που σὸς κασίγνητος λάθρα: the Old Man hints that he is beginning to suspect that the alleged messengers from Orestes might

in fact include Orestes. He hedges his suggestion with ἴσως ποῦ, a double equivocation, “just maybe?”

520–44 Parody of the recognition scene in *Cho.* 166–245. Aeschylus’ Electra readily seizes upon the tokens she finds at the tomb, the lock of hair and footprints that resemble her own, and the piece of cloth Orestes is carrying, which she recognizes as her own weaving, as evidence that Orestes has returned. Euripides’ more skeptical heroine mockingly rebuts the Old Man’s suggestions that these are signs of her brother’s presence. Her attitude is consistent with Euripides’ more doubting and subversive attitude. As Aristophanes observes, Euripides teaches one “to suspect everything” (Aristoph. *Frogs* 958). Electra doubts the gods’ help (198–9), and Orestes doubts heroic values (367–72n). See Hartigan 1991, 113 on the parody as a device “to emphasize the main character’s self-deception.” Since the nineteenth century, some scholars have regarded the lines on the recognition-tokens as an interpolation and have deleted them in whole or in part. Mau, for example, suggests deleting the entire passage; West 1980, 17–22 all but 524–6 and either 518–9 or 545–6. In contrast, others, such as Denniston; Lloyd-Jones, 177–8; Bond, 1–14; and Basta Donzelli 109–19, argue for retaining the scene in its entirety. We accept all the lines as genuine. In addition to following the sequence of Aeschylus’ tokens, the lines recall Aeschylus’ scene through verbal echoes. For example, Euripides uses the unusual word ὁμόπτερος (530, cf. *Cho.* 174) to describe the lock of hair, and σκέψαι . . . προστιθεῖσα (520) echoes Aeschylus’ σκέψαι . . . προσθεῖσα (230). By putting the criticism of the Aeschylean tokens in the mouth of an unsympathetic character, as Electra is in this scene, Euripides blunts rather than sharpens the critique. Electra’s own strictures contribute to characterizing her as a harsh and unpleasant young woman lacking in respect for the Old Man. Euripides creates a no-win situation. He debunks the notion that the tokens provide sufficient evidence of Orestes’ return, while at the same time portraying Electra as disrespectful and indulging in distortion to make her refutations. For the view that her criticisms are “on the surface at least, light-hearted . . .” see Denniston, 537n., and Bond, 7, who sees it as a “light-hearted burlesque, much in the spirit of the dramatic contest in *Frogs*.”

520 σκέψαι δὲ χαίτην προστιθεῖσα σὴ κόμη: this does not mean that he has taken the lock from the tomb and brought it with him; more likely he is inviting her to go there and have a look, as he does when he suggests that she match her foot with a possible footprint.

524–6 Electra cannot brook the idea that her brother may not be the courageous figure she thinks he should be. Yet her heroic expectations are inappropriate. It is with good reason that Orestes' furtive return is a core element in the story pattern, which none of the three tragedians tampers with. Had Orestes arrived openly, undisguised, Aegisthus would surely have had him killed before he could take revenge; and it would spoil the dramatic suspense that attaches to a disguised hero. At the same time her dismissal of the notion that he might be afraid of Aegisthus only draws attention to his hesitancy. See also 526n and "Discussions."

525 ἄν: belongs logically with μολεῖν but goes with δοκεῖς. The particle is often positioned closer to the verb of saying or thinking rather than to the infinitive governed by that verb.

526 δοκεῖς ἀδελφὸν τὸν ἐμὸν εὐθαρσῇ μολεῖν: an answer to 518. Of course Orestes always comes in secret. In Sophocles the fact that he is to use deception is the centerpiece of the plot. This Orestes, however, is less bold (εὐθαρσῇ) than his counterparts in Aeschylus and Sophocles.

527–46 Electra is stressing the differences between herself and her brother in gender and way of life as well as physical characteristics. There is no weaving to bind them together. They were so young when they parted that they have few memories even of a childhood together. They share a common bloodline, but Euripides does his best to remove family from consideration. Parents and children are estranged. Electra and her husband have no marital relations. Her mother killed her father. She and her brother have been separated since they were children and will be separated again when the play is done.

527–31 Electra offers two rather different arguments: that (a woman's) combing and (a man's) exercise would make it impossible for their hair to be alike; and that lots of people have similar hair, even if they are not family members. The continuative δέ (530) conveys the sense that the second argument, which cannot be denied, is meant to cover the possibility that the first does not hold. The man's hair would be stiff from being cut frequently for wrestling; the woman's would be softened from frequent combing. But in the specific circumstances, Electra's hair is cropped close in mourning and has not been given any feminine treatments, but exposed to the elements. Her brother, though not as badly off as she, is a wanderer and less likely to

be a frequenter of the wrestling schools than his contemporaries. He must, moreover, have grown his hair long if he could leave a lock on the grave.

532–7 Both the Old Man and Electra are so invested in their arguments that they make no sense. How matching shoe prints can indicate blood relationship is unclear. Yet Electra's claim that no footprint would show in rocky soil is refuted if the Old Man actually saw it.

532 εἰς ἵχνος βᾶσ' ἀρβύλης: "stepping into his shoe print." In A. *Cho.* Electra sees the prints of her brother's (and Pylades') bare feet (206–10) and matches the proportions of the heels and tendons to her own.

533 σύμμετρος: can mean either *equal* or *proportionate*. Electra seizes on the former so as to make the Old Man's suggestion nonsensical.

538–44 How old is Orestes? Traditionally the Trojan War lasted ten years. Orestes may have been born after Agamemnon left for Troy. In the *Odyssey* (11.452–3) Agamemnon complains that his wife "did not even permit me to fill my eyes with the sight of my son, but killed me before that." This could, but does not necessarily, mean that he never saw his son. In E. *IA* a more loving and considerate Clytemnestra brings Orestes, *still an infant* (ἔτι γάρ ἐστι νήπιος) to the camp at Aulis to delight her husband (621–2). After killing Agamemnon, Aegisthus reigned for seven years and in the eighth Orestes returned from exile (H. *Od.* 3.304–10). Although we do not know exactly when Clytemnestra sent Orestes away, it was probably before the return of Agamemnon (A. *Ag.* 877–9).

ἐκ τῶνδέ τοι παῖς ἐνθάδ' οὐ παραστατεῖ,
ἐμῶν τε καὶ σῶν κύριος πιστωμάτων,
ὥς χρῆν, Ὀρέστης· μηδὲ θαυμάσης τόδε.

For these reasons our child is not standing here, the keeper of our pledges, mine and yours, as he should be, Orestes. Do not be surprised at this.

At the time of his revenge, then, Orestes would be seventeen or eighteen. In A. *Cho.* (231–2) the weaving dismissed here by Electra is the final token that identifies Orestes for Electra:

ἰδοῦ δ' ὕφασμα τοῦτο, σῆς ἔργον χερός,
σπάθης τε πλεγγὰς ἢ δὲ θήρειον γραφὴν.

See this weaving, the work of your hand, strokes of your blade,
with its animal pattern.

The reference to or parody of Aeschylus is there for us, the audience. We remember the earlier scene and reactivate it alongside the play we are seeing/reading.

538 εἰ καί: εἰ can be understood either together with καί: “even if” (*GP* 300), or καί, although immediately following the conditional, does not cohere closely in sense with it [i.e., εἰ] but with what follows (*GP* 303–4), i.e., “but if in fact/in case.” The lost line after 538 probably referred either to Orestes’ presence or to his offerings at the tomb.

539 ἐξύφασμα: “a woven cloth from your loom.” The Old Man does not say he found a child’s (or any other) garment, as Electra wants to understand, so that she can refute the idea of the cloth as a token. In Aeschylus’ recognition scene, Orestes produces the piece of cloth, ὕφασμα, as a token (*Cho.* 231; cf. 538–44n). In both cases it could be a woven sash, a small or large piece of cloth, a blanket, or anything woven that a child could be wrapped in but not necessarily wear. Such a woven cloth, retained for identification, appears also in *Ion* 1413–26 (ὕφασμα ὕφην’, 1417).

541–4 Electra seems intent on poking fun at the Old Man for no good reason, other than to rule out any possibility that Orestes is hiding from Aegisthus. Unlike Aeschylus and Sophocles, Euripides allows his tragic characters (e.g., Menelaus in *TW* (1050) and Iphigenia in *IT* (740)), to indulge in humor. Electra’s quip here, however, is mocking and disrespectful. Nothing in the Old Man’s words suggests that he meant that Orestes was wearing clothes that Electra had woven.

545–6 “But either some stranger took pity on his grave and cut this hair or having seized spies of this land. . . .” Either the thought is incomplete (e.g., perhaps the Old Man cut in), or line 546 is corrupt, or both. The medial caesura in 546 is unusual for Euripides; see West 1982, 82–3 and n.18. Sophocles’ Electra speculates that the tomb offerings on Agamemnon’s grave were brought by someone for the dead Orestes (*El.* 932–3).

547 οἱ δὲ ξένοι ποῦ; picking up on Electra's ξένος (545) the Old Man cuts to the chase. If he has a suspicion that one of the strangers is Orestes, he covers it up by saying he wants to question them. Electra does not get the connection that these strangers might be the ones who placed the lock of hair. The new character has only two pieces of information: he has heard from Electra's husband that strangers have come with news of Orestes and he has learned from visiting the site that someone (presumably a stranger) has made offerings at the tomb of Agamemnon.

549 λαιψηρῷ ποδί: the Old Man's answer in 550–1 supports Denniston's observation that Electra points to the light and nimble tread of the two aristocrats in antithesis to "the tramp of the muscle-bound farmers." She thus again needles the Old Man, who barely made it to her hovel (489–92).

550–1 Denniston believes that such "democratic sentiments are out of place on the lips of an old family retainer." Questioning and criticizing the prevailing social values is characteristic of the sophistic spirit of this play. The Old Man repeats what has already been stated both by the Farmer in 35–8 and Orestes in 367–72. In fact, the Old Man's aside is shown to be correct at the end of the play, when the well-born Orestes proves to be a matricide and Apollo's wisdom is questioned (1192–7, 1245–6).

550 ἄλλ: *well*, approving (*GP* 19–20). **ἐν . . . κιβδήλῳ:** a neut. adjective used as an abstract noun; "in [the category of] deceptiveness." For the metaphor from coinage see *Med.* 516 and *Hipp.* 616. Orestes picks it up at 558–9. It is also about authenticity, fitting well with Electra's tendency to doubt and with Orestes' questioning of attitudes about nobility.

553–4 Orestes' comment is callous and rude.

553 Ἥλέκτρα: it is unusual for a stranger, which Orestes claims to be, to address a woman by her first name (Denniston), even if he has been accepted as a friend in the house (Cropp). The proper address would have been: γόναι. Orestes has apparently forgotten himself (or forgotten that he is incognito). Electra continues to call Orestes by the generic ξένος (555, 562; cf. 302).

555 ἄμός: epic form for ἡμέτερος. Dramatic irony: *our* instead of *my*.

558–9 ἀργύρου . . . / λαμπρὸν χαρακτήρ'; continuing the metaphor of coinage from 550. A new coin is more suspect than an older one. The image

evokes the world of coin-making and faking, a world anachronistic to the heroic age in which the play is set. Nonetheless, the audience would have understood the reference. The scar on Orestes' forehead is the *stamp* that Orestes compares to the metal. For anachronisms in Greek tragedy, see Easterling 1985, Knox 1957, 61. **ἡ προσεικάζει μέ τφ;** “is he comparing me to someone?” Orestes is ready to be recognized.

560 Ὀρέστου σ' ἥλιχ': cf. H. *Od.* 19.358, σοῖο ἄνακτος ὁμήλικα, *a contemporary of your king*.

561–79 Unlike the recognitions in Aeschylus and Sophocles, which are outcomes of conversation between Electra and Orestes, the recognition in Euripides' play emerges from stichomythia between Electra and the Old Man while Orestes says nothing to advance or effect it.

561–2 τί δὲ κυκλεῖ πέριξ πόδα; “Why is he walking around me?” We have to assume that the Old Man is not just walking round and round, but around Orestes. He must have spotted something familiar about the young man and was looking for the scar. That his circling must have raised some anxiety is suggested by Electra's reply in 562.

562 ξένε: with all the talk of Orestes and his proximity, it is part of the tragic irony that Electra must continue (see 259, 302, 555) to call him ξένε.

564 τί τῶν ἀπόντων ἢ τί τῶν ὄντων πέρι; In Greek usage such antitheses are often fully expressed. “For what of all that is here and not here?” “For what in all the world?” “Pray for what? For things I don't have or those I do?” It seems a bit contrived, but continues the wordplay on Orestes' simultaneous presence and absence (cf. 391). Similar formulations are found in two Sophoclean passages: *El.* 305–6: μέλλων γὰρ ἀεὶ δρᾶν τι τὰς οὔσας τέ μου / καὶ τὰς ἀπούσας ἐλπίδας διέφθορεν. (*For by always being about to do something, he has destroyed / the hopes I had and those I don't dare have.*) and in *Ant.* 1108–9: ἵτ' ἵτ' ὁπάονες, / οἳ τ' ὄντες οἳ τ' ἀπόντες (*Go, go, my servants, you who are here and you who aren't*). Denniston, 564n, comments: “the antithesis is an odd one”; as it certainly is in this context, so that one wonders if Euripides is not parodying Sophocles.

566 ἰδοῦ: an exclamation, but perhaps literal here: “*See*, I am calling on the gods.” She does this with a gesture rather than with words. **θεοῦς:** synizesis, see 383n.

568 μή = ἄρα μή, expecting a negative answer (Smyth 1772, 2651). “I’ve been looking for some time—are you insane?” Electra yet again shows her lack of respect for the Old Man (see 524). Her tendency to disrespect has already been shown in her superciliousness toward her husband in 404–5, 408. Her tone here is even more uncivil than that Orestes adopted toward the Old Man in 553–4. Similar reactions are found in *H. Od.* 23.10–14 and *S. El.* 879, 920. Penelope questions Eurycleia’s sanity when the latter tells her that Odysseus has returned. Electra questions Chrysothemis’ sanity when she tells her that Orestes has returned.

571 ὀρᾶν: infinitive with unstated nom. subject presupposing εἶπον on the basis of εἶπας in line 570.

572–4 ποῖον χαρακτηρ’ εἰσιδών, ᾧ πείσομαι; Electra needs proof. After having her discount the Aeschylean tokens of recognition, Euripides resorts to a Homeric token: the scar. οὐλήν: the audience was well acquainted with the scar on Odysseus’ leg by which Eurycleia recognizes him (*H. Od.* 19.390–475) and which he uses to identify himself to his herdsmen, Eumaeus and Philoetius (*Od.* 21.217–20):

εἰ δ’ ἄγε δῆ, καὶ σῆμα ἀριφραδὲς ἄλλο τι δείξω,
 ὄφρα μ’ ἐὺ γνώτον πιστωθῆτόν τ’ ἐνὶ θυμῷ,
 οὐλήν, τήν ποτέ με σῦς ἤλασε λευκῷ ὀδόντι
 Παρνησόνδ’ ἐλθόντα σὺν υἰάσιν Αὐτολύκοιο.

Come then and I will show you something else, a very clear sign so that you will know me and believe in your hearts, the scar which long ago a boar inflicted on me with his white tusk when I went to Parnassus with Autolycus’ sons.

The nature of Orestes’ scar infantilizes him: he was not participating in a manly hunt in the wilds, but playing in his own palace courtyard with his big sister and pet deer. He does not achieve the coming of age Odysseus does in his first manly adventure (see Goff, 261–5). Sophocles has Orestes present Electra with Agamemnon’s signet ring as the evidentiary token (*El.* 1222–3).

573–4 The variations in the stichomythia are effective: the Old Man extends his part to two lines for the dramatic information about the scar that ends all doubt. See also on 579–81.

576 -πίτνειν = -πίπτειν: metrically convenient poetic form.

579–81 The siblings accept and embrace each other in a more emotional or excited ANTILABE (or half line stichomythia, in which each trimeter is divided between two speakers; cf. *S. El.* 1220–6). Orestes, who has been silent throughout the discussion of the tokens and the recognition scene *per se*, finally speaks.

581–4 Orestes declares that if he does not accomplish the revenge, people will have to stop believing in the gods because justice will not have prevailed over wrong. There is an irony here. Orestes says that he is confident that he will accomplish his revenge and, in fact, does so, but the end of the play casts doubt on the wisdom of Apollo and on whether justice was really attained or is attainable. Put differently, Orestes' confidence that he will accomplish the revenge is based on his belief in the gods and in the victory of justice; but, even though he accomplishes his goal, the play undercuts his motivating beliefs.

581 ἐκεῖνος εἰ σύ; “Are you he?” How is this scene to be played? Does Electra simply accept Orestes, as her Aeschylean counterpart does? Is this scene played for comic relief to show the horrible discrepancy between real life and the unnatural deed the characters are about to do? Is it written in an egalitarian spirit to allow an anonymous slave a real part in the myth as it unfolds and reaches its destined end? The end of this scene should be a happy event but is even more brief than its counterpart in Sophocles, where the reunion is cut short by the old Paedagogus. Here Orestes cuts short their embraces (597): “in time we will share them again.” Now that he has been recognized he has to act the part of Orestes without delay.

582 “Still, if I pull in the catch I’m going after. . . .” Cropp and Diggle (following Vitelli) assume a missing line containing the apodosis of the condition, which probably indicated their future triumph. Denniston believes that the sudden break is actually an APOSIOPSIS, a rhetorical device in which the speaker or writer deliberately stops short and leaves a statement unfinished, giving the impression that he/she is unwilling or unable to continue. Indeed, it would suit Orestes not to have an apodosis here that would clearly indicate future matricide. As his next statement shows, he prefers nebulous utterances about what must happen next. ἀνσπάσσομαι < ἀνασπάω with apocope of the prefix, see 288n.

583–4 For this thought, see 198–200n.

585–95 CHORAL INTERLUDE. This short song of celebration addressing both Orestes and Electra marks the end of the recognition scene and forms a transition to the scene in which Orestes and Electra, guided by the Old Man, plan the murders. For similar songs that interrupt the continuity of the dramatic action, see A. *PB* 687–95, S. *Tr.* 205–24, E. *Hipp.* 362–72 ~ 669–79, *Supp.* 918–24. The meter is mostly dochmiac, with two mixed dimeters (586, 588) and one anapestic line (590). It allows the brother and sister a moment to embrace and separate. It is full of emotional repetitions: 585 ἔμολες ἔμολες; 590 θεὸς αὖ θεός; 592–3 ἄνεχε χέρας, ἄνεχε λόγον; 594 τύχα σοι τύχα.

585–9 Orestes is compared to a torch, suggesting the light that will dispel the darkness of the illicit rule of Agamemnon's murderers. In contrast, the depiction of Paris as the torch that would light Troy refers to the torch's incendiary qualities (Apoll. 3.12.5). In S. *El.* 66 Orestes compares himself to a star. The motif of the torch bringing light out of darkness also appears throughout Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. In the *Agamemnon*, the signal flashes announcing the fall of Troy come just before dawn (Ag. 22–5, 28–30). Torches and signal fires are associated with Clytemnestra in the first two plays of the *Oresteia*: for example, at Ag. 281–316 she describes the relay of signals she has set up to bring the news to her; in *Cho.* 536–7 torches flare in the darkness to banish Clytemnestra's fear after her nightmare that presages Orestes' return. In *Eum.* torches are associated with the civic reconciliation at the end of the trilogy (1029, 1041–2). Here, Orestes is the beacon light (587) which is another link with his parents: he is the fulfillment of the signal fires announcing the fall of Troy and the homecoming of Agamemnon.

589 ἀλαίνων see 200–6n.

591 νίκαν: while Orestes' earlier claim that the revenge will bring the victory of justice over wrong (583–4) refers to the outcome of the revenge in the future, the Chorus sees the wished-for victory already in Orestes' arrival. Sophocles' *Electra* similarly translates Orestes' arrival into the revenge before it has actually been carried out (1232–1338). Cf. Roisman 2000, 190–9; 2008, 110–11.

596–698 SECOND EPISODE, Part 2 Murder Plot: Orestes, Electra, Old Man

In contrast to the jubilation of the meetings of brother and sister in Aeschylus' and especially Sophocles' recognition scenes (*Cho.* 235–45 and *El.* 1227–87 respectively), their meeting in Euripides' play is conspicuously without elation. The dramatic emphasis is on Orestes' uncertainty as to how to carry out the revenge. This lack of warmth between the siblings is further underscored by the emotionalism of the Chorus' song (585–95) upon learning that Orestes is here. In Sophocles' play, the Chorus comments on Orestes' arrival only after Electra stirs them to do so (1227–9). In Aeschylus they do not comment at all. About two-fifths (612–40) of the 73 lines of this stichomythic passage are devoted to plotting the murder of Aegisthus; the rest to Clytemnestra and to the siblings' prayer for success. The stichomythia has 13 resolutions with a ratio of 1:5.6 in positions 2 (653), 4 (633), 6 (614, 625, 651, 656, 667, 677, 681, 683, 684), 8 (645), 10 (616). See 3n.

It is significant that Aegisthus is never at the palace when Orestes arrives. Even in Euripides' version, in which Orestes never reaches the palace, Aegisthus is not there. It is as if all three playwrights, whether intentionally or not, want to represent him as an intruder whose natural place is not in the house of Agamemnon. In Aeschylus he must be summoned home (by the old Nurse of Orestes), but despite the delay he is the first to be killed. Orestes hopes to meet him first and dispatch him, but instead is met at the door by his mother, who does not recognize him. In Sophocles he is at his country estate and is to be killed on his return, but (as it turns out) he is killed after the assassination of Clytemnestra and indeed after the end of the play. In Euripides he is at his estate preparing a sacrifice to the Nymphs, in what is described as a beautiful, well-watered, garden-like area (another Odyssean allusion). What is interesting is the assumption that—paranoid though he is said to be—Aegisthus is expected to welcome the guests, and in the actual event he is reported to do so with more than nominal hospitality. In the other *Electra* plays, he is killed at the palace. The planning for Clytemnestra's murder is also a novelty. It further stresses the displacement, the alienation, the lack of communication among all the characters. Neither Aegisthus nor Clytemnestra can enjoy the fruits of their crime: both live in fear and isolation, but both are accommodating to others.

596–611 Orestes' nine-line speech to Electra has four resolutions, averaging one resolution per two lines: 2 (600), 6 (599, 603), 8 (600). This is a very high

rate and must indicate his emotionally wrought-up state. In contrast, the Old Man's reply (605–11) contains no resolutions at all. See 3n.

596–7 Orestes cuts off the exchange with his sister and turns to the plot. Secret recognition scenes usually include some caution lest others overhear, cf. H. *Od.* 21.228–9; A. *Cho.* 264–8, S. *El.* 1288–94, E. *IT* 902–6. In Sophocles, it is the old retainer who puts an end to the joyful reunion. He has not spent all those years raising Orestes to be a murderer just to see his plan foiled by the exuberance of the young brother and sister. In Aeschylus, Orestes ends the recognition scene with an invocation of Zeus (*Cho.* beginning at 246), but the two siblings participate together in the long KOMMOS (a song of mourning between characters and chorus) that follows. In Euripides, as it turns out, there will be no possibility of renewing the affectionate embraces hereafter, except for a brief farewell before they are forever separated.

598–646 From here to the end of the planning of Aegisthus' murder, Orestes converses solely with the Old Man.

598 καίριος γὰρ ἥλυθες: though καίριος refers to place in Homer (*in the right place, in a vital organ*) and continues to be so used, it also took on reference to time: *in season, at the right time*. Greek often uses adjectives of time where English would use an adverb.

599 φονέα: the alpha is short as in 763. Cf. *Hec.* 882, *Cyclops* 327. See La Roche, 1–3.

600 This line was excised by Wilamowitz on the grounds that it does not befit the hesitant Orestes to raise the idea of killing his mother. Orestes has, however, already raised the idea in 89, when he declares his intention to take revenge on his father's "murderers," in the pl. Furthermore, though he expresses amazement at Electra's enthusiasm (282), he probably feels admiration rather than disapprobation. See 614 and 646 for his acceptance and determination to kill his mother. When he gets closer to the deed, like his Aeschylean counterpart, he expresses doubt, without which he would seem less human and natural. Canter's insertion of <τῇν> after τε mends the meter.

601 ἔστιν . . . εὐμενὲς φίλων; lit. "Is there in Argos any loyalty of friends to me?" In certain situations, a positive feeling, εὐμενὲς *well-disposed*, can

indicate loyalty; here as a neut. noun for an abstraction (as in 345, 550, cf. S. *El.* 1203). See Roisman 1984 *passim*. Orestes needs not only persons who like him, but people who would agree to put their personal interests and safety at risk for him.

602 ἡ πάντ' ἀνεσκευάσμεθ': the verb ἀνεσκευάζω, (in the pass. *be bankrupt* or *be destroyed*) etymologically means *pack up and remove the baggage*, τὰ σκεύη, making it all the more poignant: not only is Orestes an exile, but all traces of him have been removed from the household. The original audience would not have known it, but Orestes is never to reclaim his home and patrimony in Argos so he remains *packed and removed*.

605–6 οὐδεὶς δυστυχοῦντί σοι φίλος: this is a truism (cf. “a friend in need is a friend indeed”). For the gnomic expression, cf. 82–5, Theognis 79–82, S. *Aj.* 680–3. E. *HF* 57–9, *Phoen.* 402–3.

606 εὔρημα γάρ τοι χρῆμα: εὔρημα γὰρ τὸ χρῆμα is the mss. reading (corrected to τοι by Seidler). The jingly ring might be intentional. Denniston suggests that it may be a proverb. χρῆμα is often used idiomatically or colloquially as in τί χρῆμα; *why?* or in Aristoph. *Clouds*, 2 τὸ χρῆμα τῶν νυκτῶν ὅσον (“this matter of nights how long!” meaning “will this night never end!”).

610–11 In both Euripides' and Sophocles' plays, the *paedagogi* facilitate the revenge. The Old Man's prediction proves mistaken at the end of Euripides' play. Orestes recovers neither his paternal palace nor his city.

610 ἐν χειρὶ τῇ σῇ πάντ' ἔχεις καὶ τῇ τύχῃ: the hand symbolizes personal action (cf. 10). Much also depends on luck in this risky undertaking. Orestes finds himself altogether too lucky as it turns out.

614 ἥκω 'πὶ τόνδε στέφανον: the crown is an athletic metaphor, a motif in the play: 528 (Electra pictures her brother as an athletic young man), 659 (the murder plot is compared to a race), 686 (Electra uses a wrestling metaphor), 751 (she refers to the death struggle as an *agōn*), 761–2 (the messenger calls Electra and the Chorus καλλίνικοι and refers to the victory of Orestes), 854 (Orestes is crowned victor by the servants of Aegisthus), 862–5 (the Chorus credits Orestes with a victory surpassing that at the Olympic games), 880–9 (Electra crowns her brother and Pylades as victors, explicitly comparing them to athletes). At this point there seems to be no irony on the speakers' parts.

615 **τειχέων**: synizesis (see 383n). **έλθων ἐντὸς οὐδ' ἂν εἶ**: “not (by) going inside even if. . . .”

616 **δεξιαῖς**: sc. **χερσί**. “He has the advantage of lookouts and spearmen’s right hands.” **δορυφόρων**: *spearmen*, the standard term for *bodyguards*. Aeschylus’ chorus uses the same term (*Cho.* 769) when they tell the Nurse not to relay Clytemnestra’s message to Aegisthus, but simply tell him to return.

618 **σὺ δὴ τοῦνθένδε βούλευσον**: Orestes relies on the advice of others. See also 669. See “Discussions.”

625 **Νύμφαις ἐπόρσυν' ἔροτιν**: the mountain Nymphs are divinities of springs and are worshipped at specific locations. Their name means *bride* or *marriageable young woman*. They are companions of Artemis and are associated with fertility and childbirth as well as with good health and vigor. **ἔροτιν** = **ἐορτήν**: according to the scholiast and Eustathius, this is an Aeolic form; according to Hesychius it is Cyprian.

626 **τροφεῖα παίδων ἢ πρὸ μέλλοντος τόκου**: since Electra had said that Clytemnestra bears children to Aegisthus (62), this plants the possibility that Clytemnestra may be pregnant.

627 **οὐκ οἶδα πλὴν ἓν**: “I know but one thing.” A phrase that is repeated in Euripides, see 752, *Hipp.* 599, *Supp.* 933, *HF* 1143, *Ion* 311.

629 **οὐδεὶς παρὴν Ἀργεῖος, οἰκεία δὲ χεῖρ**: Aegisthus is accompanied only by his household slaves, who are not Argive citizens.

631 **οἳ σέ γ' οὐκ εἰδὼν ποτε**: in the event one of these slaves does recognize Orestes after he has killed Aegisthus and identified himself (852–3).

633 **δούλων γὰρ ἴδιον τοῦτο, σοὶ δὲ σύμφορον**: on Euripides’ less derogatory attitudes to slaves, see Synodinou, 100. It is ironic, and at the same time true to life, that the disparaging comment about Aegisthus’ slaves should issue from the mouth of a slave.

637 **κοινωνόν**: *companion, partner*. The same word Orestes used for his mother as “partner in the unholy union” with Aegisthus (600).

639 πρὸς τὸ πίπτειν: for forms of πίπτω and its derivatives in a metaphor from dice-casting see E. *HF* 1228, *Hipp.* 718, *IA* 1343, A. Ag. 32–4.

643 See 29–30n on Clytemnestra’s fear of the people’s disapproval.

646–7 When Clytemnestra’s whereabouts come up, Electra intrudes into the conversation to declare that she herself will see to the killing of her mother, even though Orestes never asks her to do so. This intrusion breaks Electra’s longest silence, 62 lines, in any of the play’s dialogues. Earlier, Electra had left the stage for 30 lines (82–111), when she went to bring water from the stream and for 68 lines (425–92; at 493 the Old Man catches sight of her) to prepare the meal for the guests. After 698 she exits into the house for 52 lines to prepare for the outcome of Orestes’ attempt on Aegisthus’ life and is called out by the chorus at 750 after the “Thyestes ode.” Following 872 she leaves briefly to fetch the garlands from the house for Orestes and Pylades, and finally she will enter her hovel behind Clytemnestra at 1146 to reemerge after the murder at 1172 with Orestes and Pylades. With these exceptions (about 180 lines), Electra is onstage for the entire play. In A. *Cho.* Electra exits the play about halfway through (584), never to return. In Sophocles’ play, she is on stage for all but 14 lines (1384–97) after her initial entrance at line 86. Her interjection here, at the first opportunity, that she will take care of her mother’s murder, reinforces her earlier statement that she is prepared to kill her mother (281) and underscores the hatred she bears her. As Denniston points out, the obvious answer to Orestes’ question would be “by waiting till she (Clytemnestra) arrives.” Her participation in the actual planning with the ruse of the false birth and in carrying out the murder of her mother is unique and is doubtless an invention of Euripides. The Old Man is now no longer focal and becomes merely an instrument in the plot.

648 ἐκεῖνα: the death of Aegisthus, yet to come.

650 We follow L in assigning the line to the Old Man, whom Electra addresses in the next line. In ancient dramatic texts there is rarely identification of speakers; see Turner, 12–13.

652 ἄρσενος: because Aegisthus feared a son of Electra growing up to take vengeance and carry on the blood feud, the sex of the child is a necessary detail; the fact that the (imaginary) child is a boy will bring Clytemnestra to

her daughter's side. Electra's choice of bait may be motivated by her frustration as a virgin who has never given birth, by her jealousy of her mother who has children with Aegisthus, and by anger at her mother's acquiescence to Aegisthus' marrying her off below her class, so that any children she might bear would lack nobility. The invention of a baby for Electra is made even more grotesque by the continued fertility of Clytemnestra in contrast to her daughter's extended virginity. Dramatically and thematically, it ties in well with the fact that Clytemnestra makes a detour from her intended sacrifice to the Nymphs, whose functions included fostering fertility, to visit her daughter, who has supposedly given birth (see on 625, 626).

653 The Old Man seems to believe that Electra has actually borne a child.

654 δέχ' ἡλίους: *ten days ago*. A woman was considered ritually unclean through the labor, the birth, and for ten days after the birth. She kept apart from society and was gradually purified, the pollution finally dissipating on the fortieth day (Parker 1983, 48–52). At the tenth-day ceremony, called the δεκάτη, the baby was given his name (a first-born boy was usually named for his paternal grandfather). It was a formal occasion for the acknowledgment of the child as a member of the family. See Garland 1990, 94–6, 61–3. Cf. line 1128 and note.

655 The Old Man apparently still does not grasp why Electra wants him to tell Clytemnestra that she has given birth.

656–7 πότεν: literally, *whence?* or *where from?* The term is usually dismissive of the previous speaker's comments, and sometimes conveys a touch of contempt. "She will come. . . . What makes you think that? Why do you think she cares about you, child?" Cf. *E. Alc.* 95. This use of πότεν seems to be colloquial; aside from Euripides, it is found only in comedy and prose.

658 ἀξίωμα: the word is semantically neutral: "that of which one is thought worthy." Electra's child with the Farmer will not be considered worthy, however. In effect, Electra is saying that her mother is a hypocrite who will regret her child's low birth. When Clytemnestra actually arrives on stage, she shows herself to be much less hypocritical than Electra thinks she is. See Denniston.

659 **κομπήν**: the *turning post* or the *finishing post* in a single race, a way of telling Electra to get to the point. The Old Man does not understand the connection between Clytemnestra's coming to Electra's hovel when she learns that Electra has given birth and Electra's plans to kill her. After 653 and 655, this is the Old Man's third failure to follow Electra's plot. Euripides seems to be mocking his slow understanding, and maybe that of the audience as well, by making it necessary for Electra to spell out connections that really are quite easy to understand.

660–4 Electra actually never discloses how her mother is to be murdered, except that it will be done in her house and in the usual way.

663 “If only I may die, once I’ve seen this!” Cf. 281.

671–84 A large part of A. *Cho.* (306–509) is taken up by the *kommos* in which Electra, Orestes, and the chorus call upon the spirit of Agamemnon and other powers to come to their aid. These invocations in Euripides’ *Electra* are a faint echo of that powerful, violent, and bloodcurdling scene. See “Discussions.”

671–83 The lines have been differently assigned. We follow Murray’s attributions, for the considerations of which, see Denniston.

678 **χείρας ἢ δίδωμ’ ἐμάς**: Electra is beating the earth with her hands (cf. H. *Il.* 9.568).

683 The transposition of 682 and 683 is certain. 683 complements 681. 684 answers 682.

684 **ἄκμή**: *high time*. The Paedagogus in S. *El.* (22, 1338) similarly uses this word to urge Orestes and Electra to get on with the revenge. In A. *Cho.* it is the Coryphaeus who reminds the two siblings that the time for action has come (510–13).

685–98 Some scholars see some or all of 685–92 as “histrionic rewriting” which duplicates Electra’s thoughts of suicide in 695–8, and think that the lines are interpolated (see Page 1934, 75–6). However, there is more than simple duplication of Electra’s suicide threat. In 685–92, Electra states that

she will commit suicide if Orestes dies; in 694–8 she explains that her reason will be to avoid rape by Orestes' enemies (σῶμ' ἐμὸν καθυβρίσαι). Actually, repetition is a feature of Electra's entire speech, see 687: "I too am dead: don't speak of me as one who lives." Its function is to add pathos.

685 **Αἴγισθον θανεῖν**: either an indirect command "(that) Aegisthus (is) to die" (Denniston), or infinitive-clause expressing a wish "that Aegisthus may die." (Smyth 2014)

686 **παλαισθεῖς**: metaphors from wrestling are common in both Greek poetry and prose, cf. A. Ag. 171–2. The 'p' sound appears three times in this line.

688 **γὰρ ἦπαρ**: the mss. have *κάρα γὰρ head*. Stabbing one's head is not an easy way to commit suicide. The usual, though masculine, method is to stab oneself in the liver or heart. ἦπαρ was suggested by Geel; *κέαρ γὰρ heart* by Reiske. The more common method of female suicide was by hanging, which was regarded as a disgraceful way to die. Killing oneself with a sword was considered more courageous (Loraux, 8–17).

694–5 **εἰ πυρσεύετε / κραυγὴν**: "light-up with beacon fires to carry the news," a metaphor for carrying the news clearly and rapidly, as is indeed done in 747–60. The signal torch is compared to the cry of victory or defeat. It is likely that this refers through ironic contrast to Clytemnestra's speech on the signal fires that bring her news of the fall of Troy in A. Ag. 281–316 (with its refrain of *πυρός* at the end of lines 282, 299, 304, 311; also 295 *πυρί*), which in turn tells her that she should expect Agamemnon and plan for his murder. For words denoting light applied to sound, Denniston gives S. OT 186 *παιὰν δὲ λάμπει* "the song flashes out"; 473–5 *ἔλαμψε . . . φάμα* "the message has just flashed." See also A. Sept. 103, *κτύπον δέδορκα* "I see the sound."

697–8 "For when defeated I will never allow my enemies to cause outrage to my body as a reprisal." The outrage may refer either to rape or torture. In H. II. 2.354–6, Nestor instructs the Argive soldiers not to stop fighting until each has lain with a Trojan woman to avenge Helen's adultery. In S. El., Chrysothemis is concerned that she and her sister will be tortured if Electra's plans for revenge are uncovered (1007–8). For similar declarations, see E. Hel. 835–42 and Ion 1061–73. Euripides' Medea prefers to kill her sons herself, rather than have them fall "by an enemy's hand" Med. 1236–41.

699–746 SECOND STASIMON (second major choral song): Thyestes and the Golden Lamb.

At the end of the second episode and before this stasimon, Orestes goes off (along the parodos by which he entered, stage left), guided by the old servant to an imaginary middle distance, one of Aegisthus' country estates along the road to Argos, not so very far away as to be out of earshot. The Old Man will continue along the road to Argos with his message for Clytemnestra. At the end of this ode, the Chorus, by claiming to hear sounds from the murder scene, makes the noise more real to the audience so that they will know that the amorphous distant sounds are part of the play (746–50).

The second stasimon, like the first, is dithyrambic. While the first murder is to be imagined as taking place off in the distance, the Chorus sings of a past event (a generation before the time of the first stasimon) in the city and of secret criminal doings in the palace, which bring context to the murder of Aegisthus. The Chorus goes back to an earlier adultery and an earlier dispute over sovereignty, which legitimizes Orestes' revenge on Aegisthus as well as on his mother, who, in her betrayal, parallels Atreus' wife. The Chorus presents Thyestes' seduction of Aerope, in order to get the golden lamb, as the source of the affliction of Agamemnon's house (720–1). Since in other treatments of the myth Euripides traces the curse on the house of Atreus all the way back to Pelops (*Or.* 988–96, cf. *Hel.* 386–7), here by going only as far back as Atreus and Thyestes, he clearly wished to present the earlier seduction as a parallel to that of Clytemnestra by Thyestes' son, Aegisthus. Thus a beginning is given to the story of Aegisthus just before he is killed offstage. Euripides also purposely avoids mentioning Atreus' revenge on Thyestes—killing his sons and serving their flesh to him at a banquet—the horror of which is brought out in the *Oresteia* (*Ag.* 1085–97, 1217–22, 1242–4, 1338, 1500–4, 1577–1603). This suppression could stem from Euripides' wish to avoid the issue of relationship between parents and children, which culminates in the matricide to come—the last revenge in the myth of the Pelopid house, an act that is not discussed at any length in this play prior to its occurrence, apart from its planning. See Mulryne, Rosivach, Morwood. Another reason may be that the poet did not want to hint at the justice of Thyestes' or Aegisthus' cause.

As in the first ode, a bright mythological picture turns dark. This time the story starts with hints of a bucolic landscape but turns into a tale of treachery, seduction, and usurpation. The physical house that was to be purified by revenge turns out to be of no interest in Euripides' version. It is already empty. The country house that Euripides substitutes for the palace

of the Atreidae will turn out to be just as morally squalid as its counterpart in the city, so that the longing for the purity or simplicity of rustic life is an example of nostalgia for something never known. The cosmic outcome, the reversal of the sun's course, seems all the more outlandish and unbelievable when we consider that it refers to recent history, within the memory of the older generation, people the age of the Old Man who cared for Agamemnon in his childhood.

Strophe 1: The golden lamb is brought from the country to the city and becomes an object of treachery. It was to be the symbol of the sovereignty of Atreus.

Antistrophe 1 leads from celebration to Thyestes' crime and back to the usurped lamb.

Strophe 2: Zeus reverses the sun's course and causes climate change around the globe.

Antistrophe 2 reflects on the purpose of such awesome stories of divine intervention and on Clytemnestra's crime.

699–706 The two principal versions of the golden lamb were that Atreus promised to sacrifice to Artemis the best in his flock, but when the golden lamb appeared among his flocks, he kept it for himself. This caused Artemis' anger at Atreus, which manifested itself in the next generation toward Agamemnon (Apoll. *Epitome* 2.10–11). The second version was that Hermes was angry at Pelops for killing his son, Myrtilus, and placed the golden lamb among Atreus' flocks knowing it would be a cause of dissension (E. *Or.* 995–1010). Euripides' version, in which Pan gives the lamb as a gift to Atreus, seems devoid of any malicious or punitive intent, although Myrtilus and Pan are both Hermes' sons, and according to *Or.* 997–1000 the lamb was born in Hermes' flock.

699–705 ἀταλᾶς ὑπὸ †ματέρος Ἀργείων †: Murray prints :

ἀταλᾶς ὑπὸ ματρὸς <ᾗρν'>
 Ἀργείων
 ὀρέων ποτὲ κληδὼν ἐν
 πολιαῖσι μένει φήμαις
 εὐαρμόστοις ἐν καλάμοις
 Πᾶνα μοῦσαν ἠδύθορον

700

πνέοντ', ἄγρων ταμίαν,
χρυσέαν καλλιπλόκαμον

705

Murray takes <ἄρν> from 705, where he believes it was wrongly placed because of miscopying from 719 in the antistrophe (χρυσέας ἄρνος . . .), and moves it to 699. The ms reading at 705 is ἄρνα καλλιπλόκαμον. καλλιπλόκαμον was shortened to καλλίποκον by Heath as the more suitable word to apply to an animal (since πλοκαμοί properly means *hair* as opposed to πόκος, *wool* or *fleece*) and to correspond to line 719, but the last word in 719 (ἐπίλογοι) is also in doubt, because its sense is uncertain: of ἐπίλογοι, Murray writes, “*non intellegitur*.”

701 πολιᾱῖσι . . . φήμαις: like English *hoary* (*white* or *gray*) πολιός is used metaphorically to mean “venerable with age.”

702–3 εὐαρμόστοις ἐν καλάμοις Πᾶνα: Pan played the *panpipes*, called the σύριγξ, to his flocks.

704 ἄγρων ταμίαν: Pan is called the *steward* (or *treasurer*) of the lamb, perhaps because it is so valuable.

706–12 The common interpretation is that the golden lamb became the token of Argive sovereignty: whoever possessed it was entitled to rule Argos, much like the golden ram whose fleece Jason had to retrieve in order to reclaim the rule over Thessaly. The Myceneans were then summoned to ratify Atreus’ kingship.

706–7 πετρίνοις δ’ ἐπιστάς κᾶρυξ ἰάχει βάθροις: the herald delivers his proclamation from a stone platform in the agora. See Camp 101–2 on the oath-stone, where new magistrates took their oath of office (Plutarch *Solon* 25.2 ἐν ἀγορᾷ πρὸς τῷ λίθῳ). Plutarch, *Solon* 8.2: ὅχλου δὲ πολλοῦ συνδραμόντος ἀναβὰς ἐπὶ τὸν τοῦ κήρυκος λίθον ἐν ᾧ δὴ διεξήλθε τὴν ἐλεγείαν, ἣς ἐστὶν ἀρχή·

αὐτὸς κῆρυξ ἦλθον ἀφ’ ἡμερτῆς Σαλαμῖνος,
 κόσμον ἐπέων ᾠδὴν ἀντ’ ἀγορῆς θέμενος.

When a large crowd had assembled, getting up on the herald’s stone he recited the poem that begins:

I have come myself as herald from lovely Salamis,
to present instead of a speech my words arranged as a song.

Paley suggests this is an allusion to the βῆμα or λίθος on the Pnyx.

710 τυράννων: proleptic: Atreus will be ruler only after the Myceneans gather and ratify him as such.

711–12 †δείματα. χοροὶ δ'†: why would the lamb inspire fear? The various emendations include, δείγματα, σήματα, θαύματα, φάσματα δεινά (where δεινά would mean *strange and wonderful*). Without a transitional word χοροὶ seems too abrupt; Denniston suggests changing δείματα to δεινά and adding αὐτίκα to restore the meter: φάσματα δεινά. χοροὶ δ' αὐτίκ' Ἀτρειδᾶν ἐγέραιρον οἴκους (“and at once they celebrated the house of the Atreidae in song and dance”). As Denniston points out, even though it was called the house of Atreus at the time of the phenomenon, in the time that the *Electra* is taking place it was known as the house of the sons of Atreus.

713 θυμέλαι: (< θύω) may refer to portable braziers or to great public altars.

717 Μουσᾶν θεράπων: the λωτός (the *nettle-tree*, the hard wood of which is used in making flutes, comes to mean *flute*, that is *aulos*) is here personified as if it were the poet, the Muses' attendant.

719 ἐπίλογοι: the meaning is in doubt. †ἐπίλογοι† Diggle. Suggestions include εἶτα δόλοι (*then came the treacheries* with Θυέστου in 720); εὐλογίᾳ (*in praise of*, with χρυσέας ἄρνους); ὥς ἐστὶ λόγος Θυέστου; ὥς ἐστὶ λόγος (*lot*) or πάλος (*lot*) Θυέστου.

Translations include:

Paley, “that the luck is to Thyestes” (taking the last reading, above)

Denniston, “Then came Thyestes' trick . . .”

Cropp, “in praise of the golden lamb, Thyestes' lamb . . .”

Vermeule, “Quick, Thyestes' trick . . .”

Luschnig (2009), “A new ending for Thyestes' story . . .”

720–6 The two crimes of Thyestes—seduction of Aerope and stealing the golden lamb—are tied together. It is unclear whether Aerope had a hand in

the thievery, as Medea had in Jason's acquiring the golden fleece. It is also noteworthy that Thyestes does not display the golden lamb, but claims that he has it. Euripides does not allow him to have a community celebration such as he granted Atreus.

726–32 According to this story the sun used to set in the east, but Zeus changed its course in outrage at Thyestes' crime. See E. *Or.* 1002–12 and Plato *Politicus* 268e–269a.

727 To “normalize” the meter Hartung adds <δῆ>: τότε δὴ τότε <δῆ> φάεν- but we are not bothered by the meter; see 737n. For τότε δὴ τότε see *GP* 207.

731–2 ἐλάυνει: is the subject Zeus or Helios? Taking the verb in the sense of *drive a chariot* necessitates a change of subject, since Zeus would not drive Helios' chariot (Denniston): “he [Helios] drives toward the western expanses with his heat of divine flame”; ἔσπερα νῶτα would then be acc. of direction toward. But the verb can also mean *strike* or *plague* and the lines could be interpreted “he [Zeus] plagues the western expanses with hot god-fanned flame.” In either case the meaning is that the sun has changed course and now sets in the west rather than the east as, according to the Chorus' claim, it used to (see 726–32n).

733–4 Ἀμμωνίδες ἔδραι: the famous oracle of Jupiter Ammon (Amen Ra) at Siwa in Libya. See E. *Alc.* 115–16.

737–46 The Chorus' expression of disbelief in the old stories, or in this case not-so-old a story (since it was just one generation past), undermines the moral basis of the myth, but not as much as the play's conclusion does. See Halporn, 109: “the dramatic function of the chorus here, as elsewhere in the play, is to suggest a universe and a way of seeing the world that can help explain the state of mind of Electra herself.” In H. *Od.* 1.32–43, Aegisthus is warned against the seduction of Clytemnestra, not through cosmic events, but by Hermes himself, and before, not after the event. Warnings from the gods are not effective in the world of this play; even if heeded, as Orestes obeys the oracle, they bring more disaster.

737 To “normalize” the meter Weil adds <τάδε>: λέγεται <τάδε>; see 727n.

746 κλεινῶν συγγενέταιρ' ἀδελφῶν: συγγενέταιρα usually means *mother*. ἀδελφῶν can refer to a brother and sister, that is, Orestes and Electra, but the already famous siblings are usually taken to be Castor and Polydeuces: συγγενέταιρα would then mean *sister*.

747–1146 THIRD EPISODE, in two parts, 747–958 (Aegisthus) and 959–1146 (Clytemnestra)

747–958 Part 1: The Death of Aegisthus: Messenger's speech; Choral Celebration; Electra over the body of Aegisthus. This scene divides into three parts:

747–858 Exchange between Electra, the Chorus, and the Messenger; Messenger's speech describing Aegisthus' murder.

859–79 Brief Choral song celebrating Orestes' accomplishment, broken up by Electra's spoken expression of joy.

880–958 Return of Orestes; Electra's speech over Aegisthus' corpse.

747–73 These exchanges have six resolutions with a ratio of 1:4.5, in positions 1 (763), 5 (764), 6 (752, 760, 763, 769). See 3n.

747 βοῆς ἠκούσαι: the chorus often filters sounds from the house. They act in these instances as a fellow audience, interpreting sounds we hear. Here they comment on and try to explain a far-off muffled sound as Electra asked them to do (694–5). A nice variation of this device is found in the parodos of *E. Alc.* where the chorus expects to comment on the sounds of mourning coming from the house but finds only silence (77–97). **δοκῶ κενή:** δοκῶ (*impression*) is found only here. See *A. Ag.* (1356) for the similarly formed μελλῶ for μέλλησις (*intention, delay*). The women of the Chorus wonder if they are hearing things.

748 νεπτέρα βροντῇ Διός: subterranean or seismic rumblings of Zeus, that is, the sound of an earthquake is compared to thunder. Though earthquakes are attributed to Poseidon, thunder (βροντή) belongs to Zeus. See *E. Hipp.* 1201 ἔνθεν τις ἤχῳ χθόνιος ὡς βροντῇ Διός “then a rumbling in the earth, like Zeus' thunder.”

749 οὐκ ἄσημα: “not without meaning.” Litotes in predicative function (350n). The “breaths of wind” may refer both to the shouts and Zeus' thunder. **πνεύματα:** a wind rising; Denniston suggests the winds of fortune because

the Chorus does not know which way it is blowing; Paley thinks it is a voice rising and dying away.

751 τί χρήμα: idiomatic, *why?* **πῶς ἀγῶνος ἤκομεν;** ἤκω with an adverb + the gen.: “how have we come out in the contest?” See E. *Alc.* 291 καλῶς μὲν αὐτοῖς καταθανεῖν ἤκον βίου: “they have reached such a time of life that they could die honorably.” The gen. in these examples is partitive.

754 γε μὴν: Denniston, *GP* 348 suggests the term is mildly adversarial.

