

Is *Orestes* 1503-36 an Interpolation ?

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THE ENCOUNTER between *Orestes* and the Phrygian (*Or.* 1503–36) has been commonly recognized as one of the most remarkable scenes in Euripidean tragedy. Criticism of it by early scholarship is embedded in the remarks of the scholia (cf. *Σ ad* 1512 ἀνάξια καὶ τραγωδίας καὶ τῆς Ὀρέστου συμφορᾶς τὰ λεγόμενα, and *ad* 1521 ταῦτα κωμικώτερά ἐστι καὶ πεζά), and it is presumably partly in reference to this scene that the pronouncement of Aristophanes is made (*Hypr.* 10) τὸ δράμα κωμικώτερον ἔχει τὴν καταστροφήν. The responses of modern scholarship to the uneasiness evidently felt by some in antiquity have been various.¹

Grüninger appears to have been one of the first commentators to examine the question of the authenticity of these verses (as a piece of evidence for the substantial reshaping of the text which he believed had taken place at the hands of actors), and, perhaps predictably, pronounced against their genuineness. In more recent times, however, there seems to have been a marked movement of opinion in their favour; Page appears to mark the beginning of reaction to Grüninger's position. His defence of 1506–36 (pp.44ff) has, as the result, the appearance of a direct attempt to refute the arguments of his predecessor; by and large, it concerns itself with comparatively isolated difficulties in the scene, which are explained (or explained away) with varying degrees of success. What is absent from Page's analysis is any attempt to consider what may be the positive, thematic relationship of these verses to their context or the implications of certain of the scene's characteristics in juxtaposition to the dramatic conventions which Euripides is elsewhere agreed to have observed.

Such general considerations have been the preoccupation of more

¹ Cf. e.g. A. Grüninger, *De Euripidis Oreste ab histrionibus retractata* (diss. Basel 1894); D. L. Page, *Actors' Interpolations in Greek Tragedy* (Oxford 1934) 45–48; W. Biehl, *Textprobleme in Euripides Orestes* (Göttingen 1955) 84–85; *id.*, ed. *Orestes* (Berlin 1965); V. di Benedetto, ed. *Orestes* (Firenze 1965). Other works which have proved of assistance include P. Maas, *Greek Metre*, trans. H. Lloyd-Jones (Oxford 1962); T. B. L. Webster, *The Tragedies of Euripides* (London 1967). These works will be cited by author and page reference throughout this essay and the following notes.

recent commentaries. The attitude of Biehl (*Textprobleme* 84) is typical: “Die Konfrontierung Or.s mit dem von Natur aus weit unter ihm stehenden Gegner enthält innerhalb der Gesamthandlung wichtige dramatische Funktionen.” Di Benedetto (*ad* 1506ff) persuasively explains the passage as a product of Euripides’ desire ‘di ricercare sempre nuovi effetti di carattere spettacolare in questa ultima parte della tragedia.’ While discussion of these points of view will be best deferred, it is perhaps worth noting that both these commentators feel obliged to offer, in the same way as Page, explanations of isolated inconsistencies in these verses, which seem to have diminished little as a result of their more abstract argumentation about the significance of the scene as a whole.

It is therefore certain that any judgement of these verses must proceed from considerations not only of their internal coherence but also from their relationship to what precedes and follows them and to the conventions normally observed by Euripides. The two are perhaps inevitably separate, but it is from their cumulative weight that the authenticity of this passage can best be assessed. It is the principal intention of what follows to suggest that there may be more solidity in the objections against its authenticity than has recently been allowed.

It is Euripides’ normal practice with *ἄγγελοι* (unless they have some sort of independent status within the drama) to confine interest in them to the strict limits of their expository function and to hurry them off stage the moment their narrative is completed.² There can scarcely be any doubt that Euripides has significantly extended his usual technique in composing the Phrygian’s narrative in lyrics (rather than in the otherwise universal iambic trimeters), and whatever the reason for this singular innovation,³ it is clearly intended to be an elaboration of the normal form of a *ῥῆσις ἀγγελική*. It is, however, hardly possible by the same reasoning to justify the retention on stage of the Phrygian after the completion of this speech for a humorous dialogue with the enraged Orestes. Such a departure from the normal economy of Euripidean structure is, of course, not in itself any

² Account is here taken of such *prima facie* exceptions as *Hel.* 700ff, where the *ἄγγελος* is retained on stage after the end of his exposition (621). He emerges, however, in 700ff as a typical *δοῦλος γενναῖος*, a class for which there are strict standards of treatment in Euripidean tragedy. His *rhēsis* is so short as to make him scarcely an *ἄγγελος* at all, and it is to be wondered whether the Mss rightly designate him so. Cf. the similar instance of the *ἄγγελος* in *Phoen.* 1067ff, whom Wecklein renamed *θεράπων*. Page (p.45) does not, I think, take Euripides’ departure from his normal practice in the case of the Phrygian seriously enough.

