A Commentary on Euripides' *Hecuba* 658-1295

with an Introduction to the Play as a Whole.

Christopher Warren Marshall  BA DipCS

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A Commentary on Euripides' *Hecuba* 658-1295,
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by Christopher Warren Marshall

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Revenge is a concept fundamental to a proper understanding of the *Hecuba*. The Introduction studies this relationship in six parts. Section I discusses the context of revenge as it relates to the play. Revenge is seen as a restorative action performed by a community, rather than an individual's personal vendetta. Section II shows that the notion of a restorative, morally unambiguous revenge was present in the Ancient Near East and continues into twentieth-century sociological thought. Section III connects the play with the larger body of myth, especially the sacrifice of Iphigeneia. This contrasts with the sacrifice of Polyxena, which is insufficient and non-functional: the windlessness continues, and another solution - Hecuba's revenge - must be found. Section IV pursues the consequences of this interpretation of revenge. In effect, there exists an intertextual relationship between the *Hecuba* and the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus. At every turn, Euripides undermines the Aeschylean system of vendetta, and replaces it with his own righteous revenge, as embodied by the Erinyes. In this light is Hecuba's metamorphosis, predicted at the play's end, interpreted. Section V examines the date (c.424 B.C.) and dating of the play, with reference to the *Cyclops*, which is shown to date post-409 B.C. Section VI details aspects of the play's structure and role-division. It then introduces the technique of status analysis as a meaningful way of examining character interaction in drama. The *Hecuba* is then analysed in terms of status. Hecuba's rise in status is inextricably linked with the play's presentation of revenge.

The commentary is based on Diggle's (corrected) Oxford Text, but questions his textual decisions on certain lines; there is a table of suggested divergences from his text. Then, following the 'traditional' commentary format, issues pertaining to individual lines are discussed in detail. These comments include textual, literary, thematic and dramaturgical matters.
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In form this is only a partial work. Because of the word limits of the degree for which this has been submitted, it was felt (rightly, I now see) by my advisor that a commentary on a full play, if done properly, would extend much beyond the given bounds. Euripides was chosen as the subject dramatist because of the three tragedians he was (proportionately) the most ignored. The *Hecuba*, while it had received much critical attention in recent articles after years of being ignored, still lacked an acceptable commentary. The release of the commentary by Christopher Collard in the Aris and Phillips 'Euripides' series was not a deterrent: the scale of the works concerned was different, and we vary considerably on the fundamental points of interpretation. The question remains, why the second half of a play? In part, the simple fact that the second half held more interest for me decided the matter. But there were also several assumptions in the literature which struck an odd chord. The play was considered bipartite (even by those who argued for its unity) in that the Polyxena-action was wonderful, but the revenge-action somehow lacked something. Critics who found the play most successful required Hecuba and all for which she stood to be destroyed. I find the play successful, and believe that Hecuba can remain noble and heroic throughout.

The commentary is based on James Diggle's 1989 (corrected) Oxford Text, though I have not followed his use of the lunate sigma and iota adscript except in cases of direct quotation of secondary sources. I only hope the discrepancy is not too distracting for the reader. Textual decisions made by Diggle have been questioned at many points, and a list of divergences (both small and large) has
been included. My aim in textual decisions has been to aim for what seems to be the highest degree of historical accuracy for the text. In the commentary, lists of cross references are often not exhaustive, and are of whatever length I felt was necessary at the time to support the point being made.

I am thankful for the funding support provided by an Overseas Research Studentship for two of my three years in Scotland. Acknowledgements should go to many more than I can name here, but in particular I owe a special debt of gratitude to my advisor Mr. David Robinson, and Mr. Christopher Strachan, for their advice and opinions on the commentary in its development. Sincere thanks also go to: the staff of the Classics Department at the University of Edinburgh; the Scottish Classics Postgraduate Meeting, the Scottish Universities Drama Seminar, and the University of Edinburgh Philosophy Department Staff and Postgraduate Seminar, for advice and comments on my interpretation of the play; Prof. Justina Gregory; Dr. Judith Mossman and Prof. Christopher Collard for giving me access to materials I would otherwise not have seen; Prof. Annette Teffeteller who introduced me to Euripides, tragedy, and Greek poetry; and my external advisor Mr. A.F. Garvie. My gratitude to them and to supportive friends in Canada and Britain is joyfully given.

In accordance with University regulations, I hereby declare that this work is my own as I have written it.
List of Abbreviations

ARV  Beazley, J.D. (1963) *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters.*² Oxford.
     Citations are by page number, then vase number.


     Citations are by page number.


     Citations are by his numbered paragraphs.

     Citations are by his consecutive numbering of the fragments.

     Citations are by his numbered paragraphs.

fr.  fragment. From Nauck (1889) unless otherwise marked.

MS., MSS.  manuscript, manuscripts. When referred to individually, cf.
     Diggle pages 334-35.

Π  Papyrus. Following numbers in Diggle, page 336.


diff. pot.  *difficilior lectio potior*

References to works have been made as clear as possible, presenting the Author's name in full and (at times) abbreviating the title. While none of these should be problematical, the abbreviations used for Homer, Pindar and Greek Drama are presented below. In each case, what seems to be the more usual name of a work is used. The consequence of this is that different langages are used in the abbreviations. Full names of plays not listed are used, e.g. Ajax, Clouds, Birds, Wasps. When fragments are cited, the source play (if known) is given in full in brackets after the fragment number. If no play name is given, assume the Hecuba; if no author, Euripides.
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Introduction

I The Context of Revenge in the Hecuba.

Revenge is a valuable passion, and the only sure pillar on which justice rests...

A.E. Housman

Sophocles’ portrayal of the Oedipus legend has, since Aristotle’s Poetics, been held up as the paradigm for Greek tragedy. This preeminence, and a faulty Victorian logic which assumed that if the Oedipus Tyrannus was good drama, everything that was good drama must be like the Oedipus Tyrannus, has led to the large-scale disregard of Euripides’ Hecuba as ‘good drama’\(^1\). This is in itself surprising, considering the play’s prestige in antiquity and its place as the first of the so-called Byzantine triad, and in sixteenth-century dramatic criticism.\(^2\) Yet a convenient starting point for a vindication of the Hecuba is with Sophocles’ Oedipus. Oedipus kills his biological father at a crossroads, unaware of the old man’s identity, as he relates to us:

\[
\text{καὶ μ’ ὁ πρέσβυς, ὦς ὅρφ,}
\]
\[
\text{ὄχως παραστείχοντα τηρήσας, μέσον κάρα διπλοῖς κέντροις μου καθίκετο.}
\]
\[
\text{οὐ μὴν ἵσην γ’ ἐτεισεν, ἀλλὰ συντόμως} \quad 810
\]
\[
\text{σκίπτετο τυπεῖς ἐκ τῆς δε χειρὸς ὑπίτους μέσης ἀπήνης εὐθὺς ἐκκυλίνδεται·}
\]
\[
\text{κτείνω δὲ τοὺς ἱμπαντας.}
\]
And the old man, seeing this, and having watched for when I passed, from his place in the carriage swung down his two-pronged goad on the top of my head. He more than paid, though: one speedy blow from the staff in this hand, and he tumbled out head first, from the middle of the carriage, onto his back.

And I killed all of them, together.

Later, in time both real and dramatic, he reflects on his actions and finds he has two valid pleas for innocence, ignorance and provocation:

καίτοι πώς ἐγὼ κακὸς φύσιν,
ὅστις παθὼν μὲν ἀντέδρων, ὡστ' εἰ φρονών ἔφρασσον, οὐδ' ἄν ὡδ' ἐγινόμην κακὸς;
νῦν ο' οὐδὲν εἰδὼς ἱκόμην ἰν' ἱκόμην,
ὑψ' ἄν δ' ἐπασχον, εἰδότων ἀπωλλύμην.

But still, by nature how was I evil? I, who suffering but retaliated, so that if I had acted with full knowledge, not even then could I be considered evil. But as it is I arrive where I’ve arrived in ignorance, while those by whom I’d suffered sought my death.

His categoric assertions of guiltlessness are not questioned in the play, nor should they be. Oedipus at the crossroads behaved exactly as he was expected. Failure to respond to the unprovoked aggression would have been cowardly and unthinkable. Killing the whole party (except the unseen messenger) for one blow is not considered excessive. The dramatic irony emerges only because this activity which in normal circumstances was excusable, in this particular instance proved to be the fulfilment of the very prophecy Oedipus was in the process of trying to avoid. Similarly, Telemachus’ desire for vengeance at the beginning of Homer’s Odyssey is seen as a mark of his coming-of-age, not a morally debilitating desire.
Hecuba does not act in ignorance, nor is she forced into her actions by some known fate, but this has no bearing on her unconditional innocence in the play. She is an old woman who has suffered much. The deaths of her two youngest children Polyxena and Polydorus, which form the locus of the play, spur her to bloody violence which is shown to be unambiguously appropriate behaviour. This is seen in the notion of revenge (παιδεία) as presented in the play, which has not been discussed fully. The modern repulsion at Hecuba’s actions has not always been standard. Heath details the changing interpretations of the play through time, and his observations on sixteenth-century aesthetics of tragedy, especially those of Caspar Stiblinus, are instructive:

Polymestor’s sufferings are wholly deserved, and Stiblinus has no moral qualms concerning Hecuba’s vengeance. I do not know, in fact, of any adverse judgement of Hecuba’s vengeance in this period; that is the more striking when one recalls that the moral ambiguity of revenge was a recurrent theme in vernacular tragedy.

Heath (1987) 47

Later interpretations have suffered from a misconception of the relationship between the Hecuba and Aeschylus’ Oresteia of 458 B.C. The Oresteia had presented an alternative view of revenge as some moral see-saw, from which Orestes’ expiation can only be attained after a trial by divine favour.

What Euripides sets forth in the Hecuba is a revenge of a completely different sort than the Aeschylean notion. It is problematical that both English and Greek vocabulary fails to rigidly distinguish the concepts, but the distinction must be maintained, for it is precisely the presentation of revenge which gives a coherent meaning to the Hecuba, and precisely an obvious and concrete difference
between the two presentations that Euripides sought to establish. Aeschylus’ radical view of revenge, as introduced in the *Oresteia*, will be called ‘vendetta’ throughout this study, to distinguish it from Euripides’ ‘revenge’ (which might equally be called ‘justified retribution’, though this seems too prejudicial). The primary difference between these is the presence or absence (respectively) of moral ambiguity. The modern mind has many associations and presuppositions about revenge that are not questioned, but must be for an accurate historical view. To apply the distinction to Elizabethan and Jacobean drama: *The Revenger's Tragedy* and *The Spanish Tragedy* are plays about vendetta; *Hamlet* is a play about revenge, a point which Kovacs (1987) 148 n.6 observes, "in *Hamlet* no one questions the propriety of revenge."

Once the concept of vendetta was presented on the stage, it immediately became common currency. Euripides in the *Hecuba* returns to an earlier presentation of revenge, absolute unto itself, which is that of the *lex talionis* as it existed in the Ancient Near East. The necessity which compels Euripides’ revenge is shown to be steadfast when compared to the vagaries of the politician Odysseus, or the lack of consideration for justice of Agamemnon, or the random barbaric cruelty of Polymestor. Here the difference between the *Hecuba* and the *Trojan Women* of 415 B.C. becomes clear. The latter shows Hecuba’s relationship with three women - Cassandra, Andromache, and Helen - when she is enslaved after the Fall of Troy. The same setting is used in the *Hecuba* to show her relationship with the three men. The structure of the play, in its inevitable flow along two familiar storylines towards a third original one (or, as Conacher (1961) 146 n.1 pictures it, two tales of suffering and a tale of vengeance), reflects a literary game Euripides plays with the *Oresteia* - echoes of the first two plays with
a re-evaluation of the third - which in turn reflects his attitude towards, and 
presentation of, revenge.

"Such vertiginous regressions, mirrors reflected in mirrors, are a characteris-
tic anxiety of modern literature" (Ricks (1974) 25) and parallel of the very game 
Euripides presents his audience. The Oresteia had shown a resolution of conflicts 
in fifth-century Athens (though Macleod (1982) minimizes direct historical 
references, values and conflicts presented remain those of the fifth century.) The 
Hecuba shows another possibility, turning the world of the Oresteia on its head. 
Such an overt literary game with the same text is seen in the Orestes (408 B.C.) 
which leaves the conflicts of the Oresteia exposed. Apollo's final solution is so 
artificial and contrived precisely for the purpose to show the impossibility of 
assigning any meaningful value to the event, and emphasizes the lack of an 
appropriate response.

The play opens with the appearance of a ghost, Polydorus, Hecuba's 
youngest son, who has been murdered for gold by a kinsman and host, the 
Thracian king Polymestor. He is an ethereal presence floating above the stage, 
and though Hecuba has had a mysterious dream, she does not yet know her son is 
dead. His presence makes it a necessary truth, as unalterable and absolute as her 
vengeance on his behalf later will be. As one ghost fades, another has appeared. 
Achilles' shade has demanded a tribute from the Greeks, lest the Best of the 
Achaean go without honour. And so Polyxena, Hecuba's youngest daughter, 
sacrificed by Achilles' son Neoptolemus to his father, becomes the last victim of 
the Trojan war. As such, her death stands for the deaths of all Hecuba's children 
lost in the war, and the ghost of Achilles clearly symbolizes the spirit of Greek 
heroism that had ensured the victory. Polyxena's placid acceptance of her fate,
despite Hecuba’s pleas and entreaties with the guileful and politically expedient Odysseus that her daughter be spared, serve to colour Polyxena’s ‘noble’ death with a sickly hue: her victory is for herself alone, a safe exit, and disregards ties of kinship to family or city\textsuperscript{13} which are the marks of heroism.\textsuperscript{14} These bonds later prove to be Hecuba’s tools towards exacting her revenge. She supports her claim on Agamemnon by a supposed kinship-relationship to Polydorus because of Cassandra (824-35.)

The audience cannot help but feel disappointed at Polyxena’s actions. Her self-sacrifice amounts to no more than a suicide, with Polyxena escaping the horrors that await her. She accepts her fate with too great a willingness to die (346-8.) In itself, this is an acceptable tragic response to unpleasant situations (cf. Ajax; and Sophocles did write a Polyxena.) In the present instance, Polyxena is helping the enemies of her mother. This completely diffuses the tension in the situation and loses Hecuba’s case for her. Hecuba’s daughter becomes Odysseus’ trump card in the ensuing debate (\textscript{αγών}): "Polyxena dies only for her own honour ... so her death affirms nothing, but becomes a bitter, incidental, discordant event, as Euripides meant it to be" (Burnett (1971) 24). While the messenger Talthybius in the following episode indicates he and the whole army were moved to tears by her nobility at death, it is not an enemy which moves them, but an ally.

As one corpse is produced, so is another. Polydorus’ murdered body is found adrift by an old serving-woman preparing to wash Polyxena for burial. Hecuba interprets her dream correctly in the light of this further evidence,\textsuperscript{15} that her son was murdered by Polymestor. So she determines on revenge. Testall (1954) seems to be the first scholar to notice that this catches the audience
completely off-guard: "in the prologue Euripides has given no indication whatever of any revenge. In 749, therefore the word τιμωρεῖν, the first notion of any such idea, comes as a complete surprise" (340). That this conclusion must follow becomes clear with the familiarity the word and its cognates assume in the ensuing drama\(^\text{16}\) (756 τιμωρομένη, 790 τιμωρὸς, 843 τιμωρόν, 882 τιμωρήσωμαι, 1258 τιμωρομένη; the word is always used by Hecuba of her action against Polymestor; further, the revenge is presented consistently as "an official act of justice" (Meridor (1978) 30.). Hecuba seeks to avenge her son not as part of a deterioration of a formerly noble character under the pressures of adverse circumstances, but because in fifth-century Athens\(^\text{17}⁄\) when a person was killed ... the killed person had suffered a wrong ... and required vengeance or retribution (τιμωρεῖται); and it was the duty of his family to obtain it for him" (MacDowell (1963) 1). The surprise comes from Hecuba’s ability to attain revenge despite the obstacles in her way, which include her servitude, her abject condition, her age and her gender. Both Agamemnon and Polymestor do not believe her capable of any genuine harm (885, 981.) The kings are laid low by the prisoner’s legitimate response.

Euripides here combines two elements found in other extant plays, which demonstrate some interest in themes over his career. Hecuba is a powerful barbarian\(^\text{18}\) woman. That the Athenian male population had a general anxiety about barbarians, women, and anyone other than themselves with power\(^\text{19}\) is certain. Euripides employs the combination of all three in Medea (431 B.C.), Phaedra in the Hippolytus (428 B.C.) as well as in the Hecuba (c.424 B.C.) The second factor contributes to this: the isolated setting on the Thracian Chersonese removes any associations with ‘civilization’, in a modern sense, as it does in the
Iphigeneia among the Taurians, the Cyclops, and in Sophocles' Philoctetes. Meridor (1983, 14 n.9) and Macleod (1983; and cf. Hogan, 1972) assumes Thrace is used to reflect contemporary interests (Hall (1989) 108-09 rightly argues against the identification of Polymestor with the historical Seuthes). If so, this must be seen as of secondary importance. Characters are found in a Hobbesian state of nature, that is unaffected by any external factors. The life and workings of the polis, so central to fifth-century thought, have no bearing. Free from such contingencies, Hecuba is able by the end of the play to restore a semblance of her former nobility, in contrast with the base actions and designs of Polymestor and the Greeks, such as would not be possible in the 'civilised' world of Argos, for example. The polis controlled private vengeance in the fifth century (cf. Winnington-Ingram (1966) 35 and 37 n.13). The Hecuba shows that there was a higher basis for this fact.

The Greek generals are continually dependent on their army. They can function only in community, suffering each others’ vicissitudes and vagaries, ever aware of popular opinion and the value of demagoguery. Further, the Greeks (both audience and, to a more limited extent, characters) can come to understand their community, or culture, better by examining it at its periphery. The clearest way to show what makes a Greek is to show him interacting with a barbarian. This is clearly a concern of Euripides, and stresses the genuine middle ground Hecuba holds. An anthropologist has stated that this is a common phenomenon of all cultures: "people become aware of their culture as they stand at its boundaries" (Cohen (1982) 3). Though community is important for understanding revenge, Hecuba’s right is presented as an absolute right, independent of human judicial process. It is only with this understanding that Meridor’s claim that
"Agamemnon's appearance ... supplies Hecuba with both a social framework and the responsible authority" (1983, 15) can be seen to be correct.\textsuperscript{20}

Agamemnon is a necessary obstacle to be overcome if the revenge is to be accomplished, and Hecuba accordingly objectifies him. He says he will not act on her behalf despite her claims of kinship with him which, under the Athenian legal principle cited above (MacDowell (1963) 1), should obligate him to act on Polydorus’ behalf. Her claim on him is twofold, based on her being his slave\textsuperscript{21} and his kinsman (and the associated paradox of such a situation), that Agamemnon will act with justice, and on her behalf, based on his (present) relationship with Cassandra (which also has mutually exclusive elements; the implicit conflict will manifest itself at the trial at the end of the play.) The power of the claim seems overwhelming, and yet he fails to act decisively, fearing the censure of the army. She will accept his inaction and tacit support for the meantime, and so dispatches her serving-woman to summon the Thracian king for an audience.

Polymestor is not known from any other sources, and so joins the ranks of other unknown Euripidean barbarian kings, such as Theoclymenus in Helen, Thoas in Iphigeneia among the Taurians, as well as any unknown unknown Euripidean barbarian kings. Three theories have been posited as to his literary origin. Méridier, Conacher (1961) and Pohlenz (1954) believe Euripides adapted the character from local lore, though this is done without any evidence, and has the sole redeeming feature of removing Euripides of a creative thought. Zielinsky (1925) 55 posited an Aeschylean play during the period of the Athenian reconquest of Thrace, 476-459 B.C. This too is the stuff of fantasy, but shows an awareness of Aeschylus’ influence on the play. The existence of similar characters in other plays and the lack of plausible alternatives necessitate the conclusion that

30
Polymestor is a Euripidean invention (rightly Kaibel and Grégoire.) There is now a more cogent progression to be found through the three storylines, tracing Euripides’ departure from his source: Polyxena is a known plot (even if Sophocles’ Polyxena did not precede the Hecuba as is generally assumed, they surely shared a common source); Polydorus is a known character, who is presented with considerable plot innovations (in Homer, Polydorus is the son of Priam and Laothoe, and killed in battle by Achilles); and the revenge on Polymestor is a new plot. Accepting that Euripides’ reappraisal of revenge is central to the play’s interpretation, it is now clear that the structure of the play recognizes these divergences.

Polymestor arrives with his young sons, full of smiles and guiles, confidently asserting that Polydorus whom he had murdered is thriving in the palace. This is a statement which everyone listening - Hecuba, attendants, Chorus, audience, Polymestor himself, and presumably his sons and guards - knows to be false. Polymestor fails to know that everyone knows, and therein lies the somewhat unusual dramatic irony of the scene. The gold surety entrusted for Polydorus’ care is also safe, Hecuba is told. He dismisses his bodyguard at Hecuba’s request, and knowing that he can be moved by greed, Hecuba lures him into the tent with promises of further gold rewards. The second obstacle has been overcome, and she is in a position to exact her revenge. Meridor (1978) stresses the complete lack of redeeming features in the portrayal of Polymestor: “he is all lies, flattery and greed” (31); contrast Jason (Medea 866-975) and Pentheus (Bacchae 1024-1392) who are shown to be more than two-dimensional villains, and (however belatedly) to have some redeeming features.

Both revenge, as expounded here, and the Oresteian vendetta can be
summarized in a common Greek maxim that may well have been proverbial,24 "the doer suffers" (Choephoroi 313 δρασαυν παθεῖν is probably the tersest formulation possible, but others surely exist, e.g. Agamemnon 1563.) The distinction between vendetta and revenge lies in the level of society at which justice is held. Both are expressions of the phenomenon of the blood-feud. With vendetta, the onus shifts back and forth between two parties, as Mark Twain describes in The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn:25

A feud is this way. A man has a quarrel with another man, and kills him; then that other man’s brother kills him; then the other brothers, on both sides, goes for one another; then the cousins chip in - and by-and-by everybody’s killed off, and there ain’t no more feud. But it’s kind of slow, and takes a long time.

Obvious examples of this punitive justice are many: the Campbells and the Hatfields and the McCoys, blood-feuds as presented in the Norse sagas, and a divine vendetta can be seen between the goddesses Artemis and Aphrodite in the Hippolytus.26 It is also the situation in the Agamemnon and the Choephoroi, made more acute because the conflict exists within the House of Atreus. The Eumenides introduces a change, making the rule of law paramount.

Euripides has a separate agenda. The rule of law is consistently debunked, through Odysseus’ machinations, the fragility of Agamemnon’s leadership, and will culminate in the trial which concludes the play. Transforming the Homeric heroes into fifth-century politicians is part of an apparently lifelong programme of Euripides to question the canonization of the traditional myths, especially Homer - compare Iphigeneia, traditionally the first casualty of the war, who does not in fact die in the Iphigeneia among the Taurians or the Iphigeneia in Aulis (which also
shows Achilles and the sons of Atreus as politicians, not generals); Helen, where Helen ‘of Troy’ never even arrives there. In the Hecuba, the eponymous protagonist formulates her first appeal to Agamemnon in her long speech on law (νόμος) assuming law’s primacy through external arbitration (799-801.)

Too many interpretations rest on the importance of this speech to the play. Its importance lies in its inadequacy. It proves an unsatisfactory outlet for revenge, so the context must change: "It is to the justice represented by the Furies that Hecuba ultimately has recourse ... Her story is a kind of Oresteia in reverse: private vendetta comes into play after an appeal to institutionalized justice has failed." (Gregory (1991) 108.)

Gregory does not make the distinction between revenge and vendetta suggested here, but apart from this imprecision the sentiment is correct. Revenge - the revenge of the lex talionis - goes beyond punitive retribution; "it can be conceived to be the guardian of the community as a whole, for homicide law is the basis of all law and order" (Macleod (1983) 129). It is a community’s expression affirming the sanctity of life, which transposes the blood-feud to a restorative context. Two details of this statement need elaboration.

Revenge is a community’s expression, not that of an individual or number of individuals, such as a kin-group (for example, an οἶκος). Mossman (1990) 197 notes the same distinction is found in the historians:

Thucydides uses τιμωρία and τιμωρεῖν almost always to express community vengeance rather than personal revenge. This provides an interesting contrast with Herodotus, who portrays Xerxes’ projected revenge on Greece as far as possible as a personal matter...

The desolate setting of the play effectively isolates the community in question, which is composed of the Hellenic host, its leaders, Hecuba, her attendants, and
her fellow prisoners, who comprise the Chorus. The playwright makes entering or leaving the community difficult, but not impossible: Polymestor and his sons, and in one sense Polydorus, are all permitted access. Euripides is careful that when the revenge is enacted, Hecuba herself, though accepting moral responsibility, physically performs neither of the crimes (although 1046 makes it clear that the situation is exactly as if she had done it physically). It is her attendants who kill the children, and blind Polymestor with their brooches. Meridor (1978) plausibly explains this as agreeing "with the spirit of Attic law which specifically forbade to hand over a convicted murderer to the injured party" (30-1). While this is no doubt valid, the actions of the mute characters form an explicit assent to the inherent justice of Hecuba's revenge. Every individual who is available to pass judgement on her actions agrees: for example, Agamemnon says to Hecuba (852-53),

καὶ βούλομαι θεῶν θ’ οὖνεκ’ ἄνόσιον ξένον
καὶ τοῦ δικαίου τήνδε σοι δοῦναι δίκην

I also wish, for the sake of the gods and for the sake of justice, that you receive your rightful satisfaction

from this blasphemous friend

and the Chorus to Polymestor (1023),

οὖσα δέδωκας ἀλλ’ ἵσως δώσεις δίκην

You have not yet paid, but equally you will pay the penalty.

Hecuba herself (1052-53) says,

... δίκην δέ μοι | δέδωκε. ...

He has paid me my due.
and even Polymestor (1252-53) says,

οίμοι, γυναικός, ός ένισ', ἡσώμενος
δούλης ύφεξω τοὺς κακόσιν δίκην.

Oh no! It seems I have been beaten by a woman, a slave, and punished by my inferiors.

Each of these statements acknowledges that the action in question is right and just (δίκη.) It is the opinion of the community. That Agamemnon accedes is important. Although he is presented as a vacillating demagogue, he is the central pillar of the community, leader of the Greeks and master of the Trojan captives. His recognition of the justice of Hecuba’s (intended) action is crucial since it makes the action authorised in a sense. The authorisation is not formally granted (that must wait until after-the-fact, in the agon) but it is a necessary step; this is why the third episode is dedicated to Hecuba’s getting it, the same way the fourth episode is dedicated to the victim admitting his guilt.) Should Hecuba fail in her revenge, she must in no way be thought to be guilty or culpable in any sense (rightly Kovacs (1987) 107). She is determining the legal right to (rightful) revenge: the law is with her, and the victim is certain. Long before the concept of revenge had been introduced in the play, the ground had been cleared: "Two of our question marks are thus already answered in the prologue: Hecuba is right to take revenge on Polymestor to the extent that he is the guilty party and that his crime was inflicted on an innocent and inoffensive victim" (Mossman (1990) 200-01).

In this light, the purpose of revenge becomes clear. It is not retributive, providing an individual with satisfaction in seeing another suffer. It is a community restoring itself to its state before the original transgression, making it whole again, in the same way that in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, concerning Macduff’s
revenge for the murder of Duncan (as a kinsman), Macduff killing Macbeth is a restorative act for Scotland. Returning to the blood-feud premiss that "the doer suffers", it becomes clear that the phrase is open to two interpretations. Vendetta maintains no overall perspective: A wrongs B who then acts according to the proverb; B has now wronged A who then acts according to the proverb ad absurdum ad infinitum. Revenge maintains that the community as a whole must punish the transgressor. The passive construction in "the doer suffers" reflects the absence of individual responsibility. The status quo ante is restored.

The play's presentation of the value of life is also nonstandard. Hecuba de facto is an enslaved prisoner of war. To make her plight tragic, Euripides accords a value to her life and those of her fellow prisoners that would not be found in the Homeric setting, nor in the popular morality of the fifth century. The rationale he employs gives deference to Hecuba's former state as Queen of Troy. It is this expanded perception of life which Polyxena will not endure: she is a princess, and life as a servant and concubine would be no life (351-68.) Her sentiment is noble, and therefore is not commensurable with the non-hierarchical perspective this community shares (for the Greeks too seem willing to accept this perspective, until the demands come from the deceased, which is beyond the community's direct experience.) It has been shown that Polyxena, in embracing death, undermines her own life. This must not be the model the Hecuba enshrines.

Hecuba mourns Polyxena and muses on her nobility (589-602) but the conclusions reached are moral - she has abandoned the original question she had formulated in terms of class. It is certainly not true that the principle established in this speech, on the immutability of one's true nature (φύσις), sets out the rule to which Hecuba will prove her own exception. This conclusion assumes that
Hecuba’s revenge constitutes a moral deterioration of her character. This has been the standard interpretation of the play throughout this century, and the names of those who follow it are many, e.g. Matthiae (1918), Kirkwood (1947), Abrahamson (1952), Oliver (1960) Conacher (1961), Kitto (1961), Daitz (1971), Vickers (1973), Luchnig (1976), Tarkow (1984), King (1985), Reckford (1985), Nussbaum (1986), Michelini (1987), Segal (1989), (1990), (1990a) etc. It is held that Hecuba’s royal character degenerates over the course of the play, the breaking point being usually at some point during her speech about νόμος (786-845). This is what I shall call the ‘debasement theory’ throughout this study. In generalising and not referring so much to individual claims, I hope to show that the theory as a whole, and the premises which underlie it are not tenable. Pohlenz (1954) 281 called Hecuba "die erste Gestalt der Tragödie, die eine innere Wandlung durchmacht." It is the situations external to Hecuba which change, not anything inside her character.

There is a democratisation of human life, which conflicts with the aristocratic scale of values present in the language in the fifth century. This is the basis for Gregory’s interpretation: "The possession of might ... does not justify its abuse. The weak also possess certain rights and resources, and those who press their advantage too far will receive their ultimate check not from the gods, but from the oppressed victims" (1991, 186-7).

Polymestor is blinded, his sons murdered, and he emerges in a scene laden with transtextual influence from the Agamemnon. He calls for help, Agamemnon appears, and in true Euripidean fashion, a fifth-century courtroom drama (ἐγκώμιον) ensues. Polymestor is on trial for the murder of Polydorus, even though the sentence has just been executed. Trying Hecuba is never mooted. Polymestor
then confesses to the crime in the fifth line of a 51-line speech (1136). Agamemnon is the judge, but Hecuba has already gained Agamemnon's allegiance to her cause. The verdict is assured before the trial begins. The scene thereby provides a retroactive confirmation of Hecuba's justice, which contrasts with the manifestly fallible human law which provides the confirmation. This trial is not to be perceived legitimate judicial procedure, but a mockery of justice, invoking not laughter but indignation. Agamemnon is genuinely surprised that Hecuba has had the opportunity to enact a revenge. He did not expect her to be able to accomplish anything in a prisoner of war camp. Even he is caught off-guard by having to hold a trial.

In Lewis Carroll's 1876 nonsense poem *The Hunting of the Snark*, "The Barrister's Dream", the Snark appears as defence attorney, judge, and jury ruling ultimately in favour of the prosecution. The Snark's position is really not that far removed from Agamemnon's, who is judge and jury and allied with the prosecution, with the verdict already passed and punishment completed. The sentence passed is not arrived at legally, but it is just. The play defines revenge succinctly within the terms of this paradox, as something which transcends human 'justice', which is utterly corrupt and without authority. The law Agamemnon represents is the one Aeschylus in the *Eumenides* had exalted in his aetiology of the Areopagus, which was institutionalized specifically to deal with revenge-killings.

There is a second attempt at evaluation of the revenge, which is ultimately more successful. After receiving his punishment and admitting his guilt, Polymestor ends the play citing prophecies of doom for Agamemnon, Cassandra and Hecuba. Rather than using a *deus ex machina*, Euripides invokes the
"prophecy of an acknowledged authority" (Meridor (1978) 32), Dionysus prophet of the Thracians. Suddenly to remember doom prophecies is not unique in Euripides, and are found also in the mouths of Polyphemus (Cyclops 696-700) citing an unspecified ancient oracle, and Eurystheus (Heraclidae 1028-37) citing the oracle of Loxias. Like Polymestor, both Polyphemus and Eurystheus are contemptible characters. Agamemnon, the prophet says through Polymestor, will be killed in a bath with an axe by his wife, and Clytemnestra will kill Cassandra as well. One purpose of all such utterances (including divine epiphanies) is to re-establish links with the world of myth, placing the action of the drama into a larger continuum. Here though, Euripides is clearly being insidious. He shows his hand in the game he is playing with the Oresteia, and effectively provides enough information to prevent the Oresteia, retroactively, from happening within the continuum: armed with the information Polymestor gives him, even Agamemnon would be clear-sighted enough to avoid the machinations of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. Or so we should like to think. Agamemnon's blithe couplet that ends the trimeters of the play (1291-92) show that he has not even been properly listening to Polymestor's utterances.

Euripides' game continues, because Hecuba's transformation into a dog (κύων) recalls the dog-woman Furies or Erinyes, who embody vengeance. Gregory draws this comparison explicitly: "By assimilating Hecuba to a Fury, the metamorphosis offers her an escape from her degraded status and endows her with a fierce grandeur" (1991, 110). This seems to have been first posited by Pucci (1980) 216-17 n.39, who agrees that the metamorphosis cannot refer to Hecuba's shamelessness. The association of the Erinyes with dogs is made explicit in the Oresteia earliest, it seems (though Gregory (1991) 110 argues that dogs are}
associated with vengeance also at Theognis 347-49), and the importance of this
text to the Hecuba has already been stressed. The play several times invokes an
avenging spirit (ἑλάστωρ), which for all practical purposes seems to be identical
with the Erinyes.\textsuperscript{36}

Meridor rejects this association, saying "Hecuba's transformation into a bitch
should not be treated in isolation, and consequently, should not be taken as a
moral evaluation of her revenge" (1978, 34); she cites the metamorphosis of
Cadmus and Harmonia into snakes, also predicted, at the end of the Bacchae.\textsuperscript{37}
But in rejecting the negative evaluations, she precludes the possibility of positive
ones. Meridor (1978, 34) stops at having reformulated the equation that the
metamorphosis establishes. Rather than consider the meaning of 'Hecuba =
κών', she suggests Euripides' purpose was the aetiological question of how 'The
Sign of the Dog (Κύνος Σήμα, i.e. the promontory Cynossema) = The Tomb of
Hecuba (Εκάβης τύμβος)', the answer to which is provided, of course, by the
metamorphosis. This is clever, and to some extent correct, but it leaves no place
for an evaluation of the revenge, which becomes reduced to an objective fact;
Segal (1990a) 128 n.59 is right to question her scepticism. This returns her to the
problem she was attempting to solve, the fact that from the fates selected by
Euripides in the prophecy, "it seems that not more can be inferred for the meaning
of the play" (1978, 33). The aetiological explanation is provided for specific
reasons, which are ultimately not a sufficient explanation for the events that occur
in the play.\textsuperscript{38}

Aware of this, Heath contrasts the sixteenth-century views of Hecuba and
Medea. While Medea's murder of her children revolts, in the case of Hecuba, "So
far from being revolted, Stiblinus proposes the circumspect calm with which she
goes about retaliation as a model" (1987, 47)\textsuperscript{39} Hecuba’s transformation is not into some base animal, but as the human embodiment of the rightful spirit of Justice. The justice of the Furies is the rightful justice of revenge. Euripides has altered the continuum of myth so that the \textit{Agamemnon} should never happen. Of course, normally variant presentations of a myth were both approved and expected, but it is clear that in this instance Euripides has an ulterior motive. Without the Aeschylean murder of Agamemnon, the Erinyes never become Eumenides, the Kindly Ones. They retain their earlier associations with revenge. Revenge is not a kind emotion, but it was intrinsic to Greek thought in the fifth century, and is a valuable passion to Euripides’ Hecuba.
The picture of a restorative revenge, as opposed to the retributive vendetta, seems to be both consistent and valid for the Hecuba. It does not function in isolation. Comparison with similar presentations of revenge outside the Greek sphere will inform a reading of the Hecuba, to show that the values expressed, that revenge has an appropriate and public outlet in a society, and is not something peculiar. The maxim of helping friends and harming enemies is the commonly held foundation for Greek ethics\(^1\) in the fifth century, and for the present that premiss should suffice. Confusion and ambiguity exist because of a misunderstanding of the biblical lex talionis, which has entered modern society in a tacitly altered form from its original meaning. Since the concept underlies any discussion of the appropriateness of revenge, it is necessary to make clear its original formulation, untainted by centuries of reinterpretation. In its original form, the lex talionis represented a restorative revenge.

Revenge involves punishment. Because "the work of Emile Durkheim has traditionally been the central reference point for the sociology of punishment" (Garland (1989) 37), it is also a convenient starting point for a discussion on revenge. Durkheim’s model\(^2\) - which claims validity for any social group, and should therefore be applicable to fifth-century Athens, and by extension to Euripides’ fifth-century presentation of the Late Bronze Age - is not completely consistent, and one of his inconsistencies concerns the lex talionis itself. Another comes at the level of definitions, where Durkheim’s original conception of crime
("by this name we call every act which, in any degree whatever, invokes against its author the characteristic reaction which we term punishment" Durkheim (1965) 70) is presented in reference to punishment, the effect defining the cause. This is however resolved with his later definition, "an act is criminal when it offends strong and defined states of the collective conscience" (1965, 80), the collective conscience being a fixed system of beliefs held by average citizens in a society. Crime is thus in the first instance an offence against a community, not against an individual. It is determined not from a society’s government (in the loosest possible sense) but by the society’s governed. Durkheim conceives just punishment as restoration to the community, and this is consistent with the picture given in Euripides' Hecuba: "Punishment, then, remains for us what it was for our fathers. It is still an act of vengeance since it is an expiation. What we avenge, what the criminal expiates, is the outrage to morality" (1965, 89).³

This link with the past is essential for Durkheim’s argument. Because by examining the past he notes a fallacy held by his predecessors in sociological analysis (Durkheim (1965) 91):

Among primitive peoples punishment sometimes seems still more completely private, as the custom of the vendetta would seem to prove. These societies are composed of elementary aggregations of quasi-familiar character, and are easily described by the word clans. But when an attack has been made by one or several members of a clan against another clan, it is the latter which itself punishes the offence to which it has been subjected. What seemingly increases the importance of these facts is that it has very often been contended that the vendetta was primitively the unique form of punishment.
Though this is the prevalent theory of the nineteenth-century ethnologists, "not a single society can be instanced where the vendetta has been the primitive form of punishment" (1965, 92). Of course, the use of the word 'primitive' in each of these quotations is prejudicial and in some sense is symptomatic of the error being addressed. It sets off as 'other' and as 'inferior' anything which has preceded. The point is that being anterior chronologically evokes behavioural assumptions (such as in the execution of justice) that will affirm a notion of progress from that point to the present, even when there is no direct link between the two societies in question. As a result, modern researchers, who have approached the issue with a liberal, post-Enlightenment, Christian mind-set, have found themselves repulsed. The tendency has been to take all undesirable features, and form a collective lump of otherness. This is what the Greeks themselves do with the application of terms such as οἱ βάρβαροι ("barbarians", i.e. all that were not Greeks.) Durkheim abandons this prejudice and establishes an alternative model, where "the vendetta is evidently a punishment which society recognizes as legitimate, but which it leaves to particular persons to inflict ... It is far from true that private vengeance is the prototype of punishment; it is, on the contrary, only an imperfect punishment" (1965, 94).

The distinction then is not developmental, but in terms of extent. Vendetta is a form of private delict, whereas vengeance is the appropriate reaction (i.e. punishment) to a crime:

It follows from this that two types of law can also be distinguished: repressive (penal) law which both reflects and reinforces mechanical solidarity [in a society] by harshly repressing difference and dissent; and restitutive (co-operative) law which reflects and facilitates organic
solidarity by organising and regulating exchange relations between the different individuals and sectors of complex social types.

Garland (1989) 42

The motive of revenge, as an expression of Garland’s restitutive law, is a desire of an individual for the benefit of his society. Punishment for a crime is a public vengeance; yet private vengeance (such as that evoked by Durkheim as cited at the end of the previous paragraph) is, ultimately, no vengeance at all. Revenge is not a prerogative of an elite portion of society, and in practice has a particular appeal to weaker members of a society, who otherwise would have no claims on justice:

It is an error to believe that vengeance is but useless cruelty ... The instinct of vengeance is ... only the instinct of conservation exacerbated by peril. Hence, vengeance is far from having had the negative and sterile role in the history of mankind which is attributed to it. It is a defensive weapon which has its worth, but it is a rude weapon.

Durkheim (1965) 87

Some would surely question the use of the adjective "defensive" in this context, and the use of the word "rude" also arouses discussion. Both terms, it appears, are being used in a slightly special sense. In allowing the motivation for the vengeance to come from prisoners of war, Euripides shows that victims do have rights; these are not the individual rights cherished by modern democracy, but collective rights from which they can benefit.

Durkheim pictures revenge as a response to another action. It is not initiatory by definition; it retaliates. The important distinction that needs to be constantly borne in mind is that the action is justified in terms of collective rights - the rights of the community - rather than individual rights, the development of
which only really occurred after the Enlightenment with the other changes from liberal democracy. Because it establishes a hierarchy of collective over individual rights, there is (in theory) no specific benefit to any individual. There is a mechanism for selecting individuals who will exact the revenge on behalf of society (in Hecuba’s case, it is because she is kin to the deceased) but the benefit is the restoration of the community. It is in this sense then that it is "defensive":

Durkheim conceptualises punishment as the expression of a particular form of social relationship - a solidarity ... maintained by the enforcement of collective beliefs. It is essentially a mechanism whereby the domination of the social over the individual is reproduced.

Garland (1989) 43

It is a "rude" weapon in the sense that it is misunderstood and misapplied. The use of revenge can degenerate (as it does in time and in the minds of so many critics) to the use of vendetta. It does so because "in the first place, punishment consists of a passionate reaction" (Durkheim (1965) 85), and passions are notoriously difficult to control. They represent an irrational side of individuals, which is implicitly in conflict with a legitimate collective response. Durkheim believes that vengeance "cannot regulate itself" (1965, 87). He does not clarify this belief, but it would seem that this is what he means. If so, an examination of some case studies should suggest otherwise: that it is not inconsistent to view revenge as a societal response to a violation of collective rights, which can be successfully implemented and maintained, which is the view of revenge present in the Hecuba. The examples to be used are from the Ancient Near East which is antecedent to Euripides, and found at an early point in each culture’s legal history. This will at least argue against external corruption of ideas.
The earliest Akkadian legal code are the Laws of Eshnunna, dating somewhere between 2000 and 1728 B.C. The justice it propounds is purely financial: recompense is to be paid by offenders. Violent crimes provoke extreme responses, and so it is violent crimes against persons, if any, that will invoke one form or another of revenge. While how murder was treated does not survive at Eshnunna, there is evidence for the case of rape, e.g. of a slave,

31: If a man deprives another man’s slave-girl of her virginity, he shall pay one-third of a mina of silver; the slave girl remains the property of her owner.

Pritchard (1958) 136

and the case of assault,

42: If a man bites the nose of a(nother) man and severs it, he shall pay 1 mina of silver. (For) an eye (he shall pay) 1 mina of silver; (for) a tooth 1/2 mina; (for) an ear 1/2 mina; (for) a slap in the face 10 shekels of silver.

Pritchard (1958) 137

which clearly establish the principles enshrined. There exists a graduated scale, but at some point life does become commensurate with money. Such casuistic codes (allowing one particular instance to stand for many similar instances) are standard in the Ancient Near East.

A significant innovation is to be found in the Code of Hammurabi (c. 1727 B.C.) and this is the earliest formulation of what is known as the lex talionis:

196: If a seignior has destroyed the eye of a member of the aristocracy, they shall destroy his eye.
197: If he has broken a(nother) seignior's bone, they shall break his bone.

200: If a seignior has knocked out a tooth of a seignior of his own rank, they shall knock out his tooth.

Pritchard (1958) 161

These are cases designed purely for the upper classes, but it does show a marked development of thought. In violent crimes against equals, there is no longer financial expiation. The former code assigned a value to life, the Code of Hammurabi puts it beyond value. It also (with its third-person plural protases) places revenge in the hands of the whole community, which in this case would be limited to the aristocracy). This is clearest in the mechanisms in place to prevent false convictions:

1: If a seignior accused a(nother) seignior and brought a charge of murder against him, but has not proved it, his accuser shall be put to death.

3: If a seignior came forward with false testimony in a case, and has not proved the word which he spoke, if that case was a case involving life, that seignior shall be put to death.

Pritchard (1958) 139

It becomes clear that life is not a matter of superficial concern, and is protected against maltreatment in every reasonable way. Revenge, in the form of the lex talionis, is not vindictive, but sets limits on behaviour. It enshrines the collective rights of the society before individual rights. The system, however, is not egalitarian, and 'life' means only the life of an equal:

198: If he [a seignior] has destroyed the eye of a commoner, or broken the bone of a commoner, he shall pay one mina of silver.
201: If he has knocked out a commoner’s tooth, he shall pay one-third mina of silver.

Pritchard (1958) 161

Residual traces of the earlier system are still present in the Code of Hammurabi, where the eye-for-eye, tooth-for-tooth ethic no longer applies.

This positive way of dealing with violent crimes was not now universal in the Ancient Near East, and the legal codes of the Hittites (c.1400-1193 B.C.) exhibit many similarities with the earlier Laws of Eshnunna. Hittite law has a notion of abstract legal persons: one’s estate had a legal identity, at least for the period of the injured party’s convalescence (if applicable), which it was the obligation of the offending party to maintain. This would seem to entail a productivity ethic, which is borne out by the penalties that are incurred:

1: If anyone kills a man or a woman because of a quarrel, he delivers the body and he shall give four people, either men or women, and he will look after the estate.

2: If anyone kills a slave or slavewoman because of a quarrel, he delivers the body and he shall give two people, either men or women, and he will look after the estate.

3: If anyone strikes a free man or woman and he or she dies, his hand sins; he delivers the body and he shall give two people and he will look after the estate.

4: If anyone strikes a slave or slavewoman and he or she dies, his hand sins; he delivers the body and he shall give one person and he will look after the estate.

7: If anyone blinds a freeperson or causes his tooth to fall, in the past they used to give one mina of silver, but now he will give twenty shekels of silver and look after the estate.
8: If anyone blinds a slave or slavewoman or causes his tooth to fall, he will give ten shekels of silver and look after the estate.
10: If anyone injures a person and makes him unfit then he takes care of him and gives a person in his place who works in his house until he is healthy; but when he regains his health he gives six shekels of silver and then that fellow himself gives the fee to the doctor.

The pattern remains consistent throughout the code. The Hittite solution is to add to the estate more manpower than had been removed. The manpower replacement is incremental - slaves are typically valued at half worth - and it is fairly clear that the punishment was not some upper limit; there was a fixed penalty for which there could be no appeal. The priorities that seem to dominate the Hittite legal system centre on the perpetuation of the estate.

It is worth examining closer the distinction which is drawn between laws one and three, cited above (it is of course the same distinction between laws two and four.) The former describes death "because of a quarrel", and the latter has the qualifier "his hand sins." In modern parlance, both crimes are a form of manslaughter. Yet the meaning of the qualifiers remains obscure. The penalty incurred in the second case is one half of that when a quarrel is involved. A consistent rationale can however be discerned if the word translated "a quarrel" refers to a blood-feud. Law one then becomes an attempt to regulate the blood-feud, by prescribing a four-to-one replacement ratio. This would leave law three for cases of manslaughter (or murder, if that is what is being described) outside the context of the blood feud. In the lesser case, there seems to be a removal of culpability from the doer: legally, it is his hand which sins. It is clear that homicide is not a capital offence, so the logical alternate interpretation, that
the phrase refers to the severity of the crime, is clearly not meant. Having only
the hand sin could carry some sociological significance that is not discernible
from the code itself.11

The overall picture of the Hittite legal system (as it concerned itself with
violent crimes) is one that distinguishes between crimes committed within the
context of a blood-feud, and those outside it. With the Akkadian system, as found
in the later Code of Hammurabi, a fundamental aspect concerning the treatment of
violent crimes was that life, or at least the life of an aristocrat, was not
commensurate with property. Both of these notions are present in the legal system
found in the Old Testament, and both are fundamental assumptions in Durkheim’s
conception of punishment and revenge. The Old Testament itself deals with law
in many places, but especially the Pentateuch, the first five books ascribed to
Moses in the Hebrew tradition (which are often collectively called "The Law.")12
In particular, the ‘Book of the Covenant’ (Exodus 20:22-23:19), which is the
casuistic code which immediately follows the Ten Commandments, shows
particular affinity with the other Near Eastern legal systems that have already been
discussed.13

Unlike the Akkadian law codes, the Pentateuch provides an explanation why
homicide is a capital crime:

   Whoever sheds the blood of man,
   by man shall his blood be shed;
   for in the image of God
   has God made man.

   Genesis 9:6
It is Israel’s special and personal relationship to Yahweh that ensures the sacredness of life. The *imago dei* theology makes life the property of its creator.\(^\text{14}\) The death of the offender is the only way to restore what has been taken. Paradoxically, the capital punishment for murder reflects the sanctity of life, and since the offence is against the society’s deity, it is the responsibility of the whole society that restitution be attained. This is in accordance with Durkheim’s tenet that "If, then, in primitive societies [among whom he numbers the Old Testament Jews], criminal law is religious law, we can be sure that the interests it serves are social" (1965, 92).

There are many other indications that the system means to establish a restorative rather than punitive judicial system, and this is seen in the laws themselves. For example,

Anyone who strikes a man and kills him shall surely be put to death. However, if he does not do it intentionally, but God lets it happen, he is to flee to a place I will designate. But if a man schemes and kills another man deliberately, take him away from my altar and put him to death.

*Exodus 21:12-14*

This clearly shares many features with the other Near Eastern codes, with the addition of a provision for death by negligence, the "place I will designate" in the above passage. The importance of these places, the Cities of Refuge, in the Old Testament law is certain. Four separate accounts are given,\(^\text{15}\) and the purpose is clear: "They will be places of refuge from the avenger, so that a person accused of murder may not die before he stands trial before the assembly" (*Numbers* 35:12), i.e. they are a mechanism to avoid the blood-feud.
In addition to the creation of formal procedures to determine culpability, and the institution of the Cities of Refuge, the *lex talionis* is part of the Old Testament blood-feud law. Its overall context is typically disregarded. The injunction is part of a supposed case, and the motivation behind the law is seen only in its fuller context:

If men who are fighting hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury, the *offender* must be fined whatever the woman’s husband demands and the court allows. But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

If a man hits a manservant or maidservant in the eye and destroys it, he must let the servant go free to compensate for the eye. And if he knocks out the tooth of a manservant or maidservant, he must let the servant go free to compensate for the tooth.

*Exodus 21:22-27*

The case in question is that of an innocent bystander being injured, which again is a likely starting point for a blood-feud. Again, the purpose of the law is restoration: injured slaves are to be set free, which implies an accorded status not found elsewhere in the Ancient Near East, and establishes a primacy of persons over property. The law also establishes a maximum of forty stripes less one in whippings which establishes a sense of proportionality. The *lex talionis* is a symbolic way of limiting the blood-feud. A final example of this is the fact that the degree of criminality is determined in proportion not to the harm caused (which is the response of the blood-feud) but rather to mental culpability: "If a thief is caught breaking in and is struck so that he dies, the defender is not guilty
of bloodshed; but if it happens after sunrise, he is guilty of bloodshed" (Exodus 22:2-3.) The distinction here being made is similar to the modern notion of killing in self-defence.

For the ancient Jews, the (understood) physical presence within the community of the deity demands the highest moral standards, and these are manifested in a legal system which opposes the blood-feud (which is the vendetta) and establishes mandatory restoration. This restoration, as a collective expression of values, becomes a collective responsibility. The lex talionis unambiguously preserves and maintains the community it governs. And it is this conception of justice which is the restorative revenge of the Hecuba.

As the Near Eastern examples are divided between the opposite conceptions of revenge and vendetta, so are the Greeks, and part of the problem in an analysis of a distinction that can appear quite subtle is that terminology used will not always reflect the distinction. The Oresteia’s pervasive presentation of vendetta obscures characteristics of revenge, though that does not mean they are not found:

Although requital of wrongs is approved as just, it is often expressed not in its personal form (‘retaliate against your enemy’) but in an impersonal form (‘the doer must suffer’) which does not specify the agent of justice, or assert the justice of personal revenge [i.e. vendetta].

Blundell (1989) 53

Similarly, the desire to see one’s oppressors punished is taken into account by the legal system, which can be seen to serve the same interests as the Old Testament limits on blood-feud:
Athenian law both acknowledged these feelings and set limits to their satisfaction, by allowing the prosecutor in a successful murder trial to witness the execution but "to do no more" (Demosthenes 23.69). From this perspective, simple retaliation appears not vengeful but a restraint on the impulse of revenge.

Blundell (1989) 30-31

Of course, counter-examples do exist. But what is clear is that the notion of revenge which Euripides sets forth in the Hecuba is one that exists throughout the ancient world; although not universal, it is clearly not merely a local idea, or even one specific to the author.

The transitional stage between the Ancient Near East and the fifth-century is important, and the poems of Homer provide a touchstone for this transition. While it is impossible to provide a complete view of the Homeric understanding of revenge, its primacy within the ethical system is undoubted:

Revenge is, after all, a central ingredient of the whole heroic ethos, whether in epic (the plot of the Iliad, too [i.e. as well as in the Odyssey], revolves around the theme of revenge, and its culminating act of vengeance also takes place in the twenty-second book) or in tragic drama (e.g. the assumptions underlying most public and private actions in the Ag., and passages like Soph. OC 270f., 992-6).