755 Ἀργεῖος ὁ στεναγμός: “Argive cry” is anomalous here. One would expect Electra to ask if the cry comes from her “enemies” as the opposite of her *philoî*, that is, her friends and family. Moreover, Aegisthus is not the only Argive who might be shouting. Orestes, of course, is also an Argive; and Pylades, being in his company, would be counted one. Aegisthus’ retinue, on the other hand, consists of slaves (629), who would normally not be referred to as Argives.

756–7 μέλος βοῆς: “the song of shouting” is an ironic reference to the terrible sound of Aegisthus’ death cries. While the Chorus suggests that the shout indicates Orestes’ victory, Electra fails to grasp the irony and thinks the worst—that the shouting signifies that Orestes has been discovered, captured, or killed.

759–60 ποῦ γὰρ ἄγγελοι: “Where are the messengers?” Electra assumes that if Orestes had killed Aegisthus, a messenger would have arrived to tell of it. Euripides exploits the expectation, dictated by the genre, that someone will bring news, whether to add to the dramatic tension, to show Electra’s anxious impatience, to make a metatheatrical reference to the theatrical convention of the messenger arriving right after a choral song—or a combination of these possibilities. Medea in E. *Med.* 1116–20 similarly expects a messenger after sending her children to the palace with the poisoned robe and diadem. Here the messenger arrives right after the cries are heard, without even an intervening choral ode, as there is in *Med.* Since choral songs often are used to represent a passage of time, in which some other event can take place, the messenger’s speedy arrival comes at the expense of realism.

761 καλλίνικοι: as often, ironic in the broader context. Even its placement between Electra’s νικώμεσθα (759, *we are defeated*) and the messenger’s νικῶντ’ Ὀρέστην (762) adds to the irony.

763–4 With Agamemnon's name the first word in the clause and Aegisthus' name the last, the sentence mimics the distance and enmity between the two adversaries and the way in which Orestes' and Electra's lives have been lived between them. The enjambed position of Aegisthus' name, as the first word in a new line, suggests how he has finally been severed from their lives. **φονέα**: see 599n. **θεοῖσιν**: synizesis (383n).

765 **τίς δ' εἴ σου**: Electra's inability to recognize the messenger even though she saw him only a short while earlier is consistent with her failure to notice the scar on Orestes' forehead, which could have led her to recognize her brother. It is another example of Electra's lack of trust in others, but also of her failure to rely on her own senses. Of all the messengers in Greek tragedy (twenty-six in all) this is the only one who is not believed. Could this be a comment on the messenger in *S. El.*, whose story (673, 680–763) is completely fabricated, but who is believed despite evidence to the contrary (from Chrysothemis, beginning at 877)? **πιστά**: **πιστός** denotes reliability based on proof. "In what way are these things you're telling me reliable/trustworthy?" See Roisman 1984, 190–1.

767 **ὦ φίλτατ'**: see also 229, 345, 1322. Electra substitutes the surrogate for her brother, using this term of affection first to her brother in disguise as his friend, then to her "husband," and only at the end to her brother. After suspecting the messenger, she now embraces him with this superlative. **δυσγνωσίαν**: *disrecognition* is something of a theme in the play: Orestes misses chance after chance to reveal his identity; he does not recognize his old minder; the first murder plot depends on his not being recognized. Electra does not recognize a man who was in her presence minutes earlier. See 765n.

771 **θεοί**: synizesis. **Δίκη τε πάνθ' ὀρώσ' ἡλθές ποτε**: "and Justice seeing-all, you've come at last." Electra addresses both the gods and a personified Justice. The personified Justice, like her father Zeus, sees everything. The idea that wrong can be done quickly while justice is long in coming is found in Solon frgs. 13, 1.25–8 (West²), cf. Hesiod, *WD* 214–18. Electra's statement recalls Aegisthus' words after the murder of Agamemnon in *A. Ag.* 1577: **ὦ φέγγος εὖφρον ἡμέρας δικηφόρου**, "O gracious light of the day of retribution!" and the Chorus' joy after Clytemnestra is forced inside the palace to face her death in *A. Cho.* 935–8. See also Men., *mono.* 179 **ἔστιν Δίκης ὀφθαλμός, ὃς τὰ πάνθ' ὀρά** "There is the eye of Justice which sees all."

774–858 This is a typical messenger speech, designed to provide information about an offstage event in such a way as to arouse pity and fear (see, for example, E. *Med.* 1136–1230, *Hipp.* 1173–1254, *Bacch.* 1043–1152). On the conventions of messenger speeches, see Barrett 2002, 14–23 and *passim*. In the Messenger's presentation, Aegisthus becomes the sacrificial victim in the ritual sacrifice he is himself engaged in performing, much as Clytemnestra will become the victim when she enters Electra's hut to perform a sacrifice to purify Electra after her supposed childbirth (1139). A similar reversal, in which the active doer becomes the passive victim, is found in E. *Hipp.* 1219–42, where the Messenger reports that Hippolytus, the skilled charioteer whose name means "the one who looses horses" was killed by his own horses. Aegisthus, who thus far has repeatedly been called a murderer, adulterer, usurper, and manipulator, is here drawn as a seemingly innocent or at least ordinary man, who with gracious hospitality invites his murderer to participate in the sacrifice he is performing, without bothering to determine his guest's true identity. The murder, carried out in a peaceful rustic setting in the course of a religious ceremony, is constructed more as a tainted sacrifice than a heroic deed. Euripides' presentation highlights the interweave of good and evil in all human acts and rejects the dichotomous moral division as oversimplified and false. At the same time, no one in the play misses Aegisthus or is sorry about his death. It is the subsequent murder of Clytemnestra that leads to a reversal in feelings, from a confident sense of righteousness to anxiety and regret. Thus, the play seems to accept revenge, but not the matricidal form it takes with the killing of Clytemnestra. Ancient Greek values did not require fair play toward one's enemies. "Flatter your enemy, and when he is under your power, take revenge on him with no explanation" (Theognis 363–4); and Athenian law meted out a variety of harsh punishments to adulterers like Aegisthus (MacDowell 124–5). Nor was there any specific injunction against killing an enemy in the course of a religious ceremony. In fact, a murder at a sacrifice was not termed a 'pollution' (Parker 1983, 159–60). Nonetheless, as Sourvinou-Inwood (2003, 345–9) and Porter (278–80) observe, Orestes distorted and corrupted the sacrifice by his murder of Aegisthus. Yet even if Orestes did not necessarily violate the sanctity of the ritual, being Aegisthus' guest he did violate the rules of hospitality. See Easterling 1988, 101–8.

The resolutions are in positions: 1 (821, 833, 835, 847), 2 (840, 849), 4 (794, 803, 826, 834, 855), 6 (775, 794, 800, 811, 817, 818, 826, 833, 837, 852), 8 (806) with a ratio of 1:3.9. Of the 22 resolutions, 6 are in the lines describing the murder of Aegisthus (832–42). See 3n.

775 δίκροτον: Paley: “broad enough for two chariots to run abreast.” Denniston: “broad enough for two chariots to rattle along side by side.” This is the kind of detail that gives messenger speeches their rightful fame.

776 κλεινός: Denniston takes this as a formal title of royalty rather than as a sarcastic comment from the messenger, who is, after all, Orestes’ slave. Cropp accepts Kvičala’s καινός because it emphasizes Aegisthus’ usurpation. Aegisthus has, however, been in power for seven years, not to mention the years, as much as a decade, he and Clytemnestra held sway before they killed Agamemnon.

777 κήποις ἐν καταρρύτοις: the presence of water is necessary for a nymphaeon. On his return to Ithaca Odysseus wakes up in a cave of the nymphs (H. *Od.* 13.102–9). See also Hippolytus’ sacred meadow (E. *Hipp.* 73–8). Aegisthus’ lovely garden is not, however, spotless like Hippolytus’, being a place of sacrifice and fitted out with implements of slaughter.

778 δρέπων τερείνης μυρσίνης κάρφ᾽ πλόκου: myrtle (*Myrtus communis*) is used for wreaths at celebrations (see Aristoph., *Wasps* 861; *Clouds* 1364: according to Dover’s note “those who sing at drinking parties do so with a branch of bay or myrtle in the hand, in accordance with an old tradition.”) and is associated with erotic experiences. In the pl. μυρσίναι designates the *myrtle wreath market* (*Thesm.* 445–8). On the medicinal uses of myrtle, see Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 23.81. Myrtle was also used by the initiates at the Eleusinian mysteries for their crowns. On the use of myrtle at funerals, see note on line 512 above.

779–833 Χαίρετ’, ὦ ξένοι: embedded direct quotations give life to a messenger’s speech. Even though Aegisthus never comes into our view, he becomes almost a speaking character through this messenger’s many quotes: 779–80, 784–9, 791–2, 805–7, 815–18, 831–3. See de Jong (1990, 1991). In other versions the killing of Aegisthus is usually perfunctory.

781 πρὸς δ’ Ἀλφεὸν: for those traveling from Thessaly, Argos is on the way to Olympia. Although members of sacred embassies also went “to sacrifice at Olympia,” two young men traveling on their own would likely have been athletes, and the implication is thus that Orestes and Pylades are going to compete in the Olympic Games.

785 **τυγχάνω δὲ βουθυτῶν**: a good illustration of the use of **τυγχάνω**, *I happen to be sacrificing* = *as you find me I am sacrificing*. Paley (*ad* 777): “The construction of **τυγχάνειν** or **κυρεῖν** with a participle implies rather the coincidence of one event with another in respect of time, than mere *chance* in the operation.”

786 **ἑῷοι**: *at daybreak*. adjectives of time or place are commonly used where English would use an adverb (see 598n).

787 **ἐς ταύτὸν ἤξει**’ is variously interpreted: Paley: “To the same place you would have arrived at if you had not been detained by me.” Denniston: “Not ‘to the same destination as if you had not been detained by me’. Perhaps ‘I will put you on the same place on your road as the one you are now leaving’. More probably, however, the sense is ‘it will be all the same to you’, ‘the slight delay will make no difference to you’.” Cropp (1989): “you will come to the same, i.e., you will be as well-off by resting here as elsewhere.” **ἐς δόμους**: “into the building.” This part of the messenger’s speech is remarkable for its mirror-like quality: the narrated dramatic scene takes place in and near an imaginary building on Aegisthus’ estate, but it comes to be a rehearsal for the murder that will take place, also offstage, in the interior of the stage-building. We see neither murder. The death of Aegisthus is heard vaguely in the distance, but that of Clytemnestra is heard clearly by Chorus and audience. On the other hand, Aegisthus’ death is described in full detail so that we almost experience it. Clytemnestra’s is reenacted emotively by her children in song and gesture, but is not so visual as this description of Aegisthus’ final moments and death. The building the messenger describes is an outbuilding on the estate, maintained for the purpose of feasting and containing the apparatus of sacrifice, not unlike the stage-building with its apparatus for stage performance and its purpose of hiding and revealing (through the use of the *eccyclēma*) actions that take place out of sight. Like all of drama enacted in the liminal space outside the *skēnē*, the sacrifice of Aegisthus takes place just outside the building on his property.

791–837 For the proceedings at a Greek sacrifice, see H. *Od.* 3.430–63, E. *IA* 1467–1569.

Burkert writes of the rituals of sacrifice (1985, 58–9; see also 112–13):

Membership of the community is marked by the washing of hands, the encirclement and the communal throwing; an even closer bond

is forged through the tasting of the *splanchna*. . . . The circle of the participants has closed itself off from outsiders; in doing so, the participants assume quite distinct roles in the communal action. First there is the carrying of the basket, the water vessel, the incense burner, and the torches, and the leading of the animals; then come the stages of the beginning, the praying, the slaughter, the skinning, and the dismemberment; this is followed by the roasting, first of the *splanchna*, then the rest of the meat, then the libations of wine, and finally the distribution of the meat.

Aegisthus' sacrifice is cut short, though Orestes refers (835–7) to the cooking of the *splanchna*. On the “fitting irony” of the legitimate ruler killing Aegisthus at his sacrifice for the continued prosperity of his family and the perpetuation of his rule, see Porter, 278–80.

791 λουτρά (*water for washing*): washing away of any defilement keeps the sacrifice pure and is a common preliminary feature of many religions.

792 χερνίβων: water for the washing of hands before sacrifice < χεῖρ (*hand*) + νίζω (*wash*)

793–4 Orestes claims to have just washed in running water, considered more appropriate for purification than stagnant water. ἡγνίσμεθα < ἀγνίζω < ἄγνός *pure, free from pollution*. See Burkert 1983, 78, “The Indo-European word for sacred, *hagnos*, is defined and narrowed down in Greek through its opposition to defilement, *mysos*, *miasma*.” Orestes at 975 speaks of being ἄγνός before he kills his mother and of his reluctance to being shunned as a matricide. The perversion of the ritual starts here, with Orestes' avoidance of purifying himself, as would be required for a religious sacrifice.

795 συνθύειν: Orestes shows himself capable of irony. He is a citizen, and the rightful ἄναξ. His question shows his understanding, in his persona as the anonymous traveler, of the importance of sacrifice to the community, but he also stresses his status as an outsider. Under normal circumstances he would wash his hands after he sheds Aegisthus' blood. But his killing spree is not yet complete.

798–9 Euripides emphasizes that no violence was expected at the ritual, other than that done to the animal.

800 Denniston (*ad* 791 ff.) describes the next part of the sacrifice: “Then barley-meal, . . . crown, and sacrificial knife are put in a basket. . . .” **σφαγείον**: a vessel for catching the victim’s blood after its throat is cut. **κανῶ**: *baskets* with the knife and barley-meal (803)

803 **προχύτας** (*barley*): Burkert (1985, 56): “The participants each take a handful of barley groats from the sacrificial basket . . . the sacrificer recites a prayer, invocation, wish and vow. Then, as if in confirmation, all hurl their barley groats forward onto the altar and the sacrificial animal; in some rituals stones are thrown. This, together with the washing of hands, is also called a beginning, *katarchesthai*.”

805–7 Echoes Clytemnestra’s prayer to Apollo in *S. El.* 650–4.

808–10 Orestes’ silent prayer would have been in keeping with the ancient Greek view that silent requests of the gods indicated sinister intent. Prayers were usually made aloud. Cf. *S. El.* 657–8; see Roisman 2008, 106–7.

811–12 **μοσχείαν τρίχα τεμών**: this serves as a validation of the sacrifice. Burkert (1985, 56): “The sacrificial knife in the basket is now uncovered. The sacrificer grasps the knife and, concealing the weapon, strides up to the victim: he cuts some hairs from its forehead and throws them on the fire. This hair sacrifice is once more and for the last time a beginning, *aparchesthai*. No blood has flowed, but the victim is no longer inviolate.” See *E. Alc.* 74–6: Death himself is the sacrificer of Alcestis.

στείχω δ’ ἐπ’ αὐτήν ὡς κατάρξωμαι ξίφει·
 ἱερὸς γὰρ οὗτος τῶν κατὰ χθονὸς θεῶν
 ὅτου τόδ’ ἔγχος κρατὸς ἀγνίση τρίχα.

I am going in for her now to begin the ritual with my sword.
 Anyone whose hair is consecrated by this sword
 is dedicated to the gods of the netherworld.

811–13 The slaughter of the beast. **κάσφαξ**: Aegisthus cuts the bullock’s throat. Burkert (1985, 56) “The slaughter now follows. Smaller animals are raised above the altar and the throat is cut. . . . The blood is collected in a basin and sprayed over the altar and against the sides: to stain the altar with blood (*haimassein*) is a pious act.”

814–26 Butchering the beast. Aegisthus turns the butchering over to Orestes. Burkert (1985, 56): “The animal is skinned and butchered; the inner organs, especially the heart and liver (*splanchna*), are roasted on the fire on the altar first of all.”

815 ἐκ τῶν καλῶν: “one of the honourable accomplishments,” Denniston. Thessaly was also known as a place of riotous living (Plato, *Crito* 53d).

816 ἄρταμεῖ: *cut in pieces*. See E. *Alc.* 494–5 (where Heracles and the chorus are discussing the habits of the horses of Diomedes). It has been suggested (Cropp) that Aegisthus might be testing Orestes’ claim to be a Thessalian. If he suspects his guest of deception, however, it is odd to supply him with a weapon (σίδηρον). ὅστις = εἴ τις.

817 ἵππους τ’ ὀχμάζει: Thessaly was renowned for horses and citizens skilled in horsemanship.

819 εὐκρότητον Δωρίδ’: *a well-hammered Dorian knife* (κοπίς) used at sacrifices (LSJ).

820 εὐπρεπῇ πορπάματα: from this line we learn what the audience would have seen from the entrance of Orestes in the Prologue, that he was wearing a fine *traveling cloak*, fastened by a *pin* (πόρπη).

822 δμῶας δ’ ἀπωθει: the Messenger is as careful in presenting the details of exactly what Orestes does as he is in reporting every step of the ritual.

823 λευκὰς ἐγύμνου σάρκας: Orestes clearly lives up to his role. The flesh of the calf appears white when the skin is pulled back, whether it is the layer of fat or the tegument (silver skin).

825 δισοῦς διαύλους ἱππίους: *two horse-track laps*. In the ordinary *diaulos* the runner ran to the furthest point of the stadium, rounded the post, and ran back by the other side, roughly 400 yards, but the horse *diaulos* was twice as long; two of them would thus be 1600 yards (somewhat short of a mile), which Cropp estimates would take about four minutes to run. This is the third comparison of Orestes to an athlete (see 614n), this time, a *runner*, or, if we choose the reading ἵπιος (in agreement with δρομεύς, 824) over ἱππίους (in agreement with διαύλους), a *racer on horseback* or *jockey*, who

would cover the distance considerably faster. For the measurement of time by distance, see also E. *Med.* 1181–2.

826–9 Reading the omens: Burkert (1985, 112–13), “. . . the inspection of the livers of the victims developed into a special art: how the various lobes are formed and coloured is eagerly awaited and evaluated at every act of slaughter.”

826–7 ἱερὰ δ' ἐς χεῖρας λαβὼν Αἰγισθος ἦθρει· *the sacred parts* refer to the innards from which auspices were drawn. The smoothness, texture, and color of the internal organs were used to determine whether they signified good or bad (cf. A. *PB* 493–5). At a public sacrifice a seer would examine the entrails.

827–9 The wholeness of the liver was of special importance, even though the absence of a lobe is extremely rare. Its absence would make it easier to spot any irregularities in the *portal vein* (πύλαι, literally, *gates*) and gall-bladder (δοχαὶ χολῆς, *gall-receptacles*). **λοβός**: The *lobe* of the liver is not there: these misshapen entrails (826–9) are what Aegisthus sees as he bows his head to look in terror at the omen before the death blow is struck (839). He thus is seen to accept his death, as a beast for sacrifice is caused to assent to its death by being given a bowl of water to drink or having its head pushed down so that it appears to be bowed. “The feature here meant is the *lobus quadratus* . . . which is adjacent to the gall-bladder, and is said by anatomists to be sometimes so slightly defined as to appear to be altogether wanting” Paley (*ad* 827). “The quadrate lobe is an area of the liver situated on the under surface of the right lobe, bounded in front by the anterior margin of the liver; behind by the porta; on the right, by the fossa for the gall-bladder; and on the left, by the fossa for the umbilical vein. It is oblong in shape, its antero-posterior diameter being greater than its transverse.” **πύλαι**: the hepatic portal vein, a large vein that carries blood from the digestive tract to the liver (Wikipedia). **κακὰς . . . προσβολάς**: i.e., προσβολὰς κακῶν, “onsets of harm.” The hyperbaton (see 16–17n) emphasizes the bad omen Aegisthus notes as he inspects the entrails.

831 τί χρῆμα; “(for) what reason?” i.e. *why*? Denniston maintains that the phrase in this meaning is confined to Euripides and is probably colloquial (*Alc.* 512, *Hec.* 977, *HF* 1179). See also 751n.

832 δόλον θυραῖον: “guile/treachery from outside/abroad.” Not only is the guile spatially “in-house,” but it is also from within Aegisthus’ family: Orestes is his cousin, thus οἰκεῖος, *belonging to the house*, in two roles. Apparently Aegisthus no longer regarded Orestes as a member of the household after Orestes fled into exile. Cf. E. *Alc.* 532–3, where there is a similar play on “outsider” or belonging to the family regarding Alcestis (Luschnig & Roisman, 532–5n); see also 290–1n.

834–7 Orestes’ question is aimed at making the supposedly all-powerful lord of the land feel ashamed of fearing a lowly exile or outsider. His suggestion that they begin the ritual meal that follows a sacrifice is aimed at diverting Aegisthus’ attention from the threat. In asking for a Phthian cleaver instead of the thin Doric knife (σφαγίς, 811, 819), he is asking for an instrument (κοπίς, *a chopper or cleaver*) used to chop through bones, instead of a sharp flaying knife (see Paley). The passage is outstanding for the visceral, intimate details, the naming of the body parts, the pathetic animal frailty of the two victims. Aegisthus is gazing at the misshapen innards of the slain animal, Orestes stands on tiptoe and opens his enemy as if he were an animal for slaughter. This might call to mind the murder of Agamemnon as told at H. *Od.* 4.534–5 (also 11.409–11.):

κατέπεφνεν / δειπνίσσας, ὥς τίς τε κατέκτανε βοῦν ἐπὶ φάτνῃ.

[Aegisthus] feasted him and killed him as one cuts down an ox at its manger.

For the weapon see A. *Cho.* 859–65.

842–3 “His whole body convulsed up and down / and he screamed in the throes of a horrific death.” Euripides’ presentation of Aegisthus’ death throes in a line-and-a-half worth of details mimics the descriptor δυσθνήσκων *dying a lingering death*.

843 ἥσπαιρεν ἡλάλαζε: asyndeton (143–4n) to heighten the excitement and pathos.

850 τλήμων Ὀρέστης: Denniston (*ad loc.*) writes “τλήμων is almost a fixed epithet of Orestes . . .” in E. *Or.*

854 The garlanding of Orestes is yet another allusion to him as an athlete, which the Chorus picks up at 860–5 when they say that Orestes’ victory is greater than winning in the Olympic games.

854–7 Notice the proximity of “head of your brother” (σοῦ κασιγνήτου κάρα) to the Gorgon’s head (κάρα . . . Γοργόνοϋ). Does Orestes bring Aegisthus’ corpse with the head severed from his body or the whole body intact? There are good arguments for either. Against the beheading is that Αἴγισθον is in the acc. rather than the gen., as it would be if it were parallel to Γοργόνοϋ. Besides that, the necessity of moving Aegisthus offstage in pieces at Orestes’ exit would be too grotesque and take too many extras. On the other hand, a director of the play in the 21st century might find it hard to forgo the beheading. In either case, the body is there, whether or not separated from its head: at 959–61 Electra speaks of it as σῶμα and νεκρόν. It is rolled out on the *eccyclēma* with the body of Clytemnestra after her murder. **κάρα:** *head* can be used to stand for the whole person (see *S. Ant.* 1).

855 χαίροντες ἀλαλάζοντες: “rejoicing, raising a happy cry.” The asyndeton (143–4n) emphasizes the excitement.

858 δανεισμός: *borrowing* or *lending*? Denniston takes it as *borrowing* with αἶματος as gen. of price after αἶμα.

859–79 In a short-lived and lively strophic song in celebration of the victory, the Chorus compares the murder of Aegisthus to an athletic contest (at 863 *on the banks of the Alpheus* refers to the Olympic games). This brief choral interlude is an epinician in reverse: usually athletes are compared to mythological characters. The meter is dactyloepitrite (alternating dactylic and iambo-trochaic sequences familiar from Pindar’s and Bacchylides’ victory songs). Electra, not yet ready to celebrate so athletically, responds in iambics, the meter of dialogue. Why does Euripides not allow her to join the Chorus in dance? The Chorus seem more excited than she is. Is it because she is slow to digest the news or because the victory is only half finished? The upward, skipping motion of the first stasimon returns briefly. **ὥς νεβρός:** on the dancer compared to a skipping fawn, see Bacchylides 13.84–90:

πόδεσσι ταρφέως,
ἥύτε νεβρὸς ἀπενθής,
ἀνθεμόεντας ἐπ’ ὄχθους

κοῦφα σὺν ἀγχιδόμοις
θρόσκουσ' ἀγακλειταῖς ἐταίραις·

Often on feet like a fawn's that feels no grief, on flowered hills leaping
lightly, with her glorious companions who live nearby.

See also E. *Bacch.* 866–7.

862–4 The meaning is, “Your brother has won, having completed a crown-winning victory greater than those beside the streams of Alpheus” (i.e., in the Olympic games). The problem is how to get this meaning out of these words. **στεφαναφορίαν κρείσσω τοῖς** . . . is the mss. reading, which Murray prints but daggers as corrupt. Diggle in his edition prints νικῶ στεφαναφόρα κρείσσω τῶν. . . We find the ms στεφαναφορίαν (“the wearing of a wreath of victory”) preferable to Weil’s conjecture στεφαναφόρα (“wreath-bearing things”). Either reading is acc. ἀπὸ κοινοῦ (*in common*, a usage in which a noun in its case is used in two different ways) as internal object of νικῶ and direct object of τελέσας. **κρείσσω**: acc. masc./fem. sg. with στεφαναφορίαν or acc. neut. pl. with στεφαναφόρα. The problem that remains is τοῖς, which would agree with ῥεέθροισι, leaving out the actual comparison. τῶν, if accepted, is the gen. of comparison, turning the prepositional phrase παρ’ Ἀλφειοῦ ῥεέθροισι into a substantive, “those beside Alpheus’ streams” (i.e., Olympic athletes). As Diggle says (1969, 53), “There are no . . . simple solutions.” **τελέσας** or τελέσας: the epic form with double σ has been substituted by Murray and others for metrical reasons. Diggle (1969, 52–3 and cited in his 1981 *Studies*) suggests (based on Seidler’s reading): νικῶ στεφαναφορίαν κρεῖ- / σσω παρ’ Ἀλφειοῦ ῥεέθροισι τελεσάντων / κασίγνητος σέθεν· We find his argument that a scribe assimilated the gen. of comparison τελεσάντων to the nom. τελέσας unconvincing and the use of the attributive participle without the article, though not unparalleled, abrupt.

864 We have accepted (with Blaydes and Diggle 1981) ὑπάειδε for ἐπάειδε of the mss. on the basis of meaning: ὑπαείδω *sing in accompaniment*; ἐπαείδω usually means *sing as an incantation* (i.e., *sing over*).

868 **ὄμμα τοῦμόν ἀμπυχαί τ’**: HENDIADYS (*one through two*: one idea expressed through two coordinate words, usually nouns connected by a copulative conjunction) *my eye and its unfoldings* = *my open eyes* (i.e., *my eyes are free to open*). **ἀμπυχαί**: apocope for ἀναμπυχαί (288n). **ἐλεύθεροι**:

fem.; see also A. Ag. 328. For three-termination adjectives functioning as two-termination, see K. I. i. 535–6. Freedom has come with the slaying of Aegisthus. It is to be lost with the matricide.

870–2 Much as she had earlier failed to recognize her brother's servant and had him repeat the news of Orestes' victory (765–70), here Electra seems not to have heard that Orestes had already been crowned with a garland by the slaves in Aegisthus' retinue (854–5).

879 Orestes, Pylades, and attendants, carrying Aegisthus' body, return by the same *parodos* by which they left.

880–906 Electra's excitement while garlanding Orestes and Pylades is evident in the relatively high number of four resolutions: 4 (887), 6 (885, 887), 8 (884). Orestes has only one resolution in his short speech: 6 (898), and there is only one resolution in the short *stichomythia*: 1 (904). See 3n.

880 *καλλίνικε, πατρός ἐκ νικηφόρου*: as often victory is ironic and short-lived. Their father was only victorious "over there" (8).

882 *ἀνδήματα*: apocope (see 288n) for ἀναδήματα.

883–5 *ἕκπλεθρον*: The six-plethron (about 200-yard) sprint was the shortest and the most prestigious race at Olympia and elsewhere. Electra must be thinking of Orestes' journey into exile as the outward leg, and his journey back to Argos as the homeward course (Denniston) or, alternatively, of his trip to Aegisthus' sacrifice as the outward leg, and home to her as the homeward leg. By calling the race *useless* (*ἀχρεῖον*), Electra elevates Orestes' success in murdering Aegisthus above the premier event of the Olympic (and other) competitions. While she thus bestows heroic stature on Orestes, she belittles what was for the audience a major and valued athletic competition.

886–7 *ἀνδρὸς εὐσεβεστάτου*: that is, Strophius. Cf. 18, 82nn.

890–2 By claiming divine support and thus giving the gods their due, Orestes avoids the risk of arousing the gods' *φθόνος*, *resentment*. Cf. A. Ag. 810–29. See Bulman. His putting the gods first, however, is ironic in view of the outcome, when Apollo is shown to have given bad advice. Orestes,

speaking after the fact, might be contrasted with the also ill-fated Eteocles as he prepares for his final battle (A. *Sept.* 4–7).

893 οὐ λόγοισιν ἀλλ' ἔργοις κτανὼν: “having killed him not in word but in deed.” No substantive difference can be found between the sg. and pl., see 47. The opposition between “word” and “deed” may be yet another echo of S. *El.*, where it is more pronounced. See Roisman 2008, 59–60n, Hartigan 1996, 85–8, Minadeo, Woodard.

894–5 ὥς δὲ τῷ σάφ' εἰδέναι τάδε προσθῶμεν: uncertain text and meaning. A possible interpretation is “to add to your certain knowledge of this, I bring him to you dead.”

896–8 On the treatment of the body: Orestes suggests throwing the body to scavengers or impaling it (or just the head) on a stake. This is one of the few times Orestes takes the lead. Orestes' offer violates basic Panhellenic values, which forbade withholding burial from a fallen enemy (E. *Supp.* 526). Such violations, however, were noted, the most salient being Creon's refusal to bury Polynices, against which Antigone rebelled, and Menelaus' to bury Ajax, which Teucer opposed. Euripides' Orestes is morally inferior to his Homeric namesake, who, Nestor points out in *Od.* 3.258–61, had given Aegisthus a decent burial after he killed him (*Od.* 3.309–10, see below). It is of note that Electra does not pick up on either of Orestes' suggestions, but instead reviles and dishonors Aegisthus with words (see her long speech, lines 907–56). See “Discussions.” In E. *Supp.* (524–7), Theseus speaks of the universal Greek law to bury the dead:

νεκρούς δὲ τοὺς θανόντας, οὐ βλάπτων πόλιν
οὐδ' ἀνδροκμητάς προσφέρων ἀγωνίας,
θάψαι δικαίῳ, τὸν Πανελλήνων νόμον
σώζων.

I hold it right to bury the dead, not harming the state or introducing struggles
that wear men down, but preserving the law of all the Hellenes.

By contrast, Sophocles' Electra—without putting it into so many words—urges her brother to throw Aegisthus' body to the carrion feeders (S. *El.* 1487–9). The play ends before Aegisthus is killed, so we cannot know how they disposed of the body.

ἀλλ' ὥς τάχιστα κτεῖνε καὶ κτανὼν πρόθεσ
 ταφεῦσιν, ὧν τόνδ' εἰκός ἐστι τυγχάνειν,
 ἄποπτον ἡμῶν:

Kill him and when he is dead lay him out / for such grave-diggers as he deserves, / far from our sight. (πρόθεσ refers to the πρόθεσις, the formal laying out of a corpse before burial.)

Nestor claims that if Menelaus had been in Argos when his brother's murderer was killed, he would have thrown Aegisthus' body to the dogs and birds (H. *Od.* 3. 253–61). But in fact the Homeric Orestes himself gives both Aegisthus and Clytemnestra a decent burial (H. *Od.* 3. 309–10). ἦ τοι ὁ τὸν κτείνας δαίνυ τάφον Ἀργείοισιν / μητρός τε στυγερῆς καὶ ἀνάλκιδος Αἰγίσθοιο· *After he killed him [Orestes] held a funeral feast for the Argives over his hated mother and that niddering, Aegisthus.* **σκῶλον**: see 7, 1000 as if Aegisthus were part of the spoils or among the fallen warriors.

898 πῆξας' ἔρεισον σκόλοπι: impaling is listed as one of the barbaric acts appropriate to the Erinyes in A. *Eum.* 189–90, where it is an act of torture perpetrated on a living human being who screams in pain. In E. *El.*, of course, Aegisthus is dead. The impaling, if done, would have been of the dead man's body or head. See Hdt. 9.78–9 where the suggestion made by Lampon, an Aeginetan, to Pausanias that he impale the head of Mardonius on a stake is met with disgust:

τὰ πρέπει μᾶλλον βαρβάροισι ποιεῖν ἢ περ Ἑλλήσι· καὶ ἐκείνοισι δὲ ἐπιφθονέομεν (9.79). *That is something you expect barbarians (non-Greeks) to do, rather than Greeks, and even they are despised for it.*

900 αἰσχύνομαι μέν, βούλομαι δ': Electra is able to overcome her shame soon enough to abuse the corpse verbally, but she does not suggest any further physical abuse. Her tirade, demonizing the enemy/victim, is in the tradition of Greek invective.

902 νεκροὺς ὑβρίζειν: verbally abusing the dead was considered sacrilegious. See Odysseus' rebuke to Eurycleia in H. *Od.* 22.412, and the Chorus' criticism of Clytemnestra in A. *Ag.* 1399–1400. **φθόνῳ**: φθόνος

covers the English range of both *envy* and *jealousy*. It may indicate human jealousy of others' goods, sexual jealousy, or morally charged divine grudge and displeasure that respond both to human hubristic actions and hubristic attitudes. Walcot, Cairns, 18–22, Konstan 2001 *Emotions*, esp. 111–26. Electra is probably referring to the divine *phthonos* (φθόνος θεῶν), the *grudge of the gods* awakened by the abuse of the dead (νεκρὸς ὑβρίζειν). It is unlikely that she is thinking of the jealousy of her fellow citizens. Her reference to the polis (904) is in reply to Orestes' claim in 903 that no human being will find fault with her. Perhaps it also acknowledges her awareness of her mother's reputation and fear of the citizens' ψόγος 643 (cf. φιλόψογος, 904).

904 Electra's concern that her fellow citizens will speak ill of her if she reviles the dead Aegisthus contrasts sharply with her lack of concern about their opinion when it comes to murdering her mother.

907–56 Electra's speech. The three parts of Electra's speech are: *beginning* (909–13): at long last I am free to speak; *middle* (914–51): her charges against Aegisthus; *end* (952–6): dismissal and rounding off. Electra hesitates, reluctant, yet eager (900). She has rehearsed, over the years of her mourning and exile, what she would say to him. Now at last is her chance—the only one she will ever get—and she has to get it right. This explains the concern with arrangement: she is suggesting that there is a lot more she could say. For all its artifice, the speech has a few surprises. Electra's 50-line speech has only twelve resolutions: 1(936), 2(919), 4(943), 6 (908, 918, 921, 926, 940, 942, 947, 950), 8 (912). One resolution to every four lines is a rather low ratio, which indicates a fair degree of emotional equanimity in the face of Aegisthus' death. It is as if her many "rehearsals" of what she would say to him have drained her words, when she finally utters them, of the expected agitation. At the same time, her speech conveys a long-simmering fury released slowly, deliberately, and point by point. See 3n.

907–8 ἀρχὴν . . . τελευτὰς . . . μέσον: Electra is concerned about the rhetorical arrangement (τάξις): beginning, middle, ending. "Where shall I start and where end?" is commonplace, but the middle is also sometimes included. When Odysseus begins his story to Alcinous he asks (H. *Od.* 9.14): Τί πρῶτόν τοι ἔπειτα, τί δ' ὕστατιον καταλέξω; *What, then, shall I tell you first and what last?* In reproaching Jason, Medea speaks just of

the beginning (E. *Med.* 475): ἐκ τῶν δὲ πρώτων πρῶτον ἄρξομαι λέγειν. *From the first I shall first begin to speak.* See also E. *IA* 1124–6 where Clytemnestra recognizes the rhetorical device, but sees all her points, beginning, middle, and end, as interchangeable, but then she proceeds to tell the story chronologically:

φεῦ:

τίν' ἂν λάβοιμι τῶν ἐμῶν ἀρχὴν κακῶν;

ἅπασιν γὰρ πρώτοισι χρήσασθαι πάρα

κἂν ὑστάτοις κἂν μέσοις πανταχοῦ.

Feu. Which of my sorrows should I take up first? / For it would be possible to take them all as first / and last and every place in the middle?

When she gives her speech she begins (1148): πρῶτον μὲν, ἵνα σοι πρῶτα τοῦτ' ὀνειδίσω . . . First then, to reproach you with this first [wrong] . . .

914–51 The middle is the largest part of Electra's speech. She accuses Aegisthus of ruining her own and her brother's lives. He married Clytemnestra and killed Agamemnon. From this she launches upon a digression about adulterous women and Aegisthus' own misery in a type of paradox much loved by the Greeks. Next (from 930) she treats the reversal of gender roles (foreshadowing Clytemnestra's bolder questioning of traditional male-female roles). She does not notice how her contempt for the wife who is superior to her husband applies to herself, though in fairness, we must allow that hers is not a real marriage (compare 931 Ὁ τῆς γυναικός, οὐχὶ τᾶνδρὸς ἢ γυνή to 366, "he is called poor Electra's husband"). She resorts (at 938–44) to the cliché that the wealth in which Aegisthus prided himself is meaningless and transitory while nature (character) is lasting. His sex appeal, which she now brings up (945–51), is indeed inappropriate for a virgin to discuss, especially his cousin and stepdaughter. Her unseemly interest in her mother's and Aegisthus' sex life may give the lie to suggestions that she is an unlikely bride (Foley 1985, 44, for example).

917 Aegisthus never went to Troy. Homer calls him ἀνάλκιδος Αἰγίσθοιο, *Od.* 3.310. Aegisthus' cowardice is a commonplace. (See also H. *Od.* 3.262–4, A. *Ag.* 1625–7, 1634–5, S. *El.* 300–2.)

919 ἔξεις: Paley emends to ἔξοις, but see *GMT* 128: even in indirect discourse after past tenses “the future indicative is generally retained” (see also *GMT* 136).

922 ἀναγκασθῇ λαβεῖν: Electra attributes to Aegisthus the lowest possible motive for marrying Clytemnestra and denies that he would have chosen to do so out of his feelings for her.

925 οὐ δοκῶν: perhaps “pretending not to” (Cropp) as in *E. Med.* 67.

926 γήμας γάμον: *figura etymologica* (see 234n).

929 τὴν σὴν: with τύχην.

932 γε: epexegetic (*GP* 138–40) after the demonstrative pronoun which points forward.

935 ὀνόμασται: Greek men were generally known by their patronymics. Electra’s point is that the marriage between Clytemnestra and Aegisthus is not between equals, which the Greeks usually recommended. Denniston compares Electra’s statement here to *S. El.* 365–7: “. . . though you could have been called the daughter of the noblest of fathers, you’re called your mother’s daughter,” and suggests that “Euripides may be copying Sophocles here.”

938–41 τις εἶναι: *to be someone*. The association of Aegisthus with Agamemnon’s wealth is a *topos* (commonplace), see *A. Ag.* 1638, *S. El.* 1290–2.

940–4 Greek literature often distinguishes between wealth that is gained with the approval of the gods, and deemed secure, and wealth that is acquired through some wrongdoing, which is viewed as insecure. See, e.g., Hes. *WD* 320–6, Solon frg. 13.7–13 (West²), Theognis 197–202, *E. Erechtheus* 354, 362.11–3 (Kannicht *TrGF* vol. 5.2.), Pind. *Nem.* 8.17. For the idea that wealth is ephemeral see *E. HF* 511–12, *Phoen.* 555–8, *Ino* 420.4–5, *Meleagros* 518.1–2 (Kannicht *TrGF* vol. 5.2).

945–6 ἃ δ’ ἐς γυναῖκας: what regards or concerns women, the things that have to do with women; your behavior with/toward women. ἃ is object of σιωπῶ and ἀνίζομαι. **παρθένη:** is she bitter about her status or is she being prissy in her moral superiority to her fallen enemy?

948 Electra does not seem to view the Farmer as her lawful husband, but rather to regard herself as still unmarried.

952–6 Conclusion: Aegisthus has reached his just end but has not achieved the learning that comes through suffering (952: οὐδὲν εἰδῶς) which had been a major theme in Aeschylus' *Oresteia* (e.g. *Ag.* 177–8, 250–1). This is the end of Aegisthus' part. Electra takes the lead now that it is time to turn to the killing of her mother.

959–1146 THIRD EPISODE, part 2: Clytemnestra and Electra

959–87 The short stichomythia between Electra and Orestes preceding the arrival of Clytemnestra contains 4 resolutions in three lines, with the ratio of 1:7.25: 1 (980), 4 (970), 6 (978, 980). See 3n.

959 εἶέν: *there you have it, quite so*. Coolly asking servants to remove the body so that her mother will not see it, Electra concludes her speech with the same controlled deliberateness with which she opened it (907).

962–84 The designation of speakers in these lines follows the manuscripts.

963 Clytemnestra is seen driving from town in a carriage.

964 τὴν τεκοῦσαν ἢ μ' ἐγείνατο: Cf. *S. El.* 261 τὰ μητρὸς ἢ μ' ἐγείνατο.

966 λαμπρόνεται: Clytemnestra is close enough for Electra to comment on her splendid appearance.

967 τί δῆτα δρῶμεν: Orestes hesitates. Only in Sophocles' version does he fail this test of his humanity, showing neither reluctance before the matricide nor regret after it. For Aeschylus' treatment (at *A. Cho.* 900–2) see "Discussions." In Euripides, Orestes has misgivings and doubts the oracle. Electra plays the part of the Aeschylean Pylades in defending the oracle and hustling Orestes inside to wait for his mother. In *Cho.* Electra has already been hustled offstage by her brother.

971–81 Apollo's role in the myth and vengeance is prominent in all three surviving Orestes/Electra plays. In this play every example of the interference of gods causes problems for the people and leads them to crimes and

violence or to sorrow: Apollo's oracle; Pan's gift of the golden lamb; Zeus' phantom Helen; even the gentle Nereids who conduct the ships to Troy and bring the armor to Achilles, and the well-intentioned but inhuman/inhumane dispensations of the Dioscuri. Roberto Calasso in *The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony* (translated by Tim Parks, New York, 1993, 387) writes, "To invite the gods ruins our relationship with them but sets history in motion. A life in which the gods are not invited isn't worth living. It will be quieter, but there won't be any stories." See notes on 87, 399–400, 550–1, 581–4, 671–84, 890–2 and "Discussions."

973 ἔχρησας . . . χρῆν: notice the wordplay. Is it that Orestes is shocked at the similarity between these words despite all his earlier verbal displays (see 89n)?

975 φεύξομαι: *will go into exile or will be a defendant?* Either fits the context.

976 Possible penalties for not avenging one's father are given in A. *Cho.* (269–96).

977–8 While Sophocles' characters usually commit their tragic mistakes on their own, Euripides' characters often make them after listening to or following others (Phaedra, Jason, Pentheus, for instance). In view of Electra's insistence that he go ahead with killing their mother after setting up the trap, and her threat to kill Clytemnestra herself if he does not do it (647), it would take more firmness of character than Orestes has revealed not to fall into line.

979 ἀλάστωρ: *a spirit of vengeance, a destructive fiend.* Cf. E. *Or.* 1669 where Orestes acknowledges Apollo as a true prophet, although he thought he had heard the voice of some fiend (τίνος . . . ἀλαστόρων) speaking as Apollo.

980 τρίποδα: The Pythia who presided over the Delphic oracle delivered her prophecies sitting on a tripod, a three-legged altar or stool.

983 ὑποστήσω: an architectural term, *support* or *lay a foundation*; also used of *setting* an ambush. τὸν αὐτὸν δόλον: it is not clear which "same deceit" Orestes is referring to: the deceit that Clytemnestra had used to trap and kill Agamemnon or the deceit that he himself had just used to kill Aegisthus.

984 There is no need to question this line on the basis of the word πόσις *husband*, which seems too honorable, according to Denniston, for Aegisthus, coming from Electra's mouth. Aegisthus is dead now, and she has just expressed her outrage at him. She can allow herself to be more respectful toward him.

987 πικρὸν δὲ χηδύ: would Orestes, after his anguish over the deed he must do, say "bitter and yet sweet"? Denniston suggests πικρὸν δ' οὐχ ἡδύ; Diggle, κοῦχ ἡδύ.

988–97 Clytemnestra arrives in a horse-drawn carriage. She is accompanied by two (or more) Trojan slave women, addressed and referred to in the feminine plural (998, 1007, 1010). The carriage is driven or led into the orchestra by two (or more) male attendants (addressed in the masculine plural at 1135–8). Clytemnestra and the Trojan slaves would climb down from the carriage into the orchestra. If there is a raised stage, only Clytemnestra would mount it (at some time before she enters the stage building). The others would remain in the orchestra until they are dismissed by Clytemnestra to exit by one of the parodoi: we suggest that they enter stage left along the parodos that leads to/from the highway and exit stage right, where the horses will be taken to pasture in the near distance.

An honorific address in anapests (– – –) to Clytemnestra, who enters in a carriage with her slave women, both she and they richly dressed (cf. 315–8, 967, 1140). In the Athenian theater, the parodos allowed the entrance of mule- or horse-drawn wagons. Her arrival is reminiscent of Agamemnon's in A. Ag. (783–809), who also is brought onstage in a carriage and accompanied by a captive Trojan woman. Like Clytemnestra here, he is welcomed warmly and lured indoors to meet his death. The parallel scene in Aeschylus' play, in which Agamemnon has returned as the proud and victorious commander of the Argive forces and walks into the palace treading on expensive weavings, shows him going to his death after succumbing to his hubris and *atē* (*destructive infatuation*). Even though he is aware of the danger of the gods' φθόνος, *resentment* (Ag. 921–2; see 902n), he gives in to his wife's coaxing and enters the palace to his death. Clytemnestra's entrance here is an ironic echo of the Aeschylean scene, with the Chorus' effusive greeting aimed at calling divine resentment down on her. Is τὰς σὰς δὲ τύχας θεραπεύεσθαι καιρὸς (996–7) as sinister as Denniston, following Keene, suggests? "Her fortunes require a physician's care, and it is high time for the physician to get to work, for hers is a τομῶν πῆμα [*a disease in need of cutting*]." Kubo (24)

compares the choral greeting with Clytemnestra to the culminating sacrifice of the Heraia, the festival they came to announce at their entrance. In this way they become fleetingly the chorus of the Heraia cult, honoring the goddess who protects marriage.

990 ἀγαθοῖν . . . κοῦροι: the Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux, are Zeus' sons by Leda. They were known as rescuers of sailors on rough seas. See Alcaeus 34 (Lobel & Page). They also symbolize heroic *philia*. Castor, who was mortal, died of a wound, and Polydeuces, who was immortal, chose to share his brother's fate. In consequence, they spend one day on Olympus and the other in the Netherworld (Pindar *Pythian* 11.59–64). The Chorus skips over Helen, who was the sister of the Dioscuri, having also been born of Zeus and Leda. See "Discussions" and 1238–1356n for the characteristics and relevance of the Dioscuri in this play; see also 312–13n.

991–2 The twins are identified with two major stars in the constellation known to us as Gemini.

998–1146 The *agōn* starts with the recollection of Iphigenia, who was sacrificed by Agamemnon. The scene resembles a trial, in which Clytemnestra is the defendant and pleads her case, and seems to have been written with the Sophoclean *agōn* in mind (*El.* 516–659, see Cropp). In Sophocles, the *agōn* precedes the recognition scene and the subsequent vengeance. It serves as an ethical exposition that explains the conduct of the characters and their future decisions. In Euripides, the *agōn* comes *post factum*, after the scheme to kill Clytemnestra has already been set in motion and just before Clytemnestra enters Electra's hut, where she will meet her death. The debate serves to show Clytemnestra as less evil than Electra makes her out to be, and Electra as less in the right than she believes.

998–1010 There are only two resolutions in these opening exchanges. 1 (1001), 6 (1006). See 3n.

998 ἔκβητ' ἀπῆνης, Τροάδες: The picture we have had of Clytemnestra in the palace, sitting on a throne amid Phrygian finery, attended by Trojan maids (314–6), now comes to life as a "moving tableau" when Clytemnestra herself is carried on stage (see Halleran 11, 14–15; on the blocking of this scene see Ley 77–9). She is also attended by two or more male slaves, perhaps a driver and a groom who leads the horses (1135–8). For a similar

scene of Clytemnestra descending from a carriage, see E. *IA* 617–8. The staging as well as the words may also call to mind Clytemnestra's address to Cassandra in A. *Ag.* (1039): ἔκβαιν' ἀπήνης τῆσδε, μηδ' ὑπερφρόνει. *Come down from the carriage and give up your pride.* Of this passage, Cropp writes, "In any case, Cl. echoes her command to another Trojan captive, Cassandra . . . heightening the dramatic irony here."

1004–10 Mother and daughter meet. This is the essence of the tragedy. Both long for each other's love, but too much has happened between them. Electra has felt for so long the sting of rejection, and feels it still (1006).

1004 δούλη γὰρ ἐκβεβλημένη: Electra in A. *Cho.* (135) also calls herself a slave: καὶ γὰρ μὲν ἀντίδουλος . . . / "I am no better than a slave . . ." The first grievance that Electra throws in her mother's face is that Clytemnestra has thrown her out of her home and made her live like a slave. In offering to help her mother disembark from the carriage, she is offering to perform a servant's task. Electra, for all the self-centeredness imputed to her, identifies with the Trojan captive women who accompany her mother; she feels for their loss of their fathers, the destruction of their homes, their loss of status. Whether or not these sentiments (1004–5, 1008–10) are another way of expressing her self-pity and resentment toward her mother, her own suffering has aroused this fellow feeling.

1006 μακαρίας τῆς σῆς χερός: "the hand of you who are blessed"/"your hand that is blessed," μακαρίας is a title of royalty, yet keeps its meaning of blessedness. Electra continues the grandiose rhetoric of the Chorus' address, but is also sarcastic. She knows that Clytemnestra is going to her death. How blessed can she be?

1008–10 Electra is looking for a fight, and starts with her maltreatment, an issue Clytemnestra will have difficulty defending.

1009 ἥρημένων . . . ἥρήμεθα: *figura etymologica* (see 234n) emphasizing Electra's feelings of loss and ruin.

1010 ὀρφανὰι λελειμμένοι: we prefer L's fem. pl. to Seidler's emendation to the masc. pl. Electra speaks of the female slaves to whom she compares herself. But she is one of them; she, too, is a cast-out princess. Otherwise, a masc. ending would have been appropriate, because in tragedy sg. fem. subjects referring to themselves in pl. use the masc. (Smyth, 1009).

1011–96 The *agōn* (the central debate): Among the unique aspects of Clytemnestra's speech are her putative acceptance of the sacrifice of Iphigenia if it had been for a good cause, her insistence that it was Cassandra and not Iphigenia who pushed her over the edge, her feminist suggestion that her critics consider how they would have viewed the situation if the genders had been reversed, and, in the dialogue that follows, her expressions of human regret and understanding of her daughter. Electra goes over the usual ground, Clytemnestra's alleged whorishness in primping while her husband was away and rooting for the Trojans in the back and forth of war (so prominent throughout the *Iliad*). Her one good argument (1088 vv.) rings true: Clytemnestra should not have mistreated her other children. Clytemnestra is lured into the trap. The fact that she is only a sad, middle-aged woman makes no difference.

