

Rhetorical Analysis and Close Reading in the Scholia on Euripides' *Orestes*

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ABSTRACT

The surviving scholia on the first third of Euripides' *Orestes* contain an unusually dense accumulation of observations reflecting a habit of close reading shaped by the interests and habits of rhetorical training, which encouraged the analysis of purposefulness in the selection of arguments, phrasing, or individual words. This approach assumes that the speaking characters in the literary classics possess expert control of their language and that they often engage in a contest of wits or deploy hidden meanings or innuendos to establish the superiority of their position. In particular, the dialogues between Electra and Helen and between Orestes and Menelaus inspire many comments on the rhetorical strategies attributed to the speakers, and these comments employ a set of terms hardly attested in other scholia on tragedy.

KEYWORDS

Euripides' *Orestes*; Scholia; Rhetorical analysis

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Donald Mastronarde is Emeritus Melpomene Distinguished Professor of Classical Languages and Literature at the University of California, Berkeley. His publications on Greek tragedy include commentaries on *Phoenissae* and *Medea* and the Teubner edition of *Phoenissae*. His current project is an open-access online edition of the scholia on the Euripidean triad.

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RIASSUNTO

Gli scolii superstiti sul primo terzo dell'*Oreste* di Euripide presentano un'insolita e densa concentrazione di osservazioni che riflettono un'abitudine alla lettura attenta, plasmata dagli interessi e dalle consuetudini della formazione retorica, la quale incoraggiava l'analisi della finalità nella scelta degli argomenti, della formulazione o delle singole parole. Questo approccio presuppone che i personaggi parlanti nei classici della letteratura possiedano una padronanza esperta del linguaggio e che spesso si impegnino in una gara di arguzia o utilizzino significati nascosti o allusioni per affermare la superiorità della propria posizione. In particolare, i dialoghi tra Elettra ed Elena e tra Oreste e Menelao ispirano numerosi commenti sulle strategie retoriche attribuite ai personaggi, e questi commenti impiegano una serie di termini difficilmente riscontrabili in altri scolii sulla tragedia.

PAROLE CHIAVE

Euripide, *Oreste*; Scolii; Analisi retorica

NOTA BIOGRAFICA

Donald Mastronarde è professore emerito di Lingue e Letterature Classiche presso l'Università della California, Berkeley. Le sue pubblicazioni sulla tragedia greca includono commentari su *Fenicie* e *Medea* e l'edizione Teubner delle *Fenicie*. Il suo progetto attuale è un'edizione *online* ad accesso libero degli scolii sulla triade euripidea.



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It is now well established that in studying Homer ancient commentators and Eustathius started from the assumption that the poet was supremely skilled and capable of wielding effectively the principles of rhetoric elaborated by sophists, philosophers, and rhetoricians in the classical, Hellenistic, and Roman periods.¹ In two recent publications I explore some aspects of how a similar rhetorical approach to reading may be detected in the tradition of commentary on tragedy, and particularly on Euripides.² In this article I want to highlight an unusually dense accumulation of observations on the first third of Euripides' *Orestes* that reflect a habit of close reading shaped (or at times, one might say, distorted) by the interests and habits of rhetorical training, which encouraged the analysis of purposefulness in the selection of arguments, phrasing, or individual words. When applied to drama, just as in the case of Homer, this approach assumes that the speaking characters in the literary classics either possess or ought to possess expert control of their language and that they are often engaged in a contest of wits with the interlocutor or are deploying hidden meanings or innuendos to establish the superiority of their position. What Richard Hunter has written about a feature of how Homer was read can also be applied to some scholia on tragedy, including some on *Orestes* to be discussed here: "One of the things which is most striking about these exercises is the psychological depth and the level of

* This article expands on lectures I have presented at several universities over the past decade, most recently at the Scuola Normale. I am grateful for the comments of my audiences, and for helpful suggestions during the final revision I thank Mark Griffith, Luigi Battezzato, and the two anonymous reviewers of this journal.

¹ E.g., LEHNERT 1896, LINDBERG 1977, NÜNLIST 2012, VALIAVITCHARSKA 2013, HUNTER 2015, HUNTER 2018, VAN DEN BERG 2022.

² MASTRONARDE 2025b, pp. 167-73, discusses some instances of criticism of a speaker or the poet for perceived offences against what is persuasive or what is proper; MASTRONARDE forthcoming discusses evidence for rhetorical analysis in some older scholia on *Hippolytus*, *Medea*, *Alcestis*, *Troades*, and *Phoenissae*, and also presents evidence in the more recent scholia (in manuscripts of the 13th and 14th centuries) for the labeling of arguments and tropes, often with the terms used in Hermogenes and commentators on Hermogenes.

calculation ascribed to Homeric characters" (just replace "Homeric" with "Euripidean"). The same close scrutiny of language, however, may also be applied for other purposes dear to the commentators, such as softening and ameliorating statements that appear to challenge theological or moral principles that teachers and society at large want to inculcate in the young.

Most of the scholia that will be discussed here are not cited in the important studies of literary criticism in Greek scholia by Meijering and Nünlist.³ These two scholars concentrate on the influence of Aristotelian analysis of plot and character and on issues related to *oikonomia*. In that tradition, the main rhetorical concern seen in the scholia is the suitability of a rhetorical performance to the status and gender of the speaker. Here, instead, I want to study the close-reading approach to specific word-choice or phrasing and the interpretations and purposes revealed by the proposed explanations. Such close reading is, to be sure, a legitimate technique of literary criticism, but involves two potential traps when applied to a dramatic text. First, slow reading of a text written on a bookroll or on the page of a codex is quite different from the rapid aural reception of a text in performance, where there is much less time (or motivation) to ponder over every phrase and no opportunity to pause. Second, readers often come to the text with varying degrees of foreknowledge of the forthcoming content, while a theatrical spectator (at a first performance) absorbs information in temporal sequence and should be open to gradually developing – and revising – an idea of what manner of characterization, motivation, and causation the playwright is offering in this particular variation on a mythic theme. Moreover, I suggest that the tendency to carry close reading to a minute verbal level and to assume that every word is potentially weighted with an intentional strategy on the part of the speaker was encouraged by education in rhetoric and composition.

In a way typical of the compilation of comments from different contributors in our scholiastic corpora, the commentators applying such close reading to this portion of *Orestes* come to various conclusions about the characters and the poet. They may detect, and approve of, a subtle use of rhetoric to trip up or implicitly find fault with an interlocutor. Or they may see the poet as skilfully supplying a character with language that subtly or inadvertently reveals their character (often something bad about it). Or they may judge that the speech of a character shows poor control of rhetoric, usually implying criticism of Euripides, since the preferred assumption was that heroic characters should be effective rhetoricians. In some cases, I hope to show, this type of analysis produces a myopic reading that ignores the wider context or disregards the temporal experience of viewing and

³ MEIJERING 1987; NÜNLIST 2009. As will be noted below, a few scholia studied here are mentioned by them for a different purpose and not scrutinized further.

hearing a drama and gradually arriving at a tentative and revisable understanding of a dramatic figure. Sometimes one may even suspect that the commentator has abstracted the argumentative situation from the specifics of the drama and thought instead in terms of how one might frame an effective rhetorical demonstration.⁴

As a first example, consider the phrase “as they say” in *Orestes* 5:

Eur. *Or.* 5

Διὸς πεφυκώς, ὡς λέγουσι, Τάνταλος.

Tantalus, born of Zeus, as they say.

Sch. *Or.* 5.19⁵ καλῶς τὸ ὡς λέγουσι· οὐ γὰρ πείθομαι τὸν Δία τοὺς ἰδίους παῖδας οὕτως αἰκίζεσθαι.

Well-put the phrase “as they say”: for (Electra is thinking) I do not believe that Zeus mistreats his own children in this way.

Sch. *Or.* 5.20 τὸ ὡς λέγουσι οὐκ ἐνδοιάζουσά φησιν εἰ παῖς ἦν τοῦ Διὸς ὁ Τάνταλος, ἀλλ’ ὀνειδίζουσα τῷ δαίμονι ὅτι τοὺς ἰδίους ἐκγόνους τοσοῦτον ἐν ταῖς δυσδαιμονίαις παρορᾷ. She does not say “as they say” because she is in doubt whether Tantalus was the son of Zeus, but rather reproaching the god because he neglects to such a degree his own descendants in their misfortunes.

The first of two scholia on this lemma (which does not mean it is temporally prior) begins with καλῶς.⁶ Scholia that begin with this adverb usually relate to an implied question, “why did the poet choose this word or expression and is it a good choice (and so worthy of emulation)?” Some scholia more obviously from the teaching tradition actually start with a question of the form “why did he say X?” and then give an explanation. Here the issue is why the poet has Electra include “as they say” in her narrative at this point. The commentator/teacher wants his readers/students to understand that Electra disbelieves what men say because she holds a higher view of how gods treat their kin. There are, of course, contexts in Euripides where a character rejects a traditional story because of a desire to maintain a purified concept of divinity, but such a view does not fit Electra here, since she has just stated that humans suffer all manner of “god-driv-

⁴ On this sort of abstraction see further below at n. 41.

⁵ All scholia on *Orestes* are quoted from MASTRONARDE 2025a; sigla occasionally referred to in this paper are those of that edition. Scholia on *Phoenissae* and *Hecuba* are sometimes quoted from personal collations.

⁶ On καλῶς in scholia see RUTHERFORD 1905, pp. 404-6; ZUNTZ 1938, p. 646-51.

en misfortune” (2 ξυμφορὰ θεήλατος) and a little later will speak of the “injustice of Apollo” (28 Φοίβου ἀδικίαν) in ordering her brother’s action. In considering the rhetorical effect of this short phrase, this commentator is adopting what I term an ameliorating interpretation, perhaps under the influence of traditional philosophical critiques of the mythological gods, perhaps under the influence of Christianity, but most likely because he needs to make the classic text a safe model for education of the young. The second scholion quoted above offers a more subtle view of Electra’s position, but may still be deemed an overinterpretation in accepting that she is reproaching the divinity. In both these readings the commentator prefers to assume an unstated motivation in a rhetorically subtle speaker rather than consider how the phrase works at the level of external communication to the theater audience. The conception and birth of her ancestor Atreus is obviously not something within the personal experience of this prologue-speaker, so it adds to the authority of her narrative for the audience to have her state that she knows this from traditional report.⁷

Two other instances of this kind of close reading applied to the prologue deserve mention here.

Eur. *Or.* 15

ἔδαισε δ’ οὖν νιν τέκν’ ἀποκτείνας Ἄτρεός.

So then, Atreus killed Thyestes’ children and gave them to him to eat.⁸

Sch. *Or.* 15.27 ἐπειδὴ κακῆς πράξεως ὑπεμνήσθη, διὰ τοῦτο οὐκ εἶπεν ὁ πάππος ὁ ἐμός, ἀλλ’ ὁ Ἄτρεός.

Since Electra has called to mind an evil action, for this reason she did not say “my grandfather,” but “Atreus.”

Eur. *Or.* 18

Μενέλαός τε Κρήσσης μητρὸς Ἀερόπης ἄπο

And Menelaus from a Cretan mother Aerope

⁷ See WILLINK 1986 ad loc. Luigi Battezzato reminds me that such a cautious statement by Electra is also appropriate because it concerns the action of a god, and humans cannot be certain about what the gods want or do.

⁸ It is not relevant to our discussion that line 15 is usually marked as spurious in modern editions. The ancient critics whose comments survive in the scholia tended to explain (or explain away) textual difficulties rather than see corruption or interpolation (for some examples see MASTRONARDE 2025b, pp. 173-82).

Sch. Or. 18.01 οὐ γὰρ ἄν' Ἑλληνίς γυνή τοιαῦτα ἔπραξε. τοῦτο οὖν προσέθηκεν ἐλευθερῶν μὲν τὰς Ἑλληνίδας, κωμωδῶν⁹ δὲ τὰς Κρήσας.

For a Greek woman would not have done such deeds. So he (the poet) added this (the epithet "Cretan"), freeing Greek women from blame, but mocking Cretan women.