Hankey (1991) 93

Hankey’s discussion focuses on the precise usage of χάξαξα ("evils") in the Odyssey, because the word is used to describe what Odysseus does, which (it is assumed) will not be morally questionable. This is coherent, and leads to the conclusion that Odysseus’ actions are evil for someone (i.e. the recipient, such as one of the suitors.)
The poet centres his work on the concept of revenge, and "Odysseus himself actively ponders and brings about 'evils', in contexts of revenge" (1991, 88). Hankey concludes, "Clearly what is meant by 'evils' in these passages [Od 9.316; 14.110; 15.178; 17.159, 465, 491; 20.5, 184] is physical revenge, the causing of bodily injury and indeed death" (loc. cit.) It is not mooted that seeking after revenge (in these appropriate circumstances) is in anyway wrong or morally culpable. What in Aeschylus becomes the most extreme example of morally ambiguous revenge, Orestes’ ousting of the usurper Aegisthus,19 in Homer is understood in absolute and positive terms: "Orestes’ revenge (πτοσις) is glorious among gods and men (1.40-6, 298-300, etc.)" (1991, 93), cf. also Od 12.377-419, 13.128-45. In every way is Orestes’ revenge held up as a moral exemplum with which to compare Telemachus (nine times in the first twelve books of the Odyssey)

Recognizing it as part of a continuum, and understanding the effective purpose of its antecedents, permits a perspective that could not otherwise be afforded which will support the literary game Euripides is to play with the Oresteia.20 In failing to see this, many modern critics demonstrate prejudices that inevitably colour a view of revenge such as is presented in the Hecuba. Denniston goes so far as to apologise for the tragedians: "It is assumed by all three dramatists that revenge, even to the point of shedding blood, is justifiable or even laudable. That is not to say that they believed this to be true ethics. But for dramatic purposes these are the ethics they assume" (El xxv).21 The fact that this interpretation of revenge also is supported by sociological thought demonstrates a consistency and universality that might not otherwise be clear.
III - Windlessness

The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind.

Bob Dylan

In order for the Greeks to set sail for Troy, Agamemnon had to sacrifice his daughter Iphigeneia, that Artemis might be appeased and release the winds she was withholding from the Greek fleet. The girl is killed (or whisked away at the last moment, as some versions of the legend, particularly those favoured by Euripides, have it) and the winds start blowing in the right direction for Troy. The first victim of the war is an innocent Greek princess, and shows that war affects not only soldiers, but civilians as well; the moral dilemma in which Agamemnon is placed means that he, as leader of the Greek expedition, must also lose something in the war, that before he can take many lives, he must lose one very close to him.

At the end of the same war, something quite similar happens, which is not surprising since, like so much of myth, it fits a structure (to adopt Levi-Strauss' term), or pattern. Polyxena, an innocent Trojan princess is sacrificed to appease Achilles, who died without receiving a gift of honour (γερας). Once he has been honoured, the winds begin to blow again and the Trojan war comes to an end. Or so went the myth before Euripides: Calder (1966) hypothesises that Sophocles' Polyxena (which he supposes predates the Hecuba) ended with winds beginning to blow. It is a satisfactory, balanced conclusion. It is not, though, what happens in the Hecuba. The debasement theory¹ which has been so influential in interpretations of the play typically allows for Polyxena to die nobly, a willing sacrifice whereby she heroically avoids the horrors and humiliation of slavery (the reasons are hers, 351-68.)² Since it has been shown that the debasement theory
itself should be reconsidered, surely this corollary of the theory should also be examined anew.

The play has six passages which deal with the lack of winds explicitly, and the sparsity of details is problematical to an extent, in that no absolutely coherent view can be produced. There is enough information, though that the matter is clear. In the prologue, Polydorus relates (35-39):

\[
\text{πάντες δ’ Ἀχαιοὶ ναῦς ἔχοντες ἔσχον} \quad 35 \\
\text{θάσσουσ’ ἐπ’ ἀκταῖς τῆς Ῥημίκας χθονός.} \\
\text{κατέσχ’ Ἀχιλλεὺς πάν στράτευμ’ Ἑλληνικόν,} \\
\text{πρὸς οἶκον εὐθύνοντας ἐναλίαιν πλάτην.}
\]

And all the Achaeans stay with their ships inactive, and sit idle on the shores of this Thracian land.

Achilles stopped all of the Hellenic host from steering a maritime oar homewards.

The Chorus provide several corroborative and more specific details (109-15):

\[
\text{τῶμβοι δ’ ἐπιβάς} \quad 110 \\
\text{οἷοθ’ ὅτε χρυσέως ἐφάνη σὺν δῖπλοις,} \\
\text{τὰς ποντοπόρους δ’ ἔσχε σχεδίας} \\
\text{λατρῇ προτόνοις ἐπερειδομένας,} \\
\text{τάδε θωῦσων. Ποί δὴ, Δαναοί,} \\
\text{τὸν ἐμὸν τῶμβον} \\
\text{στέλλεσθ’ ἀγέραστον ἀφέντες;} \quad 115
\]

You know when he appeared with golden armour, mounted on his tomb, and stopped the seafaring ships, their forestays pressing upon the sails, calling out this: “Hey there, you Danaans, where are you heading, leaving my tomb with no gift of honour?”

Later in the play, Talthybius in relating the death of Polyxena recounts Neoptolemus’ words to his father’s spirit (538-40):
The traditional interpretation of these three passages suggests that Achilles held back the winds, or gave contrary winds, because he had not been honoured, mirroring in some sense the displeasure of Artemis who gave adverse winds (cf. Aeschylus Agamemnon 192-93).

Kovacs provides the most detailed argument against this view, and because of his insistence on the point should be cited at length (1987, 145 n.58):

We must take this opportunity to clear up one misunderstanding about the plot. It should be obvious, though it has not been to many of those who have written on this play, that Achilles has not forced the Greeks by adverse winds to sacrifice Polyxena to him. For, first, the debate would have been pointless: men do not argue about whether they wish to get home, nor do they urge weaker reasons such as gratitude when stronger ones such as self-preservation are available. Second, neither of the descriptions of Achilles' ghost (37-39, 109-13) says anything about windlessness, and both suggest, on the contrary, that it was Achilles' appearance that checked the Greeks while they were already sailing away. (Just what λαίφη πρωτόνος ἐπερειδομένας means is not entirely clear, but "being pressed upon, as to the sails, by the forestays" is more likely to refer to the rigging of a ship under weigh than to one becalmed. About ... 39 there can be no doubt: they are sailing.) ...

This solution to the standard 'misunderstanding' cannot be maintained. Kovacs raises four points that need addressing, all of which have straightforward remedies.
The debate is not pointless. The Achilles’ demand for honour appears in the form of a question, in which he mentions that his tomb is "unhonoured" (115 ἀγέραστον). The debate, both as the Chorus describe it and as its context requires, is on the nature of the γέρας: did Achilles mean a literal prize of honour, i.e. a captive woman? They do not debate whether they owe gratitude to Achilles; Kovacs is right that that would be a weak reason in comparison with self-preservation (by which he means getting home by ship). However, the Greeks are not used to having their dead appearing and claiming prizes of honour. Hecuba (260-61) correctly notes that oxen are a more appropriate offering to the dead, and the fresh blood advocated by the sons of Theseus (126) is probably human but need not be so. The army is divided because they do not know precisely what Achilles wants. Odysseus’ solution (134-35) is that slaves should not be withheld from the (former) best among them reformulates the question, so that it is not "What is the γέρας?" but "Can this meagre γέρας be refused?" It is no wonder the Greeks assent.

Kovacs is correct that windlessness is never specifically mentioned in the passages cited. This is surely being too literal. Windlessness does figure later in the play in three passages (900-01, 1019-20, 1289-90):

\[
\begin{align*}
\nu\nu\nu\ \delta', \ \sigma\upsilon \gamma\acute{\alpha}p\tau' \ \iota\varsigma\sigma' \ \omicron\upsilon\iota\rho\iota\omicron\upsilon\sigma\varsigma \ \pi\nu\omicron\alpha\zeta\varsigma \ \theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma, \\
\mu\nu\epsilon\nu\epsilon\nu \ \acute{\alpha}n\acute{\alpha}g\kappa\chi \pi\lambda\omicron\omicron\upsilon \ \acute{\omicron}r\acute{o}\nu\nu\zeta \ \acute{\omicron}si\upmu\omicron\upsilon. \\
\text{But now they must wait, watching silently, for an opportunity to sail, for the god does not send favourable breezes.}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\ \kappa\alpha'i \ \gamma\acute{\alpha}p' \ \acute{A}r\acute{g}\acute{e}i\acute{o}i \ \nu\epsilon\omicron\omicron\nu \\
\lambda\upsilon\varsigma\varsigma \ \pi\theta\omicron\omicron\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \ \omicron\acute{k}\alpha\omicron\delta' \ \acute{\acute{e}}k \ \Τ\rho\omicron\omicron\iota\acute{a}s \ \pi\omicron\alpha\delta' \\
\text{For indeed the Argives yearn to unfurl the sheets of their ships homeward from Troy.}
\end{align*}
\]
and, at the very end of the play once Hecuba has enacted her revenge,

καὶ γὰρ πνοὰς
πρὸς οἶκον ἣδη τάσσει πομπίμους ὄρω. 1290
For even now I sense a breeze to convey us home.

Gregory rightly points out the error of Kovacs’ conviction (1991, 114 n.5):

katesch' (38) and esche (111) imply physical intervention, and that
[i.e. windlessness] remains the most economical interpretation for the
Greeks’ lingering in Thrace. Otherwise it becomes necessary to
imagine an initial epiphany of Achilles and a subsequent, unrelated
failure of the winds.

The obviously related verbs Gregory mentions were both translated above as
"stopped." More accurate would have been "held back" and "held" which
emphasize the physical aspect Gregory desires. It is used specifically of beaching
ships by Herodotus 6.101, and 7.59.

Thirdly, Kovacs fails to extract coherent sense from line 112. His literal
translation "being pressed upon, as to the sails, by the forestays" does not facilitate
comprehension, but two suitable explanations can be produced easily, neither of
which supports what Kovacs maintains. Platnauer (on IT 1134-36) suggests that
the sails are filled (with wind) so that they are bulging to the forestays (i.e. there
was a very good wind for sailing) when Achilles holds them, suggesting a sudden
loss of wind. Alternately, if hyperbole may be ascribed to the Chorus to relate
this supernatural event, the winds were so contrary that the forestays were pressing
against the sails. This would certainly justify the use of verbs of physical holding.
Kovacs' fourth point is that the Greeks were already under weigh. Line 39 refers to the fact that the Greeks had been sailing (they are no longer at Troy) and have become becalmed at (or forced back to) the Thracian Chersonese. This is made clear by lines 35-36. It appears then that the traditional crux of the play's location has a dramatic motivation. A reason why this would have been the Greeks' first stop is provided by Thucydides 1.11, who indicates that in the tradition the Greeks had farmed and raided for supplies in the Thracian Chersonese during the Trojan War.

Clearly the audience is meant to think what Euripides presents the characters of the Hecuba thinking, namely that the appearance of the ghost of Achilles is the cause of the windlessness. We must therefore wonder why the winds do not begin to blow during the second stasimon: "Eventually the winds are favourable ... but it cannot be said that Euripides has in any way stressed the efficacy of the sacrifice" (Hogan (1972) 252). The sacrifice of Polyxena, the arguments for which having been vague and other-worldly, appears to have no immediate effect. It was an inappropriate and futile action that accomplishes nothing. Her death is sour for the audience: she ends up arguing with Hecuba in place of Odysseus that she should be killed, and though her reasons seem noble, her death is hollow and merely furthers the Greek cause. What Polyxena wins is "a brief and merely symbolic freedom at the moment of her death" (Macleod (1983) 154; cf. Steidle (1966) 140) because "the price of staying alive [as Segal believes Hecuba demonstrates] is brutalization" (Segal (1990) 306). Polyxena's death may have been exalted in the Latin poets; it was not by Euripides.

The Greeks remain becalmed (900-01, 1019-1020), and Hecuba thereby has an unspecified period of time in which to enact her revenge. Once the revenge is
completed, and she receives confirmation of its justice from Agamemnon (in the agon, retroactively, 1109-1251) and from Polymestor (1253 δικηγ), then do the winds begin to blow. This at least suggests the whole natural order is siding with Hecuba, providing her with just enough time for her to exact the revenge (rightly Heath (1987) 66-67). What is wrong with the Polyxena-story is made right in the Polymestor-story. Windlessness has determined both the geographical setting and the timing of the Hecuba, and clearly suggests the power and necessity of justified revenge, which contrasts with the uselessness of the wrong-minded appeasement sacrifice.

This consequently calls into question the original identification of Polyxena as a counterpart to Iphigeneia. Iphigeneia’s death was truly that of an innocent, under the protection of the huntress Artemis. Polyxena’s death was a self-serving escape, differing as much from Euripides’ other voluntary sacrifices as Hecuba’s revenge does from the vendetta-based killings dealt with in other tragedies. The unavenged corpse of another innocent, Polydorus, is the wrong that must be made right before the winds can blow, and again it is Hecuba’s revenge on Polymestor which brings this about. Erasmus, in choosing plays to translate into Latin, decided eventually on the two that dealt with either end of the Trojan War, the Iphigeneia in Aulis and the Hecuba. These two deal with two tragic heroines, both noble, but they are not both victims: Hecuba decides to remain passive no longer, and to decide her own fate, rather than be allocated one. As Kovacs himself suggests (though towards a different end) "Windlessness is never without significance in Greek myth, and its significance here can be inferred from its results" (1987, 105).

This universal approval of Hecuba’s revenge informs the interpretation of the
predicted metamorphosis of Hecuba into a dog (1265). That this is intended as a sign of confirmation of the worth of Hecuba’s action is argued elsewhere.\textsuperscript{10} As a corollary, I would like to briefly examine a relevant Euripidean fragment that has not received satisfactory attention, fr. 968 (from Plutarch 	extit{Isis and Osiris} 379D): the Greeks are right in saying sacred is τὸν κύνα τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος, ὡς Ἐὐριπίδης,

\begin{quote}
'Εκάτης ἀγαλμα φωσφόρου κύων ἐσι,
\end{quote}

the dog to Ἀρτέμις, for as Euripides says “You shall become a dog, a delight to bright Hecate”.

The first detail is the positive identification of Artemis with Hecate, a development from their mutual association with the moon (hence φωσφόρου”).\textsuperscript{9} It also seems to connect someone becoming a dog - a nonstandard event, and therefore Hecuba is not an unreasonable initial assumption - with the goddess who was involved with the event at the beginning of the Trojan War. By Hellenistic times, (Lycophron 	extit{Alexandria} 1174-77) Hecuba is clearly (inasmuch as anything in Lycophron is clear) made Hecate’s servant (Cassandra speaks):

\begin{quote}
\textit{Ὦ μήτερ, ὦ δυσμήτερ, οὔδε σὸν κλέος}
\textit{ἀπυστον ἔσται, Περσέως δὲ παρθένος}
\textit{Βριμὼ Τρίμορφος θήσεται α’ ἐπωπίδαι}
\textit{κλαγγαία ταρμύσσουσαν ἐννύχους βροτοὺς}
\end{quote}

\footnotesize{O mother, wretched mother, nor will your fame be unknown, but Perseus’ maiden, triform Brimo}

\footnotesize{[= Hecate] will make you her attendant, frightening mortals at night with your baying.}

It appears quite possible then that the link that the Greeks established between either end of the war was with Artemis/Hecate (note that 1175 παρθένος was a traditional epithet of Artemis). The life lost in Iphigeneia was not avenged with the death of Agamemnon, as Clytemnestra desired, but is present somewhere along the causal chain preceding Hecuba’s revenge.

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IV - The Dependence of the Hecuba on the text of the Oresteia.

You shall read that we are commanded to forgive our enemies;
but you never read that we are commanded to forgive our friends.

Cosimo de' Medici, Duke of Florence, d. 1574

a. Prolegomena

This essay is not called "The Hecuba and the Oresteia." I have tried to introduce two points of provocation into the title, which betray both my interests and my intentions, which are ultimately to provide a clear account of the meaning of the Hecuba, by constant reference to the dominant theme of the play, that of righteous revenge. The first of these points is the word "dependence". By this I mean to suggest that the one play can only be understood in terms of the trilogy. This is not, I believe, as controversial a statement as it may first appear. The Oresteia, first presented in 458 B.C., immediately was recognized as the masterpiece that it is. Legends (if that is indeed what they are) developed about the shocking impact of presenting the Furies visibly on stage, and it presented what has become a paradigm for Classical moral thought, especially for matters such as theodicy, and moral ambiguity in matters such as (to keep our examples few) revenge. It attained this paradigmatic status not only because of its early appearance and clarity of thought, but also because it represented a marked shift from the established Archaic ethos (which is presupposed in the Homeric poems) that had so pervaded previous Greek thought. Dodds (1971) uses the labels "shame-culture" and "guilt-culture" to delineate the distinction in ways of thinking, and though these labels are necessarily incomplete representations of the transition,
they do serve the purpose of identifying the difference. It has also been suggested by Newijger (1961) Meridor (1975) and Tarkow (1984) that the *Oresteia* may have been reproduced soon after 426 B.C., when it is known that reproductions of Aeschylean drama were staged at the City Dionysia. That the *Oresteia* was among those restaged is purely hypothetical, but nevertheless a reasonable suggestion.

What this means is that the *Oresteia* is a clear, familiar, memorable, significant, and (possibly) recently reviewed exposition of certain moral opinions that if they were not actually a product of Aeschylus, were certainly championed by him at an early stage in their development. My contention is that this is essential background knowledge to an understanding of the play. It is knowledge that would have been held by Euripides, certainly, but also by the vast majority of his audience. Even without the supposed reproduction, if individuals were not familiar with the exact words of the Aeschylean trilogy, they would nevertheless be familiar with its form and content. All this is of course a fair preamble to almost any Euripidean play. What makes the *Hecuba* different from, say, the *Electra*, is that in the *Hecuba* (and I believe the same claim can be made for the *Orestes*), Euripides is consciously toying with the Aeschylean precursor, challenging assumptions that had developed from it, and subtly altering the conclusions that lead therefrom. There is, in short, an intertextual relationship between the *Hecuba* and the *Oresteia*, which it is necessary to recognize in order to understand the Euripidean play. It is not that Euripides is trying to be funny. In presenting a view of revenge contrary to the one popularly held in the late fifth century, he must undermine its most certain source in the medium in which he is writing.

This leads to the second intended provocative aspect of the title, reference to
the "text" of the Oresteia. Much of recent literary criticism (such as the work of Kristeva, Bakhtin, and Barthes) has focused on notions of text and textuality which seek to establish an independent value to a work, which leads ultimately to Barthes' bold declaration of "the death of the author." One of the problems of this approach (and one of the reasons why several critics have abandoned intertextuality as a medium of constructive discourse) is that everything becomes a text, not just works of literature, and art, but any structure (including social patterns) which can in any sense be "read." The consequence of such broad definitions of "text" is that interpretation rests entirely with the critic: whatever intertext he or she can find becomes a legitimate claim. Any notion of "text" is of course further obscured by the very nature of presentation of Greek drama. Any single production of a Shakespeare play can legitimately be called a text independent of what is published in the folio; and it makes sense to talk about Gielgud's Lear, or Olivier's. But when the Hecuba is composed for one single performance, to be directed and choreographed by the playwright, and any notion of a script for public consumption is possibly only an after-the-fact makeshift of actors' memories, there is (perhaps) a notion of secondariness in any but the first performance with Greek drama (cf. Taplin (1978) 172-81, 192-93). I have chosen to emphasize this aspect of method first, partly as a warning to myself, that I be wary of the pitfalls of this method (for such I consider them to be), and also to state that there is a point where the method is no longer of genuine interpretative value. There is an aspect of the law of diminishing returns which applies to intertextual analysis.

That is not to say, however, that no value is to be gained from such analysis. Goldhill (1986) 138-67 "Text and Tradition" does interpret parts of
Greek tragedy in terms of other necessary texts in a way that clearly illuminates the overall view. In an example that has already been discussed, Homer’s *Odyssey* tells the story of an Oresteia, in some form, nine times in the first twelve books. The purpose of this telling and retelling is to hold up Orestes’ revenge as an example to Telemachus, who is oppressed by the suitors (147-54). When Aeschylus presents the same story in terms that are morally ambiguous, the intertextual relationship is meaningful; that is, one must be familiar with the *Odyssey* and its repeated tellings of the story to understand what it is that Aeschylus is, consciously or not, doing. This critical activity is then fundamentally different from an examination of how, for example, the different tragedians adapt the story of Electra to differing dramatic ends. Riffaterre provides the following definition which if not taken in broad terms encapsulates what is being sought: "An intertext is one or more texts which the reader must know in order to understand a work of literature in terms of its overall significance (as opposed to the discrete meanings of its successive words, phrases, and sentences.)" (1990, 56). King (1985) suggests a transtextual relationship of this sort exists between Homer, his portrayal of Achilles in particular, and the *Hecuba*.

What I am proposing for the *Hecuba* is less ambitious even than Goldhill’s example. For I am suggesting that identifying the *Oresteia* as Euripides’ intertext is not a uniquely subjective achievement on my part, but rather is what Euripides would have thought, what his audience would have seen, and what has been identified by some later audiences, but has been lost in recent centuries, due perhaps in part to the morally ambiguous nature of revenge in vernacular tragedy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There will be some intertextualists who would object to the identification in this way of the *Oresteia* as an intertext.
There does exist a sense in which I am using the term naively, not as one intertext of many which will crystallise all interpretations of the *Hecuba*, but rather as one literary work/text which would have been known to all the original audience, but which has not been identified by modern critics to have a necessary interpretative role for the understanding of the *Hecuba*. If it is felt that the critical term is being misused, it is only to avoid confusion with related critical actions, such as source criticism.

This essay seeks to do more than just identify a source used by Euripides. Because the *Oresteia* so infiltrated the Athenian culture, Euripides could not just present an alternate scenario using the same characters (for example, another token-recognition scene between Orestes and Electra with a different outcome.) His attack on the values expressed in the *Oresteia* is a sustained use of verbal and visual allusion, reinterpretation, and toying with what is contained in the intertext. Chambers (1990) 143 explains it this way:

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certain texts have become recognised, that is 'canonised', and so come to stand for the hegemonic social forces, the system of power that gave them their status. In proposing itself as 'not-X' (where 'X' is the intertextual referent), a text claims literary status, but simultaneously distinguishes itself as a negativity with respect to the canon, and in so doing, distances itself from the socially marked discourses that, nevertheless, necessarily traverse it. Thus we know that [Gustave Flaubert's] *Madame Bovary* is not a clichéd text but a text 'about' cliché because it sets itself off intertextually from, *inter alia*, the stereotypes of a Romantic literature of sentiment.
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In a similar way, the *Hecuba* proclaims its literary status. It is perhaps slightly ironical that having done so, it, too, rapidly enters the canon: certainly it heads
the Byzantine triad, but much closer to its original production, it was fit subject for parody, as is shown for example in the opening (?) lines of Aristophanes' fragmentary Gerytades:

Καὶ τὶς νεκρῶν κευθμῶνα καὶ σκότου πύλας
ἐτήλη κατελθέειν;

And who has dared to descend to the hiding-place of the dead, and to the gates of darkness?

which echoes Polydorus' opening words (Hec 1-2):

'Ἡκὼ νεκρῶν κευθμῶνα καὶ σκότου πύλας
λιπών

I come from the hiding place of the dead, and from the gates of darkness...

There are of course numerous other such imitations in the comic fragments. The Hecuba deliberately sets itself off from the Oresteia in order to subvert it. This is not a random perversity of Euripides. Rather, Euripides is out to establish a different understanding of revenge, one that runs closer to the Homeric precursor than to the more prevalent Aeschylean reinterpretation. Granted that this is his aim, it is reasonable to permit the playwright the opportunity to use any devices that would be available to him to further this aim. Euripides does not need to have thought in terms of intertextuality to have established an intertextual relationship between his play and any other text. Some of the links between the texts in question are explicit, others are latent. All of them, however, inform the relationship herein developed.
b. Exempla

I now propose to examine fifteen examples which I believe indicate a definite dependence of the Hecuba on the text of the Oresteia in the terms that I have already defined. Not all of these are of equal weight, and individually some may be suspect. I believe that the references to the Oresteia are sufficiently numerous and sufficiently clear to shift the burden of proof to any who deny the relationship exists. These references are grouped as "Perspectives of Revenge", "Echoes and Parallels" and "Conscious Subversions." The first category establishes Euripides' programme; the second shows how the poet ensures the necessity of the conclusions; the third suggests that in addition to constructing a case for himself, Euripides is destroying his predecessor. My purpose in listing these is not to illuminate the Oresteia, but only to inform a reading of the Hecuba. This unidirectionality is not a necessary aspect of this investigation, but something imposed for clarity's sake.

"Perspectives on Revenge"

Fundamentally, the Hecuba is about revenge. Revenge is unconditionally presented as a just, appropriate and expected response in certain circumstances, which seeks to restore a balance to a society that has become unbalanced because of the original transgression. Once this fact is established, the Hecuba is understood as a profound and significant drama. As I have suggested, Euripides establishes this in many ways, one of which is to set itself apart from the Oresteia of Aeschylus.
1. In the *Eumenides* 94-139 the ghost of the murdered Clytemnestra indignantly enjoins the sleeping Erinyes to avenge her murder. This is very much in her character (as we know it from the previous plays in the trilogy) whether she is in fact morally right or morally wrong about the justice of her own action (murdering Agamemnon) and the injustice of her son’s (matricide). It is a pattern that certainly entered into the English revenge tragedy, cf. the ghost of Hamlet’s father in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, and the ghost of Andrea in Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy*. All three ghosts appear at or near the beginning of their respective plays, as does the ghost of the murdered innocent Polydorus. He however, does not call out for revenge. In fact, the request is deliberately avoided so that it can function as a surprise when Hecuba decides on revenge at 749-50 (so Testall (1954) and see note.) Though Polydorus has been murdered, revenge is not a personal desire of the wronged party.

2. There is a danger once the issue of theodicy is introduced, both because theodicy is a notoriously debated problem in Aeschylus (and it is a problem) and also because any attempts to substantiate an explanation are, it seems of necessity, long and complicated, and beyond the scope of a paper such as this. Nevertheless, there seems to be reason for setting the *Hecuba* apart from other revenge tragedies (such as the *Oresteia*) so it is at least worth identifying some of the key elements I see pertaining to the issue in the *Oresteia*. Earlier this century, it was a common accusation that the Aeschylean universe is ‘overdetermined’ but I believe this notion has, rightly, been abandoned (or at least augmented.)

The *Agamemnon* represents a tragic action because the protagonist, Agamemnon, has free will but any choice made cannot affect the result: he must either kill his daughter, or else (and this option consists of no choice at all) desert
and the army will kill her. There is a deliberate ambiguity here, one which Clytemnestra at least cannot fathom. The Choephoroi represents a tragic action because the protagonist, Orestes, has free will but any choice made cannot affect the result: he must avenge his father (and as a result be pursued by the Erinyes for matricide) or else leave his father unavenged (which is to shirk the legal responsibilities as next-of-kin whose duty it was to ensure revenge is taken) to be pursued by his Erinyes. Whatever Orestes chooses, the result is the same. It seems suffering for one's own action (Cho 313 δράσαυτα παθεῖν) is preferable for suffering for one's inaction: Orestes' "act of vengeance, required by δίκη, demanded by the gods, is itself a crime which requires in its turn to be punished ... for all his purity of spirit, he becomes as guilty as his father" (Garvie Cho xxxiii-xxxiv).

This is the pattern that Aeschylus establishes. Morally ambiguous revenge is demanded by a portion of the supernatural array (an array which includes heavenly gods, chthonic gods, and embodiments of abstract concepts), opposed by other supernaturals, is expected but not permitted, and guilt that needs to be expiated inevitably results. Aeschylus uses this background for his aetiology of the Areopagus, where, to summarise Macleod (1982) 129, the bloodthirsty, sleeping, ineffectual Erinyes are replaced by the just, awake, effective Areopagus. He later says, "In the Eumenides, then, legal justice, a pacific and effective solution of quarrels and wrongs, ends and supersedes the lex talionis" (135).

This is not the world of the Hecuba. In fact, it seems almost an inevitable conclusion, considering just these details, that Euripides has deliberately set his play at odds against those of Aeschylus. Rather than presenting an ambiguous vendetta-situation where one crime leads to blood-guiltiness, which must be
expiated by another crime which leads to blood-guiltiness, etc., the model of revenge is much more straightforward in Euripides: a crime, murder of a kinsman and guest, has occurred. The murderer is nowhere presented with any of the redeeming features we get of, say, Jason or Pentheus. He is wrong, and must be punished. Following the mechanism of fifth-century judicial process for murder, the deceased’s next-of-kin, Hecuba, is responsible for avenging him.

What is unexpected in the play, then, is not that Hecuba chooses to avenge her son, but that she has the opportunity to do so. As an elderly prisoner-of-war, it would not surprise an audience member if she failed in this duty. In the Trojan Women, the figure of Hecuba is of one who constantly is suffering. Here, Hecuba begins the play suffering, and endures much, but she is not broken. She can act and react, with a passion that Agamemnon, Polymestor and (I would suspect) the audience would not expect. Most important is that the rightness of her action is presented unequivocally. Just like the lex talionis in the Ancient Near East,\(^5\) Hecuba’s revenge is an approved action sanctioned by the entire community in which she functions. There is an agon after she has blinded Polymestor (1109-1251), and its function is merely to provide a retroactive (human) confirmation of what has already been established on a supernatural level. Formally, it is Polymestor who is on trial for the murder of Polydorus, not Hecuba and her women for the blinding, and murder of his sons. Basically, in no respect is Hecuba’s revenge considered criminal, morally incorrect, unjust, or reprehensible. There is no suggestion that she is now blood-guilty.

Mossman (1990) 228-29 summarizes her understanding of the relationship between the Hecuba and the Oresteia in terms of their respective presentations of revenge in this way:
In the *Oresteia* he [Aeschylus] presents his audience with a mythical situation which illustrates the morally unsatisfactory, and worse impractical primitive vendetta method of punishing violence and substitutes for it legal and public retribution. The flaws in the old system are revealed most clearly by the "most difficult case" of Orestes ... Hecuba has every excuse to take revenge, and her certainty is less unjustified than many in the *Oresteia*; in a sense Euripides gives us not a "most difficult case" but an "easiest case" and then makes us think about its problematic aspects.

To this extent I believe Mossman is right. She however thinks that Euripides refrains from any evaluation of Hecuba, and merely presents each case (fairly, one assumes) as a dialectic left for the viewer to resolve. This however leaves the notion of revenge ambiguous; the 'old system' remains flawed. I think that Euripides' reappraisal of revenge in the *Hecuba* is different from the presentation that is found in the other 'revenge plays', which share the modern associations with that label.

3. In making the previous point, one detail - in fact, a single line of the play - has been omitted from the discussion. The line in question is the famous one which predicts Hecuba's metamorphosis (1265):

Πο. κύων γενήσῃ πύρα ἔχουσα δέρματα.
Po. You will become a hound with burning eyes.

Most of the body of scholarship\(^9\) in interpreting this line make two assumptions that should not go unchallenged; first, that the predicted metamorphosis implies a moral evaluation of the revenge-action; second, that such an evaluation condemns Hecuba. This can be called the 'debasement-theory'. The metamorphosis then is
the final step in Hecuba’s moral debasement, where she physically becomes an animal, no better than her victim Polymestor. The debasement scholars certainly form the majority, but they are not right.

To begin with the first assumption, there is no immediate reason for believing that a metamorphosis would constitute an attempt at evaluation. The closest parallel for such an event that occurs in tragedy occurs in the exodos of the *Bacchae*, where it is predicted that Cadmus and his wife Harmonia will become serpents. If this is punishment (and such cannot be ruled out due to the fragmentary nature of the text) it at least can confidently be said that it is not punishment for anything done by the characters in the play. Even conceding this point, though, and permitting Hecuba’s metamorphosis to be a means of evaluating her action, it is perhaps even more surprising at the conclusion which has been reached. Everything preceding the predicted metamorphosis favours Hecuba: her sympathetic portrayal, every character involved recognising the justice (δίκη) of her action, the structure and result of the agon, the unredeemable picture of Polymestor. Yet the debasement-scholars think all this is reversed in a single line.

I would suggest, following Gregory (1991), that the metamorphosis into a hound is not meant to evoke the animals who eat raw flesh in the *Iliad*; several references in Greek literature do exist where dogs are base animals, but there are essentially as many positive ones (cf. Lilja 1976).10 Certainly, the Romans understood the story of Hecuba in the terms of this debasement-theory, but that has no bearing on how Euripides understood the metamorphosis. In fact it is known that the Latin tradition of the myth was pervasive, which, when coupled to the Christian understanding of revenge and related concepts, can clearly explain much later European (mis-)interpretation of the *Hecuba*. There is much to indicate :
that the dog in question is not just a dog. It has burning eyes, which suggests a supernatural association beyond the fact that it is in fact a metamorphosed human. As Polymestor presents the sequence of events, the dog must ascend a mast of a ship before jumping into the sea, which again is nonstandard canine behaviour.

There is, however, the *Oresteia*, in which the Erinyes are described in the *Choephoroi* and *Eumenides*. Clytemnestra tells her son (*Cho 924*):

\[
\text{Κλ.} \quad \delta\varphiα, \varphiύλαξα\, \mu\piτρός \, \epsilonγκότους \, \kυ\nuας. \\
\text{Cl.} \quad \text{Take care, beware your mother's wrathful hounds}
\]

In the following play, the chorus of Erinyes imagines itself as hunting dogs (*Eum 131-32*, and cf. 246-47):

\[
\text{Κλ.} \quad \delta\nu\nu\nu\nu \, \delta\iota\kappa\iota\kappa\iota\iota\iota\iota\iota\iota\iota \, \theta\iota\iota\iota\iota, \, \k\l\a\a\g\a\l\a\n\a\i\a\n\a\i\a\i\a\i\a\a\i\a
And some god above, either Apollo, or Pan, or Zeus, hearing the shrill wailing cry of birds, these cohabitants [in the sky], sends on the transgressor the late-avenging Erinyes: and in this way does Zeus of the Guest send the sons of Atreus against Alexander, for the sake of a woman with many husbands.

He is later to become the victim of the Erinyes (e.g. Ag 1119), however; in the *Hecuba* the identification does not waver so.

Further, Hecuba is not alone in the play in being called a κόνως. Polymestor, in his messenger-speech/agon-defence addresses Hecuba’s silent attendants (who were the ones who physically performed the revenge action) as 1173 τὰς μμυρόνους κόνας, "murderous bitches". He calls them this in rage, but its significance is certain nevertheless. The women, as the instruments of the revenge, are also associated with the spirits of revenge, the Erinyes.

4. Probably the strongest argument against an identification of Hecuba with the Erinyes is the fact that they are never explicitly mentioned in the play. This would probably be no problem at all to an intertextualist, but still I feel something should be done to further establish the connection. In the literature that survives before Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*, the function of the Erinyes is basically certain: whether as an embodiment of a curse of a wronged parent, or as the spirits that punish perjurers and oath-breakers, or as those which correct violations in nature for example, Achilles’ talking horses in *II* 19.418:

*Μόλις ἀρα φωνήσαντος Ἐρινύης ἐσχέθην αὐδὴν.*

When he [Xanthus] had spoken in this way, the Erinyes held his voice.
- with all of these functions, "the Erinyes act to avenge or correct an infringement of the normal and proper order of things (δίκη)" (Sommerstein *Eum* page 7).

The concept of δίκη does figure in the *Hecuba*, specifically associated with Hecuba’s revenge-action, by Agamemnon (852-53), the Chorus (1023), Hecuba (1052-53), Polymestor (1252-53), and (implicitly) by her silent attendants. So although the Erinyes are not mentioned by name in the *Hecuba*, their presence and function can be felt. What is mentioned are alastores, the avenging spirits:

```
αἰαὶ, κατάρχομαι νόμον
βακχεῖον, εἰς ἀλάστορος
ἀρτιμαθῆς κακῶν
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*Hec* 685-87

Al all I commence a bacchic strain, having just [or "having recently", to follow the Scholiast] learned of the evils from an avenging spirit.

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ἐξοικάσεν τ’ οἴκων γάμος, οὐ γάμος ἄλλ᾽
ἀλάστορός τις οἶδ᾽ ὧν
```

*Hec* 948-49

and he [Paris] expelled me from my house by his marriage, which is not a marriage, but a woe from some avenging spirit.

These references clearly are similar to the functions of the Erinyes (and alastores, e.g. Ag 1501, 1508) in the *Oresteia*. Burkert (1985) 181 defines an alastor as "a personified power of revenge for spilled blood" which clearly supports Eden (1988) 560, who suggests that elsewhere Euripides specifically identifies the alastores as being identical with the Erinyes.

If these references seem too sparse to be convincing, it must be remembered that the supernatural has a particularly small role in the play anyway. There are no specific deities at work behind (or above) the scenes in the *Hecuba*. The deity
who is perhaps most involved in the play is not mentioned, but invoked implicitly - Zeus Xenios: in the Polyxena-story, Odysseus refuses to acknowledge Hecuba's former kindness to him (239-57) and fails to recognize ξενία "hospitality";\(^\text{15}\) in the Polymestor-story, Polymestor by killing his ward Polydorus clearly offends against this aspect of Zeus. Zeus Xenios (it would seem, in the usual interpretations of this play) does not respond; but the Erinyes are the avengers of Zeus Xenios (Lloyd-Jones Ag 742). In this light, there is a uniting force for all the supernatural elements in the play, if the alastores are identified with the Erinyes of Aeschylus. Nor is a clearer identification necessary: if popular religion made the association automatically, there would be no further need for Euripides to justify it. That they did make such an association is suggested in a most extreme form by Mikalson (1991) 14: "The Erinyes were hypothetical, imaginary spirits, created in part from bits and pieces in the literary/mythological tradition and in good part from Aeschylus' imagination." Such a sentiment need be true only in part for the immediate point to be made.

"Echoes and Parallels"

Classicists typically cite parallels in commentaries because valid parallels, even when they were not in the mind of the author when he wrote, do nevertheless inform a reading of the present microtext (be it a word, phrase, line, or speech.) Obviously, many verbal echoes will exist between any play about revenge and the Oresteia, due simply to its size and subject matter. What I will list here, then, will be only four examples, which have already been identified by other critics.\(^\text{16}\) The existence of these parallels lends further support to the contention that Euripides had the Oresteia in mind (and perhaps open in front of him) as he composed the Hecuba.
5. First, though, will be one example of the straightforward verbal parallels that abound between the texts:

\[ \text{Ex. } \delta ψη \; ναι \; αὐτίκ’ \; ὄντα \; δωμάτων \; πάρος τυφλὸν \; τυφλῷ \; στείχοντα \; παραφόρῳ \; ποδὶ } \]  
\[ \text{Hec 1049-50} \]

Hec. You will see him straightway in front of the house, blind. In blindness do his reeling steps advance.

\[ \text{ἐπὶ \; δὲ \; τῷ \; τεθυμένῳ} \]  
\[ \text{τὸ \; μέλος, \; παρακοπᾶ,} \]  
\[ \text{παραφόρᾳ \; φρενοδαλῆς,} \]  
\[ \text{ὅμοιος \; ἐξ \; Ἐρινῶν} \]  
\[ \text{δέσμοις \; φρενῶν, \; ἀφόρ-} \]  
\[ \text{μικτος, \; αὐνὰ \; βροτοῖς. } \]  
\[ \text{Eum 328-33 = 341-46} \]

Over our victim sing this song, raving, reeling, ruining the mind, a hymn from the Erinyes, binding the mind, without the lyre, withering to mortals.

The words \text{παράφορος} and \text{παραφόρα} (the translation "reeling" obscures the physical action of staggering, and the mental state of being deranged, both of which are implied in the word) occur in verse only at these two places, and the clinical yet evocative sound of the word (it has medical uses, too) is thought by many (e.g. Collard) to echo between the passages. In the \text{Hecuba}, Hecuba uses the word as she triumphantly re-enters the stage with Polymestor blinded and his children murdered. Her revenge has been successful and just, and her victim is reeling. In the \text{Eumenides} passage, the Erinyes, the spirits of rightful revenge, describe in some detail the effect they have on their victim, which includes his mind reeling. So of the usages in verse, the word is applied to victims of rightful revenge, and, perhaps consciously on Euripides’ part, Hecuba is identified in the same terms as an avenging spirit. Working from this then it is clear that such parallels do inform a reading of the \text{Hecuba}. 

81
6. Po. (ἐνδοθεν) ὣμοι, τυφλοῦμαι φέγγος ὁμμάτων τάλας.
Χο. ήκούσατ' ἀνδρός Ἀρηκός οἰμωγήν, φίλαι;
Πο. ὣμοι μάλ' αὖθις, τέκνα, δυστήνου σφαγής.
Χο. φίλαι, πέπρακται καίν' ἐσω δόμων κακά. Hec 1035-38
  Po. (within) Oh no, I am blinded of my eyes’ light. Wretch!
  Ch. Did you hear the "oh no"s of the Thracian, friends?
  Po. Oh no again, children! Horrible bloodshed -
  Ch. Friends, unimagined evils have been done in the house.

Ἀγ. ὣμοι πέπλημμαι καιρίαν πληγήν ἐσω.
Χο. σύνα τις πληγήν ἀυτεὶ καιρίος οὕτασμένος;
Ἀγ. ὣμοι μάλ' αὖθις δευτέραν πεπλημμένος.
Χο. τοῦργον εἰργᾶσθαι δοκεὶ μοι βασιλέως οἰμώγμασιν' Ag 1343-46
  Ἀγ. Oh no, I am struck deep with a fatal blow.
  Ch. Silence: who calls out, wounded by a fatal blow?
  Ἀγ. Oh no again. I am struck a second time.
  Ch. It seems to me from the king’s "oh no"s that the deed is done.

Meridor has indicated that Hec 1035-38 and Ag 1343-46, the offstage cries of Polymestor and Φρομένην as they are attacked, and the Chorus’ response to them, "may seem close enough to suggest indebtedness" (1975, 5). In each case the victim shouts ὣμοι, [descriptive verb]... then, ὄμοι μάλ’ αὖθις.... In each case the Chorus responds with a question, then states that the deed has been done. Each Chorus refers to the cry from inside (οἰμωγήν, οἰμώγμασιν). There is also in the Hecuba an apparent reversal of events from the later description 1170-72, where it is stated that the children are killed before Polymestor is blinded. The reversal can be explained in several ways (see commentary), but whatever the reason, it is clearly done to heighten similarity with the Aeschylean passage. Finally, each passage comes immediately after a short act-dividing lyric that
functions as a stasimon.

Testall (1954) and Arnott (1982) demonstrate rightly that it is likely that the audience would not expect Polymestor to emerge from the tent: the convention as it survives is for killing people offstage, and the expected interpretation of 1037 ψαργής is "slaughter", though cf. El 1228 "wound". The emergence of Polymestor then also functions as a subversion of the earlier passage. In this context, it is appropriate to cite Cyclops 663-65:

Κυ. ὡμι, κατηγρακόμεθ' ὑφθαλμοθ σέλας.
Χο. καλός γ' ὁ παιάν μέλπε μοι τόνδ' αὖ, Κύκλωψ.
Κυ. ὡμι μάλι', ὡς ὑψρίσαμεθ', ὡς ὠλώλαμεν.

Cy.  Oh no, the light of my eyes is incinerated.
Ch.  What an excellent song! Sing this to me, Cyclops!
Cy.  Oh no again. How I am maltreated! How I am destroyed!

which clearly shares features with each of these passages, but not nearly to the same extent. Here, too, in one of the Cyclops' many echoes of the Hecuba, the victim emerges after the event.

7. There seems to be a visual allusion as Polymestor emerges from the tent, which he does on all fours, according to the Scholiast, and clearly suggested by Hec 1056-59 (sic):

Πο. ὡμι έγώ, πῇ βώ, πῇ στώ, πῇ κέλσω,
   τετράποδος βάσαν θηρός ὑρεστέρου
   τιθέμενος ἐπὶ χείρα καὶ ἱχνος; ...

Πο.  Oh no, where should I go? Where stand? Where find a haven, placing my steps
   like a four-footed mountain beast, on hand and foot?

83
This is a unique event in extant tragedy, with the exception of the Pythia, *Eum* 34ff. and esp. 36:

\[ \text{τρέχω δὲ χερσίν, οὐ ποδώκεια σκελῶν.} \]

I run with my hands, not with swift legs.

Hadley doubts that Polymestor enters on all fours in the first place. However, it does however provide a clear visual link with the *Oresteia*. Such visual links must of necessity often be quite speculative, simply because of the manner in which the information has survived. This one, however, seems fairly definite.

8. There are three parallels that Mossman draws which specifically suggest that Euripides is consciously using the *Oresteia*. Of the parodos (98-153) she writes "The *parodos* of the *Agamemnon* seems to have been its prototype" (1990, 88). Where Euripides has Talthybius stress the humanity of the sacrificial victim Polyxena, the *Agamemnon* constantly stresses that Iphigeneia is an animal (1990, 173), which serves as a deliberate counter-emphasis. Thirdly, of the strictly verbal-parallel type, 560 ὡς ἀγάλματος is, she suggests (1990, 282 n.15), derived from Ag 242 (and cf. 416, 1329).

9. Segal (1990a) 129 n.61 writes: "Agamemnon’s ‘May it somehow be well’ in 902 may also be an echo of the choral refrain, ‘Lament, lament, but may the good win out’ in the *Agamemnon* (121, 137, 159)."

10. Though the only word actually repeated in *Hec* 946-51 and Ag 1455-61 is οἰκὺς ("woe", *Hec* 949, Ag 1461) the similarity of the sentiment expressed about Helen and the misery that she caused prompted Fraenkel to say, "The end of the ephymnium (not only the last word) seems to have been in Euripides’ mind when
he made the Chorus of Trojan captives sing of Helen’s marriage" (ad loc). Garnet (1990) 214-15 labels this imitation and collusion.

11. γένος γάρ οὕτε πόντος οὕτε γῆ τρέφει
toiόνδ’ ὥ δ’ ἀεὶ ξυντυχῶν ἑπισταται. Hec 1181-82

For such a race [as women] is bred in neither land nor sea: who ever has come across them understands this.

πολλά μὲν γὰ τρέφει
deynà deimáton òx₃,  
póntai t’ ágkalai kmoθdálων  
ánθalov b'potois πλη-
θουσ’ ... Cho 585-89

Many are the dire, dreadful terrors bred on earth, and the arms of the sea teem with monsters hostile to mortals.

Similarly, Garnet (1990) 214-15 considers the similarities between these passages deliberate and noticeable, suggesting Euripides uses allusion and collusion (cf. also Segal (1990a) 119). In Aeschylus, the expression is sung by the chorus of slave women. In Euripides, the polar expression (the use of which suggesting both land and sea and everything else) is said of women.

"Conscious Subversions"

By now it should be clear that a deliberate, intertextual relationship does exist between the Hecuba and the Oresteia. At certain points Euripides all but shows his hand. The function of these is essentially to underscore the game he has played, and to form a deliberate bridge to the beginning of the Agamemnon. Since he can not present his play as a historical ancestor to the Oresteia, he sets it immediately prior in dramatic time. Here some might see Euripides as being too clever; perhaps that is what makes it characteristically Euripidean.
12. The absence of a wind for sailing (901 πλοῖον) is an important symbol in Euripides' play, which serves to set Hecuba's revenge in bleak contrast with the inappropriateness and futility of the sacrifice of Polyxena. The arguments for her sacrifice, provided by Odysseus and reported by the Chorus, are specious and other-worldly, and Hecuba rightly suggests oxen as being a more appropriate propitiation for the dead (260-61), and Polyxena's acquiescence merely furthers the Greek cause.

It becomes apparent that the sacrifice of Polyxena should not have occurred. Polyxena was sacrificed to get the winds blowing, but this failed. Once Hecuba's revenge has been completed, and she receives confirmation of its justice, then finally the winds begin to blow (1289-90), indicating the whole natural order is on her side. What is wrong in the Polyxena-story is made right in the Polymestor-story. Windlessness permits an exploration of the power of justified revenge, which contrasts with the uselessness of wrong-minded appeasement sacrifice.

13. Beginning at Hec 1259, 36 lines before the end of the play, Polymestor begins to relate some oracles concerning Hecuba, Agamemnon, and Cassandra. This is a sudden transition immediately following the agon which retroactively confirmed the justice of Hecuba's revenge. The significance of the prophecy of Hecuba's metamorphosis has already been detailed. The veracity of the prophecy (which needs to be proved both within the drama - to Hecuba - and extra-dramatically - to the audience) is provided by several devices. One of these devices is to tell Agamemnon the plot of the Agamemnon, before (in dramatic time) the Agamemnon takes place. The amount of detail provided is surely significant. Polymestor tells who, what, where, when, and how:
Po. καὶ σήν γ' ἀνάγκη παιὰνα Κασσάνδραν θανεῖν.
Εκ. ἀπέπτυσεν' αὐτῷ ταύτα σοι δίδωμι' ἔχειν.
Πο. κτενὲς ἔνν ἡ τοῦδ' ἀλοχος, αἰκουρὸς πυκάρι.
Εκ. μήπω μανεῖ Τυνδαρίς τοσόνδε παις.
Πο. καυτόν γε τοῦτον, πέλεκυν ἔξαρασ' ἔνω.
Αγ. οὗτος σύ, μαίνη καὶ κακῶν ἑρᾶς τυχεῖν;
Πο. κτείν', ὡς ἐν Ἀργεὶ φόνια λοιφρά σ' ἀμμένει.    

Po. And your child Cassandra must die.
Hec. Spit - I give this back for you to have for yourself.
Po. This man's bed-mate will kill her, a bitter housekeeper.
Hec. Long may it be before Tyndaris' child is that mad.
Po. And she'll kill this one himself, raising high an axe.
Ag. You there, are you mad? Are you asking for trouble? (makes threatening gesture)
Po. Kill away! For a bloodstained bath awaits you in Argos.

Even granting that attempts to avoid prophecies inevitably lead to their fulfilment, there is nevertheless something quite funny about Agamemnon being given this information just before his return home. The audience nevertheless will associate it with what it knows from Aeschylus, and be led to think that if this is true (which, objectively, it is) so must the metamorphosis also be true. While it is nice to think of this subverting the occurrence of the whole Oresteia, Euripides' retroactive cancellation of the trilogy he is countering, the audience is nevertheless shown that Agamemnon has neither heard nor understood the prophecy, as his simplistic couplet that end the trimeters of the play shows:

εἴ δ' ἐς πάτραν πλεύσαμεν, εἴ δὲ τάν δόμοις
ἔχοντ' ἕδομεν τῶνδ' ἀφειμένοι πόνων.  Hec 1291-92

May we sail to our fatherland safely, and may we see our house safe, having been set free from these labours.
If nothing else, Euripides has kept Agamemnon's character consistent.

14. Associated with this point is the selection on Euripides part of the murder weapon being an axe (1279 πέλεκυν.) Debate continues to rage on what weapon Aeschylus envisages Clytemnestra as wielding, but neither conclusion affects interpretation here. The Stesichorean Oresteia has Clytemnestra dream:

\[
\text{τῷ δὲ δράκων ἐδόκησε μολέν κάρα βεβρωτωμένος ἀκρόν,}
\text{ἐκ δὲ ἀρα τοῦ βασιλεὺς Πλασθενίδας ἠφάνη.} \quad \text{PMG 219}
\]

A serpent seemed to come to her, its head completely stained with gore, and from it appeared a king of Pleisthenes' race.

The standard interpretation of this is that the snake represents Agamemnon, and that a head wound would be caused by an axe. It is this version that Aeschylus either followed or abandoned. If Euripides is here following Aeschylus it is a further confirmation of the details of the Agamemnon. And if - as is much more likely - Euripides is ignoring Aeschylus' weapon-choice, and is returning to the Stesichorean model, it can be seen as another undercutting of Aeschylus. The fact that this point can be argued both ways does not devalue it. Aeschylus, in making the original change, made a clear (at the time) and decisive step. Any decision on Euripides' part must have interpretative value.

15. Another method Euripides uses to confirm the validity of the oracle is by reference to an oracle of Dionysus (1267), which seems to have been based in fact, cf. Herodotus 7.111.2, Rhesus 970-73, and Diggle (1987). This information indicates the oracle was known to the Athenian dramatic audiences, and its ability rivalled Delphi. Euripides did not need to cite a particular verifiable authority. In the related situations where he has contemptible characters introducing prophetic
information at the end of a play, one (Eurystheus Hec 1028) cites χρησμὸς παλαιὸς Λοξίου "an ancient oracle of Loxias", and the other (Polyphemus Cyc 696) merely παλαιὸς χρησμὸς "the ancient oracle." The added details provided in Hec 1267

ὀ Θηρήξι μάντις εἶπε Διόνυσος τάδε

The Thracian prophet Dionysus spoke this.

suggest Euripides here has ulterior motives. Dionysus and Apollo are the preeminent mantic gods. To my knowledge, they are the only divinities actually called μάντις - Dionysus here, and Apollo at Ag 1202, 1275, Cho 559, Eum 169. If as the Herodotus passage would suggest these chief oracular shrines were in competition, then it would certainly be furthering Euripides' aims to side against the Aeschylean prophetic god Apollo.

c. Epilegomena

What has been collated here are only some of the parallels between the texts, but nevertheless a sufficient number that it should be clear that Euripides is not unconscious of the similarities he establishes with Aeschylus. He sets forth a view in the Hecuba of revenge as morally correct behaviour in certain circumstances. This is a different view from what he establishes in other so-called "revenge-plays" (e.g. Medea, Hippolytus, and Electra) where revenge is morally ambiguous. This is not problematical. The traditional undergraduate exercise comparing the different tragedian's presentations of the Electra-legend shows, amongst other things, the prevalence of the Oresteia in fifth-century literature and
thought. But these do not share the types of similarities that have been examined here.

In the Hecuba, as in the Orestes, Euripides plays a different game. The Oresteia becomes more than a model to be like or unlike. It rather is an exemplar that must be challenged. The necessity comes from what can be seen as an unsatisfactory resolution in the Oresteia: the decision of the newly-formed Areopagus is not obviously linked with the system that had preceded it, apart from the participation of the (also altered) Erinyes/Semnai/Eumenides. Euripides presents his revenge, that of the lex talionis, which limits the amount of retribution that can be exacted and is a community expression rather than an individual’s vindictive reprisal. He does this while assaulting its rival, the Aeschylean system of vendetta.
The awareness that conscious reference to other plays does exist in Euripides generally and in the Hecuba in particular demands that the question of the relationship between the Hecuba and the Cyclops be examined. Some relationship does clearly exist; its precise nature, however, is not certain. Sutton (1980, 114-120) believes the plays to be contemporary, part of the same tetralogy, dating to 424 B.C. This opinion has also been expressed by Arrowsmith (1958) 6-7 and Lattimore (1959). Ussher (1978, 193-204) tentatively suggests 412 for the Cyclops, and marshals much of the relevant information, from which he draws some weird inferences, discussed below. Seaford (1982 and 1984, 48-51) rebuts Sutton, point for point, concluding with a date post-411, probably 408. Garner (1990, 154-7) follows this, affirming 408. Biehl (1983), who does not list Seaford (1982) in his bibliography and therefore might be unaware of its contents, briefly suggests a date "neque ante Hecubam (424) neque post infortunatam Atheniensium in Siciliam expeditionem (415-413)" (Biehl (1983) 2).