1011–50 Clytemnestra's speech in her defense divides into four parts. (1) 1011–7: Introduction, (2) 1018–29: Iphigenia, (3) 1030–40: Cassandra, (4) 1041–50: Iphigenia. There are eleven resolutions in her speech, five of them in the fourth part: 1 (1028, 1030, 1043), 4 (1027), 6 (1023, 1026, 1028, 1045, 1047, 1048), 8 (1041). See 3n.

Clytemnestra (unlike Polynices and Eteocles in E. *Phoen.* or Jason in *Med.*) did not come to debate Electra, but to help her. Her speech answers Electra's complaint as if it is spontaneous, but it too, like most of her daughter's speeches, seems rehearsed, as if she had gone over these ideas in the hours of her sleepless nights. The murder of Agamemnon was the defining action in her life: it could not be done and forgotten, but she must go over it again and again, refining and redefining her motives. She, like her daughter, shows simultaneous reluctance and eagerness to speak. Now she has her turn both to air her grievances and present her reasons in a well-argued speech, though the argument is agglutinative rather than syllogistic. Euripides presents a good case for her, humanizing her and making her vulnerable.

1011–12 Clytemnestra plunges right into her justification for killing Agamemnon, even though Electra did not explicitly ask about it. Agamemnon's "plots" were against Iphigenia, whom he sacrificed, and against his own wife, into whose home he brought Cassandra.

1013–17 Clytemnestra urges that she be judged on the basis of the facts rather than hearsay, which gives a woman a bad reputation. Clytemnestra's remarks on prejudice have something in common with Medea's (*Med.* 219–21; see also 292–305):

δίκη γὰρ οὐκ ἔνεστ' ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς βροτῶν,
 ὅστις πρὶν ἀνδρὸς σπλάγχχνον ἐκμαθεῖν σαφῶς
 στυγεῖ δεδορκῶς, οὐδὲν ἠδίκημένος.

There is no justice in people's perception:
 there are some who, before they know a person inside out,
 hate him on sight, even if they have never been wronged by him.

See also E. *Hipp.* 395–7, 406–7. We already know, from an earlier conversation (843–5) that Clytemnestra has a bad reputation with the citizens. Now we see how in fact it is hastening her end, providing her murderers with an opportunity to separate her from Aegisthus and his garrison. For all her alleged vileness it never occurred to her that she would need a bodyguard at her daughter's house, and so she dismisses her attendants and driver.

1015–16 Clytemnestra argues as a defendant in a trial, insisting that the jury know the facts (πρᾶγμα / ἔργον) as opposed to talk (γλῶσσα / λόγοι). Cf. E. *Hec.* 1187–9, *Hipp.* 983–5, Aristoph. *Plut.* 376. See however 1036–8n.

1018–29 For the argument against Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia, cf. S. *El.* 525–48, A. *Ag.* 1412–18. Τυνδάρεως: synizesis (see 383n).

1021 ὄχρετ' ἐκ δόμων ἄγων: does this mean that Agamemnon took Iphigenia with him when he first set out, suggesting that he already knew that a sacrifice would be called for? Or did he go back to fetch her from Argos under the guise of the marriage after Calchas ordered her sacrifice (see Denniston)? Euripides dramatizes the event in *IA*, where Agamemnon sends for her and is much distressed when Clytemnestra accompanies her daughter to Aulis. In *IA* (98–103) he describes the ruse.

1024–6 If there had been a good reason (other than prosecuting the war to recover Helen), Clytemnestra claims she would have accepted the sacrifice. For other victims of war prophets, see the stories of Erechtheus' daughters and Creon's son Menoeceus (in E. *Phoen.*) who sacrifice themselves to save the city; also in E. *Heracl.* Heracles' daughter Macaria volunteers to be sacrificed in order to save her brothers.

1027–8 Menelaus is often denigrated in Greek tragedy, e.g., S. *Aj.* 1046–1162, E. *IA.* 378–401, *Andr.* 309–765. On Menelaus' carelessness in keeping his wife from “folly,” see E. *IA* 70–9.

1030–4 Clytemnestra's confession that she would have put up with Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia had he not brought a concubine back home weakens her claim that she acted justly. Cassandra is only an additional justification for murdering Agamemnon in A. Ag. 1440–7, and is not featured at all in S. *El*.

1032 **μαινάδ' ἔνθεον κόρην**: Cassandra, daughter of Priam and Hecuba, and inspired (or mad) prophetess of Apollo. She is murdered by Clytemnestra in H. *Od.* 11.421–3 and in A. Ag. 1444–7, after she has foretold her own death (1136–9, 1149, 1160–1, 1290–4, 1313–30). See a mid-seventh century bronze strip from the Argive Heraeum (Prag, 58, G1, PL. 37a). Cassandra was the last straw for Clytemnestra, but her motives, as always, are mixed. If Electra's chronology is correct, Clytemnestra's sincerity must be doubted, however, since she was already living with Aegisthus before Agamemnon came home. Clytemnestra claims she enlisted Agamemnon's enemies to abet her revenge (1046–7). In H. *Od.* 11. 421–3 Agamemnon's ghost talks about Cassandra's pitiful death at the hands of his wife.

οἰκτροτάτην δ' ἤκουσα ὅπα Πριάμοιο θυγατρός,
Κασσάνδρης, τὴν κτείνει Κλυταιμνήστρη δολόμητις
ἄμφ' ἐμοί·

The most pitiful sound I heard was Priam's daughter
Cassandra, whom treacherous Clytemnestra killed
over me . . .

See A. Ag. 1035–1330, for Aeschylus' brilliant use of the third actor in his Cassandra scene and for her dead body on the *eccyclēma*, 1440–7.

1035 **μῶρον . . . γυναῖκες**: the adjective points to sexual weakness (see Denniston). For the assumption that this is a characteristic of women, see e.g., E. *TW* 1055–9, *Hipp.* 373–430. The equation of moral failing and intellectual deficiency is universal in early Greek thought. **μὲν οὖν**: *Now it is true that*; for the transitional **μὲν οὖν**, see *GP* 470–3.

1036–8 It is true (see Cropp) that Clytemnestra's argument is specious because although her adultery most likely preceded Agamemnon's with Cassandra, it did not necessarily predate his dalliance with Chryseis and other women in the Troad, of which Clytemnestra is aware in Aeschylus'

Agamemnon (1439): Χρυσηίδων μείλιγμα τῶν ὑπ' Ἰλίου: *The darling of all the golden girls who spread the gates of Troy* (tr. Fagles) or, more literally, *Plaything of all the Chyseises at Troy*.

Electra later (1070) accuses her mother of beautifying herself as soon as Agamemnon was out the door, but she is hardly an impartial witness.

1037 θέλει: can mean either *she wants* or *it is accustomed*.

1038 χᾶτερον κτᾶσθαι φίλον: Konstan (1985, 181) understands this as a political use of φίλος; that is, Clytemnestra takes on Aegisthus as an ally.

1039–40 A succinct statement of the double standard that has from time immemorial applied to women's and men's reputations.

1041–5 A surprising argument and, to some, evidence of Euripides' feminist thinking. England (103), for example, writes, "Euripides (like Plato) believed in the equality of the sexes (a most unpopular doctrine at Athens)." To Michellini (220) Clytemnestra's inversion "resembles and exaggerates the elaborate hypothetical constructs of the new rhetoric."

1044 ἡνέσχετ': Cf. 264 "Verbs," 508n.

1046 ἦνπερ: acc. governed by πορεύσιμον.

1049–50 Clytemnestra is so sure of her argument that she invites Electra to counter it, without hesitation or qualification.

1049 παρρησία: the term par excellence for free speech and frank expression. The Athenian democracy prided itself on ἰσηγορία, the right of equal access by all citizens (but not women) to public speech before the city's political institutions. παρρησία came to be viewed as a part of this access in about the second half of the fifth century. See Roisman 2004. Euripides, however, is the only extant classical tragedian who uses the term (*El.* 1056, *Ion* 672, 675, *Bacch.* 668, *Hipp.* 422, *Or.* 905, *Phoen.* 391).

1051–4 ἡ δίκη δ' αἰσχροῶς ἔχει: the chorus usually speaks a few lines to demarcate the speeches in an *agōn*. Here they are less vapid than usual and show that nobody is on Clytemnestra's side. On the ugly face of justice see also 1244 and *S. El.* 558–60. The repetition of the attitude that a woman must

go along with her husband in all things may reflect the norm, but given Agamemnon's murder of their daughter it is remarkable. See E. *Med.* 13–15:

αὐτὴ τε πάντα συμφέρουσ' Ἰάσωνι·
ἥπερ μεγίστη γίγνεται σωτηρία,
ὅταν γυνὴ πρὸς ἄνδρα μὴ διχοστατῇ.

and obliging Jason in every way.

This is what brings the greatest stability at home:
when a woman does not challenge her husband.

Clytemnestra follows this rule in her deference to Aegisthus, though she draws the line at killing her child (26–30).

1051 δίκαι' . . . δίκη: *figura etymologica* (see 234n). This is how Castor will describe Orestes' act (1244).

1054 ἀριθμὸν . . . λόγων: “does not enter into the reckoning of my considerations.”

1056–9 παρησίαν: See 1049n. Electra seizes on the positive term, inadvertently highlighting Clytemnestra's positive qualities. In S. *El.*, Clytemnestra also assures her daughter that she may speak (556–7), but then recants out of anger at what she hears (626–9).

1057 τέκνον: there is a pileup of words in this scene that emphasize the tie between mother and daughter (1006, 1055, 1058, 1061), a feature absent in the *agōn* in Sophocles' play (516–609).

1060–99 Electra's rebuttal. Euripides' Electra gives much less attention to the murder of Iphigenia than Sophocles' heroine. Since Clytemnestra had already admitted that the sacrifice was not her only motive for killing Agamemnon and that she would have tolerated the sacrifice if he had not compounded the offence by bringing Cassandra to her home, Electra need not elaborate on the matter. It is enough for her to dismiss the sacrifice as a motive right at the beginning of the *agōn*. The Sophoclean Electra goes to great lengths to justify her father's decision to kill his own daughter (565–76). Electra's speech is mostly introduction (1060–85), a character assassination of Clytemnestra. She builds the case against her mother from

1086–96 (with 1097–9 highly suspect). The speech has ten resolutions: 1 (1063, 1079, 1083, 1085, 1099), 6 (1063, 1071, 1084, 1086, 1094). See 3n.

1064 ἄμφο ματαίῳ Κάστορός τ' οὐκ ἀξίῳ: the shame or disgrace that Castor suffers is usually attributed solely to Helen's elopement (see *H. Il.* 3.236–42; *E. TW* 132–3, *Hel.* 137–42), not to Clytemnestra as well. In his alternative treatment of the myth, Euripides has a false Helen going to Troy and the real Helen enjoying divinity with her brothers (*Hel.* 1666–9, *Or.* 1635–7, 1688–90). Had Electra married Castor, she would have been both Clytemnestra's daughter and her sister-in-law.

1071 ξανθὸν κατόπτρφ πλόκαμον ἐξήσκεις κόμης: contrasting with Electra's ill-kempt, short-cropped hair, see 184, 241, 335.

1076 μόνη or μόνην?: Is Electra claiming she is the only Greek woman to know her mother so well? This is probably true, but it goes without saying. Or does she say that her mother was the only Greek woman to hope the Trojans would win?

1082 ὃν Ἑλλὰς αὐτῆς εἵλετο στρατηλάτην: on the choice/election of Agamemnon to the generalship see *E. IA* 84–6:

κάμῃ στρατηγεῖν κᾶτα Μενέλεω χάριν
εἵλοντο, σύγγονόν γε. τὰξίωμα δὲ
ἄλλος τις ὦφελ' ἀντ' ἐμοῦ λαβεῖν τόδε.

Then they chose me to command the expedition
because of Menelaus, because I'm his brother, an honor
I wish to god someone else had won instead of me.

On Agamemnon's campaign for office see *E. IA* 337–45.

1086–8 Electra's strongest argument. Only fear can refute it (1114–5).

1089–90 ἐπηνέγκω λέχει τὰλλότρια: Clytemnestra's only property after her husband's death was her own dowry from her father's home, which, considering that he was king of Sparta, may have been considerable. She had no right to Agamemnon's estate. Her daughter accuses her of alienating her children's property as her dowry to pay Aegisthus to marry her (cf. *A. Cho.*

915–17). Athenian law stipulated that the estate of a deceased man went to his sons, who were required to draw on their legacy to provide their sisters with a dowry. The widow was permitted to continue living in the house, under the supervision of the inheriting son. If she remarried and left the house, she was entitled to take with her only her personal belongings and the dowry she had brought when she married the deceased. Electra blames her mother for having used Orestes' rightful inheritance as her dowry to marry Aegisthus. One wonders whether Electra would have been as hostile to Aegisthus and her mother and so insistent on revenge had she been permitted to remain in the palace with them. Would she, like Chrysothemis in Sophocles' version, have accommodated herself to the situation?

1093–6 **φόνον δικάζων φόνος**: Electra of course does not see that the same can be said about her and her killing of Clytemnestra. The Sophoclean Electra makes the same point (582–3), but her warning can be read not only as foreshadowing the murder of Clytemnestra but also as condemning it. See Roisman 2008, 105–6.

1097–1101 Most editors question these lines on the grounds of relevance. The lines about choosing a wife most likely were marginal comments that got into the play (see Denniston, Page, 76). Stobaeus quotes 1097–9 as lines from *Cretan Women* (Κρήσσαι). In defense of the lines, it is argued (see Denniston's summary) that the content of Electra's lines echoes her bitter criticism of her mother's marriage to Aegisthus (916–17, 936–7) and harks back to what she said at 1089–90. Deleting them would make Electra's speech three lines shorter than Clytemnestra's. It is common for the chorus to make a generic comment at the end of a long speech. **εὐγένοιαν**: synizesis (see 383n).

1102–46 End of the *agōn*: as usual the *agōn* ends with back and forth lines. Often the parties break down into bickering, but Electra cannot risk so alienating her mother that she would refuse to enter the house. In contrast to both Aeschylus, who creates a hubristic, but majestic, Clytemnestra, and Sophocles, who draws her as a woman who is not a "true" mother, Euripides shows Clytemnestra treating Electra in a conciliatory and caring manner. He shows her regretting her past actions and torn as she tries to please both her husband and her rebellious daughter.

These lines have eight resolutions: 1 (1126), 4 (1137), 6 (1116, 1127, 1132, 1140, 1146), 8 (1123). See 3n.

1102–6 συγγνώσομαί σοι: Clytemnestra shows remarkable understanding. Of this speech, Vellacott (238) writes, “her answer to thirty-seven lines of concentrated hate is to speak of love.” See E. *IA* 638–9 when Iphigenia asks permission to run and embrace her father, her mother says:

ἀλλ', ὦ τέκνον, χρὴ· φιλοπάτωρ δ' αἰεί ποτ' εἶ
μάλιστα παίδων τῷδ' ὅσους ἐγὼ ἴτεκον.

Of course, my dear. Of all my children you / have always been most fond
of your father.

1105–6 οὐχ οὕτως ἄγαν χαίρω τι: Clytemnestra never denies killing Agamemnon, but she does not gloat. The consequences have not been all happy. Still, as Electra says at 1111, it is too late for regrets.

1107–8 Some editors (beginning with Weil) remove these lines and place them after 1131. Even though they may be said to “disrupt Clytemnestra’s train of thought” (Denniston) an argument can be made for keeping them here. A play is not just its words. Visualizing the scene helps us make sense of what Clytemnestra says. She has finished defending her actions and has listened to a tirade from her daughter of about equal length to her own apology. Now at last she turns to and engages with Electra. She begins to express doubts about the success of her defining action (1105–6) and pauses in her self-absorption to look at her daughter. Only when she sees her daughter’s deplorable state does she cry out (1109) and realize that she went too far. The next lines (1109–10) are too abrupt right after her expression of mild dissatisfaction, unless something, like seeing what the consequences are for Electra, stimulates it.

1110 ἤλασ' εἰς ὀργὴν πόσιν: a difficult line: the manuscripts have the acc. πόσιν, which in the context would have to refer to Aegisthus. With this reading, Clytemnestra regrets egging him on and encouraging his mistreatment of her children from her first marriage (see Electra’s response at 1116), but earlier the Farmer had said she protected them (27–8) by restraining Aegisthus. Possibly she includes her urging Aegisthus’ participation in the murder of Agamemnon. The dat. πόσει, referring to Agamemnon, has been suggested and accepted by many editors. Clytemnestra regrets nursing and goading her anger against him. This would suggest that she almost cannot remember why she killed him: “that I whipped up my anger against my

husband more than I needed to” or “I drove [myself] into anger at my husband” which in the grand scheme seems more significant since the children escaped the worst of Aegisthus’ plans. The word πόσις is used eleven times in this scene. Clytemnestra uses it of Agamemnon (1031), in general (1036), and of Menelaus (1042); Electra uses it of Agamemnon three times (1067, 1081 in a comparison with Aegisthus, and 1088), and once of Aegisthus (1091) before this use (at 1110). So it does not do to say with Denniston that “Aegisthus is not yet in the picture.” At 1116 Electra uses it of Aegisthus. In her last speech Clytemnestra calls Aegisthus *husband* twice (1134, 1138).

1111 ὥπὲ στενάζεις: a tragic sentiment like Medea’s κάπειτα θρήνει (1249) “I’ll cry tomorrow” (lit. “and then weep”).

1122 δέδοικα γάρ νιν ὥς δέδοικ’ ἐγώ: “I fear him as I fear him.” Dramatic irony. The audience knows his corpse is hidden in the stage building.

1123 τί μ’ ἐκάλεις: Clytemnestra has been informed by the old slave of the birth of a baby boy. Given their estrangement, Electra must have a reason other than common human feeling for summoning her mother.

1125 See 654n.

1128 ἄλλης τόδ’ ἔργον: the celebration was a family event (see note on 654) for acknowledging the newborn. The grandmother’s presence, at least, would be expected under normal circumstances.

1130–1 ἀγείτων: in contrast to Orestes (272), Clytemnestra discounts the Chorus. Does she purposefully ignore them for having rebuked her in 1051–4? In effect, Clytemnestra is asking why Electra acted as her own midwife, a question that injects a measure of realism into the scene. Notwithstanding the presence of the Chorus of country women, her assumption that there were no friendly neighbors around to help is not unreasonable. Electra finds it convenient to confirm this assumption.

1132–8 Clytemnestra’s last words are full of dramatic irony. In the sacrifice to the gods, she will be the victim, and this will be the χάρις, *favor* she will do for Electra. She will join her current husband not in his sacrifice to the Nymphs, but in death.

1132 τελεσφόρον: see A. *Cho.* 541, where Orestes prays for the fulfilment (εὔχομαι . . . τοῦναιρον εἶναι . . . τελεσφόρον) of his mother's ominous dream, and S. *El.* 646, where Clytemnestra prays ironically for the fulfilment (δὸς τελεσφόρα) of her ambiguous dream if it bodes well. Here Clytemnestra uses the word for the completion of the (nonexistent) infant's term, still unaware that she is participating in her own destruction.

1135–6 A director has to be aware of the disposal of actors and objects that have been brought onstage. Clytemnestra's Trojan women have stepped down from the carriage (998–9). To clear the acting area for the murder and its aftermath, they would have to go with the male slaves addressed here, perhaps a driver and another attendant to lead the horses and carriage offstage.

1139–40 φρούρει δέ μοι / μή σ' αἰθαλώση πολύκαπνον στέγος πέπλους: this final biting comment reactivates the *Oresteia* in the audience's mind and reminds us of Ag. 773–4.

Δίκα δὲ λάμπει μὲν ἐν / δυσκάπνοις δώμασιν . . .

Justice shines / in sooty houses.

Not even in the hovels of the poor, as the displacement of the setting in *Electra* tells us: when we realize that, though said to be the poor dwelling of a farmer, the *skēnē* is still the same actual space as in other versions of the story. Any hut can serve as the *skēnē* and become the scene of brutal unseen murder.

1143 ταῦρον: in A. Ag. 1125–6, Cassandra refers to Agamemnon as a *bull* when he is trapped by Clytemnestra in the bath. Here the *bull* is Aegisthus, dehumanized by his slaughter as a sacrificial beast. In Homer, Agamemnon is killed like an ox in its stall (*Od.* 4.535, 11.411). Clytemnestra does not hear these words. In any case, as the Farmer's wife, Electra would not have the means to sacrifice a real bull.

1146 δώσω χάριν: Electra mocks her mother's exit line.

1147–71 THIRD STASIMON

After Electra follows Clytemnestra into the hut, the Chorus waits outside while Clytemnestra is killed. They sing a strophic pair (1147–64) largely in

dochmiacs (— — — —) and variants (e.g., — — — — —). Clytemnestra's shrieks and the Chorus' musings are in iambs (1165–8). The Chorus retells Agamemnon's death and quotes what he cried out when he was killed. Husband and wife are reunited in death as her cries mingle with the Chorus' song. Their attitude shifts as in *A. Cho.* (though only briefly 1007–9, 1018–20; but see 1043–7). The other two odes linked the past and the present through incidents or characters from a distance. This one is closer to and includes the dramatic present.

1148 <έν> omitted in the mss. was restored by Seidler.

1150–1 **στέγα λάινοί τε θριγκοί:** the roof and the stone copings (metonymy for house, 216–17n) cry out, reminding us of the opening scene of the *Agamemnon*, “if the house could speak” *A. Ag.* 37–8. Now it does speak. **θριγκοί:** the *top course* of stones in a wall, also used metaphorically for the finishing touches.

1151 **τάδ' ἐνέποντος:** the Chorus relives what happened inside the *skēnē* in *A. Ag.* Though the scene has changed, the actual interior space has not. In *A. Ag.* he actually cries at the first blow (1343): ὦμοι, πέπληγμαι καίριαν πληγὴν ἔσω. *Ah me! I am struck, a deep and fatal blow.* And at the second: ὦμοι μάλ' αἰθις, δευτέραν πεπληγμένος. *Ah me, and again struck a second blow.* **σχετλία** (L): Diggle emends to σχέτλιε (σχέτλιος can be, rarely, a two-termination adjective); Seidler changes to σχέτλια (to stand for σχέτλια ἔργα) but this is no longer generally accepted. Denniston finds the mss. reading possible.

1151–2 **φίλαν πατρίδα . . . ἑμάν:** a very emotional/pathetic hyperbaton (see 16–17n). Agamemnon's last word is *mine* as his homeland from which he is separated by ten years is lost to him the moment he has reached it.

1152 **σποραΐσιν:** *sowings* for *years*. Not a very common word in Euripides (*TW* 503, *Andr.* 637, *Hec.* 659, *Cyc.* 56), but suitable for a rural chorus. Agamemnon returns at the seeding, a hopeful time of renewal and expectation, only to be cut down. At the start of the play the Farmer goes off to plow his furrows and seed his fields (σπερῶ, 79) and at its end he is to be plucked from his land. That neither man gets to see the growth and harvest of his crop adds to the poignancy.

Two lines to match 1163–4 are missing.

1158 Κυκλώπειά . . . τείχε’: the massive stone architecture in and around Mycenae was attributed to the Cyclopes, one-eyed giants, sons of Uranus and Gaia, who were both masons and smiths. The walls were built of huge blocks of unworked limestone so large, according to Pausanias, that two mules could not budge them; they are filled in with smaller stones (Pausanias 2.25.7; see also 2.16.4, 2.20.5). **ὄξυθήκτου βέλους:** Murray’s reading. The gen. would depend on αὐτόχειρ. The meaning “herself the wielder of the sharp-edged weapon” is hard to defend since αὐτόχειρ with gen. means “very doer” (LSJ), i.e., *actual perpetrator*. Denniston prefers ὄξυθήκτω βέλει (*with sharp-edged weapon*); Diggle marks a crux: †βέλους ἔκονεν†.

1160 πέλεκυν: see 10–11n, 160–1n.

1163 λέαινα: in A. Ag. (1258) Cassandra calls Clytemnestra a “two-footed lioness,” who betrays her lion-husband with the wolf Aegisthus; see also the lyrics about the lion raised in the house (Ag. 716–36). Here the Chorus uses the image to convey her ruthless ferocity as she murdered Agamemnon. In E. Med. the animal savagery of the lioness is mitigated by the fact that she is defending her young (187–9) as Clytemnestra at least claims to have done (see Denniston). At the end (1342) of her play Medea is also called a “lioness, not a woman.”

1172–1359 EXODOS (the part of the play after the last choral song), in three parts: *kommos* (1172–1237), *dei ex machina* (1238–1356), choral tag (1357–9).

1172–1237 KOMMOS (sung lament shared by actors and chorus)

The *eccyclema* (which had been used for the same purpose in both A. Ag. and Cho.) is rolled out to reveal the result of the interior action, the bodies of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus side by side, physically united in death (cf. 1143–5; see also 1276 where Castor alludes to the body of Aegisthus). Orestes and Electra, spattered with blood, stand over the brutalized body of their mother. Of the tableau Goff (265) writes, “When the two children . . . enter covered in their mother’s blood . . . it is possible to read a reference to birth itself in the scene,” a suggestion that is given added weight by Electra’s emotional redundancy at 1183–4 ματρὶ τῷδ’, ἃ μ’ ἔτικτε and Orestes’ physical reference to his birth at 1208–9. In Sophocles the body of Clytemnestra

is brought out for Aegisthus to see, but remains covered. The *kommos* in Euripides' *Electra* is a brilliant interchange between characters and Chorus after the killing of Clytemnestra. It performs the function of a messenger's speech by reenacting the tragic action and showing how the second murder was done, through dance, gesture, and words in the presence of the corpses of the victims. In A. *Cho.* much of the play is a *kommos*, but it takes place before the killing. There, as a ritual mourning for Agamemnon, it musters the forces of the dead and stirs the spirits of the avengers. Euripides' play is a story of rehearsal and regret. Electra has spent most of her life planning what she would say to her brother, to Aegisthus, to her mother, if ever she had the chance. In this she is finally gratified, but after the fact there is only disappointment and the realization that she has nothing left to live for. The killers feel breathtaking horror and regret at what they have done. The Chorus recoils at the sight. Nobody knows why these things have happened. Myth, like war, destroys life—but both have sometimes been thought to give it meaning.

1177 ἰὼ Γᾶ καὶ Ζεῦ: see E. *Med.* 143, 148, 1251–2 (where the Sun is said to be *all-seeing*).

1179 δίγωνα σώματ': the bodies themselves are the physical result of the ἔργα (1178) and grammatically in apposition to ἔργα.

1182 Two and one half lines are missing, the metrical match of τίς . . . κτανόντος (1195–7).

1183 αἰτία δ' ἐγώ: Electra blames herself, and the Chorus echoes her at 1204–5.

1183–4 διὰ πυρὸς: “through fire I went against my mother.” Such use of fire as a metaphor for destruction and hatred is rare in Greek literature. See Denniston. ματρὶ τῇδ', ἃ μ' ἔτικτε κούραν: it is as if Electra is finally recognizing their relationship as she looks at her mother's dead body, “my mother here . . . who gave me birth, her daughter.” The PLEONASM (or redundancy) adds to the pathos. ἔτικτε for the impf. see 115–6n.

1185–9 “Alas for your fortune, your fortune, / mother who bore unforgettable children, / unforgettable miseries and worse, / suffering at the hands of your children, justly you paid for their father's death.” Diggle (1969, 55)

suggests that σῶς is a corruption of σκληρῶς or στερρῶς, “Alas for your fortune, your harsh fortune.”

1190–7 Orestes contrasts the obscurity of the “justice” about which Apollo’s oracle spoke with the obviousness of the pains of exile he will suffer as a result of heeding the oracle’s call. His expectation that he will be exiled from all of Greece is based on his identification of Greece as a civilization that would not tolerate a murderer in its midst. He does not yet know, as does Aeschylus’ Orestes (*Cho.* 1029–32), that he will be cleared of matricide, or that he will be banished only from Argos, as Castor will inform him (1264–7, 1250–1). For banishment as the punishment for murder, see *S. OT* 236–42. **φόνια . . . λάχε**: “a murderous (i.e., murderer’s) fate.”

1195–7 **τίς . . . ἐμὸν κάρα προσόψεται**: Orestes sees himself becoming the Gorgon whose head no one can look upon (see 1221–6, where Orestes says he covered his eyes while killing his mother, as if she were a Gorgon he could not look at).

1198–1200 For Electra nothing has changed except that she has added guilt and pollution to her poverty, mourning, and alienation. There are no dances, no genuine marriage for her, as she had complained early on (178–80, 310–11). Electra brings up her own gender-related concerns about what will happen to her. Her fear is not only that no man will have her as a wife, but that she will not be able to participate in those civil activities permitted to women, such as festivals where they danced. As at 948, Electra sees herself as unmarried.

1201–5 As often in tragedy the Chorus does not express a consistent moral view. They showed no sympathy for Clytemnestra while she was alive, but now circumstances have changed, and like Electra and her brother they change with them (cf. *A. Cho.* 1007).

1206–25 Reenactment of the murder in song and gesture.

1206–7 **ἔδειξε μαστὸν**: their mother bared her breast as in *A. Cho.* 896–8, which induces Orestes’ cry, “Pylades, what shall I do?” See also *Cho.* 754–62 where Orestes’ Nurse talks about suckling him, and Clytemnestra’s dream 526–33, in which she suckles a snake. Hecuba also shows her breast when entreating Hector to enter the city and not fight a duel with Achilles (*H. Il.* 22.80).

1208–9 γόνιμα μέλεα: “birth-giving limbs,” a direct reference to the birth process, as if it is not complete until he has killed his mother. The limbs that gave birth to her killers fell to the floor . . . and her hair (1209, reading τὰν κόμαν) . . . Orestes cannot finish his sentence (an instance of aposiopesis, see 582n). When she lowered herself to the floor, in terror and supplication, he would have taken hold of her hair—the only part of her he would have had to touch—as he pulled her head back to slit her throat. Then he must have leaned over her, and she reached up to touch his cheek (1214, 1216). According to another reading (of 1209) Orestes says “I felt faint,” τακόμαν (= ἐτηκόμην < τήκω).

1214–5 “These words she screamed as she put her hand / on my face, ‘my child, I beg you’”: in the dim light of the hut Clytemnestra sees her two children armed against her and reaches for her daughter or her son (depending on the distribution of parts here), and is left clinging as she falls (1216–17).

1221–6 “I put my cloak over my eyes”: Orestes covered his face and stabbed or slashed, so that his mother’s face is hidden from him as if he were beheading a Gorgon. Electra urged him on and guided the sword. For once Electra is there and actively participates in the murder.

The *kommos*, like so many things, has been displaced from its position in the Aeschylean enactment of the story. No longer a summoning of the power of their dead father, it has become this howlingly painful song of mourning for their dead mother and regret for their own deed of matricide. On the other hand, it might be said to bring the Dioscuri as comforters.

1224–5 Euripides seems to be answering Sophocles’ version, in which Electra is outside crying out, “Strike her again, if you have the strength,” after her mother has been struck once. And Sophocles’ Orestes does strike a second blow (S. *El.*1415–16). Euripides’ Electra takes part and helps strike the blow when Orestes’ strength fails him.

1226 Diggle, following Seidler, gives this line to Electra, and emends ἔπεξα to ἔπεξα, “I have caused the most terrible of sufferings.”

1227–30 As dutiful children, they try to fit their mother’s wounded body back together and cover her with her robe as if in preparation for the *prothesis*.

1233–7 This is an anapestic (– – –) announcement of the arrival of the Dioscuri. The appearance of a deity at the end of the play is common in Euripidean tragedy: *Hipp.*, *Andr.*, *Supp.*, *IT*, *Ion*, *Hel.*, *Or.*, and *Bacch.*

1233–4 **δαίμονες ἢ θεῶν**: often little or no distinction is made between δαίμονες and θεοί. Perhaps here the term δαίμονες is appropriate because the Dioscuri are divinized humans. δαίμονες also include spirits and semi-abstractions (like Eros), as they appear and participate in human lives.

1238–1356 *EXODOS: Dei ex machina*: This is a long *deus ex machina* scene. Only that in *Hipp.* is longer. To the amazement of all, the Dioscuri appear above the palace on the *mēchanē* (flying machine) or simply on the rooftop platform (*theologeion*) to explain the past and proclaim the future. If the heavenly twins are to be seen flying in they would use the *mēchanē*. They do not, however, come down to the level of orchestra and stage to take part in the action, so that a sudden appearance on top of the stage building might be sufficient. In 1998 I (Luschnig) had the pleasure of seeing a production of Euripides' *Electra* directed by Tom Glynn at the University of Idaho, in which giant puppets were used for the gods. They had the virtues of dignity and distance or otherness and were not treated as a comic element, as they so often are in modern productions. It was one of the best performances of a Greek tragedy I have ever seen.

In summary what they have to say is:

Apollo got it wrong: Orestes should not have killed his mother.

Helen did not go to Troy; instead Zeus sent a phantom of her to Troy to cause death and destruction.

Electra is to marry the silent Pylades.

Her Farmer is to go with them and become rich.

Orestes is to go into exile, be threatened by the Furies, undergo a trial for murder, and found a new city.

1238–91 Castor's speech contains 15 resolutions in 54 lines, a low ratio of one resolution per 3.6 lines. 1(1238, 1249, 1279, 1280, 1284), 2(1278), 4 (1260, 1283), 6(1261, 1268, 1273, 1289), 8(1240, 1249, 1272). See 3n.

1238 **Ἀγαμέμνωνος παῖ**: recalls the lofty address to Orestes with which Sophocles has the Paedagogus open his play: ὦ τοῦ στρατηγῆσαντος ἐν Τροίᾳ ποτὲ / Ἀγαμέμνωνος παῖ (*El.* 1–2); “Son of Agamemnon, who

commanded once / the troops at Troy.” Whereas the Paedagogus’ words refer to the legacy of heroism that leads the Sophoclean Orestes to matricide, Castor’s words, toward the end of Euripides’ play, address a broken, remorseful Orestes who is facing the dire consequences of his “heroic” deed. The address might be seen as ironic, as is Orestes’ claim in *E. Or.* (1167) to be the “son of Agamemnon, who was ruler of Hellas” when he is in the midst of planning to murder Helen, to get back at Menelaus for slighting him (see also Tyndareus’ sarcastic questioning of Orestes’ birth, *Or.* 483).

1239–40 In stating that they are Clytemnestra’s brothers, Castor indicates that they are Orestes’ and Electra’s uncles. This family relationship explains why the Discouri go to the trouble of telling Orestes what he must do to protect himself from the Furies and to obtain pardon for the matricide, and of arranging Electra’s marriage to Pylades.

1240 Κάστωρ: of the Dioscuri, only Castor speaks. He uses dual and pl. in identifying himself and his brother at 1239 and 1242, switches to first person sg., and then back to dual or pl. beginning at 1348.

1241 ναυσὶν: “we have just calmed a storm threatening to ships.” We accept Barnes’ emendation of L’s ναὸς, which strains syntactical interpretation. Construing ναὸς to prefigure Menelaus’ ship (1278) leaves 1241 unclear at the point when it is delivered.

1244 μέν νυν: *well*. See Denniston. Clytemnestra got what she deserved, but it is not right for a son to murder his mother.

1245–6 Φοῖβός τε, Φοῖβος: an emotional repetition (anadiplosis: see 112–13n.). Castor starts to speak of Phoebus but stops himself. ἀλλ’ ἄναξ γάρ ἐστ’ ἐμός / σιγῶ: “but since he is my master, / I hold my tongue,” an example of *PARALEIPSIS*, an intentional omission for rhetorical effect (Smyth 3036). Despite his disclaimer, Castor does express a critical opinion of Phoebus (οὐκ ἔχρησέ . . . σοφά 1246; 1296–7, 1302). Apollo’s unwise act was to tell a son to commit matricide.

1246 σοφὸς . . . οὐκ . . . σοφά: of this line Goldhill (in Felski, 57) writes, “Being told authoritatively by a god that god’s oracles are not authoritative, although the god is authoritative, opens an irremediable fissure between knowledge and action, which stalls Aristotelian practical reasoning in a swirl of action.”

1248 Μοῖρα Ζεύς τ’: Fate (one’s portion or apportionment) and Zeus work together. Even Zeus cannot override the decisions of Moira. When the story is well known, Fate is an instrument for showing that things are coming out right.

1249 Πυλάδῃ μὲν Ἠλέκτραν δός: Electra’s marriage to the Farmer can be seen as non-binding because she was not given to him by Orestes, her proper *kurios*, but by Aegisthus, who overstepped his authority; see 259n. Electra, the virgin (44, 51, 270, 311), etymologically *the unbedded woman*, whom Helen addresses as “long-time virgin” (E. *Or.* 72) may not seem a likely candidate for bride, but she does show an interest in marriage, her mother’s and her own, most recently at lines 1199–1200.

1250–1 σὺ δ’ Ἄργος ἔκλειπ’: in Aeschylus, Orestes’ exile is only temporary. He is purified and acquitted and returns to rule his homeland. In this play his alienation is so complete that he never even sets foot in his native city or home.

1252 κῆρές. . . αἱ κυνώπιδες θεαί: the Spirits of Destruction are identified with the Erinyes/Furies. See Hes. *Th.* 217–22. In 1342–3 they are also likened to hounds; cf. A. *Eum.* 131–2.

1254 Παλλάδος σεμνὸν βρέτας: the ancient image (see παλαιὸν . . . βρέτας, A. *Eum.* 80) of Athena Polias (Athena of the City) made of olive wood (Pausanias 1.26.7). In Homer, *Od.* 3.306–7, Athens is the place from which Orestes comes home to take revenge. Aeschylus is the first known writer to identify Athens as the place where Orestes is cleared of guilt. To protect himself from the Furies, Orestes is told by Apollo to clasp the statue of Athena (A. *Eum.* 79–80). Physical contact during supplication is of ritual significance and crucial to making sure that the supplication will be accepted (see Gould, 78).

1256 δεινοῖς δράκουσιν: the *Keres* wield snakes. Sometimes they are portrayed as having wings and snakes in the hair. See Prag, 44–51, with Plates 28–33.

1257 γοργῶφ’ ὑπερτείνουσα σὺ κάρῃ κύκλον: images of fear are characteristic of this play. The Gorgon’s face appears or is alluded to at 460, 856, 1223. Even Athena will intimidate the Furies, unlike her Aeschylean

counterpart who uses persuasion and diplomacy. Athena's aegis is described as round, with a Gorgon's head at its center.

1258–64 Almost all homicide cases in the fifth and fourth centuries were adjudicated by the Areopagus (Macdowell, 116–18), a court named after the hill where it sat. For Aeschylus' explanation of the name, see *A. Eum.* 685–90. Euripides traces the establishment of the Areopagus back to the gods' trial of Ares after he killed Halirrhothius for raping his daughter Alcippe (cf. *IT* 943–6). Aeschylus traces it back to the trial of Orestes which Athena organized to free him from the wrath of the Furies (*Eum.* 482–4). The jury at Orestes' trial, as described here, in *E. IT* 961–7, and in *A. Eum.*, was human. In *Or.* 1648–52, Euripides makes the jurors gods so that they can abolish the human verdict passed down by the Argive assembly. Ἄρεώς τις ὄχθος: *Ares' hill* or *outcrop*, northwest of the Acropolis in Athens.

1263 ἔκ τε τοῦ = ἔκ τε τούτου: *since then*.

1264 δραμεῖν φόνου πέρι: usually with a cognate or internal acc., e.g., ἀγῶνα or κίνδυνον in the sense of *run a course* or *a risk* or *undergo a trial* (e.g., δραμεῖν ἀγῶνα *E. Alc.* 489, *Or.* 878, *IA* 1455), but sometimes the acc. is omitted. The usage is strange as Denniston observes. In these expressions the object of περί is usually the prize, νίκης (*run for victory*), ψυχῆς (*run for one's life*), rather than the charge as here (Denniston).

1265–6 ἴσαι . . . ψῆφοι and 1269 νικᾶν ἴσαις ψήφοισι: *equal votes*: see *A. Eum.* 735, 741, 752–3 where Athena proclaims the rules regarding a tied vote.

ἐμὸν τόδ' ἔργον, λοισθήϊαν κρῖναι δίκην.
ψῆφον δ' Ὀρέστη τήνδ' ἐγὼ προσθήσομαι.

My job is to make final judgment / and I shall cast this vote for Orestes.
(734–5)

νικᾷ δ' Ὀρέστης, κἂν ισόψηφος κριθῇ.

Orestes wins, even if the decision is a tie. (741)

When the votes have been counted:

άνηρ ὅδ' ἐκπέφυγεν αἵματος δίκην:
ἴσον γάρ ἐστι τὰρίθμημα τῶν πάλων.

This man stands acquitted of the charge of murder, / for the number of votes is equal. (752–3)

1269 On voting procedures, see Macdowell, 252–4.

1270–2 In Aeschylus' version, the Erinyes (Furies), defeated in their pursuit of Orestes and mollified by Athena, willingly agree to inhabit a deep cavern beneath the Areopagus; in Euripides' version, their despair causes them to sink into a cleft in the earth. In Aeschylus' version, they promise Athena that in return for being worshiped they will assure Athens' prosperity and social harmony; in Euripides' version, they become oracles for pious men. In E. *IT*, some of them refuse to accept Orestes' acquittal by the court and continue to pursue him (see esp. 968–71).

1271 **χάσμα**: a *cleft* or *chasm* at the NE angle of the Areopagus is still visible; see A. *Eum.* 805.

1272 This is the only extant mention of the Eumenides giving oracles.

1273–5 The city said to be named for him is Orestheion in Mainalia (mentioned in Thucydides 5.64.3 and in Herodotus 9.11), near the source of the Alpheus river, about six miles from the later Megalopolis. **Λυκαίου πλυσίων σηκώματος**: the Lycian precinct or sanctuary of Zeus is on Mount Lykaion, a mountain in Arcadia in the west central Peloponnese, about 22 miles from Olympia (Strabo 8.388; Pausanias 8.38.5–9). In most treatments of the myth, Orestes is allowed to return to Argos after his acquittal. In the *Orestes* he lives only for a year in Arcadia.

1276 **τόνδε δ' Αἰγίσθου νέκυν**: in the *Odyssey* (3.309–10) Orestes himself gives the funeral feast of both Aegisthus and his mother for the Argives.

1278–80 As a matricide, Orestes would not be allowed to bury Clytemnestra, which would ordinarily be his duty as her son (e.g., Lysias 31.20–3).

1279 **ἐξ οὗ**: *from when, after*.

1280–3 H. *Od.* 3. 286–300 relates that on their way back from Troy, Menelaus and Helen were driven by a storm to Egypt, where they stayed for seven years and gathered wealth. Proteus, the old man of the sea, was the only one who could tell Menelaus how to make his way back home. Forced into compliance by Menelaus, he finally told him to make offerings to Zeus so as to obtain the right winds for sailing (4.351–484). The first extant account of the story that Paris took the phantom (*eidōlon*) of Helen to Troy, while she herself spent the war years in Egypt with Proteus, is found in the *Palinode* (“Recantation”) of Stesichorus, a sixth-century B.C.E. lyric poet. Legend has it that Stesichorus was struck blind for criticizing Helen in one of his poems and that his sight was restored after he wrote the *Palinode* (Horace *Epodes* 17.42 with schol.). Euripides dramatized the story in his *Helen*, produced in 412 B.C.E. It is fitting that Helen’s brothers should present this version of Helen’s story, which exculpates her from causing the Trojan War. According to a legend that goes back to the *Cypria* (cf. *Hel.* 38–40, *Or.* 1639–42), Zeus started the Trojan War in order to thin the earth’s superfluous population.

1280–1 Ἑλένη . . . οὐδ’ ἦλθεν Φρύγας: this is sometimes taken as Euripides’ announcement of his brilliantly innovative play *Helen*.

1284 κόρην τε καὶ δάμαρτ’: “virgin-wife” takes us back to the beginning of the play, with its emphasis on Electra’s status (43–4, 255, 270, 311).

1285 Ἀχαιίδος γῆς: probably the Peloponnese.

1286 τὸν λόγῳ σὸν πενθερὸν: “your brother-in-law in name.” That is, the Farmer. Oddly enough, even the good Farmer, whose ancestors are Argive, is not allowed to stay in Argos. Why would Pylades want to have the Farmer at hand? To reward him for his decency?

1289 ὄχθον Κεκροπίας: “the hill of Cecrops’ [land]”, that is, the Acropolis of Athens.

1292–1359 The second part of the final scene consists of chanted anapests (– – –). It can be divided into three sections:

(1) 1292–1307: The Chorus/(Orestes) and Electra wonder why the Dioscuri did nothing to prevent the revenge killings.

(2) 1308–30: Orestes and Electra lament their upcoming separation and exile.

(3) 1331–59 : Farewells and departures.

1295 κάμοι μύθου μέτα, Τυνδαρίδαι; Winnington-Ingram (51–2) gives this line to Orestes.

1298–1300 At least some in the audience must have had the same question. The problem of the gods' ability and will to alter human fate is a recurrent theme in Greek literature, cf. E. *Hipp.* 1327–34, *HF* 828–32, *TW* 23–5, *Hel.* 1658–61. See H. *Il.* 16.431–61, where Zeus considers saving his son Sarpedon from an appointed death, but decides not to in view of Hera's objection to changing his fate.

1299 καπφθιμένης = καταφθιμένης: apocope.

1310 σ' ἀπολείψω σοῦ λειπόμενος: "I will leave you and be left by you." Orestes is fond of such wordplay; see 89n.

1311–13 Brushing aside Orestes' concern that Electra will be left on her own when he goes into exile, Castor focuses on her upcoming marriage and new home with Pylades. Does Euripides want to point up that Electra is not punished for her participation in the matricide? She must leave her home, but that is the common fate of brides.

1312–13 λείπει / πόλιν Ἀργείων: Euripides gives the myth a new ending. No one is to return to Argos. The house of the Atreidae is no more. The number of place names or references to place in the exodos (1242, 1250, 1254, 1274, 1277, 1278, 1279, 1281, 1283, 1285, 1287, 1288, 1289, 1313, 1319–20, 1334, 1343, 1347) signals the diaspora of the characters, the final displacement and separation of the children of Agamemnon from their home, from each other, and from their past. The house is not saved or restored by the actions of Electra and Orestes (as in Sophocles' version), but annihilated. It stands at the end desolate, abandoned finally even by the usurpers, and nearly forgotten by the playwright and audience. Euripides ends *Phoen.* similarly with the death or departure of all the characters we care about (exiled: Antigone and Oedipus; dead: Jocasta, Polynices, Eteocles, and Menoeceus, a new character for the story).

1321 στέρνοις στέρνα: *polyptoton* or *paregmenon*, see 39n. Cf. E. *Alc.* 366–7.

1329–30 Gods are often presented as unmoved by the human misery that they themselves have caused; e.g., E. *Hipp.* 1396, 1441 and *Alc.* 71.

1338 πιστοτάτη: *most loyal*. An odd term for a woman; see 83n.

1340–1 νυμφεύου δέμας Ἥλέκτρας: literally “marry the body of Electra.” The implication is that this marriage, unlike that to the Farmer, will be consummated.

1342–3 κónας τάσδ’: the demonstrative indicates that Castor sees the hounds in the distance as Orestes does at the end of A. *Cho.* (1053–4, 1057–8, 1061–2) though they are unseen by the Chorus and the audience.

1347–8 Some commentators read these lines as referring to the relief expedition that sailed from Athens to Sicily in the spring of 413 B.C.E., and argue that the play was written in that year. Others question the reference and date the play earlier, between 424 and 415; see Zuntz, 67–71 (see “Introduction: Date”). On the role of the Dioscuri, see Lucian *Dialogues of the Gods* 287: “They are made to serve Poseidon and to ride over the sea, and whenever they see sailors tossed by a storm, they settle on the vessel and save the crew.”

1351 ὄσιον: supply τό from the following coordinate phrase.

1357–9 CHORAL TAG: the chorus files out with a typical tag, generalizing on the poor chances for human happiness.

APPENDIX 1

METRICAL ANALYSIS

Note:

◡/— means that the first of the two lines in question has a short in this position and the second a long; —/◡ means that the first of the two lines has a long and the second a short.

◡◡/— means that the first of the two lines in question has two shorts in this position and the second a long; —/◡◡ means that the first of the two lines has a long and the second two shorts.

