

- δίκαια δ', ὡς φήσεις σύ· τούσδε γὰρ φιλεῖς  
 οὐχ ἦσσον ἢ γῶ παῖδας, εἴπερ εὖ φρονεῖς·  
 τούτους ἀνάσχου δεσπότας ἐμῶν δόμων  
 305 καὶ μὴ ἰγῆμης τοῖσδε μητρὶαν τέκνοις,  
 ἦτις κακίων οὐσ' ἐμοῦ γυνὴ φθόνῳ  
 τοῖς σοῖσι κάμοις παισὶ χεῖρα προσβαλεῖ.  
 μὴ δῆτα δράσης ταῦτά γ', αἰτούμαι σ' ἐγώ.  
 ἐχθρὰ γὰρ ἢ ἰοῦσα μητρὶα τέκνοις  
 310 τοῖς πρόσθ', ἐχίδνης οὐδὲν ἠπιώτερα.  
 καὶ παῖς μὲν ἄρσην πατέρ' ἔχει πύργον μέγαν  
 [ὄν καὶ προσεῖπε καὶ προσερρήθη πάλιν].  
 σὺ δ', ὦ τέκνον μοι, πῶς κορευθήσῃ καλῶς;  
 ποίας τυχοῦσα συζύγου τῷ σῷ πατρί;  
 315 μὴ σοὶ τι' αἰσχροὺς προσβαλοῦσα κληδόνα  
 ἦβης ἐν ἀκμῇ σοὺς διαφθείρῃ γάμους.  
 οὐ γάρ σε μήτηρ οὔτε νυμφεύσει ποτὲ  
 οὔτ' ἐν τόκοισι σοῖσι θαρσυνεῖ, τέκνον,  
 παροῦσ', ἴν' οὐδὲν μητρὸς εὐμενέστερον.  
 320 δεῖ γὰρ θανεῖν με· καὶ τόδ' οὐκ ἐς αἴριον  
 οὐδ' ἐς τρίτην μοι ἱμηνὸς† ἔρχεται κακόν,  
 ἀλλ' αὐτίκ' ἐν τοῖς οὐκέτ' οὔσι λέξομαι.  
 χαίροντες εὐφραίνουσθε καὶ σοὶ μὲν, πόσι,  
 γυναῖκ' ἀρίστην ἔστι κομπάσαι λαβεῖν,  
 325 ὑμῖν δέ, παῖδες, μητρὸς ἐκπεφυκέναι.

## ΧΟΡΟΣ

θάρσει· πρὸ τούτου γὰρ λέγειν οὐχ ἄζομαι·  
 δράσει τὰδ', εἴπερ μὴ φρενῶν ἀμαρτάνει.

you will agree. For you love these children as much as I do, if you are in your senses. Keep them as lords of my house and do not marry again, putting over them a stepmother, who will be less noble than I and out of envy will lay a hostile hand to your children and mine. No, do not do it, I beg you. For a stepmother comes in as a foe to the former children, no kinder to them than a viper. And though a son has in his father a bulwark of defense, how will you, my daughter, grow to an honored womanhood? What sort of stepmother will you get? May she not cast some disgraceful slur on your reputation and in the prime of your youth destroy your chances of marriage! Your mother will never see you married, never stand by to encourage you in childbirth, my daughter, where nothing is better than a mother's kindness. For I must die: this calamity does not come upon me tomorrow or the day after, but this very hour I will be numbered among the dead. Farewell! I wish you joy! You, my husband, have the right to boast the best of wives, and you, my children, the best of mothers.

## CHORUS LEADER

Fear not (I do not hesitate to speak for him): he will do this if he has any sense.