Much of the confusion comes from a lack of absolute reference points. One set of criteria that is generally acknowledged to be valid is the frequency of resolution in iambic trimeter. This technique has many successes under its belt, especially in the case of Euripides: all the plays with known dates show a proportionally increasing number of resolutions. It has had a worthwhile value concerning the Hecuba itself. For example, the external factors which were
traditionally used to date the *Hecuba* have been shown by Ley (1987) to be invalid. The *terminus ante quem* of Aristophanic parody in the *Clouds* 1165-70 of lines 172-5 (a problematic passage at any rate) may be a reference that was only introduced to the play in its later rewrite several years after the original production of 423 B.C. (at least post-420 B.C.) The *terminus post quem* of the re-intituation of the festival of Delos in 426 B.C. described in Thucydides 3.104 (the choruses of which are alluded to in lines 455-65) is similarly invalid, since Thucydides specifically states that the choruses were never abandoned. Nevertheless, metrical criteria support a date between 425 and 422,¹ the same years having been suggested² for several other Euripidean plays, both fragmentary and extant, presented here with decreasing likelihood:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Andromache</em></td>
<td>425</td>
<td>Stevens 15-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Supplices</em></td>
<td>424-20, prob.423</td>
<td>Collard 8-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Erechtheus</em></td>
<td>423-422 not with <em>Supplices</em></td>
<td>Collard <em>Sup</em> 12-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Electra</em></td>
<td>422-416</td>
<td>Zuntz (1955) 64-71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Phaethon</em></td>
<td>&quot;within a few years of 420&quot;³</td>
<td>Diggle 47-49, 177-78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Cresphontes</em></td>
<td>pre-424</td>
<td>Austin <em>Cres</em> 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Theseus</em></td>
<td>pre-422</td>
<td>Aristoph <em>Wasps</em> 433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Peleus</em></td>
<td>pre-423(?)⁴</td>
<td>Aristoph <em>Clouds</em> 1154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Cyclops</em></td>
<td>424, with <em>Hecuba</em></td>
<td>Sutton (1980) 114-120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

None of the information is conclusive, however, and all that remains are many maybes. It is a reasonable operating assumption that *Hecuba* was produced 424, the year after *Andromache*, before *Supplices*, with *Erechtheus* in 422. Thematic links can be found with the *Hecuba* which might suggest a common tetralogy, but none are sufficiently strong to warrant building any further speculation: *Peleus* presents an old man making the best out of a situation full of sufferings, for
example. While it might be desirable for a critic to place Electra early to cluster together the plays with women taking some sort of revenge (Medea 431, Hippolytus 428, Hecuba 424, Electra (?). 422) the effect is not significantly staggering and reveals little.

The case for dating the Cyclops in the same year as the Hecuba runs along the following lines. The formal similarities between the two plays are significant: both feature an exodos where a barbarian without any sympathy is blinded; the barbarian in each case vainly gropes around the stage, and then utters prophecies of doom for the cause of the blinding; both plays have a speech exalting ἔνων; both plays take place in a remote setting, etc. There are also significant verbal parallels. As a single example of the genre of satyr play, and one which is (as the fragmentary examples of other satyr plays attests) particularly para-tragic conclusions from trimeter resolution must be considered invalid.

The most detailed application of metrical criteria is Seaford (1982) 161-68, arguing for a date of c. 412-08 B.C. Yet as he himself later describes, the use of (for example) trimeter resolution in this play is not a subconscious feature of the poet’s skill (i.e. something that would develop subconsciously over time, which it must be for metrical tests to have any validity), but rather the play shows Euripides to be very aware of the difference in diction between Odysseus ("It is worth noting that no certain cases of deviation from tragic practice occur in Odysseus’ trimeters. Nor do any occur in the agon (285-346)." Seaford (1984) 46) and the other characters, whose speech "though clearly distinct in its licence from tragedy, is much closer to it than Old Comedy" (48). This at least places reasonable doubt on the late date.
Further, the desire of the playwright to parody his own work is understandable. If the Cyclops predated the Hecuba (e.g. Kaibel (1895) 84-85, Tanner (1915) 181ff) then it can only be assumed that the performance of the Hecuba would evoke laughter, as the audience recognizes the earlier (comic) situation.\(^7\) The effect is, however, reversed if the Cyclops is performed after the Hecuba, be it on the same day (i.e. in the same tetralogy) or years later: Hecuba successfully evokes the standard tragic emotions, and the Cyclops capitalises on its dramatic precedent and by reproducing a similar situation, where movements become more exaggerated and actor's actions are made more extreme. The audience is then laughing at that by which it had earlier been moved. This yields a conceivable and perhaps even desirable motivation for the playwright. This is at least part of the tenor of the Arrowsmith and Sutton line, and it is dispensed with too casually by Seaford.

It is true, though, that Euripides could equally have made the allusions to the Hecuba over a greater time frame. When faced with writing a satyr play with an outcome similar to one he had dealt with years before in the Hecuba, he made the echo deliberate and clear. I believe this to be a more plausible scenario than Seaford's suggestion that an author "will draw, consciously or unconsciously, ... on a pattern of utterance and stock metrical phrases" (1984, 48-49). Milman Parry has suggested (1930, 140-41) that Cyc 222 ἐὰν τίν’ ὑπαντεῖν τὸνδ’ ὑπὼν... (Polyphemus' initial comment on seeing the Greeks) is a recognition of Aristophanes' parody in Thes 1105 ἐὰν τίν’ ὑπαντεῖν τὸνδ’ ὑπὼν... (411 B.C.) of Perseus' first words in Andromeda (fr. 125) ἐὰν τίν’ ὑπαντεῖν τὸνδ’ ὑπὼν... (412 B.C.) Seaford concurs, "Here then, is a deliberate echo" (1984, 49), establishing the date to be post-411 B.C.
There are two reasons typically presented for believing the *Cyclops* to be post-409 B.C., both deriving from allusions to the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles. The first concerns literary allusion: "We have seen that *Philoctetes* also borrows from *Odyssey* 9, both in its general setting and with specific verbal echoes; and we have seen that Euripides, in the *Orestes*, uses the *Philoctetes*" (Garnet (1990) 155). This being so, Euripides when writing a play specifically about the events of *Odyssey* 9, alluded to his rival’s (less direct) use of the same source. More specifically, the second point concerns the similarity of the settings between the two plays, and in particular the cave with two mouths. In the antepenultimate line of the *Cyclops*, Polymestor mentions that he will go to the mountaintop 707 δι’ ἀμφιτρήτους τῆςδε. Dale (1956, 106) notes the obliqueness of the phrase (sc. *πέτρας*) and concludes that it is most likely an allusion to the only other known use of the adjective, meaning "pierced through", *Phil* 19 δι’ ἀμφιτρήτους αὐλίου. Even alone, this point would be convincing (was it known to Arrowsmith?), Sophocles’ other distinctive word for the cave, which would perhaps be clearer in this situation, δίστομος "with two mouths", is not used by Euripides. Coughanowr (1984) provides a reason for this, suggesting that Euripides understands the word’s etymology as δίς - τομος "twice-cutting, double edged", rather than δι - στομος "with two mouths". As such, regardless of Sophocles’ usage at *Phil* 16, it is unlikely that Euripides would have used it in the present circumstance.

There is another possible allusion to the *Philoctetes*, that would only really become apparent in performance. The importance of the bow as a property and a symbol in the *Philoctetes* has been much discussed. Euripides might be playing on the importance of the "magic" bow in the stage action of Sophocles’ play, by repeated visual echoes involving the magic wineskin which renews itself
(following Kassel (1973) 102-03, and see Seaford on Cyc 147.) *Ab initio*, Odysseus and Neoptolemus desire the bow of Philoctetes. The object is then passed around as follows:

776 bow is given from Philoctetes to Neoptolemus;
974 both Philoctetes and Odysseus want to be given the bow;
1080 the bow is taken off with Odysseus and Neoptolemus;
1221 Neoptolemus re-enters to return the bow to Philoctetes;
1292 the bow is given back to Philoctetes, interrupted by Odysseus.

The focus of the entire play is on who has the bow at any given time. Odysseus’ interaction with Philoctetes changes considerably once he has control of the bow. The same obsession with a physical object is found in the *Cyclops* concerning the wineskin. Particular stage directions are uncertain, of course, but the following exchanges seem likely or certain:

151 wineskin given to Silenus by Odysseus;
175-202 wineskin passed around by the chorus (?);
383-437 in cave wineskin given to Polyphemus, then Silenus;\(^{11}\)
543-566 Polyphemus tries to take it off Silenus;
567 wineskin given back by Silenus to Odysseus.

The amount of stage business involved is of course indeterminable. However, that it would be possible to evoke the handing over of the bow in the *Philoctetes* is certain, and such an allusion would add to the slapstick effect of the play as a whole. In each case, the significant object is finally returned by the person to whom it had been originally been given.
Even without this third point, it is clearly more likely that the *Cyclops* was written c.408 B.C. than pre-409 B.C. Of the early dates, following Sutton and Arrowsmith with c.424 B.C. is certainly desirable. However, the similarities with setting, literary source, word usage, and staging technique to Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, as well as the allusion to the *Andromeda* and its Aristophanic parody, strongly suggest that Euripides wrote the *Cyclops* in 408 B.C. He was not at this time only concerned with recent dramatic works, however. Faced with the similarity of theme and outcome, the playwright also drew heavily on a play he had written 16 years before, the *Hecuba*. 
a. Structure

Oliver Taplin’s 1977 study *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* aimed to provide classicists with ‘a grammar of dramatic technique’ (Fraenkel’s phrase, commenting on *Agamemnon* 613f.) that had long been required. Other studies along these lines followed, and some had preceded, but Taplin remains the clearest and fullest expositor of the new approach. Post-Taplin criticism focuses, rightly, on the staging of the plays, and defines the dramaturgy in terms of action. Emphasis has fallen on entrances and exits as being key to an understanding of dramatic structure. Traditional criticism on the other hand has centred around Aristotle’s *Poetics*, especially chapter 12 (1452b 14-27) which considers structural units. Aristotle’s definitions of ‘episode’ (ἐπεισόδιον) and ‘stasimon’ (στάσιμον) have long been recognized as unsatisfactory: because the definitions are mutually dependent and circular, they become meaningless.1

Since there exists an *a priori* desire that any use of a technical term be done consistently and meaningfully, it becomes necessary to abandon Aristotle’s definitions. For the purposes of this commentary, then, an ‘episode’ is "a part of the play inaugurated by the entry of a new character" (after Taplin (1977) 56,2 but note the qualifier, below) and a ‘stasimon’ is "a lyric song sung by the chorus dividing episodes" (making no distinction with a hyporcheme (cf. Dale (1950) esp. 20), thereby including non-responsive act-dividing songs3 which are not followed
by the entry of a new character. The ‘exodos’ follows the last stasimon. The ‘parodos’ is "the chorus’ first utterance taken as a whole." What precedes this is the ‘prologue’. These definitions have been given to leave Aristotle’s account comprehensible and consistent. Some exceptions to all these definitions will exist: drama is a resilient and adaptable medium not bound by formal theories, and the exceptions are well-known. Nevertheless, these definitions do provide a meaningful vocabulary for talking about the play’s structure, and representing the units into which it naturally falls. Episodes are normally in iambic trimeters, but often have extended lyric passages, such as lyric dialogues (e.g. Hecuba and Polyxena in Hecuba 154-215), ‘kommoi’ (lyric lamentation sung alternately between a character and chorus, e.g. Hecuba 684-722), and monodies (e.g. Polymestor in Hecuba 1056-1106), immediately before or after any of which an entry may take place which does not signify the beginning of a new episode.

Of course, not all these elements will be in every play. The Hecuba is set out clearly in this respect, and uses the conventions to balance the structure, and, as shall be later demonstrated, the meaning of the play. The following page contains a chart illustrating the formal structure of the Hecuba. At first glance it may appear complex, but it does demonstrate how unified the play is, as well as how tightly bound the characters and events in fact are to the structure. The earlier essays in this introduction have presented some models for examining the play’s structure based upon simpler criteria, such as the tripartite divisions in terms of storyline novelty. While no model is completely wrong, any model necessarily reflects particular details over others; any single attempt at such a definition is necessarily incomplete. The same is true of the present schema, though this more detailed analysis does more closely represent the reality of the situation.
**The Structure of the Hecuba**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lines</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Entry</th>
<th>Episode</th>
<th>Stasimon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-99</td>
<td>Prologue</td>
<td>entry of Polydorus</td>
<td>iambics 1-58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>entry of Hecuba &amp; serv</td>
<td>monody 59-99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-153</td>
<td>Parodos</td>
<td>entry of Chorus</td>
<td>Hecuba onstage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>154-443</td>
<td>Episode A'</td>
<td>entry of Polyxena</td>
<td>lyric dialogue 155-215</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>entry of Odysseus</td>
<td>iambics 216-443</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>444-483</td>
<td>Stasimon A'</td>
<td>Hecuba onstage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>484-628</td>
<td>Episode B'</td>
<td>entry of Talthybius</td>
<td>iambics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>629-657</td>
<td>Stasimon B'</td>
<td>stage empty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>658-904</td>
<td>Episode I'</td>
<td>entry of serving-woman</td>
<td>iambics 658-683</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>entry of Hecuba</td>
<td>kommos 684-722</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>entry of Agamemnon</td>
<td>iambics 723-904</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>905-952</td>
<td>Stasimon I'</td>
<td>Hecuba onstage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>953-1022</td>
<td>Episode Δ'</td>
<td>entry of Polymestor &amp; sons</td>
<td>iambics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1023-1034</td>
<td>Stasimon Δ'</td>
<td>stage empty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1035-1295</td>
<td>Exodos</td>
<td>entry of Hecuba</td>
<td>iambics 1034-1055</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>entry of Polymestor</td>
<td>monody 1056-1106</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>entry of Agamemnon</td>
<td>iambics 1107-1295</td>
<td>stage empty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'Entry' : which character enters, signifying a new segment of action.

'Episode' : division between lyric and iambic passages within an episode.

'Stasimon' : what characters, if any, are onstage during a stasimon.
Particularly important to the pattern is the acceptance of lines 953-1022 as an episode in its own right, and not as part of the exodos. The scene represents a significant advance of the action (Hecuba demonstrating that Polymestor is a lying murderous thief while convincing him she poses no threat to his safety) and considering it as an independent unit explains all the entries of principal characters (as permitted by the above definitions) and provides a balance with earlier scenes in terms of stage-picture during stasima. This sort of analysis of a play is standard, and has been a common phenomenon of any discussion of Greek tragedy since Aristotle’s *Poetics*. But in addition to providing a convenient shorthand for the discussion of the play, it also points to some other factors concerning the play’s production⁵ that are less well discussed. Generally, the play does not present any serious difficulties in this respect, and in general the issues are discussed in the commentary as they arise. Entrances and exits are straightforward enough that only one door is required (into the tent of Agamemnon), with one parodos leading to the Greek army and Achilles’ tomb, and the other leading to the the sea (and the rest of Thrace), which provides a visual division, placing Hecuba and her women halfway between Greek culture and wild nature. Hecuba often has shared a table with Polymestor (793) but claims kinship with Agamemnon (834).

It is conventionally assumed that fifth-century dramatic productions used a maximum of three actors in the division of speaking parts. This Rule of Three Actors is not absolute, and its very existence was questioned in 1908 by K. Rees’ *The So-Called Rule of Three Actors in the Classical Greek Drama*, who,

sought to expose the rule as fallacious and to show that the tragic poets did not concern themselves with the exigencies of part-distri-
bution either in the course of their composition or subsequently, since (so he held) they had as many actors at their disposal as they desired.

Cadel (1941) 141

Generally though, it is felt to have had some bearing on the composition of both tragedies and comedies. If this is true, it can lead to some surprising insights in dramatic characterisation that occur at a meta-dramatic level; that the Greeks were conscious of theatre functioning at the meta-dramatic level is clear from regular Aristophanic allusions (e.g. Ecclesizusae), and, I would argue, the role of the Oresteia in the Hecuba and Orestes of Euripides. With characterisation, for example, it is surely significant in Sophocles' Trachiniae that the same actor is required to play Deianeira and Heracles.6 Sophocles has written a play where the characters simply can not meet, and this informs an interpretation of the relationship. In the Ajax, the lead actor must play both Teucer and the eponymous hero. Even in the meta-dramatic level, Teucer's identity is dependent upon the death of his brother. In the same author's Electra, the same actor (the second actor) plays all the members of Electra's family that appear on stage: Orestes, Clytemnestra, and Chrysothemis. The unity given to the family by the one actor's voice could be quite evocative. In the same play the roles taken by the other actor, the paedagogue and Aegisthus, represent extremes of status, the former excessively low and the latter exceptionally high.7 The implications of this are discussed further below. In Euripides' Troades the second actor (in all likelihood) takes the roles of the women with whom Hecuba interacts, and the female goddess Athena, while the third actor takes the male characters and Poseidon.

The effects in comedy are even more extreme. Aristophanes requires his third actor in the Acharnians to:
a. Enter as Amphitheus at line 45, who runs off at 55.
b. Enter as the Ambassador at line 65, who exits at 110.
c. Return as Amphitheus at 129, shout "Here I am", and leave.
d. Enter as Theorus at 134, who cannot leave until 167.
e. Return as Amphitheus at 176, who says he has just been running.

All this business could of course be avoided if more than three speaking actors are used, but the comic potential of one character having as few as five lines to change out of one sumptuous costume and mask into another is too great to miss. Rapid costume changes and rapid movement from one parodos to a central door (for example) appear to be de rigueur for tragic performance, and attentive audience members would be aware of these effects the same way modern audiences are cognizant of lighting effects being used to create mood. Of course, this does not constitute a formal proof that only three actors were used. It does however suggest that playwrights were conscious of the expectation in an audience that all the roles would be divided between three performers, and could create effects based upon that assumption.

If the division of roles between the three actors can be shown to have interpretative value, does this have bearing on the Hecuba? Allocation of the first actor is obvious: he would take Hecuba. Different opinions have been offered as to the division of the more minor roles: Pickard-Cambridge suggests the "most probable" (1953, 144) role allocation to the second actor would be Polyxena, Talthybius and Agamemnon, the third actor taking Polydorus, Odysseus, servant, and Polymestor. This has been followed by Bremer (1971) and is a factor in his argument on interpolated passages in lines 59-215. The argument centres around the actor Theodorus (fl. c.370 B.C., the lateness itself arguing against any
worthwhile interpretation of role-division) who had an "idée fixe of coming on stage first" (Bremer (1971) 245) according to Aristotle Politics 1336b28. Also mooted is that "we know that he never took male roles" (ibid.) What is far from clear is whether he actually ever played the Hecuba. Though Pickard-Cambridge asserts that he distinguished himself in the role (1953, 101; cited with approval by Bremer (1971) 245 n.1) the evidence is paltry. Two passages in Plutarch purporting to describe the same event which are adduced as proof clearly are not: it is a dreadful thing that Alexander, tyrant of Pherae, έξαυτός ἀποσφάττων πολίτας δισθήμεται τοῖς Ἐκάβης καὶ Πολυξένης πάθεσιν ἐπιδιακρύμων (Moralia 334A "if, when he is slaughtering so many citizens, should be seen to weep over the sufferings of Hecuba and Polyxena"); he also weeps τραγῳδόν δὲ ποτε θεώμενος Εὐριπίδου Τρωάδας ύποκρινόμενον ... ἐπὶ τοῖς Ἐκάβης καὶ Ἀνδρομάχης κακοίς (Vita Pelop. 29.5 "once when he saw a tragedian enact the Troades of Euripides ... over the misfortunes of Hecuba and Andromache.") In Aelian Varia Historia 14.40 the same story is told of Theodorus playing Merope, which would suggest that he was acting in Euripides’ Cresphontes. Clearly there is some confusion, and no certainty that Theodorus ever performed the Hecuba.

Collard (1991, 37) raises another valid objection to Pickard-Cambridge’s allocation, and that is the probability that the same (second) actor took the parts of Polyxena and Polymestor, since each role requires singing lyric. To this he adds the roles of Talthybius and the servant, noting that "other distributions of the lesser roles can be devised." I suggest that the third actor took the roles of the Greeks: Odysseus (216-437), Talthybius (484-628), and Agamemnon (726-904, 1109-1292) all speaking, in the meta-dramatic level, with a common voice. This means that
the second actor would take Polyxena (177-437), the servant (658-904) and Polymestor (953-1286). This means that the second actor 'sits out' the second episode, which is probably why he is traditionally allocated Talthybius, which I believe to be less desirable. However, the servant does need to be onstage throughout the second episode (since the character is sent off probably at 618, and there is no obvious point of entry other than the beginning of the episode, 484, to comfort Hecuba after Polyxena has been taken away, as Talthybius approaches9 and there is no reason to suggest that the second actor does not stand in as the silent character. The mask and costume worn would be more detailed and of higher quality than those of the mutae personae and the audience would have legitimate expectations that the character would speak. This could be another aspect of Euripides’ game with Aeschylus: Aristophanes in Frogs 911-13 has Euripides deride Aeschylus his use of silent characters which "probably was a highly effective and quite legitimate dramatic device (as, for example, in Pirandello’s As You Desire Me)" (Stanford (1958) ad loc.) Whether the character in the second episode is played by an extra or the second actor, the effect is the same: there is the appearance that the character might speak, and this is the illusion being sought.

The only other role that is not allocated is that of Polydorus, which can be taken by either the second or third actor. While I prefer it to go to the second actor (so that the third takes only the roles of the Greeks) Demosthenes De Corona 267 suggests that Aeschines played Polydorus when third actor, though it has already been suggested (note 5) that in this context the word reflects acting ability, and fourth-century role allocations cannot be taken as definitive.

Why so much discussion has been allocated to role-division is that it has
further implications for understanding the characters and the plot. These implications come from the notion of status. Status is a complex term that has been adapted from Keith Johnstone's work on (contemporary) improvisational theatre. It is however a tool useful for analysing scripted drama, and especially Greek tragedy which is so removed from naturalistic theatre that the modern audience has significantly different expectations from a performance of the work. Status analysis, though being completely concerned with performance, is not affected by performance styles, in which lies at least part of its value. Nor is it something the author need be consciously aware of. It represents a realism that will be found in any good playwright, and will inform an interpretation of how a particular scene should be performed.

b. The Theory of Status

Status expresses a relationship between any two characters, one of which will always be "higher" than the other, who is then designated as "lower status." The difference need not be great: good friends, for instance, will often have almost equal status. Nevertheless, the status is always present and always changing - "status transactions continue all the time" (Johnstone 1981, 33) and "every movement, every inflection of the voice implies a status" (1981, 37). Status competitions can occur, where two characters compete for high status. Oedipus Tyrannus 300-462 provides a clear example, with such a competition between Oedipus and Teiresias. Both are of (relatively) high status at the start. Oedipus is the great king, Teiresias the seer who knows all things (300 ὅ πάντα νομίζων.) Almost every speech spoken in this scene affects the characters' status, with the speaker either raising himself, or lowering the other. Status works on "the 'see-saw' principle: 'I go up and you go down'" (1981, 37). The goal of
each speaker is to win the competition, by having the highest status. Oedipus, however, because he represents the suppliants (who are manifestly low status), needs to ask for information from Teiresias (e.g. 326-7.) This lowers Oedipus, and Teiresias is raised because he possesses something (prophetic knowledge) that is not shared by the group as a whole. Getting the last word in an exchange is also a high-status action. This leads to an overall victory for Teiresias, and this shows that Oedipus’ power is not absolute. This has significant implications for the coming exchange with Creon.

Oedipus is obligated always to play\textsuperscript{12} high status. Johnstone generalises about tragedy from the Oedipus example. While his conclusions about high status are not true for all tragedy, they are for \textit{Oedipus Tyrannus}:

Tragedy also works on the see-saw principle: its subject is the ousting of the high-status animal from the pack ... If he [Oedipus] crumbled into low-status posture and voice the audience wouldn’t get the necessary catharsis. The effect wouldn’t be tragic, but pathetic. Even criminals about to be executed were supposed to make a ‘good end’, i.e. to play high status. ... When a high-status person is wiped out, everyone feels pleasure as they experience the feeling of moving up a step. This is why tragedy has always been concerned with kings and princes, and why we have a special high-status style for playing tragedy. I’ve seen a misguided Faustus writhing on the floor at the end of the play, which is bad for the verse, and pretty ineffective. Terrible things can happen to the high-status animal, he can poke his eyes out with his wife’s brooch, but he must never look as if he could accept a position lower in the pecking order. He has to be \textit{ejected} from it.

Johnstone (1981) 40
Even once ejected, it is important that the high-status character walk out confidently, and not accept a lower station. Euripides clearly subverts this notion in the _Orestes_ where the eponymous hero begins the play curled up and asleep from his fits of madness, i.e. very low status. The fits endured by the title characters in Euripides’ _Hercules Furens_, Sophocles’ _Philoctetes_ and Shakespeare’s _Julius Caesar_ serve a similar function. Each is an exceptionally high-status figure who must maintain that position consciously. The fits, since they are beyond the characters’ control, expose them as being merely human, i.e. capable of playing low status. That is the secret that tragic heroes must keep to themselves.

Of course, in addition to the words themselves, status is conveyed by voice, body position (including expression in theatre not involving masks) and physical action. I will give examples of each of these from outside of theatre, any of which have dramatic applications. With voice, a loud booming voice is not necessary for high status; in some characters it would be ridiculous. Even the most soft-spoken detective revealing ‘whodunnit’ will take the focus in a situation due to high status. Pausing before responding increases status, since it makes the audience wait, uncomfortably. A brief "er" before an answer, though will lower status, since it implies a false start. Occupying a lot of physical space confers high status. Giants have higher status than dwarves, who are perceived as comical; "posture experts (like Mathias Alexander) teach high-status postures as 'correct'" (1981, 42). This also extends to clothing: a bride’s train will be longer than a bridesmaid’s, and kings and superheroes wear long flowing capes. People playing Richard III need to accommodate for the low status implied in the character’s posture: both Olivier and Sher made the hump a point of extreme
debilitation (described in Sher, 1985). It is from the low status given by his posture that Richard finds his motivation to rule over others.

One of the most obvious status associations concerning expression involves eye contact. Holding someone’s gaze is a challenge, and the first to look away drops in status; similarly, "if you ignore someone, your status rises, if you feel impelled to look back then it falls" (1981, 42). Anything that is commonly held to be genetically inferior also implies low status: buck teeth, cross eyes, baldness, a goofy laugh, etc. These of course have less application to the masked theatre of Greece than, say, body position, but need not be completely removed from consideration. High status movements, such as strong bold strides and broad sweeping gestures, would be found in the *Hecuba* in the characters of Odysseus and Agamemnon. With notions of status incorporated into an analysis of drama, 'mirror scenes' (such as are described by Taplin (1978) 122-39, 189-90) can be understood in terms of clear, visual associations. Taplin (1971) and (1978) 131-34 note the parallel scenes in the *Philoctetes* where Neoptolemus supports (physically) Philoctetes. Though motivations are different in each case, the status relationship (Philoctetes yielding status to Neoptolemus) is exactly the same. There are similar echoes between Hecuba’s confrontations with Odysseus (216-443) and with Agamemnon (723-904).

Before examining the *Hecuba* in detail, another status relationship should be recognized. In addition to the high-status challenge, status reversals are possible. In one form, this is a common everyday activity. When friends interact, their status is typically very close but it is always fluctuating, sometimes one is higher than the other, and vice versa. Regular status exchange is a part of any 'normal' relationship, and dramatists who represent such exchanges create more ‘lifelike’
scenes. A familiar example of status reversal can be seen in the first episode of the Frogs of Aristophanes (the Aeacus Scene, 460-674). The use of a comic example should present the matter in an extreme form, and thus give a paradigm for a subsequent examination. The scene is clear and familiar, and so is a straightforward vehicle to demonstrate status analysis.

The principle characters involved are Dionysus, the god who is visiting the underworld, and his slave Xanthias. Aristophanes has subverted the traditional deity-servant relationship by presenting both characters as being low-status. Master-servant relationships form a cornerstone for so much of comedy. Johnstone makes the following crucial observation (1981, 63):

The relationship is not necessarily one in which the servant plays low and the master plays high. Literature is full of scenes in which the servant refuses to obey the master, or even beats him and chases him out of the house. The whole point of the master-servant scene is that both partners should keep see-sawing.

So it becomes clear that characters have a natural status (it makes sense for Johnstone to say (loc. cit.) "a master-servant scene is one in which both parties act as if all the space belonged to the master") which can vary, higher or lower, according to the dynamics of the scene.

Dionysus has made up for his timidity/cowardliness/low-status by disguising himself as Heracles, the only individual who had successfully travelled to the Underworld and returned. The disguise gives Dionysus high status (he introduced himself as "the Mighty Heracles" 464 Ηρακλῆς ὁ καρπερός). In this scene the physical transfer of the disguise (which probably amounts to no more than a club
and tattered lionskin) represents the reversal of status between the two characters. As the scene begins, Dionysus plays high status and knocks on the door. Out comes the doorkeeper Aeacus, grandfather of Achilles and Ajax, renowned for his virtue and integrity, who begins a tirade against 'Heracles' (465-78). This constitutes a status challenge, which he wins, in part because Dionysus cannot get a word in edgeways. The following exchange between Dionysus and Xanthias demonstrates that both are low status. Dionysus then suggests (in fear) that Xanthias play high status, and take the lionskin and club (494-97) which Xanthias accepts.

A low-status maid enters (503) and reinforces Xanthias' high-status position by fawning, idolising, and promising him food, drink, and dancing girls. Dionysus realises that there are benefits to being high-status, and takes back the vestments that give him the status. In doing so, he has to challenge Xanthias' (natural) status, which contrasts with the status he is playing at the moment (530-31):

\[\text{τὸ δὲ προσδοκήσας ἁ’ οὐκ ἀνόητον καὶ κενὸν}\
\[\text{ὡς δούλος ὦν καὶ θνητὸς Ἀλκμήνης ἐσεί;}\

Surely you don’t expect, thoughtless and in vain, that you, a slave and mortal, could be Alkmene’s son?

The line is funny because the speaker, a god (which has automatic high-status associations undermined in the play), refers to a demigod by a (human) matronymic. The expected behaviour of course is to elevate the disguised identity by referring to Heracles as Zeus’ son. Xanthias relinquishes the lionskin, Dionysus sings a song declaring his high status (541-48), and two hostesses enter (549) who begin another status challenge, assaulting Dionysus for the past wrongs of Heracles. There is a sense in which it is really only the costume which is the
object of the abuse. What is important though, for the comic situation, is that the pretence to high status by the (naturally high-status) god is always challenged and he always loses, whereas the pretence of the (naturally low-status) servant is rewarded with royal honours. The costume functions purely as a visual cue for this interchange.

Xanthias is back to playing high status when Aeacus returns and threatens to bind him (605). This initiates a status challenge (607) between Aeacus and Xanthias, which transfers to a status challenge between Dionysus and Xanthias. Where throughout the episode their status levels had fluctuated, as they are being flogged to determine which is more godlike (i.e. high status) in pain tolerance, now they compete for higher status through stoic resolution (642-66). Even though the two are competing for high status, each successive blow serves to lower status levels. This does not mean that they cease to be striving for the highest levels possible. Finally, the challenge is diffused, by relegation to a higher authority, Hades, who is credited with even higher status. This example has very clear-cut distinctions, such as are not found in tragedy. Nevertheless, the value of status analysis remains clear.

**c. Status in the Hecuba.**

When Hecuba first walks onstage,\(^\text{15}\) she is an old and weak woman, being supported by servants, moving slowly. She recognizes that she is a fellow slave with these women (60 τὴν ὁμόδουλον) and she is confused by her recent dream. She is very low status, which is in marked contrast with her former (high-status) prosperity, as both queen and mother. As such she presents quite a startling contrast with what is expected of her in her meta-dramatic role of tragic heroine.
Mossman (1990) 62-63 too seems to have noticed the status relationship at work here:

This entrance, emphasising visually the frail old age she bewails verbally at 59 and 64ff, and which Polyxena pities at 202ff, is our first sight of Hecuba and thus extremely important. As well as having to bear bereavement, humiliation and slavery, Hecuba is old and feeble. The frailty dwelt on here contrasts strongly with the physical strength which Hecuba commands when attempting to hold Polyxena back at 398ff. and when she emerges from this same building and exults over Ὄρηκτε δυσμαχοτάτω at 1055.

The chorus enter (98) and promptly announce further sorrow: the Greeks have determined to sacrifice Polyxena. Hecuba’s next irregular song (154-76) reinforces her lowered status. Polyxena enters and comforts her mother and status levels remain still until Odysseus enters. The low status is imposed upon Hecuba, and it is not what she is used to, nor what she feels comfortable playing. There is something unnatural with Hecuba playing low status, which will (and must!) be corrected by the end of the play. Where in Oedipus Tyrannus the protagonist must be expelled from the community, Hecuba begins expelled, and must reintegrate herself, which she does through a community-based revenge.

Odysses hurries on (216 σπουδὴ podóς) and immediately relates the situation in an authoritarian and businesslike manner. He cites the authority of the group (220 Ἀχαιοῖς) which, combined with his social position and strong ‘heroic’ associations from Homer, ascribes his character with quite high status. Despite her wretched state, she nevertheless can challenge him to a status competition (implicit in part in the words 229 ἢγὼν μέγας): the winner will have the right to determine
Polyxena's fate. It is clear that she begins at a considerable disadvantage, since it is slave versus free. Odysseus' response to the challenge is carefree and aristocratic. He is supported by the Hellenic host, and he secures his high status with a grant of his precious time. However, he concedes Hecuba an equal footing for the moment in permitting her to ask whatever questions she likes. What she does is remind him that when their positions were reversed. When she prospered, he had been caught as a spy disguised as a beggar within the walls of Troy (the disguise itself loaded with status-based associations, both here and in its use in the *Odyssey*), she spared his life and he admitted that he was her slave (the reverse status positions are clearly not in doubt.

Odysseus diffuses the challenge to his status by removing the status-based element from the equation. His priority at the time was merely to save his life, and what he spoke were merely.

Od. πολλών λόγων εὐρήμαθ' ὡστε μὴ θανεῖν.

He does not recognize the reciprocity of the two situations, and the response he gives is not one that Hecuba can match at this point. Odysseus wins the status competition. This is true regardless of the order in which the lines are taken. I suspect that the traditional order (coming immediately before 249-50 and not immediately after; so Daitz and Collard (1986) 23 contra Diggle) is preferable: in each of the couplets 245-46 and 247-48 Hecuba establishes Odysseus' indebtedness to her (i.e. that she has a status-based claim upon him.) Line 249 is supposed to be climactic: there is something that she remembers him
saying that she believes will clinch her case, amounting to "Thanks, I owe you one." Odysseus' expected response (acknowledging lower status) is replaced with a high-status aloofness.

This is as close to equal status as the two characters become. Hecuba's following tirade (251-95) is desperate, attempting to assert status equal to Odysseus but failing. The chorus note that Odysseus is unyielding in this (296 στερρός; the word is used of Necessity in 1295). Odysseus' response (299-331) reconfirms his higher status. The entire exchange, then, what Collard calls "a suppliant-scene with elements of an agon", preserves the expected status-relationship involving a suppliancy. The traditional position of a suppliant (see Gould (1973) 75-77) leaves him or her defenceless, exposed and physically lower than the supplicated, whose high status is thereby magnified. The success of a supplication depends on the supplicated recognizing the status difference, and acting (morally) to remove it. Odysseus does not so act. Suppliancy is a means for (naturally) low status individuals to perform a reasonably high-status action. The Chorus' response confirms this, noting that slavery (332 τὸ δοῦλον) is always a base or evil thing (332 κακὸν).

Hecuba turns to address her daughter. She suggests (334-41) that Polyxena might make a successful appeal. Hecuba's willingness to yield the dramatic space to her daughter further lowers her status, as she is now dependent on Polyxena. When Hecuba first appeared, she seemed to be low status due to her physical position and the contrast with her (understood) past which had been related in part by Polydorus' ghost in the play's opening speech. Through these exchanges, Hecuba's status has continued to fall: she is suffering and is desperate; she has been fighting to save her daughter's life and has failed. For this reason the
opening four lines (342-45) of Polyxena’s long speech are particularly heartening. The delivery is confident, and makes Odysseus shy away, hiding his hand and face so as to avoid a proper suppliancy (see Gould (1973) 82-85). She is viewed as a threat to Odysseus’ status, which he is hesitant to lose.

This is a false lead. Polyxena is not challenging Odysseus’ status, but is acknowledging it. She for whose life Hecuba had fought is willing to give it away freely (369):

\[
\alpha\gamma\'\ o'd\nu\ '\ 'O\delta\upsilon\sigma\sigma\epsilon\upsilon, \ kai\ \delta\epsilon\rho\gamma\alpha\sigma\alpha\iota\ \mu'\ \alpha\gamma\omega\nu
\]

Lead me away, Odysseus, and so leading kill me.

Polyxena’s high-status action (voluntary self-sacrifice) is done without a clear point of reference (for ‘status’ of necessity implies interaction.) Her suicide (for such it amounts to) accomplishes the desire of the Greeks and frustrates Hecuba’s wish. Polyxena’s status does rise, but it is Hecuba’s which subsequently falls. She attempts to offer herself either instead of, or with, her daughter, but is refused (382-401). That Polyxena’s claim to status works against Hecuba and not the Greeks is shown by the turn the episode now takes. In lines 402-40 (accepting the deletion of 441-43) Polyxena tries to persuade Hecuba that this is the right course of action. Polyxena has formally replaced Odysseus as the advocate for the Greek side. The episode ends with Hecuba, who had entered at 59 in a position of low status, noticeably diminished. She lies prostrate on the stage, wrapped tight in her mantle (487 κεῖται συγκεκλημένη πέπλοις; this is clearly the source for Shakespeare’s “mobled queen” Hamlet II.i.496-98.) The position contrasts with Polyxena’s ‘noble’ exit. Though she, too, leaves with her head shrouded, her status is high enough that she can order Odysseus to do it for her (432).
The next episode (484-628) centres around two speeches. The first is by Talthybius, the herald of the Greeks, who relates the details of Polyxena’s death. Like the typical tragic messenger speech, the speaker is of fairly low status, but since Talthybius is actually involved in the action he is describing, his low status is defined in terms of Polyxena’s high status, which moves him to tears (518-20). Her brave death affects the Achaeans, and as a result Talthybius credits Hecuba as being responsible for what he perceived as nobility.

That this is not what Hecuba herself sees in the action is shown by the second long speech, Hecuba on the nature (598 φύσιν) of her daughter (585-628). The paradox that Hecuba must reconcile is a paradox because of the evident status differences between her and her daughter. Neither is a wicked person (596 ὁ ... κακός) and both are good (597 ὁ δ’ ἐσθλὸς). Yet Hecuba continues to suffer as a result of the actions of Polyxena. This is not the primary meaning of the speech, but it is certainly present. Low though Hecuba’s status is (much lower than the audience would have thought possible at the play’s opening; Euripides’ skill in slowly but indefatigably dropping her status now evident) she nevertheless does retain a vestige of authority. She has a servant who obeys her order (609) to prepare Polyxena for cremation. There are several small indications that she can still drop even lower in status, that soon speaking of her former pride (623 τοῦ πρὸς ἀερέντες) will be even more extreme, that it is not yet a literal truth that she has been reduced to nothing (622 ὅς ἦς τὸ μηδὲν ἡκομεν). Though the audience knows of Polydorus’ death, Hecuba must still learn of it.

The manner in which this information presented in the prologue is introduced into what is known by the participants of the drama is significant. The lyric kommos is initiated by the old servant woman, who is the lowest status
character in the entire episode, just as Hecuba was in the first episode, and as Polydorus will be in the exodos. The servant has further news that will so reduce Hecuba in status that it will be as if she has set a record in wretchedness. This impression is continued by Hecuba’s false-guesses (concerning, for example, Cassandra 676-77). She discovers her son is dead, which thereby means all her children, save Cassandra who is Agamemnon’s concubine, are dead; she has no hope for posterity. Her status is as low as it gets in the play when Agamemnon, in whose tent Hecuba and her women stay, appears (726). His initial words concern Hecuba’s failure to accomplish certain tasks, i.e. the preparation of Polyxena for cremation. This serves to ensure that the status relationships are as the audience expects them to be.

Now comes the transition. Hecuba was once high status, but has been reduced through the events immediately preceding and during this play to almost nothing. She will now begin consciously on her part to attempt to reclaim her former status level. The preparation for the transition is made in the longest extant series of asides in ancient drama (736-51). She wavers between becoming a suppliant and bearing her misery silently (737-38). Her previous attempt at supplication had failed (see above) and she (legitimately) fears the same here (741-42):

Ex. ἄλλ᾿ εἴ με δούλην πολεμίαν θ’ ἔγονέμονς γυνάτων ἀπώσατ’, ἄλγος ἐν προσθείμεθ’ ἄν.

Hec. But if he should push me from his knees, thinking me a slave and an enemy, I would bring more grief on myself.

She resolves to attempt the supplication, and in doing so introduce a concept that
has been suppressed (rightly Testall, 1954) in the play until this, the point of her status reversal (749-51):

\[\text{Ekh. \ οὐκ ἂν δυναμὴν τοῦδε τιμωρεῖν ἀντερ}
\text{τεκνοσὶ τοῖς ἑμοίσι. τι στρέφω τάδε;}
\text{τολμᾶν ἀνάγχη, καὶν τύχω καὶν μῆς τύχω.}
\]

Hec. Without this man I would not be able to avenge my children. Why do I hesitate?

I must be bold, both if I succeed and if I do not succeed.

Hecuba’s bold claim for higher status is immediately associated with revenge, and it is going to be at the moment of her revenge that her status is the highest. The remaining part of this episode consists of Hecuba’s status being elevated, at the expense of Agamemnon’s. By the end (904) she clearly has higher status than him, having won the right to extract the revenge. This is possible in part only because Agamemnon cannot conceive of Hecuba’s status changing from what he typically associates with old, female, barbarian captives. He cannot see that status is a dynamic, despite Hecuba citing the examples of the Danaids and the Lemnian women (886-87).

To attain a status equal to Agamemnon, Hecuba uses various techniques that can be identified. She seeks and attains Agamemnon’s sympathy and pity (760-85). This serves to bring them close to an equal footing. Though there is no status reversal yet, by the end of the stichomythia they are much closer than they were; Agamemnon can relate to Hecuba’s predicament, and is disposed to help her (i.e. yield status in her favour.) During Hecuba’s next long speech, she makes several gains. She asks that Agamemnon become her avenger (790 τιμωρῶς) against Polymestor. Though he eventually refuses this request, it does ally him with her for her future requests, and prepares him for the following status-
enhancing devices. Her bid at equal status with Agamemnon comes in the discussion of his relationship with her daughter Cassandra. Hecuba claims that he is kin (834 κηδεστήν). Her precise claim is that he is kin with Polydorus. She is in essence claiming mother-in-law status which, jokes aside, is filled with high-status associations even in modern culture. Once she is perceived as being of higher status as him, she begins to flatter him (841-45) for to raise Agamemnon is to raise herself. It is likely in my opinion that her delivery of the speech is much more confident that it had been earlier in the play. The effects of speech patterns on status are definite, but unfortunately must always remain speculative.

The νόμος-speech is clearly important to the play, and it is possible to see how some critics perceive it as being central to the play. It is the first successful status reversal that Hecuba has accomplished, elevating herself above Agamemnon. The debasement scholars consider this a shameful turn of events, because they have become habituated to seeing Hecuba in the role of passive victim; she remains a suffering victim in the Troades, so why does she not in the Hecuba, asks the faulty logic. The status reversal is only part of Hecuba’s return to high status, and therefore cannot be the turning point of the play. The Achaean host still holds considerable sway over Agamemnon (both demagogues, Odysseus and Agamemnon, are lower in status to the collective will of the Greeks) and he does not grant all. He does give Hecuba sufficient time to enact her revenge, in part because he has no faith that such is possible.

This new relationship is then shown in action (850-904). Hecuba expresses the paradox (864-69):
Hecuba now has mastery over Agamemnon, and can free him from the control of the Greek army. There is also a vivid contrast in the line ends of 880 and 881, which are metrically identical. What Hecuba calls a mob of Trojan women (880 Τροφάδων ὀχλον) Agamemnon continues to perceive as booty of the Greeks (881 Ἑλλήνων ὄγραυν). The episode ends with Hecuba sending off her servant with a message for Polymestor (889-94), and giving orders to Agamemnon (894-97).

The first and third episodes both involved a fair deal of status interaction. Similarly, the second and fourth both serve as consolidations of what has just been established. In the fourth episode (953-1022), then, Hecuba’s status is shown continuing to rise as she encounters Polymestor. His confident and sympathetic entry shows he is unaware that his treachery has been known. Since this is information which is shared by all the characters, the Chorus, and the audience, Polymestor’s high-status entry is perceived as false bravado. Hecuba’s status continues to climb (now at the expense of the Thracian’s) as she establishes his guilt beyond a doubt. That she can then play him for a fool and get him to discharge his bodyguard (981):
and then play on his greed to convince him to enter the tent (which he does with his sons at 1022.)

Polymestor’s cries are the signal of Hecuba’s victory. The wheel of fortune has turned full circle for her.¹⁹ She emerges triumphant, revelling over her glory. It would be ridiculous to imagine her moving at this point with the slow supported steps she possessed before the parodos. Her high status is demonstrated in her confident assertions, and manifested in her powerful delivery. When Polymestor emerges, his status is dropped. He speaks irregularly, is on all fours, and, in singing his monody (1056-1108) in lyric meters, associates himself with the other low-status characters in the play. When Agamemnon enters (1109) it soon becomes clear that he never expected Hecuba to be able to accomplish any real revenge (similarly, Creon does not expect Medea to be able to accomplish any meaningful action in just one day, cf. Med 340.) In the agon which follows (1129-1253) Hecuba’s status is again consolidated. Polymestor’s messenger speech demonstrates how he like Agamemnon, was lured into a trap based on making assumptions about the capabilities of apparently low-status individuals. Hecuba’s speech is full of rhetorical flourishes and confident assertions. Its successful point-for-point dismemberment of Polymestor’s speech is presented with a confidence in the status from which she delivers it. The result is a foregone conclusion; there is no doubt, to Hecuba or to the audience, that Hecuba will remain victorious.

Polymestor then makes a last bid for high status. He possesses information that is not shared, which gives him a legitimate claim. His slow recounting of the
oracles is done in a way that it affects both Agamemnon and Hecuba, and is self-evidently true (albeit more so for the audience which is familiar with the events of Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*.) The predictions place Polymestor above Agamemnon in status (his response is merely to banish Polymestor to an island, dependent upon the power of the Greek army (1284-85). With Hecuba the case is different. The debasement scholars would suggest that the predicted metamorphosis into a dog serves to reduce Hecuba’s status to its lowest point. This clearly goes against the entire movement of the play, which showed a slow deterioration from bad to worse until line 749 and then a sharp and ultimately triumphant rise to the high-status position she now holds. This Introduction as a whole has been seeking to establish that Hecuba’s metamorphosis is a victory, recalling the spirits of rightful revenge, the Erinyes or Furies. This is a natural progression in terms of status from what has already been documented. Hecuba’s metamorphosis into the Fury-dog means that she escapes the future shame she had to face as a (naturally) low-status slave to a Greek soldier.

It is common in presenting stories (especially myths and fairy tales) to assume a ‘happily ever after’ conclusion. Young lovers will continue to remain in love, and will die happy; any suggestion otherwise is distasteful in the terms of the common aesthetic. Similarly, Homer does not dwell on Odysseus’ future wanderings once he has returned to Ithaca. What is important is that he has returned to a faithful wife. Similarly, Euripides does not want to establish a ‘happy for the moment’ ending. By saving Hecuba from a future of slavery, he is doing her a favour. She is old, and has had a long and productive life. Death is not something that she fears. The escape afforded by the metamorphosis means that the end of the play is (virtually) the end of her life. She ends prosperously,
having been proven morally right in her revenge, vindicated of all her shame, and with a form of posterity which will be a continual beacon to sailors. Euripides introduces the aetiological connection with the promontory Cynossema so that Hecuba will always have a memorial. There is no ignominy in her death. Rather, it is something that she desires. In Euripides' play, then, Hecuba dies fully revenged of her wrongs, with the high status she has possessed all of her life, and with an eternal testimony to the fact, a testimonial that has persisted until the modern day.
Notes to the Introduction

Introduction I - The Context of Revenge in the *Hecuba*

This paper was presented in an abbreviated form to the Scottish Classics Postgraduate Meeting, in Glasgow, March 4, 1992.

1 Those who find the play most successful are Kirkwood (1947), Abrahamson (1952), Conacher (1961), Reckford (1985), and Nussbaum (1986) - so Mossman (1990) 91 n.3, a list which is acceptable for the immediate purpose. In each of these cases, the success is gained at the price of Hecuba's character. This is a price that does not need to be paid, as I shall argue. To some extent, both Gellie (1980) and Hogan (1972) call into question the play's identity as a tragedy.

2 The attitudes of the Renaissance towards the play are detailed very well by Heath (1987) and Mossman (1990) Appendix B "The Nachleben of the Hecuba: The Renaissance" 243-58, 302-06.

3 Following Jebb's interpretation of this description *ad loc*, which I believe is standard.

4 Discussed in Introduction II.

5 Hecuba's age is the first thing apparent about her to an audience member (see Introduction VI). Arnott (19??) 73 discusses the generalising effect that this has: "It is impossible to look at a character and say 'He is 38'. The plays do not allow such precision. Characters are old; they are in the prime of life; or they are very young. Old in Greek tragedy means very old indeed, another case of exaggerating for stage effect ... In such matters, as in most things visual, Greek tragedy painted on a large canvas, with a big brush."

6 Of the recent interpretations of the play, Meridor (1978) - moreso than (1983) where her emphasis shifts from Hecuba to Polymestor - and Gregory (1991) come closest to this proposed understanding of the play. Mossman (1990) also elevates the value of revenge (cf. Chapter 5 "Hecuba's Revenge" 185-227, 290-99).

7 This relationship is examined in detail in Introduction IV.

8 This relationship is examined in detail in Introduction II. Expressions of the *lex talionis* in one form or another appear in the *Hecuba* at 844-45, 902-04, 1086, and 1250-51.

9 There are of course other points of contact between the two plays, much of which is dictated by the similarities already suggested (e.g. the death of innocent children.) In each play Talthybius appears, but his presence in Hecuba is not parallel to the roles of the other three male characters. In fact, Talthybius, in relating a sympathetic narrative, provides an effective contrast with the other men. Although what he delivers is essentially a messenger-speech, like that of Polymestor in the exodos Talthybius' speech is that of a biased participant in the events, rather than a low-status impartial observer.

10 For the appearance of Thracians in tragedy, cf. Commentary note 953-1022; for the relationship between barbarian and Greek, cf. note 1129-31; for the notion of guest-friendship, cf. note 710-11.

11 Collard and Mossman (1990) 62 are right in supposing that Polydorus appears above the stage.
It is almost required in light of 31 δοξῶ "I float". Nussbaum (1986) is perhaps the clearest voice for a walking Polydorus (she presumably translates the above verb "I dart quickly"). for this interpretation, it is necessary to take 52 literally. Nussbaum also assumes that the audience sees a child-sized figure, which again is probably not so. Polydorus has presumably been with Polyphemus for the ten years of the war, and should be a young man. Lines 14-15 argue strongly against him being sent as an infant, since it is apparently conceivable that he should arms in the war. See also Barrett Hip 1283.

12 This is the source of Hecuba's traditional appellation of mater dolorosa. The tradition presents two statistics concerning the extent of Hecuba's motherhood: that she had fifty children, and that she had nineteen. The latter is at least biologically possible (though this is certainly not a prerequisite in myth.) The two can be reconciled if Priam had fathered fifty children, nineteen by his (principal) wife Hecuba. That these other children would be considered Hecuba's is to be expected considering the Homeric portrayal of Troy as an extended household (oikos).

13 These are virtually synonymous in the case of Troy, see note 20.

14 Hector represents the Homeric paradigm for this, which is why his death and the fall of Troy are so closely linked. He is a son, a husband, and a father, as well as being Troy's champion warrior.

15 Whether Diggle's deletion of large parts of the dream described 59-97 should be accepted or not does not matter for the moment. While I find Bremer (1971) creative, he is not convincing. I know there are other reasons for deleting these lines. There is no reason why the hexameters should not be used in this prophetic passage (as they are in the Philoctetes) and that an actor would compose hexameters to be casually blended into an established work is not an automatically cogent assumption. In a paper delivered in Edinburgh in 1991 specifically examining the dream, Prof. Gregory kept the dream intact, letting it refer to the deaths of both children, and I am tempted to agree.

16 Meridor (1978) 29 n.5.

17 The anachronism of applying fifth-century values onto tragic texts set during the Trojan War is a commonplace and not problematical, cf. Easterling (1985).


19 This is discussed, for example, in Shaw (1975) and Foley (1982).

20 I do not believe this to be the way the sentence is intended to be understood.

21 Even though nowhere else is Hecuba awarded to Agamemnon in the Trojan legend as it survives, this seems to be the only conclusion about the situation in this play that can be drawn; see Commentary note 754-55.


23 see also Dodds on Euripides Bacchae 973-6.

24 This is suggested, for example, by τάδε in Aeschylus Choephoroi 314.

25 This is cited as the epigraph of Blundell (1988) Chapter 2, a chapter summarising the principle in Greek ethics of helping friends and harming enemies.
This kind of compression should not surprise us in Euripides, cf. Vickers (1973) 596-97 "If we look at Euripides' plays in these terms we can see that in fact he took over the Aeschylean movement but compressed its time-scale ... In compressing Aeschylean trilogy reversals into single plays Euripides generates extraordinary energies, and we can see why Aristotle found him the most tragic of the dramatists."

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Two sample claims should suffice for the moment: Reckford (1985) 113 "Hecuba's own fate illustrates exactly what she denies for Polyxena: namely the power of time and chance to alter the nobility of the soul"; Vickers (1973) 83 "Hecuba's fate symbolizes that of so many characters in Euripides: suffering neither purifies nor ennobles but degrades, brutalizes, for she was no longer a human being in the full sense of the word when she grovelled before Agamemnon seeking revenge, and she has declined progressively since that point." The consequences of exalting Polyxena lead to conclusions such as Delebeque (1951) 147-64 who is forced to conclude the second half is tacked on as an afterthought.

Laurens (1988) 480 describes and illustrates an Etruscan mirror dating to the third century B.C., with a portrait of Hecuba holding Polyxena, and what she identifies as two Myrmidons. There is also a winged figure in the background which she tentatively identifies as Iris. I feel certain that this is a clear and early representation of an Eriny (so hesitantly Mossman (1990) 235).

Bac 1330-1339, and see Dodds ad loc.

For an explanation on the dramatic function of the etiological explanation, see Commentary, note 1271-73.