ELECTRA'S MONODY (112–66)

Strophe 1 and Antistrophe 1: 112–24 ~ 127–39

| | |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ----◡◡---- | 112 ~ 127 anapestic dimeter |
| ----◡◡--◡ | 113 ~ 128 anapestic dimeter |
| ◡---- | 114 ~ 129 dochmiac |
| ◡◡--◡◡◡◡ | 115 ~ 130 glyconic |
| --◡◡--◡---- ----◡◡---- | 116 ~ 131 choriambic dimeter |
| | glyconic |
| ----◡◡◡◡ | 117 ~ 132 glyconic |
| ----◡◡◡◡ | 118 ~ 133 glyconic |
| ----◡◡◡ | 119 ~ 134 pherecratean |
| --◡◡◡◡ | 120 ~ 135 tellesileion (acephalous |
| | glyconic) |
| --◡◡◡◡ | 121 ~ 136 dochmiac |
| --◡/----◡◡◡◡ | 122 ~ 137 glyconic |
| ----◡◡◡◡ | 123 ~ 138 glyconic |
| ----◡◡◡ | 124 ~ 139 pherecratean |

Mesode 1 (astrophic): 125–6

— — — — — — — —
 — — — — — — — —

125 glyconic

126 glyconic

Strophe 2 and Antistrophe 2: 140–9 ~ 157–66

— — — — — — — —
 — — — — — — — —
 — — — — —
 — — — — — — —
 — — — — —
 — — — — — — / — —
 — — — — — — / —
 — — — — — — | — — — — — — —
 — — — — — — — —
 — — — — — — — — | — — — — — — —
 — — — — — — — —

140 ~ 157 dactylic tetrameter

141 ~ 158 dactylic tetrameter

catalectic

142 ~ 159 reizianum

143 ~ 160 glyconic

144 ~ 161 ithyphallic

144' ~ 161' glyconic

145 ~ 162 pherecratean

146 ~ 163 glyconic | choriambic
dimeter

147 ~ 164 glyconic

148 ~ 165 glyconic | choriambic
dimeter

149 ~ 166 pherecratean

Mesode 2 (astrophic): 150–6

— — — — —
 — — — — — — — —
 — — — — — — — —
 — — — — — — — —
 — — — — — — — —
 — — — — — — — —
 — — — — — — — —

150 anapest

151 glyconic

152 glyconic

153 lecythion

154 glyconic

155 glyconic

156 glyconic

PARODOS (167–212)

Strophe and Antistrophe: 167–89 ~ 190–212

— — — — — — — / — — — — — — —
 — — — — — — — — | — — — — — — — —

167 ~ 190 dactylic (enoplian)

168 ~ 191 dactylic (enoplian)

| | |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| — — — — — / — — — — | 435 ~ 445 glyconic |
| — — — — — — — | 436 ~ 446 glyconic |
| — / — — — — — | 437 ~ 447 choriambic dimeter |
| — — — / — — — — — | 438 ~ 448 choriambic dimeter |
| — — — — — — — — | 439 ~ 449 choriambic dimeter |
| — — — — — — — — | 440 ~ 450 glyconic |
| — — — — — — — — | 441 ~ 451 pherecratean |

Strophe 2 and Antistrophe 2: 452–63 ~ 464–75

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| — — — — — — — — — — | 452 ~ 464 dactylic pentameter catalectic |
| — — — — — — / — | 453 ~ 465 pherecratean |
| — — — — — — — | 454 ~ 466 pherecratean |
| — — — — — — — — | 455 ~ 467 glyconic |
| — — — — — — — — — | 456 ~ 468 dactyls |
| — / — — — — — — | 457 ~ 469 “Kurzvers” |
| — — — — — — — — / — — | 458 ~ 470 glyconic |
| — — — — — — — — — — | 459 ~ 471 three dactyls + iambic element |
| — — — — — — — — — — — — — | 460 ~ 472 Greater Asclepiad (cat.?) |
| — — — — — — — — | 461 ~ 473 iambic dimeter catalectic |
| — — — — — — — — / — | 462 ~ 475 hipponactean |

Epode 476–86

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| — — — — — — — — — — — — — — | 476/7 dactylic hexameter |
| — — — — — — — — — — | 478 iambic trimeter |
| — — — — — — — — — | 479 iambic dimeter |
| — — — — — — — — | 480 lecythion |
| — — — — — — — — — | 481 iambic dimeter |
| — — — — — — — — | 482 prosodiac |
| — — — — — — — — | 483/4 glyconic |
| — — — — — — — — — — | 485 iambic dimeter |
| — — — — — — — — — | 486 alcaic ten-syllable |

CHORAL INTERLUDE (585–95)

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| — — — — — — — — — — — | 585 two dochmiacs |
| — — — — — — — — — — | 586 mixed (anapestic-iambic) dimeter |

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| — — — — — | 731 ~ 741 hagesichorean |
| — — — — — / — — | 732 ~ 742 telesillean |
| — — — — — — — | 733 ~ 743 hipponactean |
| — — — — — — — | 734 ~ 744 anapests |
| — / — — — / — — — — | 735 ~ 745 choriambic dimeter |
| — — — — — — — — — | 736 ~ 746 choriambic trimeter |
| | catalectic |

CHORAL CELEBRATION (859–65 ~ 873–9)

| | |
|--|--|
| — — — — — — — | 859 ~ 873 enoplion |
| — — — — — — — | 860 ~ 874 hemiepes |
| — — — — — — — — — | 861 ~ 875 iambelegus |
| — — — — — — — — — | 862 ~ 876 prosodiac |
| † — — — † — — — — — — — — — } — — — — — — — — — } | 863 ~ 877 iambelegus + dactylo-epitrite |
| — — — — — — — — — | 864 ~ 878 dactylo-epitrite |
| — — — — — — — — — | 865 ~ 879 two "Kurzvers" |

THIRD STASIMON (1147–71)

Strophe and Antistrophe: 1147–52 ~ 1155–63

| | |
|---|---|
| — — — — — — — — — | 1147 ~ 1155 two dochmiacs |
| — — / — — — — — — — — / — — | 1148 ~ 1156 two dochmiacs |
| — — — — — — — — / — — | 1149 ~ 1157 iambic dimeter |
| — — — — — — / — — — — — — — — — | 1150 ~ 1158 three dochmiacs |
| — — — — — — — — — — / — — — — — — — — — — / — — | 1151/2 ~ 1159/60 three dochmiacs |
| — — — — — — — — — — — — — — / — — | 1153/4 ~ 1161/2 dochmiac + iambic dimeter (catalectic) |
| — — — — — — — — — | 1163 two dochmiacs |
| — — — — — — — — — — — | 1164 two dochmiacs |

1165–71

| | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| — — — — — — — — — — — | 1165 iambic trimeter |
| — — — — — — — — — | 1166 iambic dimeter |

| | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| ⏑--- | 1167 dochmiac |
| --⏑---⏑---⏑- | 1168 iambic trimeter |
| ⏑---⏑---⏑---⏑- | 1169 two dochmiacs |
| ⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑-- | 1170 two dochmiacs |
| ⏑---⏑- | 1171 dochmiac |

KOMMOS (1177–1232)

Strophe 1 and Antistrophe 1: 1177–89 ~ 1190–1205

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| ⏑-----⏑- ⏑---⏑---⏑- | 1177 ~ 1190 iambic trimeter |
| ⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑- ⏑---⏑---⏑- | 1178 ~ 1191 iambic dimeter |
| ⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑- | 1179 ~ 1192 iambic dimeter |
| ⏑⏑⏑⏑--- ⏑⏑⏑⏑-[-]---⏑- | 1180 ~ 1193 pherecratean / iambic dimeter |
| ⏑⏑⏑⏑---⏑⏑- | 1181 ~ 1194 iambic dimeter |
| --⏑⏑⏑⏑- | 1195 lecythion |
| ⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑- | 1196 iambic dimeter |
| --⏑⏑--- | 1197 ithyphallic |
| ⏑---⏑---⏑---⏑--- | 1182 ~ 1198 iambic trimeter |
| ⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑-/⏑---⏑---⏑--- | 1183 ~ 1199 iambic trimeter |
| --⏑⏑--- | 1184 ~ 1200 ithyphallic |
| ⏑---⏑--- ⏑---⏑---⏑- | 1185 ~ 1201 iambic dimeter |
| --/⏑---⏑---/- | 1186 ~ 1202 iambic dimeter |
| ⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑- | 1187 ~ 1203 iambic dimeter |
| ⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑- | 1188 ~ 1204 iambic dimeter |
| ⏑---⏑---⏑--- | 1189 ~ 1205 iambic trimeter |

Strophe 2 and Antistrophe 2: 1206–12 ~ 1214–20

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| ⏑---⏑---⏑---/-⏑--- | 1206 ~ 1214 iambic trimeter |
| ⏑⏑-/⏑---⏑-/⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑-/ | 1207 ~ 1215 iambic trimeter |
| ⏑---⏑- | 1208 ~ 1216 iambic dimeter |
| ⏑⏑⏑⏑-/⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑--- | 1209 ~ 1217 iambic trimeter |
| ⏑⏑⏑⏑-/⏑⏑--- | 1210 ~ 1218 iambic dimeter |
| ⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑- | 1211 ~ 1219 iambic dimeter |
| --⏑⏑--- | 1212 ~ 1220 ithyphallic |

Strophe 3 and Antistrophe 3: 1221–6 ~ 1227–32

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| — — — — / — — — / — — — — — — — | 1221 ~ 1227 iambic trimeter |
| — — — — — | 1222 ~ 1228 lecythion |
| — / — — — — — — — | 1223 ~ 1229 iambic dimeter |
| — — — — — — — | 1224 ~ 1230 iambic dimeter |
| — — / — — — — — — — / — | 1225 ~ 1231 iambic dimeter |
| — — — — — — — — — | 1226 ~ 1232 alcaic ten-syllable |

APPENDIX 2

DISCUSSIONS

Three Electras—Three Versions of Revenge

- Electra's Pots
- Orestes' Offerings, the Tomb and Tokens
- Paedagogi* and Nurse
- The Major Characters
- Two Views of the Three Orestes
 - 1. The Oracle of Apollo and *Dei ex Machina*
 - 2. The Three Orestes
- Afterlife of Euripides' *Electra*
 - Jean Giraudoux' *Electra*
 - Michalis Cacoyannis' Film *Electra*

ELECTRA'S POTS

Each of the three Electra plays features the use of one or more vessels as props. A comparison of these pots can help us understand the individual ethos of the plays and their characters (see Luschnig 1995, 86–156).

In Aeschylus' *Choephori*, Electra enters with slave women from the palace, carrying vessels for libations, no doubt fine ware suitable to royalty. Several classical vases illustrating the scene at Agamemnon's tomb depict Electra sitting among painted pots in the same classical shapes as the vessels themselves. The vases are often decorated with theatrical scenes or images, one libation vessel almost surrealistically picturing only Electra's face (i.e., mask) on a platform beside a funerary stele (see Trendall and Webster, 40–4, Plates III.1, 1–7, esp. 44:III.1.7). We learn midway through Aeschylus' *Choephori* that during the night just past Clytemnestra was awakened by a nightmare in which she suckled a snake that drew her blood with her mother's

milk (533, 545–6). Orestes interprets the snake in the dream to mean himself (534, 549–50). This visceral dream is what frightened Clytemnestra into sending her daughter to the tomb with appeasing libations. In this way the libations bring the siblings together and link them with their parents, both their living mother and dead father: they bring Electra to her father's tomb on which Orestes has just left offerings. Clytemnestra's libations, further, are used to her detriment and ultimate undoing when they are redirected as prayers for revenge, instigated by the chorus when Electra asks for advice (105–23). Later, questions about the libations lead to the telling of the dream. Though Clytemnestra had dominated the stage in the first part of Aeschylus' trilogy, her part in the second play of the *Oresteia* is small, and she is isolated from the family and even from the action. For most of the drama she remains inside, while her children take over to carry on the familial bloodletting (*Cho.* 379, 385, 500–9).

Sophocles' *Electra* features two prominent pots, a libation vessel and a funerary urn. The libations are brought by Electra's docile and easily manipulated (466) sister, Chrysothemis. It is Electra herself who, in a variation on the Aeschylean theme, schools her sister into redirecting the libations and prayers against their offerer (431–58). The vessel sent by Clytemnestra, bearing her libations to Agamemnon's tomb, leads to the discovery of the offerings left by Orestes after his first scene. Chrysothemis' excited report comes only after another announcement that Orestes is dead, so that Chrysothemis' true news is rejected in favor of the false.

The second pot, the urn of ashes, which in fact does not contain Orestes' ashes because Orestes is not dead, is brought on by Orestes himself. Both vessels have to do with the nature of truth and knowledge of it (an important theme in that play, as it is in Euripides' version) and both figure only by indirection in the recognition. Electra's pathetic scene with the urn of her brother's ashes (as she believes) signifies her absolute isolation at the lowest point in her life, when she is denied even the right to mourn her brother whose death has robbed her of all hope. The scene was justly famous in antiquity; for an illustration see Trendall and Webster 66–7, plates III.2, 5 and note also Aulus Gellius' story (told in his second century C.E. miscellany of curious facts, *Attic Nights* 6.5) of the fourth-century B.C.E. actor Polus' handling of this scene in the role of Electra, holding in his arms the ashes of his own recently deceased son. And then, once the urn, and with it Orestes' death, is snatched from her reluctant hands, her joy, though its expression is quickly cut short, becomes as great as her sorrow had been.

In the opening scenes of Euripides' *Electra*, the water pot is a sign of Electra's displacement from her home, an eviction that is only threatened in *S. El.* if she continues in her antisocial ways. It also symbolizes both her lost future (her natural expectation that she would be the wife of a noble Hellene and bear children) and stolen past (as a much-loved and loving daughter in the palace of her father, a past already cut short by her father's absence during the long war years). She goes not to pour out liquids ritually on her father's grave, which is no longer within or near the playing space, but to draw water for ordinary household purposes, evidence of her fall from princely status. The jug itself leads Orestes to assume she is a slave (107–9), an assumption confirmed by her cropped head. As in the other two versions the first dramatically significant offerings at the tomb are made by Orestes (here and in Sophocles only by report before or after the event). But they are not seen by Electra as they are in *Choephori*.

Holding up the empty *hydria* (54–5), Electra addresses the dark night. Her pitiful lament with the water jug on her head is partly a pose (a dramatic, and even a metatheatrical pose, a repetition of the dirge the character and the actor rehearsed last night): she does it to be seen (57–8)—she tells us this much herself—but the sorrow of the character is none the less real. She asks the elements (and the audience) to look at her, a conventional request and one that adds gravity to her lamentation. She sets the vessel on the ground (140). Is the water jug left behind as she runs to the house to escape the young men, a symbol throughout the play of displacement, alienation, and failed attempts?

ORESTES' OFFERINGS, THE TOMB AND TOKENS

In Aeschylus, Orestes actually performs the ritual haircutting onstage in the dramatic present at the start of the opening scene of *Choephori*. We see and hear him as he offers locks to Inachos for nurture and in grief for his father (*Cho.* 6–7). Like Euripides' Orestes, he steps aside to gain information (20) when he sees the women coming from the palace, but he has already recognized his sister among the women (16–18). In Sophocles, Orestes creates a narrative future for himself, saying that he is going to the tomb to place the offerings (51–4). He does this explicitly instead of waiting to meet his sister early in the play (80–5). In Euripides, Orestes only narrates his visit to the tomb as part of a past that does not happen in the play's

time. This fictional past reenters the plot just before the recognition, but is (ironically) rejected as proof of the presence or identity of Orestes. Euripides' timing allows Orestes to be in place to meet the woman who turns out to be his sister, though realistically he has little reason to suppose that he should have come precisely to her house. The play is full of such planned coincidences. Coming just to the border is in character for the more reluctant or uncertain Orestes, just as getting Electra as far away as possible is in character for Aegisthus. That by exiling Electra to the border, where she will be found by her brother, Aegisthus contributes to his own demise is a fitting irony. If he had kept her at home, as other Aegisthi do, he would have been safe from this particular Orestes.

The tomb provides another offstage space, in addition to the palace, that we keep in mind in all the plays, even when it is not in our view. In Euripides the tomb is displaced from the proximity to the house of Agamemnon which it occupies in the other two extant Electra-Orestes revenge tragedies.

In Aeschylus Electra brings libations from her mother to the tomb, which is within the audience's view. She finds the lock of hair on the tomb-altar (*Cho.* 167) and sees that it is very like her own (172) and Orestes' (177–8); the identification is deliciously delayed by stichomythia. She speaks to the hair and then finds the footprints, in which she, realistically if illogically, places her own feet and notices the sameness of shape. When Orestes appears she refuses at first to accept him until he shows her a piece of weaving, the work of her own hand, at the sight of which she is overcome with joy. We actually see her doing these things, believing in the identification of the hair, addressing it, disbelieving and then accepting her brother. The contrast with Euripides' character shows how far the later Electra has withdrawn from that naïve version of herself and how far she has been separated from the old life in her father's house.

In Sophocles, Electra's sister Chrysothemis is stopped from bringing her mother's libations to the tomb and instead takes her own and her sister's offerings of cut hair. There—out of our view—she finds Orestes' offerings and comes back in great excitement with the joyous news that Orestes is here; but her true narrative is cut off by Electra, who has received and believed the false news that Orestes is dead. The lie overcomes the truth, as happens when myth is stronger and more glamorous than everyday life and has become a substitute for living out a human life. The pathos of the tokens is drowned out by that of Electra lamenting over the urn supposedly holding the ashes of her brother. Orestes finally identifies himself and offers a token as evidence. In this case, it is the signet ring that was once his father's, the symbol

of his sovereignty (1222–3), but hardly as emotive as the weaving of the earlier play. Poor Chrysothemis has left the scene for other acting duties and is not worthy of this revelation.

In Euripides the tokens of *Choephoroi* are brought back to life: the lock of hair, a suggestion of a footprint, the weaving (which is now nonexistent), only to be dismissed mockingly one by one. The fact that they are the Aeschylean tokens is less an attack on Aeschylus as a playwright (or even on his standards of probability) than a means of showing the different character of this play's *ethos* and setting from the others. Orestes is recognized by a scar which shows him as "fundamentally unheroic" (Tarkow, 144). The scar would remind the audience of the recognition of Odysseus in the *Odyssey*, but as Goff (260) concludes, "the token both compares Orestes to a heroic exemplar and simultaneously denies him the possibility of living up to the claims thus implied for him." In its pathetic appeal the scar falls between the weaving, something the earlier Electra had made with her own hands for her brother, and the ring, an object passed on by Agamemnon to the next in line. The scar is superficial but comes from an incident brother and sister shared in their childhood. Still, it has been missed for all this time by Electra, who has been looking at the stranger since the beginning of the first episode (see the Old Man's suggestion to look at him, 567) and has not seen anything familiar about him. Neither Orestes nor Electra seems to remember the incident until prompted by the Old Man. As is typical in life, it is often the parent or the one who cares for a child who remembers instances of injury and how they happened better than the child does.

While tokens of recognition are a prominent feature in all the Electra plays, in the other recognition scenes the greatest pathos is reached at their discovery. The proximity of the action to the tomb makes them the more touching, whether accepted (as in Aeschylus) or rejected (as in Sophocles). The displacement of the tomb from the scene in Euripides' staging is symbolic of the alienation of the children of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra from their pasts, from each other, and even from the action.

PAEDAGOGI AND NURSE

In Sophocles' *Electra* the Paedagogus (who speaks the play's first lines) had accompanied Orestes into exile, brought him up to keep the thought of revenge in his heart, and has come back to Argos with him to help him carry out the murder plot. It is he who postpones the meeting between brother and

sister, he who reports the tragic but false account of Orestes' demise without regard to Electra's misery, and he who cuts short the reunion of brother and sister after the recognition. In Euripides the Old Man (Agamemnon's *paedagogus*) is mocked by Orestes as a doddering, comical old fool, who can hardly keep himself upright, but in fact he turns out to be the instigator of the plot to assassinate Aegisthus (somewhat like his Sophoclean counterpart, who directs the revenge against Clytemnestra) and a player in the murder of Clytemnestra (like the Aeschylean Nurse). For the hospitality subplot he brings the best he can muster, including not only food good enough for meat-eating heroes and vintage drink, but crowns of foliage for the prospective feasters. No milk-drinking man is this (like the bringer of news in the parodos, 169–70), though he has been banished from town to the flocks, but a former denizen of the palace and a connoisseur of wine. Most of all he is the connection among the generations and turns out to be the liaison to the current rulers. At his entrance he is weeping, not, as it turns out, over Electra's sorry state, but because he has just visited the tomb of Agamemnon. He decorated it with tears, myrtle, and a drop of wine—and there discovered the tokens! It is he who brings about the recognition and reunion of brother and sister, which Orestes himself forestalled, by spotting a scar on Orestes' forehead. The Nurse in Aeschylus' *Choephoroi* is sent to bring Aegisthus from the estates to share in the news of Orestes' death (*Cho.* 734–7). She, like the two old men slaves, is a link among the generations. She brought up Orestes, nursed him, and was more a mother to him than his birth mother (749–62). In tearfully recounting her days and nights caring for the infant Orestes, she takes us mentally back to the beginning of his life, just before the crisis at which he will fulfill his mythical end. She becomes a participant in the murder when she is persuaded by the chorus to lure Aegisthus back to the palace without his bodyguard (766–82). Aeschylus and Euripides give these characters traits from real life. In Sophocles, Orestes' *paedagogus*, like his master, is all business and without ethical concerns. Tears are not part of his makeup.

THE MAJOR CHARACTERS

(SEE ALSO “TWO VIEWS OF THE THREE ORESTES”)

Though Aristotle considered *mythos* (usually translated “plot”) the soul of tragedy (1450a38), he gives the second place to characters. Cameron (52) elevates this second rank to the “complete identification of characters and action,” and defines (145) tragedy as “the exploration of the fateful situation

and the character or characters that fit it.” (See also Hartigan 1991, 107: “Euripides illustrates the important issues through the medium of character study, through the presentation of personalities and their interaction.”)

When Euripides wrote his *Electra* he had as material for his own discoveries and invention the fateful situation of a man who from Homer on must avenge his father’s murder. That in order to do so, Orestes must also kill his mother, Euripides could draw on Stesichorus, Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*, recently revived, and (we believe) also Sophocles’ *Electra*.

In Homer, Orestes is a heroic exemplar. He comes of age and proceeds to perform what is required of him, which does not include killing his mother. In Aeschylus the fate that is to be his is that of matricide, and this crime becomes the center of the trilogy that bears his name. Electra does not exist for Homer. Aeschylus uses her to bring the story out of the palace and to Orestes. Orestes needs someone with whom he can interact; as a stranger he needs someone from inside. Neither of the Aeschylean siblings has what we would call a personality, but they do have traits that humanize them. Sophocles’ Orestes does not interact with members of the household until he finally identifies himself to Electra. He never sees his other sister at all, nor his mother until he kills her ruthlessly and brutally. Euripides’ Orestes spends half the play with his sister, most of it incognito, but not without sympathy. Before he kills his mother he hesitates and, during the moments that he perpetrates the act, he covers his eyes. Sophocles alienates his Orestes from the crime by keeping him in the vicinity of but outside the palace and away from the family, while making his Electra so much a part of the household that she is diseased by the same sickness her mother suffers (308–9, 616–21). Euripides alienates both his Orestes and his Electra by geographical distance from palace, family, and their father’s tomb.

The two versions of Orestes in Sophocles and Euripides offer two types of young men of the fifth century. Sophocles’ version is a personification of expediency without heart. Euripides’ is introspective, obviously a student of the Sophists, given to sophistic thinking, but his hesitancy shows that he is not very good at it.

Sophocles’ Orestes has come with a purpose and a plan that has been worked out in every detail. He deliberately does not wait for his sister, though he considers doing so (80–1). He has not come to see his sister, but to kill his mother. He needs no ally in his plans (other than the silent Pylades and his elderly slave). Euripides draws an Orestes reacting to this other Orestes. He has come to find his sister. He also has contingency plans but no strategy, which he takes from others. Contrasted to Sophocles’ Orestes,

he has an abundance of feelings. More than the other two Oresteses, he is reluctant to take up the identity of Orestes, which his identification by the Old Man finally makes necessary. He is not a cowering, timorous youth, however: he immediately sets out to face Aegisthus, once the plan has been made with the help of the Old Man. His success with Aegisthus depends upon his negating his identity by pretending to be an anonymous generic young man on the road from Thessaly to Olympia. His success in escaping retribution at the hands of Aegisthus' bodyguard, however, depends on his bravely declaring his name, much as Odysseus does with the Cyclops before and after the blinding, first as No-man (H. *Od.* 9.366–7) and then with his full name, patronymic, and land of origin (9.504–5).

We have treated the differences among the three Electras in the Introduction ("Date"). Let a word about their actual participation in the action (that is, the matricide) suffice here. In Aeschylus, Electra is a full participant with Orestes through the *kommós*, which has the function of calling up the forces of the dead and confirming Orestes' resolve. She is then dismissed to watch and keep guard inside. The actor is needed for other characters from inside the house, the Nurse and Clytemnestra. She does not take part in the actual killings and does not return to the scene. In both Sophocles and Euripides, Electra is the central character. In Sophocles she is a towering figure with an infinite capacity for suffering, and a woman whose failed relationships define and dehumanize her. In Euripides she is brought down to earth, but also allowed to be more human and more effective. Sophocles' Electra, though dominating the stage, has nothing to do with the plot, suggesting incidentally that character can be as important as plot in a Greek tragedy. Her brother, though a minor character, controls the action (the revenge killings). When she believes her brother is dead, Electra decides to act and repudiates her sister because she will not join her in killing Aegisthus. The fact that Orestes is not dead, however, ruins her plot, renders it inane. Is this not the real tragedy of Electra, that having decided to act, she is denied action? And that in speaking openly only of killing Aegisthus, when her real goal is to kill her mother, she is deceiving her sister? Euripides' Electra, though a less monumental (and less monstrous) personality, participates fully in the plot and has equal stage time, being onstage for all but five brief exits (when she goes to the stream for water, when she goes in to fix the meal, when she goes inside to prepare for her brother's return, when she goes to get the garlands, and when she goes inside to abet her brother in matricide). She plans the murder of her mother using a ruse as deceptive as her Sophoclean brother's. Alone of the three Electras, she is present at

the scene of the crime, helping Orestes, actually putting her hand on the weapon. This is certainly a significant moment in her development. It is hard to see a playwright turning back from an Electra who is an equal partner in the crime to a harridan screaming outside, "Strike her again, if you have the strength" (S. *El.* 1415), however grand a figure she is and however heroic her temper.

TWO VIEWS OF THE THREE ORESTES

1. The Oracle of Apollo and *Dei ex Machina*

*I have come from the god's sacred rites
here to Argive land, in secret
to repay my father's murderers with death.* (87–9)

Unlike both Aeschylus, who gives a lengthy account of Apollo's advice, including dire threats should Orestes fail to avenge his father (*Cho.* 269–97), and Sophocles, who summarizes the god's injunction (*El.* 32–7), Euripides says nothing here about the oracle's contents. He does not even name either the god or the oracle, leaving us to assume Orestes has come from Delphi. Not until he is about to enter the house (399) does he use the name of the prophetic god, *Loxias*. This omission distances Apollo and makes the human role in the vengeance more prominent. Just before the matricide, however, Orestes exclaims in despair: "Phoebus Apollo, there was great lack of wisdom in your oracle . . . you who directed me to kill her whom I must not kill, my mother" (971, 973; cf. 1190–7, 1245–6, 1266–7, 1296, 1301–2, and notes). This cry serves as a criticism of the ethos of vengeance inherent in this myth, which carries vengeance to the extreme of matricide.

In contrast to Sophocles' Orestes, who says that Apollo told him to avenge his father's murder by using cunning (35–8), Euripides' Orestes says nothing about the oracle's substance or how he plans to carry out the revenge. In fact he leaves it to chance or rather to the staged coincidence of the Old Man's intelligence on Aegisthus' whereabouts and Electra's complex feelings about and knowledge of her mother. In Sophocles' version the elaborate plan is fixed from the beginning of the play in every detail, from the false report of Orestes' death to the hiding of the urn, and does not involve Electra.

The oracle at Delphi is always central to Orestes' revenge in tragedy, but in Euripides' play Apollo is less involved than in the others. What did

the god tell Orestes? In Aeschylus' *Choephoroi* (269–96) Apollo is most graphic in his pronouncements of what will happen to Orestes if he fails to avenge his father: physical torments, social ostracism, and visitation by the Furies. Still, human motivation is also present: “even if I do not trust [the oracles] the deed must be done,” says Orestes (298), before outlining his own reasons for taking vengeance. When he falters, Pylades is there with his only three lines in the play (in fact, in any of the three *Electra* plays) to remind him of the oracle (899–902).

ORESTES: Πυλάδῃ, τί δράσω; μητέρ' αἰδεσθῶ κτανεῖν;

PYLADES: ποῦ δὴ τὰ λοιπὰ Λοξίου μαντεύματα
τὰ πυθόχρηστα, πιστὰ δ' εὐορκώματα;
ἅπαντας ἐχθροὺς τῶν θεῶν ἡγοῦ πλέον.

ORESTES: Pylades, what do I do? Should I respect my mother's life?

PYLADES: What is left then of Apollo's oracles
Pythia-spoken, and our sworn pledges?
Take all mankind as your enemies, but not the gods.

In *S. El.*, Apollo's part is full but not clear. Orestes is told to use deceit and pretend to be dead. His servant tells an elaborate lie that places his master's death at Apollo's own Pythian games. In the Sophoclean version Orestes has asked the Delphic oracle not *if* he should avenge his father's death, but *how* (32–7). It is unclear whether in fact Apollo commanded him to kill his mother. It depends on what he asked the oracle. If he was already determined (as he might have been under the tutelage of his Paedagogus, 15–16) to kill both Aegisthus and his mother and only asked what tactics to use, as seems likely from the wording used (ὅτῳ τρόπῳ, *in what way* 33), the oracle would have given him only the practical advice to use stealth rather than arms (36–7). Asking the right question of the oracle is as crucial as interpreting the answer correctly. The god also directed Orestes to make offerings at his father's tomb (51–3, 82–4).

Euripides' Orestes is vague about the oracle when he first brings it up (87). He has come from the oracle and will avenge his father (87–9). The oracles are *grounded, firmly set* (ἔμπεδοι 399–400), says Orestes, still incognito, as he enters his sister's house. This is clear only to himself, but would be a riddle to any other characters who might have heard him. Perhaps he is the most uncertain Orestes because his Apollo was the least certain—and the only one to be declared wrong. It is clear from his exchange with the Old

Man that the oracle did not give him practical advice. Beginning at 599 he asks a series of questions about methods to which the Old Man's reply is:

You hold in your own hands and in fortune everything
you need to recover your estate and your city.

ORESTES: What must I do to reach this goal?

OLD MAN: Kill Thyestes' son and your mother.

ORESTES: This is the crown I have come here for, but how do I get it?

OLD MAN: Even if you wanted to, not by going inside the city walls.

It is as if Euripides, through Orestes' questions to the Old Man, is both commenting on Sophocles' version (610–15) and clarifying Apollo's answer and the question it implies. It becomes clear later (from 971, 973) that in Euripides the oracle did command Orestes to kill his mother. He has come to Argos with the two killings already in mind (613–14; cf. 89). When Orestes asks how to win back his father's house and city (611–12) he wants to know how to get access to his victims, not whether or not to kill them. The Old Man and Electra play the role the oracle of Apollo had played in Sophocles' *Electra*, by plotting the murders for him.

Neither the god of Delphi nor Apollo *Lykeios* of Argos is mentioned in the prayer for help that Electra, Orestes, and the Old Man make before the first killing (671–84). Later, at the sight of his mother, he will hesitate and question the oracle (971–81), but by then it is too late to turn to another plot (962) and he is answered with biting sarcasm from Electra (esp. 979–80).

ORESTES: Did an avenging demon speak in the guise of the god?

ELECTRA: Sitting on the sacred tripod? I don't think so.

After killing his mother, Orestes comments on the obscure justice of Apollo's commands along with the clear pain they have brought him (1190–7). Later, Castor declares that Apollo's decree was unwise (1245–6, 1296–7, 1302, cf. 1266–7), but even there the repudiation is equivocal. Aside from these instances, in which the references to the oracle are unspecific and those to Apollo are critical, the Delphic oracle is not mentioned in this play, even where one would expect it to be. In Aeschylus, Delphi is the place Orestes comes from to exact revenge (*Cho.* 269), and where he goes in order to be cleansed (*Cho.* 1034–9; *Eum.* 235–41, 282–3; the opening scene of *Eum.* is at Delphi). In Sophocles, Orestes also comes from Delphi (32–3).

Not so in Euripides, as Said points out (1993:183–4). When Orestes claims to come from Phocis, he introduces himself and Pylades as “Two Thessalians going to the Alpheus to offer sacrifice to Olympian Zeus” (781–2). After the killing of Aegisthus, the Chorus asserts that he won “a crown-contest surpassing those by Alpheus’ streams” (862–3). At the end of the play, Castor instructs him to settle “in an Arcadian city by Alpheus’ stream, close to the Lycaean sanctuary” (1273–4), which is the sanctuary of Zeus on Mount Lycaon (cf. Pausanias 8.38.7). Lastly, Delphi, where Apollo drives out the pollution of matricide with the purification of a slain swine (A. *Eum.* 282–3), disappears altogether in Euripides as a necessary stage on the way to Athens. Orestes goes straight to Athens from Mycenae (1254–7) “across the Isthmian narrows toward the happy hill in Cecrops’ land” (1288–9). The omission of Delphi can be explained in several ways: in some places (e.g., 780–1), it is not mentioned so as not to give away Orestes’ identity. In other places, it is not mentioned to avoid conferring too much honor on the dubious oracle (see Said 1993, 183–4). The matricide becomes a human tragedy through which the human beings must face the evil they have done: Electra asks (1303–4), “What Apollo, what oracles decreed that I become my mother’s murderer?” Castor’s words of solace, blaming the oracles, fate, and delusion, ring hollow (1301–2, 1305–7). Still, like Oedipus’ acceptance of his responsibility (*SOT* 1329–31), Electra’s question itself shows that she accepts or at least recognizes her own.

The act of matricide is not divinely sanctioned in Euripides’ *Electra*—in fact it is repudiated by the gods. Apollo is as ignorant as the rest of us. All he does is follow the story line. Things turn out as they did in the other two tragic versions, but Euripides brings on two divinities who do in fact clarify the wrongness of the matricide. Orestes’ shrinking from the deed was the right reaction, as anybody could have told him. Whatever the authorities may say, our common humanity tells us it is wrong to kill one’s mother. Thus the Dioscuri, by appearing and denouncing the matricide as unjust (1244) and the oracle as unwise (1246), by minimizing the role of Apollo in the trial of Orestes (1266–7) also reject his arguments (*Eum.* 657–61) favoring the parenthood of the father over the mother and any other sophistries that try to justify the deed.

Though Aristotle belittles the unraveling of the plot through the use of the *mēchanē* (1454a37–b1-5), in Euripides’ *Electra* its use fits that approved by Aristotle, that is, for matters outside the drama. The twin gods’ presence perhaps makes up for the vagueness of Apollo. Yet they seem all the more remote, not only in their physical distance, above the action, but also in their

inability to do anything (1301–2), and their nearly complete lack of concern for or understanding of the participants (see esp. 1311–13). Unlike the two herdsmen in *OT*, they do not “solve” the situation or fill in the last piece of the puzzle. They send the participants to their separate futures, but that is outside the drama. Their futures, furthermore, require that they become different people than they had been in the play and in the earlier tradition. Orestes must continue his journey alone. He must not return as ruler of Argos, but found a new city without any of his old mutual relationships of family and friends that gave him an identity. Electra begins a new and ordinary life as Pylades’ wife, with her other “husband” as a constant reminder of life in the dry hills outside Mycenae. They cannot live as their old selves.

2. The Three Orestes

The depiction of Orestes varies with his prominence in the play and his attitude toward the matricide.

Of the three playwrights, Aeschylus is the only one who makes Orestes the protagonist of his play and the only one who presents his killing of his mother as a lesser evil than failure to avenge his father’s murder would have been. Orestes is the undisputed hero of the *Choephoroi*. He opens the play as an authoritative, purposive presence, honoring his father’s grave with a lock of his hair and calling upon Zeus to grant him vengeance for his father’s murder (1–19). The Chorus marvels at his bravery in returning to Argos (179), where his life is in danger, and calls him and Electra “saviors” of their father’s house (264). The heroic characterization is consistent with that of the *Odyssey*, which emphasizes Orestes’ courage and fidelity to his father.

Aeschylus provides Orestes with the strongest and most consistent support for his deed. The Chorus commends the upcoming vengeance throughout the play. There is no moral aspersion on the deception Orestes uses to accomplish it. There is no dispute as to the authenticity of the oracle’s command, which Apollo himself verifies in *Eumenides*. The force and power of the command are strongly conveyed in Orestes’ long speech recounting the numerous dire punishments he was warned that he would suffer if he failed to carry it out (*Cho.* 269–305, 1029–33, *Eum.* 84, 203, 465–7, 594). These may be meant literally or may be taken to represent the psychological torment he will endure if he allows his mother to get away with killing his father.

Orestes himself has few doubts as to the rightness of his intentions. He raises and quickly dismisses the possibility that the oracle may be untrustworthy (*Cho.* 297–8). In the scene with his mother, he briefly wonders

whether he should kill her, after she begs him not to, but, advised by Pylades, immediately decides that it is the right and necessary thing to do (899–907) and responds with short, sure replies to all her arguments against it (908–30).

This is not to say that Aeschylus presents the matricide as unproblematic. Unlike the *Odyssey*, which does not make clear how Clytemnestra died, the *Oresteia* confronts the issue head on. In Aeschylus Orestes recognizes himself as the murderous viper of his mother's dream (*Cho.* 928–9) and, once the matricide is committed, he calls it “evil” (1041). In *Eumenides*, he acknowledges the “blood on my hand” (280). But he also presents killing his mother as morally and psychologically imperative and, in *Eumenides*, as a lesser wrong than letting a father's murder go unpunished (213–24, 462–7, 576–81, 595–673). With this very clear sense of moral priorities, Aeschylus separates the resolute hero who commits the matricide from the conscience-ridden outcast who flees his home pursued by the Furies and who voices his despair that “my victory is pollution unenviable” (*Cho.* 1017).

Aeschylus' Orestes is a man caught in a lose-lose situation. There is no way of reconciling the son's duty to avenge his father's murder with the prohibition against matricide. Obeying one, he violates the other. The way out of the dilemma, advanced in *Eumenides*, is to make blood vengeance unnecessary by transferring the responsibility for obtaining justice and punishing wrongdoers from the family to the court of Areopagus, that is, from the individual to the state. But this solution comes too late for Orestes.

Sophocles and Euripides depart radically from Aeschylus in making Electra the protagonist of their plays and, concomitantly, relegating Orestes to a secondary place *vis à vis* his sister. In Sophocles' play, Orestes is the second speaker, following the Paedagogus, but he soon leaves the stage, to return only in the last third of the play (1098). Euripides opens his play with the Farmer's speech and a scene from Electra's life with the Farmer, before bringing Orestes and Pylades onstage in line 82. Both transfer the powerful *agōn* with Clytemnestra from Orestes, who had confronted his mother in Aeschylus' play, to Electra.

Aeschylus is vague about Orestes' age relative to Electra's, but depicts her as a compliant young girl and him as the leader in their relationship. Orestes carries out the vengeance on his own and even tells Electra to go indoors before he does (*Cho.* 554). Sophocles and Euripides cast Orestes as a teenager, and Electra as a full-grown woman. In accord with the myth, Orestes remains the one who kills Aegisthus and Clytemnestra. However, both playwrights give Electra a leading role. In Sophocles' play, she stands outside the palace and recounts the killing, point by point, to the Chorus

and outer audience, as Orestes carries it out within. In Euripides' play, Orestes is bullied by his older sister and goes through with the matricide only after her prodding.

More substantively, both Sophocles and Euripides reduce Orestes' moral stature as part of their treatment of the vengeance. Of the two playwrights, Sophocles is closer in spirit to Aeschylus. Much like the *Oresteia*, Sophocles' *Electra* presents the matricide as a terrible act necessary to cleanse the *polis*, which was polluted by Agamemnon's murder, his murderers' illicit relations, and their illegitimate rule (Roisman 2008, 95–111; Whitman, 157; Blundell, 154–5; cf. Easterling 1987, 20). But whereas Aeschylus' concern is with the problem of reconciling conflicting moral injunctions, Sophocles' concern is with the gulf between the ideal, justice, and the means and qualities of character needed to bring it about in the real world.

Accordingly, Sophocles casts Orestes as Electra's complement. Electra is the passionate center of the play, impelling the revenge through a combination of idealism, degraded by fanaticism, and strong emotion, marked by immoderate grief for her father and hatred for her mother. Orestes is the masculine to her feminine, the logical to her emotional. He brings measure and self-control to her impulsiveness, and a healthy sense of self-preservation to her life-eroding grief and reckless unconcern with consequences. In the recognition scene, he remains focused on his goal, while she is carried away by the joy of meeting her brother. As Sophocles presents him, Orestes possesses the qualities of character that are needed to bring the ideal into being. In key respects, Sophocles' Orestes shares the noble and heroic qualities of Aeschylus' character. Like his Aeschylean namesake, he comes on stage eager to carry out the vengeance and ready with a well-conceived plan (A. *Cho.* 269–305, 554–84, 1029–33, S. *El.* 23–76). He is propelled by a similar sense of duty to punish the wrong done to his father and a similar determination to restore his own patrimony, stolen from him by his mother and her lover. Both these motives would have been viewed as appropriate to a young man of noble birth in the playwright's day. Sophocles draws his Orestes as a meritorious young man in other ways, as well: showing him respectful toward the elderly Paedagogus and caring toward his sister and sympathetic with her plight in the royal palace.

Sophocles differs from Aeschylus, however, in consistently raising questions about the morality of Orestes' behavior. Like Aeschylus, Sophocles provides Orestes with divine sanction for the vengeance; but he weakens it. His Orestes reports the oracle's directives for *how* to carry out the vengeance (*El.* 33) but not the command to carry it out, and says nothing

about punishment if he does not do it. Although we can assume that the command was given (otherwise there would be no point in relating the means for carrying it out), the vengeance does not come across as the divine imperative it is in Aeschylus' play. (For scholarly views of the command see, e.g., Woodard, March 2001, 15–20, Sheppard 1927).

To carry out the vengeance, Sophocles' Orestes employs deceptions similar to those used by Aeschylus' Orestes and acts with similar purposefulness. But in Sophocles these behaviors are given a negative gloss that they do not have in the *Choephoroi*. In both plays, Orestes deceives his victims with a false report of his death. Sophocles' Orestes, however, rationalizes his guile with a generalization—"no speech that brings profit is bad" (61)—that could justify any lie and that frames his false report as a piece of sophistry. Orestes' purposefulness, thus, becomes opportunism. He directs the Paedagogus to "go into the house when / the opportunity arises" (39–40) and prods him with the sweeping generalization that "it's time [to act], and timing / is man's greatest commander in every act" (75–6). It is clear in both plays that the deceit and the purposefulness are essential to preserving Orestes' life, as Aegisthus and Clytemnestra would certainly have had him killed were he to reveal his identity or allow its discovery by lingering too long before acting. At the same time, Sophocles casts an unheroic light on qualities and behaviors of Orestes that were presented as entirely admirable in the *Choephoroi*, as they were in the heroes of the *Odyssey*.

Sophocles also turns Orestes' self-confidence against him. Sophocles' Orestes expresses even less doubt than his Aeschylean predecessor in the rightness of his actions and, unlike him, shows no regret after the matricide. In view of the enormity of matricide, of its violation of one of the most basic taboos of human society, his lack of doubt before he kills his mother and lack of compunction afterward are chilling. Emphasizing the horror of the act, Sophocles dramatizes the matricide as an appalling act that dehumanizes its perpetrators and turns them into raging furies, thereby raising disturbing questions about Orestes' capacity for feeling and his moral understanding. Reinforcing these questions, Sophocles endows his Orestes with special cruelty not found in Aeschylus' figure. He shows him standing over Clytemnestra's corpse and taunting Aegisthus with the sight (1470–1) before leading him into the palace with the intention of torturing him (1504–5). The image the play leaves us with is of a callow adolescent, who, despite his noble qualities, is hardly less cruel and tyrannical than the rulers he deposed.

In weighing the relative merits of the conflicting injunctions, Sophocles, like Aeschylus, gives priority to the obligation to avenge the father. As in Aeschylus' treatment, in Sophocles' play the alternative to revenge, including the matricide, is continued rule by two usurpers, who have themselves committed murder, and the continued deprivations of Agamemnon's offspring. In both plays, this alternative is equally untenable.

But in both plays, too, the moral end, justice, is tainted by the immoral means needed to attain it. Unlike Aeschylus, however, Sophocles does not absolve Orestes of the crime of matricide. The Chorus' three-line song with which his *Electra* ends tells the avengers that they have attained "freedom" but says nothing of the eventual absolution obtained by Aeschylus' Orestes. It offers no prospect of eventual happiness or of the future at all. And it is too short to mitigate the sense of horror left by the matricide.

Euripides' *Electra* rejects the morality of the matricide, as well as the entire blood vengeance that is at the core of the myth (for a different reading, see Burnett, 243–6). Like Sophocles and Aeschylus, Euripides introduces Orestes to the audience as a pious young man and dutiful son, showing him coming to pay his respects at his father's grave as soon as he arrives in Argos (90–2). Like them, his Orestes declares that he has returned to Argos to avenge his father's death at the behest of the gods (87). Unlike the other two poets, however, he does not allow his Orestes to elaborate on the divine command, or allow the command to justify Orestes' actions. At the end of the play, after Clytemnestra has been killed, Euripides has Castor tell the avengers that "Justice has claimed her [Clytemnestra] but you have not worked in justice" (1244) and declare that although Apollo is "a wise god, his oracle was not wise" (1246). These assertions, made by the authoritative voice of a *deus ex machina* and never refuted, deprive the matricide of the moral justification it had in the other two plays and, in effect, make a mockery of the notion that matricide can possibly be a right and moral act. They also cast a pall over the avengers, especially Electra, but Orestes as well, who kill in the belief that their actions can be moral and right.

The notion of blood vengeance in ancient Greece was anchored in the heroic code, exemplified in the *Iliad*, and to a good extent held up as an ideal in Euripides' day, though it was no longer viable. In criticizing his characters' revenge, Euripides also attacked the code that gave it moral value. Thus Euripides draws Orestes, a hero in the other two plays, as patently unheroic, almost to the point of caricature. In his first speech, the audience hears Orestes telling Pylades that he has chosen not to go inside the city

gates and to remain near the border, so that he can escape if he is recognized (94–7). At the end of the speech, they see him and Pylades hide behind the altar (or other scenery) in front of the Farmer's cottage, while Electra sings her first monody. While Aeschylus and Sophocles also show Orestes taking precautions so as not to be discovered, only Euripides makes the measures seem comical, and only he has his Electra suggest that such behavior is cowardly and unworthy of Agamemnon's son (524–6).

Orestes continues to behave in ways unbecoming to a hero in the episodes leading up to each of the murders. In preparation for killing Aegisthus, Euripides has Orestes ask the Old Man one question after another concerning what he must do. First, he asks how to "punish" Aegisthus and his mother, whether he can count on anyone in Argos to help him, and whom he might turn to for support (599–603). These questions are followed by others, in response to the Old Man's replies: how he can regain his patrimony (610–2); how to go about killing Aegisthus and his mother (646), and whether Aegisthus is protected by soldiers or only accompanied by slaves (628). Aeschylus' and Sophocles' Orestes had carefully planned their vengeance in advance. Euripides' Orestes evidently had not. His successive questions show him as a befuddled young man who would not know how to go about the task he had set for himself without point-by-point instructions. They also emphasize his lack of initiative and daring. Indeed, it is the Old Man, not Orestes, who comes up with the scheme to kill Aegisthus while he is engaged in a ritual, and it is Electra, not Orestes, who devises the plan for killing their mother.

Moreover, Orestes' reliance on the Old Man punctures his inflated sense of himself, seen in his snobbism and the pomposity he displays in his reflective speech on the sources of a noble nature (367–90). Before learning that the Old Man is Agamemnon's former *paedagogus* and the person who saved him after his father's murder, Orestes refers to the Old Man snidely as a "human antique" (554). Earlier, he had declared that only educated men, among whom he undoubtedly counted himself, have the capacity for pity and that they pay a high price in emotional pain for their intelligence (296–9).

In the episode leading up to the matricide, Orestes suddenly raises doubts about the wisdom of Apollo's oracle (971), agonizes that the command requires that "I kill her, whom I should not kill, my mother" (973), and goes so far as to suggest that it was issued not by Apollo, but by "a spirit of destruction" (979), who spoke in Apollo's name, and that following this oracle will make him impure (975). After raising these doubts, he still

goes on to commit the matricide, goaded by his sister's accusations of cowardice and lack of nerve (982).

This Orestes lacks the resolution and certainty that characterize his decisive namesakes. How Euripides wants his audience to judge this heroic anemia is less clear. For Euripides has placed him in a world where certainty is monstrous. On the one hand, Euripides casts Orestes in a somewhat ridiculous light, a young man who seeks directions on how to murder Aegisthus, and murders his mother only when prodded to do so by his older and domineering sister. Yet it is in his very indecision and wavering that Orestes displays a moral consciousness that his sister, along with the women of the chorus, lacks. In the end, his doubts are vindicated by the Dioscuri. Like Aeschylus' Orestes (*Cho.* 1016–7, 1021–42), he recognizes the horror of his deed and expresses remorse (1177–82). Electra too finally feels remorse (1182–4). Their realization of the wrong they committed and the accompanying agonies of conscience they suffer will enable them to return to human society, from which the matricide isolates them, and to rebuild their lives, Electra as Pylades' wife, Orestes as the founder and ruler of a city in Arcadia.

AFTERLIFE OF EURIPIDES' *ELECTRA*

Jean Giraudoux' *Electra*

The *Électre* of Hippolyte Jean Giraudoux (1882–1944) was produced in Paris in 1937 by the actor-director Louis Jouvet, the playwright's longtime collaborator. The setting is in front of the palace at Argos and the time is nonspecific. It is a new play rather than an adaptation, with new characters, a new plot, new themes, though it refers more closely to Euripides' *Electra* than to other ancient versions. Giraudoux, a well-known public intellectual of his day, was a novelist, essayist, and government official, as well as a dramatist. He is best known to the English-speaking public for his plays *Amphitryon 38* (1929), *The Madwoman of Chaillot* (1945, still popular on college campuses), and *The Trojan War Will Not Take Place* (1935, translated by Christopher Fry as *Tiger at the Gates* in 1955). He called himself the "journalist of the theater," perhaps a between-the-World-Wars equivalent of Euripides' sobriquet "sophist (or philosopher) of the stage."

Electra opens at dawn with the arrival of Orestes: a stranger has come to town. Like Orestes of the Greek versions he has been away since he

was an infant or very young child, here, twenty years ago, and he is not recognized. He is accompanied by three little girls who met him at the city gates. They are the Eumenides. Scene by scene they age and are replaced by noticeably older, more grown-up actors, so that by the end of the play they are the same age as Electra. They take on her appearance as they set off to hound Orestes until, they predict, he will go mad and kill himself, cursing his sister as he dies. Not only do they mature in one day like insects, the likeness of these irritating Eumenides to buzzing flies is already commented on early in the first act (161). (The quotations refer to page numbers in Jean Giraudoux (1964) *Three Plays*.)

The traditional characters, Orestes, Electra, Clytemnestra, Aegisthus, a Messenger, and various extras, are enhanced by a Beggar, a Judge (le président du tribunal, in the French script) and his scandalous wife, and Electra's prospective husband (a Gardener taking the place of Euripides' Farmer) all of whom add to the urbanity for which Giraudoux was most famous and supply the clever dialogue and modern themes which plant the play in twentieth-century Europe.

It is the day that Aegisthus has arranged to marry Electra off to the Gardener in order to keep her from signaling to the gods, from "becoming herself" and ruining everyone's life. The Gardener, even more than Euripides' Farmer, introduces the nature motif which runs through the first half of the play. Like Euripides' Farmer he has put Electra on a pedestal and, feeling himself unworthy, does not plan to touch her: he will sleep in the shed, where he can protect her from owls or other intruders (184). He takes pride in his tendance of the land (as if it were his soul): "My garden is my dowry, my honor!" he says (183). Their marriage is called off by Clytemnestra, and after the first act, the play continues without him. Like Euripides' Farmer, he does not participate in the tragic events of the second half of the drama.

Midway through Act I Orestes has the boldness to displace the gardener and propose to Electra. Is incest ever far from a Greek myth rejuvenated for the twentieth century? Shortly thereafter he identifies himself to Electra, in a scene reminiscent of Euripides (*El.* 222–4).

ORESTES [*as Electra runs from him*]: . . . In a little while you'll take
me in your arms of your own accord.

ELECTRA: Don't be insulting.

Brother and sister spend the night in each other's arms, onstage, in front of the palace. She becomes his mother-figure, creating him, giving him life (189–91).

ELECTRA: . . . Let's imagine, just to be happy, that we were brought into the world without a mother. (189)

She stifles and smothers him and calls it life:

ELECTRA: I'm not smothering you. I'm not killing you—I'm caressing you. I'm bringing you back to life. . . Take your life from me, Orestes, and not from your mother! (190).

As in Euripides' version, Orestes is able to be created anew and taught to accept his name and the actions it requires. In Giraudoux' play, the story is not yet written. It too must become itself: the alleged accidental death of Agamemnon becomes or is revealed to be a murder that must be avenged. Electra learns (or invents) the story she is in and teaches it to her brother. Orestes becomes himself, the self of myth, but it is not a self he can continue to live with.