³ Cf. P. Maas, p.53 §76, “Characters of low social standing (except the Phrygian in the *Orestes*) are never given lines in sung metres, but are given instead anapaests . . .”

grounds for suspecting the scene, but it is, perhaps, bound to stimulate a somewhat closer examination of the reason for its composition.

The episode as a whole is clearly not intended to make any contribution to the furtherance of the action; it forms a self-contained unit, the avowed purpose of which is to prevent the Phrygian calling for help from Menelaus (1510). This end is attained by forcing him back inside the palace. Undeniably then, the scene is meant to exploit further the comic possibilities inherent in the Phrygian and hinted at in his lyric narrative. This admission likewise provides no evidence against the authenticity of the dialogue, although a precise parallel in Euripides to an episode so completely separate from the main thread of the *mythos* does not readily come to mind.⁴ If, however, the scene can be shown to be actually at variance with the substance of the plot and detrimental to its smooth progress, suspicion will, perhaps, be justified.

It will be useful first to look at the motivation of these verses for some indication of the way in which their author regarded them as integrated with the movement of the play as a whole. Orestes' alleged reason for coming out of the palace is to prevent the Phrygian from sending up a *κραυγή* to Menelaus (1510),⁵ and this leads logically to the core of the scene, which consists in the Phrygian's attempt to persuade Orestes of his sympathy for his, and not Menelaus', cause (1511ff). Such a motivation makes the entry of Menelaus at 1549, even with the interposition of the choral ode at 1537ff, almost absurd in its immediacy. The incongruity is emphasised by 1529, which is followed by

⁴ Di Benedetto (ed. *ad* 1506ff) is also of the opinion that the motivation of Orestes' exit is subsequently undeveloped. He assumes that this motivation is to stop the Phrygian calling to the Argives, a deduction from 1529ff. Di Benedetto does not consider the disparity between 1529ff and Orestes' stated intention at the beginning of the scene, which is discussed below. Biehl (*Textprobleme* 84, *v. supra*) represents, on the other hand, a point of view antithetic to that expressed here. He considers that the interpolation of such a long passage of *stichomythia* is *per se* unlikely, and attempts to ascribe to the scene a positive and thematic relationship to the later part of the play. This hypothesis he supports with five contentions, none of which seems to merit serious consideration; the fourth (85), for example, alleges that the victory of Orestes over the Phrygian "entzündet bei Or. das für den Kampf gegen Men. notwendige Stärkebewusstsein." 1531–36, however, show that the basis of Orestes' confidence against Menelaus is his possession of Hermione, and this remains the crux of his dealings with Menelaus until the appearance of the *deus*. Orestes' alleged fear of Menelaus, the basis of Biehl's inferential superstructure, is in fact a dramatic superfluity imported into the drama precisely by the presence of this interpolation. *Cf.* for a view similar to that of Biehl, N. A. Greenberg, *HSCP* 66 (1962) 187ff. Professor T. B. L. Webster (p.250 n.17) also thinks it unlikely that this scene is interpolated, a view which he bases on metrical considerations.

⁵ He appears to have heard 1500ff, which speak sympathetically of Menelaus.

the clumsy attempt made in 1530–36 to adapt the pretext of the scene in such a way as to minimize the strain which will be placed on the audience's belief in the probability of the dramatic sequence by Menelaus' arrival. In these verses, Orestes states that his fear was that the Argives, rather than Menelaus, would hear the cry and come to the rescue (1530–31), and then explicitly invites the latter to come (ἀλλ' ἴτω . . ., 1532), even with the Argives (1533ff).⁶

The clarity of thought in 1533–36 is extremely suspect. It is true that explanations of these verses may be made by reference to allusions elsewhere in the play (as, for example, 1621); such explanations rely heavily on unnecessary (if plausible) inferences about what may or should be Orestes' sequence of thought, and can in each case be matched by inverse suppositions of at least equal probability. Nevertheless, there are certain difficulties which seem to remain constant.