<sup>312</sup> del. Pierson: cf. 195

<sup>314</sup> τοίας Reiske, tum fort. τυχούσης

<sup>321</sup> τρίτον μοι φέγγος Herwerden: v. del. Mekler

- 45 αἰσχύνομαι γὰρ ὀλβίων ἀνδρῶν τέκνα  
λαβῶν ὑβρίζειν, οὐ κατὰξίος γεγώς.  
στένω δὲ τὸν λόγοισι κηδεύοντ' ἐμοὶ  
ἄθλιον Ὀρέστην, εἴ ποτ' εἰς Ἄργος μολῶν  
γάμους ἀδελφῆς δυστυχεῖς ἐσόψεται.
- 50 ὅστις δέ μ' εἰναί φησι μῶρον, εἰ λαβῶν  
νέαν ἐς οἶκους παρθένον μὴ θιγγάνω,  
γνώμης πονηροῖς κανόσιν ἀναμετρούμενος  
τὸ σῶφρον ἴστω καὺτὸς αὖ τοιοῦτος ὢν.

## ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

- ὦ νύξ μέλαινα, χρυσέων ἄστρων τροφέ,  
55 ἐν ἧ τὸδ' ἄγγος τῷδ' ἐφεδρεῖον κάρᾳ  
φέρουσα πηγὰς ποταμίας μετέρχομαι—  
οὐ δὴ τι χρείας ἐς τοσόδ' ἀφιγμένη,  
ἀλλ' ὡς ὕβριν δεῖξωμεν Αἰγίσθου θεοῖς—  
γούους τ' ἀφίημ' αἰθέρ' ἐς μέγαν πατρί.
- 60 ἢ γὰρ πανώλης Τυνδαρίς, μήτηρ ἐμή,  
ἐξέβαλέ μ' οἴκων, χάριτα τιθεμένη πόσει·  
τεκοῦσα δ' ἄλλους παῖδας Αἰγίσθῳ πάρα  
πάρεργ' Ὀρέστην καμὲ ποιεῖται δόμων.

## ΑΥΤΟΥΡΓΟΣ

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

56-8 sic distinxit Radermacher

59 ἀφίημ' Reiske: ἀφίην L

66 ψέγοντος Herwerden

of honor prevents me from taking the daughter of a wealthy man and committing outrage against her since I am not her equal. I groan also at the thought that poor Orestes, my supposed brother-in-law, should ever come to Argos and see the unlucky marriage his sister has made.

If anyone says I am a fool for taking a young virgin into my house and leaving her untouched, he should know that he measures modest behavior by his own mind's false standards and is himself a fool.

*Enter from the skene ELECTRA, carrying a water jug on her head.*

## ELECTRA

O black night, nurse of the golden stars! In you, carrying this vessel poised on my head, I go to fetch water from a stream—I do this not from need but to show the gods Aegisthus' outrage against me—and utter my laments to the wide heaven for my father to hear! My mother, the accursed daughter of Tyndareus, has cast me out of my house to please her husband. Begetting other children by Aegisthus, she treats Orestes and me as the house's illegitimate offspring.

## FARMER

Why, unlucky woman, do you do this work on my account, accepting toils though gently raised before? Why, when I have urged you to, do you not stop?

κῆρυξ πρὸς ἄστυ δεῦρο Θησέα καλῶν,  
 ὡς ἢ τὸ τούτων λυπρὸν ἐξέλη χθονὸς  
 ἢ τάσδ' ἀνάγκας ἰκεσίους λύση, θεοὺς  
 40 ὄσιόν τι δράσας· πάντα γὰρ δι' ἀρσένων  
 γυναιξὶ πράσσειν εἰκὸς αἴτινες σοφαί.

## ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α

ἰκετεύω σε, γεραία, γεραιῶν ἐκ στομάτων πρὸς  
 γόνυ πίπτουσα τὸ σόν·  
 ἴανομοι τέκνα λῦσαι φθιμένων νεκύων† οἶ  
 45 καταλείπουσι μέλη  
 θανάτῳ λυσιμελεῖ θηρσὶν ὀρείοισι βοράν·

ἀντ. α

ἐσιδοῦσ' οἰκτρὰ μὲν ὄσσων δάκρυ' ἀμφὶ  
 βλεφάροις, ῥν-  
 50 σὰ δὲ σαρκῶν πολιᾶν  
 καταδρῦμματα χειρῶν· τί γάρ; ἂ φθιμένους παί-  
 δας ἐμοὺς οὔτε δόμοις  
 προθέμαν οὔτε τάφων χῶματα γαίας ἐσορῶ.