The scholion on 15 again considers a precise choice of wording, answering the question why the speaker uses as subject the name Atreus and not "my grandfather." The question is arbitrary from the point of view of literary analysis, since, apart from the fact that the specific word *πάππος* is not a tragic or high-style word,¹⁰ Electra has not yet reached her own generation or introduced herself or her own name in the sequence of the genealogy, and it would be abnormal for her to use even a paraphrase meaning "my grandfather" here. I suggest that the remark of the commentator (or teacher) is *ad hoc*: he is examining the sentence in abstraction from its context and suggesting how it might in certain circumstances be rhetorically effective to use a neutral reference rather than draw attention to the close relationship to the speaker. In the remark on line 18, we may note that the masculine participles indicate that the underlying motivation is ascribed to the author rather than the character, but that does not make a difference in the style of analysis. In many scholia of this kind, in fact, one cannot be sure whether the subject of "he said" or "he added" is the poet or the character, and it has often been observed that in ancient literary analysis the distinction between author and character is at times ignored. As for the claim made here, perhaps an audience would take the passing epithet in "Cretan mother" as an invitation to think of bad Cretan women (Pasiphae, Phaedra, and Aerope herself), although such a pregnant use would be more characteristic of Senecan poetry, or of Euri-

⁹ In tragic scholia the verb κωμωδέω commonly refers to mockery in comedy of tragic diction or lines, but for the tragedian as mocking a character or some other figure see Sch. Or. 371.01 (mocking Spartans, discussed below, along with Sch. Or. 356.07, where Homer is the one treating Menelaus mockingly), Sch. Andr. 150a1 CAVARZERAN (again mocking Spartans); Sch. Aesch. Sept. 477-9 SMITH; Sch. Aesch. Pers. 309 DÄHNHARDT. The term is also used in this way of Homer about a dozen times in the *Iliad* scholia. Characteristically for the scholia on Sophocles, the verb appears there only when the critic denies that Sophocles is doing it: Sch. Soph. Aj. 74 CHRISTODOULOU παρατεῖται ὁ Ὀδυσσεὺς οὐχ ὡς κωμωδοῦντος τοῦ ποιητοῦ δειλίαν τοῦ ἥρωος (οὕτω γὰρ <ἄν> ἀφαιρεθεῖν τὸ τῆς τραγωδίας ἀξίωμα), ἀλλὰ τὸ εὐλαβὲς ἐνδείκνυται κτλ. ("Odysseus begs off [seeing mad Ajax] not because the poet is mocking any cowardice of the hero – for in that case the dignity of tragedy would be removed – but he is displaying his prudent caution").

¹⁰ *πάππος* does occur in Soph. fr. 868 Radt, but in the botanical sense of "down" (on a seed). In the sense "grandfather" *πάππος* occurs only in prose and in comedy until the Hellenistic era, when there are a few instances in Lycophron and Callimachus.

pides himself in a more combative context involving characters in hot dispute. In any case, what is also interesting is that this is another kind of ameliorating reading, artificially separating Cretan women from other Greek women in the interest of maintaining as respectable and superior the Greek identity instilled by traditional education.

Most of the readings that credit great subtlety of word choice to the characters or the poet can be seen in the notes that survive on the dialogue of Helen and Electra in the second part of the prologue (*Or.* 71-139) or in the dialogue of Menelaus and Orestes in the first part of the second episode (*Or.* 356-455). In the earlier scene, small details are explained to fit an interpretation of Electra as alternating between being openly harsh toward and subtly critical of her aunt, and of Helen as subtly insulting and condemning her niece. Sometimes the claims are a better illustration of possible rhetorical strategies than of how an audience is likely, in my opinion, to read the two characters in performance.

Eur. *Or.* 86-7

σὺ δ' ἡ μακαρία μακάριός θ' ὁ σὸς πόσις
ἦκετον ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ἀθλίως πεπραγότας.

But you, the woman blessed with good fortune, and your husband, in his blessed fortune, have come to us in our wretched distress.

Sch. *Or.* 87.01 ἦκετον ἐφ' ἡμᾶς: ἤλθετε πρὸς ἡμᾶς. τῇ προσθήκῃ δὲ τοῦ ἐφ' ἡμᾶς τραχύτερον αὐτὸ ἐποίησεν· ἀρπασόμενοι γὰρ ἤλθετε ἡμᾶς, φησίν. ἔοικε δὲ τῷ Ἑπτά ἐπὶ Θήβας.

“You two have come to (ἐφ’) us”: You have come to (πρὸς) us. By adding the phrase ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς she made the expression harsher (i.e., the phrase is taken as “against us” rather than “to/toward us”). For she means “you have come to plunder us.” It is like (the use of the preposition ἐπὶ in) *Seven against Thebes*.

The couplet 86-7 is framed to emphasize a motif of the first part of the play, the contrast between the prospering fortunes of Menelaus and Helen and the dire sufferings of Electra and Orestes. The reading of Electra’s phrasing in this scholion retrojects into this scene the claim made much later in the performance, at 1108, that Helen is indoors putting a seal on all the property that she expects to take over when Electra and Orestes are dead. In the temporal sequence of the reception of the play, an audience does not have enough information about how Helen and Menelaus will be depicted or will act to infer so much from the prepositional phrase. On the other hand, a reader steeped in rhetorical theories of innuendo and aware of the content of the whole play may be inclined to consider the words in this fashion.

The idea that Helen and Electra are rhetorical antagonists also lies behind the first comment on the scene.

Eur. *Or.* 71-2

ὦ παῖ Κλυταιμνήστρας τε καὶ Ἀγαμέμνωνος
παρθένε μακρὸν δὴ μῆκος Ἡλέκτρα χρόνου,
O child of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon, maiden for a great length of time, Electra,

Sch. *Or.* 71.01¹¹ ὦ παῖ Κλυταιμνήστρας: τοῦ προσήκοντος ἦθους ἐξέπεσεν ὁ Εὐριπίδης. νῦν γὰρ πρῶτον ἀλλήλας βλέπουσι καὶ ἀήθως¹² πάνυ οὔτε ἀσπάζονται ἀλλήλας οὔτε προσφωνοῦσι. καὶ ἡ μὲν Ἑλένη ἔξεισιν ἔχουσα χοὰς καὶ τὸν βόστρυχον ἀποτετμημένον, ἅμα δὲ δυσωπεῖ τὴν Ἡλέκτραν καὶ λυπεῖ ὑπομνησκουσα τοῦ ὀνόματος Κλυταιμνήστρας καὶ προτάσσουσα.

“O child of Clytemnestra”: Euripides has failed to express the fitting *êthos*.¹³ For they (Electra and Helen) now see each other for the first time, and in a manner entirely lacking

¹¹ On the textual problems of this note see the apparatus and comment in MASTRONARDE 2025a. Once again, it is not relevant here that line 71 is marked as spurious by many editors. NÜNLIST 2009, p. 349, refers to this scholion in the context of remarks about entrances and exits, only to make the point that such a note may be used “to kill several birds with one stone,” not to comment on the nature of the claim made here.

¹² Note that V, one of the major sources of the older scholia on Euripides, reads εὐήθως πάνυ, “very foolishly,” using a term that occurs in a number of scholia conveying criticisms of a character’s action or speech. Because of the similarity of alpha and the epsilon-upsilon ligature in many medieval hands, corruption in either direction is easy and common; but the presence of ἦθους just before, the criticism of its inadequacy, and the connection with γὰρ indicate that εὐήθως is the corruption in this place.

¹³ The use of ἐξέπεσεν implies lack of artistic control on the part of Euripides, since ἐκπίπτω refers to an involuntary action. Among parallels obtained from a TLG proximity search for ἐκπίπτω near τοῦ προσήκοντος one may quote here: Sch. Aesch. Sept. 65b SMITH τουτέστι μὴ ἀφήσης τὸν προσήκοντα καιρὸν παρελθεῖν μηδὲ τοῦ προσήκοντος ἐκπέσης χρόνου; Sch. Andr. 365a1 CAVARZERA καὶ τῆς φρενός σου τὸ σώφρον ἐξέπεσε τοῦ προσήκοντος, τουτέστιν· παρὰ τὸν δέοντα λογισμὸν ἐφθέγξω λοιδορησαμένη ἄγαν θρασέως τῷ Μενελάῳ; Dio Chrysost. *Or.* 32.46, 5-6 αὐτοὶ δὲ ἐκπίπτοντες ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τοῦ προσήκοντος καὶ τῆς ἀξίας τῆς ἑαυτῶν οὐ φροντίζετε; Scholia ad Hermogenis Status, *Rhet. Gr.* (Walz) 4:112,9-10 τεχνικώτατον δὲ τὸ τῶν καιρῶν στοχαζόμενον μὴ ἐκπίπτειν τοῦ προσήκοντος. Note also the comparable language in Sch. *Or.* 1369.05 ἐντεῦθεν ἐξέστη τοῦ ἰδίου ἦθους ὁ Εὐριπίδης ἀνοικεῖα ἑαυτῷ λέγων, with the comment in MASTRONARDE 2025a.

*êthos*¹⁴ they neither embrace each other nor greet each other with affection. And Helen comes out with libations and her cut-off lock of hair (that is, to be sent to the tomb), and at the same time she annoys Electra and causes her pain by recalling the name of Clytemnestra and by placing it first in her speech.

In this note, I suggest that a commentator interested in rhetorical training has approached the scene with the question how the two women would best speak to each other when on one side Helen hopes to obtain Electra's help in taking her funeral offerings to the grave and on the other side the main hope for Electra and Orestes now rests in Menelaus. So the proper rhetorical technique would be one that carefully wins favor from the dialogue-partner by polite and friendly speech and by strategies designed to win good will.¹⁵ This is "the fitting *êthos*" that is felt

¹⁴ I use the neutral translation "lacking *êthos*," but in the context this amounts to "lacking the *êthos* considered appropriate by the critic." The most common meaning of the adverb *âthôs* is "unusually, in a manner outside the norm, in an unfamiliar way." But here, after *hthous* in the first sentence, I believe the uses in Aristotle's *Poetics* are more relevant: 1450a23-7 *ἔτι ἄνευ μὲν πράξεως οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο τραγῳδία, ἄνευ δὲ ἡθῶν γένοιτ' ἂν· αἱ γὰρ τῶν νέων τῶν πλείστων ἀήθεις τραγῳδαὶ εἰσὶν, καὶ ὅλως ποιηταὶ πολλοὶ τοιοῦτοι, οἷον καὶ τῶν γραφέων Ζεῦξις πρὸς Πολύγνωντον πέπονθεν* ("Furthermore, without action there could not be a tragedy, but without *êthê* there could be. For the works of the majority of the recent playwrights are tragedies lacking (expression of) *êthos*, and in general many poets are of this sort, in the same way that among painters Zeuxis has suffered in comparison with Polygnotos."); 1460a5-11 *Ὅμηρος δὲ ἄλλα τε πολλὰ ἄξιος ἐπαινέσθαι καὶ δὴ καὶ ὅτι μόνος τῶν ποιητῶν οὐκ ἄγνοεῖ ὁ δὲ ποιεῖν αὐτόν. αὐτὸν γὰρ δὲ τὸν ποιητὴν ἐλάχιστα λέγειν· οὐ γὰρ ἔστι κατὰ ταῦτα μμητής. οἱ μὲν οὖν ἄλλοι αὐτοὶ μὲν δι' ὅλου ἀγωνίζονται, μιμῶνται δὲ ὀλίγα καὶ ὀλιγάκις· ὁ δὲ ὀλίγα φρονησάμενος εὐθὺς εἰσάγει ἄνδρα ἢ γυναῖκα ἢ ἄλλο τι ἥθος, καὶ οὐδέν' ἀήθη ἄλλ' ἔχοντα ἥθος* ("Homer deserves to be praised in many other respects and in particular because alone among the poets he is not unaware of what he should do himself. For the poet himself should speak very little, because he is not in these parts a producer of representations. Now the others engage themselves actively throughout but represent in short stretches and rarely. He (Homer), on the other hand, after making a short proem immediately brings on a man or woman or some other character, and not one of them lacking in *êthos* but having *êthos*."). Also relevant is the term *ânethopoîētos*, "not giving delineation of character," used by Dionysius of Halicarnassus and others authors and also in Sch. Ariston. Hom. Il. 15.147-8a ERBSE *ἀθετοῦνται ἀμφοτέροι, ὅτι ἀνηθοποιήτοί εἰσι· κτλ* ("Both lines are athetized because they lack delineation of character"); Sch. exeg. Il. 5.278b ERBSE *ὁ ἦ ἀντὶ τοῦ εἶ, καὶ τὸ οἷστος ὑποστιχθήσεται· εἰ γὰρ περισπᾶσμεν τὸν ἦ, ἀνηθοποιήτον ἔσται* ("ἦ is used for εἰ, and there will be punctuation at οἷστος; for if we put a circumflex on eta (ἦ), it will lack delineation of character").