Within the limits of the information provided by this scene, the introduction of a third alternative which envisages a combination of Menelaus and the Argives is not only gratuitous (since Menelaus arrives only with attendants, cf. 1554ff, 1610f) but invalidates the mutually exclusive possibilities outlined in the preceding verses. If we omit the question of the suitability of γάρ as a particle introducing a third and disjunct alternative,⁷ a difficulty still remains in the interpretation of καὶ μὲ μὴ σῶζειν θέλει (1534). Biehl (*ad loc.*) assumes that καὶ is epexegetic ('und somit'); this involves the improbable assumption that Menelaus' unwillingness to save Orestes will in some way be more likely if he is accompanied by Argives. Yet any other interpretation is scarcely possible, since Orestes' determination to kill Hermione can be governed only by the attitude Menelaus adopts towards him, and not by his accompaniment or otherwise by an Argive force. The connection Biehl draws between the two elements in the protasis tends to be further confirmed by the emphatic position accorded to the mention of the Argives in 1533.

Equally unfortunate is the tedious precision of 1535, and early

⁶ Biehl's assertion (p.84) that Orestes' anxiety about Menelaus' retaliation "ist durchaus berechtigt, auch wenn sich Hel. bei den Argeiern keiner Sympathie erfreut," is scarcely supported by the tone of Orestes' reasoning in 1531–36.

⁷ The wide range of meanings which γάρ may bear and its sometimes rather imprecise connection with surrounding ideas are well known, and Biehl (ed. *ad* 1533) may be right to translate εἰ γάρ 'hypothetisch' as 'denn wenn . . .'. Certainly no satisfactory alternative reading has been proposed; Weil's εἰ δ' ἄρα supplies exactly the sense required, but is unparalleled in tragedy, cf. J. D. Denniston, *Greek Particles*² (Oxford 1954) 37–38.

editors, such as Nauck and Paley, recommended its excision on metrical and what may be loosely termed aesthetic grounds. No weight attaches to the former objection,⁸ but Paley's comment (*ad loc.*) still has general validity: "It is just such a verse as interpolators were fond of inserting to make the narrative agree accurately with some former statement," as instances of which he cites 1178 σωτηρίαν σοὶ τῶδέ τ' ἐκ τρίτων τ' ἐμοί and 1192 ἢ τόνδε κάμει—πάν γὰρ ἐν φίλον τόδε. The deletion of a similar verse in the introductory monologue (33) was proposed by Herwerden.

The confusion created by 1529–36 requires but does not perhaps deserve explanation; what seems undeniable is that having stressed as the motivation for Orestes' exit from the palace his anxiety about the *κραυγή* (1510, and the word is picked up in 1529), the author was compelled, towards the conclusion of the interlude, to adjust his attitude as far as possible to the glaring inconsistency of Menelaus' arrival. He chose to do this by importing the superfluous idea of the Argives.⁹

Nevertheless, Menelaus' entry at 1549 remains unconvincing, and the question which inevitably suggests itself is the source of his information about events within the palace. Lines 1529–36, although they attempt to make it seem probable that he will appear, are prevented from offering any answer by the premise on which the scene is constructed (*viz.* Orestes' successful mission to prevent the Phrygian from calling for help—cogently stated in 1529). The indisputable implication of 1554–59 is that someone has brought an account of events to Menelaus. The details known to him would otherwise presuppose that he had heard part or all of the Phrygian's narrative while still in the πόλις!

At this point commentators are either mute or lack persuasion. Chapouthier suggests (Budé ed. *ad loc.*), "on peut penser que quelqu'une de ses (*i.e.* the Phrygian's) déclarations a été entendue du dehors, ou que le poète ne s'est pas posé la question." The latter lame expedient of criticism remains, of course, unanswerable;¹⁰ the former

⁸ This led to such emendations of *Πυλάδην* as *τρίτον* (Elmsley) and *φίλον* (Weil). Cf. di Benedetto, ed. *ad loc.* and also A. M. Dale, *Glotta* 37 (1958) 102–5 (cf. *Lustrum* 2 [1957] 40); F. Perusino, *RivCultClassMed* 4 (1962) 55ff. I am indebted to Professor E. W. Handley for these references.