στρ. β

ἔτεκες καὶ σύ ποτ', ὦ πότνια, κούρον φίλα ποιη-  
 σαμένα λέκτρα πόσει σῶ· μετὰ νυν  
 δὸς ἐμοὶ σᾶς διανοίας, μετὰδος δ' ὄσσων ἐπαλγῶ  
 μελέα <γῶ> φθιμένων οὖς ἔτεκον·

<sup>44</sup> ἀνόμους καταπαῦσαι Campbell, tum fort. νεκύων φθι-  
 μένων (Italie) cl. 52: possis etiam ἀνόμων ἀπο λῦσαι / νέκνας  
 φθιμένων <sup>59</sup> <γῶ> Kirchhoff

for their suppliant wreaths. I have sent a herald to the city  
 to summon Theseus here so that either he will remove  
 from the land the distress they cause or discharge his duty  
 to the suppliants by doing an act of piety toward the gods.  
 It is proper for women, if they are wise, to do everything  
 through their men.

## CHORUS

I beseech you, aged lady, from aged lips,  
 falling at your knees:  
 stop the lawless men<sup>6</sup> who are leaving the bodies of the  
 slain  
 in limb-loosening death  
 as food for mountain beasts!

Look at the pitiable tears upon our cheeks  
 and the gashes our hands have torn  
 in our old and wrinkled flesh! How can we do otherwise?  
 Our dead sons  
 we could not lay out in the house for burial or see a mound  
 of earth raised over their tombs.

You too once bore, my lady, a son, making your bed pleas-  
 ing  
 to your husband. So grant me  
 a portion of your kind regard, grant it, in pity for the grief  
 that I, unlucky one,  
 feel for my son's death.

<sup>6</sup> I translate Campbell's attractive but uncertain conjecture.  
 The rest of the line is likewise uncertain.

## EURIPIDES

- 945 αἰνόπαριν κατάρρα  
 διδοῦσ', ἐπεὶ με γαίας  
 ἐκ πατρίας ἀπώλεσεν  
 ἐξέφκισέν τ' οἴκων γάμος οὐ γάμος ἀλλ'  
 ἀλάστορός τις οἰζύς·
- 950 ἂν μήτε πέλαγος ἄλιον ἀπαγάγοι πάλιν  
 μήτε πατρῶον ἴκοιτ' ἐς οἶκον.

## ΠΟΛΥΜΗΣΤΩΡ

- [ὦ φίλτατ' ἀνδρῶν Πρίαμε, φίλτατη δὲ σύ,]  
 Ἑκάβη, δακρῦω σ' εἰσορῶν πόλιν τε σὴν
- 955 τὴν τ' ἀρτίως θανοῦσαν ἐκγονον σέθεν.  
 φεῦ·  
 οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν πιστόν, οὔτ' εὐδοξία  
 οὔτ' αὖ καλῶς πράσσοντα μὴ πράξειν κακῶς.  
 φύρουσι δ' αὐτὰ θεοὶ πάλιν τε καὶ πρόσσω  
 ταραγμὸν ἐντιθέντες, ὡς ἀγνωσία
- 960 σέβωμεν αὐτούς. ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν τί δεῖ  
 θρηνεῖν, προκόπτουτ' οὐδὲν ἐς πρόσθεν κακῶν;  
 σὺ δ', εἴ τι μέμφη τῆς ἐμῆς ἀπουσίας,  
 σχέες· τυγχάνω γὰρ ἐν μέσοις Θρηήκης ὄροις  
 ἀπών, ὅτ' ἦλθες δεῦρ'. ἐπεὶ δ' ἀφικόμην,
- 965 ἤδη πόδ' ἔξω δωμάτων αἴροντί μοι  
 ἐς ταῦτόν ἤδε συμπίπτει δμῶϊς σέθεν  
 [λέγουσα μύθους, ὦν κλυὸν ἀφικόμην].

## ΕΚΑΒΗ

αἰσχύνομαί σε προσβλέπειν ἐναντίον,  
 Πολυμήστορ, ἐν τοιοῖσδε κειμένη κακοῖς.