There are many other parallels with the Euripidean version:

- The emphasis on quotidian details makes us shudder at the incongruity of mythical and murderous behavior juxtaposed to everyday activities:

THIRD OF THE EUMENIDES [*talking about the day Orestes will commit matricide*]: Just try spreading butter on your bread that day with a knife, even if it's not the knife that killed your mother, and you'll see. (210)

- Orestes is not as strong as his sister and seeks Electra's help:

ORESTES: Help me, Electra!

ELECTRA: Then you're like all other men, Orestes! (210)

- Electra's narcissism and her hatred or sexual jealousy of her mother could equally reflect Sophocles' version as Euripides':

ELECTRA [*to Clytemnestra*]: In no way do I resemble you. For years I have been looking in my mirror to be sure that I don't look like you. . . . My forehead is mine. My mouth is mine. And I have no lover. (215)

- Electra's worry and impatience echo Euripides' infamous "where are the messengers?" (759):

ELECTRA: Are you sure he had his sword with him? Are you sure he didn't have to face them without his sword?

- The *agōn* is between Clytemnestra and Electra, as in the two later Greek versions, and concerns Electra's relationship to her father (232: see especially E. *El.* 1102–3).

- Agamemnon's death cries are retold very shortly before the killing of Clytemnestra (who is killed randomly, almost by accident, and, as in Sophocles, before Aegisthus: 243, 245). As in Euripides, Orestes does not look at his mother as he kills her; but in Giraudoux he does not even know whom he is striking:

BEGGAR: . . . He had closed his eyes and dealt the couple a blow at random. Even an unworthy mother is sensitive and mortal.
(245)

- There is a divine or supernatural presence at the end. Actually it is present throughout in the Giraudoux version, not only in the three insect-like Eumenides, but in the person of the Beggar, who speaks in parables and makes other vatic utterances and whose divinity is discussed in Act I. A divine presence is also suggested by the ominous bird Aegisthus sees circling above him for much of the play.

Speaking of the Beggar:

GARDENER: He's been drinking. He's a beggar.

JUDGE: He repeats himself, he's a god. (175)

Like Castor, the Beggar takes up most of the end of the play. First he tells the story of Agamemnon's death (241–4). Then he narrates the deaths of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus while they are happening, even getting ahead of events:

BEGGAR [*as Aegisthus' death cry is heard*]: I went too fast. He's just catching up with me. (246)

The ambiguity of this whole story of marriage, murder, war, and revenge, not just the defining act of matricide, is never forgotten in Giraudoux' *Electra*. Aegisthus is not a brute. Though dictatorial, he is given to reflection on metaphysical questions in the first act and, in the second act, in the face of political upheaval and national crisis, becomes a majestic, even heroic, figure. His change of heart does not matter to Electra once she has found the Truth. The crime has not festered for years in Electra's mind because the story that Agamemnon died by accident has been accepted.

ELECTRA: I don't hate women—I hate my mother. And I don't hate men—I hate Aegisthus.

ORESTES: But why do you hate them?

ELECTRA: I don't know yet.

It is only in Act II that Electra realizes that her father was murdered and that Clytemnestra and Aegisthus are (potentially) lovers, a fact with which the siblings become obsessed. She informs Orestes of these truths, determining his identity and his destiny (210–11).

Electra is an idealist, believing that there is a Truth, a Justice, apart from human beings and their activities, apart even from regret and repentance. The ruin of the world, the downfall of the city, the deaths of thousands, even the loss of Orestes are all worth the sacrifice to her if the ideal is achieved, the Truth discovered, the criminals brought to Justice.

ELECTRA: I have Orestes. I have justice. I have everything.

The third of the Eumenides tells her she will never see Orestes again. She and her sisters will hound him to death.

ELECTRA: I have justice. I have everything.

Michalis Cacoyannis' Film *Electra*

In his 1962 *Electra*, starring Irene Papas, Michalis Cacoyannis strives to make Euripides' play accessible to a mid-twentieth-century cinema audience, to move them, and to "interpret" the play so as to convey what he saw as its essential message. (The film won the award for best screen adaptation at the 1962 Cannes Festival, the Best Picture award at the 1962 Thessalonica Film Festival, and an Oscar nomination for Best Foreign Film. It was also the sixth-highest-grossing film in Greece in 1962–63 [Bakogianni, 119–32, 148–67]).

Accessibility was pursued chiefly by the creation of a straightforward and highly explicit linear narrative and the dramatization of incidents that are narrated in the play. The plot of the film roughly follows that of Euripides' play and includes all the major events. However, whereas the play presents the background to the revenge verbally and in flashbacks through the characters' speeches or dialogue, the film opens by showing Agamemnon's return and murder, the Old Man taking the young Orestes into exile, and, at a point some years later, Electra being given in marriage to the Farmer. We see her riding off with him: he driving the mule cart away into the countryside, she with her back to him, her face toward the home she is leaving. These scenes establish clearly for the audience, many of whom may have been unfamiliar with the story, the motives that will drive the revenge.

Furthermore, with the exception of the killing of Aegisthus, which is told to Electra, as it is in the play, all the significant occurrences, including the killing of Clytemnestra, are *shown* in the film. The showing, which relies on the camera and takes advantage of its special capabilities, is part of the process of translating a play to a film. As done in this film, it gives the events immediacy and makes them easy to follow. Since Cacoyannis excises a fair portion of the play's dialogue, it also reverses the hierarchy of the verbal and visual in Classical Greek tragedy, where the words, whether

spoken or sung, were of utmost importance, and certainly no less important than the music and dance that accompanied them.

In speaking of his adaptations of Euripides' tragedies, Cacoyannis emphasized that, to his mind, the story—or myth—was secondary to the emotional impact of the plays. He repeatedly speaks of his desire to move the audience, to shock them, and to lead them to a cathartic experience. Among the ways to do this, he implies, is to show the “inner torment” of the characters and to “speak basic truths,” as the tragedians did (McDonald & Winkler, 73, 79, 82).

In practice, he strives for emotional power by using the camera to magnify the film's emotional pitch. The film is full of wordless scenes and long, silent pauses filled with wide-angle expanses of desolate, stony, landscape or, in the silent scene where Electra is given to the Farmer, close-ups of the huge rectangular stones of the ruined palace of Mycenae. The pauses are heavy and oppressive. The camera work conveys the desolation of the setting and creates an aura of grandeur, which Cacoyannis, like others of his time, seems to have regarded as an essential element of Greek tragedy.

When the camera is not moving over the landscape, it often gives us huge, full-screen close-ups of the protagonists' faces. There are close-ups of all the characters, but most are of Electra: Electra with her eyes filled with tears or her face hardened into hatred, mockery, or despair: Electra the tormented heroine. The ancient Greek audience would never have seen the actors' faces, both because the actors wore masks and because of the great distance between the stage and most of the seating. Abjuring masks, Cacoyannis uses these close-ups to amplify the protagonists' emotions, to show their personalities, and to endow them with something of the larger than life stature that was provided by the elaborate costumes and masks, and by the poetic language in the Greek tragic theater.

The camera work pulls at the audience's emotions and gives the film a tone of high tragedy, while the long silences greatly slow down the rapid tempo of events that is characteristic of Greek tragedy.

It is difficult to know precisely what motivated Cacoyannis to simplify Euripides' nuanced characterization, whether he thought that one-dimensional characters would be more accessible to the audience, move them more, or come across as more heroic. Whatever the motive, the film obliterates the ambiguities of Euripides' protagonists. Euripides' main characters all contain a mixture of good and bad; Cacoyannis' are either villains or heroes. As Irene Papas ruefully admitted, “I think Euripides might be angry with

us, because we gave Electra all the rights” (McDonald & Winkler, 89). The dichotomy is established in the opening scene, as the camera moves back and forth between images of Clytemnestra, tightening the net around Agamemnon while Aegisthus repeatedly strikes him with an ax, and images of the distraught children and Chorus outside the palace.

Cacoyannis consistently irons out the flaws that Euripides gives Electra and Orestes. In Euripides’ play, Electra’s insistence, against the Farmer’s remonstrance, on going to fetch water from the spring, and her refusal to borrow clothes and jewelry from the women of the Chorus so she can participate in the festival for Hera, raise the suspicion that she is stubbornly making herself more miserable than she needs to be. In the film, her readiness to do the hard work of a farmer’s wife and her rejection of pleasure and luxury are depicted as refreshing virtues in contrast to Clytemnestra’s bejeweled licentiousness and Aegisthus’ debaucheries. Euripides’ Electra speaks rather haughtily to the Farmer and denigrates his poverty; Cacoyannis’ heroine speaks to him in consistently kind and gentle tones. When Euripides’ Electra warns Clytemnestra not to dirty her veil as she steps into the hut where she will be killed, the warning comes across as bitterly sarcastic. When Cacoyannis’ Electra issues the same warning, there is a touching softness in her voice as she momentarily wavers in her determination to kill her mother. Orestes undergoes a similar transformation. Euripides’ Orestes is overcautious, hesitant, and a bit weak. Cacoyannis’ Orestes is a slightly built adolescent whose search for advice and direction befits his age and inexperience, a youth who gradually assumes authority and grows in stature as the action progresses.

In a similar manner, Cacoyannis erases whatever credit Euripides allowed Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. Euripides’ Clytemnestra is a vain, libidinous, and jealous woman, but not a vicious one. As Irene Papas describes her, she was “caught between rights and duties” and behaved badly toward her children because she feared their revenge (McDonald & Winkler, 89). Cacoyannis chose not to show this dilemma. He expunges from the *agōn* the expressions of remorse that Euripides had given Clytemnestra and emphasizes her hardness. As she steps down from her carriage with her glitter-painted eyelids and in a clinging dress, she looks every bit the courtesan that Electra practically accuses her of being. Euripides highlights Electra’s particular cruelty in drawing her mother to her death with a ruse—that she had given birth to a son and needed her to perform a ritual for him—that played on her maternal instincts. Cacoyannis deprives Clytemnestra of the credit that Euripides had given her for this motherly conduct.

He has her accuse Electra of being the source of her troubles and shows her as eager to get the ritual over with so that she can meet up with Aegisthus.

Aegisthus does not appear on stage at all in Euripides' rendition. In the Messenger's description of his murder, he comes across as a convivial man who made the mistake of letting down his guard when he invited Orestes to join him in his sacrifice to the Nymphs. Cacoyannis makes him a violent and nasty presence. For example, in a scene not in Euripides' play we see Aegisthus and his soldiers intruding on Electra as she places myrtle on her father's grave. While the soldiers hold her, he demands that she tell him Orestes' whereabouts, threatens Orestes with violence, and slaps her across her face. The ritual where Orestes kills him is transformed from an innocent sacrifice to the Nymphs into a debauched celebration of Bacchus. His invitation to Orestes and Pylades to join him becomes a command. His bearing is arrogant, and his speech snide.

Cacoyannis was attracted to Euripides, among other reasons, because he regarded him as an anti-war playwright. The message he takes from Euripides' *Electra* is its critique of violence and revenge. In the words of Irene Papas: "When you kill somebody for doing something, you yourself become a killer, and somebody evil, so what you wanted to avoid you actually become. Revenge is a vicious circle" (McDonald & Winkler, 89). The plot of the film, like that of the play, thus hinges on the change in Orestes' and, later, Electra's attitudes toward killing their mother. Like the play, the film shows the events leading up to the revenge, reports that Orestes killed Aegisthus without any pangs of conscience, then shows his sudden reservations about killing his mother, Electra's prodding him to go ahead with the plan, and their horror and regret once it is done.

Cacoyannis, however, accentuates the message beyond what is conveyed in the play. He opens his film on an anti-military note as he shows Agamemnon and his army returning to Mycenae from the Trojan War. Agamemnon, riding high on his horse and dressed in full military regalia, exudes military might and arrogance; his soldiers radiate menace. Cacoyannis emphasizes the parallel Euripides had hinted at between the matricide and the murder of Agamemnon. He shows both murders on screen, departing from the Classical Greek convention of keeping violence offstage, so as to make the horror of the murders palpable to the audience. He also links the two murders by his camera work, in both scenes moving the camera between the inside, where the murder is being committed, and the outside, where dark-colored birds fly ominously across an otherwise empty sky and the distraught Chorus wail and undulate their bodies frenetically.

He also changes Euripides' ending in a way that emphasizes the anti-revenge theme. Like others who have made films of the Greek tragedies, Cacoyannis removes the gods. He believed that showing gods on the screen "would be alienating to modern audiences" and, moreover, objected to what he saw as Euripides' use of the gods "to diminish their stature and what they reflect about human nature" (McDonald & Winkler, 79). In other words, among his reasons for removing the gods was to maintain the heroic stature of his *dramatis personae*, which Euripides had mercilessly undercut. Castor's information that Apollo had given Orestes "unwise bidding" makes a mockery of Orestes' and Electra's conviction that they acted with the approval of the gods. It not only undermines the rightness of the matricide; it effectively takes from them their entire claim to moral understanding and raises very basic questions about the ability of human beings to know and do what is right. In removing the Dioscuri, Cacoyannis strips Euripides' play of its skepticism and irony.

But along with this, Cacoyannis also removes the Dioscuri's mitigation of the consequences of the matricide. In Euripides, Castor assures Orestes that he will obtain absolution for his crime, informs him that he will found a new city, and tells him to marry Electra to Pylades. Although both Orestes and Electra will have to leave Argos, never to return, and although they will once again be parted, the sense emerges that Electra and Orestes will eventually get on with their lives and find some sort of fulfillment and happiness. Cacoyannis' film ends on a note of unmitigated desolation. Orestes walks up a hill, Electra down a road, both into a bleak and barren landscape. Pylades begins to follow Orestes, but then stays stuck where he is when Orestes waves him to follow Electra. In both works, Electra and Orestes feel outcast from humanity after killing their mother. But only Cacoyannis' version gives no indication that the isolation their act brought on them will ever end. In this, Cacoyannis' ending is bleaker not only than Euripides', but also than Aeschylus' and Sophocles'.

There is a certain discontinuity between the film's message and its characterization. The critique of vengeance, or more accurately of matricide, in the play is consistent with Euripides' depiction of Electra and Orestes as flawed and of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus as having mitigating virtues. But how can killing the villainous woman that Cacoyannis creates be morally wrong? And, if it is wrong, how can characters so unqualifiedly noble as Cacoyannis' siblings commit such a wrong?

The question is not adequately resolved in the film. In speaking about Euripides, Cacoyannis states that "Fate, which involves human responsibility,

is a recurring theme in his plays” (McDonald & Winkler, 79). But the attempt at an answer to the question that Cacoyannis puts in the Chorus’ mouth—“Never will there be a family so noble and so damned at the same time”—separates the characters from their deeds and clears them of responsibility. This both reduces their stature and raises the question why they were so severely punished for something beyond their control.

APPENDIX 3

INDEX OF VERBS

This section is designed for students who have just finished the basic grammar, to help them avoid the frustration that arises from being unable to figure out what verb a particular form comes from. Relegating this material to an appendix allows more advanced students to ignore it. Verb forms that might stump a second-year student are included, as well as those recommended for review. Glosses for the most basic verbs are not given.

2 **ἄρας** < 1 aor. participle of αἶρω, aor. ἦρα, aor. stem ἄρ[α]- *raise, lift, get underway*. Other forms include αἶρέτω (pres. imperative 3rd sg.) 791; ἦρον (impf.) 800. Compound: ἀπήραμεν 774 < ἀπαίρω.

3 **ἔπλευσε** < πλέω, aor. ἔπλευσα *sail*; other form: συμπλείτω 1355. Πλειάδες, *the Pleiades* (or seven sisters, the seven daughters of Atlas who were metamorphosed into stars) may be derived from πλέω, because through conjunction and opposition to the sun they mark the beginning and end of the Greek sailing season.

4 **κτείνας** < ἀπο-κτείνω. In verse the uncompounded forms are more frequent [also those of ἀπο-θνήσκω, ἀπόλλυμι]. Other forms of κτείνω, κτενῶ, aor. ἔκτεινα and ἔκτανον (more common in tragedy) include κτανεῖν 27, 278; κτάνη 33; κτάνοιμι 222; κτάνοι 276; ἔκτανεν 319; κατέκτα 86 is a poetic aor. 3rd sg. of κατα-κτείνω.

5 **ἑλὼν** < 2 aor. participle of αἰρέω aor. εἶλον, aor. stem ἐλ-; pf. m-p ἤρημαι. Other forms: ἐξεῖλεν 336; εἴλετ' 821; ἤρημένων, ἤρήμεθα 1009.

6 **ἀφίκετ'** = ἀφίκετο (elision of final short vowel) < ἀφικνέομαι, aor. ἀφικόμην pf. ἀφίγμαι. Other forms include ἀφιγμένη 57; ἀφίγμαι 87; ἀφικόμην 95; ἀφίγμεθα 111. It also shows up as ἰκνέομαι, aor. ἰκόμην (1157, 956) and ἐξικνέομαι, aor. ἐξικόμην (612). The prevalence of this verb suggests this play must be an example of the plot "a stranger comes to town."

7 **ἔθηκε** < τίθημι, θήσω, ἔθηκα, τέθηκα, τέθειμαι, ἐτέθην: aor. stem *θη / θε*. Other forms: *θές* 140, 859; *θεμένα* 165; *θέντες* 798; *τεθήσεται* 1268. Compounds: *ἀμφέθηκα* 512 < ἀμφιτίθημι; ἀνατίθημι, ἀντιτίθημι, προστίθημι: *προσθιθεῖσα* 520, *προσθῶμεν* 895, *πρόσθεθ'* 1136, *προτίθημι*: *πρόθες* 896, *συντίθημι*. (It is a good idea from time to time to review the forms of τίθημι and other athematic verbs, especially the pres., impf. and aor.)

9 **θνήσκει** < θνήσκω, θανοῦμαι, ἔθανον, τέθνηκα is most common in its uncompounded forms in tragedy (ἀπο-θνήσκω is not found in *Electra* and is rare in Euripides). Other forms include *θανεῖν* 17; *τεθνηκότος* 229; *θάνομι* 281; *θάνοιμι* 663. Also found are *δυσ-θνήσκω* (843) *die an ugly death* and *καταθνήσκω* > *κατθανὼν* (288) *die*.

12 **ὄλωλεν** < ὄλλυμι, ὀλῶ, ὤλεσα, 2 aor. ὠλόμην, 2 pf. ὄλωλα *destroy, lose*; mid. and intrans. 2 aor. and 2 pf. *perish*; ὄλωλα *be dead*. Other forms: *ὄλωλότα* 29; *ἀπώλετο* 279; ὤλεσε 885; ἀπώλεσας 914.

14 **ἔλιφ'** = ἔλιπε (elision of final short vowel and assimilation of consonant before aspirate) < λείπω.

18 **ἔδωκε** < δίδωμι, δώσω, ἔδωκα, δέδωκα, aor. stem *δω / δο*. Other forms: *δοῦς* 39; ἔδωκα 91; *δοῦναι* 428.

19 **ἔμεινεν** < μείνω: liquid 1 aor.

20, 23 **εἶχ'** = εἶχε (elision of final short vowel before another vowel), also 29 εἶχεν impf. of ἔχω (impf. εἶχον), ἔξω, ἔσχον (aor. stem *σχ-*). Other forms: ἔσχεν 40, 166. Compounds: ἀνέχω, aor. ἠνέσχον: ἠνέσχετο 264 (notice double augment of prefix ἀν- and verb); ἠνεσχόμην 508; μετέχω, aor. μετέσχον: μετασχεῖν 607; ὑπέχω: ὑφέξω 1318; κατέχω; παρέχω: παρέξομαι 363.

21 **ἦτουν** impf. < αἰτέω *pray, beg, ask*. (It is a good idea from time to time to review the pres. and impf. of contract verbs.)

22, 26 **τέκοι** < τίκτω, aor. ἔτεκον *bear, be mother or father*. Other forms: ἔτεκεν 116; τέκοις 268; *τεκοῦσα* 62, *τεκοῦσαν* 653.

24 **ἦρμοξε** < ἀρμόζω *fit together, join, betroth*.

28 **ἐξέσωσεν** < ἐκ-σώζω compound of σώζω, σώσω, ἔσωσα; σώσοντε 1348. Note *ἀ*-subscript only in present system.

32 **ἀπηλλάχθη** < ἀπαλλάσσω, aor. pass. ἀπηλλάχθην, pf. m-p ἀπήλλαγμα compound of ἀλλάσσω, ἀλλάξω, ἥλλαξα *set free*; pass. *depart from, be removed from*.

(Note: common -σσ- for Attic -ττ- which has ἀπαλλάττω). Other forms: ἀλλάξων 89; ἀλλαξώμεθα 103; ἀπαλλαχθεῖς 1291.

33 **εἶφ'** = εἶπε (elision). There is also a 1 aor. εἶπα: εἶπας 275, 290. **κάνη** aor. subj. see on line 4.

36 **γεγῶσιν** (also 531) < γίγνομαι, γενήσομαι, ἐγενόμην, γέγονα (participle: γεγονώς, in tragedy γεγώς). Other forms: γεγώς 46; ἐγενόμαν 115: in lyric parts of tragedies we find Doric -α- for Attic/Ionic -η-. Compound: συγγίγνομαι: συγγένωμαι 100.

39 **λάβοι** < λαμβάνω, aor. ἔλαβον: λαβὼν 46, 101; λάβοιμεν 418. Compound: διαλαμβάνω 373.

41 **ἐξήγειρε** liquid 1 aor. < ἐξεγείρω *awaken, wake up*.

44 **ἥσυχνεν** < αἰσχύνω *make ugly, shame*.

48 **μολῶν** (also 90) < ἔμολον (aor. of βλώσκω, only found in μολ- forms in Euripides) *went, came*: ἔμολεν 169; μόλη 274; μόλης 345.

49 **ἐσώπεται** < εἰσοράω [ἐσ- for εἰς-] < ὁράω, ὄσομαι, εἶδον (ιδ-) Other forms and compounds: εἰσιδοῦσα 283.

55 **ἐφεδρεῦον** < *resting upon, setting on* < ἐφεδρεύω < ἔδρα *seat*; cf. Engl. cathedral, polyhedron.

58 **δείξωμεν** aor. subjunctive < δείκνυμι; pl. for sg. is very common for the 1st person.

61 **ἐξέβαλε** < ἐκβάλλω, aor. ἐξέβαλον < βάλλω, aor. βαλῶ, ἔβαλον, βέβληκα, βέβλημαι, ἐβλήθην. Other forms: ἐσβαλὼν 79; ἐπεσβαλεῖν 498; ἐκβληθεῖς 289; ἐκβεβλημένος 412; συμβεβλήκαμεν 906. Compounds: ἀμφιβάλλω, ἐμβάλλω, ἐπεισβάλλω, ἐπιβάλλω, προσβάλλω, συμβάλλω.

62 **τεκοῦσα**: see note on 22.

65 **τεθραμμένη** < τρέφω, θρέψω, ἔθρεψα, τέτροφα, τέθραμμαι, ἐθρέφθην / ἐτρέφην *nourish, rear, keep*. Other forms: τρέφεν 449; τραφεῖς 528; ἔθρεπεν 555; ἔθρεψας 507. Compound: ἐκτρέφω: ἐξέθρεψ' 488.

68 **ἐνύβρισας** aor. < ἐνυβρίζω *insult or mock* (someone *in* [+ ἐν] something).

75 **εἰσιόντι** < εἴσειμι (εἴμι *will go*). Other forms: ἴθι 125; ἴωμεν 787. Compounds: εἴσειμι, ἔξειμι, πρόσειμι. (It is a good idea to review εἴμι and other irregular verbs.)

79 **σπερῶ** contract fut. < σπείρω *sow*.

85 **παθόν** < πάσχω, πείσομαι, ἔπαθον, πέπονθα.

86 **κατέκτα** a poetic aor. 3rd sg. of κατα-κτείνω; see note on line 4 for forms of κτείνω.

88 **ξυνειδότος** < ξύνοιδα *know about, share knowledge*. See note on 270, 271 for forms of οἶδα.

91 **ἀπηρξάμην** < ἀπάρχομαι, aor. ἀπηρξάμην < ἄρχω. Other compounds: κατηρξάμαν 1222; ἐνάρχομαι: ἐνήρκεται 1142. The mid. is often used to mean *begin* a ritual or sacrifice.

92 **ἐπέσφαξ'** = ἐπέσφαξα (elision of final short vowel) < ἐπισφάζω, aor. ἐπέσφαξα *slaughter over*.

93 **λαθών** < λανθάνω, λήσω, ἔλαθον, λέληθα.

97 **γνοίη** < irregular 2 aor. γινώσκω, γνώσομαι, ἔγνων, ἔγνωκα, ἔγνωσμαι, ἔγνώσθην. Other forms: γνοίην 283; γνοίη 285; ἔγνώσθη 852; ἔγνωκότα 938. Compound συγγινώσκω: σύγγνωτε 348.

99 **ζευχθείσαν** < ζεύγνυμι, pf. mid. ἔζευγμαι, aor. pass. ἐζεύχθην *yoke*. Other forms: ἐζευγμέναι 317. Compound: ἀπεζεύχθης 284.

101 **μάθω** < μανθάνω, μαθήσομαι, ἔμαθον, μεμάθηκα.

103 **ἀλλαξώμεθα**: see note on 32.

105 **φανήσεται** < φαίνω, φανῶ, ἔφηναι, πέφαγκα / πέφηναι, πέφασμαι, ἐφάνθην / ἐφάνην.

108 **κεκαρμένω** < κείρω, aor. ἔκειρα, pf. m-p κέκαρμαι *clip, cut* (one's hair) *short* (as a sign of mourning; slaves also had their hair cut short). Other form: κεκαρμένους, 515.

109 **κάκπυθώμεθα** crasis for καὶ ἐκπυθώμεθα < ἐκπυνθάνομαι, aor. ἐξεπυθόμην *search out, make inquiry about*.

113 **ἔμβα** < ἐμβαίνω poetic aor. imperative < βαίνω, βήσομαι, ἔβην, βέβηκα. Other forms: ἔβατε 432; βεβῶτος 453. Compounds: ἐξέβην 215; προσβῆναι 490.

115 **ἐγενόμαν** = ἐγενόμην.

123 **κείσαι** < κείμαι *lie* (dead).

125 **ἴθι** imperative < εἶμι; see note on 75.

139 **κέλσας** < κέλλω, aor. ἔκελσα *drive on, land, put to shore*.

140 **θές** aor. imperative < τίθημι; see note on line 7.

142 **ἐπορθοβοάσω** or ἐπορθοβοάσω a questionable word: *I will cry aloud at dawn* or *I will raise high the shout*. Other editors give ἐπορθρεύσω *I will be up in the twilight* with an object, i.e., to pour out in the twilight the laments of the night, γόους νυχίους.

146 **λείβομαι** *pine, shed tears* < λείβω *pour*. Other editors read διέπομαι *be engaged in*, mid. of διέπω.

163 **δέξατ'** = ἐδέξατο, unaugmented aor., in imitation of epic usage.

166 **ἔσχεν**: see note on 20.

167 **ἦλυθον** = ἦλθον (an epic form) < ἔρχομαι, ἐλεύσομαι, ἦλθον, ἐλήλυθα. Euripides uses this form in lyrics (598), though Aeschylus and Sophocles do not. Other forms: ἔλθω 377.

169 **ἔμολε**: see on 48.

177 **ἐκπεπτόταμαι** < ἐκποτάομαι, pf. ἐκπεπτόταμαι *fly out/forth, be lifted up*.

184 **σκέψαι** aor. mid. imperative < σκοπέω or σκέπτομαι *view, look at*.

189 **μέμνεται** (long α for η in lyrics) < μιμνήσκω, aor. ἔμνησα; pf. μέμνημαι; aor. pass. ἐμνήσθην act. *remind*; m-p *remember*. Other forms: μέμνηται 351; μνασθεῖσα 745. Compound: ἀνέμνησεν 504.

ἄλοῦσα < ἀλίσκομαι *be caught*.

190 **χρῆσαι** aor. mid. imperative < κίχρημι, aor. ἔχρησα *lend*; mid. *borrow*.

191 **δῦναι** < irreg. 2 aor. inf. δύω / δύνω, -δύσω, ἔδυν *sink, put on (clothes), enter, come over/upon*. Infinitive used for purpose.

201 **καταφθιμένου** < καταφθίνω, aor. mid. καταφθίμην < φθίνω *wither, perish, die*. Other forms: καπφθιμένης = καταφθιμένης 1299.

206 **ἐκφύς** < φύω, φύσω, ἔφυσα / ἔφυν, πέφυκα *produce, grow, be*. Other forms: ἔφυ 261; πεφυκῶς 338; ἔφυν 362; πεφυκέναι 523.

208 **τακομένα** (long α for η in lyrics) < τήκω *melt, fall away*. Compound: συντετηκός 240 < συντήκω, pf. συντέτηκα.

220 **τρέσῃς** < τρέω, aor. ἔτρεσα *fear, be afraid, flee*.

224 **θίγοιμ'** = θίγοιμι (elision of final short vowel) < θιγγάνω, aor. ἔθιγον *touch*.

227 **ἔστηκα** < ἵστημι στήσω, ἔστησα and ἔστην, ἔστηκα (plpf. εἰστήκη, fut. pf. ἐστήξω), ἔσταμαι, ἐστάθην. Other forms: ἐστάναι 344; σταίη 403; στῶσι 792. Compounds: ἀφίστημι, ἐξάνιστημι, ἐφίστημι, μεθίστημι 1202, ὑφίστημι.

ἵστημι has both transitive and intransitive forms. Four tenses of the active are intransitive: 2 aor., pf., plpf., and fut. pf. The following table may help you organize the tenses of ἵστημι.

Transitive and causal:

ἵστημι *set/be setting, place, cause to stand*

στήσω *shall set*

ἔστησα *set, brought to a stop, caused to stand*

Intransitive and Passive:

ἵσταμαι *am standing, set for myself*

ἔστην *stood (set myself), came to a stand*

ἔστηκα *stand (have set myself), stand firm, be standing*

εἰστήκη *stood, was standing*

ἐστήξω *shall stand*

ἔσταμαι *be set (rare, used in pass. sense)*

ἐστάθην *was placed, was set*

The intransitive and passive forms can serve as a stronger form of εἶναι, *to be* (in such and such state or place). The compounds of ἵστημι show the same distinction of intransitive and transitive (or causal) forms.

230 **ζη** < ζάω: -αω verb that contracts to -η-. See also 238 ζῆς and ζῶσα.

240 **συντετηκός** < συντήκω; see on 208.

241 **έσκυθισμένον** < σκυθίζω *act like a Scythian, shave the head* (like a scalped victim of the Scythians).

255 **έτλη** (also 516) < τλάω, aor. έτλην *endure, have the heart to do*. Related to τλήμων (τλάμων). See also 278 τλαίης.

257 **ήξιου** < άξιόω *deem / think worthy*.

258 **ήσθη** < ήδομαι, aor. ήσθην *enjoy oneself*. Fut. ήσθήσεται 415.

260 **ξυνήκ** = ξυνήκα < συν + ήμι < ήμι, -ήσω, -ήκα, είκα, -είμαι, -είθην. Other forms and compounds: άφειμένα 379; ήτο 477; μεθείσαν 797; ήσαν 799; διαμεθής < διαμεθίμι 978.

έκτειση < έκ-τίνω, έκτεισώ, aor. έξέτεισα. See also: 599 τεισαίμην < τίνω, aor. έτεισα *pay, expiate*; mid. *avenge*.

261 **έφω** 2 aor. of φύω “was born” > *is* (naturally, by nature). The pf. and 2 aor. take a pres. meaning: *to be so and so by nature* (LSJ s.v. B, II).

262 **δραστέον** verbal < δράω, δράσω, έδρασα, pf. m-p δέδραμαι *do*; verbal adjective to be taken with άνδρα, “to be treated,” or a verbal noun with [έστι], “one must treat him.”

263 **ήξει** < ήκω, ήξω *have come, be present*: pres. with pf. meaning; fut. with meaning of fut. pf.

264 **ήνέσχετο** < άνα- + έχομαι *put up with*; see note on lines 20, 23; also at 508, 1044. (Note double augment.)

270, 271 **οίδεν, οίδε** < οίδα, είσομαι; inf. είδέναι; participle είδώς; imperatives ήσθι, ήστω; plpf. ήδειν *know* (pf. form with pres. meaning). Other forms: είδώς 292, 404; είση 346; είδέναι 894; ήδησθα 926. Common forms of οίδα:

Pf. (with pres. meaning) οίδα, οίσθα or οίδας, οίδε; ήμεν, ήστε, ήσασι

Plpf. (with impf. meaning)—2nd sg. ήδησθα 3rd sg. ήδει[v]

271 **ύφαιρούμεσθα** *keep (secret) from*; see on line 5.

275 **ήρου** < έρομαι (είρομαι), aor. ήρόμην *ask*.

281 **έπισφάξας** = επισφάξασα aor. participle < επισφάζω *slaughter over*.

284 **άπεζεύχθης** < άποζεύγνυμι *unyoke, separate*.

289 **έκυρσεν** < κυρέω (κύρω), aor. έκυρσα *happen, meet with* (+ gen.).

292 **λέξον** (also 599) < λέγω, 1 aor. imperative 2nd sg.

305 **βέβριθ** = βέβριθα < βρίθω, pf. act. βέβριθα *be heavy, be weighed down*.

308 **στερήσομαι** fut. pass. < στερέω *deprive*.

310 **τητωμένη** < τητάομαι *be in want, be deprived of*.

313 **έμνήστευον** < μνηστεύω *promise in marriage, betroth*.

- 316 **ἔπερσ'** = ἔπερσε < πέρθω, aor. ἔπερσα *waste, destroy, kill*.
- 317 **ἐζευγμένα** pf. mid. < ζεύγνυμι *fasten*: "having fastened their robes . . ."
- 319 **σέσηπεν** pf. < σήπω *be rotten*.
- 323 **ἡτιμασμένος** pf. m-p < ἡτιμάζω *bring dishonor on, disenfranchise*.
- 326 **βρεχθεῖς** < βρέχω *drench, souse*.
- 339 **δέδορκα** pf. < δέρκομαι *see*. Other form, compound: ἐσδέδορκεν 558.
- 340 **ὠρμημένον** < ὠρμάω, pf. m-p ὠρμημαι *set in motion, start*; m-p *set out for*. Compound: ἐξωρμάτ' 642, ἐξωρμημένου 1070.
- 346 **εἶση** < οἶδα: see note on 270, 271.
- 348 **σύγγνωτε** < συγγινώσκω *forgive, pardon* (+ dat.); irreg. 2 aor. imperative. **εἰρημένοις** *things said* < ἐρῶ (fut., *will say*) pf. m-p εἴρημαι, aor. pass. ἐρήθη. Other form: εἰρήσθαι 667.
- 357 **ἀνεπτύχθαι** < ἀναπτύσσω pf. mid. ἀνέπτυνγμαι *unfold, open*. Other compound: πρόσπτυξον 1255, 1325 aor. imperative < προσπτύσσω
- 363 **παρέξομαι** < παρέχω mid. *display, exhibit*; see note on 20, 23.
- 366 **κέκληται** < καλέω, καλῶ, ἐκάλεσα, κέκληκα, κέκλημαι, ἐκλήθη.
- 373 **κρινεῖ**, κρινεῖτε 385 contract futures < κρίνω, κρινῶ, ἔκρινα, κέκρικα, κέκριμαι, ἐκρίθη.
- 381 **ὠγκωμένος** < ὠγκώω, pf. m-p ὠγχωμαι *exalt, puff up*.
- 382 **ἠύρεθη** < εὐρίσκω, εὐρήσω, ἠύρον / εὔρον, ἠύρηκα / εὔρηκα, εὔρημαι, εὐρέθη. Other forms and compound: εὔροι 423; ἐφευρεθεῖς 952.
- 391 **παρῶν** < πάρεμι. Compounds of εἰμί: ἅπειμι, ἔνειμι, μέτειμι, πρόσσειμι, σύνειμι, ὑπειμι. Other forms: παρήν 629.
- 400 **ἐῶ** < ἐάω (impf. εἶων) *let, permit*.
- 403 **σταίη** aor. opt. < ἵστημι. See note on 227.
- 405 **ἐδέξω** < δέχομαι, δέξομαι, ἐδεξάμην, δέδεγμα, -εδέχην.
- 408 **ἐξήμαρτες** < ἐξ + ἁμαρτάνω, aor. ἐξήμαρτον *do wrong, blunder, make a mistake*.
- 418 **ἀγγεῖλαιμεν** aor. opt.; ἀπαγγελῶ fut. 420 < ἀγγέλλω, ἀγγελῶ, ἡγγεῖλα, ἡγγελκα, ἡγγελμαι, ἡγγέλθην.
- 419 **αἰσθοῖτ'** = αἰσθοῖτο < αἰσθάνομαι, αἰσθήσομαι, ἦσθόμην, ἦσθη-μαι *feel*.
- 420 **ἀπαγγελῶ** fut.
- 421 **χώρει** imperative, *move, go*.
- 426 **πέσω** < πίπτω, πεσοῦμαι, ἔπεσον, πέπτωκα *fall*. Other forms: πεσὼν 428; προσπεσὼν 510.
- 430 **ἐμπλησθεῖς** aor. pass. participle < ἐμπίμπλημι *fill full of*.
- 449 **τρέφεν** = ἐτρέφεν; see note on 163.
- 453 **βεβῶτος** = βεβηκότος < βαίνω; see note on 113.

- 457 **τετύχθαι** pf. m-p < τεύχω *prepare, make*.
- 480 **ἔκανεν** aor. < καίνω = κτείνω.
- 486 **χυθὲν** (also 514) aor. pass. < χέω, fut. χέω, ἔχεα, κέχυκα, κέχυμαι, ἐχύθην *pour*.
- 495 **ὑποσπάσας** < ὑποσπάω, aor. ὑπέσπασα *draw away from under, withdraw secretly*.
- 502 **τέγξας** < τέγγω *wet*.
- ἐξομόρξασθαι** < ἐξομόργνυμαι, aor. ἐξωμορξάμην *wipe off (oneself)*.
- 508 **ἦνεσχόμην** < ἀνέχομαι (note double agument; see on 20 above), 264, 1044.
- 510 **ἔκλαυσ'** < κλαίω, aor. ἔκλαυσα *weep, cry for*.
- 512 **ἔσπεισα** aor. < σπένδω *pour a libation*.
- 516 **κάθαύμας'** crasis and elision = και ἐθαύμασα < θαυμάζω *wonder*.
- 520 **σκέψαι** < σκοπέω; see on 184.
- 527 **συνοίsetαι** < συμ- φέρω mid. *meet, be in harmony with*. Compounds of φέρω, οἶσω, ἦνεγκον / ἦνεγκα, ἐνήνοχα, ἐνήνεγμαι, ἠνέχθην: ἐκφέρω (871), ἐπιφέρω (1089)
- 540 **ἐξέκλεψα** < ἐκ-κλέπτω *steal away*.
- 567 **βλέψον** aor. imperative < βλέπω, aor. ἔβλεψα *look, see, be alive*
- 574 **ἡμάχθη** aor. pass. < αἰμάσσω *make bloody, stain with blood* < αἶμα
- 576 **προσπίτνειν**: πίτνειν = πίπτειν (*fall*): poetic form used for metrical reasons.
- 578 **πέπεισμαι** < πείθω, πείσω, ἔπεισα (2 aor. ἔπιθον), πέπεικα / πέποιθα (*I trust*), πέπεισμαι, ἐπέισθην. πιθοίμην 981, 2 aor.
- φανείς** < φαίνω; see on 105.
- 582 **ἀνσπάσωμαι** < ἀνασπάω, aor. ἀνέσπασα *draw up, pull up* (of hauling in a fish).
- 592 **ἴει** pres. imperative of ἵημι *send, let go*.
- 602 **ἀνεσκευάσμεθ'** < ἀνασκευάζω, pf. m-p ἀνεσκεύασμαι pass. *be bankrupt*.
- 604 **τραπώμεθ'**; τραπέσθαι 662 < τρέπω, 2 aor. mid. ἐτραπόμην *turn*.
- 607 **μετασχεῖν** < μετέχω
- 608 **ἀνήρησαι** < ἀναιρέω in pass. *be destroyed*; the perfect indicates a permanent state.
- 609 **ἐλλέλοιπας** < ἐλ-(= ἐν-) λείπω, λείψω, ἔλιπον, λέλοιπα, λέλειμμαι, ἐλείφθην.
- 616 **κέκασται** pf. < καίνυμαι *surpass, excel*.
- 621 **εἶρπον** impf. < ἔρπω *creep*.
- 622 **προσηκάμην** 1 aor. mid. < προσίημι *accept, allow*.
- ῥηθέν** < ῥῶ pf. m-p εἴρημαι, aor. pass. ἐρρήθην *will say, say*.

- 639 **ἐννόει** imperative, 2nd sg. < ἐννοέω *think of*.
 649 **ὑπηρετεῖτω** 3rd sg. imperative pres. < ὑπηρετέω *serve, do service*
 < ὑπηρέτης *rower, laborer, helper, servant*.
 664 **ὕφηγησαι** pf. < ὑφηγέομαι *guide*.
 668 **εἵληχας** pf. < λαγχάνω *obtain by lot, be assigned*.
 672 **πεπόνθαμεν** pf. < πάσχω, πείσομαι, ἔπαθον, πέπονθα.
 675 **δός** aor. imperative *give, grant*.
 681 **ἀνήλωσαν** < ἀναλίσκω, aor. ἀνήλωσα *use up, spend, annihilate*.
 686 **παλαισθεῖς** < παλαίω, aor. pass. ἐπαλαίσθην *wrestle*.
πεσῆ fut. 2nd sg. < πίπτω, πεσοῦμαι, ἔπεσον, πέπτωκα *fall*.
 689 **ποιήσομαι** = ποιήσομαι.
 698 **ὑφέξω** fut. < ὑπέχω *hold out*.
 713 **ἐπίνταντο** < πίντημι *spread out*.
 714 **σελαγείτο** unaugmented impf. < σελαγέω *blaze, shine*.
 718 **ηὔξοντ'** < αὔζω *increase*.
 728 **μετέβασ'** < μεταβαίνω or μεταβιβάζω; the form is causative: *cause to change, shift*.
 745 **μνασθεῖσα** = μνησθεῖσα < μιμνήσκω, aor. pass. ἐμνήσθην (+ gen.).
 750 **ἄμειπον** aor. imperative < ἀμείβω, aor. ἤμειψα *leave*.
 774 **ἀπήραμεν** aor. < ἀπ- αἶρω *lift off, carry away, depart*.
 775 **ἦμεν** < εἶμι *go*.
 797 **μεθεῖσαν** aor. 3rd pl. < μεθίημι *utter*.
 799 **ἔεσαν** impf. < ἵημι.
 800 **ἦρον** < αἶρω.
 812 **τεμών** < τέμνω, τεμῶ, ἔτεμον *cut*.
 820 **ρίψας** < ρίπτω, aor. ἔρριψα *fling*.
 825 **διήνυσε** < διανύω, aor. διήνυσα *complete, finish* (a race).
 826 **κάνειτο** = καὶ ἀνείτο < ἀνίημι *loosen, open*; see note on 260.
 827 **ἦθρει** < ἀθρέω *look, gaze upon*.
προσῆν < πρόσειμι *be attached, be present*; see note on 391.
 837 **ἀπορρήξω** < ἀπορρήγνυμι. Other forms: ἔρρηξεν 842 < ῥήγνυμι,
 aor. ἔρρηξα *break*; ἀναρρήγνυμι.
 843 **ἥσπαιρεν** < ἀσπαίρω *gasp, struggle*.
ἠλάλαξε < ἀλαλάζω *cry aloud*.
 844 **ῥίξαν** aor. < αἵσσω *dart, shoot up, rush*.
 849 **ἀντετιμωρησάμην** < ἀντιτιμωρόμαι *take vengeance*.
 850 **καίνετε**: καίνω = κτείνω.
 856 **᾿πιδείξων** = ἐπιδείξων (by APHAERESIS or inverse elision of an ε
 after a long vowel) < ἐπιδείκνυμι, ἐπιδείξω *exhibit, display*.

- 863 **τελέσσας** aor. participle < τελέω *end, bring to an end*.
 869 **πέπτωκεν** < πίπτω, πεσοῦμαι, ἔπεσον, πέπτωκα. Other form: πέση 982.
 871 **ἐξενέγκωμαι** aor. mid. subj. < ἐκφέρω.
 878 **καθελόντες** < καθαιρέω.
 879 **ἴτω** 3rd sg. imperative < εἴμι *go*.
 885 **ᾔλεσε** < ὀλλυμι; see on line 12.
 891 **ἐπαίνεσον** 1 aor. imperative of ἐπαινέω.
 898 **πήξας** < πήγνυμι, ἔπηξα *stick, fix, make firm*.
 ἔρεισον < ἐρείδω, aor. ἤρεια *prop.*
 909 **ἐξελίμπανον** = ἐξέλειπον.
 918 **ἤλπισας** ingressive aor., *began to hope*.
 921 **ἴστω**: see note on 270, 271.
 διολέσας < δι-όλλυμι.
 925 **ᾠκεις** < οἰκέω.
 926 **ἦδησθα** < οἶδα; see note on 270, 271.
 927 **κεκτημένη** < κτάομαι, pf. κέκτημαι *possess, win*.
 928 **ἀνηρεῖσθον** < ἀν + αἰρέω 2 dual impf. mid.
 935 **ὠνόμασται** pf. m-p < ὀνομάζω.
 936 **γήμεντι** < γαμέω.
 938 **ἡπάτα** < ἀπατάω *cheat, deceive*.
 ἐγνωκότα pf. participle < γινώσκω.
 939 **ἠὔχεις** < αὐχέω *boast, take pride in*.
 944 **ἐξέπτατ'** < ἐκ-πέτομαι *gnomic aor.*
 948 **ἀραρῶς** pf. < ἀραρίσκω *fit*, pf. *be fitted or furnished with*.
 954 **δράμη** aor. subjunctive < τρέχω, δραμοῦμαι, ἔδραμον *run*.
 956 **ἵκηται** < ἰκνέομαι; see note on 6.
 κάμψη < κάμπτω *bend*.
 962 **ἐπίσχες** aor. imperative < ἐπίσχω *hold off, wait*.
 971 **ἐθέσπισας** aor. < θεσπίζω *foretell, prophesy*.
 973 **ἔχρησας** aor. < χράω *proclaim* (an oracle).
 975 **φεύξομαι** fut. *I shall be a defendant* (legal term; cf. ὁ φεύγων, defendant).
 978 **διαμεθῆς** < διαμεθίημι *leave off, give up*.
 979 **ἀπεικασθεῖς** aor. pass. < ἀπεικάζω *represent, copy*; pass. *become like*.
 981 **πιθοίμην** : see note on 578.
 1008 **ἀπόκισας** < ἀπ-οικίζω *banish from home*.
 1009 **ἡρημένων, ἡρήμεθα** < αἰρέω; see note on 5.
 1021 **ᾤχετ'** < οἴχομαι *be gone*.
 1023 **διήμησ'** aor. < διαμάω *cut through*.

- 1024 **ἐξιώνμενος** < ἐξιάομαι *cure*.
 1025 **ὀνήσων** fut. participle of purpose < ὀνίνημι *benefit*.
 1028 **ἠπίστατο** < ἐπίσταμαι.
 1033 **ἐπεισέφηκε** < ἐπεισφρέω, pf. ἐπεισέφηκα *let in onto*.
 1036 **ὑπόντος** < ὑπ-εἰμι *be laid down* see note on 391.
 1037 **παρώσας** aor. participle < παρωθέω *push aside or away*.
 1041 **ἥρπαστο** < ἄρπάζω, aor. ἥρπασα, pf. mid. ἥρπασμαι, aor. pass. ἥρπασθην *seize*. Other form: ἄρπασθεῖς' 1065.
 1044 **ἠνέσχετ'** < ἀνέχω; see note on 20.
 1046 **ἔκτειν'** = ἔκτεινα.
 1049 **κάντιθες** = καὶ ἀντίθες < ἀντιτίθημι, aor. ἀντέθηκα / ἀντέθεμεν *set against*; see note on line 7.
 1058 **ἔρξεις** fut. < ἔρδω *do*.
 1068 **ἴσασιν** < οἶδα; see note on 270, 271.
 1070 **ἐξωρμημένου** < ἐξορμάω *set out*.
 1071 **ἐξήσκεις** < ἐξασκέω *adorn*.
 1073 **διάγραφ'** = διάγραφε.
 1077 **κεχαρμένην** < χαίρω, pf. m-p κεχάρμαι *rejoice*.
 1083 **ἐξειργασμένης** < ἐξεργάζομαι, pf. ἐξείργασμαι *work out, accomplish*.
 1084 **ἐῴη** impf. of ἔξεστι *it is possible*; see note on 391.
 1089 **προσηψας** < προσάπτω, aor. προσήψα *fasten to, apply to*; also πρόσασπον 1321
 ἐπηνέγκω < ἐπιφέρω mid. *bring as a dowry*.
 1090 **ὠνούμενη** < ὠνόομαι *buy*.
 1105 **συγγνώσομαι** fut. < συγγιγνώσκω *pardon*.
 1110 **ἤλασ'** = ἤλασα aor. < ἐλάυνω *drive*.
 1129 **κάτεκον** = καὶ ἔτεκον < τίκω; see note on 22.
 1142 **ἐνήρκται** < ἐνάρχομαι, pf. m-p ἐνήργμαι *begin a sacrifice*; see note on 91.
 τεθηγμένη < θήγω, pf. m-p τέθηγμαι *sharpen, whet*.
 1143 **καθεῖλε** aor. < καθαιρέω *take down, kill*; see note on 5.
 1144 **πληγείσα** < πλήσσω, pf. m-p πέπληγμαι, aor. pass. ἐπλήγην *strike*.
 Another form: πεπληγμένοι 1270.
 1163 **κατήνυσεν** < κατανύω *bring to an end, finish, arrive at*.
 1168 **ὦμωξα** aor. < οἰμώζω *cry οἶμοι*; see 215 and 248 for “dramatic” aor.
 1173 **πεφυρμένοι** < φύρω *mix, wet*.
 1192 **ᾤπασας** aor. < ὀπάζω *grant, confer on*.
 1217 **ἐκρίμαθ'** = ἐκρίματο < κρίμαμαι = κρέμαμαι *hang, be suspended*.

- 1225 ἐφηψάμαν < ἐφάπτομαι, aor. ἐφηψάμην *lay hold of, grasp, touch*.
 1226 ἔρεξας < ῥέζω, ῥέζω, ἔρεξα *do*.
 1238 κλῦθι imperative < κλύω *hear*.
 1242 παύσαντ' = παύσαντε aor. participle nom. dual.
 1248 ἔκρανε aor. < κραίνω *bring about, accomplish*.
 1250 ἔκλιπ' = ἔκλιπε aor. imperative.
 1255 ἐπτοημένας < πτοέω *frighten, flutter*, pass. *be scared*.
 1267 χρήσας < χράω, aor. ἔχρησα *proclaim an oracle*.
 1268 τεθήσεται fut. pass. < τίθημι; see note on 7.
 1271 δύσσονται < δύω / δύνω *sink*; see note on 191.
 1290 πεπρωμένην < πεπρωμένη, -ης, ἡ *fate* < πέπρωται *it has been/is fated*.
 1299 καπφθιμένης = καταφθιμένης < καταφθίνω; see note on 201.
 1307 διέκναισεν < διακναίω, aor. διέκναισα *scrape through, wear away, tear apart*.
 1327 ἔγηρύσω < γηρύω *sing, cry*.
 1329 ἔνι = ἔνεστι.