⁹ Suggested, perhaps, by *e.g.* 1355–56, where, given Euripides' intention to have Menelaus arrive at 1554, significantly he is not mentioned.

¹⁰ Similarly unanswerable is di Benedetto's statement (ed. *ad* 1550), "Ma si tratta di cose che avverte il lettore moderno, non lo spettatore antico, il quale dopo il dialogo tra Oreste e il Frigio non poteva non aspettarsi l'arrivo di Menelao." Cf. also Biehl (ed. *ad* 1556ff).

not only fails, I think, to account adequately for the description of Menelaus' informant as *φόβῳ σφαλείς* (1558), but is forced to assume the existence of some person apparently not on stage, and certainly not mentioned, who escapes to the city with information derived from the *ἄγγελος*, at about the same time as the chorus decides not to take the news. More promising at first sight is the hypothesis of Page (p.46), which does not involve the presupposition of an unmentioned anonymity: ". . . we know (from 1486 sqq.) that the slaves fled through the house this way and that, we know that one escaped from the house. This one lingered improvidently in a very dangerous place, and was caught by Orestes. Others climbed out of the palace at the back instead of the front, and went straight to Menelaos instead of waiting to be apprehended. So at least we are entitled to assume. We know that there were those who could and most naturally would have taken the news to Menelaos; we know that Menelaos has heard it. That is all we need to know." This is imaginative, but Page's central assumption that other slaves have escaped is dangerous and unjustified surmise. While no certain inference may be made from 1550,¹¹ the Phrygian uses the singular in 1369 and 1498, and the author of 1503–36¹² evidently deduced from this that he was alone in his escape. 1486 *ὁ μὲν οἰχόμενος φυγᾶς* and 1488 *ὑπὸ σκότον δ' ἐφεύγομεν* may suggest the reverse, but whatever deduction is made from them, they refer to activities which preceded the disappearance of Helen and are therefore irrelevant as far as the information subsequently brought to Menelaus is concerned. Had Euripides intended the inference drawn

¹¹ Line 1550 has been used as evidence that Euripides did not regard the question of Menelaus' informant as important. *πῶς* suggests that the coryphaeus makes the only reasonable assumption to account for his arrival. But I am by no means certain that Nauck was wrong in deleting this verse. 1549 makes sense by itself, but I am inclined to suspect that our 1550 is a revised version of what Euripides wrote, designed to minimize the improbability of Menelaus' arrival which had been created by the re-entry of the Phrygian into the palace. Di Benedetto (ed. *ad* 1549) observes that this is the only place where *ἀλλὰ μὴν* is used in place of *καὶ μὴν* to announce a character's entrance. His explanation is that 1549–55 are to be taken closely with the preceding 'intermezzo' and the concluding allusion to the fate of the Atridae. "È l'arrivo di Menelao in questo momento, con le fiaccole che già sono accese, è sentito come una conferma di questo presentimento. 'Ἀλλὰ μὴν' è quindi da intendere nel senso di «e appunto»: si noti anche il *καὶ*, che presenta l'arrivo di Menelao come un altro anello di una serie negativa." This argument for a confirmatory sense is certainly more satisfactory than Denniston's (*op.cit.* [*supra* n.7] 342) attribution to it of an adversative force; but the assumption of a direct link between these verses and the content of the choral ode which precedes them is open to objection. The conclusion of the antistrophe is general, and it is normal Euripidean practice that conventional choral announcements of this sort bear no such relation to their lyric utterances.

¹² Cf. e.g. 1506.

by Page, it seems not unreasonable to expect that he would have taken the trouble to provide a hint of the existence of such a person (who forms a vital link in the dramatic sequence), as he had earlier suggested the escape of other dramatically unimportant persons.