## HECUBA

herdsman Paris the Dread, for it was their marriage—no marriage but the curse of some avenging spirit—that lost my fatherland to me and sent me far from home. May the briny sea not bring her back! May she never reach her father's home!

*Enter POLYMESTOR with his two young sons and attendants by Eisdos B, accompanied by the Maid-servant. Hecuba keeps her eyes fixed on the ground.*

## POLYMESTOR

[Priam, dearest of men, and dearest of women,] Hecuba, I weep as I see your city and also your daughter lately slain. Ah me! Nothing can be relied upon, not good repute nor yet the thought that a man in luck will never have bad fortune. The gods stir things together in confusion back and forth, adding disorder so that in our ignorance we might worship them. But why make these lamentations, which get us no further on in our misfortunes?

As for you, if you find fault with my absence, check the thought. It happens that I was away in the inland regions of Thrace when you arrived here. After I got back, your servant here arrived just as I was on the point of coming here myself. [She gave me the message: I heard it and have come.]

## HECUBA

Shame prevents me, Polymestor, from looking you in the face since I have been put into such calamity. I am

<sup>946</sup> γαίας Diggle: γὰς C    <sup>947</sup> πατρίας Dindorf: πατρώας  
 fere C    <sup>953</sup> del. Nauck    <sup>967</sup> del. Kovacs

## EURIPIDES

- 970 ὅτω γὰρ ὤφθην εὐτυχοῦσ', αἰδῶς μ' ἔχει  
 ἐν τῷδε πότμῳ τυγχάνουσ' ἴν' εἰμὶ νῦν,  
 κοῦκ ἂν δυναίμην προσβλέπειν ὀρθαῖς κόραις.  
 [ἀλλ' αὐτὸ μὴ δύσνοιαν ἠγγήση σέθεν  
 Πολυμήστορ· ἄλλως δ' αἰτιόν τι καὶ νόμος,  
 975 γυναῖκας ἀνδρῶν μὴ βλέπειν ἐναντίον.]

## ΠΟΛΤΜΗΣΤΩΡ

καὶ θαυμά γ' οὐδέν. ἀλλὰ τίς χρεία σ' ἐμοῦ;  
 τί χρῆμ' ἐπέμψω τὸν ἐμὸν ἐκ δόμων πόδα;

## ΕΚΑΒΗ

- ἴδιον ἐμαντῆς δὴ τι πρὸς σέ βούλομαι  
 καὶ παῖδας εἰπεῖν σοῦς· ὁπάονας δέ μοι  
 980 χωρὶς κέλευσον τῶνδ' ἀποστήναι δόμων.

## ΠΟΛΤΜΗΣΤΩΡ

- χωρεῖτ', ἐν ἀσφαλεί γὰρ ἦδ' ἔρημία·  
 φίλη μὲν εἰ σύ, προσφιλὲς δέ μοι τόδε  
 στράτευμ' Ἀχαιῶν. ἀλλὰ σημαίνειν σε χρή·  
 τί δεῖ τὸν εὖ πράσσοντα μὴ πράσσουσιν εὖ  
 985 φίλοις ἐπαρκεῖν; ὡς ἔτοιμός εἰμ' ἐγώ.

## ΕΚΑΒΗ

πρῶτον μὲν εἰπέ παῖδ' ὃν ἐξ ἐμῆς χερὸς  
 Πολύδωρον ἔκ τε πατρὸς ἐν δόμοις ἔχεις,  
 εἰ ζῆ· τὰ δ' ἄλλα δευτέρῳ σ' ἐρήσομαι.

## ΠΟΛΤΜΗΣΤΩΡ

μάλιστα· τοῦκείνου μὲν εὐτυχεῖς μέρος.

973-5 del. Hartung

## HECUBA

embarrassed, before someone who has seen me in prosperity, to be in my present state of misfortune, and I cannot look at you with steady glance. [But do not think this shows ill-will toward you, Polymestor: besides in other ways custom is responsible, which ordains that women shall not look directly at men.]

## POLYMESTOR

Yes, and no wonder. But what need have you of me? Why have you summoned me from my house?

## HECUBA

I want to say something privately to you and your sons. Please order your servants to stand at a distance from the house.