¹⁵ Compare the criticism of Andromache for speaking too boldly to Menelaus in Sch. Andr. 365a1 CAVARZERAN (quoted in note 13 above), and other scholia on *Andr.* discussed in MASTRONARDE 2025b, p. 169.

to be lacking, not the *êthos* that suits the character portrayal that Euripides has chosen for dramatic purposes, with Electra resentful and depressed but fiercely loyal to her brother and Helen self-centered and morally clueless. For the cited critics, the mention of Clytemnestra's name and its position near the head of the sentence are bad moves rhetorically.

A second comment on the opening couplet of Helen's speech is on similar lines, but takes Helen to be acting more deliberately:

Sch. Or. 72.01 ἄλλως· παρθένε μακρὸν δὴ μήκος· ὅ ἐστι πολλῷ χρόνῳ παρθευομένη. τοῦτο δὲ ὑβρίζουσα αὐτὴν φησιν ὡς αἰτίαν ἐχούσης καὶ διὰ τοῦτο μὴ γαμουμένης. καὶ διὰ τούτου παρεμφαίνει ὅτι εὐμοιρίας νομίζει τέλος τὸν γάμον.

Another way: maiden for a long time: Which means "still living as a maiden after much time." She (Helen) says this by way of insulting her (Electra), as if she is to blame and for this reason unmarried. And through this phrase she/he¹⁶ subtly suggests that she/he considers marriage to be the ultimate end of a good portion in life.

What exactly did this critic understand by Electra's "being to blame"? If it refers to being blamed for the matricide, then that is too recent an event to be an explanation for long maidenhood. Did this commentator instead have in mind the notion that Electra had somehow had sex before marriage, an idea that is actually exploited in a scholion on 108, as we will see?¹⁷

¹⁶ As noted above, it may be unclear whether such a statement applies to the character Helen or the poet Euripides. The run of the note may seem to favor Helen, but I am inclined to favor the poet. Helen is not a character one would expect to be cited as an authority on marriage, although one must concede that the commentator may have ignored that aspect of Helen in the interest of offering a confirmation of a societal norm. Also, there is clear case of Euripides being said to endorse a norm for females in Sch. Phoen. 88 SCHWARTZ διδάσκει δὲ πρόοδον παρθένου γίνεσθαι κατ' ἐπιτροπὴν μὲν μητρός, παιδαγωγίαν δὲ τροφῆως, χρείας μὴ τῆς τυχοῦσης ἐπειγούσης τὴν ἔξοδον ("And he (the poet) teaches (us) that the coming forward (into public) of a maiden takes place by the permission of a mother and under the guidance of a tutor, with no ordinary need urging the coming out").

¹⁷ For the prurient cast of this assumption, compare the alternative suggestion in Sch. Phoen. 946 [I.351,2-4 SCHWARTZ] about why Menoeceus is the only possible sacrificial victim, Haemon being excluded "either because he was betrothed, or because, as they say, he secretly had intercourse with Antigone, and Teiresias, as a prophet knowing this, referred to it indirectly for the sake of decency" (ἢ καθὼς ἐμνηστεύσατο, ἢ ἐπεὶ, ὡς λέγουσι, λάθρα αὐτῇ συνῆλθε. τοῦτον δὲ ὡς μάντιν εἰδότα εὐφῆμως εἰπεῖν).

Several other details are interpreted as conveying open or veiled reproach of Electra by Helen, and there are terms pointing to skillful use of rhetoric for abuse.

Eur. Or. 73-5

πῶς, ὦ τάλαινα, σὺ τε κασίγνητός τε σὸς
τλήμων Ὀρέστης μητρὸς ὅδε φονεὺς ἔφυ;¹⁸
προσφθέγμασιν γὰρ οὐ μαιίνομαι σέθεν.

How, unhappy woman, did you and your brother
wretched Orestes here become the murderer of your mother?
For I am not polluted by speaking with you.

Sch. Or. 73.01 διὰ τούτου ὠνείδισεν αὐτὴν ὡς μητροφόνου ἀδελφὴν. οἱ δὲ τοῖς ἐναγέσι
προσφθεγγόμενοι καὶ αὐτοὶ δοκοῦσι μαιίνεσθαι, ὡς καὶ ἐν Ἡρακλεῖ [Eur. *Her.* 1219] καὶ
Ἰξίονι [Eur. fr. 427] δέδεικται.

Through this speech she reproached her as the sister of a matricide. And those who
speak to persons polluted with bloodshed seem even themselves to be defiled, as has
been shown in *Heracles* and *Ixion*.

Eur. Or. 76 εἰς Φοῖβον ἀναφέρουσα τὴν ἀμαρτίαν
assigning the wrongdoing to Phoebus

Sch. Or. 76.01 καὶ τοῦτο πανούργως. ἀναμάρτητον γὰρ τὸ θεῖον. ἐμφαίνει οὖν ὡς
καταψευδομένων αὐτῶν τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος.

This too is said maliciously. For the divine is infallible. She intimates therefore that they
are falsely accusing Apollo.

Eur. Or. 81 Ἑλένη, τί σοι λέγοιμ' ἄν ἃ γε παροῦσ' ὁρᾷς;
Helen, why should I tell you what you see before you?

Sch. Or. 81.02 πρὸς πάσας τὰς ὕβρεις ἀντέθηκε τὸ Ἑλένη, ὅθεν καὶ χιάζεται ὁ στίχος·
σεσημειώται γὰρ τὸ ὄνομα τῆς Ἑλένης. αἰνίττεται δὲ ὅτι πονηρῶς κερτομεῖ περὶ τούτων
πυνθανομένη ὦν παρούσα ὁρᾷ.

In response to all the insults Electra has opposed the word "Helen," for which reason
the chi is affixed to the line. For the name of Helen has been marked as significant. And
Electra implies indirectly that Helen is maliciously criticizing when she inquires about
things that she sees before her.

¹⁸ Again, it did not occur to the commentator in antiquity to doubt the authenticity of line 74,
which is considered spurious by many editors (others keep the line, emending ὅδε to ὅς or ἔφυ to ἔχει).

Sch. 73.01 is motivated by the presence of the interpolated line 74. This note is absent from the oldest manuscripts, but still may go back to late antiquity, if the following sentence originally belonged with it, for there we find a reference to Euripides' *Heracles* (an "alphabetic" play known to very few in the middle ages) and *Ixion* (a play of which almost nothing has survived) or, rather, to commentaries on those plays (note the use of ὡς ... δέδεικται rather than something like ὡς Εὐριπίδης φησὶ/διδάσκει). Sch. 76.01 is first reference among several in the scholia on *Orestes* to the rhetorical trait of πανουργία, the deployment of language in a shamelessly deceptive and unscrupulously clever manner.¹⁹ Since this note begins καὶ τοῦτο πανούργως, "this too is said maliciously (with unscrupulous cunning)," it apparently comes from a commentary in which the term (or a synonym) was used in a preceding note now lost. The explanation here again betrays the ameliorating viewpoint toward theology that must reflect a committed philosophical or religious or pedagogical position about divinity. A similar veiled strategy based on the perfection of divinity is assigned to Menelaus in a later passage (*Or.* 417, discussed below).

The view that Helen is repeatedly reproaching and insulting Electra is shared in the note on Electra's first reply to her, Sch. 81.02. The note explains why there is a mark at line 81. When we are told in scholia of symbols present in the margin, there is a possibility that the mark itself goes back to early Alexandrian scholarship, since this practice was in use in editions by Aristarchus and presumably also in those by Aristophanes.²⁰ But the report of a sign does not mean that the explanation of the symbol in our scholia is also derived reliably by faithful transmission from the earliest scholars. We should always ponder whether it is an inference or guess, and whether the explanation has been badly distorted in transmission. In any case, this scholion assumes there are many insults in Helen's short speech since Electra is said to counter "all the insults"

¹⁹ For πανουργία and rhetoric, cf. Dion. Hal. *de Lysia* 15 (on rhetorical strategies not used by Lysias), *de imitatione* fr. 31.5.6 Radermacher-Usener (on Hyperides), and ps.-Dion. Hal. *Ars rhet.* 8.6 (on Demosthenes). Similarly, ἀπάνουργος, ἀπανούργεντος, and ἀπανούργητος are frequently used in reference to speech that is straightforward and without sophistry or stylistic artifice. For Helen's πανουργία, see also Sch. *Or.* 88.02 πανούργως ἐρωτᾷ ταῦτα ἡ Ἑλένη ("Helen asks this question with malicious intent"); Sch. *Or.* 98.13 πανούργως τὸν φόβον αἰδῶ ἐκάλεσε ("With unscrupulous cunning she has called her fear shame"). Note that Schwartz reassigned the scholion on 98 αἰσχύνομαι to 101 αἰδῶς, in which case the *panourgia* would be Electra's; but she is not elsewhere in these notes seen as *panourgōs*, and one would expect rather that she would be found to be speaking ἐν ᾗθει or ἐν εἰρωνείᾳ.

²⁰ For discussion of the chi-sign and of the debated issue of whether Aristophanes wrote commentaries to accompany his editions see PONTANI 2018.

(ὑβρεῖς recalls ὑβρίζουσα in Sch. 72.01, quoted above); it suggests that Electra sees that Helen has spoken “maliciously” (πονηρῶς)²¹ and that she retaliates by uttering the single word “Helen.” Again this is a matter of indirect suggestion, for the critic used the term αἰνίττεται.²² The idea that the name itself is here a reproach, presumably on the grounds that it evokes Helen’s notorious treachery and her responsibility for the death of so many heroes and for the destruction of Troy, seems to me to be an overinterpretation, similar to that of Clytemnestra’s name in 71.²³

The question of how to refer to Clytemnestra, by name or otherwise, occurred to the critic or critics at other points in the dialogue.

Eur. Or. 94 βούλει τάφον μοι πρὸς κασιγνήτης μολεῖν;
Are you willing to go to my sister’s tomb for me?

Sch. Or. 94.01 ἀπλούστερον αὐτῇ διαλέγεται, ὅτι μέλλει δεῖσθαι αὐτῆς, ἐν ταύτῳ δὲ καὶ παραφυλάττεται {καὶ} μητρὸς εἰπεῖν, ἵνα μὴ δόξη ὀνειδίζειν αὐτῇ. δεῖ γὰρ εἶναι κολακικὸν τὸν δεόμενον.²⁴

She (Helen) speaks with her (Electra) in a more straightforward manner, because she is about to make a request of her, and at the same time she is also careful not to say (go to the tomb) of (your) mother, so that she may not seem to reproach her. For one making a request has to behave like a flatterer.

²¹ πονηρῶς appears to be used synonymously with πανούργως in the scholia on *Orestes*, but the word is not so used in other scholia on drama or in other scholia. For the equivalence of the two terms, cf. Sch. in *Batrachomyomachiam* 93 LUDWICH, where δολίως has the series of glosses μετὰ δόλου, πανούργως, πονηρῶς, ἀπατηλῶς.

²² For this term see NÜNLIST 2009, pp. 231-4; on 233 he cites this note as an example without discussing the interpretation offered.

²³ One cannot, however, entirely exclude the possibility that the critic thought the retaliation was conveyed by using the bare name “Helen” rather than a periphrasis like “daughter of Tyndareus” or “child of Zeus.” Comparanda, however, are against this view: the bare name is used to address her by the chorus in *Helen* 306, by Theonoe in *Helen* 873, and by Theoclymenus in *Helen* 1392 without any implication of disrespect. For another interpretation (or overinterpretation) of an address using a bare proper name, see Sch. Tro. 895 on Helen’s vocative ‘Menelaus’.

²⁴ There is a corrupt fragment of a further sentence after this. It may have been a conclusive summary in a kind of ring-composition (which is found in some notes that seem to have a particularly didactic tone and may reflect the style of classroom teaching): perhaps as Schwartz suggested, “and because of this she used the term of kinship (rather than the proper name?)” or else “she used a different term of kinship (and not mother).”

Eur. Or. 95 μητρός κελεύεις τῆς ἐμῆς; τίνος χάριν;
You bid (me to go to the tomb) of my mother? Why?

Sch. Or. 95.01 νῦν μητέρα αὐτὴν ἐκάλεσε δεικνύουσα ὅτι οὐδὲ τὴν πρώτην λοιδορίαν προσήκατο.
Now Electra called her “mother,” demonstrating that she did not accept even the first offensive statement.

Sch. Or. 95.02 ἢ ὅτι διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τῆς ἐχθρᾶς μητρός παραιτεῖται τὴν αἴτησιν.
Or because by using the name of her hated mother she declines the request.

Sch. Or. 95.03
ἄλλως: ἡ μὲν κολακεύουσα συγγενικῶ ὀνόματι ἐχρήσατο, ἡ δὲ παραιτουμένη τὴν κολακείαν εἶπε μητρός.
(Explained) in another way: Helen, trying to wheedle a favor, used a term of kinship (sister), but Electra, rejecting the wheedling appeal, said “of (my) mother.”