APPENDIX 4

GRAMMATICAL AND RHETORICAL CONSTRUCTIONS FOR REVIEW

The grammatical notes are concentrated toward the beginning of the play.
Line/lines

4 τὸν κρατοῦντ': attributive use of the participle, *the one ruling, the ruler*.

7 ἐπὶ ναῶν < ναός *temple*: not to be confused with ναῦς *ship*, which has gen. pl. νεῶν.

8, 11 crasis (= squishing): κάκει = καὶ ἐκεῖ; χῶ = καὶ ὁ; see 86 χῆ = καὶ ἡ, etc.

12 βασιλεύει χθονός: verbs of ruling take the gen. See also 93 οἱ κρατοῦσι τῆσδε γῆς.

13 ἐκείνου: ἐκείνος (like *ille* in Latin) is used to refer to famous personages. The Farmer has mentioned Agamemnon by name in line 3.

14 οὓς δ' *those whom*: the antecedent, if just a generic "those," is usually omitted.

15 Ἥλέκτρας θάλος: Ἥλέκτρας is the defining gen., the genitive of which something consists: "the shoot which is Electra," that is, "a young daughter, Electra."

16, 19 τὸν μὲν (referring to Orestes) is followed by the corresponding ἧ δ' (referring to Electra).

17 χερὸς ὑπ' [ὑπο] for ὑπό: when the preposition follows its noun, the accent shifts back. This is called ANASTROPHE. It is common in prose only with περί, but many two-syllable prepositions allow it in verse.

18 ἐς γῆν: ἐς = εἰς: although τρέφειν is not a verb of motion, a verb of motion is implied, "to take him into the Phocians' country and bring him up there."

22 δεισας δὲ μή . . . τέκοι: object clause after a verb of fearing. The optative is used because the main verb (εἶχεν) is past. See also 30, μὴ φοβηθείη.

22 τφ = τινι: the accent tells you that it is the indefinite pronoun rather than the definite article or the interrogative pronoun/adjective. παῖδ' = παῖδα.

25 πλέων: neut. nom. of πλέως, -α, -ων *full*, a first/second declension adjective (see Smyth 289 for declension).

26 μή . . . τέκοι: purpose clause or object clause after verb of fearing.

27, 28 σφε, νιν: third person personal pronouns. G&G 364, 367, 369, 371a, Smyth 325e. The tragedians use σφε (masc. and fem. acc. pl., sometimes used as sg.) as a non-reflexive or indirect reflexive. More common is νιν as a personal pronoun in all genders, in both sg. and pl. acc. Σφε and νιν are enclitic. They mean what they have to mean (*him, her, it, them*). The context will help you decide.

27 βουλεύσαντος: either a gen. absolute with Αἰγίσθου understood, or a circumstantial participle in agreement with Αἰγίσθου in line 28.

33 χρυσὸν εἶφ' = εἶπε [εἶπον is often used of official pronouncements]. A future infinitive is implied.

ὃς ἂν κτάνῃ: omission of the antecedent is common. It would be in the dat. (ἐκείνῳ) if it were there. Relative future more vivid protasis, "whoever/if anyone kills" *him* (Orestes is understood as the object of κτάνῃ).

34–6 ἡμῖν . . . γεγῶσιν: the use of pl. for sg. is very common in tragedy, especially for pronouns, body parts, weapons, and words for *house*.

34 δίδωσιν: historical or narrative present. The present is used to indicate the past for vividness, as is appropriate to the farmer in telling this surprising fact.

36 οὐ δὴ τοῦτό ἐξελέγχομαι (*I am not found wanting in this; it is not in this that I am found wanting*): ἐξελέγχω + acc. of the point in which one is refuted; the act. also takes acc. of the person.

37 λαμποί [εἶσι]: after certain adjectives the verb *to be* in the third person sg. or pl. (and less commonly in the first sg.) is regularly omitted (Smyth 944c).

39 ὥς . . . λάβου: use of ὥς in a purpose clause is common in tragedy. (Smyth 2193.) See also ὥς ὕβριν δείξωμεν (58).

40–2 εἰ . . . ἔσχεν . . . ἂν ἐξήγειρε . . . ἂν ἦλθεν: contrary to fact condition in past time.

43 ἦν = *her*, almost a demonstrative. ἀνὴρ ὅδε: deictic use of the demonstrative; the αὐτοῦργός points to himself, giving more substance to the subject than if he had just said ἐγώ. σύννοιδέ μοι: *share knowledge with someone* (+ dat.) as a witness.

45 τέκνα: pl. for sg. Generalizing plural, cf. 658, 937; Smyth 1012.

47 λόγοισι: *only in words, nominally*; dat. of respect.

48–9 . . . εἴ . . . ἐσώπεται: future “emotional” condition: εἴ with the future, used when the protasis suggests something feared (Smyth 2328).

52–3 ἀναμετρούμενος . . . ἴστω . . . αὖ τοιοῦτος ὢν: ἴστω 3rd sg. imperative of οἶδα. ἀναμετρούμενος (*measuring*) and ὢν: verbs of knowing and showing take the participle in indirect statement. αὖ shows that τοιοῦτος points back to μῶρον in line 50.

55 τόδ’ ἄγγος τῷδ’ . . . κάρα: the repeated deictic demonstratives call attention to her physical situation, the props, her mask and wig with close-cropped hair.

61 χάριτα: a rarer form for the more common acc. χάριν.

62 Αἰγίσθῳ πάρα: *with Aegisthus* (i.e., married to, sleeping with). For accent of πάρα see note on 17.

64 γάρ: Denniston (*GP* 78) explains this γάρ thus, “Rarely, the γάρ clause gives the cause of what precedes, and, by putting it in question form, the speaker asks why the cause has been brought into operation.” In *Electra*, “The farmer, finding Electra drawing water, breaks in upon her soliloquy. . . . (Her action is explained by her desire to save her husband trouble. He enquires the cause of that desire.)”

ἐμὴν . . . χάριν: adverbial acc. of manner or motive, *for my sake* (Smyth 1608, 1610).

66 ταῦτ’ (= ταῦτα): either object of ἀφίστασαι or adverbial acc. *at that* with ἐμοῦ λέγοντος, gen. absolute. See also 88 οὐδενὸς ξυνειδότος.

67 θεοῖσιν = θεοῖς: expanded forms of the dat. in -σι are common in poetry. θεοῖσιν is dat. with the adjective ἴσον. See Sappho 31.1–2: φαίνεται μοι κῆνος ἴσος θεοῖσιν ἔμμεν’ ὄνηρ, “That man seems to me to be equal to the gods.”

69 θνητοῖς: dat. of advantage.

72 μόχθου: gen. of separation with ῥπικουφίζουσας, *relieving [you] of*; or partitive gen. *alleviating your toil*.

73 σοι: dat. with compound verb.

74 τᾶξωθεν = τὰ ἔξωθεν, τὰν = τὰ ἐν; understand ἔργα.

76 θύραθεν *from outside the door*: the suffix -θεν means *from*, as in Δίοθεν *from Zeus*, ἔνθεν *from there*, ἐντεῦθεν *from here/there*, Ἰλιόθεν *from Troy*, ὅθεν *whence*, πόθεν *from where?*, τηλόθεν *from afar*.

τᾶνδον = τὰ ἔνδον.

78 μελάρων τῶνδ’: in poetry the article is omitted with the demonstrative.

81 δύναιτ’ ἄν: potential optative. ξυλλέγειν: ξύν is the old Attic spelling of σύν. Both forms occur in tragedy. See ξυνειδότος 88, but σύνοιδε 43,

ξυντιθείς 95, ξυνεργάτιν 100, but on the same line συγγένωμαι, ξυνήκα 260, ξυνάυξοιντο 544. In the general vocabulary the forms are given under συν-.

85 πρόσσονθ' ἃ πρόσσω *faring as I fare*: πρόσσειν is often used with neut. pronouns or adjectives; here ἃ πρόσσω is a euphemism for κακά. Note that the Attic -ττ- is avoided in tragic diction, the -σσ- common to most other dialects being used instead. Other examples include γλῶσσα, κρείσσων, ἥσσω, θάσσων, Θεσσαλός; καρύσσω (= κηρύσσω), αἰμάσσω, αἰνίσσομαι, ἀλλάσσω, ἀναπτύσσω, πλήσσω, προσπτύσσω, τάσσω.

86 χῆ: see on crasis, 8n.

89 ἀλλάζων: the future participle is used for purpose.

90 νυκτὸς δὲ τῆσδε: gen. of time within which.

94 βαίνω πόδα (also 1173): acc. of instrument of motion (LSJ) or respect, *go on foot, take a step*.

95 δοῦν: objective gen. (translate *for*) with ἄμιλλαν *striving*.

97 εἴ μὲ τις γνοίη: protasis of a future less vivid condition.

98 νιν: acc. (see note on 27–8) subject of indirect statement after φασί.

102 γάρ here is anticipatory, preceding the clause it explains.

103 ἀλλαζώμεθα: hortatory subjunctive. See also 109.

105 νῶν: 1st person pronoun in dat. dual.

107 ἀλλ' . . . γάρ: when used to mark the appearance of a new character on the stage, the particles are separated (*GP* 103–4).

109 ἐζώμεσθα= ἐζώμεθα: -μεσθα is used when necessary for metrical reasons instead of -μεθα.

110 δούλης γυναικός: gen. of source.

ἦν = ἐάν: *if* in future more vivid condition.

111 ἐφ' οἷσι: supply the generic antecedent, *on those things on/for which we have come*.

112 ὥρα [ἐστί]: *it is time*.

112nv. Note that in tragic lyrics Doric long -α- is used for Attic/Ionic -η-: ὁρμάν (112), ἐγενόμαν (115), στυγνὰ κόρα (117), ζόας (121), ἀδονάν for ἡδονήν (126), τλᾶμον (131), ἀδελφάν (134), ἀλάταν for ἀλήτην (139), κ.τ.λ.

117 Τυνδάρω: gen. of Τυνδάρεω, nom. (also 989).

119 πολιῆται: Epic and Ionic have πολιήτης, -εω for πολίτης, -ου.

120–1 φεῦ φεῦ σχετλίων πόνων / καὶ στυγεράς ζόας: the cause of emotion (here, with φεῦ) goes into the gen. See also 201, οἴμοι τοῦ καταφθιμένου. . . .

122 ἐν Ἀίδα: Ἀίδα is Doric/Aeolic gen. sg. masc. with *house* or *halls* (in the dat. with ἐν) understood, as is common (also after εἰς with *house* understood

in the acc.; see 662 εἰς ᾿Αἰδου). The form ᾿Αἰδου is also found for the gen. The expression is spelled out at 1144 κᾶν ᾿Αἰδου δόμοις. (Smyth 1302.)

123 σφαγαίς: dat. of means/manner.

132–4 Notice the complicated word order, the separation of οἰκτρὸν from ἀδελφάν (hyperbaton), so that Electra seems to encompass the sorrows of the family, but Orestes too is implicated (λιπὼν), though absent.

135 ἔλθοις: optative of wish.

140 ἐμῆς ἀπὸ κρατὸς: the preposition is frequently put between adjective and noun.

145 τὸ κατ' ἡμέρᾳ *daily, day by day, day in day out* (also 182): the article is often used with expressions of time to make an adverbial acc.; cf. τὸ νῦν *now*; τὸ κατ' ἀρχάς *in the beginning* (Smyth 1611).

146–7 κατὰ . . . τεμνομένα TMESIS: the separation of the (prepositional) prefix from the verb is common in epic and sometimes imitated in drama.

149 θανάτῳ σφ': dat. of the cause (Smyth 1517), usually with expressions of emotion.

151 οἷα . . . ὥς (155): *just as/such things as . . . so/thus*.

162–3 μίτραισι . . . ἐπὶ στεφάνοις: ἐπὶ goes with both datives, but is placed with the second, as is common in poetry. This construction is called ἐπὶ κοινοῦ “in common” (K-G 1.550).

169 ἔμολέ τις ἔμολεν: repetition to express various emotions, here breathless excitement about the news.

176 θυμὸν: acc. of the part affected (a type of acc. of respect).

181 δακρύων δέ μοι μέλει: certain impersonals (δεῖ, μέλει, μέτεστι, προσήκει) are used with the dat. of the person and the gen. of the thing that is the care (need, share, concern).

184–6 σκέψαι . . . εἰ *look at . . . [to see] if; consider whether*.

188 ὅ = ἥ relative pronoun.

ῥμοῦ (= ἐμοῦ) πατέρος: verbs of remembering and forgetting take the gen. ῥμοῦ = ἐμου by aphaeresis or inverse elision of an ε after a long vowel.

191 δῶναι: infinitive of purpose (Smyth 2008–9).

198, 200 ἐνοπᾶς, σφαγιασμῶν: gen. with κλύει, which takes gen. of the person and often of the thing heard or attended to.

202 ἀλάτᾳ: Doric or Aeolic gen. sg. masc. of 1st decl. noun ἀλήτης.

206 τοῦ: the article retains its demonstrative force.

215 ἐξέβην: the “dramatic” aor., translated as pres., is used in the 1st person when the speaker tells of an event that has just happened, or expresses an emotion that is just coming on or has just happened the instant before (Smyth 1937, Denniston *ad loc.*).

- 219 ἐξαλύξωμεν (< ἐξάλυσκω *escape*): hortatory subjunctive.
- 220 μὴ τρέσῃς: prohibitive subjunctive.
- 221 μὴ θανεῖν: infinitive used for wish (Smyth 2715).
- 222 κτάνοιμι: optative of wish: "I should like to kill," "may I kill." σέθεν = σου is used often in tragedy. (Similarly 404, 611, 758, 803.)
- 223 ὦν: partitive gen. with verb of touching.
- 224 ὅτου (= οὗτινος *anyone whom*): gen. with verb of touching: "there is no one whom . . ."
- θίγοιμ' ἄν: potential optative
- 225 καὶ πῶς: used to express astonishment and/or indignation and to demand an explanation.
- 227 κρείσσων = κρείττων: irregular comparison of ἀγαθός, in the sense of *stronger*.
- 229 ζῶντος ἢ τεθνηκότος: understand μοῦ κασιγνήτου λόγους.
- 231 μισθὸν *in/as payment for*: the acc. in apposition to the sentence is frequently used of rewards and punishments (Smyth 991).
- 232 νῶν ἀμφοῖν: dual dat.
- 233 The sentence continues ζῆ of line 230.
- 234 νομίζων: in its original sense, *keeping* (as law or custom). νομίζων νόμον: a cognate acc. (acc. of kindred specification) i.e., the noun is of the same origin as the verb (this is also an example of *figura etymologica*).
- 235 οὐ πού: used for something one does not want to believe, *surely not* . . . (Denniston *ad loc.* and GP 492).
- 237 κείνου = ἐκείνου: the two spellings are about equally distributed in *Electra*.
- 238 ὅπως . . . συμφορᾶς ἔχεις: ἔχω + adv. *be in such and such a way*. συμφορᾶς: partitive gen. with ὅπως (which often has a gen. added, LSJ s.v. A.6) *what state of fortune you are in*.
- 240 ὥστε με στένειν: "natural" result clause with the infinitive.
- 243 τῶνδ' γ' ἐστὶ φίλτερον: gen. of comparison; irreg. comparison of φίλος: φίλτερος, φίλτατος.
- 246 ἐκ τοῦ = ἐκ τίνος *why? from what cause?*
- 248 ὥμωξ': for "dramatic" aor., see on 215. Probably Orestes has just let out an exometric gasp or groan.
- 249 ἥλπιδεν ἐκδῶσειν: verbs of hoping are used with the future infinitive.
- 251 ἐκείνου *his*: i.e., *the farmer's*.
- 260 μή ποτ' ἐκτείσῃ δίκην: object clause after (understood) verb of fearing.
- 261 πρὸς δέ *and besides*: used in its original adverbial function.

- 266 τάδε: internal object, an extension of the cognate acc.: cf. ὑβρίζειν ὕβριν, *commit outrage* > ὑβρίζειν τάδε *commit these acts of outrage*.
- 269 ὧν: with δίκην, gen. of the crime.
- 270 οἶδεν δέ σ' οὔσαν: verbs of knowing and showing take the participle in indirect statement.
- 273 σ' = σά.
- 274 τί δῆτ' Ὀρέστης πρὸς τόδ': understand τί [ποιήσῃ].
- 279 τῷ: used as a relative pronoun = ὅ.
- 280 λέγω: deliberative subjunctive.
- 282 εἴθ' ἦν: impf. for an impossible wish.
- 294 ἀμαθία: abstract noun for the personal τοῖς ἀμάθεσι.
- 297 τὸν αὐτὸν ἔρον: review the uses of αὐτός.
- 306 ἐκ conveys a sense of transition as well as expulsion (Denniston *ad loc.*).
- 310 ἀνέορτος ἱερῶν καὶ χορῶν: gen. of separation, "without share in festal rites" LSJ.
- 312–13 πρὶν ἐς θεοὺς ἐλθεῖν: πρὶν with infinitive.
- 313 οὔσαν: circumstantial participle in agreement with ἔμ'; probably to be taken as causal.
- 319 μέλαν: adjective used predicatively with σέσηπεν.
- 321 ἐν can be used of the instrument, *with* or *by*.
- 339 καὶ μὴν marks the entrance of a new character or calls attention to someone or something that has just come into view (*GP* 356).
- 341 ἔα: an exclamatory particle used to express surprise, perhaps colloquial.
- 345 εἰς ὕποπτα: n. pl. adj. used as a noun. μὴ μόλης prohibitive subjunctive.
- 346 τὸν ὄντα δ' . . . μῦθον *the truth, the actual story*: that it is not in fact true is part of the irony.
- 349 ἀνῆρ = ὁ ἀνὴρ: crasis, see on line 8.
- 351 σὼν τε μέμνηται κακῶν: see on 188.
- 352 ἀσθενὴς φεύγων ἀνὴρ: repeated from 236.
- 355 τὰ μὲν . . . τὰ δὲ: understand κακὰ from the previous line.
- 366 ἐμός τῆς ἀθλίας: τῆς ἀθλίας in agreement with the gen. idea implied by the possessive adj. ἐμός, as if ἐμός were ἐμοῦ.
- 370 τὸ μηδὲν: as a noun, *a nothing, a good-for-nothing*.
- 374 πλούτῳ: dat. of means, *by* [the criterion of] *wealth*.
- 376 κακόν: understand εἶναι. Probably masc. rather than an object in the neut. of διδάσκει (a verb that may take two accusatives, *teach somebody something*). That is, *it teaches a man to be evil* rather than *it teaches a man evil*, which would more likely be κακά.

383 οὐ μὴ ἀφρονήσῃθ': οὐ μὴ with the future in strong prohibitions (Smyth 2756a).

394–5 πένης . . . πρόθυμος . . . ξένος: that is, a ξένος who is πένης but πρόθυμος (see also 253).

397–8 ἐβουλόμην δ' ἄν, εἰ κασίγνητός με σὸς / . . . ἦγεν εὐτυχῶν . . . : Perhaps, *I would prefer* [it], *if* . . . , contrary to fact condition. In the sense of "prefer," βούλομαι is usually used with μᾶλλον or with ἤ.

400 χαίρειν ἐὼ: *permit to say farewell*, idiom for *I have no use for*.

405 μείζονας σαυτοῦ ξένους: irreg. comparative of μέγας; gen. of comparison.

412 πόλεος is used for πόλεως for metrical reasons in Attic poetry (Smyth 270 N.1).

413 Changing τόνδ' ἐς δόμους ἀφιγμένον to τῶνδ' ἐς δόμους ἀφιγμένων makes a little better sense, but is not certain.

416 ἐκσώζει ποτέ: historical pres.

418–19 ἀγγείλαιμεν ἄν, εἰ . . . αἴσθοιτ': future less vivid.

421 ὅσον τάχος: adverbial acc., *with all speed, as quick as you can*.

425 ἐν γ' ἐπ' ἡμαρ: *for just the one day*, ἐπί + acc. for the extent of time.

τούσδε πληρῶσαι βορᾶς: verb of filling with acc. and gen. (of that with which they are filled)

429–30 τῆς δ' ἐφ' ἡμέραν βορᾶς / ἐς σμικρὸν ἦκει: it [money] comes to little *as the price* of food for the day (after Denniston).

431 ἴσον φέρει: *carries (holds) or gets an equal amount*.

439 ἄλμα: acc. of respect with κοῦφον.

444 χρυσέων . . . τευχέων: gen. of material, defining what something consists of.

465 ἀελίοιο = ἡλίου: epic form of gen.

490 προσβῆναι: infinitive used like acc. of respect with the adj. ὀρθίαν *steep* (489).

491 ἐξελκτέον: verbal implying necessity, *one must*.

494 τῶν ἐμῶν βοσκημάτων: gen. of separation with verb ὑποσπάσας (495).

496 τευχέων: gen. of separation with verb ἐξελὼν.

504 μῶν = μὴ οὖν: interrogative particle introducing a question that expects a *no* answer.

506 ἐν χεροῖν: dual dat.

509 πάρεργ' (= πάρεργα) ὁδοῦ: acc. in apposition to the sentence.

510 ἐρημίας: gen. with τυχῶν.

513 πόκῳ: dat. of respect.

522 οἷς = ἐκείνοις οἷς.

- 523 ὅμοια: predicate nom. σώματος: part. gen. with τὰ πόλλ'.
 531 μή: with a participle having indefinite or conditional force.
 534 ἄν . . . ἄν: ἄν is often repeated for emphasis (Smyth 1765).
 536 δυοῖν ἀδελφοῖν: gen. dual, *brother and sister*.
 537 ἄρσην = ὁ ἄρσην (crasis).
 540 μὴ θανεῖν: infinitive of purpose (Smyth 2008).
 541 ἡνίκ' ἐκπίπτει: historical pres.
 542–4 εἰ δὲ κᾶκρεκον πέπλους: contrary to fact protasis.
 πῶς ἂν τότε ὧν παῖς ταῦτά νῦν ἔχοι φάρη, εἰ μὴ ξυναύξοινθ' οἱ
 πέπλοι τῷ σώματι; future less vivid condition.
 553 τοῦ (= τίνοος) ποτ': ποτε is often added to question words with intensive force: τίς ποτε *who in the world?*
 559 τῷ = τινι: dat. with verb meaning *compare* (Smyth 1466).
 571 ὁρᾶν: inf. in indirect statement with subject omitted.
 573–4 ἦν . . . ἡμάχθῃ: cognate acc.
 578 θυμόν: acc. of the part affected: *in my heart*.
 603 τῷ = τινι.
 604 ποῖαν ὁδόν: acc. of extent of space.
 614 πῶς λάβω: subjunctive in deliberative question.
 618 τοῦνθένδε: crasis for τὸ ἐνθένδε *the next step*.
 620 μηνύσειας, αἰσθοίμην: optatives of wish.
 632 ἡμῖν ἂν εἶεν, εἰ κρατοῖμεν, εὐμενεῖς: Orestes' hesitancy or diffidence shows in his use of the future less vivid condition in his question.
 638 ἦν (= ἔάν) θεὸς θέλῃ: future more vivid protasis.
 649 δυοῖν ὄντοιν: dat. dual.
 652 λεχώ: acc., predicate in indirect statement with participle after ἀπάγγελλε.
 654 δέχ' < δέκα. λεχώ nom., subject of ἀγνεύει *keeps pure*; i.e., she is defiled from giving birth and avoids contact with others. Such ideas have prevailed into the modern world.
 657 αὐτῇ σοῦ μέλειν: see note on 181.
 662 σμικρὸν = σμικρόν ἐστιν.
 εἰς Ἄιδου: i.e., into [the house/halls of] Hades.
 663 εἰ γὰρ θάνοιμι: optative of wish.
 685 Αἴγιστον θανεῖν: infinitive in indirect command.
 708 Ἀγορὰν ἀγοράν: terminal acc., *to*.
 710 ὀψόμενοι: the future participle is used for purpose.
 712 Ἀτρειδᾶν: gen. pl.
 730 αὐῶς: gen. < ἁῶς = ἡῶς, ἕως *dawn*.

- 741 δυστυχία βροτείω: dat. of purpose, *for, to the* . . .
- 745 ὄν: gen. with verb of remembering.
- 754 μακρὰν: understand ὁδόν; *a long way*, adverbial acc.
- 770 ταῦθ' = ταῦτα = τὰ αὐτά;/ review uses of αὐτός.
- 772 ποίω τρόπῳ δὲ καὶ τίνι ῥυθμῷ: dat. of manner.
- 805 βουθυτεῖν (continue to *sacrifice cattle*): infinitive in a wish or prayer. Aegisthus' invocation of the Nymphs shows that he implies "grant that I . . .," δότε (Smyth 2014).
- 843 ἡσπαιρεν ἡλάλαζε: asyndeton (absence of conjunctions) is used for vividness of description (Smyth 2166).
- 845 ἀνδρείας δ' ὑπό: with abstract nouns ὑπό is used for manner: *bravely, manfully*. On anastrophe (shift of accent) see note on line 17.
- 868 ἐλεύθεροι: predicate adjective.
- 879 χαρὰ: dat. with compound adj. ξύναυλος *in harmony with*.
- 881 τῆς ὑπ' Ἰλίου μάχης: gen. of cause or source.
- 894 τῷ σάφ' εἰδέναι: articular infinitive in dat. with compound verb προσθῶμεν (895), *add . . . to your certain knowledge*.
- 921 του = τινος.
- 924 οἱ: dat. of the 3rd person sg. indirect reflexive: no nom.; gen. οὗ; acc. ἑ.
- 928 ἄμφω πονηρὸν . . . ὄντε: dual nom.
- 929 τοῦκείνης = τὸ ἐκείνης with κακόν.
- 940 βραχὺν . . . χρόνον: acc. of duration of time.
- 942 αἶρει κακά: *raises, lifts*, that is, *bears* (as a burden) or *lifts and takes away, relieves*.
- 954 μοι: ethical dative, used of 1st and 2nd person pronouns to show or elicit the interest of the person in the action. Often may be translated *please, if you please, you see*, etc. (Smyth 1486).
- 994 σεβίζω σ' ἴσα καὶ μάκαρας: καὶ with words of sameness or likeness, *as*.
- 1024–6 κεῖ . . . ἔκτεινε πολλῶν μίαν ὑπερ, συγγνώστ' ἄν ἦν: condition contrary-to-fact.
- 1036 ὑπόντος τοῦδ': gen. absolute, "with this as our foundation."
- 1060 προοιμίου: appositive gen. (gen. of explanation).
- 1061 εἴθ' εἶχε: impossible wish with impf.
- 1063 συγγόνω: dual nom.
- 1072 ἀπόντος ἀνδρός: see 1036.
- 1090 μισθοῦ: gen. of price.
- 1102 πέφυκας πατέρα σὸν στέργειν: intransitive forms of φύω + inf. imply *be born or disposed by nature to do something* (LSJ s.v. II.2).

- 1106 χαίρω τι: acc. of the internal object, *take any joy*.
ἐμοί: dat. of agent with pf. pass.
- 1118 παύσομαι θυμουμένη: παύω with supplementary participle.
- 1149 ἐμὸς ἐμὸς ἀρχέτας: an example of pathetic repetition.
- 1151 ἐνέποντος: gen. absolute with αὐτοῦ understood.
- 1168 χειρουμένης: gen. of the cause of an emotion with ὄμωξα or gen. absolute.
- 1181 ἄποιν' = ἄποινα: acc. in apposition to the sentence, *in payment for* (+ gen.)
- 1188 ὑπαί = ὑπό: + gen. of agent.
- 1261 μῆνιν: adv. acc. in apposition to the sentence, *in anger*.
ἀνοσίων νυμφευμάτων: gen. of the cause of the emotion.

APPENDIX 5

VOCABULARY

Words in bold are used five or more times in *Electra*. For words that occur only once in the play the line number is given. Principal parts that are used in the text are provided in the entries for irregular verbs and verbs that are likely to be unfamiliar to intermediate students. This word list is based on Marianne McDonald's Concordance (TLG, 1985). The combination of dash with acute [-'] means the accent shifts forward from antepenult to penult or changes from circumflex to acute. After a line number, "v" refers to a reading noted in the commentary; "alt." refers to an alternate reading not commented on.

ᾗ *ah!* (1160)

ἀγαθός, -ή, -όν *good, noble*

ἄγαλμα, -μάτος, τό *honor, gift for the dead or the gods, adornment, statue*

Ἀγαμέμνων, -ονος, ὁ *Agamemnon*

ἄγαν *very much, too much, too*

ἀγγέλλω, ἀγγεῖλω, ἡγγεῖλα *announce, be a messenger of*

ἄγγελος, -ός, ὁ *messenger*

ἄγρος, -ους, τό *vessel, pitcher, bucket, urn* (55)

ἀγείτων, -ον *neighborless* (1130)

ἀγλαΐα, -ας, ἡ *splendor, beauty, joy, adornment*; pl. *vanities, festivities*

ἀγλάϊσμα, -μάτος, τό *adornment, honor, offering* (325)

ἄγνευμα, -μάτος, τό *chastity, religious purity* (256)

ἀγνέω *keep pure, purify* (654)

ἀγνίζω pf. m-p ἡγνισμαι *make pure, consecrate* (793)

ἄγνός, -ή, -όν *pure, free of defilement or pollution, chaste*

ἀγορά, -άς, ἡ *assembly*

ἀγορεύω *speak in the assembly, proclaim*

ἄγορος, -ός, ὁ [= ἀγορά] used in pl. *assembly*

- ἄγρα, -ας, ἡ *prey* (472)
 ἄγραυλος, -ον *in the country* (342)
 ἄγριος, -α, -ον *wild, savage* (1116)
 ἄγριόω *make savage, provoke* (1031)
 ἄγρός, -οῦ, ὁ *field*
 ἀγρότειρα f. of ἀγροτήρ, as adj. *country, in the country* (168)
 ἀγροτήρ, -ῆρος, ὁ *country-dweller, rustic* (463)
ἄγω, ἄξω *bring, lead*
 ἀγών, ἀγῶνος, ὁ *contest, struggle, race*; [the debate scene in a tragedy]
 ἀγωνισμα [*< ἀγών*] *contest, conflict* (987)
ἀδελφή, -ῆς, ἡ *sister*
ἀδελφός, -οῦ, ὁ *brother*
 Ἄϊδης, -ου or Αἴδης, ὁ *Hades, death, the underworld*
 ἀδίκηω, -ήσω, ἡδίκησα, ἡδίκηκα, ἡδίκημαι *do wrong (to + acc.), commit injustice*
ἄδικος, -ον *unjust* (584); **ἀδίκως** *unjustly*
ἀεί *forever, always*
 ἀείρω epic form of αἴρω *raise* (873)
 ἀέλπτως *unexpectedly*
 ἀζήμιος, -ον *free from penalty* (295)
 Ἀθῆναι, -ῶν, αἱ *Athens, Attica*
ἄθλιος, -α, -ον *unhappy*
 ἀθρέω *look, gaze upon*
 ἀθυμέω *be dispirited* (831)
 αἶ, αἰαῖ a cry of distress, *alas*
 αἶα, -ας, ἡ *land, earth*
Αἰγισθος, -ου, ὁ *Aegisthus, Aegisthos*
 αἰθαλόω *soil with smoke or soot* (1140)
 αἰθέριος, -α, -ον *high in the air*
 αἰθήρ, -έρος, ἡ *air, climate*
 αἶμα, -μάτος, τό *blood*
 αἰμάσσω, aor. pass. ἡμάχθην *make bloody, stain with blood* (574)
 αἰνέω *praise, go along with, agree to, put up with*
 αἰνίσσομαι, αἰνίζομαι *speak in riddles* (946)
 αἶνος, -ου ὁ *story, tale* (1062)
αἰρέω, aor. εἶλον, pf. m-p ἥρημαι *take, seize, destroy*; mid. *choose*
αἴρω, aor. ἦρα *raise, lift, get underway, take up and bear, take away*
 αἰσθάνομαι, aor. ἦσθόμην *perceive, feel*
 αἴσθησις, -έως, ἡ *feeling, perception, sensation* (290)

- αἰσσω, aor. ῆξα *dart, shoot up* (844)
 αἰσχρός, -ά, -όν *shameful, ugly*; αἰσχρῶς *shamefully*
 αἰσχύνω *make ugly*; pass. *be ashamed*
 αἰτέω *pray, beg*
 αἰτία, -ας, ἡ *cause, blame, responsibility*
 αἷτιος, -ά, -ον *blameworthy, responsible*
 αἰχμάλωτος, -ον *taken by the spear, captive, prisoner of war* (1008)
 ἄκανθα, -ής *thorn, prickly plant, backbone, spine* (492)
 ἀκέλευστος, -ον *unbidden* (71)
 ἄκμή, -ῆς, ἡ *prime, peak, flower, most fitting time, critical moment*
 ἄκμων, -ονος, ὁ *anvil* (443)
 ἀκοίτης, -ου, ὁ *husband* (166)
 ἄκος, -ους, τό *cure, remedy* (1111)
 ἀκουσίως *against the will* (670)
ἀκούω, ἀκούσομαι, ἤκουσα *hear, have something said of one, hear one-self called*
 ἄκρα, -ας, ἡ *highest point, hilltop, end, extremity, citadel* (442)
 ἀκριβής, -ές *exact, precise*, (367)
 ἄκρος, -α, -ον *topmost, on the tip*; ὄνυχας ἐπ' ἄκρους στάς *standing on tiptoe* (840); superl. ἀκρότατος (1233)
 ἀκτή, -ῆς, ἡ *shore, headland, promontory* (441)
 ἀλαίνω *wander around*
 ἀλαλάζω *raise a cry, cry aloud*
 ἄλαστος, -ον *not to be forgotten, inconsolable*
 ἀλάστωρ, -ορος, ὁ *avenging spirit* (979)
 ἀλγέω *feel pain* (1118)
 ἄλγιστος, -ή, -ον (superl. based on ἄλγος *pain, grief*) *most painful*
 ἀλητεύω *wander* (of beggars and exiles)
 ἀλήτης, -ου, ὁ *wanderer*
 Ἀλῖρρόθιος, -ου, ὁ *Halirrothius* ("sea-beaten"), son of Poseidon, killed by Ares for raping his daughter (1260)
 ἄλις (adv.) *enough, with moderation* (73)
 ἀλίσκομαι, aor. ἐάλων (athematic 2 aor.; stem ἄλ-) *be caught, be grasped* (as if passive of αἰρέω) (189)
ἄλλά *but*
 ἀλλάσσω, ἀλλάξω, ἥλλαξα *give in return, exchange*
ἄλλος, -η, -ον *another, other*
 ἀλλότριος, -ά, -ον *belonging to another, foreign*
 ἄλλως *besides, otherwise*

ἄλμα, -ατος, τό *leap, spring* (439)

ἄλουτος, -ον *unwashed* (1107)

ἄλοχος, -ου, ἡ *wife*

ἄλς, ἄλός, ἡ *the sea*

Ἄλφεός / Ἀλφειός *the river Alpheus*

ἄλωσις, -έως, ἡ *capture, conquest* (1024)

ἅμα *at once, at the same time*

ἀμαθία, -ας, ἡ *ignorance, lack of culture*

ἀμαξιτός, -οῦ, ἡ [ὁδός] *wagon track* (775)

ἀμαρτάνω *err, miss the mark, fail; lose* (+ gen.) (1036)

ἀμείβω, ἀμείψω, ἡμειψα *exchange (give or take in exchange), pass through, leave*

ἀμείνων, ἄμεινον *better* (comparative of ἀγαθός)

ἀμέτερος = ἡμετέρος *our*

ἀμέτρητος, -ον *immeasurable, countless* (433)

ἀμήχανος, -ον *without resource, helpless, impossible*

ἄμιλλα, -ής, ἡ *contest, conflict, desire, striving after* (95)

Ἀμμωνίς, gen. -ίδος (adj.) *of Ammon* (734)

ἀμοιβή, -ῆς, ἡ *repayment, requital* (for + gen.) (1147)

ἄμός, -ή, -όν = ἡμέτερος *our; my* (also ἄμός)

ἀμύνω *keep off, ward off, defend*

ἀμφήκης, -ες *two-edged, cutting both ways* (688)

ἄμφι (+ gen., dat., acc.) *around, near, about*

ἀμφιβάλλω *throw around, put on* (1231)

ἀμφιτίθημι, aor. ἀμφέθηκα *put around* (512)

ἀμφίτομος, -ον *two-edged* (164)

ἀμφοτέρως, -ά, -ον *both* (1306)

ἄμφω, -οιν *both*

ἄν = ἐάν *if*

ἄν conditional particle

ἀνά (before labials ἄμ) prep.+ acc. *up to, up along, over, through; ἀνά στόμα ἔχειν* (80) *to have constantly in the mouth (i.e., on one's lips); also + dat. on, upon*

ἀναγκάζω, aor. pass. ἠναγκάσθην *compel, put ἀνάγκη upon* (922)

ἀναγκάιος, -ά, -ον *constrained by force, indispensable, connected by blood* (293)

ἀνάγκη, -ῆς, ἡ *necessity ἀνάγκη [ἐστί] + infinitive: it is necessary*

ἀνάγω, -άξω *bring up, bring back* (from the dead) (126)

ἀνάδημα, -άτος, τό *hair band* (882)

ἀναίνομαι *shun, reject*

ἀναιρέω pf. mid. ἀνήρημαι *take up, annul, destroy* (608)

ἀναλίσκω aor. ἀνήλωσα *use up, spend, consume, destroy* (681)

ἀναμετρέω *measure back, measure out* (52)

ἀναμιμνήσκω, aor. ἀνέμνησα *remind* (504)

ἀνανδρία, -ας, ἡ *unmanliness, cowardice* (982)

ἄναξ, ἄνακτος, ὁ *king, lord*

ἀναπτύσσω pf. mid. ἀνέπτυγμαι *unfold, open* (357)

ἀναπτυχή, -ης, ἡ *opening* (868)

ἀνάπτω *make fast, kindle, light up* (801)

ἀναρρήγνυμι, aor. ἀνέρρηξα *break up, break open* (837 alt.)

ἀνασκευάζω, pf. mid. ἀνεσκεύασμαι *carry away, dismantle; pass. be bankrupt* (602)

ἀνασπάω, aor. ἀνέσπασα *draw up, pull up* (582)

ἄνασσα, -ής, ἡ *queen* (678)

ἀνάσσω *be king, be lord* (835)

ἀνατίθημι, -θήσω *attribute, ascribe* (1296)

ἄνδημα see ἀνάδημα

ἀνδρεία, -ας, ἡ *courage, brave spirit* (845)

ἀνδρεῖος, -ά, -ον *manly, masculine* (949)

ἀνέλπιστος, -ον *unhoped for, unexpected, hopeless* (570)

ἀνέορτος, -ον *without festival, not participating in festivals* (310)

ἄνευ (+ gen.) *without* (81)

ἀνέχω, aor. ἠνέσχον *hold up; mid. hold up what is one's own, hold oneself up, bear up, suffer, put up with*

ἄνῆρ, ἀνδρός, ὁ *husband, man*

ἀνθέω *blossom, bloom* (944)

ἄνθρωπος, -ού, ὁ / ἡ *person, human being, man*

ἀνίημι, aor. ἀνήκα / ἀνέϊμεν *send up, let go, loosen* (826)

ἀνιστορέω *ask about, make inquiry of* (830)

ἀνόνητος, -ον *without profit, in vain*

ἀνόσιος, -ον *unholy (of the dead), without funeral rites; adv. ἀνοσίως in an unholy way, without the rites of the dead*

ἀνσπάω see ἀνασπάω

ἀντεῖπον *deny* (361)

ἀντί (+ gen.) *instead of, at the price of, in return for*

ἀντιδίδωμι, aor. ἀντέδωκα *give in return, give instead of* (957)

ἀντίπρωρος, -ον *prow to prow, ready for action, face to face* (846)

ἀντιτίθημι, aor. ἀντέθηκα / ἀντέθεμεν *set against, set in opposition* (1049)

ἄντιτιμωρέομαι *take vengeance* (849)

ἀντιφεύγω *go into exile in turn* (1091)

ἀνυμνέω *proclaim by oracle* (1190)

ἄνω *up*

ἄξιος, -α, -ον *worthy, deserved* (ἄξιόν ἐστι *it is worthwhile*); adv. ἄξίως

ἄξιόω *think worthy, expect*

ἄξιωμα, -άτος, τό *honor, rank*: usually refers to high rank, but at 658 probably *low rank*

ἀοίδιμος, -ον *sung of, celebrated in song, won by song* (471)

ἄορ, ἄορος, τό *sword, weapon* (476)

ἀπαγγέλλω, fut. ἀπαγγελῶ aor. ἀπήγγειλα *report, bring news*

ἀπαίρω, aor. ἀπῆρα *lift off, carry away, depart* (774)

ἀπαλλάσσω, aor. pass. ἀπηλλάχθην, pf. m-p ἀπήλλαγμα *set free*; pass. *depart from, be removed from*

ἀπαλός, -ή, -όν *soft, tender* (1337)

ἀπαντάω *meet* (666)

ἀπαξιόω *disown, think unworthy* (256)

ἀπαρνέομαι *deny utterly*

ἀπάρχομαι, aor. ἀπηρξάμην *make a beginning* (esp. of a sacrifice), *offer* (91)

ἀπατάω *cheat, deceive* (938)

ἀπεικάζω, aor. pass. ἀπηκάσθην *represent, copy*; pass. *become like* (979)

ἄπειμι (εἰμί) *be away*

ἀπειρόδροσος, -ον *without dew, parched* (735)

ἀπέρχομαι, aor. ἀπῆλθον *go away* (223)

ἀπήνη, -ης, ἡ *wagon* (998)

ἄπιστος, -ον *not to be trusted, faithless* (350)

ἀπό *away from* (+ gen.)

ἀποδίδωμι, -δώσω *pay, render* (912)

ἀποζεύγνυμι, aor. pass. ἀπεζεύχθην *part, separate* (284)

ἀποικίζω, aor. ἀπόκισα *send away from home, banish* (1008)

ἄποινα, τά *punishment* (1181)

ἀποκτείνω, -κτενῶ *kill* (1094)

ἀπολείπω, -λείψω *leave behind, lose* (1310)

ἀπόλλυμι, 1 aor. ἀπώλεσα; 2 aor. mid ἀπώλόμην *destroy*; mid. *die, perish*

Ἄπόλλων, -ωνος, ὁ *Apollo*

ἀπορρήγνυμι, ἀπορρήξω *break off* (837)

ἀπωθέω *thrust off*

ἄρα *then, therefore*

ἄρα question particle asking for information, but not implying the answer expected.

ἀραρίσκω, pf. ἄραρα *fit together, fit well*; pf. *be fitted or furnished with* (948)
 ἀρβύλη, -ης, ἡ *boot, heavy shoe, half-boot* (of country people, travelers,
 hunters, goddesses, and women: Denniston) 532

Ἀργεῖος, -α, -ον *off from Argos*

Ἄργος, -ους, τό *Argos, the Argolid*

ἄργος, -ους, τό *plain* [see Strabo 8.6.9] (1)

ἀργός, -ον *idle, lazy, not working* (80)

ἄργυρος, -ον, ὁ *silver, money* (558)

Ἄρης, Ἄρεος, ὁ *Ares*

ἄρθρον, -ου, τό *joint* (842)

ἀριθμός, -οῦ, ὁ *number*

ἀριστεύς, -έως, ὁ mostly in pl. *those who excel, chiefs* (22)

ἄριστος, -ή, -ον *best, most excellent*

Ἀρκάς, -άδος, ὁ *Arcadian* (1273)

ἀρκέω, aor. ἤρκεσα *be enough* (1300)

ἄρκτος, -ου, ἡ *bear, the north* (733)

ἄρκυς, -υος, ἡ *net* (965)

ἄρμα, -ατος, τό *chariot* (320)

ἀρμόζω *fit together, join, betroth* (24)

ἀρνός, -οῦ, ὁ *lamb*

ἀροτήρ, -τήρος, ὁ *farmer* (104)

ἄρουρα, -ας, ἡ *plowland, farmland* (79)

ἀρπαγή, -ῆς, ἡ *prey*, (896)

ἀρπάζω, aor. ἤρπασα, pf. mid. ἤρπασμαι, aor. pass. ἤρπάσθην *seize, snatch up*

ἄρσην, -εν *male*

ἀρταμέω *tear to pieces, butcher* (816)

ἄρτι / ἀρτίως *just now*

ἀρχαῖος, -α, -ον *ancient, old*

ἀρχέτας, -ου, ὁ *ruler, leader, prince, general* (1149)

ἀρχή, -ῆς, ἡ *beginning*

ἀρχηγέτης, -ου, ὁ *first leader, author, founder* (891)

ἄρχω *begin, rule over* (+ gen.) (985)

ἄσημος, -ον *without mark, obscure* (749)

ἀσθενής -ές *without strength, weak, poor, needy, insignificant*

Ἀσίς, -ίδος fem. adj. *Asian*; pl. used as a noun, *Asian women* (315)

ἀσκέω *work, form by art, dress up* (1073)

ἄσκος, -οῦ, ὁ *skin, wineskin* (511)

ἄσοφος, -ον *unwise, foolish* (1302)

- ἀσπαίρω *gasp, struggle* (of the death throes; 843)
 ἄσπασμα, -ατος, τό *embraces* (596)
 ἀσπίς, -ίδος, ἡ *shield* (455)
 ἀσπιστής, -οῦ, ὁ *warrior, person armed with a shield* (443)
 ἄσπονδος, -ον *receiving no libations, without a truce, admitting no truce, implacable* (905)
 ἀστός, -οῦ, ὁ *citizen* (795)
 ἄστρον, -ου, τό *used in pl. the stars*
 ἄστυ, ἄστεως, τό *city, town*
 ἀταλός, -ή, -όν *tender, delicate* (699)
 ἀτερπής, -ές *joyless* (293)
 ἄτη, -ης, ἡ *ruin, delusion* (1307)
 ἀτιμάζω, pf. m-p ἡτίμασμαι *bring dishonor on, disenfranchise* (323)
 ἄτοκος, -ον *not having had a child* (1127)
 Ἄτρεϊδης, -ου, ὁ *Atrides, son of Atreus* (Agamemnon, Menelaus); pl. *Atreidae*
 Ἄτρεΰς, -έως, ὁ *Atreus* (father of Agamemnon and Menelaus) (721)
αὖ *again*
 αὐθάδης, -ες *stubborn, surly, willful* (1117)
αὖθις *again, after this* (597)
 αὐλή, -ῆς, ἡ *hall* (168)
 αὐλιζομαι *lie in the courtyard, live, be housed, spend the night, be stalled or stabled like an animal* (304)
 Αὔλις, -ίδος, ἡ *Aulis* (1022)
 αὕξω *increase* (718)
 αὔρα, -ας, ἡ *breeze*
 ἀϋτέω *cry, shout, call on*
αὐτός, -ή, -ό *-self; with article: same; in oblique cases: him, her, it, etc.*
 αὐτοῦ, αὐτῆς (ἐαυτοῦ, ἐαυτῆς) (of) *himself, herself*
 αὐτουργός, -οῦ, ὁ *one who works his land himself, one who works for himself*
 αὐτόχειρ, αὐτόχειρος (gen.) *with one's own hand* (1160)
 αὐχέω *boast, claim, take pride in, be confident in* (939)
 αὐχὴν, -ένος, ὁ *neck* (1288)
 ἀφαιρέω *take away* (928)
 ἄφαντος, -ον *made invisible, blotted out, secret, obscure* (1191)
 ἀφίημι, pf. mid. ἄφειμαι *let go, dismiss*
ἀφικνέομαι, aor. ἀφικόμην, perf. ἀφίγμαι *arrive*
 ἀφίστημι trans. *remove*; intrans. *stand away, desist* (66)
 Ἀχαιίς, -ίδος, ἡ *Achaian* (land) (1285)

ἄχέτας, -ου, ὁ [= ἡχέτης] *clear-sounding, shrill, chirping, musical* (< ἡχώ)
used as noun or adj. (151)

ἄχθος, -ους, τό *burden* (108)

Ἀχιλλεύς, -έως, ὁ (acc. Ἀχιλῆ) *Achilles, Achilleus*

ἄχος, -ους, τό *pain, distress*

ἄχρεϊος, -ον *useless* (883)

ἄως (gen. ἀοῦς) [= ἡώς, ἔως] *dawn* (730)

βάθρον, -ου, τό *step, base*; pl. *foundation*

βαίνω, βήσομαι, ἔβην, βέβηκα *step, go*

βάλλω, aor. ἔβαλον, pf. βέβληκα, pf. m-p ἐκβέβλημαι, aor. pass. ἐκβλήθην
throw, fling

βάρβαρος, -ον *non-Greek, foreign* (7)

βάρος, -ους, τό *burden, weight* (1287)

βαρύς, βαρεῖα, βαρύν *heavy, severe, stern*

βασίλεια -ας, ἡ *queen*

βασίλειος, -α, -ον *royal* (187)

βασιλεύς, -έως, ὁ *king*

βασιλεύω *be king* (12)

βασιλικός, -ή, -όν *of a king, royal*

βάσις, -εως, ἡ *step, footprint* (532)

βαστάζω *carry, support* (696)

βέβαιος, -ον *certain, secure*

βέλος, -ους, τό *something thrown, weapon, arrow, sword*

βελτίων, -ον *better* (1061)

βῆμα, -άτος, τό *step*, (954)

βίος, -ου, ὁ *life, livelihood, living*

βίोटος, -ού, ὁ *life* (1352)

βλάπτω *harm* (974)

βλέπω, aor. ἔβλεψα *look, see, be alive*

βλέφαρον, -ού, τό *eyelid, eye*

βοή, βοῆς, ἡ (βοά) *loud cry, shout*

βοηδρόμος, -ον *giving aid, bringing help* (963)

βόλος, -ου, ὁ *cast* (of a net), *catch* (of fish) (582)

βορά, -ᾶς, ἡ *food* (of animals), *simple food*

βόσκημα, -άτος, τό *flock* (494)

βόστρυχος, -ού, ὁ *curl, lock of hair*

βουθυτέω *sacrifice or butcher cattle*

βούλευμα, -άτος, τό *resolution, purpose*

βουλεύω *plan*

βουλή, -ῆς, ἡ *wish, will, design* (162)

βούλομαι *wish*

βοῦς, βοός ὁ, ἡ *bull, ox, cow* (79)

βουσφαγέω *slaughter cattle* (627)

βουφορβός, -οῦ, ὁ *herdsman, cowboy* (252)

βραχύς, -εῖα, -ύ *short*

βρέτας, -εος, τό *image, a wooden image of a god* (1254)