Introduction II - Durkheim, Revenge, and the Ancient Near East

1 See especially chapter 2 of Blundell (1989) 26-59, which is a good recent summary of this view.

2 The particular model being discussed is Durkheim's earliest formulation, in the first (on crime) and second (on punishment) parts of Book One, chapter two "Mechanical Solidarity through Likeness" in The Division of Labour in Society. This is his seminal work on the subject, and though the views expressed are at times altered or emended later, for simplicity and clarity only the early discussion will be examined. Of course, it is not possible to give a complete account of all modern sociological thought, or even of Durkheim and his specific critics. What is important for the current discussion is simply the fact that the theories have been put forward as possible explanations for societal behaviour.

3 The vocabulary of revenge is problematical, because over time moral colouring has attached to certain cognates. While "revenge" itself is relatively neutral, "vengeance" is decidedly negative (perhaps due to the use of the word "vengeful") and yet "to avenge" or to be an "avenger" is slightly positive. In the present discussion, all are being used synonymously, and with as little moral colouring as possible. The purpose of the discussion is to assign a positive value to the concept, but that should and can only be done from a neutral starting point.

4 For ease of reference, I have tried to keep external bibliography with respect to the Ancient Near East to a minimum. For the Akkadian law codes, I am using translations in Pritchard 1958, which for texts is an abridgement of the much larger Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the New Testament 2 (Princeton UP, 1955.) The translations of the Laws of Eshnunna are by Albrecht Goetze (133-138), and those of the Code of Hammurabi are by Theophile J. Meek (138-167).

5 One mina of silver = 50 shekels, or approximately 600 grams.

6 Meek's note, Pritchard (1958) 139 n.1: "awêlam seems to be used in at least three senses: (1) sometimes to indicate a man of the higher class, a noble; (2) sometimes a free man of any class, high or low; and (3) occasionally a man of any class, from king to slave. I follow the ambiguity of the original and use the rather general term 'seignior,' as employed in Italian and Spanish, to indicate any free man of standing."

7 Meek's note, Pritchard (1958) 161 n.1: "Lit. 'the son of a man,' with 'son' used in the technical sense [of 'belonging to the class of, species of,' so common in the Semitic languages] ... and 'man' clearly in the sense of 'noble, aristocrat'; or it is possible that 'son' here is to be taken in the regular sense to indicate a person younger than the assailant."

8 Translations of Hittite material are my own, based on the transliterated text found in Friedrich (1967) 20-21.
9 An exception is in the case of "splitting an ear", found in laws 15 and 16. Whereas law 7 and law 8 seem to represent all kinds of permanent damage, ranging from losing a tooth to losing an eye, law 15 prescribes a penalty of 12 shekels if a free man's ear is split, but law 16 requires only 3 shekels for a slave (in addition to the maintenance of the estate, of course. Because casuistic law is being used, it becomes important to understand what is meant by "splitting an ear". It is fair to assume that deafening a person is not what it meant - were this the case, it would be similar to the injury incurred in law 7. Odd as the euphemism may sound, "splitting an ear" is probably representative of all non-debilitating personal injury that has not already been covered by law 10. This is consistent with the productivity ethic already described, since it can be assumed that the end result of these injuries is no more than a scar or a notched ear. The aesthetic disadvantages for a slave are not on the level of a debilitating injury. Productivity is not decreased.

10 Neither seems to represent premeditated murder, though such an interpretation is possible in each case. The interpretation of the phrase "his hand sins" later in the paragraph could be adduced to support the view in favour of manslaughter.

11 The Apostle Paul in Romans 6:13 enjoins his readers, "Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God..." (New International Version. All biblical passages are from this translation.)

12 E.g. Nehemiah 8:8, Matthew 22:40.

13 Many of the views on the Old Testament legal system were presented in a course on "Contemporary Social Ethics: Law" given by Prof. Alvin Esau at Regent College, Vancouver, Canada in January 1989.

14 It is a misunderstanding of this application that has caused undue tension in the modern debate of capital punishment. The Jewish people in the time of Moses were nomadic and without any mechanisms for incarceration, community service, etc.


16 The other time that the "life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth" appears in the Pentateuch is Deuteronomy 19:21, which is a provision against false testimony.

17 E.g. II Corinthians 11:23 πεπτάχως τεσσεράκοντα παρά μην.

18 E.g. ἀνενεφθονον αὐτῷ τιμωρεῖται τὸν ὑπάρχαντα ("Nobody can be denied retaliation against him who was the aggressor" Demosthenes 59.15.)

19 Homer does not introduce the issue of matricide so that the parallels between Telemachus' position and that of Orestes are more clearly drawn (Goldhill (1986) 147-48).

20 This is described more fully in Introduction IV.

21 That as individuals this is what they believed is suggested by, e.g. Dover (1974) 180-84. Aeschylus in the Oresteia presents an alternative to this historical view. His literary view however was so pervasive and persuasive that the notion of vendetta (as opposed to revenge) became common, see Introduction IV.
1 This term was introduced and defined in Introduction I.

2 For a conventional account of the sacrifice, cf. O'Connor-Visser (1987), or Méridier (note 4, below). Gellie (1980) 34 writes, "The character and behaviour of Polyxena have been designed to meet certain specifications: she must be the kind of girl who can make us feel good when she dies ... Part of the good feeling is achieved by allowing some teasing physical detail to add its own kind of warmth." Golden (1988) 12 calls this vicarious pleasure in the young girl's death a form of pornography, which may be an extreme view, but certainly points out the wrongness of an audience warming to the sacrifice.

3 Diggle obelizes this word. None of the likely or suggested meanings affects the present interpretation.

4 Cf. for example Méridier Hécube 169 n.1: "C'est lui [Achille] qui retient la flotte grecque (v. 38, 111); c'est lui que Néoptolème invoque pour obtenir le départ des navires et un heureux retour (539 et suiv.). D'autre part l'armée est condamnée à l'immobilité, faute de vents favorables (900), et à la fin de la pièce, quand le sacrifice a été consommé, Agamemnon salve l'arrivée des brises attendues (1290)."

5 The reference to a/the god (900 θέος) could refer either indirectly and vaguely to the ghost of Achilles, or, more likely, be merely a façon de parler for the weather (cf. Kovacs (1987) 79).

6 Kovacs (1987) 112-13 reckons that there are three significant inconsistencies in the play, namely the location, the demands of the ghost, and the time sequence at the opening. I believe that the first two of these are solved by the interpretation offered in this essay. Neither is there need to resort to Arnott's apology (1991, 138-39): "In the context of the Greek theatre, there is no need to specify [whether it is set at Troy or Thrace]. It can be either or both, as the action dictates. In Hecuba Euripides weaves a tragedy from two separate and distinct sources; he uses two plots, each of which illuminates and comments upon the other. In the same spirit his theatre allows him to fuse two separate spheres of action into a no man's land which is Troy or Thrace according to the demands of the immediate moment."

7 Cf. Introduction VI.


9 Cf. Mossman (1990) 28 "it does seem that Hecuba is thought of as an archetypical tragic character as well as more generally one who suffered greatly: it is striking how often Hecuba's name is mentioned when a random example of a tragic figure is required." cf. Lucian Nigr 11.8, Salt 27.16, Stephanus of Byzantium on Aristotle Rhet 1403b27: ει μην γάρ τύραννον ἢ Πολυμήστορα μιμότα, δε μεγαλή χρήσις φωνή, ει δε γυναίκα σιων Ἐκάθην ἢ Πολυξένην, μικρά και σιων υπό τοῦ πάθους διακοπτομένην.


11 Farnell (1896) II 501-19 describes Hecate and in particular her associations with Artemis. Cf. also Aesch Sup 676 "Ἀρτέμιν ἐκάθην, fr. 87 Smyth, Theocritus 2.33, and Eur (?) IA 1570-71.
This paper was first presented to the Scottish Universities [Classical] Drama Seminar, in Glasgow, June 1, 1992.

1 The story that pregnant women aborted while watching the performance, which is preserved in the anonymous vita of Aeschylus, has long been thought to be a fictitious and late tale. Even so, the anecdote attests to the great extent that the play captured the imaginations of its audience. Calder (1988), however, provides a parallel event from eighteenth-century European history which recognizes at least the possibility that the story of the staged Erinyes may be based in fact.

2 cf. Aristophanes Acharnians 9 and scholia. Newinger bases his argument on supposed recollections in the Clouds, and Meridor supports Newinger's case by reference to the Hecuba.

3 I hope to pursue this relationship elsewhere at greater length.


5 In Introduction II.

6 Kock 149, from Athenaeus Deipnosophists 12, 551a.

7 The following summarizes the distinction drawn in Introduction I.

8 As described in Introduction II.


10 Cf. Kovacs (1987) 146 n.68: "It has been mentioned that the dog ranks so low in the scale of animal nobility and is so constantly associated with shamelessness that Hecuba's transformation cannot be anything but a degradation. Yet the dog has many associations besides shamelessness (see RE 9, 2 s.v. "Hund," esp. cols. 2567-69) and may connote tenacity (S. Aj. 78), hard work (X. Mem. 4.1.3, Arist. HA 608a31), and the Greek virtue of beneficence to friends and maleficence to enemies (Pl. Resp. 375A2-C2)." There is a slight problem in that use of the word with respect to women is much more clearly negative, and not satisfactorily explained by the examples Kovacs lists. One factor that must be integrated into the analysis must be the speaker and his state of mind. Polymestor is not abounding with goodwill towards Hecuba and her women, and a pejorative animal association is appropriate in his mouth. If this negative aspect can be ascribed to Polymestor, with the other association (that Kovacs sees) being ascribed to the prophet and (ultimately) Euripides, we are closer, I believe, to an acceptable solution.

11 I am told by Prof. E. Kerr Borthwick that Sir J.T. Sheppard believed that at this point Clytemnestra made her initial entrance, that the words had a secondary reference to her. This is an intriguing notion, and certainly possible for Aeschylus, but quite unsubstantiated. The end of the passage here cited, and its reference to the woman with two husbands, is equally appropriate, for example.

12 All are cited in Introduction I.

13 Burkert (1985) bases his distinction between Erinyes and alastores primarily on the following passages: Erinyes (427 n.31) Homer Il 3.278f, 19.260, and cursing 9.454, 15.204, 21.412, Aesch
Eum 417; alastores (421 n.19) Aesch Ag 1500f, Per 353, Soph OC 787f, Eur Med 1333, cf. Socrates of Argos FGrHist 310 F 5, Apollodorus FGrHist 244 F 150.

14 The Commentary note on 786 cites Reckford (1985) 126-27 to this effect, and see Introduction III.

15 For this key word in the play, see Commentary, note 710.

16 Verbal echoes to which it is more difficult to assign any certain interpretation are simply cited as parallels in the commentary, with the exception of number 5, provided as an example.

17 See Introduction V for a fuller examination of the relationship between the Hecuba and the Cyclops.

18 Though running on all fours disguised as a wolf is reported in Rhesus 210-11, 254ff.

19 Detailed more fully in Introduction III.

20 For bibliography and discussion, see Commentary, note 1279.

21 Cf. Garvie’s discussion of this fragment in his introduction to the Choephoroi xix-xxi.

Introduction V - The date of the Hecuba, and the Cyclops

1 In the same way, the suggested date for the Heraclidae of c. 430 B.C. is confirmed by Zuntz (1955) 81-88, independent of reference to the Eurystheus oracle and Alcmena scene (see esp. 88 n.3.)

2 Only one authority is cited for each case. Some are controversial, most are reasonable. Undated plays for which there is no reason to believe occurred between 425 and 422 have not been included. Webster (1967) 3-5 would add Aeolus (427-23), Ixion (420-17), the Melanippe plays and Phrixos B (all 427-c.417).

3 Further support might be gained for proximity to the Hecuba if there is a resolution in a fourth foot, for which see Diggle (1970) 177-78 or commentary at 727 and 1240.

4 A reference in the Clouds obviously contains the possibility that the line comes from the later rewrite, post-420, as described for the Hecuba.

5 These are discussed in the commentary as they arise. See also Ussher Cyc, esp. pages 196-97.


7 Seaford (1984) 49 argues against the same phenomenon concerning a later play: "it seems unlikely that Euripides would introduce a ridiculous echo of a satyr play into the tragic Andromeda. It must be the other way around".

It has been suggested that there is a similarity between the presentation of Polymestor and that of the Homeric Cyclops. This seems valid, and gives some motivation for the *Hecuba* to be a play recalled in the *Cyclops* if the later date, endorsed here, is accepted. Mossman (1990) rightly condemns Segal (1990) for extending the identification of Polymestor = Polyphemus to *Hecuba* = Odysseus in the *Hecuba*, which I agree is not an intended association by the poet, but she is wrong to accept an equivalence of *Hecuba* = Homeric Odysseus, which is logically not valid.

In November 1988, I directed both plays together as a double bill in Montréal, where the parallels I suggest here became evident.

To what extent Sophocles uses "magic" items in any of his plays is a subject I hope to examine in greater detail in the future. Suffice it to say that the bow is necessary for the Greek victory at Troy. Depending on how the prophecy of Helenus is understood, it may be necessary that Philoctetes is also there.

This is suggested by 543, for example.

**Introduction VI - Status and the Structure of the *Hecuba***

1 Taplin sets out the difficulties in *Poetics* 12 clearly and succinctly: see his Introduction, section 5 (pp. 49-60) and Appendix E (pp. 470-479.)

2 Taplin does however note that "Many entrances ... are clearly within a structural unit, and in no way mark the beginning or end of one" (1977, 53) which does reintroduce an element of circularity, but allows for instances such as are found in Aesch *PV* and Soph *Tra*.

3 E.g. in Euripides: *Hecuba* 1023-34, *Hippolytus* 1268-82 (recognized by Barrett as a stasimon), *Ion* 1229-43, *Bacchae* 1153-64, and *Medea* 1081-1115, but not *Supplices* 918-24 and *Electra* 585-95.

4 Discussed in Introduction I.

5 For general details on Classical dramatic production, Ley (1991) evaluates most factors fairly and concisely.

6 In this instance I am not suggesting that the two are meant to sound alike. Part of the skill of a good (serious) actor is the ability to lose one's individual personality into that of the character: Olivier is heralded as a good actor in part because it is possible to watch one of his films and not know which role he is playing. Opportunity for just this sort of virtuosity is afforded by the demands of playing multiple roles. Exactly the opposite is in the dynamic of comedy. The good (comic) actor often plays the same character in every role: Groucho Marx always plays Groucho Marx. This identification with expected characteristics enhances the humour involved.

7 Even with Kells' (1973, 18) division, allotting Chrysothemis to the third actor, the same actor is required to play Orestes and Clytemnestra, murderer and victim. In a 1990 production of the play I directed in Edinburgh, the same actress played Chrysothemis and Clytemnestra (low and high status respectively) and the same actor the paedagogue and Aegisthus (also, a low status role and a high.) Neither had difficulties with the technical aspects (changing costumes in short periods of
time) or with playing the opposing statuses.

8 It has become conventional to understand the terms πρωταγωνιστής, δευτεραγωνιστής and τρίταγωνιστής in their rare use applying to actors in theatres, as 'first' 'second' and 'third actor' referring to decreasing theatrical demands in performance. There is slight evidence that some role allocation was done by convention: Demosthenes 19.247 suggests the king or tyrant fell in the fourth century) to the third actor. In my suggested role allocation for the Hecuba, the third actor takes Agamemnon but not Polymestor. There is also a suggestion that value judgements were attached to which position was held. The use of τρίταγωνιστήν of Aeschines in Demosthenes De Corona 267 suggests "third-rate actor", which at times no doubt was true. In much of Aristophanes, however, the first actor's comedic demands are significantly less than those of the actors taking the smaller parts. Despite this, the convention will be maintained for the purposes of discussion merely to provide points of reference.

9 That the servant is with Hecuba ab initio is unlikely, since she refers to the silent attendants as children (59 ὄ παιδες) and the servant is never mentioned with this or a related term. It is perhaps even significant that Hecuba, having lost so many children in the war, has adopted her servants in this way.

10 The definitive treatment on status is Johnstone (1981) 33-74, the chapter called "Status". His many examples cannot all be reproduced here. The word 'status' is clearly being used in a special sense, which will be defined. It is in this sense that I have endeavoured to use the word throughout this dissertation. Levin (1965) esp. 213-5 charts Marlowe's tragic plots in quite similar terms, comparing them with other contemporary tragedies.

11 Though they don't have much place in tragedy, low status competitions can also occur, e.g. Monty Python's "Four Yorkshiremen" sketch, where each character seeks to 'underdo' the others in their descriptions of their poverty and living conditions when they were younger.

12 When discussing status, Johnstone speaks in terms of 'play'. The notion of status interaction is to a large extent intuitive, and every individual does make conscious decisions to play high (e.g. 'power' dressing for interviews) or low (e.g. wearing old clothes on vacation) at different (appropriate) times.

13 Baldness can have high-status associations, but typically represents low status. It is associated with other low status characteristics explicitly, e.g. in the Old Norse short story of Authun the Westfirther, of whom the reader is told, "At that time, all the money the king had given him for the journey is finished. He then takes up the path of a beggar, and begs for food for himself. He is then bald, and rather wretched!"

14 Since it seems likely that the entire first half of the play, and the Aeacus scene in particular, is a sustained parody of Euripides' (fragmentary) Πέριθους, it is probable that the high-status associations of Heracles would be further elevated by the expected high-status nature of a (para-) tragic hero.

15 Polydorus' opening speech and the stasima are not being described here because 'status' exists in quite a different sense in solo-scenes and becomes much more subjective (which is why there are so many ways of delivering soliloquies.) There is none of the 'give and take' aspect presently being expounded.

16 That the circumstance of having one's head wrapped in clothing is low status elsewhere is
shown in Seaford’s description of Agamemnon’s last bath: “Made vulnerable by his funeral bath, Agamemnon is then trapped by his funeral robe” (1984, 250).

17 Debasement-scholars view the speech as ironic, that Hecuba will prove an exception to her own rule that the good remain good. This is clearly wrong. The speech allies herself with her daughter, and separates Hecuba from the likes of Odysseus, Agamemnon and Polymestor.

18 The odd metaphor which expresses this combines the notion of victory (and its associated high-status connotations) with misery. Note the use of 658 παναιθία, 659 νικάω, 660 στέφανον, 662 νηρύγματα.

19 In Medieval Scholastic theology, and in popular thought (as evidenced by, e.g. the Carmina Burana) Hecuba typically appears as the exemplar of the Wheel of Fortune, who having once prospered has followed the rotation and becomes under it: nam sub axe legimus | Hecubam reginam (Hilka-Schumann-Bischoff 16.3.7-8.) In general the Latinate tradition accentuated only certain aspects of the Hecuba-legend, with Ovid making much of the metamorphosis (which influences the debasement scholars). It is hard to know how the Medievals did perceive the exemplar functioning in their model of the fragility of fate. The information that survives from the period does not make the matter particularly clear. Most interpretations though suggest that the point is that Hecuba was once at the top of the wheel, but has fallen to the bottom. It is known that Euripides’ play was the subject of much Byzantine attention, and when it did reach the West it was understood not as a study in moral degradation (see Heath, 1987). Though there seems no definite way to prove it, the notion of the Wheel of Fortune as regards Hecuba seems much more apposite if the wheel is allowed to continue its revolution. All circles close in on themselves, and the Wheel of Fortune should not be an exception. Hecuba begins at the top, descends, but then rises again. Though each acme has a different base (prosperity against justice) the notion of a wheel is much clearer. Whether it is anachronistic to attribute this to the West this early cannot be said with any certainty. Dante Inferno canto xxx 16-21 certainly follows Ovid, where,

Ecuba, trista, misera e cattiva,
possia che vide Polissena morta,
e del suo Polidoro in su la riva
del mar si fu la dolorosa accorta,
forse hatrale si come cane:
tanto il dolor le fe’ la mente torta.

Hecuba, sad miserable and captive, once she had seen Polyxena slain, and, saddened, noticed her Polydorus

on the shore of the sea, raving she barked like a dog: so great was the sadness which tortured her soul.
Table of Suggested Alternate Readings
to Diggle’s corrected (1989) text of Hecuba 658-1295

All of the following are discussed to some extent in the Commentary ad loc. Several tentative alternate readings have not been included in this list, but are discussed as they arise.

692 μ’ ἐπισχήσαι
740 κρανθὲν
756-57 do not delete
758-60 retain the traditional order of 758, 759, 760
793-97 do not delete
800 capitalise Νόμος
816 capitalise Πεθώ
824 κενὸν
827 delete
do not delete

γὰρ τῶν τε

τὰς ἀνάγκας

δ'ἐμι

punctuate as follows:

τὰ δ' ἄλλα θάρσει πάντ' ἕγω θῆσω καλῶς.

ἡσυχον

χαροποιῶν

divide the lines as follows:

...κατ' ἄστυ Τροι- ἵνα τὸδ' Ἡ παιδεῖς...

divide the lines as follows:

...ἀποσκόποθα', ἐπεὶ ὁ νόστιμον ναῦς...

Διοσκόροιν

punctuate as follows: γάμος, οὐ γάμος ἄλλ'
Insert comma after μῦθους

Do not delete

Read and punctuate as follows:

Εκ. εἰ τῆς τεκούσης τῆς ... μέμνηται τί μου;

spoken by the Chorus, continuing with 1042-43

Do not delete πᾶ βῶ

Alternate readings for certain passages in lines 1-657 are discussed in the Introduction and Commentary when they are discussed, but this is not meant to be a complete examination of the textual problems of these lines. By far the best work done on the manuscript tradition for this play is Matthiessen (1973) which discusses these matters at length.
658-904 Third Episode

The scene begins with the servant running onstage in a panic: her preparations for the burial of Polyxena have become horrific. These two notions, preparation and horror, unite the events in this episode. The audience knows that Polydorus is dead from the prologue, but it has since been focusing on the plight of Polyxena. As the Polyxena storyline is concluding (all that remains are the final preparations for the cremation), a new horror is presented to the prisoners of war: Hecuba's youngest son is also dead. It is due to this transition that the play has often been falsely labelled as 'broken-backed', and is one of the reasons for the play's lack of popularity in recent centuries (see Heath 1987.) The difficulties in maintaining this view have already been discussed (see Introduction VI.) In fact, Euripides does not allow the audience's attention to slacken: at a point where a κόμμος for Polyxena might be appropriate, the audience is presented one for Polydorus. Hecuba's failure to identify the corpse of her son as he is brought onstage leads to further tension and links between the two children, a theme that will be expanded at the end of the episode, 896-97. Until this point, the parodos going to the sea has been underused: the servant had used it to go fetch water at the end of the last episode, and apart from that all entrances had been along the other parodos, heading towards the Greek camp (and Thrace, cf. 953-1022 note). The audience has become accustomed to disaster coming from the camp. This new disaster, from the sea, is the first sign of changes to come in the story line, as this episode makes clear.

Agamemnon enters immediately following the κόμμος as Odysseus had in the first episode, and then begins a long supplication scene (Heath (1987a) 145-48.) Hecuba's intent only begins to be revealed at 749, the end of a long and exceptional series of asides: she is seeking revenge. Though she is unable to get any more from Agamemnon than a supportive neutrality, by the end of the episode she has made all the necessary preparations for her horrific revenge.
As the episode opens, the θεράπαινα (= ἄρχωσα λάφρις of 609) returns with the corpse of Polydorus, which would be brought in on a bier by 'extras' (mutae personae) who then join others at the back of the stage or leave. It is unreasonable to assume that the body is brought on by the servant herself, since this would interfere with the delivery of her lines, which are clearly rapid and excited. It does mean there is some oddity in having such obvious functionaries. It is required, however, and the only alternative, to use the ἔκκυκλημα to reveal the corpse, is inappropriate, since its conventional use is to show interior scenes to the audience, and the body is not at present within the tent. As the anonymity of the body is essential until 679, it must be assumed that the body is shrouded. For entry of characters with corpses, cf. And 1166, Bac 1216 (where it is in pieces), and on a larger scale Sup 794. In Aesch ST bodies are brought on, followed by Antigone and Ismene at 871 (cf. Hecuba's slightly delayed entry at 667. Arnott (1962) 69, 115 suggests "dummy bodies" were used in these instances. This fulfils what was predicted at 45-48 by the ghost of Polydorus. Quite often Euripides' prologues give inaccurate, or deliberately incomplete, information, and in some ways the same is happening here. Although what Polydorus had said was true, it was an incomplete truth, and the play will soon start to focus on the effects of Hecuba's revenge, which was not anticipated in the prologue (see note 749-50.)

Hadley notes that there is a cruel and ironic ἀθλον metaphor in these lines: παναθλια (658), νικώσα (659), and στέφανον (660), which is continued in κηρύγματα in 662. This leads to a paradox, since the conquering is in evil. παναθλια normally means "wretched", and so it would be understood on first hearing. It is only with the subsequent line's νικώσα that the impact of the metaphor becomes clear.

θῆλν σπορὰν while perhaps rare is not remarkable, cf. Tro 503 θῆλεία σπορὰ.

στὶς κακογλώσσου βοῆς is a genitive of cause (e.g. 156, Med 1028.) Similar in construct to κακογλώσσου is Valckenaer's conjecture of δυσθρείν at Aesch Sup 513. There is an implied reproach of the servant, for bringing news of more trouble for Hecuba; in a sense, the chorus are shooting the messenger. The Scholiast wonders τι ἐστι τὸ βούλημα τῆς στὶς κακοφῆμου βοῆς;
662 Herwerden’s emendation ματ has restored a balanced sense to the line, avoiding Paley’s apologetic tone (“I say, your evil-boding clamour, for these doleful announcements of yours know no rest, coming as they do so quickly after the bad tidings brought by Talthybius” [i.e. 484-85].)


663-64 Her words do not concern the chorus, however: Ἐκάβη φέρω, sc. ἄλλ’ ὀφθ θυμν. This is probably meant apologetically. Although it could be left indefinite, it is likely that τόδ’ ἄλγος, accompanied by an appropriate gesture, is a description of the corpse. Hadley, however, believes it to be abstract. This would mean that the first reference to the body is made by Hecuba in 671 when she mistakes it for Polyxena.

στόμα is an accusative of respect (“to speak propitiously as to your mouth”). The meaning is similar to 181, and may imply as it often does “to keep silent”, cf. Aesch Ag 1247 εὑρημον, δ’ τόλαινα, κολμησον στόμα, Cho 582, also Horace *Odes* 3.1.2, 3.14.11. εὑρημένων is presented as the opposite to 661 κακογλώσσων.

665 Taplin (1977) has demonstrated convincingly how verbal cues function in lieu of some stage directions, especially in terms of recognizing entrances and exits, in Aeschylus. In many ways, these principles can and have been extended for other Greek playwrights. One such formulaic verbal cue is καl μὴν, announcing a new entry, as at 216. Hecuba emerges from the tent.

τυγχάνων + participle = ‘happens to x’. This gives the feel of a speak-of-the-devil entry, which are relatively common in tragedy, because of the compression of events required for the presentation of diverse happenings. It is not an ‘offhand’ comment.

The tent from which Hecuba emerges is δόμων (as it was in 55) but the use of ὑπο (“from beyond
the limit of") equally recalls 53 ὅπο σκηνής. There is some confusion between the scene represented and the theatrical reality.

666 Friis Johansen and Whittle (Aesch Sup 483) note that "the first element of a trimeter (being) occupied by the final word of a clause begun in the preceding line(s) ... is common in the younger tragedians." In this case, ἡδε is an elided disyllable (as at 679 and 1130) but a monosyllable is also possible. cf. Ale 179, 737, Med 612, 793, 893, 1320, Hip 296, 355, 890, 1097, Held 407, 455, And 582, Soph El 43, Ant 250, OC 1168, fr. 142.ii. 15, Aesch PV 821 (and see Griffith (1977) 97-9.)

σοῦν λόγους, "in time for your words", is a dative of accompanying circumstance.

667 παντάλαινα echoes 658 παναθήλια, and is a relatively rare word, cf. And 140 ὅπο παντάλαινα νύμφα.

668 This line constitutes a simple polar expression of the this-and-not-that type. ἀλωλας is used intransitively: "you are lost/destroyed". ἤλ from the copula ἤμ (as at 683) and not ἤμ (as 579), which is also serving as a verb of existence. With the concessive βι.ἐπούσα, it can be translated "though you can see the light of day, you are no longer alive." For the hyperbole, cf. 1121 and Ale 1082 ἄπωλεσέν με, κατι μᾶλλον ἂν λέγω.

669 Tricola of this type are very common, cf. Hel 1148 ἄνωστος ἄδικος ἀθεος, Bac 995 ἄτοιν ἄνωσον ἄδικον ἄθεον, Or 310, And 491, HF 434, Tro 1313-14, Soph Ant 876, Aesch Cho 55, Homer II 9.63, Gorg Pal 36, Demosthenes 9.40, and as tetracola, cf. Hip 1028, IT 220 and Milton Paradise Lost 5.898-99 "unmov'd l Unshak'n, unseduce'd, unterrifi'd", Samson Agonistes 416-17 "ignoble, l Unmanly, ignominious, infamous". See also Fraenkel on Ag 412, Bond Hyp p.80 and Aristophanic parodies of this at Frogs 203, 838-9. In the present instance, notice how each word is more general than the previous: Hecuba has lost blood ties, marital ties, and political ties. That this
threefold trouble represented to the ancient mind the extremes of a woman’s possible suffering is perhaps attested by Naomi’s similar situation in the biblical Ruth 1:1-5, where ‘the emptying of Naomi’ is crucial to the literary structure of the narrative. Meridor (1983) 15 presents a more conventional view that "with the loss of the body-politic she and hers have lost all protection against offence."

ἐξερθομένη is a hapax in tragedy.

670 Hecuba is thinking of Polyxena’s death, and she is mistaken; she sees no special force in ἄπαις. There is an implied rebuke in ἑλώσων, cf. Aesch PV 1040-41 ἑλώστι τοῖς μοι τάσοι ἀγγέλαις ἢ ἑθώξεν, Homer II 10.250, perhaps because the tricolon might sound like an insult. ὀνειδοσις is embittered, and the phrase seems to have the same tone as the English "cast it up in my teeth."

When the plural refers to oneself, it is always masculine, cf. 237, Soph El 399, Ant 926.

Note the threefold repetition of the el sound.

671 As at 258, ἀρτὺρ indicates a sudden change of topic (GP 52). Because the word νεκρὸν is always masculine, there is perhaps some irony here. Hecuba believes she is referring to her dead daughter, but in her grammatically-necessary imprecision, is unwittingly accurate with respect to its gender. The confusion of the corpse is dramatically similar to the climactic scene in Sophocles’ Electra, when Aegisthus mistakenly believes the corpse of Clytemnestra is that of Orestes. The most probable date for Sophocles’ play is c.413, well after the Hecuba. In each scene, the character enters knowing that somebody is dead, and assumes that the shrouded corpse in front of them is that dead person. In each case, they are mistaken, and the corpse is shown to be somebody else. In the case of the Electra, there is the extra detail that the individual removing the shroud (Orestes) is the same person that the mistaken character (Aegisthus) believes to be dead.

672-73 ξομίζουσα cf. Hip 1261.


τάφος recalls the words of Talthybius, at 572ff. Nevertheless, it has been felt that the noun is inappropriate, most recently by Kovacs (1988) 133-34, and for τάφος suggests στρατός (perhaps also altering πάντων to πᾶς τὼν (cf. 530). This is attractive, though the corruption is hard to explain, and the sense is tolerable as it stands.

διὰ χερὸς = χειρ., cf. OC 470 δι’ οὖς χειρὸν θηγόν.

Though normally active, 'to be busy', σπούδην ἔχειν is here passive, "to be attended to / receive attention", cf. Or 1056 μη θανεῖν σπούδην ἔχον.

674-75 Tierney etc. mistake these lines for an aside, based on Hecuba’s reaction at 676-77. Bain (1977) 31-2, rightly argues against this (for Bain’s definition of an aside, see note on 736-51.) There is no dramatic reason why Hecuba should not hear this couplet. In fact, her response makes more sense if she has heard νεκών (675). The line is probably addressed to the chorus, though it too might be considered an odd thing for the servant to say. Yet there are parallels of the third person being used to refer to a person with whom the speaker is conversing, e.g. Held 435 συγγνωστὰ γάρ τοι καὶ τῷ τοῦθ’.

ἀπετεταί metaphorically = "grasps", cf. 586.

676-77 μῦν = μὴ οὖν, as at 754 the questioner is appalled at the possibility of a positive answer, and is hoping the answer will be negative.

References to Cassandra in the play are few and important. Cassandra is Hecuba’s last living child (though Helenus might still be alive as a prisoner: he is never introduced into the narrative of this play), as she is to discover in three lines. She has been mentioned previously at 127 and 426. She will be used as a lever to win Agamemnon’s assistance towards attaining her revenge 824-32. Here there is an affectionate synecdoche (κάρα τῆς Κασσάνδρας = Κασσάνδραν, cf. 21-22, 87, 127, 724) and a double reference to her prophetic powers. There is a similar double reference in 121, when Cassandra is being considered (in report) as a possible Polyxena-substitute.
The use of βακχεύον (cf.121) is similar to μικρόεις at El 1032, Tro 307, 415, but seems out of place in reference to Cassandra, who is typically associated with Apollo (note the use of 827 φοιβάς and 1076 Βάκχας "Αιών.) It would seem from the present usage that the word could be used purely in a general sense of "inspired, frenzied" - which would not deny that she is a prophetess - without having any associations with Dionysus, much as 'divine' can be used to describe a rich dessert without theological overtones. For Dionysus as a mantic god, cf. 1267 note.

678-79 λέλακας (historical perfect) is also used of wailing at Hel 186, but as Lee notes at Tro 269, the word denotes a sound of unusual quality rather than volume. It is therefore also used by Agamemnon to represent the sound of Echo at 1110 of this play.

τόν θανόντα is the first definite indication that the corpse is masculine.

For the monosyllable τόνδ' at the beginning of the line, cf. 666. The word is postponed for effect; as this sentence has been said, the servant has drawn back the shroud from the corpse, revealing who it is. This is then a clue for the interpretation of γυμνοθέν, which normally means "naked". At 734 there is a reference to πέπλοι, which means either attendants are dressing the body during the κομμός 684-722 (which would be an unnecessary and distracting stage action) or γυμνοθέν means something else. 'Lightly clad, virtually naked' is possible and would suggest Polydorus is wearing rags from being cast upon the sea, but more likely is "uncovered", a direct reference to the preceding action. The similarity with the scene in Sophocles' Electra (see note 670-71) suggests that there is no need to assume that the practice of enshrouding a corpse is in any way unusual.

680 παρὰ ἐλπίδας "contrary to (your) expectations", cf. Or 977, Hip 1120.

681 δὴ is used emphatically with verbs at moments of strong emotion, as at 413-4 (GP 215.)

682 Despite the ironic juxtaposition of ἐσοχ' and Ἐρῆς ἀνήρ, Hecuba is not yet laying blame.
She is beginning a period of gradual recognition, and interpretation of her dream 66-95.

μοι is an ethic dative, which can virtually be rendered, "I had thought" This is however the first reference to Thrace since 81 (before that it is mentioned at 7, 19, 36, and 74.) While here it is used innocently, cf. use at 710. οὐχος is a locative dative, as it is at 457.

683 Friis Johansen and Whittle (Aesch Sup 908) note of ἀπωλόμην that 'the aorist indicates that something which has just happened is identified by the speaker with his ruin.' cf. 440, Alc 391 ἀπωλόμην τάλας, And 71, 74, 1077, Hip 575, Soph El 676-7, but note also the virtually synonymous Cyc 665 ὀλόλαμεν and 669 ἀπωλόμην.

σύκτετ' εἰμὶ δή, cf. Or 1081 κήδος δὲ τοῦμὸν καὶ σὸν σύκτετ' ἔστι δή, Hip 778, Hel 279.

Mossman (1990) 73 suggestively posits that here Hecuba falls to her knees. If so, she must again be standing by 736 (since again, she can fall to her knees.) Rising at Agamemnon’s entrance (say at 722) is most likely, but Mossman does also offer Hecuba's identification of Polymestor as murderer (710) as the moment when she rises. If so, this would be a visual manifestation of Hecuba’s willingness to take action against him.

684-722 This is the second and final κομμός in the play (the first being that at 154-215.) Before, she had lamented that her daughter Polyxena was going to be sacrificed by the Greeks. Here, she is lamenting the discovery that her (last) son has been murdered by barbarians. The situations seem very different, but the grief remains the same. Extremes of emotion are characteristic of κομμός. Hecuba sings in the more lyric metres (in this case predominantly dochmiac dimeters) while the chorus and servant speak in more regular iambic trimeters. This is the epirrhematic structure, also used by Euripides at Hip 565-95, Tro 235-91. The idea of κομμός being sung for the young dead is attested as early as Homer II 18.569-72.

685-87 The first two lines are iambic dimer, and serve as a lead-in to the lyric. 687 is a dochmius - one of the so-called "Bacchic" metres. There is some problem in the interpretation of
these lines, centring around how ἀλάστορος is understood. The first difficulty is in the colometry: Diggle and most others understand a comma after βακχεῖον, but Daitz (only in his apparatus colometricus) and more recently Lebke and Reckford understand it after ἀλάστορος. Their argument (note on 722-4) is as follows: "the ambiguity seems clear: ... (what) Hecuba now commences is either a Bacchic 'strain' or a new Bacchic 'law' created by an avenging spirit". While both positions of the comma are testified in the MSS., this interpretation seems mundane.

κατάρχομαι is a technical term used in ritual, along with ἐξάρχει. It typically takes the genitive (e.g. Pho 540 ἡμέρας κατάρχεται) but takes an accusative here, Or 960 κατάρχομαι στεναγμόν and Homer Od 3.444-45 (the only use of the verb in Homer, cf. Herod 4.60, 103.) cf. the use at IT 40 where it "refers to the sprinkling of the victim's head with water" (Platnaur) - presumably, the first stage in the process of sacrifice. What she is beginning here is νόμον βακχεῖον, which is a reference to the doxmiacs she will be singing. Mossman (1990) 187 suggests that this technical usage (without the play on words) is suggested by Aesch Cho 424, Per 935-37, and Xenophon Sym 9.3. The metre is "used with scenes of great excitement - of intense joy or grief" (Raven (1962) 91.) To understand the ἀλάστορος here is possible, but less desirable than the alternative.

The idea of an avenging, malignant spirit is common in Greek tragedy (e.g. 949, Tro 768, Soph OT 788, Tra 1092, 1235, OC 788, Aesch Sup 415, Per 354, Ag 1501, 1508 etc.) and it is often, as here, personified to some extent. If it is taken with ὀρθομάθης κακῶν, four subtly different interpretations are possible:

1. It is an unspecified ἀλάστορος, posited by Hecuba because of her sufferings. This seems to be the standard interpretation.

2. The Scholiast suggests the ἀλάστορος is ἐκ Πολυμήστορος. This places a greater emphasis on κακῶν in 687, but it assumes Hecuba has already guessed the cause of Polydorus' death. This is unlikely, in view of the question she asks at 699-700, etc.

3. The ἀλάστορος is sent by Polydorus, the dead thereby having a direct effect on the world of the living. This option seems not to have been expressed previously,
though it is consistent with the use of ἀλάστωρ at Ag 1501, 1508.

4. The ἀλάστωρ is the ghost of Polydorus. This is one of the suggestions of the Scholiast, based upon the use of ἀρτιμαθῆς, and relating it to 54 φάντασμα δεμαῖνουσα ἐμόν and 75-6, lines which are also recalled by 704-5.

There is a similar, and importantly related notion in the Homeric understanding of the Erinyes, which seems to entail the notion of a specific protecting spirit that one has which seeks vengeance on one’s behalf: Homer Od 11.271f, Oedipus is punished by the Erinyes of his mother Epicaste; II 9.447f, Phoenix is punished by the Erinyes of his father Amyntor. cf. also Od 2.134f, II 9.567f, II 21.412f. All these examples concern restoration for violence within the family, but Od 17.475 shows that even a beggar can have an Erinys. More detail on this can be found in Lloyd-Jones (1989) and (1990) esp. 204. Further corroboration for this thesis comes from Euripides himself where he "apparently equates avenging spirits with Erinyes at [Med] 1059, where Medea swears μᾶ τοῦς παρ’ "Αἰδη νερτέρους ἀλάστορας" (Eden (1988) 560). If this notion is analogous with the use of ἀλάστωρ here, the third option listed above is both best and clearest. It also means that parallels can legitimately be drawn between the use of "ἀλάστωρ" in this play and the role of the Erinyes in the Oresteia, cf. Introduction IV.

ἀρτιμαθῆς, "having just learned", is a hapax (the variation in the MS. is not significant). The Scholiast takes ἀρτι- in a slightly different sense, "having accurately learned". This would suggest 688 is a statement and not a question. It also makes Hadley's interpretation of παιδός in 688 even more tenuous.

Textually, the readings adopted by Porson, Paley, Daitz and Diggle are preferable to Murray’s 685 γόουν and 687 νόμου (which is the reading adopted by implication by Nussbaum (1986) 409). Murray nevertheless does deserve attention, since it is possible and its adoption would prejudice the interpretation presented above of ἀλάστωρ. As Mossman (1990) 291 n.6 notes, γόουν or γόουν make more sense as a gloss on νόμου than vice-versa. The accusative is not exceptional in this context, cf. Or 960 (cited above) where the genitive alternate in the MSS. does not scan. Murray sets βαθυστοῦν...νόμου as an accusative of apposition, to γόουν, and can be construed, but is
overall less desirable and with less MSS. support.

688 ἐκτὸς παιδὸς has been taken two ways. Tierney rightly places it in an immediate context, where παιδὸς = Polydorus, and his "ruin" is his death. Hadley has removed it from the present context, referring to Paris, ἐκτὸς then = an active, working curse, recapitulating on the second stasimon, 629-57.

Σ δύστημε σό is perhaps a colloquial expression, cf. Aristoph Clounds 398 ο μῶρε σό. At any rate, it shows the familiarity with which the chorus holds Hecuba. It is conceivable that the line should be attributed to the servant, which both explains the colloquialism, and is complicated by the familiarity. There is an extant difficulty of just this nature at 708.

689-90 Stanford (Frogs 1335-36) says Euripides "was addicted to using repetitions to stimulate [and, presumably, simulate] emotion", and notes, in addition to the four repetitions here, the 18 in Or 1369-1502, and the 3 in Hel 648-51 (as well as the 7 in Aesch Sup 836-63.) This is technically known as anadiplosis. Repetition of this type lends itself well to parody, viz. Aristoph Frogs 1336, 53. cf. 908, 1031, 1092, 1098. For other examples of a word being repeated after an apostrophe, cf. And 843 ἄποθος, ο ρηξ, ήποδος, Alc 218, Pho 818, Cyc 510, Rhe 346-47, 357-58, 385, Aesch PV 577. It actually represents nothing remarkable linguistically, merely the speaker picking up where he left off before the interjection.

καὶνα is used euphemistically for "strange", as it is at 1038, Sup 92 καϊνας καβολὰς ὁρῶ λόγων, Hel 1513, Soph Phil 52, Tra 613. cf. the use of νεός at Tro 1160, Sup 91, 99, 1032, Her 382, Hip 79%. Latin does the same thing with novus.

κυρεί, "follow", is also used in a very similar sentiment with anadiplosis at IT 865, 867 ἄλλα δ' ἐξ ἄλλων κυρεί, I διάλογος τόχαι πινός.

691-92 Diggle accepts Hermann's emendations of these lines, and while this is clearly acceptable with ἀστέναικτος ἀδάκρυτος (the reading of the MSS being nonsensual), reading 'παραχάσει for μ'
ἐπισχήσει is less certain. Two arguments can be presented in favour of excising μ':

1. Scansion. μέρα ἐπισχήσει is a normal dochmiac (-----)

and μέρα μ'ἐπισχήσει is not (-----). However, while the passage is predominantly dochmiac with some (spoken) iambics, 706 (-----) is a non-dochmiac lekuthion. Preserving the reading of the MSS, yields a kaibelianus (an abnormal dochmiac) which is also found among normal dochmiacs at Alc 401 ἔγινεν σε' ἔγινεν, μὴ τερέμ, and the responding 413 ἔβας τέλος σὸν τὸδ'. Scansion is therefore not a necessary reason to excise μ'.

2. Interpretation. If μ' = μοι (an interpretation Ambrose attributes to Murray), ἐπισχήσει = "hold out", and therefore "continue", i.e. "will pass by for me". This elision would be more welcome in lyric or epic than in tragedy. This is a lyric passage, though. Ambrose’s suggestion that this means μ' is a later interpolation is wrong. The alternative is that μ' = με. Here ἐπισχήσει = "keep", and therefore "prevent", i.e. "will stop me (from grieving.)"

There is nothing wrong with this interpretation, and so there is nothing wrong with preserving the reading of the MSS.

695/6 ὑνήσκεις should not be taken as a historical present (e.g. Lembke and Reckford) but rather "what is the death you died?", cf. Virgil Aen 8.294-5 tu Cresia mactas prodigia.

697 This is her first guess that Polydorus may have been murdered. Her question at 699-700 seeks to confirm this.

698 χυρῶ, a vivid present, normally takes the genitive, but cf. Aesch ST 699 βλον εὖ χυρῆσας. Tierney’s note indicates that he believes both this and 701 to be spoken by the chorus, which would be wrong.
699-701 Etymologically similar to the Latin *cadaver* and the English *carcass*, πεπίμα is also found at *Pho* 1701 ὁ φίλα πεπίματ’ ἀθλι’ ἀθλίου πατρός and *And* 652-3.

ἐν ψαμόθρῳ λευρῇ is to be taken with ἐκβλητον (the intervening phrase being almost parenthetical.) A body washed ashore would be found on smooth sand, in the littoral zone of the foreshore. Hecuba does not realize that the alternatives she offers are not mutually exclusive. Porson attributed only 699 to Hecuba, and 700-01 to the θεράπων, which also makes sense, loses some irony, gains in factual description, but is overall less desirable.

ἐξήνεγκε cf. Thucydides 1.54.1 ἐξενεχέντων ὑπὸ τοῦ ῥου καὶ ἄνεμου.

702-07 These lines confirm that what the audience learned from the ghost of Polydorus 1-54 was also learned, in one form or another, by Hecuba in her nightmare described 66-95. There are two echoes of her description. The first is μελανόπτερον, which recalls 71 μελανόπτερυγον. Aristophanes inflates this at *Frogs* 1336 μελανονεκτεύμονα, 'black-corpse-clad'. The second is φάντασμα. Though the MSS reading φάσμα makes sense, echoes 70, and scans, Matthiae’s conjecture is preferable. It still makes sense, and recalls 70 φάσμασσαν. The fact that two consecutive words each recall a particular passage (70-71) suggests how the error could have been introduced originally. Stylistic variation is found elsewhere in the play (see note on 928-32.) Scansion also argues against the reading of the MSS. As it stands, the lines scan as follows: 704 doch + cr, 705 cr + cr, 706 lekuthion (named in antiquity after Aristophanes *Frogs* 1208 etc.) Abnormal dochmiacs "occur as isolated metra here and there, scarcely ever in sequences" (West (1982) 110.) Following the emendation, scansion regularizes for the most part: 704 doch + doch, 705 doch, 706, lek. This is more acceptable. (Line 702 is not extra metrum, but must be scanned with 703. This produces double dochmiacs.)

ἐμεθοῦν is an instantaneous aorist, "I (just now) understood."

παραβαίνω is being used metaphorically, "escape".

ἂν = Doric ἰν, referring to δάν (704). Diggle’s *apparatus* omits Hermann’s conjectured
τάν, adopted by Murray, though the only apparent purpose of this suggestion is to ensure that the final syllable in the previous line is scanned long.

σοβ (and δντος) is adopted by Diggle because of the relative rarity in tragedy of ἐμπρ + accusative = "concerning"; there are however a substantial number of parallels that make such an emendation unnecessary: cf. Tro 511 ἐμπρ μοι Διον, Or 1538, Rh 932, Soph Tra 937, Aesch Sup 246, Ag 715 (corrupt); also, note the early use of what a hymn or ode is 'about': Homer Hymn 7.1, 19.1, 22.1, 33.1, Pindar P 2.15-6, I 7.9, etc. It may be right, though.

Διδς ἐν φάει, "in the light of day", is the same as the Latin phrases sub Jove and sub Divo.

709 It is common in Greek to use ὁδια + infinitive = 'to be able to x.' ὀνειρόφρων is a hapax, "understanding dreams". The context does not allow for any interpretation other than understanding one's own dream. cf. Aesch Per 224 θυμόμαντις.

710-1 There are many verbal echoes of lines 6-14 in this couplet, which strengthens the connection between Hecuba's nightmare and the prologue: as she begins to interpret her dream, she uses many of the same words as Polydorus used.

For example, ξένος echoes 7 ξένου. The Greek concept of guest-friendship (ξένος) had a special set of moral obligations, which are of particular importance to this play. The word is used fifteen times, cf. 26, 715, 774, 781, 890, 1047, 1216 etc. The relationship was what bound foreigners to each other, and was the presumption of goodwill in Greek ethics that lasted until warranted otherwise. Benveniste (1973) 278-79 associates the word with the equally important notion of φιλα, and cf. Arnott (1959) 183-84 and Adkins (1966) 204-05 who argues that it is not self-evidently ὁδικος to kill a ξένος, that "killing a ξένος as a χάρις to a φιλος" is acceptable. While I am sure that there are instances where this is true, the emphasis on the word and concept in the play is paramount. A ξένος was under the protection of Zeus Xenios, whose power can be seen to be the overriding νόμος Hecuba later invokes (800 and see note): "The stranger who had a xenos in a foreign land - and every other community was foreign soil - had an effective substitute
for kinsmen, a protector, representative, and ally. He had a refuge if he were forced to flee his home..." (Finley (1965) 112).

"Θρήκεις recalls 7 Θρηκίον (see note on 682). Ἰππότας echoes 9 φιλιτον (cf. Homer II 10.437, 14.227.) Ἰνα, "where", here refers to Thrace, though properly it should go with ξένος, "with whom". There is a Ἰνα clause in 11, and it is also used with an indicative in 2, cf. And 652-53. πατήρ is in both 711 and 11. Finally, κρύφως recalls 6 ὑπεξέπεμψε and 14 ὑπεξέπεμψεν, all of which imply concealment from the enemy. For possible stage direction at this line, see note 683.

713 The use of the future in τί λέξεις provides "a still more emphatic reference to a present intention" (MT 72); Verrall (Med 1310) explains it thus: "The future points to the inability of a person receiving bad news to grasp the truth at first. He speaks as though he still had to hear it." cf. 511, 1124, Hip 353, Ion 1113, Pho 1274 (where Jocasta's answer, οὗ φῆλ', ἂλλ' ἔστω, shows she has understood the question as if it had been asked in the present or aorist), Soph Phi 1233.

The use of an interjection before τί λέξεις is usual, οὗμοι being the most common.

714-5 The tricolon crescendo is a common rhetorical device whereby three elements are presented such that each successive element is longer than the one preceding. It was "very much favoured by, for example, Tacitus, Macaulay, and Sir Winston Churchill" (Fraenkel (1957) 351 n.1) but is also found in Euripides at 811, Tro 1313-4, Hyps p.80. Fraenkel lists other examples. In the present instance, the second element θαυμάτων πέρα is a phrase also found at IT 839-40 θαυμάτων ι πέρα καλ λόγου πρόσω τάδ' ἀνέβα. Euripides also uses θαυμάτων at Bac 667, 716. For πέρα + genitive = "beyond" cf. IT 900 μυθων πέρα, Pausanias 4.5.6.10 ὥς ἄνοσιά τε κα πέρα δεινῶν εἵργασιμόν. Nor is the use of a comparative to express amazement especially remarkable: cf. Hip 1217, Cyc 376, Sup 844.

Hadley is probably right in reading σοὶ δει' σοδ' ἀνεκτά as indicating an offence against
both the gods and men, but especially Zeus, cf. 345. With this in mind, ἄξων should be interpreted as both subjective and objective, and translated accordingly, "between friends". The sanctity of strangers has already been established in the play, at 26. Herodotus 6.35.2 gives a similar incident in the life of Miltiades, which also transpires in the Chersonese.

The scansion here is slightly irregular because of the kaibelianus (= iambic tripod) in the second foot, but it should still be considered a double dochmiac; 1084 presents a kaibelianus in the first foot, cf. Bac 983 ~ 1003, Hip 593, Pho 114, 183 (which are sometimes emended away), and Dale (1968) 133f, to which Barrett adds Aesch Prom Pyrk (?) fr. 343.34ff Mette = Fr. 278 Lloyd-Jones, in Smyth, Aesch. Barrett's judgement (Hip 565-600) is that such "obdurate cases" are acceptable but rare, but he also cautions that many corruptions may enter the MSS tradition because of the double dochmiac's "superficial resemblance to an iambic trimeter."

716 The partitive genitive in κατάρατε ἄνδρων almost gives the force of a superlative (cf. 192.) Barrett (Hip 848-51) calls this form of address "an old use" dating to Homer. Other examples in Euripides are Hip 848-49 and Ale 460 δ φολα γυναικῶν, Held 567 δ τάλανα παρθένων. cf. Aristophanes Frogs 835, 1049, 1227, Ecc 567, 784, Aesch Sup 967, Homer, II 6.305, Od 14.361, 443, 21.288, Theognis 1307, Theocritus 15.74.

διημοράσας is used literally of cleaving the body, but cf. Hip 1376-77 διαμοράσας κατά τ’ εὐνάσας ι τόν ἐμὸν βλέτον, where it refers to Hippolytus in his grief calls out for his own destruction. It has much the same force (and construction) as 782 διστεμόν. The discovery of the wounds formally answers the question asked at the beginning of 695, and tells that Polydorus' death was no accidental drowning.

718 Although σίδαρχο is metallurgically anachronistic, this probably would not have mattered. It is possible that the word is intended to recall the geographical setting of the play, since in the fifth century, the monetary units of Byzantium were known as οἱ σίδαρχοι.
720 For scansion purposes, μέλεα is given rather than the more usual contracted form, μέλη, from μέλος "limb".

721-22 ὅς is causal. Note that what appears to be a colon at the end of 721 in Diggle’s text is a typographical error and should not be there. Line 722 is repeated for the most part at 1087, where it is interpolated (see Page (1934) 103-5.) The δαίμων of this line is not to be identified concretely with the ἀλόστρος of 686, because δέσις, being indefinite, marks its antecedent (δαίμων) also as indefinite. ἔθνες (like 111 ἐξηκε and 656 ναίνα) is used in the Ionic sense, = ποιεῖν. For possible stage directions at this point, see note 683.