These notes explain the use of “my sister” rather than “your mother” in 94 as a way to avoid further offense at the moment Helen is asking for a favor. This idea that references to Clytemnestra by name or as a mother might be aggressive ploys by Helen returns one final time in comments on Electra’s first reply to Helen’s request (95). Having committed to viewing the proper name and the term “mother” as loaded with hostile innuendo, the critic or critics then have to explain why Electra used the term “mother” in 95. The fronting of “mother” in μητρός κελεύεις and indeed of the question itself ahead of the “why?” suggest that this question is uttered with disbelief or even indignation. The scholia offer more than one possible explanation. In the first, Electra is said to have “not accepted” the hostile implication of Helen’s opening words (that is, pretended that there was no bad intention present). The second explanation²⁵ is that Electra’s reference to her mother serves to justify refusal of the request. This view does recognize the emotional charge in μητρός in this context, and it does not necessarily assume that Helen was deliberately aggressive, only insensitive and self-centered. The third explanation postulates that both speakers recognize the rhetorical strategy of Helen as “wheedling,” and that Electra parries that strategy by speaking bluntly.

The use of κολακικόν, κολακεύουσα, and κολακείαν in Sch. 94.01 and 95.03 above suggest the intersection of rhetorical theory and modern politeness the-

²⁵ Possibly by a different critic, but it is not unknown for commentators ancient and modern to offer more than one possible interpretation.

ory.²⁶ Whereas the later is concerned with threats to an interlocutor's 'face' and strategies designed to minimize such threats, ancient rhetoric approaches the relationship in terms of gaining and maintaining the good will of the audience of one's speech in order to maximize the possibility of successful persuasion. In terms of 'negative politeness' a speaker can reduce their imposition on the autonomy and psychological comfort of the interlocutor by such strategies as flattery, indirectness, or apology in advance. Without further digressing about this intersection, it can be stated here that in the scholia on tragedy and Homer, the terms *λυπεῖν*, *δυσωπεῖν*, *θεραπεύω*, *προθεραπεύω*, and their cognates point to a similar understanding of the interpersonal dynamics of making a request.²⁷ Indeed, the tragedians even present characters acknowledging such dynamics, hesitating to cause distress to an interlocutor. This is conventional when a messenger brings bad news (e.g., *Phoen.* 1208-15), but is also found in passages such as *Phoen.* 383-4 ὅπως δ' ἔρωμαι, μή τι σὴν δάκω φρένα, / δέδοιχ', ἃ χρίζω· διὰ πόθου δ' ἐλήλυθα ("I am fearful about how I am to ask you what I wish (to ask), lest I in some way sting your feelings, but I long (to ask)").²⁸

Small details of Helen's language provide further material for inferring her character and describing her rhetorical strategy in the passage where she tells Hermione what to say in prayer at Clytemnestra's tomb (117-23).

Eur. *Or.* 119-21

πρευμενῇ δ' ἄνωγέ νιν
ἐμοὶ τε καὶ σοὶ καὶ πόσει γνώμην ἔχειν
τοῖν τ' ἀθλίοιιν τοῖνδ', οὓς ἀπώλεσεν θεός.

And bid her to have a gracious spirit toward me and you and (my) husband, and toward these two wretched ones whom a god destroyed.

Sch. *Or.* 120.02 ἐνταῦθα ἡ βελτίστη οὐδὲ τὴν θυγατέρα ἑαυτῆς προέκρινε· τοῦ γὰρ ἀνδρὸς μικροῦ δεῖν καὶ ἐπελάθετο.

²⁶ For a thorough introduction to threats to 'face' and politeness strategies, see CATRAMBONE forthcoming, Chapter 2; more briefly, CATRAMBONE 2021, pp. 143-6; for Euripides see also RODRÍGUEZ PIETRABUENA 2022, as well as, e.g., LLOYD 2009 and VAN EMDE BOAS 2022.

²⁷ Some relevant passages are assembled in the Appendix.

²⁸ See also *Hec.* 234-6 εἰ δ' ἔστι τοῖς δούλοισι τοὺς ἐλευθέρους / μὴ λυπρὰ μηδὲ καρδίας δηκτῆρια / ἐξιστορῆσαι ("if it is permitted slaves to pose to free men questions that are not painful nor sting the heart"); *Or.* 544-5 ὦ γέρον, ἐγὼ τοι πρὸς σε δευμαίνω λέγειν / ὅπου σε μέλλω σὴν τε λυπήσειν φρένα ("Old man, I am afraid to speak to you on a subject where I am likely to cause pain to you and your feelings").

Here the wonderful woman did not even give precedence to her daughter over herself. As for her husband, she almost even forgot about him.

Sch. Or. 121.01 τοῖν τ' ἀθλίοις: καὶ αὐτῶν μέμνηται, ἵνα μὴ δόξη παντελῶς λιθοκάρδιος εἶναι, ὅμως μετὰ ἀρᾶς. τὸ γὰρ οὗς ἀπώλεσεν θεός δοκεῖ μὲν συναχθομένη λέγειν, πανούργως δὲ ἐμφαίνει ὅτι θεοῖς ἀπηχθήμενοι εἰσίν. οὐ γὰρ ἀπολλύει εἶπεν, ἀλλ' ἀπώλεσεν, ὡς ἐγνωσμένης ἤδη τῆς παρὰ θεῶν δυσμενείας.

"And the two wretched ones": She mentions them (Orestes and Electra) as well, in order not to seem completely stone-hearted, but even so she does it with a curse. For in uttering the phrase "whom god has destroyed" she seems to be sharing their distress, but with malicious cunning she indirectly suggests that they are hated by the gods. For she did not say "is destroying" but "has destroyed," as if the hostility on the part of the gods is already decided.

In the prayer for a kindly spirit toward "myself and you and my husband" (120 ἐμοί τε καὶ σοὶ καὶ πόσει), the word order is interpreted as self-centered, as if there were something marked about the word order. This is another overinterpretation, since the order "to me and to you" is attested in Aeschylus, Euripides, and Plato in several passages where no self-centeredness is evident, even apart from the fact that a different order would be metrically difficult or impossible and that the order Helen uses reflects the descending levels of kinship (a sister, a niece, and a brother-in-law). In the note on the next line in Helen's prayer, a similar verbal pedantry is applied to the tense of the verb in order to maintain the interpretation that she is subtly expressing hostility. Noteworthy in this scholion is the recurrence of πανούργως.

Readings of the kind we have been observing assume an intention on the part of the speaker (as opposed to the poet) to convey a concealed meaning. They can be variously analyzed under the heading of irony (εἰρωνεία), or with the concept of αἰνίττεσθαι (to speak in a riddling or coded way), or with the term ἐσχηματισμένον when a double meaning is intended, one deceiving the addressee and the other, true one that is obvious to the speaker, the chorus, and the audience (for example, some of Hecuba's statements to Polymestor as she lures him to his punishment in *Hecuba* 990-1022). The instances discussed above, however, often involve instead one of the rhetorical meanings of ἔμφασις, commonly expressed through the verb ἐμφαίνειν,²⁹ which in places can be considered a synonym of αἰνίττεσθαι. A similar connotation is conveyed by παρονειδίω³⁰

²⁹ See e.g. Ps.-Hermog. *de Inv.* 4.13, Tiberius *de fig. Demosthenicis* 14, Quintilian 8.3.83-6, 9.2.64.

³⁰ This verb is rare, but for its use in scholia cf. Sch. vet. Arist. *Eq.* 51b MERVYN JONES ὁ γὰρ οἰκέτης ἐστὶ ... παρονειδίωσιν ὅτι τοσαῦτα ἀποστέλλεται οὐκ ἐπὶ δειπνον, ἀλλ' ἀκρατισμόν ("the

in the scholion on 32, where the reproach is not openly stated, but a secondary implication.

Eur. *Or.* 32 κἀγὼ μετέσχον οἷα δὴ γυνὴ φόνου
And I shared in the killing in the way a woman can.

Sch. *Or.* 32.09 οἷα δὴ γυνή: ὥς γυνή, συμβουλεύσασα, παραθαρρύνασα, ὑπομνήσασα τοῦ πατρός. οὐ γὰρ αὐτόχειρ γέγονε τῆς μητρὸς, ἀλλὰ λόγοις παρώρμησε κατ' αὐτῆς τὸν ἀδελφόν. τάχα δὲ διὰ τοῦ οἷα δὴ γυνή παρονειδίζει τῇ μητρὶ· ἐκείνη γὰρ αὐτόχειρ γέγονε τοῦ Ἀγαμέμνονος οὐ κατὰ γυναῖκα.

"In the way a woman can": As a woman, having counseled him, emboldened him, reminded him of his father. For she did not become the murderer of her mother by her own hand, but used words to arouse her brother against her. Perhaps by saying "as a woman" she is indirectly reproaching her mother, for she did become the murderer of Agamemnon by her own hand, not (behaving) in the manner natural for a woman.

We have observed how Helen's verbal approach to Electra was identified as reflecting rhetorical πανουργία. In addition to πανούργως and πονηρῶς, κακονόως, "with ill will," or κακοήθως, "maliciously," are applied to Helen in the scholion on 108, and they will also be applied to Menelaus in the later scene. Here Helen explains why she is not sending Hermione rather than Electra to carry the offerings to Clytemnestra's tomb.

Eur. *Or.* 108 ἐς ὄχλον ἔρπειν παρθένοισιν οὐ καλόν.
It is not proper for maidens to go into (public view of) a crowd.

Sch. *Or.* 108.04 ταῖς νεάνισιν· οὐ γὰρ ταῖς ἀγάμοις. ἄγαμος γὰρ καὶ ἡ Ἥλέκτρα. παρθένος δὲ ἐστὶν ἢ τε ἀμειγῆς καὶ ἡ ἄρτι ἡβῶσα. ἢ πάλιν κακονόως [variant κακοηθῶς] οὐ παρθένον βούλεται δεῖξαι τὴν Ἥλέκτραν, ὅτι οὐκ ἐπείσθη αὐτῇ.

(By "parthenoisin" Helen here means) young girls. For she does not mean unmarried girls. For Electra too is unmarried. And a "parthenos" is both the girl who is still a virgin and the one who is just coming to sexual maturity. Alternatively, once again with ill will she (Helen) wants to show that Electra is not a virgin, because she (Electra) did not accede to her request.

servant is indirectly reproaching that so many things are being sent not for a dinner but for breakfast") and Sch. vet. Arist. *Nub.* 543a HOLWERDA οὐκ ἔστι δηλὸς ἐνταῦθα τίς παρονειδίζει· ἀλλ' ἴσως ἑαυτῷ, ἐπεὶ πεποίηκεν ἐν τῷ τέλει τούτου τοῦ δράματος καιομένην τὴν διατριβὴν Σωκράτους καὶ τινὰς τῶν φιλοσόφων λέγοντας "ιοῦ ιοῦ" ("it is not clear here whom he is indirectly reproaching; but perhaps (he reproaches) himself, because at the end of this play he has scripted the school of Socrates being burned and some of the philosophers saying 'iou iou'").

Rather than consider Helen to be insensitive or obtuse in not being aware of the irony of her reasoning, the critic again prefers to detect, at least as an alternative, a deliberate rhetorical cunning, an insult in retaliation for Electra's refusal.³¹

This style of close reading again becomes prominent in the scholia on the scene between Orestes and Menelaus at the beginning of the second episode. Malice is repeatedly attributed to Menelaus with the terms *κακοήθως* and *πονηρώς*, and there is a high probability, in my view, that a cynical approach to Menelaus was already to be found in Didymus. Didymus was presumably following an existing tradition, since much earlier we have Aristotle's terse remark about Menelaus being unnecessarily base.³² There is also the anonymous and undatable judgment transmitted among the prefatory matter to the play that declares that all the characters except Pylades are *φαῦλοι* (inferior, mean, ignoble).³³ At any rate, the evidence pointing to Didymus is in the scholion on 371:

Sch. Or. 371.01 ὅπουλα πάντα τὰ ῥήματα Μενελάου, ἀφ' οὗ ὁ ποιητής τὸ ἄσφατον τῆς Λακεδαιμονίων γνώμης κωμωδεῖ,³⁴ ὡς καὶ ἐν Ἀνδρομάχῃ [445-6]· “ὦ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποισιν ἐχθιστοὶ βροτῶν, Σπάρτης ἔνοικοι, δόλια βουλευτήρια.” πρὸ γὰρ Διοκλέους, ἐφ' οὗ τὸν Ὀρέστην ἐδίδαξε, Λακεδαιμονίων πρεσβευσαμένων περὶ εἰρήνης ἀπιστήσαντες Ἀθηναῖοι οὐ προσήκαντο, ἐπὶ ἄρχοντος Θεοπόμπου, ὃ ἐστὶ <ἔτεσιν β> πρὸ Διοκλέους. οὕτως ἰστορεῖ Φιλόχορος [FGrHist 328 F 139a].