βρέφος, -ους, τό *newborn baby* (1129)

βρέχω, aor. pass. ἐβρέχθην (326) *wet, shower, drench; pass. be drunk*

βρίθω, pf. act. βέβριθα *be heavy, be weighed down* (305)

βροντή, -ῆς, ἡ *thunder* (748)

βρότειος, -ον *human, mortal* (741)

βροτός, -οῦ, ὁ *mortal, human being*

βρόχος, -ου, ὁ *noose* (154)

βύρσα, -ης, ἡ *skin, hide* (824)

βωμός, -οῦ, ὁ *altar*

γαῖα, -ας, ἡ / Γαῖα *earth, land /Earth, Gaia*

γαλακτοπότης, -ου, ὁ *milk-drinker* [Herodotus 1.216; 4. 186] (169)

γαμέω, aor. ἔγημα *marry*

γάμος, -ου, ὁ *marriage*

γάρ *for; yes; καὶ γάρ in fact*

γαυρόομαι *take pride in, exult in* (322)

γε *at least, yes*

γεγωνίσκω *cry aloud, shout, proclaim* (809)

γείνομαι, aor ἐγεινάμην *give birth, bear, father*

γενναῖος, -α, -ον *high-born, noble, true to one's birth*

γένος, -ους, τό *birth, kinship* (37)

γένυς, -υος, ἡ *jaw, cheek, face*

γεραιός, -ά, -όν *elderly, old*

γεραίρω *honor, reward* (712)

γέρας, -αος, τό *prize of honor* (1003)

γέρων, -οντος, ὁ *old man; as adj. elderly*

γῆ, γῆς, ἡ / Γῆ *earth, land / Earth*

γῆρυς, -υος, ἡ *voice* (754)

γηρύω *sing, cry* (1327)

γίγνομαι, γενήσομαι, ἐγενόμην, γέγονα (participle: γεγώς) *come into being, become, prove to be, turn out to be*

γινώσκω, aor. ἔγνων, pf. ἔγνωκα, aor. pass. ἐγνώσθην *know*
 γλῶσσα, -ήs, ἡ *tongue, talk*
 γνώμη, -ης, ἡ *means of knowing, thought, judgment, intelligence*
 γνωρίζω, γνωρίω *make known, come to know* (630)
 γνωρίμως *intelligibly* (946)
 γονεύς, -έως, ὁ *parent* (257)
 γόνιμος, -ον *productive, of a parent, life-giving* (1209)
 γόνος, -ου, ὁ *offspring, child* (450)
 γόνυ, γόνατος, τό *knee* (492)
γόος, -ου, ὁ *wailing, sound of grief*
 Γοργώ, Γοργόνος, ἡ *Gorgon*
 γοργώψ, -ῶπος (gen.) *fierce-eyed, gorgon-faced* (1257)
 γοῦν *at least*
 γραμμή, -ῆs, ἡ *line, starting or finish line* (956)
 γύης, -ου, ὁ *measure of land for plowing, field* (79)
 γυμνός, -ή, -όν *naked, unclothed* (308)
 γυμνόω *strip naked, bare* (823)
γυνή, γυναικός, ἡ *woman, wife*

δαί form of δῆ used in questions with an interrogative to show interest or surprise

δαίμων, -ονος, ὁ / ἡ *spirit, fortune*
 δαίς, δαιτός, ἡ *meal, banquet*
 δάκνω *bite, sting, cause pain or grief*
 δάκρυ, -υος, τό *tear* (181)
 δάκρυον, -ίου, τό *tear*
 δακρυτός, -όν *to be wept over* (1182)
 δακρύω *weep* (658)
 δάμαρ, δάμαρτος, ἡ *wife*
 δανεισμός, -οῦ, ὁ *money-lending, borrowing* (858)
 δαπάνη, -ης, ἡ *cost, money spent* (429)
 Δάρδανος, -ίου, ὁ *Dardanus, founder of Dardania, a city on Mt. Ida, and forefather of the eponymous founders of Troy, Tros and Ilus* (5)
δέ *and, but*
 δέδοικα see δεῖδω
δεῖ *it is necessary*
 δεῖγμα, -ατος, τό *sample, pattern, evidence* (1174)
 δεῖδω, aor. ἔδεισα, pf. (with pres. meaning) δέδοικα *fear*
 δείκνυμι, aor. ἔδειξα *show*

δείλαιος, -ά, -ον *sorry, wretched* (183)

δειμα, -ατος, τό *fear*

δειμαίνω *be afraid* (834)

δεινός, -ή, -όν *terrible*

δέκα *ten* (654)

δέκατος, -ή, -ον *tenth* (1126)

δεκέτης, -ες *lasting ten years* (1152)

δελφίς, -ίνος, ό *dolphin* (435)

δέμας, τό (only nom. and acc.) *body, form*

δεξιός, -ά, -όν *right* (χείρ) *δεξιά right hand*

δέρη, -ης, ή *neck*

δέρκομαι, pf. δέδορκα *see*

δέσποινα, -ης, ή *mistress, lady of the house*

δεσπότης, -ου, ό *master*

δέχομαι, δέξομαι, έδεξάμην *accept, receive*

δέω *see* δεῖ

δή *indeed, to be sure*

δηθε stronger form of δή *I suppose* (268)

δηλος, -ή, -ον *plain, clear* (660)

δημότης, -ου, ό *townsman* (643)

δητα *then, now, of course; in answers or to correct the previous speaker: yes indeed; no rather*

διά *through, in the midst of (+ gen.), through, on account of (+ acc.)*

διάβροχος, -ον *wet through, soaked* (503)

διαγράφω *write through, strike off, draw a line through* (1073)

διάδρομος, -ον *running through, wandering, lawless* (1156)

διαίρέω *take apart, divide* (839)

διακναίω, aor. διέκναισα *scrape through, wear away* (1307)

διαλαμβάνω, aor. διέλαβον *grasp separately, distinguish* (373)

διαμάω, aor. διήμησα *cut through, scrape, slash* (1023)

διαμεθίημι (aor. -ήκα, -είμεν) *leave off, give up* (978)

διανύω, aor. διήνυσα *bring to an end, accomplish, complete, finish (a race)* (825)

δίανυλος, -ού, ό *double pipe, double course* (825)

δίγονος, -ον *twice-born, double, twin* (1179)

διδάσκω *teach* (376)

δίδωμι, δώσω, έδωκα (έδομεν), δέδωκα *give*

διέπω *manage, conduct; mid. be engaged in* (146v L)

δικάζω *judge, determine on* (1094)

δίκαιος, -α, -ον *just*

δίκη, -ης, ἡ / Δίκη *justice, penalty, judgment, doom / Justice*; δίδωμι δίκην *requite, pay* (the penalty)

δίκροτος, -ον *double-beating*, [a road] *for two carriages, double rutted* (775)

Δίοθεν *sent from Zeus* (736)

διόλλυμι, aor. διώλεσα *destroy utterly*

Διόνυσος, -ου, ὁ *Dionysus* (497)

Διόσκοροι, -ων, οἱ *the sons of Zeus, Dioscuri* (Castor and Polydeuces) (1239)

διπλοῦς, -ῆ, -οῦν *double, twofold, bent over double* (492)

δίπτυχος, -ον *double, twofold, pl. two* (1238)

δίς *twice, doubly*

δισσός, -ή, -όν *double, twofold* (825)

διώκω *chase, pursue* (574)

δμωή, -ῆς, ἡ *female slave captured in war* (316)

δμῶς, -ώς, ὁ *slave taken in war*

δοκέω, δόξω, ἔδοξα *think, seem*

δοκά, -οῦς, ἡ [= δόκησις] *opinion, impression, fancy* (747)

δόλιος, -α, -ον *deceitful*

δόλος, -ου, ὁ *bait, trick, deceit*

δόμος, -ου, ὁ *home, house* (often in pl. of one house)

δόξα, -ης, ἡ *reputation* (1013)

δόξασμα, -άτος, τό *opinion* (383)

δορίπνοος, -ον *toiling with the spear* (479)

δόρυ, δόρατος, τό *spear*

δορυφορος, -ου, ὁ *spear-bearer, bodyguard* (616)

δοῦλος, -ου, ὁ *slave*

δοχή, -ῆς, ἡ *receptacle, holder*; δοχαὶ χολῆς *gallbladder* (828)

δράκων, -οντος, ὁ *serpent* (1256)

δραμεῖν see τρέχω *run* (a course or a risk) (1264)

δράω, δράσω, ἔδρασα, pf. m-p δέδραμαι *do*

δρέπω *pluck, pick* (778)

δρομεύς, -έως, ὁ *runner* (824)

δρόμος, -ου, ὁ *course, race* (474)

δρύοχα, τά *woods* (1163)

δρύπτω *tear, strip* (150)

δύναμαι, δυνήσομαι *be able, can*

δύο, δυοῖν (gen. and dat.) *two*

δυσάρεστος, -ον *hard to please, implacable, cranky* (904)

δυσγενής, -ές *low born* (363)
 δυσγνωσία, -ας, ἡ *difficulty of knowing* (767)
 δυσδαίμων, -ον *unfortunate, ill-starred* (199)
 δυσείματος, -ον *ill-clothed* (1107)
 δυσθνήσκω *die a bad/slow death* (843)
 δυσμενής, -ές *ill-meaning, hostile* (847)
 δυσσεβής, -ές *ungodly, impious*
 δύστηνος, -ον *unhappy*
 δυστυχέω *be unfortunate* (605)
 δυστυχής, -ές *unhappy, unfortunate*
 δυστυχία, -ας, ἡ *bad luck* (741)
 δύω / δύνω, -δύσω, ἔδυν *sink, put on (clothes), enter, come over/upon*
δῶμα, δώματος, τό *house*; very commonly in the plural for a single household.
 Δωρικός -ή, -όν *Doric, Dorian* (836)
 Δωρίς, -ίδος (gen.) fem. adj. *Dorian* (819: *Dorian knife*)

ἔα a cry of surprise: *ah, alas, huh*
 ἔάν (ἤν) *if* (used in future less vivid and present general conditions)
 ἑαυτοῦ, ἑαυτῆς (αὐτοῦ, αὐτῆς) (of) *himself, herself*
 ἔαω, inf. ἔδω *permit, let go*
 ἐγγενής, -ές *inborn, kindred, of the same race or country* (313)
 ἐγείρω *wake up, rouse* (125)
 ἔγχος, -ους, τό *sword* (696)
ἐγώ, ἐμοῦ (μου), ἐμοί (μοι), ἐμέ (με) *I, my, me*
 ἔδρα, -ας, ἡ *seat, place, dwelling*
 ἕζομαι *sit*
 ἐθέλω *wish, be willing*
εἰ *if*
 εἰδέναι < οἶδα *know*
 εἶδον *I saw* [aor. of ὁράω]
 εἶδος, -ους, τό *form, appearance* (1062)
 εἶδολον, -ου, τό *image* (1283)
 εἶεν *very well, well then, okay*
 εἴθε introduces a wish: *if only!*
 εἰκῇ *without plan, at random* (379)
 ἐλίκτός, -ον [ἐλίκτός] *rolled, whirling* (180)
 εἰλίσσω [ἐλίσσω] *turn around, roll, hurry* (437)
εἶλον, aor. of αἰρέω

- εἶμι** *go* [as future of ἐρχομαι] imperatives: ἴθι (2 sg.), ἵτω (3 sg.)
εἰμί, ἔσομαι *be*; emphatic: *exist, be alive*
 εἰνάλιος, -α, -ον *in/of the sea* (450)
 εἴπερ *if in fact*
εἶπον / εἶπας *say, order, promise, offer, propose*
 εἴργω, εἴρξω *keep off, restrain*
εἰς / ἐς *into, to, toward, against, in regard to, as far as* (+ acc.)
εἷς, μία, ἓν *one*
 εἰσακούω, aor. εἰσήκουσα *hear, listen to, give ear to* (416)
 εἰσαφικνέομαι, pf. -αφίγμαι *come/go into, arrive at* (413)
 εἰσβαίνω, ἐσέβην *go in or on* (775)
 εἰσβάλλω, εἰσέβαλον *put into* (79)
 εἰσδέρχομαι, pf. εἰσδέδορκα *look at* (558)
 εἰσδοχή, -ῆς, ἡ *reception* (396)
 εἴσειμι (εἶμι) *come/go into*
 εἰσέρχομαι, aor. ἐσῆλθον *go into*
εἰσοράω, εἰσόψομαι, εἰσείδον *look upon*
 εἴσοψις, -έως, ἡ *looking into, spectacle* (1085)
 εἰσπορεύω *lead into, go into* (1285)
εἴσω (ἔσω) *inside, within* (+ gen.)
 εἶτα *after that, next, then*
 εἴτε *whether* (896)
ἐκ (ἐξ) (+ gen.) *from, out of, by, as a result of, after* (with a sense of change);
 ἐκ του; = *why, for what reason?* (246)
 ἐκάς *far, far off, far away from* (+ gen.) (246)
 ἕκαστι *on account of*
 ἐκβαίνω, aor. ἐξέβην *go off*
ἐκβάλλω, aor. ἐξέβαλον, pf. m-p ἐκβέβλημαι, aor. pass. ἐξεβλήθην *throw out, let fall, send out; intr. go out, branch off*
 ἔκγονος, -ον *descended from; as noun descendant, son, grandson*
 ἐκδέρω, aor. ἐξέδειρα *skin, strip off the skin* (824)
 ἐκδίδωμι, fut. ἐκδώσω *give out, give away* (in marriage) (249)
 ἐκεῖ *there* (924)
ἐκεῖνος, -η, -ο *that; he, she, it; like Lat. ille, it is used to denote famous persons*
 ἐκκλέπτω, aor. ἐξέκλεψα *steal*
 ἐκκομίζω *carry out, carry away* (721)
 ἐκκρεμαννυμι *hang from* (950)
 ἐκλείπω, aor. -ἐλιπον *leave out, omit, abandon, be eclipsed, cease*

- ἐκλιμπάνω *leave off* (909)
 ἐκλύω *release* (1353)
 ἔκμακτρον, -ού, τό *image, impress* (from modeling in wax or clay) (535)
 ἐκμοχθέω *work out, achieve with exertion* (307)
 ἐκπέμπω, aor. ἐξέπεμψα *send out* (1283)
 ἐκπέτομαι, aor. ἐξεπτόμην *fly out/away* (944)
 ἐκπίμπλημι, aor. participle ἐκπλήσας *complete* (1290)
 ἐκπίπτω *fall out, go into exile from* (541)
 ἔκπλεθος, -ον *six plethra long* (883)
 ἐκπνέω *breathe out, expire* (1220)
 ἐκποτάομαι, pf. ἐκπεπτόταμαι *fly out/forth, be lifted up* (177)
 ἐκπράσσω, aor. ἐξεπραξα *bring about, do* (1191)
 ἐκπυνθάνομαι, aor. ἐξεπυνθόμην *search out, make inquiry about, hear of* (109)
 ἐκσφζω, aor. ἐξέσωσα *keep safe*
 ἐκτείνω *stretch out, lay out, reach out* (823)
 ἐκτίνω, ἐκτείσω, aor. ἐξέτεισα *pay off, exact full payment* (260)
 ἐκτρέφω, aor. ἐξέθρεψα *bring up from childhood* (488)
 Ἑκτωρ, -ορος, ὁ *Hector* (468)
 ἐκφέρειω, aor. ἐξήνεγκον *carry out, bring out* (871)
 ἐκφοιτάω *go out* (320)
 ἐκφύω, aor. participle ἐκφύς *generate; intrans. be born of* (206)
 ἐκών, ἐκοῦσα, ἐκόν [ἐκοντ-] *willing, willingly* (1065)
 ἐλαύνω, aor. ἤλασα *drive, harass, plague, strike*
 ἐλελίζω *whirl around, vibrate, quiver* [843 alt. Schenkl]
 Ἑλένη, -ης, ἡ *Helen*
 ἐλεύθερος, -ά, -ον *free*
 Ἑλλάς, -άδος, ἡ *Hellas, Greece* (1066)
 ἐλλείπω, pf. ἐλλέλοιπα *leave in/behind* (609)
 Ἑλλην, -ηνος, ὁ *Greek (man)*
 Ἑλληνίς, -ίδος, ἡ *Greek (woman)*
 ἐλπίζω, aor. ἤλπισα *hope*
 ἐλπίς, -ίδος, ἡ *hope, expectation*
 ἐμβαίνω, aor. ἐνέβην *step on*
 ἐμβάλλω, aor. ἐνέβαλον *put upon, put in, strike with, throw into, embark upon*
 ἐμβατεύω *step in/on, dwell in*
 ἐμμανής, -ές *mad, frantic* (1253)
 ἔμολον (aor. of βλώσκω) *went, came*

ἐμός, -ή, ὄν *my, mine*

ἔμπεδος, -ον *in its place, steady, lasting* (399)

ἐμπίμπλημι, aor. pass. participle ἐμπλησθεῖς *fill full of* (430)

ἐμφανής, -ές *apparent, plain, open, palpable*

ἐν (εἶν) *in, on, among, in the category of* ; instrumental: *with, by, clothed in* (+ dat.)

ἐναλος, -ον *in/on/of the sea*

ἐναντίος, -α, -ον *opposite*

ἐνάρχομαι, pf. m-p ἐνήργμαι *begin with, begin a sacrifice* (1142)

ἐνδεής, -ές *lacking, in need of* (+ gen.) (356)

ἐνδικος, -ον *just* (1096); ἐνδίκως *justly* (1050)

ἐνδον *inside*

ἐνείμι (εἰμί) *be in*

ἐνεκεν (+ gen.) *for the sake of, on account of* (742)

ἐνθα *where, there*

ἐνθάδε *here*

ἐνθεν *from there, after that*

ἐνθένδε *from here*

ἐνθεος, -ον *full of god, inspired* (1032)

ἐνθρόσκω *leap upon/into* (327)

ἐννέπω [ἐνέπω] *tell, speak, bid*

ἐννοέω *think of, have in mind* (639)

ἐνοπή, -ῆς, ἡ *cry, scream, war cry*

ἐνταῦθα *there, then* (1264)

ἐντεῦθεν *from here/there* (1247)

ἐντός *in, inside, within* (+ gen.) (usually follows its noun)

ἐνυβρίζω, aor. ἐνύβρισα *insult (someone) in (something)* (68)

ἐνυδρος, -ον *with water, holding water, watery* (733)

ἐξ (+ gen.) *from, out of, by, as a result of, after*

ἐξαίρετος, -ον *taken out, chosen* (1002)

ἐξαιρέω, aor. ἐξεῖλον *take away*

ἐξαλύσκω [= ἐξαλέομαι] , aor. ἐξήλυξα *beware of, escape* (219)

ἐξαμαρτάνω, aor. ἐξήμαρτον *do wrong, make a mistake* (408)

ἐξανίστημι, aor. ἐξάνεστην *rise*

ἐξαρτύω, ἐξαρτύσω *get ready*

ἐξασκέω *adorn* (1071)

ἐξεγείρω, aor. ἐξήγειρα *awaken, wake up* (41)

ἐξείμι (εἶμι) *come out* (1316)

ἐξεῖπον aor. *speak out* (907)

- ἐξελέγχω* *bring to the test; pass. be blamed* (36)
ἐξέλκτεον *one must drag along* (491)
ἐξεργάζομαι, pf. *ἐξείργασμαι* *work out, accomplish* (1083)
ἔξεστι *it is possible* (1084)
ἐξευτρεπίζω *prepare* (75)
ἐξιάομαι *cure, make amends for* (1024)
ἐξικνέομαι, aor. *ἐξικόμην* *reach, arrive at, attain* (+ gen.) (612)
ἐξομόργνυμαι, aor. *ἐξωμορξάμην* *wipe off (oneself)* (502)
ἐξορμάω, pf. m-p *ἐξώρμημαι* *set out, start from*
ἐξύφασμα, -ατος, τό *a finished piece of weaving* (539)
ἔξω *out of* (+ gen.)
ἔξωθεν *outside*
ἔοικα *be like, seem* (636)
ἐπαίδω *sing to, charm, sing (as) an incantation, sing in addition to* (864v)
ἐπαινέω aor. *ἐπῆνεσα* *praise* (891)
ἐπαρήγω *come to aid, help* (1350)
ἐπεγκελεύω *give orders to* (1224)
ἐπεί *when, since*
ἐπειδή *since, after* (20)
ἐπεισβάλλω, aor. *ἐπεισέβαλον* *throw into besides, add into* (498)
ἐπεισφρέω, pf. *ἐπεισέφρηκα* *let in onto* (1033)
ἔπειτα *then, after that*
ἐπί *upon, over, in charge of* (+ gen.); *in, on, for, over, on the condition of, depending on, among* (+ dat.); *to, against, for* (of time) (+ acc.)
ἐπιβάλλω, aor. *ἐπέβαλον* *throw upon* (1221)
ἐπιβώμιος, -ον *on/at the altar* (715)
ἐπιδείκνυμι, *ἐπιδείζω* *exhibit, display* (856)
ἐπίκουρος, -ον *helping, aiding; as a noun ally* (138)
ἐπικουφίζω *lighten, relieve of* (+ gen.) (72)
ἐπίλογος, -ου, ὁ *conclusion, peroration* (719)
ἐπίορκος, -ον *swearing falsely, perjuring* (1355)
ἐπίσημος, -ον *having a mark on it, remarkable, conspicuous* (936)
ἐπίσταμαι *understand, know* (1028)
ἐπιστέλλω *send to, send in a message, send a message* (333)
ἐπισφάζω, aor. *ἐπέσφαξα* *slaughter over*
ἐπίσχω *hold toward; restrain, wait, leave off*
ἐπιφέρω, aor. *ἐπήνεγκον* *bring upon, confer upon, mid. bring as a dowry* (1089)
ἐποικτίρω *have compassion for, take pity on* (545)

†ἐπορθοβοάω / ἐπορθοβοάω *cry aloud at dawn/raise high the shout* (142)

ἔπος, -ους, τό *word*

ἐπώνυμος, -ον *named after* (1275)

ἐρατός, -ή, -όν *beloved* (718)

ἐργάζομαι, aor. εἰργασάμην *work, perform*

ἐργάτης, -ου, ὁ *worker* (75)

ἔργον, -ου, τό *deed, work, function*

ἔρδω, ἔρξω *work, do* (1058)

ἐρείδω, aor. ἤρεισα *prop* (898)

ἐρετμόν, -οῦ, τό *oar*

ἐρημία, -ας, ἡ *desolation* (510)

ἐρίπνη, -ης, ἡ *crag* (210)

ἔρις, -ιδος, ἡ *strife* (1282)

ἔρκος, -ους, τό *enclosure, fence* (155)

ἐρμηνεύς, -έως, ὁ *interpreter, expounder, spokesperson* (333)

Ἑρμῆς, -οῦ, ὁ *Hermes* (462)

ἔρομαι [εἴρομαι], aor. ἠρόμην *ask*

ἔρος, -ου, ὁ *love, desire* (poetic form of ἔρως, 297)

ἔροτις (dialect form of ἐόρτη), ἡ *feast, festival* (625)

ἔρπω, impf. εἶρπον *creep*

ἔρρω *go (to hell)* (952)

ἐρυμνός, -ή, -ον *fortified, strong, steep, sheer*

ἔρχομαι, aor. ἦλθον (ἦλυθον) *come, go*

ἐρῶ (aor. εἶπον), pf. m-p εἴρημαι, aor. pass. ἐρρήθην *will say, say*

εἰς [= εἰς] *into, to, toward, against, with regard to (+ acc.)*

εἶς- see under εἰς-

ἐσθλός, -ή -όν *noble, good*

ἔσπερος, -ον *of evening, western* (731)

ἐστία, -ας, ἡ *hearth* (205)

ἐσχάρα, -ας, ἡ *hearth, altar* (801)

ἔσω = εἴσω *inside*

ἕτερος, -ά, -ον *other; different*

ἔτι *still, yet*

ἔτοιμος, -ή, -ον *ready* (796)

ἔτυμος, (-ή) -ον *true, real* (818)

εὖ *well*

εὐαμερία, -ας, ἡ *fine weather, happiness* (197)

εὐανδρία, -ας, ἡ *abundant supply of men, manliness, manly spirit* (367)

- εὐάρμοστος, -ον *well-adapted, accommodating* (702)
 Εὐβοίς, -ίδος (gen.) *Euboean* (442)
 εὐγένεια, -άς, ἡ *nobility* (of birth), *high status*
εὐγενής, -ές *noble, well-born*
 εὐδαιμονέω *be happy, be prosperous*
 εὐδαιμονία, -ας, ἡ *happiness, prosperity* (995)
 εὐδαίμων, -ον *happy, fortunate*
 εὔδω *sleep*
 εὐθαρσής, -ές *courageous* (526)
 εὐθύς, -εῖα, -ὺ *straight, direct*
 εὐκρότητος, -ον *well-wrought, well-welded* (819)
 εὐλογία, -ας, ἡ *good language, praise, blessing* (719v, Wecklein)
 εὐμενής, -ές *well-disposed, friendly*
 εὐνέτης, -ου, ὁ *companion in bed, husband*
 εὐνή, -ῆς, ἡ *bed*
 εὐπρεπής, -ες *becoming*
 εὔρημα, -άτος, τό *something found, unexpected gain, a piece of good luck*
 (606)
εὐρίσκω, aor. ἤρπον, aor. pass. ἠρέθη *find*
 εὐσέβεια, -άς, ἡ *reverence* (254)
 εὐσεβής, -ές *reverent, pious*
 εὐτρεπής, -ές *ready, prepared* (689)
 εὐτυχέω *be lucky*
 εὐτυχής, -ές *lucky*
 εὐχή, -ῆς, ἡ *prayer, wish, vow* (196)
 εὔχομαι *pray*
 εὐψυχία, -ας, ἡ *courage* (390)
 ἐφάπτομαι, aor. ἐφηψάμην *lay hold of, grasp, touch, claim* (1225)
 ἐφεδρεύω *sit, rest upon* (55)
 ἐφ᾽ ἑστίος, -ον *by one's house, of the house* (216)
 ἐφευρίσκω, aor. pass. ἐφηυρέθη *find out, discover* (952)
 ἐφίστημι, 2 aor. ἐπίστην *stand over* (706)
 ἔχθρα, -ας, ἡ *hatred*
 ἐχθρός, -ά, -ον *hostile*; as a noun *enemy, hater* ἐχθίων, ἔχθιστος
ἔχω (impf. εἶχον), ἔξω, ἔσχον *have, hold, take* (in marriage), *hold back,*
wear; with adv. *be* (in such a condition)
 ἐῴος, -α, -ον *in the morning, at dawn* (786)
 Ἑως *Dawn, Eos* (102)

ζάω *live*

ζεύγνυμι, pf. mid. ἔζευγμαι, aor. pass. ἐζεύχθην *yoke, fasten, join*

Ζεύς, gen. Διός, dat. Δί, voc. Ζεῦ *Zeus*

ζητέω *seek*

ζόη, ζόας, ἡ [= ζωή] *life, existence* (121)

ζωπυρέω *kindle into flame, set fire to* (1121)

ἤ *or ἢ . . . ἢ either . . . or*

ἦ *surely*

ἦβη, -ης, ἡ *youth, prime* (20)

ἡγεμών, -όνος, ὁ *leader, guide* (669)

ἡγέομαι *think, consider*

ἤδη *now, already*

ἡδομαι, aor. ἥσθην *enjoy oneself*

ἡδονή, -ῆς, ἡ *pleasure*

ἡδύθροος, -ον *sweet-sounding* (703)

ἡδύς, -εῖα, -ύ *sweet*; superlative: ἥδιστος

ἦθος, -ους, τό *custom, bearing, character*; pl. *traits*

ἥκιστος, -ή, -ον *least*; as adv. ἥκιστα *least, not at all* (1012)

ἦκω, ἦξω *have come, reach a point, come out*

Ἥλέκτρα, -ας, ἡ *Elektra, Electra*

ἦλθον < ἔρχομαι

ἦλιξ, -ίκος (gen.) *of the same age* (560)

ἦλιος, -ου, ὁ (ἄλιος, Doric, ἄέλιος, Aeolic) *the sun*

ἦμαρ, ἡματος, τό *day*

ἡμάχθην aor. pass. of αἱμάσσω *make bloody* (574)

ἡμέρα, -ας, ἡ *day*

ἦν [= εἰάν] *if*

ἡνίκα *when*

ἦπαρ, ἥπατος, τό *liver* (688)

Ἥρα, -ας, ἡ *Hera*

ἥσσω, ἥσσω *worse* (1078)

Ἥφαιστος, -ου, ὁ *Hephaistos, Hephaestus* (444)

θάλαμος, -ου, ὁ *chamber, bedroom* (132)

θαλερός, -ά, -όν *fresh, blossoming* (20)

θάλος, -ους, τό *child, shoot, branch* (15)

θανάσιμος, -ον *deadly, fatal*

θάνατος, -ου, ὁ *death*

- θάπτω**, θάψω *bury* (1280)
θαρσέω *be brave* (1319)
θάσσω, ᾠον *compar. of ταχύς more quickly, faster* (824)
θαῦμα, ᾶτος, τό *marvel, wonder* (284)
θαυμάζω, θαυμάσομαι, ἐθαύμασα *wonder at, be surprised, honor, pay respect to*
θεά, -ᾱς, ἡ *goddess*
θεῖος, ᾶ, -ον *divine, sacred* (256)
θέλω [= ἐθέλω] *wish*
θέμις, -ιστος, ἡ *right*
θεόπυρος, -ον *kindled by the gods* (732)
θεός, -οῦ, ὁ / ἡ *god*
θεραπεία, -ας, ἡ *service, attendance* (744)
θεραπεύω *be an attendant, do service, court, respect, care for* (by a physician) (996)
θεράπων, -οντος, ὁ *slave, attendant* (717)
θερμαίνω *heat, cause to grow hot* (402)
θερμός, -ή, -όν *hot*
θεσπίζω, aor. ἐθέσπισα *foretell, prophesy* (971)
Θεσσαλός (masc. adj.) *Thessalian*
Θέτις, -ιδος, ἡ *Thetis*
θήγω, pf. m-p τέθηγμαι *sharpen, whet* (1142)
θῆλυς, ᾶ, -ια, -υ *female*
θήρ, -ός, ὁ *wild animal* (896)
θησαύρισμα, ᾶτος, τό *treasure* (497)
θησαυρός, -οῦ, ὁ *store* (565)
θῆσσα, fem. of θής *worker, laborer* (the lowest order of free men); used as adj. *belonging to the hired hands* (205)
θιγγάνω, aor. ἔθιγον *touch*
θνήσκω, θανοῦμαι, ἔθανον, τέθνηκα *die, be killed*
θνητός, (-ή), -όν *mortal*
θoinάω, θoinάσομαι *feast* (836)
θοῖνη, -ης, ἡ *meal, feast*
θρέμμα, -ατος, τό *nursling, creature* (495)
θρήνημα, ᾶτος, τό *dirge, lament* (215)
θριγκός, -οῦ, ὁ *topmost course of stones, coping* (1150)
θρίξ, τριχός, ἡ *hair*
θρόνος, -ου, ὁ *armchair, seat* (315)
θρυλέω *babble, chatter, repeat over and over* (910)

θυγάτηρ, -τρός, ἡ *daughter*

Θυέστης, -ου, ὁ *Thyestes*, father of Aigisthos

θυηπολέω *perform a sacrifice*

θυμέλη, -ης, ἡ *hearth, place of burning*, esp. *place of sacrifice, altar, brazier* (713)

θυμός, -οῦ, ὁ *spirit*

θυμόω *anger, provoke*

θύος, -ους, τό *sacrifice* (1141)

θύραθεν *from outside the door* (76)

θυραῖος, (-ά), -ον *beyond the doors, outside*

θύρασι (ν) *at the door, outside* (1074)

θυσία, -ας, ἡ *sacrifice*

θύω, θύσω, ἔθυσα *sacrifice*

ιατρός, -οῦ, ὁ *doctor, physician* (70)

ιαχέω *shout, cry* (1150)

ιαχή, -ῆς, ἡ (ιαχά) *cry, shout* (143)

ιάχω *cry, shout* (707)

ιδ- aorist stem of ὀράω

Ἰδαῖος, -ά, -ον *of Ida* (a mountain near Troy) (317)

ἴδιος, -ά, -ον *one's own, peculiar*; τὸ ἴδιον *characteristic* (633)

ἰδοῦ *behold! look! here! there!*

ἰδρύω *put, set, establish* (1130)

ἱερός, -ά, -όν *sacred*; n. pl. ἱερά, τά *offerings, victims, sacred objects, omens*

ἰήιος, -ά, -ον *invoked with the cry ἰή* (of Apollo), *mournful, grieving* (1211)

ἵημι *let go, throw, send*

ἱκετεύω *approach as a suppliant, supplicate*

ἰκνέομαι, aor. ἰκόμην *come, reach, arrive*

Ἰλιάς, -άδος fem. adj. *of Troy, Trojan*; as a noun *Troy, Trojan woman* (4)

Ἰλιόθεν *from Troy* (452)

Ἰλῖος, -ου ἡ *Ilios, Ilium, Troy*

ἵνα *in order to*

Ἰναχος, -ου, ὁ *Inachus*, a river in the Argolid

ἵππιος, -ά, -ον *of or with horses* (825)

ἵππος, -ου, ὁ *horse*

ἱπότης, -ου, ὁ *driver or rider of horses* (449)

ἱποφόρβιον, -ου, τό *herd of horses, pasturing herd* (623)

Ἰσθμῖος, -ά, -ον *of the Isthmus* (1288)

ἴσος, -η, -ον *equal*

ἵστημι, στήσω, ἔστησα / ἔστην, ἔστηκα *set up; stand*

ἵστορέω *inquire* (105)

ἵσχω (< ἔχω) *restrain, keep back* (460)

ἴσως *perhaps, probably; equally*

ἵτυς, -υος, ἡ *outer rim of a shield* (458)

Ἰφιγόνη, -ης, ἡ *Iphigone, Iphigenia*, daughter of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon (1023)

ἵχνος, -ους, τό *track, footprint*

ἰὼ *yo, ah, alas*: a cry that may be used to express grief or call on the gods

καθαίρέω, aor. καθείλον *take down, put down, kill*

καθαρμόζω, aor. καθήρμωσα *join, fit* (1228)

καθαρός, -ά, -όν *clear, pure* (794)

κάθημαι *sit* (315)

καθίζω *sit* (980)

καθοράω, aor. κατεῖδον *see, look down on* (1206)

καθυβρίζω, aor. καθύβρισα *insult* (698)

καί *and, also, too, even, as; καὶ . . . καί or . . . τε . . . καί both . . . and; καὶ γάρ in fact*

καίνυμαι, pf. κέκασμαι *surpass, excel* (616)

καίνω, aor. ἔκανον *kill*

καίπερ *although* (1030)

καίριος, -ά, -ον *at the right place or time* (598)

καιρός, -οῦ, ὁ *critical time, due measure* (997)

καίτοι *and yet*

κακίζω, aor. pass. ἐκακίσθην *abuse, make cowardly; pass. be turned into a coward* (982)

κακός, -ή, -όν *bad, cowardly τὰ κακὰ troubles, ills, abuse; compar. κακίων; adv. κακῶς badly, ill*

κακοῦργος, -όν *doing evil, criminal*

κακόφρων, -ον *ill-disposed, malignant, heedless* (481)

κάλαμος, -ού, ὁ *reed* (702)

καλέω, fut. καλῶ, pf. m-p κέκλημαι *call, call on*

καλλίνικος, -ον *victorious, glorious in victory*

καλλιπλόκαμος, -ον *with beautiful hair* (705v)

καλλίποκος, -ον *with beautiful fleece* (705v)

κάλλος, -ους, τό *beauty*

καλός, -ή, -όν *fine, noble, handsome; superl. κάλλιστος; adv. καλῶς well, nobly*

- καλύπτω, καλύψω *cover*
 κάμαξ, -ακος, ἡ *vine-prop, pole, spear shaft* (852)
 κάμνω *labor, be weary* (1358)
 καμπή, -ῆς, ἡ *winding, turning post* (659)
 κάμπτω, aor. ἔκαμψα *bend*
 κᾶν = καὶ ἐν
 κᾶν = καὶ ἐάν
 κανοῦν (κανέον), -οῦ, τό *basket*
 κανών, -όνος, ὁ *straight rod, rule, standard* (52)
κάρα, τό (gen. κάρητος or κάρης) *head*
 καρδία, -ας, ἡ *heart* (402)
 καρπός, -οῦ, ὁ *fruit, crop, harvest* (1346)
 κᾶρυξ [= κῆρυξ] *herald*; καρύσσω [= κηρύσσω] *proclaim*
 κασιγνήτη, -ης, ἡ *sister* (1042)
κασίγνητος, -ού, ὁ *brother*
 Κάστωρ, -ορος, ὁ *Castor, brother of Polydeuces*
κατά *below* (+ gen.); *in, to*; καθ' ἡμέραν *day by day*; τὸ κατ' ἡμέραν *daily*
 καταθνήσκω, -θανοῦμαι, -έθανον *die* (288)
 καταθρηνέω *bewail* (1326)
 κατασχύνω *put to shame, dishonor* (365)
 κατακλαίω *lament loudly*
 κατακτείνω, poetic 2 aor. κατέκταν, -ας, -α *kill* (86)
 καταλάμπω *shine upon, dawn*
 κατάλυσις, -έως, ἡ *dissolving, making an end of, resting, lodging, guest quarters* (393)
 κατανύω *bring to an end, finish, arrive at* (1163)
 κατάξιος, -ον *quite worthy of* (46)
 κατάρα, -ας, ἡ *curse* (1324)
 κατάρρυτος, -ον *watered* (777)
 κατάρχομαι, aor. κατηρξάμην *begin* (a ritual) (1222)
 καταφθίνω, aor. mid. κατεφθίμην *die away, perish* (622)
 κατέχω, impf. -εῖχον *fill, keep, occupy, dwell in*
 κατήρης, -εξ *fitted out, supplied* (of a ship, with oars), *furnished with*
 κάτοπτρον, -ού, τό *mirror* (1071)
 κάτω *below* (+ gen.)
 κεῖμαι, κείσομαι *lie*
 κείρω, aor. ἔκειρα, pf. m-p κέκαρμαι *clip, cut short* (one's hair, as a sign of mourning)
 Κεκρόπιος, -α, -ον *Cecropian, of Cecrops, Athenian* (1289)

- κελαδέω *murmur, roar, sound, ring, sing of* (716)
 κελαινός, -ή, -όν *black*
 κέλευθος, -ου, ἡ *path* (1236)
 κελεύω *order, urge on* (413)
 κέλλω, aor. ἔκελσα *drive on, land, put to shore* (139)
 κενός, -ή, -όν *empty*
 κέρδος, -ους, τό *gain, profit* (744)
 κερκίς, -ίδος, ἡ *staff, rod* (for weaving)
 κερόεις, -όεσσα, -όεν *burned* (725)
 κεύθω *cover, hide, keep in store*
 κηδεύω *take care of, tend, ally oneself in marriage to, be related by marriage; pay last rites to the dead* (47)
 κῆπος, -ού, ὁ *garden* (777)
 κήρ, κηρός, ἡ (Κήρ) *death, doom*
 κῆρυξ, -υκος, ὁ [= κᾶρυξ] *herald* (347)
 κηρύσσω [= καρύσσω] *be a herald, proclaim* (172)
 κίβδηλος, -ον *adulterated, false, baseborn, base* (of a coin), *counterfeit* (550)
 κικλήσκω *call, invite, summon, call by name: a poetic reduplicated form of καλέω* (118)
 κινέω *move, prod, provoke, stir up, call forth* (302) [Denniston: *disturb what is best left undisturbed*]
 κίχρημι, aor. ἔχρησα *lend; mid. borrow* (191)
 κλαίω, aor. ἔκλαυσα *weep, cry for* (510)
κλεινός, -ή, -όν *famous, renowned*
 κλέος, τό (only nom. and acc.) *report, fame, glory* (1084)
 κληδών, -όνος, ἡ *reputation, name*
 Κλυταιμῆστρα, -ας, ἡ *Clytemestra, Clytemnestra*
κλύω, imperative κλῦθι *hear, give ear to, attend to* (+ gen. of person and gen. or acc. of thing); κλύω κακῶς *have bad things said of one*
 κλών, κλωνός, ὁ *young shoot, twig* (324)
 κοινός, -ή, -όν *common, shared; κοινῇ fem. dat. as adv. in common* (232)
 κοινωνέω *share in, take part in* (1048)
 κοινωνός, -οῦ, ὁ / ἡ *companion, partner*
 κοίτη, -ης, ἡ *bed, lying* (158)
 κολάζω *prune, restrain, punish* (1028)
κόμη, -ης, ἡ *hair*
 κομίζω *carry, bring; mid. take back, bring home*
 κομπέω *boast* (815)

- κόνις, -ιος / -εως, ἡ *dust* (477)
 κοπίς, -ίδος, ἡ *chopper, cleaver* (837)
 κόπτω *strike, cut* (838)
 κόρη, -ης, ἡ [= κούρα] *girl, daughter; Kore* (= Persephone)
 κόρη, -ης, ἡ *pupil* (of the eye), *eye*
 κόρος, -ου, ὁ [= κοῦρος] *boy, young man* (990)
 κορυφά, -ᾶς [-ή, -ῆς], ἡ *head, crown of the head* (460v)
 κοσμέω, pf. m-p κεκόσμημαι *order, arrange* (1000)
 κόσμος, -ου, ὁ *adornment, accessories* (951)
 κούρα [= κόρη]
 κούριμος, -ή, -ον *shorn, cropped*
 κουφίζω *be light, lighten, lift up* (861)
 κοῦφος, -ή, -ον *light* (439)
 κραίνω, aor. ἔκρανα *bring about, accomplish* (1248)
 κράνος, -ους, τό *helmet*
κράς, κρατός, ὁ *head* (poetic form of κάρα)
 κραταίλεως, -ων *stony, rocky* (534)
κρατέω *have or get power over, rule, surpass, hold sway, be bigger*
 κράτιστος, -ή, -ον (superl. of ἀγαθός) *strongest, best* (379)
 κραυγή, -ῆς, ἡ *crying, screaming* 695
 κρείσσων, -ον (compar. of ἀγαθός) *better, stronger*
 κρέκω *strike, beat, play* (542)
 κρέων, -οντος, ὁ *ruler, master* (1262)
 κρίμναμαι [= κρέμαμαι] (used as passive of κρεμάννυμι) *hang, be suspended* (1217)
 κρίνω, κρινῶ *judge*
 κριτής, -ου, ὁ *judge* (374)
 κρούω, κρούσω *knock, strike* (180)
 κρυπτός, -ή, -όν *hidden, secret*
 κρύφιος, -ία, -ον *hidden, secret* (720)
 κτάομαι, pf. κέκτημαι *possess, win*
 κτείνω, κτενῶ, aor. ἔκτανον and ἔκτεινα *kill*
 κτενισμός, -ου, ὁ *combing* (529)
 κτυπέω *crash, resound, ring*
 κυανέμβολος, -ον *with dark (blue-black) prow*; κύανος was used for decorating armor and may here refer to the covering of the prows with bronze. (436)
 κυκλέω *move around, wheel, surround* (561)
 κύκλος, -ου, ὁ *circle, cycle*

Κυκλώπειος, -α, -ον *Cyclopeian, built by the Cyclopes* [of the massive masonry at Mycenae and other sites] (1158)

κύκνος, -ου, ὁ *swan* (151)

κυνῶπις, -ίδος, ἡ (< κυνώπης *dog-eyed*) *shameless, dog-faced* [of the Erinyes] (1252)

Κύπρις, -ίδος, ἡ *Kypris, Cypris*, a name for Aphrodite: the *Cyprian*, from her birthplace on Cyprus (43)

κυρέω (κύρω), κυρήσω, aor. ἔκυρσα *happen, meet with* (+ gen.)