724-25 Strictly, this is no longer part of the κομμός, but rather a formal choral introduction preparing for the entrance of Agamemnon. "Marking the appearance of a new character on the stage" (GP 103) ἀλλ’ εἰσορῶ γὰρ can also be found at HF 138 (where see Bond), 442 (add to Parry’s footnote), Or 725, El 107, Bac 1165, Hip 51, Aesch PV 941, εἰσορῶ alone also being used to announce entries at Ale 24, Cyc 35. Parry calls the formula "a means of turning the eyes of the audience towards an actor who has just come onto the stage" (1971, 292.) It is best to translate taking εἰσορῶ γὰρ τοῦτο δειπόντου δέμας ἔρχεται Ἀγαμέμνονος as parenthetical. The periphrasis δέμας Ἀγαμέμνονος in some instances would recognize and welcome the actual physical presence (see Bond HF 1036) but here is a formal greeting, of their captor cf. the affectionate periphrasis in 676; also IA 417 σῆς Κλυταμήστρας δέμας, Or 107, El 1341, HF 1036, Soph Ant 945, OC 1550, Aesch Eum 84, Virgil Aen. 7.650 corpore Turni. The Homeric distinction between a living δέμας and a dead σώμα does not hold in Attic. The hortatory συγώμεν is not that the chorus must keep the matter of Polydorus a secret, nor even particularly that they tell themselves to "hush up." It is partly coming to order on the entrance of their master, and also allowing Hecuba, their former queen, to function as their spokesperson.

726 μέλεας + present or future indicative = "hesitate, delay".
727-28 The couplet recapitulates Hecuba’s words to Talthybius at 604-8. ἐφ’ οἷον εἶναι is relative attraction for ἐν τῷ τόπω έξ (so Tierney and Ambrose, who render "under the conditions which") cf. And 821 ἐφ’ οἷον ἠλίθες ἄνυγγελουσα σύ, Or 564 ἐφ’ οἷς δ’ ἀπαλεῖς ὡς πετρωθήναι με χρῆ. For the resolution in the fourth foot, cf. 1240-42 note.

729-30 The position of the epsilon in οὔδ’ ἐφηώμεν is open to question. Nauck’s version (adopted by Diggle) makes sense, and does avoid the violation of Porson’s law (cf. And 346, IA 530) but exceptions do exist (see West (1982) 84-5) which might excuse the original reading of the MSS.

ὁστε = "so as" to astonish me. MT 584 notes that "we generally translate ... so that I am astonished, as if it were ὁστε θεαμάξοντο ἔγώ, simply because we cannot use our infinitive with a subject expressed." ὁστε + infinitive introduces "a result which a previous act tends to produce" (587.1).

731-32 τάκειθεν refers to the preparations described 572-80. It is "matters from there" because it is at the place from which he has just come, cf. Latin ex ille parte "on that side"; also Soph OC 505 τάκειθεν, Aesch ST 40, cf. Hec 1152 ἔνθεν "on the other side". Although ἐξο + adverb is more common, ἐστὶν is acceptable, and is also used at 532.

καλὸς as an adjective, cf. Held 369-70 τοῦ τάκετα καλὸς ὅν εἶπα παρά γ’ ἐδφ φρονοθεῖον;

733 In Euripides, ἐξ always indicates surprise, cf. 1116. Page Med 1004 gives examples. As at 19, ἐνδέρα is used in attributive apposition (Smyth 986). Here it demonstrates the sequence of recognized details: "What man is this I see by the tent? dead? and a Trojan?"

734-35 With οὗ γὰρ Ἀργεῖον, sc. δύτα. While strictly speaking only a woman’s garment (933, Med 786, in plural Bac 833), here and at Cyc 301 ἕνιά τε δοῦναι καὶ πέπλοτες ἐπαρκέσαι,
πέπλοι is used of "clothes" in general. The singular is used of men's clothing at Cyc 327, IT 1218. "Strangers' clothing regularly excites attention as an indication of their race" (Friis Johansen and Whittle, Aesch Sup 234) cf. Held 130-31 καὶ μὴν στολὴν γ' Ἑλληνα καὶ Ῥωμηον πέπλων ἐξε, τά δ' ἐργά βαρβάρου χερὸς τάδε, IT 246, Rh 313, Hyps pp.78-9, Soph Phil 223-24, Aesch Sup 234, fr. 59 δοτις χτύνας βασανάς τε Λυδίας ἐξε ποδής, and, also from Edonians, fr. 61 ποσπάνδος δ' γυννίς; τίς πάτρα; τίς ἡ στολή; Lucian Cont 9. Yet here it seems somewhat artificial for there to be identifiable clothing on a body which has been adrift on the sea for up to three days. Both Menelaus in the Helen, and Odysseus in Odyssey 6 are naked after a shipwreck, which naturally recalls 679 γυννοθέν. As was mentioned there, it is less desirable dramaturgically to have a 'naked' dummy body which gets clothed by attendant servants during the κόμμος, Compare the use of δέμας with 724. Based on analogy with these lines, Page prefers δέμας to χέρας at Med 1206-07 ἐμοίκε δ' εὐθύς καὶ περιπτῶξας χέρας ἵνα γενε προσομοιώτας τοιάδ'.

736-51 These lines constitute "one of the most striking pieces of stage action to be found in Greek tragedy" (Bain (1977) 13) in that they represent both the earliest, and the longest, extant example of the use of an aside. The use of the term tends to be imprecise and can be misleading. Though Bain gives a narrow definition, it is consistent and is the only way to understand the device as having dramatic interest. The definition is this: "When X and Y are on stage together, an aside is any utterance by either speaker not intended to be heard by the other and not in fact heard, or properly heard by him" (17). This particular formulation is useful, since it avoids meta-theatrics, dealing exclusively with the character's intentions. It is unlikely, though possible that other characters on stage (such as the chorus) do hear the lines; it is equally possible that more than one person is meant to be excluded. It would be wrong to think of Hecuba's lines as being delivered sub voce to the servant, who is still onstage, see note on 778. What is important with this convention of the stage is that although the lines must be delivered with sufficient volume that they can be heard at the back of the theatre, the characters in question absolutely can not be thought to have heard them. Lembke and Reckford's belief that the lines are "orchestrated for
Agamemnon's benefit" could not be more wrong: it is a convention of the stage that is being introduced, and not the guile of Hecuba. Lembke and Reckford's interpretation is appropriate for an equally striking, but completely different scene, that of the merchant in Sophocles' Philoctetes.

As an example of an aside, Bain mentions Shakespeare Othello III.iv.34-5:

Oth: Well, my good lady; - O, hardship to dissemble!-

How do you, Desdemona?

Des: Well, my good lord.

If Desdemona had heard "O, hardship to dissemble" (the aside) her answer would not have been "Well, my good lord". Yet her answer does demonstrate that she has clearly heard both the preceding and the following phrases. All of Hecuba's lines in this passage are spoken aside, and are not heard by Agamemnon. Agamemnon's lines help reconstruct some of the stage action (e.g. Hecuba has her back turned to him) which is useful in terms of theatre history because it suggests that the ancient attitude to, and way of dealing with, an aside is similar to the modern one. The stage action (turning) shows that at least some degree of naturalism was present in ancient acting techniques. The convention, present but not frequent elsewhere in Euripides, became commonplace in Greek and Roman New Comedy. In general, my interpretation of these lines follows that of Bain (1977) 13-19. cf. 674-75, 812-23 which are commonly, though wrongly, labelled asides (Bain (1977) 31-33.)

The sustained use of the device, however, is remarkable, and its overall effect is quite similar to Shakespeare Henry VI part I V.iii.60-109 in the dialogue (if such it can be called) between Suffolk and Margaret, an excerpt of which follows (72-80):

Mar: Say, Earl of Suffolk, if thy name be so,

What ransom must I pay before I pass?

For I perceive I am thy prisoner.

Suf: [Aside] How canst thou tell she will deny thy suit, 75

Before thou make a trial of her love?

Mar: Why speak' st thou not? What ransom must I pay?
Suf: [Aside] She's beautiful, and therefore to be woo'd; She is a woman, therefore to be won.

Mar: Wilt thou accept a ransom - yea or no? 80

The exchange continues, Margaret hearing nothing as he speaks. This example shows the complete artificiality of the situation, but nevertheless its dramatic effect. Margaret’s impatience without a response is of exactly the same nature as Agamemnon’s in the present example.

736-38 Self-address is present elsewhere in Euripides (El 112-3, Tro 98-104). The Scholiast wrongly applies δύστηνε to Polydorus, with Hecuba then turning to address herself (πρὸς έαυτήν ἀποσταρβεία λέγει.) But εμαυτήν γὰρ λέγω, "I mean myself", clearly shows that neither Agamemnon nor Polydorus can be meant, cf. Herodotus 7.144.7, Isocrates Panath 277, Cicero de Fin 5.3 me autem dicebat. Despite its use in New Comedy, the Scholiast also indicates Didymus was unfamiliar with the device (also cited by Tierney): τὸ δὲ δύστηνε ὁ Διδύμος φησι πρὸς τὸν Πολύδωρον λέγειν τὴν Ἐκάβην, ὁ δύστηνε Πολύδωρε, εμαυτήν γὰρ λέγω, δύστηνον ἀποκαλοῦσα σε. She returns to the first person in the next line. λέγουσα σε poses a slight problem, as literally she has not yet said "σε", though it must be self-quotation. Hadley understands σε with the vocative δύστηνε, i.e. as if she had said "δύστηνε σύ." It is fair to wonder why she does not continue τί δράσεις; The relative novelty of the aside required such a transition to function as a clue to the aside, to make the audience realize that something unusual was occurring. Thus Paley rightly follows Dindorf in taking together δύστηνε Ἐκάβη, the rest of 736 being a justification for her self-address in the vocative. As at 260, πότερα introduces alternate possibilities, and often only the ἦ need be translated. προσπέσῳ + accusative is also found at Aesch ST 94-95 πότερα δὴ ἐγὼ <πάτρω> προσπέσῳ βρέτη δαμόνων; (where πάτρω is supplied from the Scholiast.) The deliberative subjunctive does not affect how δράσῳ is understood.

739-40 The poetical form of ὀδύρομαι - required by the metre - is rare (hence the MSS
variations), but is also found at And 397 (which might be spurious, see Stevens) and Aesch PV 271, and in lyric Med 159, Soph OT 1218, and Aesch Per 582. The use of the verb suggests an audible sound to which Agamemnon is responding (perhaps he has heard only the word δόρη' and is responding to that.) This need not be the case, as stage action could easily be used to represent weeping, requiring no sound. Though this is most likely, Bain (15 n.1) offers another possibility, that δόρη is being used in the same way that στένων is used in Soph Phi 806, where it refers to inward groaning.

Although it is favoured by Diggle, Collard, Murray (who lists no MSS variations), Bain (1977, 14 n.1) and Bichl (1984) 131-35, I do not believe πραγματεύον, ‘what has been done,’ is the correct reading, even though it is found in the majority of MSS (including Triclinius.) Two other readings are found, and should be considered:

1 κρατεύον, from κρατέω, ‘what has been done / brought to pass.’ It is found written in G, and in K as a correction by the first hand. This is the reading favoured by both Daitz and Matthiessen (1969) 302 and, at one time, by Diggle (1975), who called the reading "a clear gain" when reviewing Daitz. Bain says Euripides’ use of το κρατεύον always implies a divine element, but overstates his case. Though he is right about Ion 77, he is less certain about the corrupt Hip 868 (even Barrett suggests a neutral meaning: ‘what has come to pass.’) Though it is true that κρατεύον is ‘regularly used of decrees of gods and fate’ (Stevens And 1272, cf. Fraenkel Ag 369), it is often used with ψηφος, of voting (i.e. something irrevocable, Willinck’s ‘the unalterable situation.’) cf. 219, Or 1023, Tro 785, Aesch Sup 943. Bain’s argument rests on his desire for a neutral meaning (cf. Hip 842) and is influenced by Fraenkel to believe such is not possible with κρατεύον, which is not the case. κρατεύον is a slightly rarer word (suggesting diff. pot.), has a synonymous meaning to the more common reading, and is present early enough in the tradition (the late 13th century, just before Triclinius) to warrant it being preferable to πραγματεύον.
2 \textit{κραθέν} is found as the original of \textit{B} and \textit{K} (before each was corrected) and in Diggle's \textit{Π₁} (= Daitz' \textit{Π₄}) = \textit{P.Oxy} 876 [Pack² 389], dating from the fifth century A.D., and therefore predating all other readings by at least 500 years (\textit{Π₈} is illegible at this point.) Daitz (\textit{XIII} n.1) uses this reading to strengthen his case, saying \textit{κραθέν} = \textit{κρανθέν}, by which he means the \textit{former} is an abbreviation of the \textit{latter}. Although the \textit{nu} is not part of the \textit{κραθωω}-root, it is present in every form. For it in this one instance to have an optional form could seem too convenient, did \textit{Or} 1023 not give \textit{κραθέντ} as an alternate to \textit{κρανθέντ} in \textit{M} (before correction), \textit{V}, \textit{L}, \textit{P}. I am nevertheless tempted to posit \textit{κραθέν}, from \textit{κρανήνυμι} = "what has been mixed/diluted", as of wine - cf. \textit{Cyc} 557 πῶς ὁν ἄκραστα; \textit{Iol} 1016, fr. 472.5-8 (\textit{Cretans})

\begin{quote}
σος αὐθλιγνης τημβεια δοκος  
στεγανος παρέξει Χαλύβωρ πελέξει  
καὶ ταυροδέτῳ κόλλη κραθεισ'  
ἀτρεκεῖς ἀρμος κυπαρίσσου
\end{quote}

- being used here metaphorically for "what has been garbled." It would normally be scanned long, so there is no metrical problem.) If this reading were correct, it would then constitute another direct reference to the fact that 736-8 was spoken as an aside: the fact that Agamemnon could not make out what Hecuba had said, that it was garbled. Such a reference is appropriate for the probable novelty of the convention (no earlier example survives which suggests a recent development and possibly that this was the first use.)

Serving the same function is Agamemnon mentioning that Hecuba has turned her back. This interpretation is also not limited by any way of understanding \textit{δύρη}. It certainly is a rare word, and it is easy to imagine a transition to "what has happened" - \textit{κρανθέν} - as familiarity with the convention of the aside developed (as it clearly did with Menander and the New Comedy.)
Arguing against this possibility is Aesch Ag 321 ὁμιᾷ βοήν ἄμικτον ἐν πόλει πρέπειν which is typically taken to refer to cries that do not blend being heard clearly. Since ἄμικτος and κεράννυμι are used in opposing senses in Plato Philebus 61b it seems unlikely that the metaphorical leap required could be effected (the notion of clarity in the passage in the Agamemnon being part of the verb πρέπειν.)

It therefore seems that κρανθέν is the best of the possible readings, and that the lines should be translated: "Why do you weep, turning your back on me, and do not say what has been done? Who is this?"

741-42 Hecuba continues the aside and ignores Agamemnon’s questions. The sentiment she expresses is similar to Helen’s at Tro 914-5: ἵνα μὲ, κἀν ἐδὼ κἀκις δόξοι λέγειν, ἵνα ἀνταμείπῃ πολεμίζων ἔγονοιν. The parallel is not exact, since the Troades passage is the beginning of the agon between Helen and Hecuba, and supplication is not involved.

ἀπόσακτο + genitive = "thrust (me) away from". The repetition of ἓν (cf. 359-60, three times at 1199-1200) is frequent, and it is only slightly unusual in so short a clause, see MT 223, and Denniston El 534. cf. El 1047-48, Med 250-51, 616-17, Hip 961, And 77, 934-35, Tro 985, 1244, IT 98, 245. Again there is a structural allusion to the earlier scene with Odysseus, when the possibility of the person supplicated refusing to act in accordance with the supplicator’s desires is mentioned.

743-44 It is common in Greek (cf. 332) to use the perfect of φύω to mean "to be (by nature)", by extension from the primary meaning "to have been born." μὴ + participle (κλύων) creates a conditional force (MT 841), "unless by hearing." ἔξαπορφος (cf. 236) = "to search out", or perhaps better "to follow" which preserves the metaphorical use of ὄν, which itself is common: Hip 290 γεωρῆς ὄν, Pho 911 ἔχουε δὴ γνων τεσσαράκτων ἐμὸν ὄν, Med 376, Soph OT 67, 311, Aesch Eum 989, Ag 1154, Pindar O 8.13, Thuc 1.122, and also Aristoph Pax 124 where literal
and metaphorical meanings meet.

745-46 γε adds liveliness to the question posed by ἄρα (GP 50). μᾶλλον = “too much.” φρένας should be taken as “purpose”, as it is at Ion 1271-72 ἐν συμμάχοις γὰρ ἀνεμετρησάμην φρένας ἐν τάς σάς, διέσω μοι πήμα δυσμενῆς τ’ ἔφυς.

747 εὐ τοι cf. GP 546, the particle combination in conditional protasis is also found at El 77 εὐ τοι δοξεῖ σοι, στέξε. Hip 507.

748 It is fair to assume that Agamemnon, thinking Hecuba is not going to respond to him, begins to turn away from her as if to exit where he came onstage. This line was later reused by Euripides, with change only in the last two feet, at Or 1280 ες ταύτων ἡκεῖς καὶ γὰρ οὐδὲ τῆδε δῆλος. (cf. also 279 = Or 66 ταύτῃ γέγονε καλυληθετα κακών.) A similar feature has been observed in Tennyson’s poetry, and is explained by Ricks (1966). Barrett notes that the phrase ες ταύτων ἡκεῖς can mean one of two things: "(a) you are (after a given action) in the same position as you were or would be after another action" e.g. Hip 273, El 787, IA 1002; "or (b) you are in the same position as someone else" e.g. Or 1280, where sc. έμοι, IA 665, Scholia on Hip 273. He wrongly identifies the present instance as (b) when it is in fact (a): Agamemnon is saying that Hecuba will soon come to a point where it will no longer matter whether she speaks to him or not. It is necessary to understand βούλομαι (from 747 βούλη) with ἔγώ κλέειν. Parry (1971) 294 includes ες ταύτων ἡκεῖς καὶ γὰρ οὐδὲ (both here and at Or 1280) among a list of six phrases “by which a character who has just come upon the stage can begin his speech, or by which the thought can be carried back and forth between actors in the give and take of dramatic conversation”. What this implies is that, despite the asides, the ‘rules’ of stichomythia (such as they exist) are being followed.

749-50 Verbs of avenging (like τιμωρέων here, or ἄμόνεων) are clearly defined in terms of the
cases which they take. The dative (τέκνοι τοῖς ἐμοῖς) indicates the person avenged (Smyth 1376). An accusative represents the person punished, with the crime itself sometimes being regarded as the offender. A genitive indicates the wrong done, or the cause (Smyth 1445). When the verb is found in the middle form (as it is in 756 and 882) it means "to avenge oneself on" and therefore times = "to punish". Cf. Herodotus 3.145 καὶ σφεταὶ τιμωρήσωμαι τῆς ἐνθάδε ἀπίξος ("And I shall punish them for coming here"); Xenophon Anabasis 7.4.23 τιμωρήσασθαι αὐτοῦς τῆς ἐπιθέσεως ("to take revenge on them for this attack"); Cyropaedeia 4,6,8 τιμωρήσειν σοι τοῦ παιδὸς τὸν φονέα ὑποσχοῦμαι ("I promise to avenge you for the murder of your son." Revenge in Greek morality can be ambiguous (as in the modern world) but in all of these instances, it represents meet and acceptable behaviour, as should be expected with the word's etymological link with τίμη; cf. Introduction I, II, IV. The word is used in the Oresteia of Aeschylus four times, at Ag 1280, 1324, 1578, and Cho 143.

In mentioning revenge at this point, Hecuba initiates her consolidated effort to reclaim her former glory, which she will accomplish through her righteous revenge upon Polymestor. This is the first time the word has been used (and its omission from the prologue is probably significant, cf. Introduction IV, and note its omission in 262-65 where the notion but not the vocabulary of revenge are strongly present). The use introduces a key word of the play (always used by Hecuba of this revenge-action, cf. 756, 790, 843, 882, 1258) and initiates the key movement of the story. She is at this point the lowest in status she ever is in the play (see Introduction VI), and the decline in status has been continual since she first appeared on stage. Even though at this point (cf. 751) she is as open to failure as success, she at least will no longer be passive. Testall (1954) rightly notes that this constitutes a genuine moment of surprise in the play.

Like the Latin volvo, στρέψω comes to = "hesitate" from its more primary meaning of ‘revolving’ thoughts. It is not a reference to physical position.

751 Hecuba steals her courage and ends her aside. The use of the double καὶ (crasis for καὶ ἐκεῖν, see GP 324) is stronger than just "whether ... or". Despite the grammatical irregularities in
English, a translation should include both possibilities rather than exclude one: "I must be bold, both if I succeed, and even if I do not succeed."

752-53 In addressing Agamemnon, Hecuba turns and falls in the traditional position of supplication, cf. 286 (see Gould (1973) 75-77). She surprises him before he can turn away, as Odysseus did in 342. The sanctity of the suppliant was absolute, cf. Thetis in Homer Il 1.407, 500-02, and Priam in book 24. Conacher (1961) wrongly believes that Hecuba’s supplication constitutes a debasement. What Agamemnon hears is a two line speech (even though the audience has heard three other lines aside.) He responds with a two-line speech (754-55) as does Hecuba (756-57, but see note.) In effect, she has selected the former alternative that she had suggested 737-8. Murray printed an ellipse after 753, assuming that Agamemnon was cutting Hecuba off before a long supplicatory speech was under way. This is unnecessary. The sentence makes satisfactory sense as it stands, and it is normal for characters to continue one another’s grammar, though this is a particular feature of stichomythia.

754-55 η χρήμα indicates astonishment, cf. Aesch PV 298. Homer uses the verb ματέω, but by the fifth century it has become interchangeable with the more metrically convenient μαστέω. Euripides uses both (μαστέω: here, Hel 597, Pho 36; ματέω: 779, 815 - note again Euripides’ tendency to repeat rare words in a close proximity to each other), as does Aeschylus (Ag 1099 (though Schütz emends this away); Ag 1094; Cho 219) and Pindar (P 3.107, 4.62, N 8.73; N 3.53.) Sophocles uses only ματέω (OT 1052, Phi 1210, OC 211) but this could easily be an accident of what survives. Hesiod fr.85 (Göttl.) has τὴν μαστέων. As at 676, μῶν functions like the Latin num, with the questioner anticipating a negative response. ἔλευθερον ... θέσθαι, "have made free", cf. the use of the active voice at 656, 722.

Exactly why this is ρέοσθαν is neither clear nor spelled out. Pflugk thinks Agamemnon is suggesting suicide. This is ridiculous, wrong and inappropriate, and constitutes an unnecessarily cruel pun in ἔλευθερον αὐτῶν θέσθαι. The alternative is that Agamemnon is ready to grant
Hecuba her freedom, either in respect to her old age and former status, or for the sake of Cassandra (cf. 823-32.) Paley takes this line when he paraphrases ἐμοὶ τὸ τοῦτο χαράσσεσθαι σου. But this is also not free from interpretative problems. If Hecuba need only ask for her freedom, it seems unlikely that the dramatic situation itself would exist. Deference to Hecuba’s old age is possible (she is clearly meant to be thought of as frail and weak.) Weil seems to propose a reason in terms of practical theatricality: Agamemnon makes the offer so that Hecuba can prefer slavery to revenge. Though perhaps valid, this too is insufficient.

The uses of the word ἁδίος in Euripides are not instructive: cf. e.g. And 232, 975, Held 268, 1022, fr. 20 (Aeolus) μὴ πλοῦτον ἐπιμένει σύξι θεωματίζω θεόν | ἀν χῶ κάκιστος ἁδίος ἐκτῆσατο, fr. 360.54-5 (Erechtheus) καὶ ἁδίος ἰ σκότημεν ἀν σε κυρόν ἀν πάσχοις κακῶν.

The question that must be asked is, what authority does Agamemnon have over Hecuba? The evidence is slight. This problem has led a few editors to offer emendations: θέσθαι, πάλιν ἀν οὐκέτ’ ἔστι σοι; F. Gu. Schmidt: ἁδίοιον δ’ οὐκ ἔστι μοι Ηειμνοεθῆ; or, following Blaydes’ τόδ’ for γάρ, reading θέσθ’; οὐ ἁδίοιον τόδ’ ἔστι σοι (emending in this way does support cutting 756-58, or 756-59, where see note.) But all of these are also insufficient solutions. The allocation of all the prisoners of war has taken place (100-01.) In Euripides’ later treatment of the same event, Hecuba is told Tro 277 ἦδηκ Οὐδασεῖς Ἐλαχ’ ἄνωξ δούλην σ’ ἔχεν. This is especially cruel, in her mind, and demonstrates how chance seems to be working against her. At what point did this detail enter the story? The absence of evidence leaves the matter open. Presumably, every survivor is assigned to somebody in the tradition. If Hecuba is then traditionally assigned to Odysseus, her relationship with him in the first episode of this play is obscured (to what end?) and there is no reference in the Odyssey to the fact it is off of his ship that she falls. It certainly would not be ἁδίοιον for Agamemnon to free Odysseus’ slave (cf. the dispute which opens Iliad 1.) If assigning Hecuba to Odysseus is an innovation of the Troades, as is likely, the original question is begged. Apollodorus Epitome 5.23.8-11 (Frazer (1921) II 240-1) suggests that there were two traditions, the antiquity of which cannot be determined. Assigning Hecuba to Odysseus is also found in Quintus Smyrnaeus Posthomerica 14.20-23, but the alternate
tradition, where she is assigned to Helenus (Dares Phrygius De Excidio Trojae 43) is the one, according to Apollodorus, involving the metamorphosis (see note on 1265), though the transformation is found in Posthomerica 14.347-51 (where it takes place on the beach.)

One factor that can be brought into consideration is the use of the central door to Agamemnon’s tent (53-54): that Hecuba and Polyxena are presented as staying there, as well as (one presumes) Cassandra whom we know in the tradition (also from 826) is assigned to Agamemnon, suggests that they too are assigned to Agamemnon, at least until what is to be done with Polyxena has been decided. The Scholiast to 99 recognizes the problem, but fails to give an adequate solution: ἤν γὰρ ἡ Ἐκάβη ἐν τῇ τοῦ Ὀδυσσέως σκηνῇ, ὥ δὲ χορὸς ἐν τῇ τοῦ Ἀγαμέμνονος. διὰ τοῦτο λέγει τὰς δεσποσύνους, τουτέστι τοῦ Ἀγαμέμνονος, ὅπου ἐκληρώθην εἶναι δοῦλη. Hecuba is old, and clearly not a desirable prize (except in terms of cruel irony, when assigned to Odysseus as in the Troades.) If she had been assigned to Agamemnon, either legitimately or by ‘default’ as mother of Cassandra, it would explain (1) why mother and daughters are all staying with Agamemnon, (2) why Odysseus will not let Hecuba die with Polyxena, and (3) why granting her freedom is ῥόδιον for Agamemnon. This then is surely the solution. For the purposes of this play, a third tradition (not described by Apollodorus) is operating, wherein Hecuba the Queen of Troy is assigned as a prisoner to the Leader of the Achaeans, Agamemnon. Only this accounts for the details of stage geography as well as the problem presented by this line. It also adds a powerful nuance to 864-69 (where see note and cf. Introduction VI.)

Major suggested that these lines were in Plautus’ mind when he had Leonida say at Asinaria 274 (=2.2.8) Aetatim velim servire, Libanum ut conveniam modo.

756-9 There is a problem with the text here concerning the authenticity and the ordering of the lines. The MSS. and editors variously delete and rearrange these lines. Daitz keeps all of them in the traditional order, as does Murray, and I am inclined to agree, though it is worth listing the various other possibilities and evaluating their relative merits:
1. **None of the lines are genuine.** This is supported by Diggle's II\(^7\) (not edited, dating from the second century A.D., from Oxyrhynchus) which omits 756-59. This invalidates Weil's half-solution to the interpretation of 754-55 (as does Diggle's solution, below) but does not significantly affect the sense of the passage. Though this might suggest interpolation, it is likely that any actor's alteration would have occurred in the fourth century B.C., and would be reflected in the much later papyrus fragment. The omission could simply represents the scribe's desire to save space. Nevertheless, since the reading of II\(^8\) is uncertain (there appears to be enough room for all the lines, so Mossman (1990) 57), this does represent the earliest version surviving. The fact that II\(^7\) also omits 761 which was *in marg. infer. add. ut vid.* (Diggle) supports either viewpoint. Though it might indicate excessive sloppiness (or selection) on the part of the original scribe, it similarly could suggest that the second hand knew 761 existed but was unaware of 756-59.

2. **Deleting 756-8.** Not a lot is gained but little is lost with this alternative, which has the support of M and O, and the original reading of B, F, G, K, Triclinius etc. It does preserve three couplets before regular stichomythia, which though not required is neater.

3. **Diggle.** Diggle deletes 756-57, and reverses 758-59. These decisions should be examined separately. Lines 756-7 are not great, surely, but they do (as Weil noted) help explain the preceding couplet to an extent, and do add to the motif of slavery, discussed by Daitz (1971). Hecuba's pronouncement that she would rather be a revenged slave than simply free is dramatically similar to Philoctetes' desire that he would rather live on alone in pain than accede to Odysseus' wishes. In reordering 758-59, Diggle creates a situation artificially which supports his case for deletion. The opening syllables make the lines seem specious:
Excising the lines seems unsound. The reordering is an attempt to remove the awkward couplet of 759-60 (which is also done by both of the solutions below.) Though there are no strict rules for stichomythia, it is thought that Agamemnon's single line at 758 is somehow inelegant. The rearrangement creates two couplets, then 'regular' stichomythia (counting from where Hecuba begins to speak aloud to Agamemnon again.) Again, this solution is only elegant if 756-57 is deleted. See also 759 τούτων.

4. There is a lacuna. Hadley says Kirchoff suspected a line of Agamemnon's has been lost after 758. Paley gives a theoretically possible, if unfounded, guess of one beginning καὶ δὴ πέπεισμα ("Supposing I do assent...", cf. Med 386.) Alternately, Hermann posits a line of Agamemnon's after 759. Either of these are possible, but solve only an imagined problem.

5. Hirzel. Mossman (1990) 58-59 adopts a middle road between Diggle and the lacuna-theory, resurrecting Hirzel's treatment of the problem. Hirzel was the first to transpose 758-59, and had posited a lacuna after 757 (one line of Agamemnon's.) This removes any structural inelegancies, avoids the odd repetitions discussed in (3) above, and would give 759 τούτων more than one spoken suggestion to which to refer.

6. Hartung. Hartung deleted 759 in his commentary on IA (1837) which does not injure sense and removes Hecuba's 'inelegant' couplet. The argument against this is the strength of MSS. support for this line is greater than for 756-8, which are lacking in two good MSS., etc. However, he kept it in his 1850 edition of this play, writing, "Der Vers is weder zu tilgen noch durch eine Zwischenrede und Lücke von dem folgenden zu trennen, und die Stichomythie kann nicht unterbrochen sein ehe sie noch begonnen hat."
There is nothing wrong with the verses as they stand in the received text. The 'inelegancy' is imaginary: the rules, such as they exist, of stichomythia, can only apply once stichomythia has begun. Mastronarde rightly notes that Diggle’s "solution is ingenious but not self-evidently correct ... the four lines 756-59 in the traditional order produce what many have found to be convincing sense" (1988, 156-57.) However, if the text is felt to be unsatisfactory because of the inelegancy, Hirzel’s solution is markedly the best.

756-57 τιμωρομένη cf. 749-50 note. θέλω (= θελω) "I am willing" rather than "I wish."

759 Using Diggle’s order, τούτων must refer to 754 τι χρήμα μαστεύσωσα, and this is strained. Following the traditional order, it refers to 758 ἔπάρκεσιν. δὲν has been attracted from the accusative of δοξάζεις to the case of τούτων.

758 Euripides uses the formula καὶ δὴ to introduce a surprised question here, Hel 101 καὶ δὴ τί τούτ’ Ἀλαοτι γίγνεται κακόν, El 655, Or 1188. Xen Cyr 4.3.5 might be analogous; Aesch Sup 499 καὶ δὴ φίλον τις ἔκτασιν ἐγνολας ὑπο and Aristoph Birds 1251 are not. cf. GP 250.

760 To begin a question with ὄρθης, which is answered with ὄρω is a fairly common form, cf. Ion 1337-38 ὄρθης τόδ’ ἄγγος χερός ὑπ’ ἄγκαλας ἐμαίς; ὁ ὄρω παλαιάν ἀντίθηγ’ ἐν στέμμασιν, Hel 797-98, IA 322-23, Aesch Per 1018-19, PV 69-70. ὃς, "on which", could very well be less metaphorical than one might initially suspect: having the actor stand right over the corpse could be particularly effective. That would mean that she breaks the supplication position, see note 752-3. She could just point to the corpse (τόνθ’.)

στᾶξω and its compounds (such as καταστᾶξω here) are often used transitively for shedding tears: IA 1466 σῶκ ὅδω στᾶξεξ δάκρυ, HF 1354-55, fr. 407.1-2 (Ino) ἐμοναία τοι μηδ’ ἐπ’ οἰκτρωσιν δάκρυ I στᾶξαν, Oppian Halieutica 4.343-44, cf. Ion 876 στᾶξαν κόραι δακρύσασιν ἐμαί, Xen Cyr 5.1.5, Timotheus Pers 100-01 δακρύσασθαεῖ γόρ. An intransitive use is not out of
the question however, cf. 241. In his Latin version of the *Hecuba*, Ennius rendered the line *vide nunc meae in quem lacrurae guttati cadunt* (this was preserved in Nonius, under *guttati*.)

761 τὸ μέλλον "what is about to come." The adversative use of μέντοι does not always require a preceding μέν, especially in verse. cf. 885, *Pho* 272 πέποθα μέντοι μητρὶ, *Ion* 812, Aristoph *Clouds* 588, *Ecc* 646, *Plut* 554, see *GP* 404. μέν can exist, e.g. at *IT* 1334-35 καὶ τάδ' ἂν ὑποτα μέν, ἵ ἢ ἤρεσκε μέντοι σοίσι προσπόλοις, ἀναξ.

762 This line is an example of *hysteron proteron*, where the natural order of things has been reversed for emphasis. e.g. *El* 969 πῶς γάρ κτάνοι νῦν, ἂ μ' ἐθρέψε κατεκεν; *Soph* *OT* 827 ἄδε ἐθρέψε κατεξαφανεῖ με, *Homer Od* 12.134, *Virgil Aen* 2.353. The regular expression for a pregnant womb is the periphrasis found here, ζώνης δπο, "under (my) girdle/belt" cf. *Aesch Cho 992 ἄδε, ὑπὸ τέκνων ἴνεγχ' ὑπὸ ζώνην βάρος, etc. but the is some anatomical variation as to its actual location: *Ion* 15 γαστρῶδ' ... δηγκον, *Sup* 919 ὑρ' ἤτατος, and *Pindar* and the tragedians have σπλάγχνον.

763 τίς is in an unusual position for the interrogative pronoun. If the *accent* is removed, the line then becomes: "So this is a certain one of your children, poor wretch..." which seems unusual.

764 How much irony is in Hecuba's comment? She is speaking to the general ultimately responsible for the fates of all her children.

765 ἃ γάρ is used for a surprised, or eager question: 1047, 1124, *Soph OC* 64, *Phi* 248, 322, 654.

766 The neuter plural ἄνόνητα γ' is being used as an adverb "in vain, unprofitably" (built from ἄνάνημα and the alpha-privative.) cf. *Or* 1501, *Hel* 886, *Alc* 412, *El* 507, 508, *fr.386 (Theseus) ἄνόνητον ἀγαλμ' ὅ πάτερ, οἴκουι τέκνων. *Barrett* notes the exception of *Hip* 1144-45 ὅ
τάλαινα μάτρι, ἡ ἐπεκεῖς ἀνόνωτα, which does not fit the pattern of the word being 'used when the subject himself οὔδεν ὑπόνεται from his action.' Aristotle NE 1.10 discusses happiness after death as a way of appraising success posthumously. Bad luck can affect one's εὐδαιμονία retrospectively and retroactively. The present treatment of Polydorus' corpse continues to outrage his spirit.

767 The epicism πτόλυς is used for the sake of the meter (cf. 1209.) In iambics, it always appears at the end of a line, except at Bac 216 κλέω δὲ νεοχώρα τήνδ' ἀνά πτόλυν κακά. It does not occur in extant Sophocles, but is fairly common in Euripides and Aeschylus: full lists of occurrences in tragedy can be found at Page Med 641, and Friis Johansen and Whittle Aesch Sup 699. Variations in the MSS are metrically unsound, and merely represent the substitution of the more common word for the rarer one.

768 Strict syntax would require something like μὴ θάνη rather than ὑπωοδῶν θανεῖν, "fearing that he should die", but cf. Ion 1563-65 ἐπι δ' ἀνεφέρει πράγμα μηνοῦθεν τόδε, ἰ θανεῖν σε δέσσα σμιρρός ἐκ βουλευμάτων καὶ τήνδε πρὸς σοῦ, μηχανάζει ἐρρύσατο. ὑπωοδῶ is uncommon in tragedy (El 831-32 Η ξέν', ὑπωοδῶ τὸν ἄδολον θυραῖον, fr.128 ὑπωοδῶν ἐφηται ἐπὶ τοῦ εὐλεμβείόθαι and cf. Soph OT 616), though it is favoured by Herodotus, who uses the Ionic ὑπωοδῶν. Euripides does use the nominal form more often though, e.g. Pho 1389 διὰ φῶλον ὑπωοδῶν. The accusative and infinitive is a common construction when expressing fear, cf. Rh 933 οὐκ ἐδείμαυν θανεῖν, Sup 554, Med 1256.

769 With ποῦ it is necessary to sc. τίν ἐξεπέμψεν from the previous line. χορῆσας, from χορπίζω, "separating x (accusative) from y (genitive)" (Ambrose.) Agamemnon is filling in the details that were set forth in the prologue and again 682; cf. 779.

770 This line is an indirect accusation, emphasized by the postponement of θανοῦν. οὔπερ
"where". ηὐρέθη is an augmented form of εὑρέθη, cf. 270.

771 Πολυμήστωρ has been attracted to the nominative case because it has been transferred to the relative clause for emphasis, cf. 986-88, Hip 101 τὴν ἡ πύλαια σαΐς ἐφέστηκεν Κύπρις, Bac 1332 ἢν Ἄρεος ἐχθραὶ Ἀρμονίαν θνητὸς γεγός. Pindar P 2.15-17, Homer II 11.624-26. The name itself is relatively rare in the play: it occurs here (Agamemnon), 969, 974 (Hecuba), and 1116 (Agamemnon.)

772 πυροτάτου is proleptic, for "which was to cause his bitter sufferings," cf. Cyc 589 οἴμοι πυρότατοι οἶνον δῆμοια τάχα. What is being stressed is Polymestor's role as guardian: the money wasn't his.

774 The γε is being used as δῆ, to strengthen the force of the interrogative (GP 124.) The construction τίνος ... ἄλλου is also found at El 1314, Aesch PV 440. Both Θρησκείας and ξένος are in emphatic positions. In a very real sense, both words are 'loaded' in this context, and together would have sounded to Athenian ears like an oxymoron. The ξένος-relationship was coveted and esteemed (cf. esp. 710-1 and note, 781, 1047, Denniston El 83, Collard Sup 930-1) while the Thracians were generally considered to be base and untrustworthy.

The play continually refers to Polymestor not by his name (cf. 771) but as "the Thracian" (here, 710, 890), "the Thracian man" (682, 873), and "the Thracian king" (856), and this systematically prejudices the audience against the character. Slave lists that survive from this period indicate that many Athenian slaves were of Thracian decent; it is therefore probable that Θρησκείας was a common slave name. The typical Athenian attitude to the Thracian character is evidenced by, e.g. Aristoph Ach 134-73, Thuc 2.95-101, 7.29.4-5 τὸ γὰρ γένος τὸ τῶν Θρησκείων ὁμοία τοῖς μάλιστα τοῦ βαρβαρικοῦ, ἐν ὑπὸ ἄνθρωποι, φοινικῶτατοι ἐστίν (ὁμοία για ὁμοίως as in Herodotus.) cf. Herodotus 9.119.1, Aesch PV 727 and Herodotus 4.103 attest to the sacrifice of shipwrecked strangers to Artemis Orthia (so named because her temple stood on the κρημνός in
front of the city (Strabo 308)) in the Tauric Chersonese. This is still happening in Tacitus’ day (An 12.17.4) and is a possible source for part of the Iphigeneia myth (e.g. Euripides IT, but this is not the only source of the myth, viz. Abraham and Isaac, in the biblical Genesis 22.)

Though geographically more removed from the Thracian Chersonese where this play takes place, both locations are essentially anomic, and serve to remove an external human authority, requiring any law or custom to be imposed by the characters themselves. In this play, the area represents a netherworld between the Greeks and Trojans, also represented by its king, Polymestor. In the Iliad, Trojans are not treated as barbarians, though it is unknown whether this is a cultural or a literary creation; but by the fifth century, Greek identity was established very much along a ‘them-and-us’ mentality. Euripides in his plays consciously challenges this notion, by presenting barbarians (and especially barbarian women) as being more righteous, powerful and noble than the Greeks. In this context however, the Thracian fulfils the traditional expectations of a barbarian.

775 The negative nuance of ταλίμον is derived from the context, cf. the positive use at 562. The use of ἔρασθη (from ἔραμαι, "desires eagerly") may have recalled the equally greedy and more contemporary Thracian, Sitacles in the minds of some audience members. Of him, Thucydides 2.97.4 says ὅπως ἦν πρᾶξαι οὐδὲν μὴ διδόντα δῶρα.

776 Tierney, Hadley, and Stevens And 910 suggest τοιαῦτα should be rendered "just so", but Denniston El 645 is more apt in this context, explaining it as "a sinister litotes, 'something like that'". The gold had been kept with Polymestor against the contingency of Troy being taken, and served as the guarantee of Polydorus’ safety. With the capture of Troy and the coming-of-age of Polydorus (exactly when this is is never made explicit) the gold would have to be forfeited.

778 The demonstrative ἤδε, "she," can only refer to the θεράπωνα of 657-701, and shows that she is still onstage (probably upstage and to the side, removed from the present dialogue but still in attendance.)
779 μαρτύουσα, cf. 754, 815, and note that some MSS have the sigma as a variation. As at 774, Agamemnon is briefly being filled in on the events that transpired at the beginning of the episode, before his entrance.

780 This refers back to the orders given at 611-13. ὀσοῦσα is from φέρω.

781 Polydorus has not only been murdered by his ξένος (Polymestor) but the body has not properly been buried. These are regarded as two separate crimes at 796-97. For the strength of the ξένος relationship, cf. 710-11 note. The notion of the offence being more heinous because it violates two moral laws is similar to Macbeth's predicament, Shakespeare, Macbeth I.vii.10-16:

This even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double trust:
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself.

The situation is slightly different as both of Macbeth's crimes are in essence violations of the ξένωσα relationship, to which must be added the treatment of the corpse (cf. premise of Soph Ant.)

782 This line assents to both the previous statements, but in doing so reverses the order, producing a chiastic structure. διατεμένων, "having disfigured" cf.716.

784 An absolute statement such as this could only be understood to be ironic. While it might be argued (as by Collard, cf. 1274) that Hecuba is now beyond suffering, she is going to wreak κακό

785 For a full account of the variation between ὀδυμός and ὀδύτω, see Friis Johansen and Whittle Sup 338.

786-845 Though this speech is important to the play it does not hold the primacy sometimes ascribed to it, e.g. Kirkwood (1947). Polyxena’s death in the first and second episodes has been presented as noble, honourable and befitting a princess of Troy, though in the end the victory was bitter, ultimately serving the Greeks’ desires. It was something Hecuba was powerless to prevent. Polydorus’ murder was ignoble, dishonourable, and shamefully brutal, and this spurs Hecuba to action. Her revenge on Polymestor is, partly, to regain honour for her dead son. It is also in part Hecuba’s regaining her own former dignity, and it is in this speech that her status and presence on stage surpasses that of the Greek general. Polydorus’ death was due to the fall of Troy (776) despite Priam’s best efforts. Hecuba remembers her former state and status and seeks, in captivity, to reclaim some of her former nobility through revenge. Medea can be considered in a similar light: in addition to wishing to punish Jason for his actions, she desires to restore to herself some of the honour she had before leaving Colchis. Of course, this similarity must not be pressed too far, as there is a significant quantitative difference between Medea’s infanticides and those of Hecuba. It is in this light that one must view Hecuba’s so-called abasement in the third episode and epilogue, especially 824-32.

In many ways the speech does break neatly into two halves, with 812 forming the dividing mark. Lines 786-811 present a rational appeal by Hecuba based on the traditional grounds of justice and pity. But this does not convince Agamemnon, so her plea gets more desperate (and more reminiscent of fifth-century Athenian politics) as it is an appeal of structured rhetoric, both desperate and personal. Equally telling in this respect are the three abstractions invoked, and in some sense personified, during the speech: Τύχη (786, Misfortune), Νόμος (800, Law, or - see
The Scholiast rightly observes of τὴν Τύχην that τὴν δυστυχίαν δηλονότα. Τύχη is one of those words which is coloured by its context, cf. Sup 1146-47 οὖν τὸ κακὸν τὸ δέ εἴδει, ἀλλὰ τόξος, Al 393, And 979, El 1185 (all of which imply δυστυχία), and Hel 1195, Or 154, both of which are found with συμφορᾶς and are neutral or ambiguous in terms of moral colouring. What is unusual in this context is that the word that colours it is its lexical (if not necessarily semantic) opposite δυστυχία in the previous line. Of the parallels normally cited, two are the wrong way round (Plautus Capt 521, Terence Adelph 761) The third is valid, though: fortunam ipsam anteibo fortunis meis, Trabea, cited in Cic Tusc Disp 4.31; and cf. Milton Paradise Lost 2.39 "Surer to prosper than prosperity".

Schaefer was the first to suggest τύχη was personified here, by placing the capital. Reckford (1985, 126-27) notes:

Most everything that happens in Hecuba is a matter of chance, blind chance. It would be more reassuring, almost, if we could see some specific dark power at work in this play, like Aphrodite in the Hippolytus or Dionysus in the Bacchae. Then evil would have a face.

His sentiment is correct, it would be more comforting to have a particular divinity responsible, but he oversimplifies: it is less a personified chance and more the actual fall of Troy that is ultimately at fault; and Hecuba’s punishment of Polymestor, even with his retributive prophecy of her doom, removes the arbitrary malevolence. On the role of the gods in the play, see also Segal (1989).
The optative in λέγεις should be retained over the simpler and more common -εις, since it states the case in the most general way (Jebb Ant 666 says the optative is especially suited for γνώμαι.) cf. fr. 212 (Antiope) τί δει καλῆς ἔγνωμα, εἰ μὴ τᾶς φρένας χρηστᾶς ἔχων; fr. 253 (Archelaos) οὗ γὰρ λέγειν ἔστιν, εἰ φέρει τινα βλάβην, Soph OT 315, and Smyth 2359, 2360; contra Tovar (1959) 132. Well suspected this line not to be genuine, but to remove it makes 785 both rhetorical and weak.

788 It is often possible to distinguish between justice according to divine standards (δίκαιος, here adverbial), and that in a human perspective, δίκαιος. Abuse of hospitality, being the concern of Zeus Xenios, is ἄνόσια, for example. Greek also makes δίκαιος = "permitted for human use", opposite to ἡρα, "sacred", but here clearly Hecuba is appealing to the higher authority of divine justice because she does not want to be part of the demagoguery of Odysseus and Agamemnon, cf. Soph Ant 73-74 ἄρημα μετ' αὐτοῦ κέδοσαι, φίλου μέτα, ἤ δίκαιον πανουργήσας', Polybius 23.10 παραβιάζειν καὶ τὰ πρὸς τοὺς ἄνθρωπῳ δίκαια καὶ τὰ πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς δίκαια. A similar point can be seen in Milton's Tetrachordon, on Genesis 1.27 "Men of the most renowned virtue have sometimes by transgressing most truly kept the law".

789 στέργου’ ἄν, "I am willing to endure it", cf. Hip 458 στέργουσα δ’, ὁμιᾷ, ξυμφορῇ νικώμενοι. σοί μοι γενοῦ "you are to become for me." The reading of Μ, μου, is wrong, arising perhaps due to attraction from its proximity to γενοῦ.

790 Hadley explains τιμωρός ἀνδρός, "an avenger upon the man," thus: "The genitive is used with adjectives of transitive action, where the corresponding verbs would have the accusative." (235) as it does, e.g. Soph El 14 πάτρι τιμωρόν φόνου. For the importance to the overall theme of the play of the word τιμωρός, see note 749-50. ξένου is not "false friend", i.e. an implicit opposite (and clearly ironic) meaning as Well seems to
think, emending to ἀνοσιάτατον, κακοξένου. Though this removes the repetition with 792 (which in itself is unproblematical), it is more ironic to have a (continued) friendship after the murder of Polydorus. For the importance of the relationship in the play, see 710-11 note.

791 It might be that Hecuba is universalising Polymestor’s offence, saying that it offends against all supernatural powers. It is more poetic to see here a reference to the two specific crimes with which Polymestor has been accused (781.) He has failed to honour the "nether gods" (τοὺς γῆς νερθέν, sc. θεοὺς, which is periphrastic for χθόνιον θεοῦ) in not burying Polydorus, and has offended particularly against Zeus Xenios of the "gods above" (τοὺς ἄνω, sc. θεοὺς) in violating his duties as a host. Non-burial of the dead would bring anger of the deceased’s ὀλάστωρ (see note 685-87.) It could also be that the line is a periphrastic way of saying "absolutely every god."

What is not certain is whether in fact it is valid to understand θεοὺς in this context (Diggle (1981) 121 strongly argues that Burges’ θεοὺς for τοὺς is wrong.) Perhaps, considering the absence of a particular malevolent deity in the play (see note 786), τοὺς ἄνω = "those still alive", and τοὺς γῆς νερθέν then = Polydorus’ ὀλάστωρ. This interpretation is more in line with the supernatural world as it has already been presented in the play. Just as Achilles’ ghost in the first two episodes was something to respect and honour, so Polydorus’ ghost becomes something to fear in this episode.

792 ἔργον ἀνοσιώτατον is a poetic formula (see Parry (1971) 294-5 and 295 n.6) Euripides also employs, also at verse ends, at Med 796 φεύγουσα καὶ τλάστῃ ἔργον ἀνοσιώτατον and Or 286 δόσις μ’ ἱπάρας ἔργον ἀνοσιώτατον.

793-97 Diggle accepts Nauck’s deletion of these lines, also adopted by Weil (who calls them "bavardage vague et mal écrit"), Page (1934), Mossman (1990) 147, etc., but not Murray or Daitz. Page is particularly damning: they are "ill-composed and quite unworthy of Euripides. This is a rather bad interpolation, written by an actor specially for this context, perhaps as late as 250 B.C."
(1934, 68). This seems to be more an emotional response than anything else. Page provides no objections to 793, three to 794-95, and one to 796-97. Other editors have been more prudent: Matthiae deleted only 794-95; Dindorf 794-97. There is a significant and obvious hermeneutical error in Page’s assumption that every line of Euripides must be perfect. The vicissitudes of the MSS. tradition alone prevent its feasibility. Collard makes a fivefold argument against all the lines. Mossman (1990) 147 accepts their deletion. Problems in these lines will be discussed as they arise. None are insurmountable, and I believe all the lines are authentic in origin, though Dindorf may be right to the extent that only 793 (and perhaps 797) survives in the MSS. as it was originally written.

Even discounting viability, the lines do contribute three notions to the play which on thematic terms alone suggest their preservation. First, they separate and define the two separate crimes that Polymestor has committed (see note 781). This picks up on what the ghost of Polydorus established 26-27. Secondly, the references to ἡξελάθα further a theme that is being developed (see note 710-11). Finally, the notion of Hecuba having eaten often at a common table (see next note) with Polymestor furthers the tacit notion that she too is of Thracian decent (implied by 3, picked up perhaps later in 1129-31.)

793 The phrase κοινὴς τραπέζης is also found at Ion 651-52 θέλω γὰρ οὔπερ σ’ ηὗρον ἀρξασθαί, τέκνον, ἐκ κοινῆς τραπέζης. δαίτα πρὸς κοινῆς πεσόν. Or 8-9 διὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος ὁν κοινὴς τραπέζης ἄξιομα ἡξελαθ᾽ ἐχθῶν ἵσον, and is not as 'vague' as Tierney and Weil believe. It refers to the speaker's own dinner table, and that is clearly the desired meaning here. It is possible to construe 794 ξενίας with τραπέζης though this is in no way easier or more obvious. There is a non-Euripidean parallel for this interpretation, at Homer Od 14.158 = 17.155 ἵστω νῦν Ζεύς πρῶτα θεῶν ξενία τε τράπεζα. That these lines may also be alluded to in line 794 is perhaps significant, but also note that πρῶτα is not adverbial.

794 Page believes this line to be "very odd." This is not so. ξενίας ἁρισμῷ can be construed
with little difficulty, "in rank (lit. number) of hospitality." Similarly, πρῶτα does not stand for τὰ πρῶτα but should be taken adverbially, as it is at Homer Od 14.158 = 17.155 (cited in previous note.) Porson wrote at exceeding length on this line, and concludes by suggesting an emendation to πρῶτος ὅν but this is not necessary as has been demonstrated (nor, for that matter, is Pflugk's πρῶτ' ἔχον (which Murray claims as his) nor Wakefield's πρῶτα τ' ὅν.) Porson's purpose was to make 793-94 stand in the place of 795-97, making them excisable. Many MSS have ξένων instead of φιλῶν, and Euripides does end two other lines with ξένος (19, 1235), but reading φιλῶν prevents repetition within this one line. The use of ἀριθμὸς is at variance with a use common in Euripides = "a member of a collection considered in isolation from the rest" (Dodds Bac 209 where see note.)

795 τυχόν is weakly repeated from 793. Page would again have us believe that λαβὸν προμήθηαν is "very odd", whether it means "with a base regard for his own interests" (Paley), "s'étant chargé du soin de Polydore" (Weil), or "having received consideration at our hands" (Pearson), but cf. Aesch Sup 178 προμήθηαν λαβὸν and Soph Tra 669-70 ὡστε μὴ ποτ' ἐν προθυμίαν ἔδηλον ἔργου τῷ παρανέσαι λαβεῖν. If nothing more, these show the emendations προμηθήαν (Musgrave) and προθυμίαν (Hermann) to be unnecessary. I translate with Pearson (and Hadley) with the phrase being correlative to ἔχω προμήθηαν, cf. Ale 1054 ἐγὼ δὲ σοῦ προμηθήαν ἔχω.