All the words of Menelaus are deceitful, (a portrayal) by which the poet mocks the unreliability of the Lacedaemonians' attitude/mind, as also in *Andromache*: “O, most hateful of mortals for all people, / dwellers in Sparta, deceitful counselors.” For before Diocles, in whose archonship [409/408] he produced *Orestes*, when the Lacedaemonians sent ambassadors about peace, the Athenians, distrusting them, did not accept it, during

³¹ Line 108 also aroused the puzzlement (or indignation) of other critics or teachers interested in the reinforcement of gender norms: Sch. Or. 108.01 τί οὖν; ταῖς τελείαις τοῦτο καλόν; (“What then? Is this fine for adult women (to go out among a crowd)?”).

³² Arist. *Poetics* 15.1454a28-9: ἔστιν δὲ παράδειγμα πονηρίας μὲν ἦθους μὴ ἀναγκαίας οἶον ὁ Μενέλαος ὁ ἐν τῷ Ὀρέστῃ (“An example of unnecessary baseness of character is the sort presented by Menelaus in *Orestes*”).

³³ Arg. 2d: τὸ δρᾶμα τῶν ἐπὶ σκηνῆς εὐδοκιοῦντων, χεῖριστον δὲ τοῖς ἦθεσι. πλὴν γὰρ Πυλάδου πάντες φαῦλοι ἦσαν [εἰσιν Nauck]. (“The drama is one of those that are (were) much admired on the stage, but it is very bad in its characters. For apart from Pylades they were [‘are’ Nauck] all inferior (mean, ignoble).”) I have always wondered why Pylades gets a free pass in this commentator's blanket condemnation. Perhaps his general reputation as an exemplary loyal friend outweighed for this critic his role in the killing of Clytemnestra (condemned by his father Strophius) and in proposing and participating in the attempt upon Helen's life.

³⁴ On κωμωδέω see note 9 above.

the archonship of Theopompus, that is, two years before Diocles. Thus Philochorus records it.

The interest in allusions to contemporary events, the appeal to chronology by archon years, the citation of an authority like Philochorus the Atthidographer, and the quotation of lines of another tragedy as evidence – these are all features generally believed to have characterized Didymus' commentaries.³⁵ This note, however, does not use πανούργως or the other adverbs we have seen in the scholia discussed above and to be cited below, and Didymus seems to be interested in Menelaus's bad character and an allusion to the historical moment rather than rhetoric. Thus we are not compelled to conclude that all the briefer notes that call attention to Menelaus speaking κακότηως should be connected to Didymus as well. They may be connected with him only in the sense that later commentators, using their own terminology and more interested in rhetorical analysis and training, may have piled on more instances of the duplicity that Didymus mentioned.

A similar approach to Menelaus is evident in the comment on his first speech beginning at line 356:

Sch. Or. 356.02 ἀπὸ πρώτης παρόδου σημειοῦται τὸ κακότηες τῆς γνώμης Μενελάου. καὶ γὰρ οὐδὲ εἰς Σπάρτην ἀνήχθη, ἀλλὰ πρότερον εἰς Ἄργος ὡς ἐξελάσων Ὀρέστην, ὡς ἐν τοῖς ἐξῆς δηλὸς ἐστὶ. καίτοι παρὰ τῷ ποιητῇ εὐρίσκεται τῶν πάλαι πολεμίων φειδόμενος· ἐν γὰρ τῇ Ζ ῥαψωδίᾳ [Hom. *Il.* 6.37-65] κωμωδεῖται συγχωρῶν ζῆν τὸν Ἄδραστον δόσιν χρημάτων ἐπαγγελλόμενον.

From his first entrance, the malice of Menelaus's attitude is marked as noteworthy. For he did not even land his vessel at Sparta, but first moored at Argos³⁶ in order to drive Orestes out, as is clear about him in what follows. And yet in the poet (Homer) he is found to be one who spares even his longtime enemies. For in Book 6 (of the *Iliad*) he is mocked for granting life to Adrastus when the latter was promising a payment of money.³⁷

³⁵ On Didymus's use of historians see MONTANA 2020; some of his characteristic scholarly interests and methods are discussed throughout the chapters of COWARD AND PRODI 2020.

³⁶ The commentator's phrasing is telegraphic, eliding the need to land at Nauplion to reach Argos or at some other port to go inland to Sparta.

³⁷ NÜNLIST 2009, p. 254, notes the fact that the critic here compares the Menelaus of *Iliad* 6, but does not analyze the critic's thinking any further, assuming it belongs in the tradition of Menelaus' "unnecessary baseness." The reading of the *Iliad* passage in this scholion is somewhat more detailed than what survives in the scholia vetera, where we find the connection of Menelaus's being persuaded to spare Adrastus to his reputation as μαλθακός αἰχμητής (Sch. exeg. *Il.* 6.51a1-2 ERBSE) and acknowledgment that Menelaus's ἥθος is μέτριον καὶ ἀόργητον because he leaves the

The use of κωμωδεῖν for mocking portrayal, the similarity of the phrase “Menelaus’ *gnômê*” to “the Lacedaemonians’ *gnômê*,” and the reference to the Homeric episode may incline one to say this is by the same commentator as the scholion on 371. On the other hand, some details of the interpretation do not do much credit to the critic, although this is not a reason to exclude Didymus. First, whereas I think an audience witnessing *Iphigenia in Aulis* may legitimately and usefully be in doubt whether to take Menelaus’ shifting positions in his scene with Agamemnon as a sign of actual inconstancy or as due to a subtle plan to seem blameless to his brother when he knows the sacrifice will have to go forward, the view that Menelaus rushed first to Argos to expel Orestes and seize his property is a retrojection from what is said about Helen sealing off the possessions quite a bit later in the play (at 1108), and has little to commend it in the temporal experience of the play in performance or on first reading. The commentator knows it is a retrojection, since he cites later behavior as evidence, but he does not regard that as an obstacle to his reasoning about the entrance. Furthermore, it seems to me farfetched that Menelaus’ inclination to mercy in his treatment of the suppliant in *Iliad* 6 (before this softness is squelched by Agamemnon) is an intertext that underlines his harsh treatment of his nephew in this case.

One might more plausibly say that the Iliadic evidence of Menelaus’ softness could be connected with his surprising statement (371-3) that, even knowing of the murder of Agamemnon, he was intending to embrace Orestes and Clytemnestra “as ones enjoying good fortune” (373 ὡς εὐτυχοῦντας). Although some ancient paraphrases and modern translations flatten the meaning of εὐτυχοῦντας,³⁸ some ancient readers or critics saw it as problematic and in need of explanation.

killing to Agamemnon (Sch. Il. exeg. 6.62b1-2 ERBSE). Eustathius *Comm. in Il.* 6.51 [II.242,3-9 van der Valk] likewise refers to the μαλθακός αἰχμητής characterization, but also acknowledges that Menelaus may be swayed by the prospect of valuable ransom (κάμπτεται πρὸς ἔλεον καὶ ἐθέλει περιποιήσασθαι τὸν ἰκέτην, ἴσως μὲν καὶ διὰ τὰ ὑπεσχημένα δῶρα, ἴσως δὲ καὶ αἰδεσθεὶς τὸν ἰκέσιον, “he is bent toward pity and willing to let the suppliant live on, perhaps also because of the promised gifts, but perhaps also out of respect for Zeus of suppliants”).

³⁸ E.g., WEST 1987 “assuming them to be well”; MEDDA 2001 “credendo che stessero bene”; better is KOVACS 2002 “supposed they would be prospering.” WILLINK 1986 has no note on this phrase. The softer meaning given by West and Medda is in the tradition of an explanation already offered in antiquity: Sch. Or. 363.02 τὰ κατὰ τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονα ἠπιστάμην καὶ τὸν ἐκείνου θάνατον ἐδάκρυσα, ἐλπίζων δὲ περιπτύσσεσθαι τὸν Ὀρέστην καὶ τὴν μητέρα ὡς σφζομένους, παρ’ ἐλπίδας ἤκουσα τῆς Κλυταιμνήστρας τὸν θάνατον. τὸ γὰρ εὐτυχοῦντας ἀντὶ τοῦ σώους καὶ ὑγείας. (“I knew of what happened to Agamemnon and I wept for his death, but expecting I would embrace Orestes and his mother as safely surviving, contrary to my expectations I heard of the death of Clytemnestra. For (he uses) the word ‘having good fortune’ in the sense ‘safe and healthy’.”)

Eur. Or. 371-3

δοκῶν Ὀρέστην παῖδα τὸν Ἀγαμέμνωνος

φίλαισι χερσὶ περιβαλεῖν καὶ μητέρα,

ὥς εὐτυχοῦντας, ...

thinking I would embrace with loving arms Agamemnon's son Orestes and his mother,
as ones enjoying good fortune ...

Sch. Or. 373.05 εὐτυχοῦντας: τὸ εὐτυχοῦντας κακοήθως

"Enjoying good fortune": (He uses) the word "enjoying good fortune" maliciously.

Sch. Or. 373.06 ὥς εὐτυχοῦντας: κακοήθως, ὥς ὑγιῶς ἔχοντας

"Enjoying good fortune": Maliciously (expressed), (meaning) as if in a healthy condition.

Sch. Or. 373.01 εἰώθασιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι τὰς τῶν ἐχθρῶν ἀτυχίας εὐτελεῖς λογίζεσθαι
βουλόμενοι μέχρι θανάτου τὴν ἀτυχίαν αὐτῶν προκόπτειν. καὶ ὁ Μενέλαος τοῖνυν
ἐφεδρος ὢν τῇ τοῦ Ὀρέστου ἀρχῇ μόνον τὸ ζῆν αὐτὸν εὐτυχίαν ὀρίζεται.

People are accustomed to reckon the misfortunes of their enemies as unimportant,
because they want their misfortune to proceed to the point of death. And Menelaus,
accordingly, being the successor looming over Orestes' realm, defines his merely being
alive as good fortune.

The brief scholia 373.05 and 373.06 take Menelaus' choice of the word to be evidence of hostility, employing κακοήθως. The more discursive note 373.01 assumes the hostility without using that keyword and reasons from a generalization about human behavior to explain the psychology behind Menelaus' use of the word. This analysis ignores the detail that Menelaus applies the adjective to Clytemnestra as well as Orestes. Note that here too we have the detail of Menelaus as eager to inherit rule of Argos.³⁹

Two more signs of a hostile attitude are detected in the few remaining lines of this entrance-speech of Menelaus, when by stage convention he is understood to be not yet aware that Orestes is present to hear what he is saying.

Eur. Or. 373-6

...ἔκλυον ἀλιτύπου τινὸς

τῆς Τυνδαρείας παιδὸς ἀνόσιον φόνον.

καὶ νῦν ὅπου 'στὶν εἶπατ', ὦ νεάνιδες,

Ἀγαμέμνωνος παῖς, ὃς τὰ δειν' ἔτλη κακά.

³⁹ See above on Sch. Or. 356.02.

I heard from a seaman the unholy murder of Tyndareus's daughter. And now tell me, young women, where is the son of Agamemnon, who dared to do the terrible wrong.

Sch. Or. 374.07 ἀνόσιον φόνον: δέον εἰπεῖν εὐσεβῆ φόνον, κακοήθως ἀνόσιον καὶ ἀσεβῆ φόνον καλεῖ τὴν τιμωρίαν Κλυταιμνήστρας.

"Unholy murder": Although he should have said "pious murder," maliciously he calls the punishment of Clytemnestra "unholy and impious murder."

Sch. Or. 376.05 καὶ ἐκ τούτου δῆλός ἐστιν ὁ Μενέλαος πονηρῶς ταῦτα λέγων. δέον γὰρ εἰπεῖν "ὅς ἤμυνε τῷ πατρὶ," φησὶν "ὅς τὰ δεινὰ εἰργάσατο κακά."

From this detail too it is clear that Menelaus says these things maliciously. For when he should have said "who avenged his father," he says "who accomplished the dreadful evils."