If, then, the Phrygian had left the stage after the completion of his *διήγησις* (according to the normal Euripidean practice), the choral ode (1537–48) would, as often, mark a lapse of time allowing off-stage events to take place, and Menelaus would arrive informed by the *ἄγγελος*. The final verses of his narrative (1500–02) imply that this is what will happen by directing attention to Menelaus. This would be a natural course for the Phrygian, who, having gathered his wits, might well take the news to his master and enjoy his protection. Presumably he would have done so at once, had not the unreality of the messenger-convention detained him to give an account to the chorus. This fact is in itself unusual, since the recipient of a *ρήσις ἀγγελικὴ* is normally an interested party commanding the *εὐνοία* of the messenger. With such requirements Menelaus conforms. Certain statements made by Menelaus on his arrival tend to confirm the identification. His informant evidently used the word *ἄφαντος* (1557), as did the Phrygian (1495–96), and the description of him as *φόβω σφαλεῖς* (1558) suits perfectly the impression created of the Phrygian in the messenger scene. Admittedly, these words might apply to any informant, but they would gain in point significantly if intended to remind the audience of the Phrygian.¹³

At this point it may be worth considering briefly what is gained structurally if the episode is deleted.

After the illusion that Helen has actually been murdered has been carefully built up (1286–1310) and Hermione has been taken hostage within the palace (1323ff), the emotional excitement is heightened by the choral song (1353–65) which centres on the theme of Helen's murder (treated as a *fait accompli*, cf. 1354 *ὁπραχθεῖς φόνος*) and prepares for the entrance of the Phrygian with a fuller account of *τὰ ἔσω δόμων*. This account given, it is not until the closing verses of his lyrics (1493ff)

¹³ Professor R. P. Winnington-Ingram points out to me that a third point of contact may be the apparent recalling of the imagery used in 1401 in 1555. Di Benedetto (ed. *ad loc.*) notes all the similarities between the informant of Menelaus and the Phrygian which have been observed here, and explains them by supposing that Menelaus' informant "è un «duplicato» del Frigio." The extraordinary nature of such a procedure would be, as far as I know, unparalleled in Euripides, and is some indication of the implications of maintaining the authenticity of 1503–36.

that the disappearance of Helen is recounted. It would seem that Euripides has deliberately created a false impression of Helen's murder and suspended its refutation for over a hundred verses in order to make the news of her disappearance the more unexpected and effective. If the Phrygian were to leave after 1502, *i.e.* immediately following his account of Helen's disappearance and his allusion to Menelaus, the choral ode (1537–48) antistrophic to 1353–65 would fall (logically, it seems) immediately after the Phrygian's account, as the strophe preceded it. Euripides clearly indicates the intended parallelism of these two odes by constructing them as strophe and suspended antistrophe; and a similar parallelism is apparent in their tone and subject matter, the second dealing with the power of *τύχη* and its implications for the three conspirators as suggested by the thwarting of the plan to murder Helen (which constitutes the *ἕτερος ἀγών*, *cf.* 1537–38), as the first had dealt with her apparent murder.¹⁴ It is arguable that this parallelism should by corollary extend to their place in the structure of these scenes, as the medium for heightening the emotional tension before and after the crucial announcement of Helen's disappearance. The structural symmetry and cumulative emotional effect which such a sequence produces seems to me irreparably disturbed by the intervention of the humorous dialogue between Orestes and the Phrygian, between the lyric account of the disappearance and the antistrophe crystallizing its impact.

Finally, a comparatively isolated phenomenon may be considered. At the end of his account the Phrygian announces *παρὰ προσδοκίαν* (1493ff)

ἐκ θαλάμων
ἐγένετο διαπρὸ δωμαίων
ἄφαντος,

the importance of this revelation being confirmed by the elaborate apostrophe which follows.¹⁵ This is what Menelaus has heard (1557), and the point is subsequently stressed by Orestes (1579ff). Yet in the

¹⁴ Biehl (ed. *ad* 1353–68) observes that strophe and antistrophe divide themselves into "einen mehr 'dramatischen' (1353–60 bzw. 1537–44) und einen rein 'lyrischen' (1361–8 bzw. 1545–8) Teil."

¹⁵ I am unable to accept the view which suggests that the disappearance is left indefinite at the end of the Phrygian's account (1495ff), relying on *τὰ δ' ὕστερ' οὐκέτ' οἶδα* (1498). This means only "I didn't see what happened after that (because that was when I escaped)," and cannot be used to impugn the finality of the announcement of her disappearance. Biehl (ed. *ad loc.*) is probably right to refer the words to the fate of Hermione.