## POLYMESTOR

Leave! To be unattended is quite safe here. You are my friend and so is the Argive army here. (*The attendants leave by Eisodos B.*) But you must tell me: what help should I, a man in prosperity, render to my unfortunate friends? I am at your service.

## HECUBA

First tell me whether my son Polydorus, whom you received into your house from my hand and his father's, is still alive. I shall ask you my other questions after that.

## POLYMESTOR

Most assuredly he is alive! Where he is concerned, your fortune is good.

925 δόμοι τ' ἐλαύνειν φθέγμ' ἔχοντες οἶδε με,  
μισεῖ τε γαῖα Φθιάς. εἰ δ' ἤξει πάρος  
Φοῖβον λιπῶν μαντείον ἐς δόμους πόσις,  
κτενεῖ μ' ἐπ' αἰσχίστοισιν, ἢ δουλεύσομεν  
νόθοισι λέκτροις ὧν ἐδέσποζον πρὸ τοῦ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

πῶς οὖν τάδ', ὡς εἶποι τις, ἐξημάρτανες;

ΕΡΜΙΟΝΗ

930 κακῶν γυναικῶν εἴσοδοί μ' ἀπώλεσαν,  
αἶ μοι λέγουσαι τούσδ' ἐχαύνωσαν λόγους·  
Σὺ τὴν κακίστην αἰχμάλωτον ἐν δόμοις  
δούλην ἀνέξῃ σοι λέχος κοινουμένην;  
μὰ τὴν ἀνασσαν, οὐκ ἂν ἔν γ' ἐμοῖς δόμοις  
935 βλέπουσ' ἂν αὐγὰς τᾶμ' ἐκαρποῦτ' ἂν λέχη.  
κἀγὼ κλυοῦσα τούσδε Σειρήνων λόγους  
[σοφῶν πανούργων ποικίλων λαλημάτων]  
ἐξηνεμώθη μωρία. τί γάρ μ' ἐχρήν  
πόσιν φυλάσσειν, ἢ παρήν ὅσων ἔδει;  
940 πολὺς μὲν ὄλβος, δωμάτων δ' ἠνάσσομεν,  
παῖδας δ' ἐγὼ μὲν γνησίους ἔτικτον ἄν,  
ἢ δ' ἠμιδούλους τοῖς ἐμοῖς νοθαγενεῖς.  
ἀλλ' οὐποτ' οὐποτ' (οὐ γὰρ εἰσάπαξ ἐρῶ)  
χρῆ τούς γε νοῦν ἔχοντας, οἷς ἔστιν γυνή,  
945 πρὸς τὴν ἐν οἴκοις ἄλοχον ἐσφοιτᾶν ἔαν  
γυναῖκας· αὐταὶ γὰρ διδάσκαλοι κακῶν·  
ἢ μὲν τι κερδαίνουσα συμφθείρει λέχος,  
ἢ δ' ἀμπλακοῦσα συννοσεῖν αὐτῇ θέλει,

drive me forth, and the land of Phthia hates me. And if my husband leaves the oracle of Phoebus and comes home before I leave, he will kill me amidst great disgrace or I shall be a slave to the concubine who was once my slave.

ΟΡΕΣΤΕΣ

How then did you come to commit these grave sins, as someone might call them?

ΕΡΜΙΟΝΗ

My undoing was bad women coming into the house. They puffed me up in folly by speaking in this vein: "Will you put up with this wretched captive in your house sharing in your marriage bed? By the goddess,<sup>a</sup> in my house she would not have taken her pleasure of my husband and lived to see the light!"

I listened to these Sirens' words [these clever, knavish, deceitful chatterers,] and became inflated with foolish thoughts. What necessity was there to keep such a watch on my husband when I had all I needed? I had great wealth, I was mistress in the house, and I would have borne legitimate children, while she would have borne bastards with half-slave parentage to serve my children. But never, never (for I say it again and again) should husbands who have sense allow women to come to visit their wives in the house! They are the ones who teach evil. One woman corrupts a friend's marriage with an eye to gain, while another who has slipped from virtue

<sup>a</sup> Presumably Hera as goddess of marriage.