796-7 The problem in these lines is the brevity of εἶ κτανεὶν ἔβούλετο, which must mean "even if he was wanting to kill (my son.)" This is not as bad a compression as most people make out, but it is an unlikely concession for Hecuba to make. Virgil Aen 6.329 states the fate of an unburied soul: centum errant annos volitantique haec litora circum. It is likely that at least part of this notion is present in this context; the ghost himself has emphasized the fact (30.) Hecuba's concern is not just to restore an appropriate level of honour to her son (as had been the case in sacrificing Polyxena to Achilles), but to put the shade to rest. ἄφηκε πόντιον, cf. OT 1411
798 The meaning here is double-edged. This fact could not be missed by the audience, nor by Hecuba, but must be thought to have been missed by Agamemnon. Prima facie, she is speaking of herself, and of her physical predicament: the use of the masculine plural when the speaker (regardless of gender) speaks in the plural is a commonplace (cf. 237.) On a secondary level, she is generalising and speaking for all humanity, both Greek and barbarian, both general and prisoner-of-war. She is therefore in these cosmological terms equating herself with Agamemnon. By calling him "weak," however indirectly, she undermines his authority, as she will continue to do especially in the second half of this speech. This interpretation avoids the need for a gap after this line.

799 ἄλλα responds to the μέν in 798 (GP 5.)

800-01 Kirkwood (1947) views this examination of νόμος as being central to an interpretation of the play. While Kirkwood is right to stress the importance of νόμος and this speech, he overstates his point. Sophistic philosophy contemporary with Euripides often weighed the relative merits of νόμος (both 'law' and 'custom') and φύσις ('nature.') The contrast is stated explicitly in favour of Nature, in ignoring νόμος and letting animals speak, in Euripides fr. 920 (incert) ἡ φύσις ἐξούσια, ἡ νόμων οὐδὲν μέλει (the original citation, Aelian NA 4.54 refers to an asp, and cites Hom Il 19.404). Plato has Hippias (Prot 337a1-3) contrast φύσις and νόμος, and makes the latter the stronger: ὅ δὲ νόμος, τύρραννος ὅν τῶν ἰθρόποιον, πολλά παρά τῆν φύσιν βασιλεύει. He seems to be implying that human decision (be it through choice or convention) can bind or restrict things independent of human control. cf. also Hippocrates, On Airs Waters and Places 16, 23, 24. Since the death of her daughter, Hecuba has already philosophised on φύσις (592-602, esp. 598) and concluded that it was unalterable in humanity, though it was subject to variation in agriculture.
Here, she posits the supremacy of νόμος. Her eventual conclusion, however, abandons both in preference for πείθω (816.) In each of these three instances (598, 800, 816; cf. Τύχη in 786) the key word is given prominence at the beginning of the line. It would be cynical but not too far wrong to see in this a Hegelian pattern of thesis φύσεις, antithesis νόμος, synthesis πείθω.

Otswald (1969) 26 says here "we find a general νόμος controlling even the gods, presumably identical with the source of ordinances dispensed by the gods". The presumption requires elucidation. It would be wrong to think that νόμος = human law or convention. This Sophistic idea is believed to have originated in Protagoras’ Περὶ Θεῶν, which Tierney says had received public reading in Euripides’ household. Plato rejects the notion that the gods exist by certain human conventions (νόμοι) in Laws 10, 889c. Other interpretations are possible, however. If νόμος = enacted law, then Euripides is saying τοῦ θεοῦ Ἑγουμένα because the state can dictate which deities could be worshipped (viz. Socrates being tried for inventing false gods.) cf. the νομικὸν δήκομεν in Aristotle NE 5.10, Pol 1.3 (1253b20-3; see note on 864.) This atheistic view seems to be what Heinemann (1945) 121-22 suggests, that this passage seems to both accept a faith and to suggest that faith is weakly grounded, cf. Oliver (1960) 91-102. A significant Euripidean fragment exists supporting νόμος = human law or convention: fr. 292.4-6 (Bellerophon)

νόμοι δὲ θυτῶν αἱ μὲν εἰσ’ ἀυθαίρετοι,
αἱ δ’ ἐκ θεῶν πάρεισιν, ἀλλὰ τῷ νόμῳ
ιὸνεθ’ αὐτῶς.

Otswald’s interpretation of this passage (38 n.4) is probably right. αὐτῶς can mean both self-inflicted and god-inflicted, or only the latter. He suggests the second makes better sense: "although the presence of these diseases is due to the gods, we nevertheless act in the conviction that we can cure them." (Note though that the reading may be suspect.)

The alternate possibility is that νόμος is to be understood in supernatural terms, i.e. that νόμος = divine law. This is closer to the way it is used in other Presocratics. If νόμος = Law, holding a place corresponding to the Anaxagorean Mind, Νός, it becomes something positioned above the gods, creating a hierarchy:
cf. *adespota* fr. 471 ὁ γὰρ θεὸς μέγιστος ἄνθρωπος νόμος, which is almost the same thing. Such a placement does not pose the theological difficulties that it would for monotheists, since omnipotence is not typically found attributed to members of a pantheon. Support for this view can be gathered from the threefold emphasis on δίκαια (788, 790, 792; "divinely just", as opposed to "humanly just" = δίκαια.) Euripides gives a similar place to 'Ἀνάγκη (Necessity) in *Alec* 962-83, whose assent Zeus requires to do anything (978-79), and cf. *adespota* fr. 502 οὐδεὶς ἄνάγκης μᾶλλον ἰσχύει νόμος. For ἄνάγκη in this play, see note 1295. Too legalistic an interpretation is probably wrong for the present instance. Empedocles fr. 9.5 ἢ θέμις οὖν καλέσαν, νόμῳ δ᾿ ἐπάρχη καὶ αὐτὸς shows an acceptance of a common usage in speech, and Democritus 9.125 "accepts the way people talk (νόμῳ) about colour, sweetness, and bitterness, even though he knows that in truth (ἔτει) only atoms and the void exist" (Oswald (1969) 39.)

The Scholiast offers a different interpretation, that the νόμοι in question are those established by the gods: ὁ νόμος ἐκείνων ἤγουν τῶν θεῶν, ὁ κατὰ τῶν ἄνθρωπον διληνέτοι. This would imply that the standards the gods set for themselves should also be the object of human dealings; we believe in the gods therefore by virtue of the applicability and inherent rightness in their law, which becomes the model for our own. Although a lack of context can often prohibit complete understanding, this interpretation can shed light on fr.294.7 (*Bellerophon*) εἴ θεοὶ τι δρῶσιν αἰσχρόν, οὐκ εἰσὶν θεοί. There is a need to obey the νόμοι, even in adverse conditions, or when they seem incomprehensible, cf. fr. 433 (*Hippolytus*) ἔγαγε φημὶ καὶ νόμον γε μὴ σέβειν ἔν τούτοι δείνοις τῶν ἀναγκαίων πλέον, and *adespota* fr. 99 πῶς οὖν τὰδ εἰσορώντες ἃ θεῶν γένος ἐξαι λέγωμεν ἢ νόμοις χρώμεθα; These νόμοι "are thought of as universally acceptable, valid and binding" (Oswald (1969) 26.) This seems to me to be the best interpretation of νόμος in the present passage. It is also Paley’s preference.

There is some blurring of meaning, though, and the huge treatises written serve nothing to remove this: one thinks of Aristotle *Rhet* 1.13.2 where law (νόμος) is distinguished as either ἴδιον ("particular", human) or κοινόν ("universal", divine) The universal law is that according to nature,
which recalls the Hegelian ideas mentioned above. cf. Soph OT 865-66 ὅν νόμοι πρόκεινται ὑπάρχοντες, and Jebb’s note, Ant 453-55. cf. Steir (1928). The Scholiast’s interpretation is seeking to establish a ground for morality. Any such moral law would be κοινόν. Secondly, any discussion of νόμος must take into account Pindar fr.169 Νόμος ὁ πάντων βασιλεὺς ἰ θνατῶν τε καὶ ᾧ βανάτων ἰ ἅγει (cf. also Herodotus 3.38.) This fragment can be understood either as something which rules over both gods and men, or as "dispensations" or "ordinances" from Zeus (so Kirkwood (1982) 347-49, with its secondary bibliography); Dodds (1959) 270-72.) This view has the support of Hesiod WD 276-79 where Zeus has one νόμος for animals and another for men, cf. Polyphemus’ speech on νόμος Cyc 332-33 ἡ γῆ δ’ ἀνάγχη, κἀν θέλῃ κἀν μὴ θέλῃ, ἵ τάκτουσα ποιῶν τάμα παινεῖ βοτά (see also 338.) Though this is the likeliest meaning of the Pindar fragment, it must be remembered that the fragment is extraordinary in that it presents Heracles in a very poor light (which Kirkwood et al. believe is significantly odd for Pindar) and it is possible that the intended meaning is similar to the Protagoras passage cited above, but with application also to the gods. Otherwise, the Protagoras passage must be seen as a reaction to this fragment - the verbal similarities (τύρραννος, βασιλεὺς) ensure this, cf. also Otswald (1965). Unfortunately, though a larger context is available for the Pindar fragment, it sheds no further light on the interpretation of this fragment. cf. 816 note. The role of Zeus is probably important, and it is just possible that the νόμος being referred to is that specifically of Zeus Xenios, whose tacit presence is felt throughout the play (cf. Introduction IV and note 710-11).

tοὺς θεοὺς ἠγούμεθα, cf. El 583-84 ἢ χρῆ μικῆθ’ ἠγείροθαι θεοὺς, ἐ εἰ τάδικ’ ἐσται τῆς δίκης ὑπέρτερα, Bac 1325-26 ἐ εἰ δ’ ἐστιν δικαίως διαμόνον ὑπερφέροντι, ἐ εἰ τοῦθ’ ἀθρήσας θάνατον ἠγείροθος θεοὺς, Aristophanes Knights 32, Plato Apology 27D.
The ξέμεν clause is also governed by νόμῳ, though it could be understood to be an example of νόμος. The perfect middle of ἀδίκακα δίκασιν ἐφιμένα should probably be interpreted with Paley, "having justice and injustice defined for us", as opposed to Ambrose’s more extreme "having defined for ourselves justice and injustice."
802 Tierney views ἄνελθων "having been referred" (from ἄναφέρειν) as an anachronistic appeal to the fifth century notion of the δῆμος as the source of law; Hadley rightly recognizes that these issues would come before Agamemnon since the Homeric notion of kingship was as viceregent of the gods.

εἰ + future indicative, for a future condition is used for a strong appeal to feelings, a threat, or a warning (MT 447) and is more vivid than ἦν + subjunctive, "since", cf. 1233 note.

803-4 θεόν is to be scanned as a monosyllable, which is not unusual. λεπά is generally used of "sacred things or rights" which is not entirely appropriate here. It might be rhetorical amplification (Sidgwick) but also present is the notion of νόμοι being sacred to the gods (cf. 800.) Though λεπά often means 'sacrifice victims' in particular, it would be wrong to see an allusion to the death of Polyxena here. Hecuba knows that Polymestor can in no way be held responsible for the death of her daughter, but it would be natural to conflate the day's tumultuous events in this way. The consequence of this view is that the most obvious candidate described by this phrase is Agamemnon himself, picking up on the implied threat of 802. φέρεται also means "plunder" at Bac 758-9 τοι δργης ὅποι 1 ες δολ' ἄχροσουν φερόμενοι βασικάν ὅπο, but here it also contains the notion of sacrilege, and defilement, derived from the present context.

805 σῶν is an emendation by Kayser (not Radermacher, as Tierney says) from the reading of all the sources, -οίς ἱσοί. Because the appeal to equality is inappropriate for a Homeric queen, even one enslaved as Hecuba is, Kayser has preferred an appeal to safety or certainty. The anachronism in the MSS reading is hardly un-Euripidean, and if it is a corruption, it is very early. Besides, Hecuba might be making the point in spite of her position.

Porson says this verse is again employed by Euripides in an uncertain play in Stobaeus, p.165 ed.Grot. (cf. Stob 4.41.34, 4.1.13.)

806 Méridier's translation is instructive: "rougir d'en venir là, respecte ma misère." αἰδέσθητι με
is another anachronism. In the Attic law courts, κιδέομαι meant "to feel pity for," and by extension, "to pardon." Hecuba's use of legal language urges Agamemnon to make a concrete decision, linking it with 802 εἴ δικαίωσεντα. This also relates to the use of τάθετα which leaves open the possibility, however dishonourable, that Agamemnon may not give justice.

807 Agamemnon is told to view the situation dispassionately, but there is a "subtle indication he is responsible" (Sheppard.)

γραφεῖς, only here in Euripides, is the reading of all the MSS except perhaps one, which is illegible in the first and fourth letters. Murray insists that the true reading is βραβεῖς, "arbiter"; King also doubts. γραφεῖς is a nicer image, somewhat supported by the incidental detail provided by the Suda that says Euripides studied painting in his youth (of course, the source of this detail may very well be this very line, though lines such as 558-60 which refer to contemporary art also support the contention, albeit indirectly.) Murray and Daitz cite 528 and (wrongly) And 972 as places where letters are illegible obscuring a true reading. Murray’s reading foreshadows 1109-1295, when Agamemnon is the judge in the conflict between Hecuba and Polymestor. One can also see Murray’s point: if Agamemnon is being flattered, he would rather be compared to a judge than an artist. It is just as possible to argue the other way, however, where the allusion to the visual arts picks up the famous lines in the narration of Polyxena’s death, esp. 560 ὡς ἄγάλματος. Though γραφεῖς is right (most certainly from the bulk of the MSS. weight, but also because βραβεῖς is a more obvious image), in either case the sentiment is the same: sound judgement, be it of artwork or a case at law, comes from distancing oneself (ἀποσταθεῖς repeats an idea also found at Ion 585-6 οὐ ταύτων εἶδος φανερα τῶν πραγμάτων η πρόσωπον ἐγγύτερον θ’ ὧν ὑπερμένων.)

If the reading of ἀποσταθεῖς were ἔτυ-, a case could be made that it meant "having been appointed" which would be appropriate for a βραβεῖς, but also acceptable for γραφεῖς = "scribe."

808 ἀνάθησον "reckon, study", normally a prose word, is a poetry hapax.
suggests, rightly, that there is one clear political advantage that Hecuba achieves by this statement. As Agamemnon’s slave (see note 754-55) she is entitled (under fifth-century Athenian law, though this anachronism should not cause concern, see Easterling 1985) to his protection as master, and he is morally bound to act on behalf of her free son according to the ϑρή τρῆδος (Demosthenes 21.47.) A similar position is found in Adrastus’ supplication to Theseus, Sup 164-66 ἄναξ Ἀθηναῖον, ἐν γὰν αἰσχῶν καὶ ἡξοι πάνω πρὸς οὐδας γόνυ σοι ἁμήν πρὸς τὸ τύραννος εὐδαιμον πάρος:

εὔπαι "blessed with children", cf. Ion 469-70 τὸ παλαιόν Ἐρεχθεῶς Ⅰ γένος εὐτεκνάς, Sup 66, 955, Tro 583, Phae 155, fr. 520 (Meleager)

This form of the compound can also mean "blessed as a child", e.g. IT 1234 εὔπαι ὀ λατοῦς γόνος, HF 689, Or 964, Bac 520. There exist many similar compounds, with the same ambiguity. φιλότεκνον means "loving children, except when used of cats at Herod 2.66.2.5-6 φιλότεκνον γὰρ τὸ θηρίον, where it means having a lot of children. Euripides could be playing with both meanings here.

Hecuba emphasizes her age (γραφές) because it means she is no longer physically capable of bearing children (she is now to be ἥπαις permanently, forgetting for the moment about Cassandra, cf. 821, 826.) There was a particular duty in Athenian society for children to care for aged parents, hence the emphasis of this grief in tragedy: Ion 618-9 ἀλλῶς τε τὴν σὴν ἀλοχον ὀκτίρω, πάτερ, ἣ ἀπαίδα γηρᾶσακοναν, Alc 735-36, Sup 170, 966, fr.369.1-2 κείσθω δόρυ μοι μίτον ἁμπληξειν ἄραχνας, μετὰ δ’ ἡσυχίας πολιῶ γῆρα συνοικολήν.

For Euripides’ use of alpha-privatives in tricola, cf. 669. Both ἀπολίς and ἔρημος are found
at Hyps 1.4.15-19:

ως ἔχθρὸν ἀνθρώπωσιν αἱ τ’ ἐκδηλμαί
διαν τε χρείαν εἰσπεσὼν ὀδοιπόρος
ἀγροῖς ἐρήμους καὶ μονοκήτους ὑδη
ἀπολις ἀνερμήνευτος ἀπορίαν ἔχον

δη τράπηται.

Here ends the first part of the speech, where the argument has been based on appeals to justice and pity.

812 Agamemnon begins to move away, to avoid Hecuba’s persistent entreaties, much as Odysseus tried to avoid the supplicating Polyxena 342-45. Because there are so many parallels between the conflict with Agamemnon in this scene with the earlier scene with Odysseus (see Introduction VI) it would be particularly effective if the stage-picture created at each of the moments mentioned above were the same, creating a visual echo, linking the scenes.

ὑπεξάγεις πόδα is being used here as if = φεύγεις, which is why it takes the accusative με. Tierney believes the double prefix implies secret escape, cf. 6, OT 227 καὶ μὲν φοβεῖται τοῦπίκλημι ὑπεξέλων, though this is wrong. If any nuance is to be added, it should be "gradual escape."

813 The normal idiom would be ὁς ξοικεν rather than ξοικα, but cf. IA 847-8, Herodotus 1.155, and Cicero Lael 9 sed, ut mihi videris, non recte iudicas. With the infinitive, = "I seem likely to..." (the future infinitive is used because the thing desired is in the future.)

814-5 Here begins an apology for the Sophistic training in persuasive public speaking that had begun with the arrival of Gorgias from Sicily in 427. It has been suggested that both Gorgias and Euripides, as well as Sophocles and Pericles, had been students of Anaxagoras. μαθήματα is the standard Sophistic word for subjects studied, but Plato Laws 817E provides a definition which is
closer to the modern notion of mathematics, embracing arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. What Hecuba is saying is that she has put her case and has failed. In a sense, she does back down. Rather than be defeated, she continues in the style of a forensic orator. Though formally (see note on the structure of the speech, 786-845) she abandons the truth, in actuality she needs both the truth and rhetoric.

816 Πειθῶ is the third personified abstraction in this speech (cf. 786-845, 799-801 νόμος) and here = "persuasion in court, demagoguery" (as the object of μανδάνειν), cf. the Achaeans and Agamemnon in IA, though it originally was 'persuasion in love', cf. note 831-32, Aesch Ag 105-07 'persuasion in song' ἐπὶ γὰρ θεόθεν καταπνέει Πειθῶ τοις μολλάν τὰ ἀλκάν σύμφωνοις αἰῶν. This is significant because Euripides' descriptive phrase (τὴν τύραννον ἀνθρώπων μόνην) is similar to ones found elsewhere describing Ἑρως: Hip 538 τὸν τύραννον ἀνδρῶν, fr.136.1 σὺ δ' ὁ θεὸς τύραννε κάνθρωποιν Ἑρως. "Only" is used in the present context to usurp any claim νόμος might have on the title (cf. 799-801.) The passage does not say that Πειθῶ is τύραννος over the gods, which affects how νόμος is understood in the earlier passage. Kirkwood and Nussbaum miss this. Hecuba favours νόμος, but is unable to act because of 866 νόμον γραψαλ, as in Sophocles' Antigone where the title character yields to a superior νόμος.

The line is imitated in the Hermione of Pacuvius: O flexanima atque omnium regina rerum oratio (cited Cicero de orat 2.44, referred to at Quintilian 1.12.18 illam (ut ait non ignobilis tragicus) reginam rerum orationem.) Oratio is a neutral word, and does not contain the negative overtones present in its Greek counterpart.

817 οὐδὲν τι μᾶλλον "not all the more" = "least of all."

τὸ τέλος "to the end" = "thoroughly", cf. 1193 note.

818-19 μεθοτος διδόντες μανδάνειν is an anachronistic reference to the Sophistic practice of accepting fees for instruction, cf. Xenophon Mem 1.6.13, Aristophanes Clouds 876, etc.
The reading of the majority of the MSS, ἵν' ἦ, can be construed even though a subjunctive would be preferable in the indefinite clause (e.g. ἵν τις βούληται.) The optative reading βούλητο is defensible: Soph OT 979 ὅπως δύναιτο τις and Ant 666 ἵν πόλεσστήσει (though this line has been deleted by Dawe, followed by Lloyd-Jones and Wilson) provide parallels of its use in the primary time of the principal clause. This however "puts the case in the most general way" (Jebb); to avoid such definiteness, most editors follow Elmsley’s emendation ἵν' ἦ, which denotes "that the purpose is dependent upon some unaccomplished action, or unfulfilled condition, and therefore is not or was not attained" (MT 333), cf. Hip 647-48 ἵν' εἴρθη μήτε προσφωνεῖν τινα ἤ μήτε ἐκείνων φθέγμα δέξασθαι πάλιν. Soph OT 1389 ἵν' τυφλός τε καὶ κλών μεθεν, Aristoph Knights 850-51 ἐλλ' ἐστὶ τοῦτο ὁ Δήμης μμεχένη, ἵν' ἦν σοῦ βούλη 1 τὸν ἄνδρα κολάσαι τοῦτον, σοι τοῦτο μὴ κτήνηται. Elmsley is clearly correct, providing "would have been" to the MSS. "will be." βούλητο then functions as a cue to ἦν. However, Sidgwick notes the difficulty with this, that it would expect the principal verb to be past rather than present.

820 The hiatus τὶ ὅν is also found at Soph Phi 100 τὶ ὅν μ’ ἄνωγος ἀλλο πλὴν ψευδὴ λέγειν; Aesch ST 208, 704 τὶ ὅν ἔτ’ ἐν σαίνουσιν ἀλέθριον μόρον; Per 787, Eum 902. cf. Hip 598 πῶς ὅν, Soph OT 959 εὖ ἴσθ’. This then is not an argument against its preference over πῶς; see also Tovar (1959) 133.


While τὶς is a generalising question, Hecuba has herself in mind.

ἐλπίσαι is an alternative though rarer form of the 1st aorist optative.

821 The natural way to understand οἱ παιδεῖς is as "children", which of course is not true (in the same way 810 ἄτατος was not true): Cassandra is still alive, as Hecuba is to mention in 6 lines time. Yet that reference is effectively going to alienate mother from daughter, giving a strangely appropriate truth to the present statement, which is only prima facie true if "sons" is meant. cf.
826 ποτε. Méridier 212 n.2 makes the same mistake, referring to "les deux enfants qui lui restaient après la ruine de Troie."

822 Two MSS. read οὐνη rather than οὖνη, and this is followed by Verrall and Murray (with a full stop after ὁμᾶδὲλωνος) and sc. Cassandra quae intus est. This cannot be right, as it removes all irony from 821, alludes to somebody who hasn’t been mentioned by name since 677, removes meaning from ὀφρομεν, etc.

823 Hecuba continues to muse on all that she has lost. This line does raise two questions about ancient dramatic production.

First, painted scenery. Set as the play is in the Thracian Chersonese, Troy would be less than twenty miles from where the characters are. It would be natural to imagine Troy as being, literally, behind the characters. The question then arises whether behind the entrance to Agamemnon’s tent would be painted the ruins of Troy. Haigh (1907, 183-85) emphasizes the simplistic character of Greek σκηνή-painting but of course evidence either way is slight. In many cases, details would be left to the imagination (e.g. the parodos of Ion.) Hecuba poses the additional problem of distant scenery being required in addition to immediate scenery. It is assumed the ‘hemikyklion’ (Haigh (1907) 218) - used for representations of distance - is a fourth century development, and would be out of place here. Painting in any form would need to be simplistic, both because it needed to be seen from the back of the theatre and because it would need to be easily changed for other performances at the festival (the modern method of using flats or canvas could not be too far wrong.) It must nevertheless be admitted that, at least to modern sensibilities, some visual representation of the ruins of Troy would be appropriate, particularly during the stasima when there would be no movement onstage. Contrary to this view is Brown (1984).

Second, smoke effects. The deictic quality of the line can be taken to mean either that the actor playing Hecuba is pointing to nothing at all, and is suggesting the presence of smoke, which
is to be imagined; or is pointing to smoke which could either be painted on the scenery or represented by genuine smoke, i.e. a pyre burning behind the σκηνή. A pyre of some sort is also suggested at Sup 1071 ἡμῖν δὲ καὶ τῷ συμπυρουμένῳ πόσει, and could also have been used in the earthquake scenes of Bac 576ff, Her 904ff, and at the end of Aristoph Clouds. The surprisingly active participle ὑπερθρήφορονθεὶ seems to favour the presence of real smoke, but would not be out of place if the actor were merely suggesting its presence to the audience. Smoke is also mentioned at 1215 and Tro 1295ff, but in these cases it need not be genuine, or even seen. Arnott (1962) 129 believes the audience sees smoke rising from a fire offstage.

824-25 Having indicated that she is beginning a new thought (καὶ μὴν is used to introduce new arguments, GP 352, cf. 1224, Hel 1053), Hecuba then prefaces the thought, beginning at 826, with an apology for it.

μὴν ... ἀλλ' δῆμος (GP 6) is a particularly common structure in Euripides: 843, Hip 47-48 ἢ δ' εὐκλέης μὲν ἀλλ' δῆμος ἀπόξευσεν Ἡ Φαίδρα, 795, Hel 1232, El 753, Bac 776, 1027, IA 904, Or 1024, Alc 353, Held 928 (cited below), etc. ἀλλ' δῆμος, "but still," is also found in Sophocles (OT 998) and (in parody?) Aristophanes Clouds 1363, Ach 402, 407, 956.

τὸ οὐ στόχον is a partitive genitive, depending on τόδε: "this part of my argument".

Nauck’s emendation ξένον (adopted by Diggle) is unsupported and unnecessary. The unanimous reading of the MSS, ξένον, "fruitless, vain" gives better sense for the context. This is the opinion of Collard (1986) and (1988), an opinion which he revises in his 1991 commentary, interpreting it as "foreign to the argument." I nevertheless believe his earlier arguments in favour of the original reading are stronger (Collard (1986) 23):

‘foreign to, unconnected with’ τὸ στόχον (cf. S. O.T. 219) it is not, rather it is a plank of the argument 826-30. But why is it ‘unusual’ to plead on the strength of Agamemnon’s enjoyment of Cassandra? ‘Useless’ or ‘vain’, ξένον it may indeed prove to be - for Ag. is forced to be devious in acknowledging Hec.’s claim on him
through his [sic; "her" is meant] daughter, 855ff.

The infinitive Kύπριν προβάλλειν, "to mention Love (or Sex)", is in apposition to τόδε; this is her new argument, which is expanded 826-32. By invoking love in this way, Hecuba uses the most powerful formulation available to her, the name of the goddess herself. There is irony here too, that Agamemnon who sacked Hecuba’s city to restore a woman stolen by Aphrodite, should now be under her influence. But even this invocation is in vain.

The use of the future middle for passive is found elsewhere in Euripides, cf. Held 928 δέσποιν’, ὅρας μὲν ἄλλ’ δήμος εἰρήσεται, Hysp 1.5.27, and "to denote unpleasant or dangerous revelations" (Bond) Med 625, Ion 760, Pho 928, Bac 776.

826-27 What κοιμήσεται, "is stilled," means in this context is clear, despite its more usual use for a periphrasis of death 473-4, Hip 1387-8 (sic) εἴθε με κοιμάσει τὸν ἰ δυσδαίμον’ Ἀιδα μέλαινα νύκτερός τ’ ἀνάγκα, cf. its use of storms at Soph Aj 674-5 δεινών δ’ ἀμα πνευμάτων ἐκοίμησε 1 στέννοντα πόντον’. There is irony here, in that Hecuba using Cassandra as a lever to work her revenge, she is behaving not like a mother should, and in some sense their relationship is now dead, cf. 677, 821.

Rather than take φοιβάς as ‘radiant, pure,’ it makes good sense to translate "inspired (by Phoebus Apollo)" cf. 676 βαγχεῖον. The Scholiast supports this by glossing ἥ μάντις (Cassandra was a priestess of Apollo.) cf. IA 1064 μάντις ὁ φοιβάδα μοθασαν.

There is a problem with the accusative Κασσάνδραν (the double sigma is for scansion; there seems to be no other distinction between the single- and double-sigma spellings), in that it seems to imply that she had two separate names, one used exclusively by the Trojans, the other by the Greeks (such as is found with Paris and Alexandras, and Pyrrhus and Neoptolemus.) The Scholiast says that the other name was Alexandra: ἥ Κασσάνδρα πρώην Ἀλεξάνδρα ἑκαλέτσε, ὡς καὶ Λυκόφρων φησίν, ἐκλήθη δὲ Κασσάνδρα παρὰ τῶν Τρώων διὰ τὸ κάσον καὶ ὀδηλφόν ἄνδρεῖον ἔχειν τὸν Ἑκτόρα. But this explanation is unsatisfactory, since it constitutes a renaming, rather than an alternate naming (though it might be seen to be supported by Homer II 22.506
The alternate name was certainly part of the general fabric of myth (it is the title of a poem by Lycophron that survives, for example, though the poem itself is a *tour de force* of arcane and obscure mythological detail, which could also argue against its value here) though its familiarity cannot be determined. Hermann posited the nominative form, which was later found to be in the 2 MSS. (Rw, Zu) *pace* Diggle, i.e. "Cassandra, whom the Trojans call the inspired one" (that is, a prophet.) This is more satisfactory, still leaves some questions unanswered. Haupt deleted the entire line and I am inclined to agree. Hecuba knows her daughter’s name, and telling a Greek what the Trojans call the woman he shares a bed with seems extraneous. It also is the type of flourish that could be added by a fourth-century actor.

828-30 Diggle (1982) 321-23 makes a strong case for all of his emendations (supported by Collard (1986) 20): λέξεις from δέξεις (though *Hel* 1603-4 should be included with *Or* 802 and *IA* 406 in using ποσὸν with δέξινμην; even this emendation is not certain, since the present passage has an object, which needs to be understood in the *Or* and *IA* passages), and ἦ ... τιν’ for ἦ ... τίν’. The emendations do make the lines easier to read, though the weight in favour of the traditional reading (including the Scholiast on Soph *Aj* 520) suggest an early corruption. For the separation of δήμα from ποσὸ, cf. *GP* 270-71. εὐφρόνας "kindly times" is a euphemism for "nights" (appropriate in this context) intended to prejudice Agamemnon towards Hecuba. Nonius, under *modice* gives Ennius’ version of 829-30: *Quae tibi in concubio verecunde et modice morem gerit*, though this is a milder, active sense. Hecuba is attempting to gain some moral hold over Agamemnon, as she had earlier attempted to do with Odysseus in reminding him of how she had once spared his life (239-57.) Her desperation is betrayed in the following lines. χάριν "thanks, reward" puns on the usual meaning of (often sexual) ‘pleasure, delight.’ Hecuba is not seeking vicarious sexual pleasure, but desires to cash in on that of Agamemnon. The same *double entendre* is found in 832. The word represents a key idea in the play (discussed by Segal (1990a) 124, Tarkow (1984) 134, Adkins (1966) 209, Conacher (1961) Oliver (1960), etc.) which is later recalled in its adverbial
Hecuba is saying that her daughter has been cooperative. \( \varphi \lambda \tau \alpha \tau \omega \nu \) can be understood as either active or passive, though passive (= "so much enjoyed") is too direct. The \( \dot{\alpha} \sigma \pi \alpha \sigma \mu \alpha \tau \alpha \) have been \( \varphi \lambda \tau \alpha \tau \omega \nu \) both in Agamemnon’s enjoyment and in that Cassandra has been loving to him. Since she is making this very direct point, she could very well spend five lines on it (thereby keeping 831-2, where see note.) In her bluntness about talking about the sexual aspect of her daughter’s relationship with Agamemnon, Hecuba is not "taking to herself the status of a pimp" (Michelini (1987) 151; cf. also Buxton (1982) 179, Reckford (1985) 121 and \( \Sigma \) Soph Ajax 520 \( \mu \alpha \sigma \tau \rho \sigma \iota \nu \kappa \omega \tau \sigma \eta \sigma \zeta \alpha \tau \alpha \) εις \( \tau \eta \) \( \dot{\varepsilon} \chi \alpha \beta \eta \nu \) λέγουσαν) As Gregory (1991) 106 notes, Menelaus in \( \text{And} \), Hecuba in \( \text{Tro} \), Danaus in Aesch \( \text{Sup} \), Heracles in Soph \( \text{Tra} \) and Creon in \( \text{Ant} \) "all concern themselves openly and in detail with their children’s sexual lives."

831-2 The seemingly indelicacy of these lines in Hecuba’s mouth is probably modern (see previous note), though they are compared by Page to 606-8 (these two are "therefore unlike any other interpolation in tragedy" (1934, 67). Most editors have followed Matthiae’s deletion of them, but recently Garzya, Daitz and Michelini (1987) have preserved them. There is a traditional connection between \( \text{Ερως} \) and \( \Pi \epsilon \theta \omega \), cf. 816 note, Buxton (1982) 32-34, 38-39, as well as \( \Pi \epsilon \theta \omega \) being a cult title of Aphrodite (Farnell (1977) 2.664); and regardless, the indelicacy is not at all out of place for a pleading prisoner of war bent on revenge. Also in their favour is the fact that they are cited (albeit inaccurately) in Orion \( \text{Anth} \) 8.17 Scheiddewin, the Scholiast on Hom \( \text{Od} \) 10.481, and Tzetzes Exeg p. 86 Hermann.

There are three significant MSS problems, and the most minor concerns the particles. Diggle favours \( \tau e \ldots \tau e \), Daitz \( \gamma \dot{\alpha} \rho \ldots \tau e \). The MSS are split, but \( \gamma \dot{\alpha} \rho \) makes better sense in that it gives the air of a connected argument, though asyndeton is possible by way of illustration and may not need a particle connecting it with the previous line. Next, I tentatively accept Nauck’s emendation \( \nu \kappa \tau \epsilon \rho \pi \sigma \iota \omega \nu \) (which is also accepted by Diggle) because it is so much easier to construe than Daitz’ reading \( \nu \kappa \tau \epsilon \rho \omega \nu \beta \rho \sigma \tau \omicron \omicron \zeta \). Another possible reading, which was favoured by some
Victorian editors, is νυκτέρων πάνυ, but πάνυ is rare in tragedy and is no easier to construe. Whatever the reading, it does recall 828 εὐρήκιον. If this is accepted, third MSS problem disappears: Daitz reads θηνητζ to the better alternate βροτοζ, since he reads βροτοζ in the previous line.

φυτρων are mentioned here not for their own sake but as things which create bonds, in a slightly transferred sense. Michelini sees in φυτρων another reference to the Sophists: "The argument suggests the Helene of Gorgias, where, defending the most beautiful of women against offended sexual morality, the rhetorician likened the charms of the logos to that of erôs itself, assimilating both to enchantments (philtra) and potions (pharmaka) that intoxicate the mind and body" (1987, 151-2) - referring to Gorgias Helene DK 2:82 fr. IIB 8-10 and 14, but this is not necessary. In general, it seems that the lines should be kept since, though outrageous, they are linked verbally and semantically with 826-30, and pave the way for the rhetoric Hecuba will use 836-40.

833-5 These lines raise the argument above a basic sexual level, with Hecuba arguing (to what degree of precision one cannot be sure, see below) that Agamemnon has married into her family. Euripides uses the expression άκουε δη νυν (cf. GP 218) often: Pho 911 άκουε δη νυν θεσφάτων έμων οδην, 1427, Cyc 441, Sup 857, HF 1255, Ion 1539, IT 753, Hel 1035, Or 237, 1181, IA 1009, 1146, Aristoph Knights 1014, Birds 1513, cf. Plato Laws 693D.

καλός is also to be understood with 835 δράσεις.

κηδεστήν "kin-by-marriage" = τοῦτον = 833 τὸν θανόντα τόνδ’ = Polydorus. Michelini believes this argument to be fallacious: "The κηδεστής takes part in a social relation whereby men exchange women; slaves taken in war are not given by their male relatives, who have been killed by the conquerors. Cf. the ode following this scene." (1987, 152 n.84.) The question must then be asked why Hecuba would lie in this way. Surely Agamemnon would know the social bond that does exist, however much prompting he may need to remember it. I therefore believe there must exist some justification for Hecuba’s use of this term. The κηδεστής-relationship is valid, and
Agamemnon has genuine social obligations which he acknowledges by his compliance later in the play. Nor is the claim itself surprising. The Homeric Agamemnon was particularly proud of his relationship with Chryse (II 1.133-15):

καὶ γὰρ ὁ Ἀγαμέμνον ἀξίωμα προσέβουλα
κοιμίζειν ἄλοχον, ἐπεὶ οὗ ἔθεν ἐστι χερείων,
οὐ δέμας σώδει φυήν, οὔτ' ἂρ φρένας ὅπερ τι ἔργα.

836-40 One wonders what Hadley meant in saying, "this beautiful passage comes as a relief." Michelini is much closer to the mark in saying, "It might just be possible to tolerate the bizarreness of Hecuba's speaking anatomy, and to repress the picture of an eloquent foot embracing Agamemnon's knee, if the reference to Daidalos' arts did not suggest some actual grotesque realization of what otherwise would be mere wordplay" (1987, 152.) But she goes too far in calling it "astonishingly grotesque." The mixture of bathos and hyperbole is intended to shock the listener, and in this light the reference to Daedalus is probably an extension of the wordplay involved: cf. the Scholiast, cited in note 838. Modern sensibilities are coloured by, e.g. Charles Wesley's hymn "O for a thousand tongues...", which if taken literally, could sound a grotesque wish, but is an imaginative conceit with some rhetorical power, cf. Fama in Virgil Aen 4.181ff. That it was at least tolerated as mere wordplay, perhaps elevated by the reference to Daedalus, but still not a thing of (rhetorical) beauty, cf. the similar passages in Euripides, HF 487-89

πῶς ἔν ὁς ξοῦθοπτερος
μέλισσα συνενέγκαμι' ἐν ἐκ πάντων γάρος,
ἐς ἐν δ' ἵνεγκοσα' αἵροσ ἀποδοίην δάκρυ;

El 333-35

πολλοί δ' ἐπιστέλλουσιν, ἐρμήζειος δ' ἐγώ,
αἱ χεῖρες ἢ γλώσσα' ἢ ταλαπώρος τε φρήν
κάρα τ' ἔμοιν ξυρῆκες δ' τ' ἐκέτινεν τεχών.

Hecuba has already sought rhetorical skill (816); what she now says she needs is just many voices. This is, of course, another rhetorical device; cf. also Gregory (1991) 119 n.69.

198
836 The combination of ἐλ (without -θε or γάρ) + optative is rare, but is used for "unattainable wishes, when they refer to the future" (Smyth 1818), cf. MT 723, Soph OT 863 ἕ μοι ἔνοες ἐφεστὶ μοῖρα, Homer II 10.111, 15.571, 16.559, 24.74, cf. si for utinam at Aen 6.187, Horace Sat 2.6.8.

838 Daedalus is here cited because he was the preeminent mortal craftsman of the ancient world, as a sculptor (the present reference, he is purported to be able to make moving statues at Homer II 18.417), an architect (viz. the labyrinth, cf. Diodorus Siculus 1.97.5), and an inventor (Icarus’ wings.) The Scholiast gives much information that is useful: περὶ τὸν Δαίδαλον ἔργων, δι’ ἐκανεῖτο καὶ προῖα φωνῆς, αὐτὸς τε ὁ Εὐριπίδης ἐν Εὐρυσθέη λέγει [fr.373]: ‘οὐκ ἔστιν, ὦ γεραίε, μὴ δεῖσθι τάδε: τὰ Δαίδαλεα πάντα κινεῖσθαι δοκεῖ βλέπειν τ’ ἀγάλμαθ’. ὐδ’ ἀνήρ κεῖνος σοφός’ καὶ Κρατίνος ἐν Θράττας [fr.74]: ἔπαυσε καθὼς δὲ οὕτως μαστεύκων τινὰ ποτὲ χάλκοῦν ἢ ἐξίλιον καὶ χρύσεον προσῆν σώδαμωσ ἔξιλινος ἐκείνος ἄλλα χαλκοῦς ὄν ἀπέδρα. πότερον Δαίδαλος ἦν ἢ τὶς ἐξέκλεψεν αὐτὸν’ καὶ Πλάτων [Comicus fr.188]: ‘οὕτος τὶς ἐλ, λέγε ταχὺ, τί σιγῆς’ οὐκ ἑρείς. ‘Ἐρμῆς ἔγωγε Δαίδαλον φωνῆν ἔχων ἔξιλινος βαδίζων αὐτόματος ἐληλυθα’. cf. Horace Od 4.2.2 ope Daedalea. The Scholiast passage is the only one where the statues both talk and move; in the Homeric passage mentioned above, they only move.

839 Wackernagel prefers the epic form ἄμαρτῇ to the Attic modification found in all the MSS. In favour of this reading are Held 138 δίκαιον ἄμαρτῃ ὁρῶν, fr.680 (Sciron) ἄμαρτεῖν, and Barrett Hip 1195, but cf. Rh 313 ἄμαρτῇ and variants. Hesychius glosses it with ὁμοίο, as "together."

The plural verb ἔχοντε is used despite the neuter subject (πάντα), cf. MT 181 for use after ὡς.

840 κλαίοντα is "wailing" here, rather than "weeping", since voices and not eyes (or tear-ducts) are the subject, cf. Denniston El 842-3 for asyndeton, as well as 70, 1171, 1173 (where see note),
1175, And 1154, Cyc 465, Pho 1193, Sup 529 with different verbs.

ἐπισκήπτοντα can be used for serious entreaty, cf. Aeschines Against Ctesiphon 157 καλοῦντας ἱκτεῦοντας ... ἐπισκήπτονας μηδενὶ τρόπῳ τὸν ἀληθήριον στεφανόν, but also "is the verb used of a dying man who urges his family to take vengeance for him" (MacDowell (1963) 20). He continues, "the duty of the relatives of a killed slave was simply to urge his master to obtain vengeance for him by taking legal action against the killer." Meridor (1983) 16 n.29 cites Antiphon 1.29-30, and Lysias 13.41-42, 92 in their contexts, and cf. Demosthenes 47.72. The situation is not exactly parallel, however, and this is not in fact the action that Agamemnon undertakes on Hecuba's behalf. Nevertheless, if this was the sort of thing that would be associated with the word, then the full legal force of Hecuba's speech becomes clear: 824-35 Agamemnon must act as a kinsman; 836-445 Agamemnon must act as a master.

841 By addressing Agamemnon in this elaborate way, Hecuba admits to herself that she is now without any social status. She is desperate, and is now completely dependent on Agamemnon's beneficence. Yet though she lacks any real rank, she nevertheless does have power, and that she can embarrass him in this way is a sign of that power. Agamemnon is meant to be uneasy: Hecuba's address recognises that she is a slave, but also reminds him of Cassandra. The metaphorical use of φός for people is also found at Ion 1439 ὁ φός μητρὶ κρείσσον ἡλίου, HF 531, Homer II 18.102. For the use of the dative Ἐλλησιν, cf. Sup 278 and HF 1017 Ἐλλάδι.

842-43 Dale distinguishes two uses of πιθοῦ, used in contexts of appeal: alone, referring to a previous appeal (here, Ale 1101, 1109, IA 739, 1209, Or 1101); and in phrases such as ἀλλ' ἐμὸ πιθοῦ (402, Hel 323) it precedes a petition.

Although HF 1210-1 κατάσχεθε λέοντος ἀγρίου θυμὸν gives a parallel for the reading of the majority of the MSS, -σχε, it is generally emended away to παράσχες (2nd aorist imperative "lend.") 895 demonstrates Euripides' use of -σχε in εἰκο-compounds.

χεῖρα ... τιμωρῶν "an avenging hand", cf. note 749-50
άλλ’ δύος is a common Euripidean aposiopesis, cf. note 824-25.

844-45 "For it is the part of a good man to administer justice, and always in every case punish the bad." This expression of the lex talionis is fundamental to an accurate interpretation of the final trial scene, and for an appreciation of Hecuba’s revenge; that it closes the appeal to Agamemnon is not accidental. It is the moral crunch of the speech, both flattering Agamemnon, and calling him to duty. In his role of Greek commander, his job is to mete out justice, and as a result, he has an obligation to the gods (cf.800) to act in a way appropriate for this, as an ἄνήρ ἐσθλός. cf. Simonides in Plato Rep 332D τὸ τοὺς φίλους εὖ ποιεῖν καὶ τοὺς ἔχοντας κακῶς (to which Socrates says the good man cannot harm others. cf. the biblical Sermon on the Mount, esp. Matthew 5.43-4.

846-49 The chorus expresses a straightforward paradox, with reference to νόμος (cf. 800.) It is implied that Hecuba has persuaded Agamemnon with her speech, which is misleading in that it will be demonstrated to be only partly true. Still, ol νόμος are cited as being the reason Agamemnon is now a friend, and Polymestor has fallen into disfavour. The chorus is referring in particular to Hecuba’s argument based upon kinship, 833-35 (see 847 note.)


Paley summarizes the three interpretations of συμπίπτειν given by the Scholiast and periphrastcs:

1. how all things collapse and perish
2. how all evils conspire against man

201
3. how all things turn out
but prefers "how strangely one thing falls in with another," which is along the right track for explaining the irony and reversal of natural order (in terms of relationships) intended by Euripides here.

847 Busche's emendation τῆς ἀνάγκης adopted by Diggle is intended to tie the word closer with οἷς νόμοι, "the laws of necessity." This is both unnecessary, and as Tierney notes, runs contrary to the principle of diff. pot. Considering what follows, it is more likely the intended meaning is "ties of kin, relationships" (cf. Latin necessitudines) and that the MSS. reading should be preserved. Ambrose's "primitive laws" for νόμοι is unnecessarily prejudicial. Musgrave's emendation to χρόνοι at least makes sense, but also is not needed, cf. Bac 484 οἷς νόμοι δὲ διάφοροι.

διώρισαν "determine" gnomic aorist.

848 τιθέντες = ποιεῖν as 656.

γε, cf. GP 117.

851 δι' οἴκτου ... ἕχω, cf. Sup 194 δι' οἴκτου τὰς ἐμάς λαβεῖν τύχας, IT 683 δι' άισχύνης ἕχω, and see Denniston El 1183. But Or 757 διὰ φόβου γὰρ ἔρχομαι has ἔρχομαι rather than ἕχω.

852-53 θεῶν is scanned as a monosyllable by synecesis, cf. 24. A breach against the laws of hospitality offends in particular Zeus Xenios. cf. 844-45, note 710 and Introduction IV.

τοῦ δικαίου, taken with οἴκεια = "justice among men" cf. 791, 'Held 569-70 τῆς τε σῆς εὐφυχίας ι καὶ τοῦ δικαίου. It is important thematically that Agamemnon use the word δίκην here, that he too (like the Chorus, Hecuba and Polymestor) recognise the justice of Hecuba's revenge against Polymestor (cf. Introduction I.) Tovar (1959) 133-34 however argues for χάριν, which, while it is a word that does have thematic importance in the play, is not preferable at this point, and is a corruption probably just picked up from 830 χάρις.
854-56 Two interpretations of εἰ ποις φανεῖν are typically put forward, depending on whether or not δίκι is understood. If it is (Hadley), there is a conflation of two constructions yielding "provided that it should appear right". Better is the impersonal alternative, "provided that it should appear possible." Agamemnon's stress on appearances is significant: he is using Hecuba's arguments concerning Cassandra against her. This is not too subtle an interpretation for Agamemnon; in fact, it accords with his cowardly nature and desire for self-preservation evidenced throughout the play. The use of εἰ ποις "for the elliptical expression of a hope or aim" (Jebb on Soph Tra 584), cf. And 54-55 εἰ ποις τὰ πρόσθε σφάλματ' ἔξαιτούμενος | θεόν παράσχοιτ' ἐς τὸ λοιπὸν εὔμενην, Hel 429 and Diggle (1978) 167-68 on Hel 741, MT 489.

Throughout extant tragedy the portrait of Agamemnon is of someone continually dependant on his soldier's approval, cf. 868, Or 1167-8 δὲ Ἑλλάδος | ἡρῆς ἀξιωθεῖς, οὐ τύραννος, Soph Ajax 1100-01, Aesch Ag 844-5. This colours how one understands στρατόφ. Agamemnon's fear is one of rebuke from the masses, a humiliation he suffers in the Iliad (before this story) in the famous episode with Thersytes 2.225ff. His fears are well grounded in all likelihood, due to his relationship with Cassandra, cf. note 833-5.

The optative δόξαμι expresses Agamemnon's doubt that his providing assistance could remain a secret.

χάριν = εἶνεξω, also at 874.

Meridor (1978) 30 believes that Agamemnon here indicates what the Chorus suspects at 1032-34, that Hecuba's vengeance will mean killing Polymestor. This reckons the suggestions at 876 and 878 as being serious (so Meridor (1983) 17 n.36). Agamemnon's suggestions are meant in jest (see note 876-79) and here he does not genuinely believe Hecuba to be capable of accomplishing anything in real terms. This is markedly different from Creon's acquiescence to Medea's request, Med 340 μὲν μὲνα τίγδ' ἐκασον ἡμέραν, which recognises the possible danger, Med 350 καὶ δρόῳ μὲν ἐξαρμαρτάνων.
857 Agamemnon, in indicating that he has been touched by apprehension, demonstrates considerable embarrassment over his relationship with his troops.

858-63 Agamemnon’s attitude, the conflict between political and individual allegiance, is similar to that found elsewhere in tragedy:

Demophon (Held 411-13)  

παίδα δ’ οὔτ’ ἐμήν κτενῷ
οὔτ’ ἀλλὰν ἀστῶν τῶν ἐμῶν ἀναγκάσω

ἔκονθ’.

Theseus (Sup 247, 349-50) τί πρὸς πολίτας τούς ἔμοις λέγων καλῶν;

δοξεῖ δὲ χρῆσο καὶ πόλει πάσῃ τόδε,

δοξεῖ δ’ ἐμοῦ θέλοντος.

Pelagius (Aesch Sup 368-69, 398-401)

ἐγὼ δ’ ἄν οὐ κραίνομι’ ὑπόσχεσαι πάρος,

ἀστοῖς δὲ πᾶσι τῶνδε κοινώσας πέρι.

...  

εἶπον δὲ καὶ πρὶν, σὺν ἄνευ δήμου τάδε

πράξαιμι’ ἄν, οὐδὲ περ κρατῶν, μή καὶ ποτὲ  

εἶπῃ λεύς, εἶ ποῦ τι κάλλοιον τύχοι,

‘ἐπίθυλας τιμῶν ἀπάλεσας πόλιν.’

It is also of course part of Antigone’s dilemma, in Sophocles’ Antigone. ταραγμὸς is significant, in that by it Agamemnon does recognize that he has two loyalties: he concedes her argument that she has a moral claim on him as mother of Cassandra. Nevertheless, there is still a rejection of active participation. That the army would behave as Agamemnon expects is likely, in light of their reaction to Polyxena’s sacrifice 127-29.
859-60 Elmsley's δ' ἔμοι is clearer than the MSS. δὲ σοι, as δὲ then = Polydorus, but Tierney is wrong to ask for "something like ἄνηφρ": δὲ is used poetically for ἐγὼ (perhaps with a demonstrative gesture) also at Soph El 1004 εἰ τις τούσδ' ἀκούσεται λόγους, Tra 305 τήσδε γε ζώσης ἔτη (cf. Smyth 1242.)

χωρίς τούτο, sc. ἐστι, "that is a separate matter."

861 πρὸς ταύτα, "in view of this," indicates a fixed resolution rather than a reason, cf. Soph El 383-84 πρὸς ταύτα φράζου, καὶ μὲ μὴ ποθ' ὑπέρεν ἡ παθόουσα μέμψῃ, 820, OT 426.

862 ταχύν προσαρκέσαι, "swift to help you," includes a significant though suppressed protasis along the lines of "if I could do so without angering the Greeks and there was no other way but with my help." Only part of this is detailed in the next line.

863 εἰ διαβληθήσομαι, "if I am to be slandered," but the slander has bite, also containing nuances of "fall into disfavour with," cf. Held 420-22 ταύτ' οὖν δρα σὺ καὶ συνεξεύρῃσθ' ὑπερ' αὐτόν τε σωθήσασθε καὶ πέδον τόδε, ἵνα κάγω πολλάς μὴ διαβληθήσομαι, Thuc 4.22.3, 8.81. For the construction, cf. 802, MT 407.

864-69 The dynamic of these few lines serves to clearly indicate the reversal of status that has occurred. In a real and visible sense, Hecuba is now the master, cf. Introduction VI. The vocabulary in this passage is discussed in detail also by Daitz (1971).

864 φρέω is not of sorrow but of contempt. Hecuba's statement echoes her earlier sentiments (cf. 800) in their levelling effect. Despite the great status difference between the two, in a broader perspective both Hecuba and Agamemnon are captives and subject to the whims of the Greek army. The phrase οὐκ ἐστι θνητῶν is similar to that in Aristotle Rhetoric 2.21 οὐκ ἔστιν
άνδρων. θυντών is a partitive genitive after δόσις, which is intentionally vague.

865 The postponement of γάρ to the third position is well preceded, cf. GP 96. The idea of ή χρημάτων ... δουλός is common is Euripides: Pho 395 ἄλλ' ἐς τὸ κέρδον παρὰ φύσιν δουλευτέον, Sup 876-77 ὅστε τοὺς τρόπους ἢ δοῦλους παρασχεῖν χρημάτων ξενοθεῖς ὑπο, fr.1029.2-3 οὐ ἕστιν ἄρετῆς δοῦλον ὅτε χρημάτων ὢν τ' εὐγενελάς οὕτε θωμέλας δχλού.

866 πλήθος has democratic nuances, and is therefore at least partly anachronistic. πόλεος is written for πόλεως, metri gratia, cf. Or 897 δέ ἢν δύνηται πόλεος ἢν τ' ἀρχαίον ἡ, El 412, Ion 595, and Jebb on Soph Ant 162ff (where he omits this occurrence.)

This line constitutes the earliest implicit reference to written law being a guarantee for democracy (νόμων γραφαί), i.e. a measure of personal freedom (the earliest explicit reference in Sup 429-37, for which see Stinton in Collard ad loc in addenda pages 440-42.) Stinton suggests, following Oßwald (1969), that lack of any earlier testimony is accidental, that the almost casual reference here assumes the notion was already common at the popular level. There is of course further anachronism in this notion, since the earliest written laws were those of Solon. Stinton is wrong: no one is ἐλεύθερος, because he is tied down by the laws. Stinton's is not the usage here. What Hecuba saying in an odd way amounts to, "You cannot be an absolute tyrant." Even the fact that the laws are written implies at one level that there are those who do not accept the law prima facie (Oßwald (1969) 47.)