course of 1506–36, there are two distinct statements which presuppose that the murder has in fact taken place.¹⁶ In the first (1512–13) Orestes asks the Phrygian whether Helen ἐνδίκως . . . διώλετο;¹⁷ it is, of course, particularly easy in stichomythic scenes, where the syntax is segmented, to propose the expedient that these verses are interpolated into a genuine context. A reason for any such insertion is difficult to see, and the deletion of this couplet will further involve the removal of 1514–15. Equally, it is possible to suppose that Orestes is ignorant of the Phrygian's knowledge of Helen's disappearance; any such suggestion must ultimately be judged by its own probability, but it is perhaps worth mentioning here that 1536 (spoken after the Phrygian has left the stage) also assumes the murder, and therefore that Orestes himself actually believes in this fiction. That this is not his belief is clear from 1579ff. Finally, we may with Page (p.46) suppose that διώλετο has an ambiguous force; but 1513 shows unmistakably that the Phrygian at least interprets the word in its fully physical sense, although this too may be excused as an example of the diplomacies to which his self-preserving σύνεσις persuades him.¹⁸ In short, defence of 1512–13 seems to create a maze of psychological intricacies, which enjoy at most a dubious probability.

But if defence of 1512–13 is possible, the same may scarcely be said for 1536, in which Helen is specifically referred to as a νεκρός which Menelaus κατόψεται. Lines 1579ff show that Orestes is aware of her disappearance; there is only one scene in this play (211ff) in which he suffers from hallucinations. From this verse, then, we are obliged to conclude that Helen has actually been murdered and that her corpse is within, ready for display to Menelaus when Hermione is killed. Page's explanation of this anomaly (p.45) is quite inadequate: "the new point is the death of Hermione; a slight inaccuracy of language is almost necessary to couple the similar fates of Hermione and Helen."¹⁹

¹⁶ A third reference may be disregarded; of 1534 Page (p.45) rightly observes that it means no more than that "Orestes assumes that Menelaos will think that Helen is dead."

¹⁷ Biehl (ed. *ad loc.*) cites Cic. *Laelius* 26.98 for this characteristic of "die zustimmende Antwort in der Form der 'Übertreibung'" as being typical of the parasite in comedy.

¹⁸ Biehl's hypothesis (*Textprobleme* 84) that the assumption that Helen is dead in 1512–13 is "nicht anstössig, weil sie den einfachsten Ausgangspunkt zum Diskutieren darbietet" is extremely unsatisfactory.

¹⁹ Biehl (ed. *ad loc.*) explains the linguistic inaccuracy as part of Orestes' pose as ἀλάζων. The inconsistency is too strong to be excused on any such grounds, but his contrast of Orestes as ἀλάζων with the Phrygian as κόλαξ is instructive as a further illustration of the heavy debt of this scene to comedy.

Their fates are anything but similar; a glaring inconsistency remains which can be bypassed only by attributing a singular lack of clarity in thought and language to Euripides and by placing on his audience the intolerable necessity of seeing an idea contradicted by its expression. It is perhaps of interest that in the only other place where *κατόψεται* is found in the text of Euripides (*Hec.* 45) it is preceded by *δύο νεκρώ*, the phrase in this case being given rhetorical point by its association with *δυοῖν δὲ παιδῶν*.²⁰ Is it possible that the striking (and here strikingly misplaced) phrase is due to an interpolator's memory of a verse in *Hecuba* ?

The direction of the above arguments is clear, but no finality has been (or, perhaps, can be) achieved. Nor can anything approaching certainty be reached in guesses about the origin or nature of the suggested interpolation. The popularity of *Orestes* is well known,²¹ and in view of the evidently increasing importance of the acting profession from the fourth century B.C. onwards, it is not impossible that the episode was inserted in the interests of a particular actor, in order to exploit more fully the comic possibilities of the Phrygian as outlined by Euripides in the lyric *διήγησις*.²²

A possible *terminus ante quem* for its insertion may be inferred from a fragment of Apollodorus (6K.),

οὐ πανταχοῦ Φρύξ εἶμι · τοῦ ζῆν ἄν ὄρω
κρεῖττον τὸ μὴ ζῆν, χρήσομαι τῷ κρεῖττονι.²³

²⁰ It is possible, although not to be pressed, that the first half of 1536 *παρθένον τε καὶ δάμαρτα* is suggested syntactically by *Hec.* 46 *ἐμοῦ τε τῆς τε δυστήνου κόρης*. The contrast, as well as the possible comparison, between these two phrases is instructive. In the *Hecuba* passage *δυοῖν δὲ παιδῶν . . . κτλ.* are genitives dependent on *δύο νεκρώ*, whereas in our passage they are in apposition. Euripides elsewhere (as e.g. *Hec.* 671, 679) uses the dependent genitive construction, but I can find no other instance in the extant plays of nouns in apposition with *νεκρός*. In *Hec.* 45–46, the use of apposition would seem to be at least as appropriate as of dependent genitives, but no conclusions are warranted as the incidence of *νεκρός* is small. Biehl (ed. *ad loc.*) compares also *Or.* 66 with *Hec.* 279.