κύριος, -α, -ον *having authority, authoritative, decisive* (259)

κυρώω, pf. m-p κεκύρωμαι *confirm, ratify, authorize* (1069)

κύτος, -ους, τό *hollow* (473)

κύων, κυνός, ὁ / ἡ *dog* (1342)

λαγχάνω, pf. εἴληχα *obtain by lot, be assigned* (668)

λαγών, -όνος, ἡ / ὁ *hollow, hollow part below the ribs, flank* (826)

λάθρα *in secret*

λαθραίως *secretly* (26)

λαιμοτόμας, -ου, ὁ *cutter of the throat* (459v)

λαιμότομος, -ον *throat cutting* (459)

λάϊνος, -η, -ον *stony, of stone*

λαιψηρός, -ά, -όν *swift* (549)

λαμβάνω, aor. ἔλαβον *take, get, receive, regain*

λαμπρός, -ά, -όν *bright, clear, radiant, shiny*

λαμπρύνομαι *pride oneself, distinguish oneself, become noticeable or notorious*

λανθάνω, aor. ἔλαθον *escape notice, go unnoticed; pass. forget* (93)

λάσκω *ring, scream, cry aloud* (1214)

λάχος, -ους, τό *fate, destiny, one's lot* (1193)

λέαινα, -ης, ἡ *lioness*

λέβης, -ητος, ὁ *caldron, basin* (802)

λέγω, λέξω, ἔλεξα *speak (of), tell, talk of*

λείβω *pour libations; pass. shed tears, have one's eyes running with tears, pine away* (146)

λείπω, λείψω, ἔλιπον, pf. m-p λέλειμμαι *leave, leave at home; mid. be bereft of* (+ gen.); pass. *be left behind*

λείψανον, -ού, τό *piece left, remnant* (554)

λέκτρον, -ου, τό *bed*

λευκός, -ή, -όν *white*

λεύσσω *see, be alive*

λεύω *stone* (328)

λέχος, -ους, τό *bed, marriage*

λεχῶ, -οῦς, ἡ *a woman in childbed* (during or just after giving birth)

λήγω *abate, leave off, cease* (340)

λίαν *in excess, too much*

λιμὴν, -ένος, ὁ *harbor, haven* (452)

λιμός, -οῦ, ὁ *hunger, famine, emptiness* (371)

λιταίνω *pray, supplicate* (1215)

λιτή, -ῆς, ἡ *prayer* (592/3)

λοβός, -οῦ, ὁ *lobe* (827)

λόγος, -ου, ὁ *word, saying, argument, story, study*

λόγχη, -ης, ἡ *spearhead, spear*

λοιπός, -ή, -όν *left, remaining*; τὸ λοιπὸν *for the future*

λοῖσθιος, -ά, -ον *last* (1333)

Λοξίας, -ου, ὁ *Loxias, Apollo* (as interpreter)

λουτρόν, -οῦ, τό *bath, water for washing*

λοχάω *lie in wait, ambush* (225)

λόχευμα, -άτος, τό *child, childbirth* (1124)

λοχεύω *bring to birth, deliver* (1129)

λόχιος, -ά, -ον *of childbirth* (656)

λόχος, -ου, ὁ *ambush* (217)

λυγρός, -ά, -όν *mournful* (164)

Λύκαιος, -ά, -ον *Lycean, Arcadian* (1274)

λύπη, -ης, ἡ *grief* (240)

λυτήρ, -ῆρος, ὁ *deliverer* (136)

λύω *release, undo, loose; pay, profit* (511)

λώβη, -ης, ἡ *outrage, ill treatment, disgrace* (165)

λωτός, -οῦ, ὁ *lotus (nettle-tree), flute, pipe, aulos* (716)

Μαῖα, -άς, ἡ *Maia, mother of Hermes* (463)

μαινάς, -άδος, ἡ *maenad, madwoman* (1032)

μάκαρ, μάκαιρα, μάκαρ *blessed* (994)

μακάριος, -ά, -ον *happy, fortunate, blessed*

μακρός, -ά, -όν *long* (754)

μᾶλλον *more*

μανθάνω, aor. ἔμαθον *understand, learn*

μαντεύομαι, pf. μεμάντευμαι *prophesy* (981)

μαντικός, -ή, -όν *prophetic* (400)

μάργος, -η, -ον *raging, furious, greedy, sexually active* (1027)

- μάρτυς, -υρος, ὁ / ἡ *witness* (378)
 μαστός, -οῦ, ὁ *breast* (1207)
 μάταιος, -ά, -ον *idle, foolish, vain, light, lewd* (1064)
 ματεύω *seek* (448)
 μάχη, -ης, ἡ *battle* (881)
 μάχομαι *fight* (845)
μέγας, μεγάλη, μέγα *big, great; μέγα by far*
 μέθη, -ης, ἡ *strong drink, drunkenness* (326)
 μεθίημι, aor. μεθήκα / μεθεῖμην *let go, hand over, let loose, let fall, utter*
 μεθίστημι, aor. pass. μετεστάθην *remove; mid. and intransitive forms leave*
 (+ gen.); pass. *change* (one's position) (1202)
 μείγνυμι *mix, join, bring together* (756)
 μείζων, μείζον comparative of μέγας
 μελάγχιμος, -ον *dark, black* (513)
 μέλαθρον, -ού, τό *hall, palace*
 μέλας, μέλαινα, μέλαν *black*
 μέλει (impersonal) *it is a care to* (+ dat. of person and objective genitive)
 μέλεος, -ά, -ον *fruitless, vain, empty, unhappy, miserable*
μέλλω *be about to, intend, delay, hesitate*
 μέλος, -ους, τό (n. pl. μέλεα) *limb*
 μέλος, -ους, τό *song*
 μέμφομαι, aor. ἐμεμψάμην *blame* (903)
μέν postpositive particle, used to emphasize the first of two words, phrases
 or clauses in contrast
 Μενέλεως / Μενέλαος, ὁ *Menelaus*
 μέντοι *however*
μένω, aor. ἔμεινα *stay, remain*
 μέρος, -ους, τό *part, share, lot* (888)
 μέσος, -η, -ον *middle, mid, in the middle* (of)
μετά *with, among* (+ gen.); *after* (+ acc.)
 μέτα = μέτεστι(ν) *there is a share* (+ dat.): i.e., *one has a share or claim*
in something (+ gen.) (1295)
 μεταβαίνω, μεταβιβάζω (causative form of -βαίνω) 1 aor. (causative)
 μετέβησα *pass, change course, shift* (728)
 μετάτροπος, -ον *turning around* (1147)
 μέτειμι (εἰμί) *be among; impersonal μέτεστι(ν) μοι I have a share*
 μετέρχομαι *come among, go between, go after, go away*
 μετέχω, aor. μετέσχον *share* (+ gen.) (607)
μή *not; lest*

- μηδέ *and not, but not, not even*
 μηδεῖς, μηδεμία, μηδέν *no one, nothing*
 μηκέτι *no longer* (583)
 μήλειος, -ον *of a sheep* (92)
μήν *surely, indeed*
 μῆνις, -ίος, ἡ *wrath, anger, malice* (1261)
 μηνύω, aor. ἐμήνυσσα *disclose, betray, inform* (620)
μήτηρ, μητρός, ἡ [= μάτηρ] *mother*
 μητροκτόνος, -ον *killing one's mother* (975)
 μηχανάομαι, aor. ἐμηχανησάμην *make by art, contrive* (31)
 μία *see εἷς, μία, ἕν*
 μαιφόνος, -ον *blood-stained* (322)
 μιάστωρ, -όρος, ὁ *one who brings pollution; avenger* (683)
 μικρός, -ά, -όν [= σμικρός] *small, short*
 μιμέομαι *imitate* (1037)
 μιμνήσκω, aor. ἔμνησα; pf. μέμνημαι; aor. pass. ἐμνήσθην (μνασθεῖσα
 745 = μνησθεῖσα) act. *remind; m-p remember*
 μισέω *hate*
 μισθός, -οῦ, ὁ *wages, pay*
 μίτρα, -ας, ἡ *band, headband, snood* (162)
 μνήμα, -άτος, τό *memorial, memory* (328)
 μνηστεύω *court, woo; promise in marriage, betroth* (313)
 μνηστήρ, -ῆρος, ὁ *suitor* (21)
 μοῖρα, -άς, ἡ /Μοῖρα *share, lot / Fate*
 μολ- *see ἔμολον went, came*
 μόλις *hardly, with difficulty* (403)
 μολπή, -ῆς, ἡ *music, song*
μόνος, -η, -ον *only, alone*
 μόσχειος, -ά, -ον *of a calf* (811)
 Μοῦσα, -ῆς, ἡ /μοῦσα *Muse/music*
 μοχθέω *be weary, be troubled* (64)
 μόχθος, ου, ὁ *trouble*
μῦθος, -ού, ὁ *story*
Μυκηναῖος, -ον *of Mycene, Mycenae*
 Μυκῆναι, -ῶν, αἱ *Mycene, Mycenae* (963)
 Μυκηνίς, -ίδος, ἡ (woman) *of Mycene/-ae* (761)
 μυρσίνη, -ης, ἡ *myrtle*
 μυσσαρός, -ά, -όν *foul, dirty, abominable, polluted*
 μυστήριον, -ού, τό *mystery, secret ritual, rites* (87)

μῶν question particle that expects the answer *no* < μὴ οὖν
μῶρος, ᾿α, -ον *foolish, stupid*; as noun *a fool*; τὸ μῶρον *folly, sexual weakness, giddiness*

ναί *yes* (658)

ναίω *dwell in*

ναός, ὁ *temple* (7)

νάπη, -ης, ἡ (νάπα) *glen, woodland valley* (446)

Ναυπλία, -ας, ἡ *Nauplia* (1278)

Ναύπλιος, ᾿α, -ον *of Nauplia* (453)

ναῦς, νεώς, ἡ pl. νᾶες, νεῶν, ναυσί *ship*

νεανίας, -ου, ὁ *young man*; as adj. *young* (344)

νεᾶνις, -ίδος, ἡ *young woman* (487)

νεβρός, -οῦ, ὁ *fawn* (574)

νεῖκος, ᾿ους, τό *quarrel, strife* (1121)

νεκρός, -οῦ, ὁ *body, dead person, corpse*

νέκυσ, -υος, ὁ *body, dead person, corpse* (1276)

νέμω *distribute, dwell in*

νεογνός, -ον *newborn*

νέομαι *come, go* (722)

νέος, -α, -ον *new, young*

νεόφονος, -ον *just killed* (1172)

νέρτερος, ᾿α, -ον *in or of the lower world* (748)

νεύω *nod (to), bend forward* (839)

νεφέλη, -ης, ἡ *cloud* (733)

νεωστί *lately, just now* (653)

Νηρηίς, -ίδος, ἡ *daughter of Nereus, Nereid*

νικάω *win*

νίκη, -ης, ἡ *victory*

νικηφόρος, -ον *bringing victory*

νιν *her, him, them* (see note on line)

νομίζω *think, practice, keep* (as a custom); pass. *be customary*

νόμος, -ου, ὁ *law, custom, general laws*

νόσημα, ᾿ματος, τό *sickness, disease* (656)

νόσος, -ου, ἡ *sickness*

Νυμφαῖος, ᾿α, -ον *of a Nymph* (447)

νύμφευμα, ᾿ατος, τό *marriage* (1261)

νυμφεύω *marry, attend the bride*

Νύμφη / νύμφη, -ης, ἡ *Nymph, bride*; νύμφα nom./acc. dual

νυμφικός, -ή, -όν *bridal* (1200)

νυμφίος, -ου, ὁ *husband* (24)

νυν *then* (enclitic particle)

νῦν *now*

νύξ, νυκτός, ἡ *night*

νυχεύω *watch through the night* (181)

νύχιος, -ά, -ον *by night, dark as night*

νωτιαῖος, -ά, -ον *of the back* (841)

νῶτον, -ου, τό *the back, a wide surface or expanse* (used of the sea and the sky); ἔσπερα νῶτα *the western sky*

ξανθός, -ή, -όν *yellow, golden*

ξένιος, -ά, -ον *of guests*; τὰ ξένια *gifts of hospitality* (in the form of food and drink given by a host to his guests) (359)

ξένος (Ionic: ξεῖνος), -ου, ὁ *stranger, guest-friend*; also used as an adjective

ξηρός, -ά, -όν *parched, dry*

ξιφήρης, -ες *armed with a sword, with sword in hand* (225)

ξίφος, -ους, τό *sword*

ξυν- see συν-

ξυρήκης, -ες *shaved* (335)

ξυρόν, -οῦ, τό *razor* (241)

ὁ, ἡ, τό *the* ὁ' μέν . . . ὁ δέ *the one . . . the other*

ὀγκόω, pf. m-p ὠγχωμαι *exalt, puff up* (381)

ὅδε, ἦδε, τόδε *this* τῇδε *thus, in this way, here*

ὁδῖος, -ον *of the road or journey* (162)

ὁδός, -οῦ, ἡ *road, way, journey*

ὀδύνη, -ης, ἡ *pain, suffering* (1210)

ὅθεν *whence, from which*

οἷ *where* (to which)

οἶδα, εἴσομαι; inf. εἰδέναι; participle εἰδώς; imperatives ἴσθι, ἴστω;
plpf. ᾔδειν *know* (perfect form with present meaning)

οἴκαδε *homeward, to one's home* (1285)

οἰκεῖος, -ά, -ον *of the house* (629)

οἰκέτις, -ίδος, ἡ *servant, slave* of the household (104)

οἰκέω *live* (in)

οἶκος, -ου, ὁ *house*

οἰκτίρω *pity*

οἶκτος, -ου, ὁ *pity, compassion*

οἰκτρός, -ά, -όν *pitiful*

οἶμαι [= οἶομαι] *think*

οἶμοι *alas, ah me!*

οἶμος, -ου, ὁ *road* (218)

οἰμωγή, -ῆς, ἡ *wailing, lamenting* (752)

οἰμώζω, aor. ὤμωξα *wail loudly, lament, cry* οἶμοι

οἶομαι [= οἶμαι] *think*

οἶος, -ά, -ον *of what sort, such as, what a*

οἶς, οἶός, ὁ / ἡ *sheep* (513)

οἴχομαι *be gone*

οἰωνός, -οῦ, ὁ *large bird, bird of prey* (897)

ὄλβιος, -ά, -ον *happy, prosperous*

ὄλβος, -ου, ὁ *happiness, wealth* (943)

ὄλλυμι, ὀλῶ, ὤλεσα, 2 aor. ὠλόμην, 2 pf. ὄλωλα *destroy, lose; mid. and intrans. 2 aor. and 2 pf. perish; ὄλωλα I am dead*

ὀλολύζω *cry loudly (esp. of women praying)* (691)

Ὀλύμπιος, -ον *of Olympus* (782)

ὁμαρτέω *act together, accompany, keep pace with* (412)

ὄμβρος, -ου, ὁ *rainstorm* (736)

ὁμιλέω *be in company with, associate with* (940)

ὁμιλία, -ας, ἡ *company, association with* (384)

ὄμμα, -ατος, τό *eye, face*

ὅμοιος, -ά, -ον *like, resembling, same* (523)

ὁμόπτερος, -ον *with the same plumage* (530)

ὅμως *all the same, nevertheless*

ὁμῶς *equally, likewise, alike*

ὀνίνημι, ὀνήσω *profit, benefit* (1025)

ὀνομάζω, pf. m-p ὠνόμασμαι *name* (935)

ὄνυξ, -υχος, ὁ *claw, talon, hoof, nail; ὄνυχας ἐπ' ἄκρους στάς on tiptoe* (840)

ὀξύθηκτος, -ον *sharp-edged, sharp-pointed* (1158)

ὀπαδός, -οῦ, ὁ *attendant*

ὀπάζω, aor. ὤπασα *send with, grant, confer upon* (1192)

ὀπάων, -ονος, ὁ *comrade*

ὀπλίζω, aor. ὤπλισα *arm* (627)

ὄπλον, -ου, τό *tool, weapon; pl. arms* (377)

ὅπου *wherever*

ὅπως *how, as, in what way or manner; that, so that*

ὁράω, ὄψομαι, εἶδον (ἰδ-) *see*

ὀργάς, -άδος, ἡ *a well watered, fertile plot of land, wooded meadowland* (1162)

ὀργή, -ῆς, ἡ *temper, natural impulse, anger* (1110)

ὄρειβάτης, -ου, ὁ *mountain-ranging* (170)

ὄρειος, -ά, -ον [= οὐρειος] *of the mountains*

Ὀρέστης, -ου, ὁ *Orestes*

ὄρθιος, -ά, -ον *steep, uphill* (489)

ὀρθός, -ή, -όν *straight, right; adv. ὀρθῶς truly, rightly*

ὄρθρος, -ου, ὁ *the time just before daybreak, dawn* (909)

ὀρμάω, perf. m-p ὠρμημαί *set in motion, start; m-p set out for* (340)

ὀρμή, -ῆς, ἡ *rapid motion, onset*

ὄρμος, -ου, ὁ *cord, chain, necklace* (177)

ὄρος, -ους, τό *mountain* (700)

ὄρος, -ου, ὁ *border, boundary*

ὀρρωδέω *dread, shrink from* (831)

ὀρφανός, -όν *orphan, bereaved*

ὅς, ἡ, ὅ *who, which*

ὅσιος, -ά, ον *pious, holy*

ὄσμή, -ῆς, ἡ *smell, odor, aroma* (of wine, *bouquet*) (498)

ὅσος, -η, -ον *as great as, as many as, as much as, how much, how many;*

εἰς ὅσον as far as

ὅσπερ, ἥπερ, ὅπερ *the very one who/which*

Ὅσσα, -ας, ἡ *Ossa, a mountain* (446)

ὅστις, ἥτις, ὅ τι *anyone who, anything which, whoever, whatever*

ὅταν *whenever, when*

ὅτε *when*

ὅτι *because, that*

οὐ, οὐκ, οὐχ *not*

οὐδας, -εος, τό *floor* (88)

οὐδέ *and not, but not, not even, nor*

οὐδεῖς, ουδεμία, ουδέν *no one, nothing*

οὐδέποτε *and not ever* (580)

οὐκέτι *no longer*

οὕκουν *then . . . not* (1004)

οὐκοῦν *question word inviting assent: surely then, then; in replies very well, yes*

οὐλή, -ῆς, ἡ *scar* (573)

οὖν *then, therefore*

οὐνεκα *because, because of* (+ gen.)

οὔποτε *never*

οὔπω *not yet* (324)

οὐπώποτε *never yet at any time* (255)

οὐρανίδης, -ου, ὁ *son of Uranos; pl. the gods*

οὐράνιος, -ά, -ον *in the sky*

οὔτε *nor*; οὔτε . . . οὔτε *neither . . . nor*

οὔτοι *not, not indeed*

οὔτος, αὕτη, τοῦτο *this*

οὔτως, οὔτω *so, thus*

οὐχί *not*

ὄφρῦς, -ύος, ἡ *eyebrow* (573)

ὄχθος, -ου, ὁ *eminence, hill*

ὄχμάζω *grip fast, make a horse obedient to the bit, break in* (817)

ὄχος, -ου, ὁ *carriage*

ὀψέ *after a long time, late* (1111)

ὄψις, -εως, ἡ *sight* (1237)

πάγος, -ου, ὁ *crag, rocky hill* (1271)

παθ- aorist stem of πάσχω *suffer*

πάθος, -ους, τό *suffering* (1226)

παιδαγωγός, -οῦ, ὁ *slave who attends children, taking them to their play or to school* (287)

παίδευμα, -άτος, τό *that which is taught: child, pupil; lesson* (887)

παῖς, παιδός, ὁ, ἡ *child, son, daughter*

παίω, παίσω, ἔπαισα *strike, hit*

πάλαι *long ago*

παλαιός, -ά, -όν *old*

παλαίστρα, -ας, ἡ *wrestling school* (528)

παλαίω, aor. pass. ἐπαλαίσθην *wrestle* (686)

πάλιν *again*

παλίρροπος, -ον *sliding back, tottering, bent, wobbly* (492)

παλίρρους, -ουν *flowing backward, ebbing and flowing* (1155)

Παλλάς, -άδος ἡ *Pallas Athena*

πάλλω *wield, swing, brandish*

Πάν, Πανός, ὁ *Pan* (703)

πανδερκέτης, -ου (m. adj.) *all-seeing* (1177)

πάντως *in any case* (227)

πανύστατος, -ή, -ον *last of all* (157)

πανώλεθρος, -ον *utterly ruined, abandoned* (86)

πανώλης, -ες *utterly ruined, destroyed, all-destructive* (60)

παρά *from* (+ gen.), *at, with, near* (+ dat.), *to, by, near, at* (+ acc.)

παράγω *lead by, lead aside* (789)

παράδειγμα, -'ατος, τό *pattern, model, example* (1085)

παραμένω *stay beside or near* (942)

παρασπιστής, -οῦ, ὁ *one who bears a shield beside, companion in arms* (886)

πᾶρειμι (εἰμί) *be present*; **πάρεστι** *it is possible*

πάρεργον, -'ου, τό *a by-work, secondary business, a collateral purpose*

παρέχω, παρέξω *furnish, offer*; mid. *display*; impersonal **παρέχει** *it is in one's power*

παρηίς, -ίδος, ἡ *the cheek*

παρθενικός, -ή, -όν *of a virgin* (174)

παρθένος, -ου, ἡ *an unmarried young woman, virgin*

παρθενωπός, -όν *looking like a virgin, girlish* (949)

πάροιθε(ν) *before* (+ gen.)

πάρος *before* (+ gen.)

παρρησία, -ας, ἡ *freedom of speech*

παρωθέω, aor. παρέωσα *push aside or away* (1037)

πᾶς, πᾶσα, πᾶν (πάντ-) *all, every, the whole*

παστήρια, τά *feast of sacrificial meat, parts of the sacrificial animal that are eaten* (835)

πάσχω, πείσομαι, ἔπαθον, πέπονθα *suffer, be treated*

πατήρ, πατρός, ὁ *father*; pl. *ancestors*

πάτριος, -'α, -ον *of/belonging to one's father*

πατρίς, πατρίδος ἡ *fatherland, homeland* (1152)

πατρῷος, -'α, -ον *of or from one's fathers*

παύω *stop*; mid. *cease (from)*

πέδιλον, -'ου, τό pl. *sandals* (460)

πέδον, -ον, τό *plain*

πείθω, πείσω, ἔπεισα / ἔπιθον, πέποιθα *persuade*; mid. *obey, yield, heed*;
2 pf. *be confident*

Πειρηναίος, -'α, -ον *of Peirene* (475)

πελάζω, πελάσω *draw near, approach* (1332)

πελάθω [= πελάζω] (1293)

πέλας *near, close to*

πέλεκυς, -'εως, ὁ *axe*

πέμπω, πέμψω, ἔπεμψα *send, conduct*

πένης, πένητος, ὁ *laborer, poor man*; as adj. *poor, poor in* (+ gen.)

- πενθερός, -οῦ, ὁ *father-in-law, brother-in-law, in-law* (1286)
 πενία, -ας, ἡ *poverty* (376)
πέπλος, -ου, ὁ *robe*; in pl. *robes, clothing*
 πεπρωμένη, -ης, ἡ *fate* (1290)
 πέρα *beyond, across, further* (1187)
 πέρας, -άτος, τό *end, limit, object* (955 alt.)
 πέρθω, aor. ἔπερσα *waste, destroy, kill, take as plunder, get by sacking a city* (316)
περί *about, for* (+ gen.), *regarding, about* (+ acc.)
 περίδρομος, -ον *running around, surrounding* (458)
 πέριξ *all around* (561)
 περίπλευρος, -ον *covering the side* (472)
 Περσεύς, -έως, ὁ *Perseus* (459)
 πετραῖος, -ά, -ον *rocky* (805)
 πέτρινος, -ή, -ον *of rock, rocky* (706)
 πέτρος, -ου, ὁ *piece of rock, stone* (328)
 πηγαῖος, (-ά), -ον *of a spring* (108)
 πηγή, -ῆς, ἡ *spring*
 πήγνυμι, ἔπηξα *stick, fix, make firm* (898)
 πήδημα, -άτος, τό *leaping, throbbing* (861)
 Πήλιον, -ού, τό *Pelion* (445)
 πῆμα, -άτος, τό *trouble, misery*
πικρός, -ά, -όν *bitter*
 πικρότης, -ητος, ἡ *bitterness, cruelty* (1014)
 πιναρός, -ά, -όν *dirty* (184)
 πίνος, -ου, ὁ *dirt* (305)
πίπτω, πεσοῦμαι, ἔπεσον, πέπτωκα *fall*; πρὸς τὸ πίπτον *according to the fall* (of the dice)
 πίστις, -εως, ἡ *trust, belief* (737)
 πιστός, -ή, -όν *faithful, loyal*
 πῖτνημι *spread out, extend* (713)
 πλανάω *lead astray, wander*
 πλάξ, πλακός, ἡ *anything flat, plain* (1349)
 Πλειάδες, αἱ *the Pleiades* (468)
 πλεῖστος, -ή, -ον *superlative of πολὺς most*
 πλέω, aor. ἔπλευσα *sail, swim*
 πλέως, -α, -ων *full* (25)
 πληγή, -ῆς, ἡ *blow* (1180)
 πλὴν *except* (+ gen.)

- πλήρης, -ες *full* (384)
 πληρώω *fill* (425)
 πλησιάζω, ἐπλησιάσθην *bring near, approach* (634)
 πλησίον *near* (+ gen.)
 πλήσσω, pf. m-p πέπληγμαι, aor. pass. ἐπλήγην *strike*
 πλόκαμος, -ου, ὁ *lock of hair*
 πλόκος, -ου, ὁ *lock of hair*
 πλούσιος, -ά, -ον *rich*
 πλοῦτος, -ου, ὁ *riches, wealth*
 πνεῦμα, -άτος, τό *breath, wind* (749)
 πνέω *breathe*
 πόθεν *from what place, from where?, why?, how can it be?*
 ποῖ *where?, to what place?*
 ποιέω (ποιέω), ποιήσω, ἐποίησα *make, do*
 ποίμνη, -ης, ἡ *herd, flock* [at line 725, perhaps of a single animal]
 ποινάτωρ, -ορος, ὁ / ἡ *punisher, avenger*
ποῖος, -ά, -ον *of what kind?*
 πόκος, -ου, ὁ *wool* (513)
 πολέμιος, -ά, -ον *hostile; as noun enemy*
 πολίτης, -ου, ὁ [= πολίτης] *citizen* (119)
 πολίος, -ά, -όν *gray, white, gray-headed, old, venerable* (as laws or tales)
 (701)
πόλις, -εως, ἡ *city-state*
 πολίτης, -ου, ὁ; Epic, Ionic: πολίτης, -εω *citizen* (1277)
 πολίτις, -ίδος, ἡ *citizen woman* (1335)
 πολλάκις *many times, often* (805)
 πολύδακρυς, gen. -υος *with many tears, tearful* (126)
 Πολυδεύκης, -εως, ὁ *Polydeuces* (Pollux), brother of Castor (1240)
 πολύκαπνος, -ον *smoky* (1140)
 πολύμοχθος, -ον *full of labor/toil* (1330)
 πολύπηνος, -ον *close-woven, having intricate patterns* (191)
πολύς, πολλή, πολύ *much, many*
 πονέω *toil* (1007)
 πονηρός, -ά, -ον *painful, useless, bad*
πόνος, -ου, ὁ *toil, labor*
 πόντος, -ου, ὁ *sea*
 πορεύσιμος, -ον *able to be crossed*
 πορεύω act. *carry, convey; m-p go, travel*

πόρπαμα, -ατος, τό *a garment fastened with a πόρπη*; here, *a traveling-cloak* (820)

πόρπη, -ης, ἡ *buckle, brooch* (318)

πορσύνω *offer, give*

* πόρω see πεπρωμένη (1290)

πόσις (no gen.; dat. πόσει; acc. πόσιν), ὁ *husband*

πόσος, -η, -ον *how great, how much* (628)

ποτάμιος (-ά), -ον *of a river*

ποταμός, -οῦ, ὁ *river* (410)

ποτανός, -ά, -όν *winged* (460)

ποτέ *ever*

πότερον, πότερα *whether*

ποτί [= πρόσ] (a Doric and epic form 167, 205)

πότμος, -ου, ὁ *fate* (1305)

πότνια, -ας, ἡ *lady* (a term of address to women and goddesses)

ποτόν, -οῦ, τό *a drink* (499)

που *anywhere*

ποῦ *where?*

πούς, ποδός, ὁ *foot*

πράγμα, -άτος, τό *affair* (1015)

πράξις, -εως, ἡ *a doing, action, result* (1297)

πράσσω, πράξω, ἔπραξα *do, make, fare, experience* certain fortunes, *do well or badly*

πρέπω *appear, be conspicuous*; πρέπει *it is fitting* (+ dat.) (186)

Πρίαμος, -ου, ὁ *Priam* (5)

πρίν *before*

πρό *for, on behalf of* (+ gen.) (626)

προβαίνω *go forward, lead* (403)

πρόβημα, -άτος, τό *a step forward* (985 alt.)

πρόβλημα, -άτος, τό *something that projects, barrier, business, risk, task, process* (985)

προδότις, -ιδος, ἡ *betrayal* (1028)

πρόθυμος, -ον *ready, eager* (395)

προοίμιον, -ου, τό *opening, introduction* (1060)

πρός *by, at the hands of, for, in favor of* (+ gen.), *at, besides, near* (+ dat.), *to, against, in the face of, in view of* (+ acc.)

προσάπτω, aor. προσήψα *fasten to, apply to*

προσβαίνω, aor. προσέβην *come to* (490)

- προσβάλλω *cast upon, lay upon* (655)
 πρόσβασις, -έως, ἡ *means of approach* (489)
 προσβολή, -ῆς, ἡ, *application, falling upon, approach, attack, visitation*
 (829)
 προσεικάζω *make like* (559)
 πρόσειμι *be attached, be present*
 πρόσειμι (εἶμι) *go to/toward*
 προσεννέπω *address, entreat* (552)
 προσέρχομαι, aor. προσῆλθον *come or go to, approach* (343)
 προσεύχομαι, προσεύζομαι *pray* (415)
 πρόσθε(ν) *before*
 πρόσθημα, -άτος, τό *addition* (192)
 προσίημι, 1 aor. mid. προσηκάμην [Smyth 777] *send to, admit, allow, accept, welcome* (622)
 προσοράω, -όψομαι *look upon* (1196)
 προσπίπτω, aor. προσέπεσον *fall upon* (510)
 προσπίτνω *fall upon*
 πρόσπολος, -ον *attending; as a noun servant, attendant*
 προσπτύσσω, aor. imperative πρόσπτυξον *embrace*
 προστατέω *stand before, be leader of, be in charge, be head of* (+ gen.)
 (932)
 προστίθημι, προσθήσω, aor. -έθηκα, -έθεμεν *put upon, add*
 πρόσφαγμα, -άτος, τό *victim sacrificed* (for another/others) (1174v)
 πρόσφθεγμα, -άτος, τό *address*
 προσφόρημα, -άτος, τό *something taken to someone, food* (423)
 πρόσω *forward, before, toward; far from* (+ gen.)
 πρόσωπον, -ού, τό *face, mask*
 προτείνω *stretch out* (1067)
 προτίθημι, aor. -έθηκα *put out, lay out* (896)
 προφωνέω *declare in advance* (685)
 πρόχειρος, -ον *convenient, ready* (696)
 προχύται, -ῶν, αἱ *the barley cakes thrown at the beginning of a sacrifice*
 (803)
 πρυμνός, -ή, -όν *endmost, lowest* (445v)
 πρυμνοῦχος, -ον *detaining the fleet* (1022)
 πρῶρα, -άς, ἡ *the front part of a ship, prow, bow*
 Πρωτεύς, -έως, ὁ *Proteus* (1280)
πρῶτος, -ή, -ον *first*
 πτερόεις, -εσσα, -εν *feathered, winged, light* (466)

πτοέω *frighten, flutter*; pass. *be scared* (1255)

πτῶμα, -άτος, τό *fall, disaster*

Πυλάδης, -ου, ὁ *Pylades*

πύλη, -ης, ἡ *gate* (usu. pl. of a town or a house; also gates of Hades), *orifice*;
portal fissure or vein of the liver

πῦρ, πυρός, τό *fire*

πυρά, -ᾶς, ἡ *funeral pyre, altar for sacrifices*

πύρπνοος, -ον *fire-breathing* (473)

πυρσεύω *light up, set on fire, communicate by signal fires* (694)

πυρσός, -οῦ, ὁ *torch, firebrand* (587)

πύστις, -εως, ἡ *asking, inquiry* (690)

πῶλος, -ού, ὁ *horse* (475)

πῶς *how?, why?, how is it that?, how come?* (used to express astonishment, doubt, displeasure)

ῥάδιος, -ά, -ον (comparative ῥάων, ῥᾶον) *easy* (72)

ρέζω, ῥέξω, ἔρεξα *do* (1226)

ρεῖθρον, -ού, τό [= ῥέεθρον] *river, stream*

ρήγνυμι, aor. ἔρρηξα *break* (842)

ρίπτω, aor. ἔρριψα *fling* (820)

ροή, -ῆς, ἡ *stream, current, flow*

ρόθιος, -ον *rushing*; n. pl. as a noun ῥόθια, τά *waves, breakers, surf* (992)

ῥυθμός, -οῦ, ὁ *rhythm, pattern, proportion, condition, order, succession* (772)

ῥυσός, -ή, -όν *drawn, shrivelled* (490)

σάκος, -ου, ὁ [= σάκκος] *coarse cloth of hair* (464)

σάλος, -ου, ὁ *tossing, rolling* (1241)

σάρξ, σαρκός, ἡ *flesh*; αἱ σάρκες *fleshbags* (cf. “meatheads”) (387)

σαυτοῦ, -ῆς *yourself* (405)

σάφα *clearly, well*

σαφῶς *clearly, plainly, surely, reliably, soundly*

σεβίζω *worship, honor*

σείω *shake* (846)

σελαγέω *enlighten, blaze, shine* (714)

σέλας, -αος, τό *bright flame, flash, torch* (866)

σελήνη, -ης, ἡ *moon* (1126)

σεμνός, -ή, -όν *solemn*

σήκωμα, -άτος, τό *sacred enclosure* (1274)

σημα, -άτος, τό *sign, mark* (456)

- σημαίνω *show by a sign, give a sign* (765)
 σήπω, pf. σέσηπα *cause to rot; pf. be rotten* (319)
 σθεναρός, -ά, -όν *strong* (389)
 σθένος, -ους, τό *strength*
 σθένω *have strength* (71)
 σιγάω *be silent*
 σιγή, -ῆς, ἡ *silence* (271)
 σίδηρος, -ού, ὁ *iron*
 Σικελός, -ή, -όν *Sicilian, Sikel* (1347)
 Σιμουντίς, -ίδος *of Simois* (441)
 σιωπάω *be silent* (946)
 σκαίος, -ά, -όν *left, left-handed, awkward, stupid; as a noun fool*
 σκάφεύς, -έως, ὁ *digger* (252)
 σκέπτομαι *see σκοπέω look at, view*
 σκῆπτρον, -ού, τό *staff, scepter*
 σκῆψις, -έως, ἡ *pretext, excuse*
 σκόλοψ, -οπος, ὁ *anything pointed, stake* (898)
σκοπέω, aor. ἐσκεψάμην *view, look at; followed by εἰ: consider whether*
 σκοπία, -ᾶς, ἡ *look out place* (447)
 σκοπός, -οῦ ὁ / ἡ *one who watches, lookout, spy*
 σκότος, -ου, ὁ *darkness* (960)
 σκυθίζω, pf. m-p ἐσκύθισμαι *act like a Scythian, shave the head, scalp* (241)
 σκυθράζω *be angry* (830)
 σκύλευμα, -άτος, τό *plunder, spoils* (314)
 σκύλον, -ού, τό *spoil, prey; used mostly in the pl.: the armor stripped from dead enemies* (7, 1000)
 σκύφος, -ου, ὁ *cup, wine cup* (499)
σμικρός [= μικρός] (old Attic form)
σός, σή, σόν *your* (singular)
σοφός, -ή, -όν *wise, clever*
 σπανίζω *be rare, be few, want* (235)
 Σπαρτιᾶτις, -ίδος ἡ *Spartan woman* (411)
 σπείρω, σπερῶ *sow, beget* (79)
 σπένδω, aor. ἔσπεισα *pour a libation*
 σπεύδω *set going, urge on, hasten, speed* (473)
 σπλάγχνα, -ων, τά *guts, heart*
 σπονδή, -ῆς, ἡ *libation* (511)
 σπορά, -ᾶς, ἡ *sowing, seed-time, origin* (1152)

- σπουδή, -ῆς, ἡ *eagerness* (1347)
 στατίζω *post, place, have a place or station* (316)
 στέγη, -ης, ἡ *roof, house*; often in the plural of a single house
 στέγος, -ους, τό [= στέγη] (1140)
 στέγω *cover, keep hidden* (273)
στείχω *come, go*
 στεναγμός, -οῦ, ὁ *keening, groaning, lamentation* (755)
 στενάζω *lament, bewail* (1111)
 στένω *mourn (for), groan*
 στέργω, στέρξω *love, be content*
 στερέω, fut. mid. or pass. στερήσομαι; 2 aor. pass. ἐστέρην *deprive*
 στέρνον, -ου, τό *breast, chest*
 στέρομαι *be without, lose* (1309)
 στεφανηφορία / στεφαναφορία, -ας, ἡ *wearing of a wreath of victory*
 (862v, Murray)
 στεφανηφόρος / στεφαναφόρος, -ον *wearing a crown or wreath, of a
 contest in which the prize is a crown or wreath* (862v, Diggle)
 στέφανος, -ού, ὁ *wreath, garland*
 στέφω, στέψω *crown*
 στολή, -ῆς, ἡ *clothing* (966)
 στόμα, -ατος, τό *mouth*
 στοναχή, -ῆς, ἡ *wailing*
 στρατηλατέω *lead an army*
 στρατηλάτης, -ου, ὁ *leader of an army, commander* (1082)
 στρέφω, aor. ἔστρεψα *turn* (739)
 Στρόφιος, -ίου, ὁ *Strophius, father of Pylades* (18)
 στυγερός, -ά, -όν *hateful, loathed* (121)
στυγέω *hate, detest*
 στυγνός, -ή, -όν *hateful*
σύ, gen. σοῦ, σου, σέθεν; dat. σοί, σοι, acc. σέ, σε *you* (singular)
 σύγγαμος, -ον *united in marriage, married* (212)
 συγγενείαιρα, -άς, ἡ *mother, parent, sister* (746)
 συγγίγνομαι, aor. συνεγενόμην *be born with, associate with, live with*
 συγγινώσκω, συγγνώσομαι, συνέγων *think with, acknowledge, pardon,
 forgive*
 συγγνωστός, -όν *forgivable* (1026)
σύγγονος, -ον *inborn, connected by blood*; as noun *brother or sister*
 συγχωρέω *give way, yield to* (1052)
 συλλέγω *gather together* (81)

- συμβάλλω, pf. συμβέβληκα *bring together, engage in* (906)
 σύμβολον, -όν, τό *sign, token* (577)
 σύμμαχος, -ον *fighting along with; as a noun, ally*
 σύμμετρος, -ον *of the same size, commensurate with, proportionate* (533)
 συμπλέω *sail along with* (1355)
 συμφέρω, συνοίσω *bear along with, be useful, agree with; mid. meet, be in harmony with* (527)
 συμφορά, -άς, ἡ *misfortune*
 σύμφορος, -ον *happening with, convenient, suitable* (633)
 σύν *with (+ dat.)*
 σύναυλος, -ον *harmonious, in concert with the pipe/flute* (879)
 συναύξω *grow along with* (544)
 σύνειμι (εἰμί) *be with, associate with* (943)
 συνεκκλέπτω *help to steal away, help (someone) hide (something)* (364)
 συνεκκομίζω *help in carrying out* (73)
 συνεργάτις, -ιδος, ἡ *fellow worker, partner* (100)
 συνέστιος, -ον *sharing one's home and hearth, guest* (784)
 συνεύδω *sleep with* (1145)
 συνθoinάτωρ, -ορος, ὁ *fellow feaster* (638)
 συνθύω *sacrifice along with* (795)
 συνίημι, aor. συνῆκα *send or bring together, perceive, take notice of*
 συννέφω *collect clouds, wear a gloomy look* (1078)
 σύνοιδα *know about, share knowledge, know well*
 συντείνω *stretch together, exert oneself*
 συντήκω, pf. συντέτηκα *melt together, waste way* (240)
 συντίθημι *put together, contrive* (95)
 συντυχία, -ας, ἡ *occurrence, accident, misfortune* (1358)
 σφαγεῖον, -όν, τό *a bowl for catching the blood of a sacrificial victim* (800)
 σφαγή, -ῆς, ἡ *cutting the throat*
 σφαγιασμός, -οῦ, ὁ *slaying, sacrificing* (200)
 σφάγιον, -όν, ὁ *sacrificial victim*
 σφαγίς, -ίδος, ἡ *sacrificial knife*
 σφάζω, aor. ἔσφαξα *cut the throat, sacrifice* (813)
 σφε *her, him, them*
 Σφίγξ, Σφιγγός, ἡ *Sphinx* (471)
 σφόνδυλος, -όν, ὁ *a vertebra* (841)
 σχέτλιος, -α, -ον *suffering, miserable, cruel*
σῶζω, σώσω, ἔσωσα *save*
σῶμα, -ατος, τό *body, person*

σωτήρ, σωτήρως, ὁ *savior* (993)

σωφρονέω *be of sound mind, be moderate*

σώφρων, -ον *modest, virtuous*

τάκω = τήκω *melt* (208, 1209v)

ταλαίπωρος, -ον *enduring toil* (334)

τάλας, τάλαινα, τάλαν *unhappy, miserable*

ταμίας, -ου, ὁ *one who distributes, steward, treasurer, master* (704)

Τάναος, ὁ *Tanaus river* (410)

Ταντάλειος, -α, -ον *of Tantalus* (1176)

Τάνταλος, -ου, ὁ *Tantalus* (11)

ταραγμός, -οῦ, ὁ *disturbance, confusion* (368)

ταρβέω *fear* (261)

τάσσω, τάζω *appoint, assign* (908)

ταῦρος, -ου, ὁ *bull*

τάφος, -ου, ὁ *grave, tomb, burial*

τάχα *perhaps; soon* (226)

τάχιστος, -η, -ον *superl of ταχύς swift* (791)

τάχος, -ους, τό *speed, swiftness; ὅσον τάχος with all speed* (421)

ταχύπορος, -ον *quick-moving* (451)

τε *and enclitic, postpositive*

τέγω, aor. ἔτεξα *wet, moisten*

τέθριππος, -ον *with four horses* (866)

τεῖχος, -ους, τό *wall*

τεκμήριον, -ου, τό *sure sign, proof* (575)

τέκνον, -ου, τό *child*

τέκος, -ους, τό *child* (1215)

τελεσφόρος, -ον *brought to an end, completed, bringing fulfilment* (1132)

τελευτή, -ης, ἡ *fulfilment, end* (908)

τελέω aor. ἐτέλεσσα / ἐτέλεσα *end, perform, accomplish, bring to an end* (863)

τέλος, -ους, τό *end* (956)

τέμνω, τεμῶ, ἔτεμον *cut*

τέρας, -ατος, τό *sign, marvel, portent* (722)

τέρην, -εινα, -εν *worn smooth, delicate* (778)

τέρμα, -ατος, τό *end* (1232)

τέρμων, -ονος, ὁ *boundary* (96)

τετραβάμων, -ον *four-footed* (476)

τεῦχος, -ους, τό *tool, implement, vessel, cheese press* (496); pl. *arms*

- τεύχω, pf. m-p τέτυγμαι *prepare, make* (457)
 τήκω [= τάκω] *melt, fall away*; mid. *be moved to tears* (208, 1209v)
 τηλόθεν *from far away* (753)
 τηλορός, -όν *distant, far* (251)
 τητάομαι *be in want, be deprived of* (310)
τίθημι, θήσω, ἔθηκα, τέθεικα, θέθειμαι, ἐτέθην *put, make*
τίκτω, aor. ἔτεκον *bear, be mother or father*
 τιμάω *honor* (194)
 τιμή, -ῆς, ἡ *honor* (993)
 τιμωρέω *take vengeance on*
 τιμωρία, -ας, ἡ *help, vengeance, retribution* (978)
 τίνω, aor. ἔτεισα *pay, expiate*; mid. *avenge*
τις, τι *some, any, someone, something*; τι (adverbial) *at all*
τίς, τί *who?, what?*; τί *why?*
 τλάω, aor. ἔτλην *endure, have the heart to do*
τλήμων (τλάμων) *enduring, suffering*
τοι *surely, you know* ("the wheedling particle," Gildersleeve)
 τοιγάρ *therefore* (483)
 τοίνυν *then, moreover* (1030)
τοιόςδε, -άδε, ὁνδε *such*
τοιούτος, τοιαύτη, τοιοῦτο *of such a kind*
τόκος, -ου, ὁ *childbirth, bringing forth of children*
 τολμάω, aor. ἐτόλμησα, aor. pass. ἐτολμήθην *dare, be brave, have the heart to, endure*; pass. *El.* 277 οἱ ἐτολμήθη πατήρ "such things as my father had dared (or done) against him" [LSJ, s.v.]
 τομή, -ῆς, ἡ *cut, stroke* (160)
 τόπος, -ου, ὁ *place*
 τοσόσδε, τοσήδε, τοσόνδε *so great*
 τοσοῦτος, τοσαύτη, τοσοῦτο *so great* (424)
 τόσως *so much* (1092)
τότε *then, at that time*
 τρανῶς *clearly* (758)
 τρέμω *tremble, fear* (643)
 τρέπω, 2 aor. mid. ἐτραπόμην *turn*
τρέφω, aor. ἔθρεψα, pf. m-p τέθραμμαι, aor. pass. ἐτρέφθην / ἐτράφην
nourish, rear, keep
 τρέχω, δραμοῦμαι, ἔδραμον *run, run (a course or a risk)*
 τρέω, aor. ἔτρεσα *fear, be afraid, flee* (220)
 τρίβος, -ου, ἡ *worn path* (103)

- τρίβων, -ονος, adj. *skilled, experienced* (1127)
 τρίπους, -οδος, ὁ *tripod, stool or altar of the Delphic priestess* (980)
 τριταῖος, -ά, -ον *in three days, on the third day* (171)
Τροία, -ας, ἡ *Troy*
 τροπαῖος, -ά, -ον *of a turning, of defeat, turning away*
 τρόπος, -ου, ὁ *way, manner, way of life, character, temper*
 τροφεῖα, -άς, ἡ *pay for rearing* (626)
 τροφεύς, -εως, ὁ *one who rears, foster father* (16)
 τροφός, -ου, ἡ, ὁ *feeder, rearer* (usually fem.; the masc. is τροφεύς)
 τροχηλατέω *drive a chariot, drive, chase* (1253)
 τρύχος, -ους, τό *rag, tattered clothing; pl. rags*
 Τρωάς, -άδος, ἡ *a Trojan woman; γῆ Τρωάς the region of Troy, the Troad*
 Τρῶες, οἱ *Trojans* (1077)
 Τρωϊκός, -ή, -όν *Trojan* (1279)
 Τρώϊος, -ά, -ον *of Troy, Trojan* (440)
 τυγχάνω, aor. ἔτυχον *happen* (with participle), *meet with, get* (+ gen.)
τύμβος, -ου, ὁ *tomb*
 Τυνδάρεως, -εω, ὁ *Tyndareus*
 Τυνδαρίδαι, -ῶν, οἱ *sons of Tyndareus* (1295)
 Τυνδαρίς, -ίδος, ἡ *daughter of Tyndareus* (Helen, Clytemestra)
 τυραννεύω *be a tyrant* (877)
 τύραννος, -ού, ὁ *king, tyrant; as adj. royal*
 τύρευμα, -άτος, τό *cheese* (496)
τύχη, -ης, ἡ *luck, fortune*

 Ὑάδες, -ων, αἱ *the Hyades* (468)
 ὑβρίζω, aor. ὕβρισα *insult* (46)
 ὕβρις, -εως, ἡ *violence, insolence* (58)
 ὑδραῖνομαι, aor. ὑδρανάμην *wash, bathe* (157)
 ὑμέτερος, -ά, -ον *your* (pl.) (1293)
 ὑπάγω *lead under, bring a person before a judge* (1155)
 ὑπαίδω *sing in accompaniment, accompany with the voice* (+ dat.; 864v, Diggle)
 ὑπείμι (εἰμί) *be under, be at the bottom, be granted, be laid down* (1036)
 ὑπέρ *above, for* (+ gen.); *over* (+ acc.)
 ὑπερτείνω, aor. ὑπερέτεινα *stretch over, spread, stretch*
 ὑπέρτερος, -ά, -ον *above, higher, stronger* (584)
 ὑπερέρχομαι, aor. ὑπερῆλθον *go/come under, come upon, steal over* (748)
 ὑπέχω, ὑφέξω *hold/put under, hold out, supply*

- ὑπηρετέω *serve as a rower, serve, do service* (to/for + dat.)
 ὑπρέτης, -ου, ὁ *rower, laborer, helper, servant*
 ὑπό *by* (+ gen.); *under, from under* (+ dat.); *under, down to* (+ acc.)
 ὑποπτος, -ον *looked at from under, viewed with suspicion*
 ὑποσπάω, aor. ὑπέσπασα *draw away from under* (i.e., draw a young animal from under its mother), *withdraw secretly* (495)
 ὑποφεύγω *flee from under, evade, shrink back* (1343)
 ὑπώροφος, -ον *under the roof, sheltered, inside the house* (1166)
 ὕστατος, -η, -ον *last* (1055)
 ὑφαίρεω *seize secretly; mid. keep (secret) from* (271)
 ὑφήγομαι, pf. ὑφήγημαι *guide, lead the way* (664)
 ὑφίστημι, ὑποστήσω *place under, support, lay in secret; intrans. undertake* (983)
 ὑψηλός, -ή, -όν *high, towering, proud* (6)
- φαέθω *shine; found in participle φαέθων radiant, shining* (464)
 φαεννός, -ή, -όν *shining, clear* (726)
φαίνω, aor. pass., ἐφάνην *show; m-p appear*
 φανερός, -ά, -όν *visible, evident*
φάος, τό [= φῶς] *light*
φᾶρος, -ους, τό *cloth, cloak, clothing*
 φάσγανον, -ού, τό *sword* (1222)
 φάσμα, -ατος, τό *phantom, apparition, strange phenomenon, portent, prodigy* (711)
 φάτνη, -ης, ἡ *manger* (1136)
 φαῦλος, -ή, -ον *slight, trivial, mean* (760)
 φέγγος, -ους, τό *light*
φέρω, οἶσω *carry, bear, get; perhaps at 431 hold*
φεῦ exclamation of astonishment, grief, anger, admiration: *ah!, oh!, alas!*
 φεύγω, φεύξομαι *flee, escape, be a defendant, be exiled*
 φήμη, -ης, ἡ *utterance*
φημί, φήσω *say*
 φθείρω *ruin, corrupt, destroy; mid. waste away, wander, drift* (as a seafarer) (234)
 Φθιάς, -άδος, ἡ *a Phthian woman* (836)
φθίνω *wither, perish, die*
 φθογγή, -ης, ἡ *voice* (1292)
 φθόγγος, -ου, ὁ *voice* (716)
 φθονέω *envy* (30)

- φθόνος, -ου, ὁ *envy, jealousy* (902)
 φίλαυλος, -ον *fond of the pipe/flute* (435)
 φιλέω *love, be likely, be wont to*
φίλος, -η, -ον *dear, loved; as a noun, friend, loved one; compar. φίλτερος; superl. φίλτατος*
 φιλόπονος, -ον *fond of blaming, carping* (904)
 φίλτρον, -ου, τό *love charm* (1309)
 φλογερός, -ά, -όν *blazing, gleaming* (991)
 φλόξ, φλογός, ἡ *flame* (732)
 φοβερός, -ά, -όν *fearful* (743)
 φοβέω *frighten; mid. fear* (617)
 φόβος, -ου, ὁ *fear, flight*
Φοῖβος, -ου, ὁ *Phoibos, Phoebus* (Apollo)
 φονεύς, -έως, ὁ *killer, murderer*
 φονεύω *murder, kill*
 φονή, -ῆς, ἡ *murder* (1207)
φόνιος, (-α), -ον *bloody, murderous*
φόνος, -ου, ὁ *murder*
 φορέω *bear constantly, wear* (309)
 φράζω, aor. ἔφρασα *tell (of)* (666)
 φρενήρης, -ες *sound of mind* (1053)
 φρήν, φρενός, ἡ *heart, spirit, sense*
φρονέω *think, be disposed, be in such and such frame of mind (+ adv.); εὖ φρονεῖν be of sound mind, be well disposed, be glad; μέγα φρονεῖν think big, be presumptuous*
 φρόνημα, -άτος, τό *mind, will*
 φρουρά, -ᾶς, ἡ *watching, guard*
 φρουρέω *watch (out for)*
 φρούρημα, -άτος, τό *watch, garrison, guard* (798)
 Φρύγιος, -ά, -ον *Phrygian, used as a variation of Trojan* (Phrygia was an area of Anatolia, and its inhabitants were allies of the Trojans.)
 Φρύξ, Φρυγός, ὁ *Phrygian, > Trojan* (675)
 φυγάς, -άδος, ὁ, ἡ *refugee, exile*
 φυγή, -ῆς, ἡ *flight, exile*
 φυή, -ῆς, ἡ *growth, stature, form* (460/1)
 φύρω *mix, mingle, wet* (1173)
 φύσις, -εως, ἡ *nature*
φύω, 1 aor. ἔφυσα *produce, ὁ φύσας father; 2 aor. ἔφυν be born, be; pf. πέφυκα be by nature, be (perf. and 2 aor. have a present meaning: to be so and so by nature, LSJ s.v. B, II)*

φώς, φωτός, ὁ *man*
 φῶς, τό [= φάος] *light*

χαίρω *rejoice*, pf. m-p κεχάρμαι; χαῖρε *hello, farewell*; χαίρειν ἔαν *dismiss from one's mind, renounce*

χαίτη, -ης, ἡ *hair*

χαλά [= χηλη]/, -ῆς, ἡ *horse's hoof, claw* (474)

χαλεπός, -ή, -όν *hard, difficult* (1352)

χαρά, -άς, ἡ *joy*

χαρακτήρ, -ῆρος, ὁ *one who mints coins; mark, impress, stamp* (on a coin)

χαρίζομαι *favor, gratify* (192)

χάρις, χάριτος, ἡ *thanks, favor, gratitude*

χάσμα, -ατος, τό *yawning, gulf* (1271)

χείρ, χειρός, ἡ (spelled χερ- and χειρ-) *hand; band, troop*

χειροδράκων, -οντος *with serpent hands* (1345)

χειρώω *subdue, overpower* (1168)

χέλυς, -υος, ἡ *tortoise; lyre; breast, chest* (837)

χερνής, -ῆτος (gen.) *poor, needy* (207)

χέρνιψ, -ιβος, ἡ *special water* (for ritual purification of the hands) (792)

χέρσος, -ου, ἡ *dry land; as adj. dry, barren of (+ gen.)* (325)

χεῦμα, -ατος, τό *that which is poured, stream* (152)

χέω, aor. pass. ἐχύθην *pour*

χθών, χθονός, ἡ *earth*

χίλιοι, -αι, -α *a thousand* (2)

χοή, -ῆς, ἡ *pouring out, drink offering* (324)

χολή, -ῆς, ἡ *bile, gall; δοχαὶ χολῆς gallbladder* (828)

χόρευμα, -άτος, τό *choral dance* (875, 434v)

χορός, -οῦ, ὁ *dance, chorus*

χράομαι, χρήσομαι *use (as) (+ dat.)* (374)

χράω, aor. ἔχρησα *proclaim* (an oracle); *direct, warn (+ inf.)*

χρεία, -ας, ἡ *need, poverty*

χρέων [ἔστι] *it is necessary, it is right/proper*

χρή, impf. χρῆν *it is necessary* (one ought), *it is proper* (one should)

χρήζω *want, need*

χρήμα, -ατος, τό *thing; τι χρήμα why?*

χρήσαι (191) aor. mid. imperative of κίχρημι *lend; mid. borrow*

χρησμός, -οῦ, ὁ *oracular response, oracle*

χρηστήριον, -ού, τό *oracle, seat of an oracle* (1272)

χρηστός, -ή, -όν *good*

χρόνιος, -ία, -ον *after a long time, long-delaying, long-awaited*

χρόνος, -ου, ὁ *time; χρόνῳ in time, at long last*

χρυσεόμαλλος, -ον *with golden wool* (726)

χρύσεος, -ή, -ον *golden, of gold*

χρυσήλατος, -ον *of beaten gold, worked with beaten gold* (713)

χρυσός, -οῦ, ὁ *gold* (33)

χρυσότυπος, -ον *made of gold* (470)

χρυσωπός, -ον *with golden eyes or face* (740)

χρῶμα, -άτος, τό *color, complexion* (521)

χρῶς, χρωτός, ὁ *skin, flesh*

χωρέω *make room, give way, move, go, travel*

ψαύω *touch*

ψήφος, -ού, ἡ *pebble, vote, tribunal, judgment*

ψόγος, -ου, ὁ *fault, blame*

ψυχή, -ῆς, ἡ *soul, breath of life*

ὦ *oh!*

ὧδε *in this way, thus*

ὦδή / ὦδά, -ῆς / -ᾶς, ἡ *song* (865)

ὠμός, -ή, -όν *cruel*

ὠμόφρων, -ον *cruel-minded*

ὠνέομαι *buy* (1090)

ῥα, -ας, ἡ *hour, time, season; ῥα [ἐστί] it is time*

ὥς *so, thus, as though, when, so that, because, for, exclamatory how; as*
prep. (used only with persons) *to (+ acc.)*

ὥσπερ *as, just as*

ὥστε *so that, so as to*

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The index covers themes, *loci*, and names mentioned in all parts of the commentary other than the sections Verbs and Grammar. It does not cover any of the references in “Notes and Commentary” to Euripides’ *Electra* or its *dramatis personae*, or any references to Agamemnon in the play. It does, however, cover references to the same characters in other plays.

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