867 "prevents him from following his character, according to his mind" i.e. from acting as he would. μὴ should precede χρησθεῖ, but metre demands otherwise. It is the redundant (in English) μὴ after verbs of preventing, cf. IA 661 μ' ἵσχε, HF 197 βύεται μὴ κατθανεῖν, Soph El 518, OT 1388. Due to its frequent use in comedy, τρόπος, "humour, character" may be a colloquialism.

868 δὲ expresses a break-off, like ἀπάρ (GP 167) cf. 1237, Cyc 286, 597, El 297, Hel 143, Bac 206
δχλωρ is used with contempt, as στρατφ had in 855. πλέον νέμεις sc. μέρος, cf. Sup 241 νέμοντες το φθόνο ρλέον μέρος, Hel 917-8 οδκουν χρή σε συγγόνορ πλέον νέμειν ματαλφ μόλλον ἢ χρηστφ πατρί, fr.183 (Antiope) λαμπρός θ' έκκαστος καλί τόστι επελεγεται 1 νέμον το πλεύστον ἰμέρας τούτω ρμέος, 1 ν' αὐτὸς αὐτὸ τυγχάνει κράτιςτος ἄων, Thuc 3.3.1.

869 There is irony in this reversal of status, the slave setting the master free. It is yet another manifestation of the topsy-turviness of the world as presented in the play.

870-71 Hecuba offers a compromise whereby Agamemnon need only give consent. Hecuba will undertake the action of her revenge herself. The phrasing is subtle: the polar expression used is not balanced. The passive role Agamemnon is to play is presented only as "sharing knowledge" (σύνσωσθ) which is a necessary and completed action, as she has already told him of her intended revenge. The active role Agamemnon need not play is presented as a prohibition (μη + aorist subjunctive = "don't!", cf. 183), as if she were urging him against an action towards which he would normally be inclined. Hecuba tacitly assumes the assent she seeks then urges Agamemnon not to do or think anything other than what he now does, which he willingly obeys.

872-74 Aphaeresis - inverse elision - occurs here in ή 'πικουρα, as well as 387 and (using the same phrase as here) at 878. Since it would normally take a dative, πάσχοντος is to be understood as a genitive absolute. ἄνδρος Θρήνος is contemptuous, cf. 682 note.

οία πελαστι is a grim euphemism avoiding any direct explanation of the form her revenge is to take, cf. 1000, El 289 and Dennistons note on 1141. Though the audience would recognize that this conceals her intended actions, it is left guessing as to what those actions are to be.

The aorist passive φανη τις goes with θερηφτος ή 'πικουρα. μη is used with δοκεων rather than οὐ because of the imperative cf. Hip 119 μη δοκει τούτου κλέειν where it is used because of the infinitive. οὐ δοκεων is found at Med 67, El 925, Aristoph Knights 1146, Platus 837.
875 Reiske's dashes (adopted by Diggle) are unnecessary and make the line choppy. Daitz' solution - a semicolon at the caesura - is better. ἐγὼ δήσω καλὸς in context is "a euphemism so transparent that it is ominous" (Bond HF 605, where he also cites HF 938, Hip 709, IA 672, Bac 49, Soph El 1434, etc.) for the impending blinding of Polymestor. The clause itself Euripides uses elsewhere (cf. Hip 521, Or 1664, IA 401), always at the end of a verse. In this respect, Parry (1971) 295 is right to call it a formula.

876-79 Agamemnon's questions are leading, sarcastic, and heavily ironic. There is also some alarm. The alarm grows to a critical point at 885. In some ways, the questions are dramatically unnecessary, but this exchange does affect how Agamemnon is viewed when he becomes the arbiter 1109ff. Euripides uses πῶς ὅν as a rhetorical device for eliciting hypothetical suggestions, cf. Hip 598, 1261, Med 1376, Hel 1228, 1266. The two possible solutions suggested by Agamemnon are also found at Ion 616-7 ὅσας σφαγὰς δὴ φαρμάκων <τε> θανατίμων ἱ γυναῖξες ηὗρον ἀνθρώπων διαφθοράς, where Dindorf deleted them, believing them to be interpolated, perhaps from another play. In the present context, the murder by sword is impossible in Agamemnon's point of view for a woman; poison is a more realistic possibility for a woman (cf. Heracles' lament Soph Tra 1062-63 γυνὴ δὲ, θῆλυς ὅσα κάνανδρους φύσιν, ἵ μόνη μὲ δὴ καθελε φασάγανον δίκα, and the source of her poison being 1140 τοσοῦτος φαρμακεύς) but quite impractical for a prisoner of war. In the present context, these unrealisable possibilities (in Agamemnon's view) prepare for the eventual cruelty of the revenge, as well as the means by which it is delivered (1161 φάσαγανατ.)

ἡ ἀσκούρλα cf. 872. The accent on τίνι shows it to be an interrogative, not an enclitic: "or with what assistance?" cf. Hip 803 λύπη παρχωθέσο' ἢ ἀπὸ συμφορᾶς τίνος;

880-81 The verbal structure of these two lines establishes the tone of the entire passage: the mirror
construction shows how opposite each of the character’s views in fact is. Gender, social status, origin and potential power are all invoked in a very compressed time. οπέρα is probably accompanied by a demonstrative action demonstrating the tent of Agamemnon immediately behind them (cf. 59 πρὸ δόμων.) Euripides often elides the 3rd person plural perfect, as he does with κεκεύθασι’, cf. Ion 1622 πεφώκασι’, Tro 879 τεθνάσι’ (and 350, depending on the reading of the MSS. adopted), HF 539. The MSS. here also give the Doric form of the verb, which is less preferable.

Τριφάδων δώλον is virtually an oxymoron, intended to surprise Agamemnon in answering his (supposed) rhetorical question. Just twelve lines previous, δώλος had been used by Hecuba to describe the Greek army. She equates her followers with his. He counters this phrase with Ελλήνων ἄρραν. Hecuba had presented her fellow captives as "a mob of Trojan women" who would support her revenge. Agamemnon’s rebuff occurs at the same position in the line, scanning identically but emphasizing not their unpredictability (δώλον also means "riot") but their servitude ("the booty of the Greeks"). Note the subtle shift from a defining genitive to a possessive genitive which accomplishes the same thing.

ενας is a momentary aorist cf. 583.

882 Scaliger’s emendation ἐμῶν is an attempt to remove the problem of a murdered Hecuba speaking the line. Tierney’s interpretation of the received text, ἐμῶν, "my particular murderer" is unnecessary and not altogether convincing, even when it is recognized the murdering is metaphorical, in that he has cut off her family line. The possessive pronoun is being used without the noun to which it refers, much as in English one can wish greetings to "you and yours," cf. And 374-75 δούλων δ’ ἐκέινον τῶν ἐμῶν ἄρχειν χρεών ι καὶ τῶν ἐκέινου τοῦτος ἐμοῦ ἡμῖν τε πρῶς, Sup 320 μὴ δῆτε ἐμὸς γ’ ὠν, ὡ τέκνων, κεχρημέναις;

τιμωρήσομαι should take the accusative (cf. 749-50 note.) Though normally a spondee by syneesis, φονέα is also scanned as a tribarach at El 599 λέξον, τί δρῶν ἂν φονέα τεσσάμην πατρὸς, 763.
883 καὶ πῶς loads the question with disbelief.

ἀρατόν ... κράτος means either "victory over men" (objective genitive) or "the strength of men" cf. Tro 949-50 δὲς τῶν μὲν ἄλλων δαμόνων ἔχει κράτος, ἵνα δὲ δοσιλάς ἔστι. Line 884 can be taken to answer either question. Most editors favour the former, and a singular is not necessarily preferable, since Agamemnon would assume that Polymestor would be protected by many men. I prefer the latter interpretation, but cf. the questions at 515, 1064, Alc 482, Hip 1171, Soph Tra 68.

885 Having confirmed the previous statement (δεινόν) Agamemnon qualifies this with the adversative particle μέντοι (GP 404.) The repetition of δεινόν indicates a sort of one-upmanship contest occurring between Hecuba and Agamemnon. μέμφομαι "I think little of" is rendered correctly by the Scholiast φαύλον ἠγοῦμαι, cf. fr. 199 (Antiope) τὸ δ’ ἄσθενες μου καὶ τὸ θῆλυ σώματος ἡ κακὴς ξελέμφης. This fragment only partly supports Jenni’s emendation σθένος: the MSS. reading γένος makes as much sense and is appropriate in Agamemnon’s mouth. The two examples Hecuba gives in 886-87 are equally representative of the potential strength of women and what can be accomplished by the female gender. This last of course is (in a modern sense) a prejudicial reading of γένος which strictly = "race," but it should not be surprising that Agamemnon considers himself wholly different from females, cf. 1181 note. Similarly, the Chorus doubts Medea’s intent to murder her children, Med 856-65.

886-87 τι δ’ "Expressing surprise or incredulity, and usually introducing a further question (‘What?!’)" (GP 175.) εἷλον is from αἰρέω "kill."

The story of the Danaids was common in myth (e.g. Aesch Sup) wherein the fifty daughters of Danaus married the sons of his brother Aegyptus (Ἀγύπτου τέκνα.) On their wedding night they killed their cousin-husbands at the request of their father, because of a fight he had had with his brother. However, Hypermnestra (the splendide mendax of Horace Odes 3.11.35) disobeyed
and spared her husband Lynceus. The myth itself varies considerably in its various presentations, and the details above are the only ones which are not contradicted by any of the sources. The best summary of the various presentations is that of Garvie (1969) 163-83. The Scholia on this line actually constitute one of the key sources for the story. Λήμνιον refers to the Lemnian women, another common story (e.g. Aesch Cho 631-38): neglected by their husbands due to Aphrodite's curse, they killed them (Ἄρδην "utterly," cf. Ion 1273-74 ἔσω γὰρ ἐν με περιβαλόονα δωμάτων Ἄρδην ἐν ἄξωμαις εἰς "Ἀδωνίδωμος") and lived under Hypsipyle until found by the Argonauts, cf. Pindar P 4.251, Herod 6.138 γενόμεται ἀνὰ τὴν Ἑλλάδα τὰ σχέτικα ἔργα πάντα Λήμνια καλέσθαι.

These two exempla are chosen to show the potentially destructive power of women. In each case, the power of a large number of women is demonstrated: this mirrors the fact that it is the attendants of Hecuba who actually perform the revenge upon Polymestor. Exemplars could have been found had Euripides wanted individual actions: Aeropse and Atreus; Eriphyle and Amphiaraus (cited Soph El 837-41). Clytemnestra and Agamemnon also fit this pattern, but it is an action which follows this play, so could not have been cited in this context. It is however invoked later by the blinded Polymestor: he converts what he has suffered at the hands of many women to an ad hominem mention that he knows a prophecy of a similar harm to befall his judge (see note 1277-81.) ἐξωμαισαν, is used here almost euphemistically = "to depopulate" (cf. 948) + accusative of the land so emptied, + genitive of the people removed from the land.

888 ὀλλ' ὑσ γενέσθω "but let it be so" seems to be a fixed phrase concluding an argument, cf. Tro 726, IT 603. μήθες "let be, break off" effectively forms a rapid transition from theory to practice: "That's enough talk," Hecuba is saying, "now we must act."

889 πέμψων ... ἀσφαλῶς "give safe conduct to." τῇδ' points to the woman addressed in the next line. Weil rightly notes that this is the θεράπανα of 658, the other actor who has not yet left the stage. The alternative to this view requires this actor to have left the stage without mention (an
unlikely possibility) and for this to be addressed to a non-speaking attendant. The θεράπιανα leaves the stage at the caesura of 894.

890 πλασθήσας is an irregular form of the aorist passive πελάξω "having drawn near" cf. And 25 πλασθήσας Ἀχιλλέως παιδί, Tro 203, Rh 14, 557, and the MS. variation at 776, Aesch PV 897, Bacchylides 16.35. ξένω can be taken ironically as "friend" or "stranger."

891-94 The language of καλεῖ ... Ἐκάθη is reminiscent of Theocritus 2.101. It is probably best to write δὴ ποτ’ as one word, following Schwyzer II.563. The meaning (common for tragedy) is olim (GP 213) "usually implying an irrecoverable happier condition" (Collard Sup 1131) cf. Tro 506-07 ἄγετε τὸν ἄβρον δὴ ποτ’ ἐν Τρολαὶ πόδα, ἵνα δ’ ἐντα δοῦλον, Phae 96. χρέος is being used like χάρυν, cf. 855, Pho 762, Soph Tr 485 etc.

These lines begin a direct quotation of what the servant being sent is to say to Polymestor. The quotation continues to ...τοῦς ἕξ ἐκέκινης (who therefore = Hecuba herself.)

895 ἔπισχες, cf. 842. τάκων, cf. 672.

896-97 The structure of this purpose clause alternates between unity and division: "so that these two siblings together, in a single flame, the divided care of their mother, may be buried in the ground." The initial division is emphasized by the dual τῶδ’ ἄδελφῳ, which is united in πλησίον (taken closely with the verb) and μᾶλ φλογῖ. It is then divided again by δισσῆ (that this would be noticed is likely, due to the common contrast in tragedy between μᾶ and a number word, cf. Ion 539 δόσ μᾶν θεωμᾶτομεν, Or 1244 τρισοίς φίλοις γφρ ἐς ἄγον, δίκη μᾶ, and Barrett Hip 1403.) What is unclear is in what precise sense δισσῆ is to be understood: whether as double (i.e. twice as big) trouble, or as two troubles. The context rules out the possibility of a divided trouble, based on analogy with Aesch Ag 122 λήμασι δισσῶς (where Dindorf suggests λήμασιν ἰσοῦς.) κρυφθητον (another dual form) recalls πλησίον and brings them together to a common ground,
\(\chi\theta\omicron\nu\). Statius *Theb* 12.429-32 speaks of the divided flame of the cremations of Eteocles and Polyneices. If the body is removed at the end of the episode, these lines function as instructions to silent attendants to do so.

898-900 Any solemnity in the preceding words (\(\epsilon\sigma\tau\alpha\iota\ \tau\acute{a}\delta\ \sigma\omicron\tau\alpha\omega\ "so shall it be") is ruined by \(\kappa\acute{a}l\ \gamma\acute{a}r\), the tone of which amounts to "But let me make one thing perfectly clear...", followed by a \(\mu\acute{e}n\ ... \delta\acute{e}\) polar expression, finishing in 901. \(\pi\lambda\omega\varsigma\), unlike its use in 901, "can mean 'sailing-wind' as an extension from the meaning 'possibility of sailing'" (Webster on Soph *Phi* 1449.) \(\nu\omicron\ \delta\) "but as it is..."

Fraenkel (1962) 79 believes that Agamemnon’s assent is only to the last petition, concerning the treatment of the dead children. Lines 902-04 show that it applies to the entire plan of revenge, even though as yet he does not comprehend its magnitude.

901 \(\pi\lambda\omega\nu\), see previous note.

Unnecessary difficulty has been made of the word \(\eta\sigma\upsilon\chi\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\). Hartung’s emendation is not needed, and most of the Scholiast’s worries just display an assumption that the calm must be connected with the opportunity to sail. Hadley is right in saying the MSS. reading \(\eta\sigma\upsilon\chi\omicron\upsilon\) is to be taken adverbially, with \(\mu\acute{e}n\epsilon\nu\), as at *Held* 476-77 \(\gamma\upsilon\upsilon\alpha\iota\kappa\upsilon\ \gamma\acute{a}r\ \sigma\iota\gamma\iota\ \tau\alpha\iota\ \tau\acute{a}l\ \tau\delta\ \sigma\omega\rho\phi\rho\nu\epsilon\iota\nu\ \chi\acute{a}l\lambda\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\ \epsilon\delta\sigma\omega\ \theta\iota\ \eta\sigma\upsilon\chi\omicron\upsilon\ \mu\acute{e}n\epsilon\nu\ \delta\acute{a}m\omicron\nu\).

Early in the play it was implicitly established that the spirit of Achilles was responsible for the stopping of the winds (38, 111-12), and not until he had received some \(\gamma\phi\rho\alpha\varsigma\) would he free the winds. Talhbybius makes it clear that this is his own belief 538-41. That this is a mistaken assumption is demonstrated by the patent inconsistency in the facts, that the winds didn’t start after the sacrifice. This in itself is probably a variation on the tradition, and quite possibly Sophocles’ play, in which the sacrifice of Polyxena does restore the winds and thereby forms a mirror-scene to the sacrifice of Iphigeneia: sacrifice of Greek king’s youngest daughter to get to Troy to begin Trojan war; sacrifice of Trojan king’s youngest daughter to leave Troy to finish Trojan war. The
present instance is the first of the subsequent references to the winds, coming at a point where Hecuba has completed the first step of her revenge: she has secured Agamemnon’s (passive) support. The next reference comes at the completion of the second step, as Polymestor enters Agamemnon’s tent with his sons, at the end of the next episode (1019-20.) The final reference to the winds comes in the last actor’s speech (1289-90), when, Hecuba’s revenge having been completed, the winds begin to blow. This motif that runs throughout the play is the only clear supernatural sign of the correctness of Hecuba’s actions.

902-04 Agamemnon concludes with banal moralising: the πως is telling, “may there be good in this somehow.” It would seem he has already forgotten his alarm of 25 lines previous. He then expresses two sentiments (both infinitive clauses in apposition to τόδε) which are κοινόν πάσι, “common to all.” What he is doing is accepting Hecuba’s intended justice (albeit passively) as proposed 842-45 (cf. 870-71 note.) The contrast between ἵνα “privately” and πόλει is also found at Sup 129 ἵνα δοκήσαν σοι τόδε ἂν πάση πόλει, and the sentiment itself is echoed in fr. 1036 κακόν γὰρ ἄνδρα χρῆ κακῶς πάσχειν ἄσι.
905-52 Third Stasimon

As Agamemnon goes offstage (with any silent attendants he might have), Hecuba remains onstage, with the corpse of Polydorus, which is probably towards the back of the stage, and perhaps has been reshrouded. It is possible that it is carried away here (as many editors suggest) but dramatically it is much more effective if the audience can see the corpse throughout the fourth episode. It then bears a silent witness to Polymestor's lies. The death of children is a running motif throughout the play, beginning with Polyxena, carrying through Polydorus, and ending with the corpses of Polymestor's murdered children. If it is removed, in light of Hecuba's recent comments (896-97) attendants probably remove the body following Agamemnon, to prepare both dead children for the single flame. Characters remaining onstage, presumably motionless, throughout a stasimon is not exceptional: it happened earlier in the play (first stasimon) and also, Medea in Med 410-45, 627-62, Pentheus in Bac 370-433 etc. This establishes a tableau for the play's longest choral ode, wherein they recall the horrors of the night Troy was sacked (the Ταύου Πέρσων.) This theme is made explicit with 908 πέρσων. Euripides adapts a popular story, probably from two books of the so-called epic cycle by Arctinus of Miletus (fragments and hypothesis in Evelyn-White (1982) 521-5), which he also used Tro 511-67, IA 751-800, and is found in TGrF Kannicht adespota 644.20-43. Webster (1970) 208 notes that Euripides uses 'epic' narrative in contrast with an ugly present. Euripides seems quite 'modern' in portraying the event through the eyes of a noble woman: "by taking the Trojan war into the bedroom, Euripides is being consistent in his theme of a sacked city as women see it. In this lay his original contribution to the Trojan saga." (Barlow (1971) 31, commenting on Tro 531-50 but equally relevant here as she notes.) The chorus are narrating in the first person, adding πάθος to the dramatic situation. While both this ode and Tro 511-67 present a shift from celebration to horror, the latter passage only has direct narration in lines 551-54. Personal suffering is present in each case, cf. Tro 517 ὀλόμαν, Hec 914 ὀλλόμαν.

The previous episode has shown the final effects that the Fall of Troy has had on Hecuba. Her family has been destroyed, and this stasimon serves to show that similar losses have been
suffered by all the Trojan women. This is not to trivialise Hecuba's situation: rather, as queen, the sufferings of her people are very much her own. The positioning of this ode is clearly significant: the suffering has been far reaching, and with the impending revenge, some sense of justice will be restored. The stasimon contains two strophic/antistrophic pairs and an epode, forming a direct address to the fallen city:

Strophe α'       O Ilium, you were sacked
Antistrophe α'   When my husband was tired from feasts
Strophe β'       And I was setting my hair for bed;
Antistrophe β'   I was taken away by ship.
Epode            May Helen be cursed!

Sandwiched between the opening apostrophe of the dead city (cf. Polymestor's opening apostrophe of its dead king, 953) and the closing curse of Helen which is very strongly reminiscent of Aesch Ag 1455-61 (for which, see Introduction IV), is a story of Troy's last night. It seems hard, in view of this summary, to substantiate Hourmouziades' claim that the destruction of Troy in the Hecuba is "so dimly implied by the onstage action" (1965, 121.) The structure actually represents a reversed time-frame, beginning with the ruined city, moving back to the night of the ruin, and closing with the original cause. Collard (1989) rightly calls the ode "forcibly suggestive" and relevant to the overall dramatic structure, rather than merely a diverting narrative. Lines 936-52 are analysed in detail by Biehl (1985) 260-3.

In the Hecuba, Euripides consciously links the three stasima thematically. This has been noted in detail by Michelini (1987) Appendix C, and Gellie (1980) 42-44. Mossman (1990) 82-110 discusses the role of the Chorus in this play at length, and this stasimon in particular 103-08. That the act-dividing lyric 1024-34 should be considered as a stasimon is discussed ad loc, and its place in the overall intent for the stasima should become clear. The four lyrics are linked by nautical references: in the first stasimon, the women hypothesize on where the Greek ships will take them (444-74); the second relates Paris' abduction of Helen by ship (634); the third tells of the women being dragged into the Greek ships and torn from their country (936-41); the fourth uses nautical
terminology to predict the fate of Polymestor (1025-28). Of course, nautical references are to be expected due only to the location of the story. The pattern here does seem more deliberate, and the presence of the motif in the stasima is supported by the lack of winds for sailing (see note 901) as well as Polydorus’ body cast upon the waves (26-9, 36, 697-701) Barlow Tro 98-152 notes the combination of literal and metaphorical nautical imagery there. Also uniting the odes is a sense of impending doom: 475-79; 629-30; 910-13; 1024, where it is no longer their own doom, but that of Polymestor - another sign of moral victory. The idea of journey is also present: in the first stasimon, from Troy to Greece; in the second from Greece to Troy; in the third from Troy to Greece; and the fourth explicitly concerning someone who has just travelled from Thrace to the Chersonese. There is also an oscillation in the chronological sequence involved: the first lyric deals with an undetermined future; the second with the distant past; the third with the immediate past; and the fourth with the immediate, determined future.

There is an evident time violation in the ode, noted by Collard (1989). At 890 Hecuba sends her handmaid to Polymestor in Thrace - a journey of several hundred miles - and he appears at 953. It is fair to assume that at least several days pass during the stasimon. This is not a unique phenomenon in extant Euripides: about a week passes during And 1009-46; at least several hours and probably a night pass during Cyc 356-74. These examples suggest that Euripidean stage convention preferred such chronological suspension to artificial plot twists to perpetuate tension and maintain internal logic in tableaux.

The metre is primarily aeolic, with many interspersed iambic lines. Such a mixture was found in the previous stasimon (629-57) as well as And 274-308, HF 348-407, Ion 184-237, Tro 1060-1117, Hel 1107-64 (Raven (1962) Appendix, page 125.) While some of the scansion and line division is found in Daitz (80-81), he does differ from Diggle at several places which shall be discussed as they arise. Since Diggle’s text does not number individual lines in the stasimon, and some lines have been joined since the traditional numbering, the following is the number I shall use of each successive line in his text, as deduced from his apparatus: 905, 906/7, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913; 914, 915/6, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922; 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928/9, 930,
Kranz (1933) 254ff. considered this the earliest of the "dithyrambic" stasima.

Nussbaum (1986) 510 n.45 calls the ode "the most solipsistic lyric of all", revealing "the degree to which each woman, as an 'I', is obsessed with private dreams of revenge." This is far too narrow a reading. Yes, the chorus like Hecuba, are concerned to attain revenge, but it is not a random lashing out at someone to compensate for their loss, but revenge particularly for Hecuba because her son has been murdered. In detailing the Sack of Troy, the Chorus does focus on its (collective) loss, a loss also endured by Hecuba (which if anything shows what binds these women together, not what isolates each.) To suggest as Nussbaum does that "there is no cooperation or mutuality here, but only parallel projects of revenge" is to miss the purpose of the ode, of the meaning of revenge in the play and (perhaps) of the fact that it is Hecuba's servants and not the Chorus who perform the eventual revenge.

905 The chorus' immediate concern is for their πατρίς, a key word which is echoed towards the end of the stasimon at 947 πατρίας and 951 πατρίφων.

906/7 The verb λέγω is one of the verbs (a complete list of which can be found at Smyth 809) which uses both the future middle (as here) and the future passive forms in a passive sense. The former is durative, the latter aoristic. cf. HF 582 ὡς πάροισθε λέξομαι, Alc 322 ἀλλ' αὐτίκ' ἐν τοῖς οὐκέτ' οὖσι λέξομαι.

The partitive genitive τῶν ἀπορθήτων (sc. πόλεων) "among the unsacked (cities)" was one of the traditional boasts of Athens, cf. Med 824-26 Ἐρεχθέα τὸ πολιτῶν δήλησέν τι καὶ θεῶν παῖδες μακάρων, ἵππας ἱππίας ἀπορθήτου τ' ἀπο, Aesch Per 348 ἔτε' ἄρ' Ἀθηναίων ἔστ' ἀπορθήτως πόλις; Its use here, at the beginning of the ode, is emphatic, as perhaps a reminder to the Athenians that their city too though great, could fall if the Peloponnesian War were to continue. Such suppositions must remain only that, but the phrase is not unproblematical when applied to Troy, for Troy had been sacked by Heracles when Priam's father Laomedon was king (hence in the
story of Philoctetes, the bow of Heracles is needed to sack the city, since it had been used to do so once before.) Presumably Euripides' lack of concern with this detail suggests he wishes the contemporary reference to be particularly clear.

908-12 Weil wrongly says Ἐλλάνων is dependent on δοπλ, when in fact it is a genitive of material, dependent upon νέφος, which is used metaphorically, cf. Pho 250-51 νέφος ἀσπίδων, Pindar N 9.38, 10.9, I 3.35, Homer II 17.243 πολύμοο νέφος περὶ πάντα καλύττει. Epic vocabulary or allusion is also found 915-16, 20, 35, 45.

This strophe contains three tmeses, the fractured verbs perhaps invoking the breaking of the city's defences: ἀμφὶ σε κρύπτει (= ἀμφικρύπτει σε), ἀπο - κέκαρσαι (cf. HF 875-76 ἀποκέρτεται | σὸν ἄνθος πάλαις) and κατὰ - κέργωσαι (cf. Med 497-98 ὥς μάτην κεχρύσαμεθα | κακαὶ πρὸς ἄνδρος, Pho 1625 σοὶ τὸ εἶδ' ἱλεκτκα γόνατα μὴ χρύσεω ἐμά.) For tmeses in dialogue, cf. 1172-75 note. It retains κηλίδα as a cognate accusative, modified by αἰθάλου, genitive of material ("with the stain of soot.") Smoke is a typical element in the sack of a city, cf. Hip 551 σὸν αἵματι, σὸν κατηκόρο, Tro 145, Aesch ST 342, Pindar P 5.84, Virgil Aen 2.609. The κατηκόρο of the MSS is unmetrical and clearly a gloss. Collard (1989) 6 suggests the repeated tmeses are purposeful: "The separations of preverb and verb become one by one longer, 907 by an enclitic pronoun, 910 by a noun, 911 by a whole phrase; gradual extension of the ruin is thus suggested." He also posits a crescendo of guttural consonance, with 907 κρύπτει, 910 κέκαρσαι, 911-13 (κατὰ) κηλίδα' οἰκτροτάταιν κέργωσαι. For the repetition of δοπλ δῆ δοπλ, see note on 689-90. δῆ is used here emphatic of the previous substantive δοπλ (GP 214.)

Troy's towers are also στεφάνας at Tro 783-84 βαίνε πατρώων | πύργων ἐπ' ἄκρας στεφάνας, Pindar O 8.32, AP 9.97, Kannicht TGFr adespota 644.38 [στε]φανας, for other cities cf. Pindar I 6.4, O 5.1, 9.19. The women lament the loss of Troy's (personified) crown because it is a symbol of their own abasement, both in terms of having lost a city as well as (most acutely for Hecuba) the loss of royal honours. Such female personification of a city is common in ancient thought, e.g. the biblical Lamentations 1:1-10. Tierney notes that "the great Mother-goddess,
Cybele, widely worshipped in Asia Minor, is regularly represented with a crown of towers." She is so pictured on coins from Hellenistic Smyrna, and both Seneca and Virgil describe her as turrita.

Daitz divides 910 and 911 (= his 909 and 910) which are coordinated with 919 and 920 (= his 918 and 919) after the final syllable in κέκκαρσα and ἐκείνο rather than the penult, as Diggle does. The advantage of Daitz’s division (which produces an enoplian and a telesian) is that line ends coincides with word end. This however is not required, and Diggle’s division (yielding a telesian and a pherecratean) is perhaps preferable in that it is more clearly aeolic.

913 Hadley and Collard note that this verb is used especially of protecting deities when used in tragedy: of Dionysus Soph OC 678-80 ἄν, ὡς βασιλεύσας ἐκ νῦν ἡμιστευεί | θείας ἀμφιπολῶν τιθήμαις, and of Pan Aesch Per 448-49 ἄν ὁ φιλόχορος ἢ Πᾶν ἐμβατεύει. It is also used of persons, though, cf. El 595, 1251.

914 Some adjectives of time (or place, or order of succession, etc. (Smyth 1042)) are used as predicates where English would have an adverbial phrase. Here, μεσονύκτιος = "at midnight", cf. 797 ἄφηκε πόντιον, 926 ἐπιδέμνιος. Σ Lycophron 344 preserves a line from the Little Iliad (of the so-called ‘epic cycle’) confirming the traditional hour of the fall: νῖς μὲν ἔν αὐτή, λαμπρῇ δ’ ἐπέτελε σκλήρην (Evelyn-White (1982) 516-7 = fr. 9 Bernabé = 11 Kinkel) which was used twice in Tzetzes’ Posthomerica (720, 773, cf. Tro 543, Virgil Aen 2.255 (for which see Grafton and Swerdlow (1986) 212-18), Petronius 89.54ff. Aesch Ag 826 sets the fall ἐμφα Πελεάδων δόσιν which would seem to connote time of year (where see Fraenkel) rather than time of night. If nothing else, reckoning by constellation would suggest the night was clear. The Chorus’ "destruction" is a hyperbolic conceit, as are Hecuba’s similar claims at 167-68, 284, and 1214.

915/6-8 These lines constitute two temporal clauses: the first (ἱμοι ... σκλήναται) modifies line 914 (here Collard (1989) sees deliberate sigmatism); the second (μολπάν ... καταταξάμεθα) modifies 918 (Collard (1989) n.6 follows Wilamowitz in coordinating participial and prepositional
phrases, cf. 346-47, 1197-98, and list at Diggle (1972) 244. This produces an ABBA structure which would seem to justify strengthening the punctuation in 916.

Only used with the indicative, ἐμος "when" is an epicism found only here in extant Euripides, never in Aeschylus or comedy, but at Soph OT 1134, Aj 935, Tra 155, 531.

For the temporal use of the preposition in ἐκ δειπνῶν, cf. Xenophon Anab 4.6.21 ἐκ τοῦ ἄριστου "after breakfast." The use of ἐκ is paralleled in the next clause by ἀπό, cf. Anab 2.5.32 ἀπὸ τῶν σίτων "after meals." In all these cases the genitive is ablatival.

For the supposed sigmatism, cf. 1208-10 note.

There is no semantic difference between σκίδναται and the other form found in the MSS, κίδναται. Both are epicisms. Neither is found elsewhere in extant tragedy, and the terminal sigma in the preceding line only obscures the problem. Tierney prefers this reading because of a use in Hippocrates (Ionic prose) αἱ κόραι σκίδνανται: "the pupils are dilated" which may be valid, cf. Thuc 6.98 ἀποσκίδνασθαι.

While a slightly inferior MSS reading, χαροποιῶν "gladdening" makes far better sense than χαροποιῶν adopted by Daitz and Diggle. The Doric μολιᾶν (= μολπήν) is coordinated with χαροποιῶν θυσίαν (= θυσίων) through καὶ: "after the songs and gladdening sacrifices ['gladdening' since they celebrated the end of the siege] had ceased." The plurals here and in δειπνῶν suggest the celebrations at the apparent departure of the Greeks had been city-wide, cf. Virgil Aen 2.265, where the Greeks invadunt urbem somno vinoque sepultam.

919-20 This line is parenthetical, since the subject of 920 ὀρὸν is 918 πόσις. This is the only extant use of ἄστον in tragedy, = "polished (lit. shaved) shaft", hence "spear." Whether this was a fixed meaning is uncertain, since significantly different interpretations exist both later (e.g. Xenophon Cyr 4.5.58 = cavalry lance) and earlier (e.g. Homer II 15.677-8 νόμα δὲ ἄστον μέγα
There exists some ambiguity in πασσάλῳ. It is uncertain whether the implication is that the husband is ready for any eventuality (cf. Theocritus 24.43, where Amphytrio when summoned at night takes his sword περὶ πασσάλῳ), or if it signifies he was (finally) at leisure.

For scansion differences between Daitz and Diggle, cf. 908-12 note.

921-22 The Doric ναύταν is adjectival, not in apposition to διμλον. Editors and translators have needlessly stretched the sense of δρόω: e.g. Tierney’s "no longer on the watch for", Arrowsmith’s "forgetting" and Ambrose’s nightmare-visions theory. Lembke and Reckford also misconstrue with "He never saw what the sea brought." Simply, the husband is no longer seeing the Greeks because they have pretended to sail away. Although verbs of seeing do recur in this ode (925, 936, 939) it is not a dominant motif in the play as a whole, and should not be connected with Polymestor’s blinding. The notion of the geographical region of the Troad (Τροϊαν) comes from Homer, e.g. Il 3.74. Τμώδα is in apposition to this, elision preventing the possibility of the dative singular.

The epic perfect participle ἐμβεβότα “treading on” is an echo of 912/3 ἐμβατέσθα, but with poignant contrast. The ἐμβ- syllable is in the metrically identical place, cf. ἐτας in Soph Ant 615 and 625.

923-24 Structurally, Ἕγω δὲ in opening the second strophe, corresponds to the σ’ μὲν which began the first strophe. In sense, the responsion is between the situation of the woman, and that of her husband just detailed 916-22. The datives of means ἀναβέτοις μῆτρας have caused some problems for translators. The word μῆτρα has particular Eastern associations (e.g. Lydian in Alcman, Babylonian in Herodotus, Trojan in Euripides, etc.) but nowhere requires a meaning beyond “something that is worn that somehow binds,” hence its most common associations are as a girdle (binding the waist) and as a headband (binding the hair.) Of the latter, use is not gender-specific: μῆτρα are found on male athletes in Pindar O 9.84, I 5.62, though elsewhere there
is a hint of effeminacy when worn by males, e.g. Herodotus 1.195, where LSJ translates "turban." Dionysus in Soph OT 209 is χρυσόμυτρης. In cases where it is worn by females, there is no reason why it should = "snood" rather than "headband" or "ribbon." That most citations happen to be singular (Bac 833 ἔτι κόρα δ' ἔσται μήτρα, 929, 1115, Alcman 23.67, Aristoph Thes 257, 941, Sappho 98 (a) 10, (b) 3 (if μήτραν = μήτρα) and Virgil Aen 4.216) is insufficient. In addition to Herodotus' plural, Euripides El 163 has μήτραιοι, which Booth rejects as a "generalizing plural" (cf. 925 χρυσέων ἐνόπτρων) but Denniston takes it as a genuine plural, which at least allows for μήτρασιν here = "ribbons", cf. Méridier's "bandelettes", being used to tie back the hair at night rather than a poetic use of plural for singular yielding "snood" or somesuch. There is a hapax in ἀναδέτους, though Tierney draws a parallel in Homer Il 22.469 πλεκτὴ ἀναδέτημι.

It is probably best to take ἐπιφυμεζόμαν to mean "I was arranging." However, Paley, citing Med 1161 σχηματιζέσται, suggests that the middle implies the presence of a κομμωτρια, which Collinge feels is demanded by the "general air of opulence" (1954, 36), i.e. "I was having (my hair) arranged." cf. El 1071 ξανθὸν κατόπτρω πλάκαμον ἐξήσκεις κόμης. The upsilon in 924 ἐρυθμεζόμαν is scanned short because it is in weak position.

925 Though both Hadley and Collinge (1954) believe the reference to golden mirrors (χρυσέων ἐνόπτρων - genitives of source, from which light rays, in the Greek view, shot forth) to be anachronistic, archaeology of the heroic period suggests otherwise: Wace (1949) 36 "it contained two bronze mirrors with carved ivory handles and an inlaid ivory wing", and fig.55, the so-called 'Tomb of Clytemnestra'; and two pairs of Mycenaean mirrors are among the 13 Cypriot items discussed by Catling (1964) 224-27. Most editors believe this to be a poetic plural (cf. 924 μήτρασιν which is also mistaken as a poetic plural) though the rationale behind this is weak. Archaeologists tend to find mirrors in pairs (Wace) and Euripides regularly uses the plural in this context (though both Tro 1107 χρώσει δ' ἐνόπτρα, and Or 1112 οἴους ἐνόπτρων καὶ μήρων ἐπιστάτας concern Helen.) Of the interpretations of ἀπέρμονας εἰς αὔγας presented below, only Collinge's requires a literal plural here. Only Collard (1989) 6 talks of "the flashing mirrors" but
he does not translate so in his commentary. Typically mirrors would be of bronze or silver; χρυσόν (disyllabic by synizesis) is used "to heighten the picture of luxurious ease" (Hadley.)

The phrase ἀτέρμονας εἶς αὐγάς has received much attention, and has suffered many interpretations. The Scholiast suggests ἀτέρμονας = περιφερεῖς = κυκλοτερεῖς = "round," of the mirrors. Though such an interpretation makes sense and the similarly-constructed word ἀτείρος does mean "circular" in Aristotle Phys 3.6, 10, it requires a shift of both case and number through attraction to αὐγάς. Such a stretch is not even desirable, since a mirror would be round at any rate, cf. finds listed above, Aristoph Clouds 751 σπογγύλον, AnthPal 6.18. The presence of εἶς is easily explained: clearly the idiomatic αὐγάς λεύσειαν "to look into the light (of the sun), i.e. to live" is not meant (it is meant, for example, at Pho 1084 εἰς λεύσεις φάσος and Tro 270 ἀρά μοι ἄκλιον λεύσει; and cf. 1154); the context does however require = "looking into αὐγάς ἀτέρμονας." For αὐγή = "reflected beam", cf. Ion 890 χρυσαντανγή "reflecting back golden rays" of Apollo. Collinge adopts this view, and is followed by Barlow (1971), where she praises the imagery of "light reflections in mirrors described as extending back without limit" (11) as being representative of Euripides’ distinctive use of light and colour. Collinge posits two mirrors held so as to produce "an endless series of images."

Booth (1956), Ussher (1957) and Skutch (1957) all object to this but for what I believe to be weak reasons. Nor does accepting this view require the presence of a κωμικότρια (cf. 924 note): both ῥυθμίζω and λεύσω are durative verbs and therefore remain simultaneous (required by the present participle) with one person alternating between handling ribbons and mirrors. Alternative views remain unconvincing. Booth needs ἀτέρμονας = "not having a τέρμα at the mirror" which may be true but is not in the Greek. Skutch suggests the phrase is periphrastic for τηλευγής which would be valid if "not having a τέρμα" = "having a τέρμα far away", i.e. alpha-privative = τῆλε which is not so. Ussher’s "boundless gleamings" can work, though his citation of Aesch Eum 634-35 ἐν δ’ ἀτέρμονι ι κόπτει πεδήσασθ’ ἄνδρα δαιδάλωρ πέπλωρ implies ἀτέρμονας = "seemingly endless", which is equally valid for Collinge’s theory. Ussher, followed by Collard (1989), cites Pindar N 4.132 ὁ χρυσός ἐφόμενος αὐγάς ἔδειξεν ἄπάσας. In fact, Collinge’s
theory only falls down if the actual phenomenon of observing multiple reflections is beyond the physical experience of the audience. This is unlikely. Even if mirrors were expensive or rare in households, the chorus could suggest the action and symbolically represent the action of viewing the back of one's head. In specific reference to these lines, Dale (1968) 214 says that the song "seems to call for mimetic accompanying action" (though she does believe there to be only one mirror.) The verbal image is complex, but it is not incomprehensible. Quite cleverly, αὐγάς is kept in the singular, as it is the same image which is iterated repeatedly, "looking into the endless reflection of the golden mirrors."

Daitz divides 925 into two lines (= his 925a and 925b) coordinating with 935 (= his 935a and 935b), reading an iambic tripod and a glyconic. Keeping Diggle’s (lack of) division, 925 and 935 constitute a single iambic metron + a rare Aeolic (Raven (1962) 122c).

926 For the use of ἐπιδείκνυος (harka) see μεσονόκτιος (914.) The use of πέπτειν corresponds to that at Bac 1111-13 ύψος δε θάσσων ύψοθεν χαμαιράρης | πέπτει πρός οὐδας μυρίς ομωγμασίν | Πνεύμον. Aesch Ag 566. Michelin (1987) 331-33 sees a sexual nuance here, cf. note 933.

927 The rapid tribrachs reflect the suddenness and the speed with which the Greek attack came (for the unusual metron - - - - - - here and in 937, cf. Ion 457, IT 884 and Diggle (1974) 19-21. Properly, πόλις is the acropolis around which the ἄστυ (928 "lower town") gathered, cf. Homer Od 8.508 ἔτη ἄστης. Though Troy had no polis proper, Euripides would assign standard features in Greek urban planning, especially Athens, cf. 906 note, Tro 555-7, IA 778.

928/9-32 The initial phrase "and this word of command was throughout Troy's lower town..." introduces direct speech in 929-32, a prominent feature of Dithyrambic stasima (so Panagl, 1972), cf. Tro 524ff. Despite the unanimous reading of the MSS Prinz, Tierney, and Daitz adopt κέλευμα for the slightly older form κέλευσμα. The use of κατά + accusative is also found Lycurgus 40
καθ’ δελεν την πόλιν "throughout the entire city." The use of the phrase ὑ παίδες Ἑλλάνων is reminiscent of Aesch Per 402 ὑ παίδες Ἑλλάνων (Garnet (1990) 214-15 calls it imitation), cf. Herodotus 1.27 Λυδίων παίδες, Homer II 1.162, 2.83 ὤς Ἀχιλλ. The poet uses variation twice in these lines: ἦλθα = Τροίας; σκοπεύν "hilltop" = πόλιν. The word ὁκους connotes both the notion of "residences" as well as "families", hence "homes."

The division of 928/9 and 930 by Diggle (= Daitz’ 928 and 929/30) and the corresponding 939 and 940 (= Daitz’s 938 and 939/40) less preferable. It makes more sense to understand the cretic (929 -ος τόθ' -Ω and 939 νόστιμον with the dactylo-epitrite rather than the iambic dimeter.

933-5 The metre prohibits the use of λέξτρα (accusative plural of λέκτρον) = "marriage bed" (plural used for singular object, as often in Sophocles, see Stanford Ajax p.272-73), so λέχη is being used as an equivalent, hence plural. The repeated reference to the bed (cf. 926) prepares for the horror of losing the husband (936-7), cf. Sup 55 φίλα ποιησαμένα λέξτρα πόσει.

The contempt in the phrase Δωρίς ός κόρα describing μονόπετάλος cannot be concealed. There is at least an implied reference to Helen of course (cf. 651, 943-52), but the immodest fashion of Spartan girls - wearing a sleeveless χτόνι cut above the knee - was infamous throughout the Greek world: cf. And 598 μυμνοῦσα μηρος καὶ πέπλος ἄνεμενος (for which, Stevens writes, "They [Spartan girls, generalising from Helen] wore a single garment ... open at the sides in such a way as to show their thighs when they moved about."); Ibycus fr.61 φαινομηρίδες; Pindar N 1.74-75 καὶ γαρ αὐτά, ποσσὶν ἄπόλοις ὀροσάιοι ἀπό στρωμάς; Virgil Aen 1.315-20 virginis os habituique gerens, et virginisfirma, Spartanae ... nuda genu, modoque sinus collecta fluentes. Collard (1989) 5 notes that "Michelini [1987] 332 is surely wrong to import from And. the notion of 'loose sexuality', despite the clear sexual nuance of 926 and 933." There may also be a small joke in the reference to Dorian dress in the Doric dialect.

The use of σεμνός "august, holy" in Athens was especially of the Erinyes. Perhaps the chorus here attributes the goddess Artemis with their vengeful qualities, as it feels forsaken. Artemis is appropriate here for many reasons: traditionally, both Artemis and Apollo favoured the
Trojans in the war (e.g. Homer II 5.477); historically, her cult originated in Asia Minor; in Aesch ST 149-50 she is invoked because of her martial abilities; Paley says she had some special tutelary relationship with married women (perhaps when worshipped as παιδοτρόφος?); in Athens, she was the principal women’s goddess (every Athenian girl would be dedicated to her in childhood) and it is natural to call on her when in distress. Ambrose says it is common to use a deity’s name when its shrine is meant. The point is that the prayers of the chorus, sitting as suppliants, were not answered.

The Doric ἀ τλάμον (= ἕτλημον) is in apposition to the subject of ἰνυσα, cf. Bac 1100.

For the lack of division of 935, see 925 note.

936-37 In light of the previous references to the marriage bed (918, 26, 33) the reference to the husband as ἀκολταν "bed-mate" is surely significant, as 1277 ἀλοχος is. The superposition of two near-synonyms (ἀλιον ἐν πέλασον "over the main of the sea"), and the rapid metre of the line (cf. 927, 50) gives the feel of the chorus being rushed to the Greek ships immediately after the fall of the city: they are embarking on a long voyage and have not had time to mourn the dead properly.

For the scansion of 937, see 927 note.

938-41 ἄποσκεπέω = ἀποβλέπω = "gaze at" i.e. turning away (ἀπο-) from all else and focusing on a particular thing. Tragedy is replete with obscure nautical expressions of this type: ἐνελ νόστιμον ναύς ἐξήνησεν πόλει lit. "after the ship had set in motion a returning foot", Ambrose "after the ship had started on its return course." Here, ποδας is functioning much as in English one talks of a leg of a journey, but there is some ambiguity, recognized by both Paley and Collard, who also adopt the nautical meaning of πόδα which means sail/sheet, cf. 1020, Or 706. νόστιμον is used not from the perspective of the chorus, but of the ship.

For the line division of 939 and 940, see note 928/9-32.
942 τάλαννα (here appositional nominative, of the speaker) echoes its use in θ13 (vocative, of Troy) thereby linking the fates of the one with the other.

943/4-47 The epode marks a decided change of tone for the stasimon. Until this point, the chorus has spoken as an individual lamenting its personal loss at the Sack of Troy. This approach helps personalize and individuate the chorus: the listener is told of a particular private situation, from many voices, and so knows that there must have been many similar situations - every soldier was finally at ease, and every wife was relaxing, preparing herself for bed after the celebrations when the Greek shout rang out. Euripides shows himself sensitive to the innocent sufferers in war, a message that would ring true in war-torn Athens. The beautiful, balanced narrative of the stasimon serves to bind the chorus to its distant homeland (the way the first stasimon took them away from it; Euripides often employed the motif of forced separation from one’s homeland, viz. Bac, Cyc, Hel, Hip, It, Pho.) Yet the stasimon is completed with a curse upon Helen and Paris. External to the narrative and irrelevant to the plot of the play, this sudden transition and dénouement can disappoint modern sensibilities. It must be seen as a virtual convention in any reference to Troy’s capture. It does provide a weak link to the second stasimon, describing the judgement of Paris (cf. And 274-308), and clearly shows whom the chorus blames for its state (cf. And 103-16.) A much stronger link with the previous stasimon is in the enjambment of the epode with the previous antistrophe. Such a device is not found elsewhere in extant Euripides outside of these two instances (it does happen between strophe and antistrophe at Sup 47-48, Hip 130-31, Rhe 351) but drawing any conclusions as to the possible significance remains uncertain.

Paris is also called βοτανός at 646, And 280 ἐπὶ βούτας (where the Scholiast says τὰς ἐπαύλεις τοῦ βουκόλου Πάριδος) cf. Stinton (1965) esp. 16 n.2. It seems Greeks were so habitually cursing Paris that compounds such as αἰνόπαρν (which is better to be taken capitalised, as if it were a proper name) are found regularly: Homer II 3.39, 13.769 Δύσπαρης, Alcman (PMG 77 = Diehl 73) Δύσπαρης Αἰνόπαρης κακὼν Έλλαδι βοτιανεῖραι. Also found is Or 1388 δυσελένα (the Phrygian speaks), and of their marriage, Hel 1120 αἰνόγαμος, Aesch Ag 713 αἰνόλεκτρον,
Kannicht *TrGF* adesp 644.40 φιλογάμου. The construction begun in the 2nd antistrophe is continued with κατάρφ διδόσα "giving over to curses" cf. Hom *Od* 19.167 ἄχεσι με δόσας. Daitz is probably right to follow the minority of MSS. in reading Διοσκόρον rather than Diggle's Διοσκόρον, cf. *Hel* 1644, *El* 1239, and Tovar (1959) 134. The emendations of the editors in 946-7 are to resolve metrical difficulties, see Stinton (1975) 91, 97, who goes against West's interpretation, cf. Diggle (1984) 70. Collard (1986) 20 includes this among Diggle's treatments that are definitely better.

948-49 ἡφίκησεν (aorist of ἡφικίζειν) "eject, expel" + genitive of separation. The many parallels typically given for γάμος οὗ γάμος are not exactly equivalent: *Or* 819 τὸ καλὸν οὗ καλὸν, Soph *El* 1154 μήτηρ ἀμήτωρ, *OT* 1214 τὸν ἅγιον γάμον, *Ajax* 655 ἄδωρα δώρα, Aesch *Pv* 544 ἄχαρις χάρις, Aristoph *Frogs* 1334 ψυχάν ἀψυχόν. The ἄλλα implies a corrective force rather than simply this simply being an oxymoron. Truly parallel are the more clearly punctuated 1121, *Hel* 1134 γέρας, οὗ γέρας ἄλλη ἔριν, *Pho* 1495 ἔρις - οὗ ἔρις, ἄλλα φόνῳ φόνος, *Alc* 231 οὗ φιλαν ἄλλα φιλτάταν (see also GP 480). The use of γάμος = wife = Helen is substantiated by *And* 103-04 Ἑλένη φιλαν ἄλλα τῶν ἅγιων ἄλλα τῶν ἅγιων ἄλλα τῶν ἅγιων ἄλλα τῶν ἅγιων ἄλλα τῶν ἅγιων ἄλλα ἀλλὰ φιλτάταν. ἄλαστορός is a genitive of source, cf. 686. οἷς is also used of Helen at Aesch *Ag* 1461, and also in the terminal position. Euripides is making his borrowings from the *Oresteia* blatant, so that the audience will be prepared for further wholesale adaptations 1035ff.

950-51/2 There is an evident reluctance to speak Helen’s name: ἄν (=ην) = οἷς = Helen. The repetition of πέλαστος ἄλιόν from 937, again in a burst of ten short syllable, ties the epode closer to the second strophic pair, and repeats the regret at the haste with which the chorus was taken from Troy. With ἰκονε the chorus finally addresses Helen directly, using an allusive plural (cf. Smyth 1007), cf. Clytemnestra of Orestes at Aesch *Eum* 100 παθοῦσα πρός τῶν φιλτάτων. The Alcaic decasyllable (951/2) is found elsewhere in tragedy, e.g. *Pv* 132, 148, 167, 185. Horace of course adopted the pattern into his verse, e.g. *virginibus puerisque canto*.
Hecuba has remained onstage throughout the preceding stasimon, as she had during the first stasimon. Through the sustained use of irony, and word repetition, and manifested in the stage action with the dismissal of Polymestor’s retinue at 981, an effect is created which reverses the status of the two characters: Polymestor enters with his sons seemingly in control, and confident, while Hecuba plays up her weakness and femininity; this results in Hecuba attaining exactly what she requires towards the fulfilment of her revenge, and Polymestor’s duplicity is shown to all for what it is. The use of the two paradoi throughout the play is quite vague and nonspecific, but it seems that one parodos leads to the sea, and perhaps is where the sacrifice of Polyxena took place (if it is fair to call this Achilles’ tomb), and the other leads to the Greek camp. It seems likely that Polymestor appears along the latter parodos (889 διὰ στρατοῦ; so also Mossman (1991) 76).

The dynamic that exists in this scene is clever. Everyone on stage knows that Polymestor is lying in everything that he says; what Polymestor does not know is that Hecuba and the chorus do know this. No age is given for Polymestor’s children (the use of παῖς and τέκνον being inconclusive), but 1158 implies that, unlike Polydorus (contra Nussbaum), these are not full- or almost full-sized figures on the stage. For the division of these lines as the fourth episode, see Introduction VI.

The sustained use of irony in this passage combines many of the usually distinct meanings of the (English) word: the literal meaning is the opposite of what is intended (e.g. the crocodile tears, δεκρύμα, in 954; 1004 ἐβαρομένος ἄνω; there is more truth in a statement than the speaker means or intends (e.g. 956 where Polymestor himself is not παῖς; 959 Polymestor himself is in ignorance; 995, 997 the gold is now safe from Hecuba); a situation or utterance has a significance unperceived at the time (e.g. 957 Polymestor will not fare well soon; 1006 although Polymestor will not die immediately, this is the impression Euripides is trying to leave with the audience, which he does later with the echoes of Aesch Ag); a condition where one seems to be mocked by the facts (e.g. 953-55 the fourfold use of the second person pronoun when Polymestor will be shown to care only for himself; 968-74 Hecuba’s use of the same words she has earlier used with
Agamemnon; 1017 where the absence of men and safety do not coincide.) There are many more examples of each of these types, and the question is begged, why does Euripides do this? At least part of the answer is that he can.

The purpose of this episode is to have Polymestor appear onstage and to bring him into the tent, and this could be accomplished in a very few lines. He has chosen to include a testing of Polymestor's guilt, the questions of Polydorus' well-being 986-97, since all the evidence (regardless of how one understands the dream) is circumstantial. This is the 'proper' (or expected) place in the play for the second agon, which only appears after Hecuba's revenge has been enacted. This, too, is ironic. When it does come, the agon serves a non-obvious purpose, that of retroactively confirming the moral correctness of the revenge, human procedure thereby mirroring divine rights. The function of the irony is to prolong and heighten the audience's anticipation of the events to come, events which (cf. note 1034) the audience members are deliberately misled to believe will lead to Polymestor's death.