What is the viewpoint of the critic's use of "he should have" (δέον) in these notes? At this point in the play both Electra and Orestes himself (and the chorus) have referred to the horrific and morally ambiguous nature of the matricide. Why would Menelaus be expected to adopt a one-sidedly approving stance toward this deed? Would a critic insist that Euripides as tragic playwright ought to have put the more favorable phrases in his character's mouth in these lines? Or is the critic instead approaching Menelaus' words from the point of view of an advocate's rhetorical task, assuming the assignment of formulating a speech for Menelaus as advocate for his nephew, a role that Euripides represents him as unwilling to perform, and perhaps morally incapable of performing?⁴⁰ Judged as rhetoric in such terms, abstracted from the dynamic context of the drama,⁴¹ δέον applies perfectly well to the task of the rhetorician, namely, to minimize the objectionable elements in an act that cannot be denied and to play up the mitigating factors. Instead, they find that Menelaus is adopting the techniques suited to a prosecutor and enemy.⁴²

⁴⁰ As an alternative, Luigi Battezzato points out to me that the critic could have held the view that adulterous women always deserve to be killed and that Menelaus is not adhering to this "morality," as one should.

⁴¹ For this approach to the rhetoric of a dramatic character, compare my discussion of Sch. Phoen. 584 [I.309,12-19 SCHWARTZ] (about supposed faults in Jocasta's speech attempting to reconcile her sons) in the final pages of MASTRONARDE forthcoming.

⁴² Menelaus is spoken of in several of Libanius's *Progymnasmata* and in works of Choricus in connection with events of the Trojan War, and he is the speaker ventriloquized in Liban. *Progymn.* 11.21 (τίνας ἂν εἴποι λόγους ὁ Μενέλαος μαθὼν περὶ τῆς Ἀγαμέμνονος τελευτῆς;), imagined as learning of his brother's death during his wanderings, as in *Odyssey* 4; this speech ends with a

Once the stichomythia between uncle and nephew begins, the critic or critics in our scholia point to many features considered to reflect Menelaus' intention to reject any excuse for Orestes and to consider him guilty and indefensible, and they again connect this with the assumption that he lusts for rule over Argos. We can also observe again the interpretation of any reference to "mother" or "killing" as an intentional attack and the notion that Menelaus believes the gods cannot be favorable to Orestes.

Sch. Or. 401.01 ἤρξω δὲ λύσεως πότε: καὶ τοῦτο πονηρῶς. θέλων γὰρ ἐλέγξει ὡς θεομισῆ φησιν "ἤρξω δὲ λύσεως πότε." ἤθελε γὰρ μαθεῖν εἰ χρονίον ἐστὶ τὸ νόσημα καὶ δυσίατον. "And when did you begin your madness": This too (he says) maliciously. For it is because he (Menelaus) wants to convict him (Orestes) of being hated by the gods that he says "when did you begin your madness?" For he wanted to ascertain whether the sickness is longstanding and hard to cure.

Sch. Or. 403.01 πότερα κατ' οἶκους: ἀπὸ κοινοῦ τὸ ἤρξω, τουτέστιν ἐν ποίᾳ ἡμέρᾳ ἤρξω καὶ ἐν ποίῳ τόπῳ. κακοήθως δὲ καὶ τοῦτο. "Whether in the house": Understand "did you begin" from the earlier use: in other words, on what day and in what place did you begin? This point too (is made) maliciously.

Sch. Or. 411.01 αὐταὶ σε βακχεύουσι: κακοήθως τῷ ὀνόματι ἐχρήσατο (ἀντὶ) τῆς μανίας. κακότηες δὲ καὶ τὸ ὑπομνήσκουσιν αὐτὸν τοῦ φόνου τῆς μητρός. ἥρκει γὰρ αὐταὶ σε βακχεύουσι'.⁴³

lament that he is unable to kill Aegisthus to avenge his brother, with no mention of Clytemnestra or Orestes. The similar exercise in Nicolaus, *Progymn.* 11.13 (*Rhet. Gr.* I.391-2 Walz: τίνας εἶποι λόγους Μενέλαος ἀκηκῶς Ἀγαμέμνονα παρὰ τῆς Κλυταιμνήστρας οἶκοι τεθνάναι;) does, however, speak of Clytemnestra and Orestes and anticipates the matricide as a just action (ἀλλὰ τίς ἂν μοι τὸν Ὀρέστην ἐκσώσειεν; οὗτος Αἰγίσθου λήψεται δίκην, οὗτος μητέρα διεφθαρκῶς οὐκ ἀδικήσει τὴν φύσιν, ἀλλ' ἀμυνεῖται τὸ γένος, "But who might keep Orestes alive for me? He will exact punishment from Aegisthus, he, having destroyed his mother, will not do wrong to nature but will avenge his clan."). I do not find any rhetorical exercises that treat the period of Menelaus's return to his brother's city.

⁴³ The text above accepts Schwartz's supplement (ἀντὶ) τῆς μανίας, designed to account for the fact that M has the nonsensical τὸν τῆς μανίας while all the other witnesses have the more obvious τῆς μανίας. With ἀντὶ the point is that he used a word implying divine imposition of madness (thus, again suggesting that Orestes is hated by the gods) rather than using μανία for a more neutral reference to madness. Without ἀντὶ the sense would apparently be that he used the term expressing madness (βακχεύουσι) when he could have used a more neutral word like "pursue."

"These make you rave": Maliciously he used the word ("bakcheuō," "make rave, afflict with divine madness") instead of "madness" ("mania"). And it is also malicious that he reminds him (Orestes) of the murder of his mother. For it was sufficient to say "these (goddesses) make you rave" (that is, without adding "kindred murder").

Sch. Or. 413.01 οὐ δεινὰ: γυμνὸν ἐνταῦθα δείκνυται τὸ ἦθος τοῦ Μενελάου· κατέκρινε γὰρ αὐτὸν χωρὶς κρίσεως.⁴⁴

"Not monstrous": Here the character of Menelaus is shown laid bare: for he condemned him (Orestes) without a trial.

Sch. Or. 421.01 πόσον χρόνον δὲ μητρὸς οἶχονται πνοαί: ἐχρῆν εἰπεῖν πόσῳ χρόνῳ. τὸ δὲ μητρὸς κακοήθως καὶ δυσωπητικῶς.

"How long since your mother's breath departed": He ought to have said "within how much time" (dative instead of accusative). And (using) the word "mother" (is done) maliciously and in a manner meant to shame and disturb him.

Sch. Or. 427.01 τὰ πρὸς πόλιν δὲ πῶς ἔχεις: πονηρῶς πάλιν ἐρωτᾷ, ἵνα, εἰ μὲν εὖμενεῖς ἔχει τοὺς πολίτας, ἀφέξηται τοῦ ἐπιχειρήματος, εἰ δὲ ἐχθραίνοντας, ἐπιθέμενος κρατήσῃ.

"What is your situation with regard to the city": Maliciously again he asks the question, so that, if he (Orestes) has the citizens favorably disposed toward him, he (Menelaus) may refrain from his attempt against him, but if (the citizens) hate (Orestes), he may attack him and overpower him.

Sch. Or. 437.01 Ἀγαμέμνωνος δὲ σκῆπτρ': πάλιν φιλοπράγμονος ὁ Μενέλαος παραγυμνοῖ τὸ ἦθος φροντίζων περὶ τῆς βασιλείας.

"And Agamemnon's scepter": Again Menelaus indirectly bares his character as meddlesome, showing his concern for the kingship.

All the comments on 401-37 just quoted are found in the oldest manuscripts,⁴⁵ and there is one further comment in this vein in the very next scene, in the dialogue between Tyndareus and Menelaus.

Eur. Or. 481-2

(TY.) Μενέλαε, προσφθέγγῃ νιν, ἀνόσιον κάρα;

(ME.) τί γάρ; φίλου μοι πατρός ἐστιν ἔκγονος.

(Ty.) Menelaus, are you speaking to him, the unholy creature?

⁴⁴ NÜNLIST 2009, p. 249, cites this among examples of critics appreciating the ability of a writer to evoke characterization with clarity.

⁴⁵ All are in MB, most are in V as well, and one in O.

(Me.) Why not? He is the offspring of a father dear to me.

Sch. Or. 482.06 ἄλλως· φίλου μοι πατρός· ὃ ἐστὶ συγγενοῦς μοι πατρός υἱός. πάλιν δὲ τὸ κακότηδες τοῦ ἀνδρός δείκνυνται, ὅτι τὸν ἀδελφὸν φίλον εἶπεν.⁴⁶

(Explained) another way:⁴⁷ Which means “son of a father who is akin to me.” Again the maliciousness of the man is shown, because he called his brother “dear.”

This remark is rather puzzling. Is the wording of the line malicious because the critic thinks a well-disposed uncle should have applied “dear” to the son rather than only to the father? Or is it because he used “dear” at all, on the assumption that a brother would always be loved by a brother? In any case, since both this comment and those from earlier in the scene are attested in our oldest manuscripts of Euripides, they most likely go back to late antiquity or the Roman imperial period and reflect the approach taken in a particular commentary that fed into the surviving corpus. As for scholia attested only in Palaeologan witnesses and thus more likely (but not certain) to originate sometime in the tenth to thirteenth centuries, I have found only one similar analysis, in the manuscript known to Euripides’ scholars as Pr (Remensis 1306 [J 733], ca. 1290-1300):

Eur. Or. 447 ὦ μέλεος, ἥκεις συμφορᾶς ἐς τοῦσχατον.

Oh unhappy fellow, you have arrived at the most extreme point of misfortune.

Sch. Or. 447.01 τάχα θλίβεται, πλὴν κακότηως ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν ἦλθες εἰς τὴν τελευταίαν ψήφον τοῦ θανάτου.

Perhaps he (Menelaus) is distressed, but (it is spoken, or he speaks) maliciously starting with “now you have come to the final vote of death.”

It appears that the commentator has realized that such an expression of sympathy does not fit well with the repeated claims of the cynical critic(s) that Menelaus speaks κακότηως. So he admits the possibility that Menelaus is truly distressed (θλίβεται, in a favorite Byzantine use), but he wants to save the inherited view of Menelaus by asserting that the next words return to malicious intent –

⁴⁶ NÜNLIST 2009, p. 250 n. 43, cites this as an example where “again” presumably implies praise for consistency of characterization, but does not evaluate the critic’s attitude further.

⁴⁷ This follows Sch. Or. 482.05, which offers the misguided interpretation that “dear father” is to be taken as “my dear father” (Atreus) and ἐκγονος as “grandson.” An anonymous reviewer points out that this forced interpretation may be a reaction to, and rejection of, the view advocated in Sch. Or. 482.06.

not very convincingly, since Menelaus is simply echoing Orestes' own reference to the threat of death in line 446.

The clustering of the terms *κακότηες*, *κακοήθως*, or *πανούργως* in analysis of the first 500 lines of *Orestes* is striking. The published scholia on Euripides contain no other uses of these words to describe a character or the character's rhetorical strategy, and the terms are very rare in other scholia. *κακοήθως* or *κακότηες* is used a couple of times in the scholia on Aeschines (1.79, 3.42, 3.145). There are a few uses in the Homeric scholia, one of which is applied when Ther-sites is the speaker (Sch. exeg. Hom. Il. 2.236 ERBSE). Sch. Hom. exeg. Od. 7.313a and 7.313b PONTANI are especially interesting. In a cynical interpretation, Alcinous' offer of his daughter in marriage is seen as a test of Odysseus' veracity in claiming to have refused the offer of Calypso. This view is challenged by another critic saying τοῦτο μὲν κακότηες καὶ οὐ βασιλικόν, οὐδὲ κατὰ τὸ Ἀλκινόου ἦθος, "this is malicious and not kingly, nor consonant with Alcinous's character." Finally, in Sch. exeg. Hom. Od. 8.532b PONTANI, Odysseus is said to shed tears οὐ κακοήθως ... ἀλλ' ἀνθρωπίνως.⁴⁸ The situation is similar with *πανούργως*: the only other statement in scholia on tragedy and comedy about the way someone speaks is Sch. Aesch. Eum. 601 SMITH *πανούργως* φασί, μὴ ἡμᾶς διδάσκει, ἀλλὰ τοὺς δικαστάς, commenting on the chorus's challenging question to Orestes. As for Homer, Sch. exeg. Hom. Od. 9.278a PONTANI applies *πανούργως* to Polyphemus's attempt to ascertain where Odysseus's ship is (the final sentence of this scholion suffers from corruption, but it contains the term *πονηρία* in reference to the trickery).

Beyond this series of remarks detecting malicious cunning in the first third of *Orestes*, we can also find evidence for the practice of judging a character's words as if the heroic characters should always display the ability to adopt the most appropriate rhetorical strategy. This type of analysis entails that the playwright is not allowed to portray people behaving in a self-destructive or self-defeating way – which a modern critic might think is a hallmark of tragedy. Whereas frank vituperation of an opponent can be viewed as a characteristic of the proud, self-willed behavior that often suits mythological figures, some commentators were more concerned with rhetorical *καιρός*.