²¹ Cf. e.g. Ar.Byz. *Hyp.* 21; *CIA* II 973, 13 and 18; Philostr. *VS* p. 232. For references to evidence in comedy cf. E. W. Handley, *BICS* 12 (1965) 42, 45. At first sight, *Σ ad* 1366–68, which states that these verses are the insertion of actors *ἵνα μὴ κακοπαθῶσιν ἀπὸ τῶν βασιλείων δόμων καθαλλόμενοι*, seems to bear out other testimony for the popularity of *Orestes* and for the activity of actors on the text. Recent scholars have, however, strongly defended the passage, cf. A. M. Dale, *WS* 69 (1956) 103–04; di Benedetto (ed. *ad loc.*). A statement of the arguments supporting the scholiast's suggestion is made by Biehl (*Text-probleme* 79–81), and a similar position is taken by P. Arnott, *Greek Scenic Conventions* (Oxford 1962) 119.

²² Cf. Arist. *Rhet.* 3.1403b, *μείζον δύνανται νῦν τῶν ποιητῶν οἱ ὑποκριταί*.

²³ Cited by Stob. *Flor.* 121.14=4.53.14 H. The inference which I have drawn seems supported by Tert. *De Anim.* 279b, *Comici Phrygas timidus inludunt*, and more probable than the inverse supposition that Apollodorus is alluding to the scene in *Orestes*. I am indebted to Miss C. Baratt for drawing my attention to this fragment.

The passing allusion to the *Φρύξ* in this passage seems to imply that the tradition of Phrygian *δειλία* and its dramatic representatives were well established (at least in comedy) by Apollodorus' time; and to judge from the uncomplimentary attentions which *βάρβαροι* in general enjoy in Aristophanes, the convention had probably been in existence for some time. If, then, the convention were one developed in comedy, and here imported into a popular tragedy which already contained an embryonic *Φρύξ*, the comic tone of the interlude, which seems to be the basis of the criticism and anxieties of early commentators, is at once explained.²⁴

Here ideas must, in default of more specific evidence, remain conjectural, but even when more than due allowance has been made for the absence of realism evident on occasion in Euripidean tragedy, it seems that these verses create substantial difficulties, which have not hitherto been satisfactorily explained by those who support their authenticity.

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²⁴ Di Benedetto (ed. *ad.* 1506ff), in perhaps the most convincing recent defence of these verses, attempts to explain them as an instance of Euripides' tendency in his later plays to include elements of purely theatrical spectacle. He is conscious of their strongly comic tone, as parallels to which he cites the trochaics of *Hel.* 1627ff and *Ion* 517ff, which he describes as having "un tono poco aderente alla tradizione tragica." But an examination of these passages reveals the similarity as superficial. The scene in *Helen* between Theoclymenus and the *Θεράπων* has a valid dramatic function as a bridge preventing the former from taking action between the *ἀγγελία* and the following epiphany, and the gnomic conclusion (1639–41) is alone sufficient to mark its speaker as a genuine Euripidean *δοῦλος γενναῖος*. In the *Ion* passage, any suggestion of comedy is confined to 517–26, the rest of the scene (to 565) having an obvious and serious dramatic meaning as the false *ἀναγνώρισις*. In neither of these parallels does the element of comedy seem as strong as in the *Orestes* passage, but on this individual opinion will differ. What invalidates di Benedetto's comparison is rather that in both *Helen* and *Ion* the scenes in question can be seen to have a meaningful relationship to the whole, and it is this which separates them essentially from the intrinsic and irrelevant comedy of this interlude (which di Benedetto himself concedes). Likewise, his observation that *ἀντιλαβή* is common to all three scenes can be shown to have only a nominal value by an examination of the form which it takes in them. In *Helen* there are 10 instances, in *Ion* 33, all of bipartite division. In our passage, however, there is only one instance (1525), and here the division is tripartite.