<sup>924</sup> τ' Bothe: γ' vel μ' C

<sup>937</sup> del. Nauck

3 FTIM  
S-13

πολλὰ δὲ μαργότητι· κἀντεύθειν δόμοι  
 950 νοσοῦσιν ἀνδρῶν. πρὸς τὰδ' εὖ φυλάσσετε  
 κλήθροισι καὶ μοχλοῖσι δωμάτων πύλας·  
 ὑγιᾶς γὰρ οὐδὲν αἰ θύραθεν εἴσοδοι  
 δρῶσιν γυναικῶν, ἀλλὰ πολλὰ καὶ κακά.

## ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἄγαν ἐφήκας γλῶσσαν ἐς τὸ σύμφυτον.  
 955 συγγνωστὰ μὲν νῦν σοὶ τὰδ', ἀλλ' ὅμως χρεῶν  
 κοσμεῖν γυναικᾶς τὰς γυναικείας νόσους.

## ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

σοφόν τι χρῆμα τοῦ διδάξαντος βροτοῦς  
 λόγους ἀκούειν τῶν ἐναντίων πάρα.  
 ἐγὼ γὰρ εἰδῶς τῶνδε σύγχυσιν δόμων  
 960 ἔρι τε τὴν σὴν καὶ γυναικὸς Ἑκτορος  
 φυλακὰς ἔχων ἔμιμνον, εἴτ' αὐτοῦ μενεῖς  
 εἴτ' ἐκφοβηθείς· αἰχμαλωτίδος φόνω  
 γυναικὸς οἴκων τῶνδ' ἀπηλλάχθαι θέλεις.  
 ἦλθον δὲ σὰς μὲν οὐ σέβων ἐπιστολάς,  
 965 εἰ δ' ἐνδιδοίης, ὥσπερ ἐνδίδως, λόγον  
 πέμφων σ' ἀπ' οἴκων τῶνδ'. ἐμὴ γὰρ οὔσα πρὶν  
 σὺν τῷδε ναίεις ἀνδρὶ σοῦ πατρὸς κάκη,  
 ὃς πρὶν τὰ Τροίας ἐσβαλεῖν ὀρίσματα  
 γυναικ' ἐμοὶ σε δοῦς ὑπέσχεθ' ὕστερον  
 970 τῷ νῦν σ' ἔχοντι, Τρωάδ' εἰ πέρσοι πόλιιν.  
 ἐπεὶ δ' Ἀχιλλέως δεῦρ' ἐνόστησεν γόνος,  
 σῶ μὲν συνέγνω πατρί, τὸν δ' ἐλισσόμην  
 γάμους ἀφείναι σούς, ἐμὰς λέγων τύχας

wants company in her vice, while many act from sheer  
 lewdness. That is the source of the disease in the houses  
 of men. In view of this, guard well with bolt and bar the  
 gates of your houses! For visits of women from outside  
 cause nothing good but only trouble aplenty.

## CHORUS LEADER

You have hurled your tongue too violently at your own  
 sex. To be sure, this is pardonable in your case, but still  
 women ought to cover up women's frailties.

## ORESTES

Wise was the advice of him who taught men to listen to  
 reports from their enemies. Because I had learned of the  
 turmoil in this house and the strife between you and Hec-  
 tor's wife, I kept watch waiting to see whether you would  
 remain here or, frightened by the murderous attempt on  
 the slave woman, would wish to leave this house. It was  
 not out of respect for any commands of yours that I came,  
 but so that if you should give me the chance to talk to you,  
 as you are now doing, I might escort you from this house.  
 For you were mine to begin with, and you are married to  
 Neoptolemus only by the baseness of your father. Before  
 he attacked Troy, he gave you to me to be my wife, but  
 later he promised you to your present husband as a  
 reward if he sacked Troy. When Achilles' son came home  
 to this land, I was forgiving toward your father, but I  
 begged Neoptolemus to relinquish his marriage to you. I

<sup>955</sup> μὲν νῦν Canter: μὲν οὖν C

<sup>966</sup> πέμφων Heath: πέμφω C