⁴⁸ Other instances in tragic scholia do not concern the rhetorical strategy of a speaking character: Sch. Soph. Aj. 190d CHRISTODOULOU (on Sisyphus alleged to be the father of Odysseus in several dramas: "his malicious character (τὸ κακότηες) is revealed also by his birth"); Sch. Soph. El. 62 XENIS (a possible veiled allusion to Pythagoras by Sophocles himself, in the manner of comedy); Sch. Soph. Trach. 939 XENIS (Hyllus embraces his mother because he now realizes he was wrong to believe she sent the poisoned cloak κακοήθως). The word is also used in scholia on various authors as a gloss on other terms, such as κακῶς or κακοπινέστατον.

Eur. *Or.* 97

<ΗΛ> σοὶ δ' οὐχὶ θεμιτὸν πρὸς φίλων στείχειν τάφον

<EL.> And is it not proper for you to go the tomb of those dear to you? (or as a statement: It is not proper ...)

Sch. *Or.* 97.01 οὐκ ἐν καιρῷ παρρησιάζεται ἡ Ἥλέκτρα, καὶ ταῦτα πρὸ ὀλίγου φάσκουσα ἐλπίδα ἔχειν εἰς τὸν Μενέλαον. ἐὰν μὲν ἐν ἐρωτήσῃ ἢ ὁ λόγος, μετριώτερός ἐστιν· ἐὰν δὲ ἐτέρως, ἀντικρὺς ἐναγῇ καὶ μὴ ἀξίαν οὖσαν προσπελάζειν τῷ τάφῳ ἀποδεικνύει τὴν Ἑλένην διὰ τὰ πεπραγμένα αὐτῇ {τοῖς φίλοις}.

Electra speaks freely at an inopportune moment, and this despite saying a little earlier that she places hope in Menelaus. If the sentence is interrogative, then it is more measured; but if the other way (as a statement), she is openly declaring that Helen is polluted and not worthy to approach the tomb because of the deeds she has done {to her kin}.

As we saw earlier, Sch. *Or.* 71.01 claimed that both Helen and Electra should be seeking the other's good will by avoiding offense. Here too the notion is that Electra has failed to use the careful formulation and word-choice that would befit a skilled rhetorical composition. Even a detail of the choral anapaests introducing Menelaus falls victim to this kind of analysis in commenting on the phrase used to greet him.

Eur. *Or.* 352 ὦ χιλιόναυν στρατὸν ὀρμήσας

O, you who launched the expedition of a thousand ships

Sch. *Or.* 351.01 δι' ὧν δοκεῖ αὐτὸν ἐπαινεῖν, διὰ τούτων λυπεῖ ἀναμνησκουσα τῶν ἀπολομένων ἐν τῇ Τροίᾳ.

Through the words with which (the chorus) seems to praise him, through these they pain him by reminding him of those killed at Troy.

Sch. *Or.* 351.02 ἀπὸ τούτων αὐτὸν ἐγκωμιάζει, ἀφ' ὧν ἐμεγαλύνετο. τῷ δὲ ἀπηρτισμένῳ ἀριθμῷ ἐχρήσατο· τοσαῦται γὰρ ἦσαν αἱ νῆες τῶν Ἑλλήνων, ἄρπς.

(The chorus) praises him on the basis of those deeds on which he prided himself. He (the poet) (or it, the chorus) used the rounded number, for the ships of the Greeks (at Troy) were this many: 1,186.

While the second note quoted above assumes that the chorus is praising Menelaus, using a detail that will match his sense of pride, in an effective use of rhetoric to please the recipient, the first is more similar to the preceding examples. We cannot be quite sure whether this interpreter thought that the chorus was deliberately causing pain to Menelaus while only seeming to be friendly (that is, by a malicious use of language). This would be true if δοκεῖ means “seems

to Menelaus or a naïve listener.” But if δοκεῖ means “seems to the chorus itself” or “thinks/believes,” the comment would reflect a judgment that the chorus (or Euripides) is at fault, for not being sufficiently competent rhetorically to perceive an unintended offensiveness. Except when engaged in an intrigue plot, as later in the play when this chorus cooperates with Electra in entrapping Hermione, tragic choruses are not usually subject to suspicion of insincerity or falsehood. But that convention may not have been significant in the eyes of this interpreter. The only other significant remark possibly touching on the chorus’s rhetoric in this greeting is that on the final phrase.

Eur. *Or.* 354-5

χαῖρ'· εὐτυχίᾳ δ' αὐτὸς ὁμιλεῖς,
θεόθεν πράξας ἅπερ ἠῶχου.

Hail: and you yourself enjoy good fortune, having with the gods' help accomplished what you prayed for.

Sch. *Or.* 355.01 θεόθεν πράξας ἅπερ ἠῶχου: τὸν γὰρ πόλεμον κατορθώσας ἔλαβε τὴν Ἑλένην. σὺ μὲν οὖν, φησὶν, εὐτυχῶς ἀπηλλάχθης, ὁ δὲ Ὀρέστης δυστυχεῖ.

“Having with the gods' help accomplished what you prayed for”: (Menelaus did so) because, having succeeded in the war, he captured Helen. You, then, (the chorus) says, ended up with good fortune, but Orestes suffers misfortune.

This note and the rephrasing of it in Sch. *Or.* 354.01 correctly show awareness of the general contrast developed in the first part of *Orestes* between Menelaus's prosperous fortune and the opposite condition of Orestes, to which the chorus's greeting contributes by emphasizing Menelaus's good fortune.⁴⁹ The second sentence of the note, however, is a paraphrase of lines 354-5 that has been expanded to mention Orestes' misfortune explicitly, probably as an interpretation of 354

⁴⁹ As Mark Griffith reminds me, the entrance of Menelaus in *Orestes* may recall the entrance of Agamemnon at Aesch. *Ag.* 783. There the chorus openly admits its past disapproval of the war but pledges its loyalty for the future. The scholia on *Orestes* contain no comments comparing Aeschylus's *Oresteia* (even when dealing with the trial on the Areopagus in Sch. *Or.* 1648.01-03 and 1651.01-04) and thus do not provide evidence for the type of intertextual allusions to the trilogy that modern interpreters have rightly highlighted. (Note, however, the comment in MASTRONARDE 2025a on Sch. *Or.* 598.01, which offers an alternative, less likely interpretation of the opaque scholion, one that might imply knowledge of the Apollo's dire threats if Orestes does not avenge his father.)

αὐτὸς.⁵⁰ Possibly this interpreter judged that Menelaus himself is meant to infer the contrast and that this is an instance of ἔμφασις, implicit suggestion, designed to prepare Menelaus to react favorably to the appeal they expect Orestes to make.

It is worthwhile to consider here one final example of a style of reading that uses rhetorical analysis to eliminate any whiff of scandal in Euripides' text. This concerns the criticism of Apollo in the extended stichomythia of Orestes and Menelaus.

Eur. *Or.* 416-17

<OP.> Φοῖβος, κελεύσας μητρὸς ἐκπρᾶξαι φόνον.

<ME.> ἀμαθέστερός γ' ὦν τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ τῆς δίκης.

<OR.> Phoebus, who commanded me to carry out the killing of my mother.

<ME.> Being in that rather ignorant of the good and of justice.

Sch. *Or.* 417.01 εἰ τοῦτο ἐκέλευσεν, ἀμαθής ἐστιν, ἵνα ἐκ τῶν ἐναντίων δηλώσῃ ὅτι οὐκ ἐκέλευσεν ὁ θεός· οὐ γὰρ ἐστιν ὁ θεὸς ἀμαθής.

If he commanded this, he is ignorant, (which Menelaus says) in order to show from the opposite that the god did not command (it). For the god is not ignorant.

Sch. *Or.* 417.02 μετὰ συλλογισμοῦ τοῦτο εἴρηκεν· εἰ γὰρ οὐκ ἀμαθής ὁ θεός, δῆλον ὅτι οὐδὲ προσέταξε τοῦτο ποιεῖν.

Menelaus said this using a syllogism. For if the god is not ignorant, it is clear that neither did he command (Orestes) to do this.

The sharply critical remark embodied in applying ἀμαθέστερος to Apollo has parallels in Euripides,⁵¹ but ancient teachers were inclined to smooth over this charge, again evincing the ameliorating and moralistic slant of some scholia. They argue here that Menelaus did not believe Apollo ordered the deed at all and thus is using this statement to imply denial of Orestes' claim of divine sanction. The appearance of συλλογισμός in Sch. *Or.* 417.02 is also noteworthy, since in older scholia on drama the term is found only here and in a couple of short old

⁵⁰ The pronoun does call for some comment. WILLINK 1986, p. 145, offers "perhaps both 'as the prime exemplar' (of εὐτυχία) and 'with no need of good wishes from me.'" While Sch. *Or.* 355.01 sees αὐτὸς as contrastive with Orestes, Sch. *Or.* 354.01 takes the contrast to be with the Tantalids (σύ, φησιν, οὐ μετέχεις τῆς δυστυχίας τῶν Τανταλιδῶν. "You, (the chorus) says, do not share in the misfortune of the Tantalids."), while the 12th-century redaction (in O = Laur. plut. 31.10) in Sch. *Or.* 354.02 has it both ways (σύ μὲν οὐ μετέχεις τῆς δυστυχίας τῶν Τανταλιδῶν, ὁ δὲ Ὀρέστης δυστυχεῖ. "You do not share in the misfortune of the Tantalids, but Orestes suffers misfortune.").

⁵¹ See, e.g., WILLINK 1986, p. 154, and MASTRONARDE 1994, p. 166 on *Phoen.* 86-7.

scholia on *Orestes* indicating that the character is speaking μετὰ συλλογισμοῦ or κατὰ συλλογισμόν.⁵² So once again we have evidence that our surviving annotation on *Orestes* has preserved a particular tradition of rhetorically-based commentary.

I have discussed elsewhere three longer scholia on this part of the stichomythia that take a similar approach: Sch. Or. 414.05, 416.01, 424.02.⁵³ The first of these is much more detailed in ascribing rhetorical and sophistic strategies of argument to Menelaus, and it includes terms of rhetorical analysis like σοφιστικῶς (in a sophistic, argumentatively tricky manner), προκατασκευάζω (make preliminary reference to, or give preliminary support for, a proof), συνίστημι (affirm, establish a point), ἔνστασις (objection to an argument), κλέπτω (deceive, with a special use for rhetorical deception), ἀναιρέω (refute). Although συλλογισμός does not appear in this note, other terms related to logical argumentation suggest a kinship with the notes just discussed.

To conclude, the scholia on the first scenes of *Orestes* offer, by some accident of transmission, a unique concentration of notes evincing a kind of close reading that is particularly influenced by rhetorical analysis. Several terms that appear repeatedly in these notes are rarely or never found in other surviving old scholia on tragedy. The critic or critics sometimes assume that the characters are completely competent in rhetoric and masters of innuendo, or should be assumed to be so. At other times they find fault with the character (or with Euripides) for not taking the rhetorical approach they consider most suitable, even seeming to abstract the rhetorical issue from the dynamic experience of the reception of the play and treat the issue as a prompt for a rhetorical exercise.⁵⁴ This style of reading is also called into service when the text suggests something theologically challenging or subversive of cultural stereotypes. Although some criticisms seem to go back to Didymus (or his predecessors), reflecting scholarly concern with

⁵² See Sch. Or. 646.01 κατὰ συλλογισμόν φησιν ...; 646.05 ... κατὰ γὰρ συλλογισμόν προῆκται ὁ λόγος; in an unrelated usage συλλογιστικός occurs in a grammatical analysis in Sch. Or. 730.18. Otherwise the term is found a few times in scholia recentiora on Euripides, Sophocles, and Aristophanes.

⁵³ MASTRONARDE 2017, pp. 200-5. Other short scholia that insist Menelaus is rejecting the claim of divine sanction or otherwise finding fault with Orestes' statements are Sch. Or. 415.01-03; 417.07, 417.20-22 (labeling sarcasm or irony), 418.10 (beginning ἀκαίρως τοῦτο, "This comment (is made) inopportunistically."), 419.01 (beginning πανούργως ἔχει πᾶσα ἡ ἐρώτησις, "The entire interrogation is malicious."), 423.01.

⁵⁴ On uses of Euripides in rhetorical education, see FERNÁNDEZ DELGADO 2020 and 2021 (with references to much other related bibliography).

the appropriateness of speech to the status of the speaker, I suspect that the more minute analysis of the effect of individual words reflects the interest of the commentators and compilers of the Roman period and later. Whatever their date, when we look at some of the criticisms surviving in our scholia on Euripides, it is appropriate to ask whether they are based on literary and dramatic criteria, in which case, in my view, we have critics who captiously restrict the freedom of the poet, applying a very limited notion of suitability of character or of legitimate dramatic effects and sometimes indulging in odd overinterpretation of individual words. Instead, many remarks may reflect an analysis intended for, or heavily skewed by, a rhetorical education, an analysis in which attention is focused on how subtle effects could be intentionally conveyed by a short phrase or even a single word (or at times unintentionally conveyed because of a lack of rhetorical skill), and in which statements may even be abstracted from the dramatic context and used to illustrate how one would use one's rhetorical training to make the most effective argument in the general situation.

Appendix: Some terms related to negative politeness in Scholia

λυπεῖν and related words

Sch. Or. 71.01 (quoted in full and discussed in main text: a failure to use appropriate ἦθος and employ a politeness strategy) δυσωπεῖ τὴν Ἠλέκτραν καὶ λυπεῖ⁵⁵
she annoys Electra and causes her pain

Sch. Or. 640.08 προθεραπεύει τοίνυν τὸν ἀκροατὴν, ἵνα ἀναμείνῃ τὸ μῆκος τῶν λόγων ἀλύπως.

Thus, he (Orestes) is conciliating his auditor in advance in order that he abide the length of his speech without annoyance.

Sch. Gu Phoen. 457 (σύ τ' αὖ ... Πολύνεικες): ταῦτα εἶπεν ἵνα μὴ λυπήσῃ τὸν Ἑτεοκλέα.

⁵⁵ Compare the reference to λύπη in the paraphrase trying to explain a difficult line (nowadays considered corrupt): Sch. Or. 424.16 ἐχρήν γάρ σε χρωματίζοντα τοὺς λόγους ἐκφέρειν πρὸς παραμυθίαν, ἀλλ' οὐ πρὸς λύπην, εἴπερ σοφὸς ἦσθα κακός ("For you should have colored your words and pronounced them with a view to consolation rather than to causing pain, if you were a clever villain [i.e., a rhetorically skilled villain]"). Intentional infliction of distress is also noted in Sch. Hec. 1259 ταῦτα δὲ προμαντεύεται ὁ Πολυμήτωρ ὡς δὴ λυπήσων αὐτήν ("Polymestor makes these prophecies intending to pain her").

“And you, in turn, ... Polyneices”: she said this in order not to cause pain to Eteocles (scil., by admonishing only him, as she did in 454-6).

Sch. Phoen. 467 ὡς σὺ φής: ἵνα μὴ λυπήσῃ τὸν Ἑτεοκλέα
‘As you say’: (is said here) in order that she not cause pain to Eteocles (scil. by expressing as her own opinion that Polyneices has been wronged).

Sch. Thom. Phoen. 885 τις·ὁ Κρέων. οὐκ ἠβούλετο δὲ εἰπεῖν τοῦνομα, ἵνα μὴ τοῦτον παρόντα λυπήσῃ.
“Someone”: Creon. But he (Teiresias) did not wish to say the name, in order not to bring pain to him, who was present.

Sch. Thom. Phoen. 897 (paraphrase) ἡ εὐτυχία φεύγει σε, ὡς δυστυχοῦντα, οὐκ ἐγώ· ἢ, ἡ δυστυχία φεύγει σε, καὶ οὐκ ἐθέλει ἐμφανισθῆναι σοι, οὐκ ἔῴσα με εἰπεῖν σοι φανερώς αὐτήν, ἵνα μὴ σε λυπήσω.
Good fortune, not I, eludes you, since you are unfortunate; or, misfortune eludes you and does not wish to be revealed clearly to you, not permitting me to speak of it openly, in order than I not pain you.

Sch. rec. (PrRw) Hec. 236 ποιεῖ δὲ τοῦτο οἷον αἰχμάλωτος, μὴ βουλομένη προπετῶς καὶ ἀναισχύντως ἀναμνησκεῖν αὐτῷ τὰ οἷον λυπήσαντα.
And she does this a captive, not wishing to rashly and shamelessly remind him of things that, as it were, pained him.

δυσωπέω⁵⁶ and related words

Sch. Or 71.01 (quoted in full and discussed in main text) δυσωπεῖ τὴν Ἥλέκτραν καὶ λυπεῖ
she annoys Electra and causes her pain

Sch. Or. 221.01 τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ γένους ἀνάγκην προβάλλεται πρὸς τὸ μὴ δυσωπῆσαι τῇ θεραπείᾳ τὸν ἀδελφόν.
She puts forward the compulsion deriving from kinship in order not to cause embarrassment to her brother by her attending to him.

Sch. Or. 421.01 (quoted in full and discussed in main text) τὸ δὲ μητρός κακοήθως καὶ δυσωπητικῶς

⁵⁶ It is interesting in terms of possible relation to modern ‘face’ theory that *δυσωπεῖν* is a word that etymologically suggests a disturbance of facial expression by shame or displeasure.

And (using) the word “mother” (is done) maliciously and in a manner meant to shame and disturb him.

θεραπεύειν and related words

Sch. Or. 640.08 προθεραπεύει τοίνυν τὸν ἀκροατὴν, ἵνα ἀναμείνῃ τὸ μήκος τῶν λόγων ἀλύπως.

Thus, he (Orestes) is conciliating his auditor in advance in order that he abide the length of his speech without annoyance.

Sch. Phoen. 467 τοῦτο θεραπευτικὸν τοῦ Ἑτεοκλέους.
(‘As you say’:) this is aimed at courting the good will of Eteocles.

Sch. Thom. Phoen. 467 τοῦτο θεραπεία τοῦ Ἑτεοκλέους.
(‘As you say’:) this is an effort to court the good will of Eteocles.

Sch. Thom. Phoen. 1555 οὐκ ἐπ’ ὀνειδέσιν: προθεραπεία⁵⁷
“Not for reproach”: mitigation in advance.

Sch. Thom. Hec. 603 ἦσθετο Εὐριπίδης ἑαυτοῦ παρεκβεβηκότος ἀκαίρως, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τεθεραπευκέναι τοῦτο βουλόμενός φησὶ ‘καὶ ταῦτα μὲν δὴ νοῦς ἐτόξευσε μάτην’, τουτέστιν οὐ κατὰ καιρὸν εἴρηται.

Euripides sensed that he had digressed inopportunistically, and for this reason, wanting to ameliorate this, he says “and these things my mind has shot out in vain,” that is to say, they were spoken unsuitably to the occasion.

Sch. rec. (GuZu) Hec. 824 προθεραπεία καὶ διόρθωσις
Mitigation in advance and correction. (Hecuba is about to introduce the argument from Agamemnon’s sexual relationship with Cassandra.)⁵⁸

⁵⁷ The term προθεραπεία is found in Hermogenes and his commentators, the scholia on Demosthenes, Eustathius, and as a rhetorical label in Sch. Soph. Aj. 422a (glosses) CHRISTODOULOU; in that edition the gloss is continued from <τόνδ’>: ἐμὲ τὸν Αἴαντα, whereas the correct lemma must in fact be the following phrase, ἔπος ἐξερῶ μέγα, interpreted as an acknowledgment by Ajax that somewhat softens the bold statement Ajax is making. In Eustathius the term προθεραπεία is applied to the poet’s technique rather than a speaker’s strategy (VAN DEN BERG 2022, p. 119), while θεραπεύω is often used for remedying objectionable features of myth (VAN DEN BERG 2022, pp. 47, 52-3).

⁵⁸ The similar term προδιόθωσις, “correction in advance,” appears in the Sch. rec. (S) Hec. 824.

Sch. rec. (Yf) Hec. 1237 δεσπότης δ' οὐ λοιδορῶ: θεραπεύει τὸν λόγον αὐτῆς.
"I do not upbraid my masters": She mitigates her statement.⁵⁹

Sch. Ariston. Hom. Od. 11.428a PONTANI ἥτις δὴ τοιαῦτα] ἐν πολλοῖς οὐ φέρεται, ὥς ἐκλύων τὸν θυμὸν· οὐδ' ἂν τι πρὸς θεραπείαν Ἀρήτης ὁ Ὀδυσσεύς <εἴποι>· οὐ γὰρ ἀναγκαῖον τῷ ὑποκρινομένῳ τὸ πρόσωπον Ἀγαμέμνονος περιστάσθαι τι εἰπεῖν.
The line is absent in many copies, as weakening the anger (of Agamemnon's condemnation of women). Nor would Odysseus be saying something to avoid offending Arete; for it is not necessary for one who is speaking in the role of Agamemnon to avoid saying anything.⁶⁰

Sch. exeg. Hom. Il. 1.18-9 ERBSE θεραπευτική ἡ τοιαύτη ἔντευξις, τὸ ὑπερέυχεσθαι χειρῶσασθαι τοὺς ἐχθροὺς καὶ τὸ εὐθεῖαν καὶ εὐάγων δοθῆναι ὁδόν.
Such an entreaty is designed to win good will – to pray on their behalf that they conquer their enemies and that they be granted a direct and easy journey (home).

Sch. exeg. Hom. Il. 23.594 ERBSE διοτρεφές: θεραπευτικῶς ἀγαθὸν καὶ θεοφιλῆ αὐτὸν καὶ ἰσόθεον ἀποδείκνυσι· πρὸς μὲν οὖν Ἀχιλλέα [23.543-54] τῇ δικαιολογικῇ στάσει ἐχρήσατο, νῦν [23.587-95] δὲ τῇ παρορμητικῇ, ἀφιστάμενος μὲν τοῦ δικαιολογεῖν, θεραπεία δὲ καὶ τιμὴ ὁμιλητικῶς ἀνακτῶμενος.
In a manner meant to win good will he declares him (Menelaus) to be noble and godlike. Now then, in addressing Achilles he used the issue of justice, but here the issue of exhortation, abandoning making a claim of justice and trying in a sociable way to win him over by mitigating speech and by showing honor.

Sch. D Hom. Il. 9.226 HEYNE διατί τὸν ἐχθρὸν οὕτως ὠνόμασε προπετῶς, οὐ προθεραπεύσας;
Why did he (Odysseus) name (Achilles') enemy (Agamemnon) so precipitately, without having mitigated in advance?

Sch. Hom. Od. exeg. 8.485a PONTANI αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πόσιος] δαυμονίως τῇ τάξει ἐχρήσατο. οὐ γὰρ ἅμα τῇ δόσει τῶν κρεῶν εὐθὺς ἐπιτάττει τὰ περὶ τὸν ἵππον ἄδειν, ἀλλὰ

⁵⁹ The similar term ἐπιδιόρθωσις, "correction immediately following" appears in Sch. rec. (AaRf) Hec. 1237.

⁶⁰ οὐδ' ἂν τι is Pontani's emendation of οὐ γὰρ ὅτι, and the addition of εἴποι is also his. If one retains οὐ γὰρ ὅτι, the sense might be "For it is not the case [i.e., one cannot argue against the deletion] that Odysseus <spoke> to avoid offending Arete" (a verb of speaking is to be understood or supplemented in the text).

προεθεράπευσε μὲν τῇ τιμῇ. τὸ δὲ πρόσταγμα εἰς καιρὸν ὑπέθετο ὅτε ἔμελλεν ἐκεῖνος αἰεῖδεν.

He (Odysseus) employed the arrangement (of his requests) marvelously. For he does not order him to sing about the horse right off simultaneously with the gift of the meat, but he won his good will in advance by showing honor and postponed the command to a suitable moment when that man was going to sing (anyway).

κολακεύειν and related words

Sch. Or. 94.01 (quoted in full and discussed in main text) [Menander quoted] 'δεῖ γὰρ εἶναι κολακικὸν τὸν δεόμενόν του'

"For one making a request of someone has to behave like a flatterer."

Sch. Or. 95.03 ἡ μὲν κολακεύουσα συγγενικῶ ὀνόματι ἐχρήσατο, ἡ δὲ παραιτουμένη τὴν κολακείαν εἶπε 'μητρός'.

Helen, trying to wheedle a favor, used a term of kinship (sister), but Electra, rejecting the wheedling appeal, said "of (my) mother."⁶¹

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⁶¹ Compare the use in a paraphrase of the difficult lines Or. 714-15: Sch. Or. 714.01 οὐ πρὸς ἡμῶν, φησὶν, οὐδὲ τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀξίας ὑποδραμεῖν καὶ κολακεῦσαι τὸν τῶν Ἀργείων ὄχλον ("It is not suitable to us, he says, or to our high status to wheedle and flatter the mob of the Argives").

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