Burnett (1971) 15, however, critiques the value of the technique:

> Ordinary tragedy did not deal with baseness or with foolishness, but it had made the blindness of men one of its principle tenets, and tragic irony, the device for conveying this blindness, had become the chief stylistic ornament of the classic stage. It was an elegant and indispensable tool, but irony had a major fault as a teacher of humility, since it depended on the creation of a knowing audience. The spectator who joined the poet in watching over the blindness of Oedipus forgot to see himself in the blind man, for irony appreciated had made him feel as all-knowing as a god.

This observation concedes too little to the power of irony (or perhaps concedes the wrong thing.) It's ornamental use serves to enliven the style, and specifically to make the audience pay more attention to what is transpiring on stage. Certain lines in this episode may make a modern viewer cringe at the 'obvious' double-entendre, but it is important that the audience follow precisely what is happening. The scene is very compact, and very important: in it Hecuba gets the necessary proof of Polymestor's guilt, as he swears Polydorus is alive and well, with the corpse of Hecuba's
Euripides does not want the spectator here to "see himself in the blind man". It is Hecuba who receives sympathy, and who is above the irony. She is not blind, but rather blinds physically the who is already blind metaphorically. This then functions as another confirmation of Hecuba's vengeance: she does not act contrary to nature, but according to the limits and parameters already established and demonstrated clearly in this scene.

Euripides is infamous for his use of repetitions, but it is for his lyric passages (e.g. the Phrygian in Or 1369ff, and also Polymestor 1056ff) that Aristophanes parodies him (Frogs 1331ff.) These instances seem to be used to portray heightened emotion. Yet Euripides' word repetition is not confined to these passages and seemingly unmotivated repetitions seem prevalent throughout the play:

E.g. 1. 85 ἀλαστον 98 ἐλασθην
2. 522 πλήρης 527 πλήρες
3. 526 χεροῖν 527 χεροῖν 528 χειρι
4. 538 πρευμενής 539 πρύμνας 540 πρευμενοθς†
5. 601 μάθη 602 μαθών 603 μάτην
6. 655 τίθεται 656 τιθεμένα
7. 676 βακχείον 686 βακχείον (lyric)
8. 745 δυσμενεῖς 746 δυσμενοὺς

Even this brief list gives some idea of the scope of these repetitions. Their presence calls for explanation: are they accidental, or deliberate, and if accidental, is it a fault (i.e. stylistically unsatisfactory)? That they are not accidental is suggested by their prominence in the present episode (I count sixteen instances, not including σθεν, cf. note 990):

1. 953 φιλτατ' 953 φιλτατῆ 990 φιλταθ'
2. 956 πιστόν 1017 πιστά
3. 958 αὐτά 960 ταύτα
4. 964 ἁφικόμην 967 ἁφικόμην
There is also a prevalence of such repetitions in the following stasimon (where see note.) The difficulty lies in interpreting their purpose. Some of these (e.g. 2, 6, 8) may be mere coincidence, but the bulk are clearly deliberate (cf. also 45 διον δε παλετν δο, 84 γορον γορεις, 156 δειλατα δειλατου, 203 δειλατω δειλατα, Med 513 μονη μονοις, a figure described in detail by Denniston El 337. The purpose when used in lyric, simulating extremes of emotion, fails to give a satisfactory account. In many languages, the repetition of a morpheme with a different semantic value in each use is considered stylistically clever, but here (generally) words are being used to mean the same thing. Nor can the conventions (inasmuch as they exist) of stichomythia be used to account for the repetitions. The mere existence of the feature would imply that Euripides was attempting to be stylistically clever, and whereas in a modern aesthetic he may not succeed, in the ancient one he probably does.

Polymestor is the most despicable character in the play, and it is worth speculating as to how he was presented on stage. It seems likely that he would be wearing long Thracian-style robes that would look like they were of expensive cloth (the women in the tent fawn over the cloth, and much of the conversation in this episode concerns gold and riches; it would be a logical dramatic
touch to have Polymestor’s opulence visibly manifested.) If the robes are removed during the fourth stasimon so that Polymestor appears in a different, simpler costume (and changed mask) when he is blinded, the effect could be quite extreme. But it seems that there was something distinctive about the appearance of Thracians that made them particularly striking when presented in a dramatic context: viz. Aristoph Ach 135ff., Lys 557ff., Soph Tereus (and therefore Aristoph Birds?), Aesch Lykourgeta, etc. Beginning with a hypothesis, then, that when Thracians were presented on stage (and in visual art as a whole) they were shown with some kind of exaggerated headpiece, what can be said to confirm or disprove this contention? Thracians are often described by their red hair, which suggests the head was distinctive in some way. The Tereus legend, with the metamorphosis into a hoopoe (Ἑρώη) provides more corroboration: the bird has a large distinctive crest, which could serve as an aetiological link between the Thracian Tereus and the bird he became. Most convincing, however, is the iconography of the Hecuba itself, as described by Séchan (1926) 319-22, Laurens (1988) - an excellent and apparently complete summary - and Mossman (1990) Appendix A. One vase in particular, an Apulian loutrophoros (British Museum 1900.5-19.1, Séchan (1926) 321 fig. 95), shows the blinded Polymestor wearing what appears to be a tall pointed hat. This feature appears not to have been satisfactorily explained, but I believe that it is a distinctive feature of Thracian dress, recalling the crest of the Ἑρώη, that marks Polymestor out as foreign (and particularly Thracian) as well as providing visual stimulation through the use of costumes.

953-55 Polymestor enters apostrophizing the dead Priam, and then switching his focus to Hecuba. Nauck deleted 953 because of its seeming oddness. Though this is understandable, the opening words of an episode are an unlikely place for an interpolation, and its place in context can be explained. Priam is addressed first for five reasons: he has priority as King of Troy; he has priority due to his recent death (compare the respect the Greeks give Achilles as their greatest hero, despite his being dead, cf. also HF 217ff); it makes Polymestor’s δακρύω seem more sincere; it steeps the opening words with irony (cf. also his later address of his just-murdered children, 1037);
finally it colours his future use at 1114 of ὁ φαλατατ', where see note. There is a subtly different use in φαλτάτη, with respect to the name of the person addressed:

Πρέπειμεν is in apposition to φαλτατ' ἀνδρῶν
οὐ is in apposition to φαλτάτη...Ἐκάβηλ.

The objects of δακρύω with σ' ἐλεορφών form a tricolon, culminating with ἔκγονον = Polyxena, but understandable as Polydorus. The play contains three speeches which talk of the mutability of things, and this is the third. The voices Euripides uses to express this sentiment are wide ranging, the other speeches being Talthybius (488ff.) and Hecuba (621ff.)

956-57 ςεδ is extra metrum, as usual. Diggle follows the reading of most MSS. with οὐκ ἦσθαν οὐδέν πιστῶν, though Murray, etc., perhaps troubled by the double negative, followed the 11th century M, ἦστα πιστῶν οὐδέν. This is unnecessary: the second negative "simply confirms the first negative" (Smyth 2761.)

958 Note the quantities of φρονοῦσι (long first syllable) and θεόν (monosyllabic) αὔτὰ = human fortunes. Though Murray's αὔτος is closer to the MSS, φρονοῦσι requires an object. πάλιν τε καὶ πρόσω, "back and forth", following the kneading procedure; but it is also a variation on the usual πρόσω καὶ ὀπέσω, "past and future", in view of 957.

959 Hadley rightly notes that ἐνιθάνετε is a continuation of the culinary metaphor in the previous line, here "putting in as an ingredient." Though properly a dative of accompanying circumstance (Smyth 1527), the presence of a subjunctive implies ἄγνοσήμα should be understood as a dative of cause (Smyth 1517.) The Scholiast explains τῇ ἀθηλὰ τῶν πραγμάτων τῶν μελλόντων.

961 The accusative προκόπτοντα agrees with the assumed accusative of person in the previous clause (=τιμε) = the subject of ὑρηνεῖν. The metaphorical use ("advancing, making progress" also at Alc 1079, Hip 23) becomes standard in later moral philosophy. The assumed subject could also be
Τινά, and the word takes οὐδέν.

Though the general meaning of οὐδέν ἐς πρὸς θεν κακῶν is clear, the grammar remains obscure:

1. κακῶν is a genitive of separation (Smyth 1392) The phrase εἰς τὸ πρὸς θεν = "forward" (cf. Herodotus 8.89, Aristoph 43, Plato Rep 437a etc.) If the τὸ had been omitted (say, for metrical or poetical convenience), the present phrase would = "advancing forward not at all from evils." This is Collard’s interpretation. κακῶν can either be dependent upon πρὸς θεν, or a vague partitive genitive.

2. By emending εἰς to ἐκ, κακῶν is no longer a problem: "(advancing) not at all out of former evils." There is no need for τῶν as the evils are clear to everybody involved (though other examples of πρὸς θεν = "former, ancient, of old" do have the article, cf. Soph OT 268, OC 375, El 504, Aesch Sup 52, Homer II 9.524, and so is probably wanted.)

3. Perhaps the most satisfactory solution is to emend οὐδέν ἐς οὐδενῶς, which removes the difficult preposition: "(advancing) from none of the former evils."

This is without any support, though, so (1) is probably right.

962 τί, adverbial with εἰ = "at all."

τῆς ἐμῆς ἀπουσίας, genitive of cause (Smyth 1405) = "on account of my absence" cf. Hip 1402, Thucydides 8.109.2.

967 Murray’s punctuation - avoiding Diggle’s comma at the end of 966 and placing one at the caesura in this line, after μύθους - emphasizes the relationship between δμοις and λέγουσα, and
strengthens the consequential ὑπ. The cases taken by verbs of hearing are *normally* an accusative of the sound heard, genitive of source (so Denniston *El* 851-52); but cf. also Soph *OC* 1187 λόγων δ' ἀκούσαι τις βλαβή; for another exception.

968-75 Diggle deletes 974-75, believing them to be interpolated, followed by Collard (1986) 20. Similarly, Dindorf removes 970-75, and Hartung 973-75. Page believes these objections are "not very strong" (68.) Arguments for deletion object to a "maidenly restraint" (Hadley) inappropriate for the (former) Trojan queen, as well as anachronistic. But anachronism is not a problem in Euripides, and Hecuba's attitude is clearly ironic in the light of 870-87. She is fulfilling Polymestor's expectations of a woman (as well as those Agamemnon expressed 876ff) and thereby gaining the upper hand. The commentators are right in thinking that the action is inappropriate for the powerful heroine of the play; they fail to see that her strength is due in part to her expected weakness. Even the more charitable interpretations are unsatisfactory: her restraint is feigned; she is not so uncertain in her resolve that she fears her face may belie her. Nor is overemphasis of her actions a plausible reason for deletion of any of these lines. In fact, ending with a proverbial tone is even desirable, in light of Polymestor's response (see 976 note.)

The repetition of Πολυμήστορ (969, 974) and προσβλέπειν / βλέπειν (968, 975) might be the cause of secondary objection, and this has been discussed in the introduction to this episode. Also in favour of the authenticity of these lines is the repetition of basic terms from moral philosophy that she has already used in her νόμος-speech in the previous episode: ἀλοχόνομα (968, cf. 806 ἀλοχρα), κακοὶ (969, cf. 808 κακά), αἰδώς (970, cf. 806 αἰδεσθητο), νόμος (974, cf. 800.) These echoes show that Hecuba remembers her earlier argument to Agamemnon and that she is functioning within the same moral confines as before. This is one of the more straightforward reasons why Kirkwood's (1947) interpretation of the play - that Hecuba relinquishes νόμος and adopts πεθό due to the Greek and Thracian injustices - is unsatisfactory. The lines are also kept by Mossman (1990) 297 n.37.

The syntax treats the phrase αἰδώς μ' ἔχει as if it were αἰδεσθητε, hence the nominative
Tuyx&vouoa instead of an accusative. Tierney calls this sense-construction (κατά σύνεσις) as at Ion 927, cf. Hip 23, Cyc 330, HF 185, IT 695, 947, 964.

ὀρθοὶς κόραις, "with unfaltering gaze" (Hadley) is a standard image, cf. IA 851, Soph OT 528, 1385, Lucan 9.904 lumine recto, Ovid Met 2.776 recta acies, Claudian Praef ad iii Con Hon 6 et recto flammas imperat ore pati. Hecuba’s refusal to make eye contact (the words clearly describing the stage action) serves to drop her status onstage, thereby raising his. She is trying to make him feel secure and confident. I agree with Mossman (1990) 297 n.37 that Nussbaum’s (1986) 412 pun on κόρη is unconvincing. Denniston El 343-4 compares the impropriety here with his immediate passage, Held 474-77, And 876-78. fr. 521 (Meleager) ἔνδον μένουσαν τὴν γυναικίν’ εἶναι χρεών | ἐσθλήν, θόραι δ’ ἀξίαν τοῦ μηδενός, and cf. IA 821-34.

Tierney states that this is the earliest recorded usage of δύσσουσαν (taken with the objective genitive σεθεν) followed by Soph El 654, then only in prose. Bond HF 1160-62 seems to imply that Hecuba’s face is here veiled, but that this is meant literally is unlikely.

976 Polymestor is doing more than merely recognizing the appropriateness of the proverb when he says καὶ θαυμά γ’ σεθεν. It demonstrates that Hecuba has succeeded in making Polymestor secure, as he himself says at 981. For καὶ...γε, cf. 993, and Jebb on Phil 38. Here, γε helps καὶ introduce a new fact, cf. Soph OT 1132 κοῦδεν γε θαυμά, 1319, etc. The phrase ἄλλα τίς χρεία σ’ ἤμοι (sc. έχει) corresponds closely to the Homeric τι δέ σε χρεία ἤμείο (II 11.606.)

978-79 Denniston notes that δή τι implies the speaker "can, and does, particularize in his own mind, but keeps the particularization to himself" (GP 212) cf. IT 526, 578, IA 661, Soph Phi 573. He continues, "There is an air of mystery about most of these."

By including the children in her statement, Hecuba shows that she has already planned her coming action. Yet it is a private understanding: the chorus do not fully understand until she recounts the details 1044-46.

The earliest use of the word ὀπάσονος means a comrade, esp. in war. This lends support to
the supposition that the attendants are armed.

982-83 Polymestor claims a φίλωα-relationship both with the Greeks (the Scholiast explains διὰ τὸ μὴ συμμαχήσας αὐτὸν τοῖς Τρωσι) and with Hecuba (this had been sealed with the pledge of Polydorus, a pledge both he and Hecuba now know to be void, despite the claims made 986-97.)

Diggle restores the reading of most MSS. (also Aldus, Porson), χρῆ. Murray, etc. had adopted the imperfect χρῆν, on analogy with 265.

986-88 That the subject of ζῆ is παῖδα Πολύδωρον is not as unusual as the commentators imply, cf. Homer II 5.85. Apparent difficulties emerge from the prolepsis.

989 μάλαστα = "certainly" as in modern Greek. μὲν can be stood either as looking forward, preparatory for an antithetical ἀλ-clause which is left incomplete (GP 369ff), or looking back, contrasting with the description of her fortunes that have preceded (GP 377-78.) The latter is preferable.

990 ὁ φίλωαθ' clearly recalls 953, in sarcastic echo. The irony is lost on Polymestor, though, who repeats the phrase with Agamemnon, 1114. ἀξίως is adverbial, as at Med 562, Thuc 3.39.

The isolated reading of the MS. L λέγεις σὲθεν has been preferred almost universally (holdouts include Kirchoff and Paley) over the unanimous reading of the remaining MSS. σὲθεν λέγεις. Daitz’ reasoning is based on analogy with 955, 966, 973 (and he could add 1003), all of which end with σὲθεν. Tovar rightly questioned this opinion: "the reading λέγεις σὲθεν is a consequence of the old recognized authority of L or P. The order εὖ κάζως σὲθεν seems preferable, and as we have reason to doubt the value of L, nothing justifies maintaining L’s reading against that of all the rest of the codices" (1959, 134). A corruption towards λέγεις σὲθεν, because of the common line-end, seems more plausible.
992 cf. Virgil Aen 3.341 *Ecqua tamen puero est amissae cura parentis?* Adoption of the reading of the MSS, *muou*, requires Murray's ellipse at the caesura, and a question mark at the end of the line. Tierney's emended *mu* may be "more elegant" but serves nothing, and Herwerden's *pou* (adopted by Diggle) though easily explainable in terms of corruption is also unnecessary.

993 καλ...γε as at 976. ὅς σὲ "to you": ὅς + accusative "of persons only, used after verbs expressing or implying motion" (Smyth 1702.)

The imperfect in κρύφως ἐξίπτει mol Eis is suspicious, considering Polydorus' fate. The question is begged, what is meant by κρύφως? Tierney supposes "without being caught by the Greeks," but this absurdly requires him to have accompanied Polymestor to the Chersonese and to have been stopped just outside the Greek encampment. It is preferable for Polydorus to be hidden from Polymestor, i.e. that he had tried to escape and that this is an ironical representation of the facts. It makes Polymestor's guardianship something from which to escape, which would then (since Hecuba is in the know) lead naturally onto the matter of the financial pledge, discussed immediately.

994 γε "adds detail to an assent already expressed" (GP106) as at 1004.

996 The caesura separates the two imperatival clauses. The aorist in the first half expresses urgency ("I beg that you..." Smyth 1841b) but the present which follows gives almost a proverbial tone (Smyth 1841e, cf. biblical Exodus 20.17.)

τὸν is used pronominally, with the adverbial πλησίον = "of those nearby" (Smyth 1100) = "of your neighbour." τοῦ κρύσσε (Hadley) or δντον (Major) must be understood (actually anything that fits, transferred from εὐτόν = the pledge of gold.) Tovar (1959) 132 argues for the MSS. alternate τοῦ.

997 Hadley suggests that we should understand στως before ὄναμην, on analogy with Aristoph
Having gathered her evidence, Hecuba moves on to the matter at hand using the normal particle for proceeding onto a new point, ὅν, GP 426.

φιλήθελς "beloved" cf. IT 983.

Hermann's emendation ἔστιν...κατόρυψες is generally accepted, yielding an example of the schema Pindaricum (singular verb connected with a masculine or feminine plural subject, the verb always appearing first) cf. Ion 1146, Hesiod Theog 825, Plato Gorg 500d, Euthyd 302c, Pindar fr. 45.16, and Gildersleeve on O 11.6.

κατόρυψες, "excavated chamber" is here used for the location of the treasure (χρυσοῦ) but is used for a tomb at Soph Ant 774. This may be a secondary meaning, derived from opulent grave goods. Whether the audience would here an overtone in this of Polymestor being lured to his death is uncertain. Note the alliteration in 1002.

The conventional requirements of stichomythia require Polymestor's interruption at 1001, cf. 1271-73 note.

The postponement of γε is common when used with a preposition (GP 149) and here is used to add detail to a previous assent (995, cf. GP 136.)

The question must be understood to be asked innocently, without suspicion.

This line deliberately provides a false lead, which provides an expectation for the Chorus (1028, 1034) which is eventually frustrated, only to be replaced with a much grimmer reality.

Boissonade's semicolon is essential. Following a demonstrative, καὶ binds it "more closely with the following words (GP 307.)"
1008 The reading of the MSS Τλας requires it to be used as an adjective. Scalinger's emendation Τλαδος, adopted by Diggle, makes sense and is an easily justifiable corruption: attraction with Αθανας (which is a genitive) of a peculiar noun, to a more regular metre.

In context (cf. 1002), στεγα is probably implies an underground treasury, cf. the so-called Treasury of Atreus at Mycenae (now known to be a tomb). In Athens, though, Athena's temple on the Acropolis was the state treasury, and this is likely the primary association. Earlier (see 927 note) Euripides assigned Troy somewhat artificially with features of Greek urban planning.

1009 σημειον δε τι is a common interrogative structure in Euripides at a line end, cf. Hel 141 θατερον δε τι; 604 θαγγελεις δε τι; 818 (see Diggle (1978) 169-71), Tro 74, Hip 519, Pho 1338, IA 1354, Aristoph Clouds 1186, Frogs 630 Plutus 917 and Thomson (1939).

1010 This grim landmark is the play’s most explicit reference to the existing ruins that remain at Troy. Hourmouziades (1965) 122 suggests "In the Hecuba the 'city' is as remote as, but at the same time dramatically more relevant than, Argos in the Electra. Although it is mentioned only once (823) [sic] the vision of its lost splendour and utter destruction dominates the play."

1011 Stokes (1990) 15 suggests (probably rightly) that interrogative τι is better than the indefinite τι preferred by the editors. This would then echo 991, and is paralleled by the questions in the middle of interrogations at Aesch Sup 306 τι σου ετευξεν άλλο δυσποτυμφ βοι; and Cho 114.

1012 The absence of particles suggests that Hecuba has ignored the question just asked, perhaps because of the validity of the landmark.

1016 Τοτε read by Weil, Méridier, Murray and Diggle, is preferable to the MSS reading.

In 53, the σηνη is Agamemnon's (see note 754-55), and that σηνη = these στεγας. Can it
therefore be private to have smuggled the treasure into the tent? If not, the question becomes important for the decoration of the σκηνή itself: at what is Polymestor looking when he and his sons enter?

1017 Polymestor's choice of words confirms that Hecuba has successfully duped him. ἀρσεὶν means "male" but connotes strength and ferocity (cf. ἀρρηνίς.) For ἰρμίλα, cf. Bac 875. The sense is different than it was in 981.

1018 Polymestor is eagerly awaiting this answer. Hecuba draws it out by using as many long syllables as is metrically permitted.

1019-20 Singularly appropriate for Polymestor, ἵππες (which is picked up on with 1021 ὄς) assumes secrecy is required, i.e. that the Greeks are watching them.

νεών λόγοι πόδας οἴκαδε "to loose the sheets in the wind for a homeward journey" (Hadley.) πόδες were the ropes (sheets) at the foot of the sail, cf. Homer Od 5.260, Virgil Aen 5.830, and note 938-41.

1022 Everyone but the chorus enters the tent: Polymestor, Hecuba's (silent) attendants, Polymestor's sons and Hecuba. If the entry were made in this order (or its reverse) there would be a visual echo when the characters emerge, cf. 1049-53 note.
1023-1034 Fourth Stasimon (Act-Dividing Lyric)

This song is short and astrophic, but does constitute a formal division between the two natural actions of the Fourth Episode and the Exodos (see Introduction VI and Kranz (1933) 162). Whereas the three responding (strophic) stasima have been shown to be interrelated both among themselves and with the play as a whole (see note 905-51), this song remains closely associated with the action of the plot, and is directly predictive (however inaccurately) of the coming action of the Exodos. As with previous stasima, these lines represent a compression of time: the events purported to transpire during the singing of these lines must take longer than the singing itself. This is a common feature of stasima, and not requiring further discussion. The lines contain both iambic trimeters and dochmiac dimeters, the dominant rhythms of the second κομμίς, 684-723. The dochmiacs are exceptionally regular, upset only by 1031 (a single dochmiac and an iambic foot) and the (unremarkable) hyperdochmius in 1032.

The chorus apostrophise Polymestor. The fact that he is not onstage at the time is not important (cf. the address to Ilium at 905, or Polymestor’s address of Priam in 953): the words are addressed to him for rhetorical purposes only, and to leave no doubt that it is him shouting offstage at 1035. The language used in the ode is exceptionally metaphorical and allusive, but not inscrutable: Murray’s obols on 1026-30 are unnecessary. An important literary feature is the word repetition within these lines. Such repetition has been observed to play a large part in the play already, and in particular in the preceding episode (see note 953-1022.) Here though the doubling is quite dense, with notable contrasts:

1. 1023/4 \( \delta \dot{\epsilon} \dot{d} \omega \kappa \alpha \varsigma, \delta \omega \sigma \zeta \zeta \) past and future
2. 1023/4, 1030 \( \delta \kappa \nu, \delta \kappa \xi \) penalty and trial
3. 1025, 1026/7 \( \pi \sigma \omega \varsigma, \xi \kappa \nu \) simile and metaphor
4. 1028/9, 1034 \( \beta \iota \nu, \beta \iota \nu \) Polydorus’ life, and Polymestor’s
5. 1031 \( \delta \lambda \dot{e} \nu \beta \rho \iota \nu, \delta \lambda \dot{e} \nu \beta \rho \iota \nu \) standard Euripidean anadiplosis, see note 689-90 and Willink Or 999.
1023 Nauck, Weil, and Tierney view οὕτω δέδωκας as redundant, and have postulated reading οὕτω δέδωκας ἄν ἵσως δώσεις δίκην instead. This is done without authority and blind to the placement of the statement. The line is being said as Polymestor is within the tent, in the process of being blinded. The two tenses, looking back to the previous episode and looking forward to the Exodos, are used deliberately in order to mark the transition, in lieu of a responding stasimon.

1024/5 The notion of falling into a sea of troubles (ἀλλιμένων...εἰς ἄντιλον) is not unique in Euripides, cf. Hip 469-70 εἰς δὲ τὴν τύχην ἱ πεσοῦσ’ δοσθ’ σ’ν, πῶς ἄν ἐκνεύσηι δοξης; 822-23 κακὼν...πέλαγος εἴσορῶ ἱ τοσοῦτον ὡστε μὴποτ’ ἐκνεύσαι παλιν. Why this passage is often labelled a crux is due to a failure to view the metaphor as somewhat appropriate to the situation at hand. As the chorus makes clear, the general (τὸ) situation described is directly applicable to Polymestor who is being punished for causing Polydorus to fall, into salt water, where he washed up on a beach, i.e. had no harbour, both literally and figuratively. (25-27, 700-01.) This threefold reference to the plight of Polydorus (made explicit by 1028 ἄμξρας β’ν) isolates what the chorus is saying: Polymestor will suffer exact retribution for what he did to Polydorus, and his suffering shall figuratively represent that of Hecuba’s son. King’s likening Polymestor to a man suffering a shipwreck is wrong. The metaphor is used with precision to show the parallel situations. For this reason also Paley’s ἀλλιμένον = “where there is no rest for his foot” is unacceptable.

This rationale is integral to the understanding of the play. The immediate parallel is that of Polymestor’s blinding: as Hecuba will no longer see her murdered son, so too Polymestor will no longer see his (murdered) children. Reciprocation will come at 1259, 1261 where Polymestor predicts Hecuba will fall into the salt water near the promontory which will take its name from the event (1273, where there is no harbour, cf. Hel 1211 Λιβός ἄλμενος ἐκπεοῦντα πρὸς πέτρας where the same idea is found of cliffs.) ἄλμενος means “without a harbour” (a straightforward description of fact) and can be used both of shores, as at Hel 1211 (cited above) and Aesch Sup 768 μολόντες ἄλμενον χόνα, and of seas, as at Thuc 4.8.41 πρὸς τὸ πέλαγος ἄλμενα δντα. By extension it can mean “without a shelter” as with mountains, Hel 1132 ἄλμενα δ’ ὑψα, or the
air, Aristoph Birds 1400 ἀλὰμνον αἰθέρος αὐλακα. These are the parallels normally adduced for an extended meaning in the present instance. But an enclosed bilge is not parallel with mountains or the air, and to call it ἀλὰμνος ("inhospitable"? or (Collard) "with no escape"?) because it is either dirty, or one can drown there, is not the same metaphor and unacceptable (still another metaphor exists at Cyc 349 ἀλὰμνον τε καρδίαν.) The ἄντλος then is ἀλὰμνος firstly because it offers no protection (Polydorus is dead), and secondly to establish the figurative correspondence for retribution suggested above.

The meaning of ἄντλος as (metaphorically) "filthy water" derives from its meaning of "bilgewater", i.e. literally filthy water. Such is the meaning at Tro 691 ὁ ἄντλον εἰργῶν ναός, and, involved in the same sort of metaphor, Aristoph Thes 796 (where bilge = enemies), Pindar O 9.53 ("flood"), P 8.12 (where the ship of ὑβρις is scuttled), and Held 168 παῦσων τε τῶν ἢ καγίλων ἐμπιστεύσε πόδα (to get into difficulty, cf. the phrase "come hell or high water.") On this last example, Elmsley suggested that ἄντλος, however wrongly, is being used to mean πάλαιος. To these examples may be added the later (also metaphorical and derivative) use to mean a threshed but uncleane pile of grain, as at Nicander Theriaca 114, 546, Q. Smyrnaeus 1.352 and Adaeus AP 6.258. The only other extant use of the word are extended from the primary meaning, to "hold of a ship" (the same extension is found in English, where one can store things "in the bilge") at Homer Od 12.411, 15.479 (where someone is falling into it.) Manetho Astrologus 6.424 "bucket" should be considered in this category. The fact that so many examples of the word’s use are metaphorical, and that the present instance is a metaphor, suggests that it is best to translate "into a harbourless sea of troubles", ἀλὰμνος assuming that the dirty water is outside the ship, following the use at Held 168.

1026/7 The Scholiast rightly renders λέχριος as πάλαιος "sideways" (as he does when the word is used at Soph Ant 1344-5 πάντα γὰρ ἐν λέχρια τῶν χεροῖν) and it can be taken:

1. with πασαῖ (so Paley, Weil, Tierney, Pflugk etc.) where it represents the lurch of the ship; or
2. with έκπεση to mean either "headlong" (Hadley) or "sideways" (Collard) i.e. awry.

This can be metaphorical as at Soph Ant 1345 (cited above), Shakespeare

Richard II II.iv.24 "And crossly to thy good, all fortune goes", or literal, representing the blind staggering of Polymestor (1056ff.) unable to get where he wants (his heart’s desire.) The closest parallel for this is Med 1168-70:

χροίαν γὰρ ἀλλὰξασα λεχτα πάλιν
χωρεῖ τρόμουσα κώλα καὶ μόλις φθάνει.
θρόνοισιν ἐμπεσούσα μὴ χαμαί πεσεῖν.

The second, literal option is preferable, though there is merit in all the interpretations.

έκπεση is adopted by all modern editors, though in previous centuries έκπέση was preferred, a subjunctive with no stop after 1024 δίκην, "as one might lose his life falling..." (see Paley.) The accepted reading is a more standard Attic construction, though, and agrees with the Scholiast στερηθηση.

φόλας καρδίας, not "his dear life" but "his heart’s desire" is the treasure he seeks, a goal from which he has fallen (awry) cf. Soph Ant 1105 καρδίας τ’ έξισταμαί. In both these cases, καρδία is being used for θυμός, cf. Hip 1324 πληροῦσα θυμόν, Homer Il 13.784 νόν δ’ ἄρχ’, διπη σε κραδή θυμός τε κελέει.

1028-30 ύπέγγυον is used in two senses: with δίκη, "liable to be called to account for a (human) judicial action" (referring both to the punishment he will suffer (1024) and the after-the-fact trial (1109ff); and with θεότην "responsible to the gods" (Polymestor’s crimes have offended against divine standards, too, see 800 note, cf. Aesch Cho 39 θεότεν Ἐλακον ύπέγγυοι.) The capitalisation of δίκη is unnecessary, and is the source of part of the confusion exhibited by Tierney. There is perhaps some wordplay on the notion of έγγύη, the pledge or surety for which Polymestor has murdered Polydorus. Tierney believes "no Greek would make a distinction between such debts" and cites Didymus in the Scholiast, ύπέγγυον τὸ ἄληθὲς οὕτε παρὰ τῇ Δίκῃ οὕτε παρὰ τοῖς θεοῖς ἐμπεσοῦν ἄφανισταί. τοῦτο δὲ φησι διὰ τὸν Πολυμήστορα, ὅτι μέλλει
Barrett calls this "fantastic rubbish ... in defiance of usage, syntax, and mere common sense" (p.48.) It is stated that the meanings coincide (συμπίπτει, cf. 846, 966): they do, however interpreted, hence the adoption of Hemsterhuys' oó for the MSS. oó (accepted by Biehl (1985) 263-67.)

LSJ understands ἁμέρος βλέν passively, i.e. "losing your life", but Mossman (1990) 109 suggests an active interpretation, i.e. "destroying your life", but neither of these explanations satisfies. The life in question is that of Polydorus, so Collard is closer with "for your robbery of life."

1032 Some have taken δδοτ with ψεόδει, but it should be taken metaphorically with ἐλπίς "hope from this path." King, Jeffrey miss this metaphor and believe it refers to the journey to the Greek tents, but Polymestor's hope (for monetary gain) only begins at 1001. For the falsity of Hope, cf. Collard Sup 479, and fr. 650 (Protesilaus) πολλ' ἐλπίδες ψεόδους καὶ λόγοι βροτοὺς.

1033 θανάσιμον is never used of persons in Euripides, and goes tautologically with Ἀϊδαν (cf. 571, 1145) Ἀϊδαν as a cretic is also found at Sup 811 (cf. Diggle (1981) 21.) A contrary view is given by Cononis (1964) 33. Though most MSS. read ἵω τάλας, this removes the direct apostrophe of the (offstage) Polymestor, which is desirable. Diggle is right to follow Porson in reading ὧ. Some MSS. attribute this to Polymestor, but this is clearly wrong: the chorus are still singing doichmics.

1034 ἀπολέμωρ δὲ χειρ: "by no warrior's hand" = "by the hand of a woman" cf. Ion 216-8 καὶ Βρόμως ἄλλον ἀπολέμουσα κυσάναι βάκτροις ἵπτερει Γυς τέκνων ὁ Βασιλεὺς.

λεγεῖς βλέν is of course false, but indicates that the chorus is unaware of Hecuba's plan. It also prepares for the coming echoes of Agamemnon's death in Aeschylus, where he did lose his life. Euripides is deliberately creating false expectations in the audience, as he commonly did with the so-called "lying" prologues.
1035-1295 Exodos

To this point the play has shown Hecuba the former queen of Troy, interacting with various men from the Greek camp, and with her false-friend Polymestor, who also will soon ally himself with the Greek camp (1032ff.) This has prepared for her eventual victory, which comes in the Exodos. Because the progress of events is rapid and detailed, these last lines will be considered in smaller sections.

1035-55 The Revenge

The chorus begins the Exodos alone onstage. The only sound provided is by Polymestor's voice offstage, yielding a scene that is consciously modelled on Aesch Ag 1343ff. There is also a marked and deliberate similarity with Cyc 663ff, which is discussed in Introduction IV and V, and is noted by Arnott (1982) and Meridor (1975). While far from the naturalistic theatre of today, keeping violent acts offstage was an accepted and standard practice in the tragic theatre (though not an absolute rule, e.g. Pearson Soph Frag 2 p.96-97 where one of Niobe's daughters is killed by Artemis; the actor Timotheus of Zancynthus' portrayal of the suicide of Ajax (Scholiast Soph Ajax 864) was late and cannot be thought to be representative, or the standard interpretation of the scene.) Cries from inside serve to fix the actual moment of the event in the mind of the audience, cf. especially Ag 1343, 1345, Or 1296, 1301, Cyc 663, 665, 666-68, Hip 776, Soph El 1404ff, Aristoph Frogs 1214, Platus 934-35.

Arnott (1982) discusses in detail the phenomenon of the offstage cry, and notes "how quickly the convention ... became stabilized and even stereotyped" (40). In the earlier use of a complex theatrical convention (the aside, 736ff) Euripides carefully signposted its use because (in all probability) of the novelty of the convention itself. With the offstage cry, however, audience recognition is assured and a spectator would know to anticipate certain features (Arnott lists a 'canon' of seven such features, (1982) 38) based, it would seem, originally on the twofold use in the Oresteia (Aesch Ag 1343ff, Cho 869 ff.) Yet unlike these examples, or for that matter, Soph El 1404ff, Eur Med 1271ff, HF 750ff, El 1165ff, the present instance does not lead to the death of
the victim. Euripides, in remaining so faithful to the convention’s canon, creates a surprising effect (1982, 41):

In the Hecuba Euripides seems to have taken particular care towards his achievement of a powerfully new effect by keeping as close as possible to the details of the traditional model (with the Aeschylean echoes and the verbal ambiguity underlining this closeness), and then making the one change that sets this scene completely apart: the victim lives on before the eyes of the audience. The effect is all the stronger because the one transforming and shocking novelty is set in a context of totally conventional details.

Euripides plays with the same convention in a different way at Or 1296ff, and echoes of the present passage, with the same eventual effect, can be seen in Cyc 663ff (pace Arnott.)

It therefore seems 1035 apparently refers to the blinding and 1037 to the murder of the children (which Polymestor can presumably detect from their shouts, since it seems too gruesome a possibility to contemplate him being blinded in one eye (1035) his children being murdered (1036) and then losing the other eye (1037), with one ὅμων per eye) which reverses the order of events as narrated 1160-72. Meridor (1975) 6 notes "This reverse arrangement seems to be due to the impact of the pattern of Aesch. Ag. 1343-46 and may point to an unusually vivid impression made on Euripides by the Agamemnon [sic] of Aeschylus". The similarity of this punishment with the punishment of Zedekiah (also mentioned in Meridor, 1975) is discussed in note 1049-53.

1035 ϑῆγγος accusative of respect, cf. 910. The line is spoken in high tragic diction (Barrett Hip 799 notes that ὅμων is vernacular Attic, as opposed to ὅμων which is literary Attic; see notes 1036 and 1037) cf. Cyc 663 ὅμων, κατηγορίας ῥαξῶμεθ᾽ ὀφθαλμοῦ σέλας, where parody of (at least) the assignment of such diction to violently-minded characters is intended. In the shouting, the syllables of the interjection would likely have been drawn out.

1036 The chorus must react to the offstage shouts, but it is far from clear in what way the lines
are to be divided. Daitz prints semichoruses as marked in some MSS. but such marks reflect copyist’s opinions (based on analogy with the imitated passage in the *Agamemnon*), not authorial intent. Though there are some clear cases of semichoruses (e.g. *Or* 1258ff, *Soph* *Aj* 866ff, Aristoph *Lys*) they are not to be thought of as normative. If used here it would be more clear. Since there are many parallels with the Aeschylean blinding of *Agamemnon*, also possible is assigning each speech - 1036, 1038, (1041), 1042-43 - to different individuals. This also is unlikely: Aesch *Ag* 1346-71 is an extended passage which conveniently provides a couplet for each chorus member and this is not; nor are there any significant verbal allusions. Much more likely is that the lines are spoken all by the chorus leader, who is responsible for interacting with characters during episodes. This explains the use of φιλατι (both here and in 1038) which would be acceptable if the chorus were speaking as a whole, but altogether less satisfactory.

The use of οἰμωγήν does not affect the reading ὃμοι in 1035, 1037, cf. *Soph OC* 820 ὃμοι, οἰμώξειν, Aesch *Ag* 1343-46 ὃμοι, οἰμόγιμας and Barrett *Hip* 1401.


σφεγής can ambiguously refer either to the death of his children (which Collard, while recognising the ambiguity, suggests is indicated by δυστήνου) or to his own blinding (so Weil, cf. *El* 1228 σφεγή = wound.) The vocative allows for either (see also Fraenkel *Ag* 1389). If the former, a kind of parallelism exists, with 1035 referring to the blinding, and 1037 to the murder. But the latter is more in character with the monody as a whole, which is completely self-obsessed: 1075-78 are clearly hyperbolic, and refer to himself as much as to his sons; Polymestor only directly addresses his sons’ murder at 1160. Until then the suffering is his, which does include the loss of progeny, but is primarily internalised. This meaning could be made clear by the actor stressing the caesura in the fourth foot, rather than in the third: "Oh no, again. Children! - Horrible bloodshed- ". The audience does not yet know the fate of the children, nor could
reasonably be expected to guess with any certainty. The line then reads as an address to the children, informing them (and the audience) of what has happened. Nor is there an inconsistency when the narration of the events takes place (1145-75.) In retrospect, the line simply has Polymestor addressing his just-murdered sons, cf. 953 for the irony.

1038 καίνα cf. 689 note.

1039 οὕτι μή + aorist subjunctive constitutes a strong denial of the future, cf. MT 295, but see Campbell (1943) and Cyc 666 ἀλλ' οὕτι μή φύγητε τῆρα ἔξω πέτρας, ἐνδευκάτω Sup 1069 οὗ γὰρ μή κίχιμις μ' ἐλών χερί, El 982 οὗ μή κακισθῆς εἰς ἀνάνδριαν πεσῆ.

1040 That βάλλων refers to Polymestor’s fists is clear by the dramatic necessity of 1155: he had been disarmed of his javelins (pace Tierney) and blinded. The βαλλω-root is also used by Hecuba at 1044 and Polymestor at 1175, both times of the hammering of his fists at this moment, cf. the English expression “to throw a punch.” Ambrose is wrong to tie the interpretation with βέλος in the next line, where see note.

Whether Agamemnon’s tent is laid out like a Greek household with “the women’s apartments” being innermost is not at issue with the use of μυχοῦς: the word here represents where the women stay in the tent.

1041 It has been tacitly assumed by most modern scholarly opinion that the Scholiast on this line contains both one correct fact (Polymestor speaks this line) and one incorrect fact (that he is throwing stones): τοῦτα δὲ φησιν ὧς βάλλων λίθους ἐν τοῖς οἰκίμαιν, ἵνα καταστήτη τὰς αἰχμαλώτους. The obvious methodological error in making these assumptions should not go unquestioned.

That the line is Polydorus’ is not "clearly correct" (Collard.) ἵδον does not necessarily refer to a visual stimulus (it is used of sounds El 566, Soph Aj 870, and of silence (!) And 250.) Weil’s
belief that βέλος is a javelin which bursts through the σκήνη and lands by the chorus shows a lack of awareness of this. Though it would create a powerful image (the 1988 Royal Shakespeare Company's production of Macbeth did something quite similar in the closing scene) the idea is too modern for the present context (nobody imagines Orestes firing genuine arrows at Or 268-74.) A near-parallel can be found in Ag 1344 σίγαρ τίς πληγήν ἀυτεί καπρίως συνόβαςμενος; which is a line of the chorus (both δοῦ and σίγα meaning "attend!"). If the line is the chorus', Tierney is right in that they say only what they believe they hear; they have been wrong before (1034) after all. The Scholiast's notion of rocks is wrong - there would be no rocks in the tent, but it is reminiscent of the Homeric Cyclops' action of reaching for a large rock, Od 9.416. This would then explain βαρελας.

The use of βέλος for fists is possible (cf. Virgil Aen 5.438 corpore tela modo atque oculis vigiantibus exit - Entellus is boxing) and, as Paley notes, also gives a clear meaning to βαρελας. I therefore suggest that the Scholiast is wrong on both accounts, and that the chorus hear a loud banging noise (made perhaps by a stagehand behind the σκήνη) which they assume is made by the javelins they saw Polymestor holding when he entered the tent.

1042 βουλεθή ἐποπόσωμεν seems almost to suggest the chorus believes it rude to "burst in" on the happenings within (ἐποποσωμεν contains the notion of violent entry, cf. HF 34, Soph OC 915, Herod 7.42.2, Xenophon Cyr 7.5.27 and Aesch Ag 1350. The "dithering" of the chorus is conventional, cf. Ag 1346-71 as an extreme. βουλεθε often precedes a deliberative subjunctive (Smyth 1806, MT 287.)

ἀκμὴ, the critical moment, cf. Aesch Ag 1353.

1043 It is important to remember that the chorus have not participated in the revenge: it is Hecuba and her silent attendants that have done the deed. This seems to be missed by Arnott (1991) 37, "In Hecuba the women of the chorus, fellow prisoners in the Greek encampment, actively assist the former queen of Troy in her revenge." The most independent action of the
Euripidean chorus that is extant is probably the breaking of the promises in Med, Ion.

1044 Hecuba enters, triumphant. The evident strength of her presence is a marked contrast to her initial entry from the tent, and demonstrates that a complete status reversal has occurred (see Introduction VI.)

Φείδου μηδέν is almost a cliché, cf. HF 1400, Soph Af 115, and Page Med 401.

ἐκβάλλων echoes 1040 βάλλων, but is the standard word for breaking down doors, cf. Lys 3.23. The prefix ἐκ- suggests the central door opened outwards, and this is corroborated by the most probable (and simplest) mechanism of the ἐκκύκλημα. The word is not "tearing up" (Paley) as suggested by the Scholiast’s ἀνασπῶν, ἐς γῆν ῥίπτον, cf. Soph OT 1261, and Bond HF 999.

1045-46 The doors burst open (that Greek αἷ̄ρ doors opened outwards is mentioned by Plutarch, Publicola 20.3, but such would be suggested anyway for the stage at least, by the simplest operation of the ἐκκύκλημα) and Hecuba, emerging, announces the actions of her revenge. Though formally addressed to Polymestor (cf. 1032-34), she does not intend him to hear (though unlike an aside (see 736-51 note) it does not affect the action if he does.

There is of course a double sense to the pronouncement that ὁ παῖδας δραμέν | ζωντας: they are no longer alive, and he can no longer see. Nevertheless, this is the fate that Hecuba shares (she can only see the dead Polydorus) which establishes a kind of reciprocity between the situations.

οὗς ἐκτίνει έγώ, which also ends line 1051, means "whom I sentenced to death" or "whom I had killed", cf. Plato Apol 38d1-2, 39c4. Lines 1161-62 make clear that Hecuba is however clearly accepting the responsibility for the actions undertaken, and is merely stating that her hands remained unbloodied. In terms of retaining the spirit of Attic law, in this, cf. Meridor (1978) 30-31, which is only partially convincing.

1047-8 καθείλες is a wrestling metaphor, "thrown down"
The line is packed with double meanings: the oxymoron in κρατεῖς ξένον is almost as strong as that in Θρήκα...ξένον (cf. 710 note, 774, 890, 1124.) 
καὶ δέδρακας ὁλαπερ λέγας, cf. Cyc 701 καὶ δέδραχ' ὁλερ λέγω.

1049-53 Again, Hecuba emphasizes the twofold nature of her revenge, clearly taking full moral responsibility for the actions (1051 ὁς ἔκτελυ ἐγώ) while acknowledging the help of the Trojan women. The events as related by Polymestor 1160-71 (and there is no reason to suppose Polymestor is giving a false report) suggest the actual deeds were perpetrated by the women, thereby bringing the revenge more in line with the mythological paradigms of 886-87 (where see note.)

It is my opinion that these lines would be accompanied by considerable spectacle, in terms of stage action. Hecuba announces the use of the central door three times, and it is natural to view this as an immediate succession, in a structured and formal emergence from the tent, signalling Hecuba's victory:

1051 ἔχχόλημα carrying the bodies of the two murdered sons of Polydorus. ὑψι clearly indicates that the bodies do appear, and here is the most effective moment, and the only announcement of their entry. Line 1118 again shows that they are onstage. Collard 1109-1295 and pages 36-37 fairly notes that it is equally possible that the bodies are revealed as the door opens, in a 'discovery space', cf. Taplin (1977) 442-43, Hourmouziades (1965) 106-7. At the Athens Festival of 1955, an ἔχχόλημα was used in the production of the Hecuba.

1052 Hecuba's attendants emerge, probably looking no different than they had when they entered at 1022. Their entry is signalled by ταῖσδ' and a gesture from Hecuba.

1053 ὡς ὅρφς suggests Polymestor appears here rather than at 1056. ὃς makes this clear, cf. Hip 1156, Phae 311, Soph Ant 386, Antiope 18 Page. He is
wearing a new mask (see note 1056-1108) and perhaps a new costume (cf. notes on 1155-56 and 953-1022). Mossman (1990) 78-79 believes that Polymestor appears riding the ἐκκόψαλημα.

Such a focused use of the door (which has already been referred to, in 1044) could be a direct reversal of the group entry at 1022, and though circumstantial does provide a clearer and more reasonable tableau than haphazard emergence of these individuals.

For the repetition of ἔντυσον ἐντυσάμι, cf. 953-1022 note. The idea of ἔντυσον...ποδί is present in Pho 834, 1545, 1616, and see Porson on 1722 (=1708) to which list add Lycophron 1102 and Milton, Sampson Agonistes 1-2 "A little onward lead thy guiding hand | To these dark steps, a little further on" Ovid Met 13.560-62 *aique uta correpto captivarum agmina maturum | invocat et dignos in perfida lumina condit | expilatque genis oculos.

For οὗς ἔκτειν' ἔγω see note 1046.

παρασφόρο "reeling" is described in the Introduction IV. The word is used of the Erinyes at Aesch Eum 330 παρασφόρα φρενοδαιλη, and has medical usages too (see LSJ.)

Hecuba has announced her crime and the results have been made manifest. Meridor has noted that the similarities between Hecuba’s treatment of Polymestor and Nebuchadnezzar’s of Zedekiah (in the biblical II Kings 25:6-7) "seems of real importance" (1978, 35 n.24.) The biblical passage comes immediately after the siege and fall of Jerusalem by Babylon (25:1-5) in 586 B.C. (New International Version):

(6) and he [Zedekiah, the last king of Judah] was captured. He was taken to the king of Babylon at Riblah, where sentence was pronounced on him. (7) They killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes. Then they put out his eyes, bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon.

The similarities are indeed striking: after a long siege, a treacherous king has his sons murdered before his eyes, is then himself blinded, and then sent far away. While the Greeks were known (at times, cf. Herodotus 9.120) to kill an offender’s children before their eyes, the severity in the present instance seems extreme. Polymestor has committed murder, and betrayed a trust, but does
this warrant the punishment he (and more importantly, perhaps, his children) have suffered? Meridor (1978) 35 n.24 believes that "Hecuba’s revenge can be claimed to agree with the spirit of the lex talionis much more than a sentence of death upon Polymestor, for as he was by his act, so was he by her revenge, doomed to a life of bereavement without hope or light." As it stands, this is too fishy. There is something wrong with Hecuba’s metaphorical loss of light and Polymestor’s visceral counterpart. It seems that Meridor’s understanding of the lex talionis aims towards an exact tit-for-tat, not recognizing the intended regulatory function of the lex talionis (described in Introduction II) which strives to draw a line, i.e. no more than tit-for-tat.

An examination of what commentators have made of the passage in II Kings does start to provide an answer. Since Josephus Antiq 10.138-39, responsibility for the fate of Jerusalem has fallen on Zedekiah, who broke his covenant-relationship with his souzerain, Nebuchadnezzar. More recent observers have noted of the murder (Robinson (1976) 243 n.7)

the Hebrews had no belief at this time in a personal immortality [which developed at some point during the Inter-Testamental Period]. A man’s hope for the future lay in his family. By this action, Nebuchadnezzar intended to wipe out the family and memory of a rebellious vassal.

and of the blinding (Montgomery (1951) 562) "such mutilation destroyed the royal potency". The fullest interpretation is by Hobbs (1985) 363 n.7:

The punishment of Zedekiah seems inordinately cruel, though it was by no means unusual in warfare in the ancient world. If, however, Zedekiah had broken faith with Babylon and contravened treaty regulations, the punishment is understandable, though no less cruel. The verb ... [translated above as "they killed" which properly =] "they butchered" is often used in the killing of sacrifices (Lev 6:25) and in this context implies a brutal slaughter of the sons of Zedekiah. The rabbis saw in the blinding of Zedekiah a fulfilment of Ezek 12:13 [that he would die in Babylon, but not see it]. Blinding of prisoners was a common Assyrian practice [as shown, e.g. in Assyrian reliefs], but little evidence is found for the practice by the Babylonians.
The symbolic significance of such an act is obvious. The eyes are important as gateways to the intellect and will (see the frequent "in the eyes of"), and without them a person is rendered powerless.

The punishment of Polymestor, then, if it is indeed fair to transfer these interpretations to the similar crime, frustrates any hope of a future for Polymestor, as well as any power - royal or otherwise - in the present. This is surely in some way "worse than death", yet Hecuba can always say that she has not killed him.

To expand Devereux's study of Soph OT to the present play, it seems fair to assume that he would see the blinding of Polymestor as a symbolic removal of the possibility for Polymestor to have any further children: "Greek data confirm the clinical finding that the eyes tend to symbolise the male organs, and blinding castration ... blinding and castration are mutually exclusive punishments" (1973, 49). Devereux's argument cannot be lightly dismissed. The evidence he has culled from Greek mythology is significant. If this argument is accepted (and I myself am still not totally convinced) there is a more exact equivalence between the crime and the punishment: Hecuba lost her last son and (due to age) will not be able to replace him; Polymestor lost his sons and (now symbolically) can sire no more. For the violence against the children, see note 1293-95. The question remains as to whether Devereux' symbol is more convincing than Meridor's metaphor.

There is a final similarity between II Kings 25:6-7 and the punishment of Polymestor, and that concerns the phrase translated above as "sentence was pronounced on him", which Grey (1970) 766 n. 25 understands as follows: "The phrase indicates that Zedekiah had the semblance of a fair hearing, but as a rebel against a suzerain who had, in fact, appointed him to preserve order under his authority, the result was not in doubt." Just as the result of Polymestor's trial is assured before it takes place (see note 1109-1295 and Introduction 1) so there was no doubt of Zedekiah's guilt despite being granted due process. This perhaps sounds totalitarian, but the rule of law, so key a concept in modern democracies, is not a necessary element in the ancient jurisprudence. All these similarities of course do not depend on Euripides using the Hebrew scriptures as a source. What is
shown is that similar ideas of crime and punishment were present throughout the Mediterranean in the fifth century B.C.

1054-55 Hecuba announces her plan of action. ἀλλὰ cf. GP 8. ἐκποδοῦν "out of the way" cf. 52, Sup 1113, Pho 40, Bac 1148.

θυμῷ ξύνντι "boiling with rage" is preferred (correctly) by Zuntz (1965) p.156-57, cf. Soph OC 434, also Hec 583. A strong case can however be made for the reading of the majority of MSS., adopted by Murray and Daitz, "raging like a torrent with rage," the parallels for which are Homer Il 5.87-88, Aristoph Knights 526-27, Dem de Cor 272, and Horace Serm 1.7.26, 28 of Persius.

1056-1108 Polymestor’s Monody

Polymestor emerges singing a long astrophic monody. This also happens with the Phrygian slave, Or 1369ff., and Io in Aesch PV 574ff. (where a note of contempt also can be detected.) Monodies were a distinctive feature of Euripidean tragedy (Aristoph Frogs 944.) Monodies allow the playwright to have characters express intense and personal feelings, which need not be regular or rational, which explains the abandoning of strophic resposion in this case. This was emotion unbound and wild. Though in the early plays, monodies are responsive (Ale 393ff, Hip 816ff, And 1173ff, Sup 990ff, Rh 895ff, as well as the parody at Aristoph Frogs 1331ff.) the dictates of the form appear to have lapsed to permit more extreme expression. Astrophic lyric then became normative (though not exclusive, viz. Tro 308ff.)

In many ways, the monody is a continuation of the spectacle begun in 1051 (or even from 1035.) Metrically, the dochmias are interspersed with anapests, iambs and cretics, allowing for the appearance of sudden mood changes. The difficulty scholars have had in establishing metrical periods lends the passage the feel of a run-on sentence, and the complete absence of connective particles (noted by Collard) gives a staccato and disjointed feel. Though word-repetition has been noted as a key feature throughout the play (see 953-1022 note), its presence in this lyric passage
recalls the parody in Aristoph *Frogs* 1331ff. (which does have some echoes of this play despite being closely modelled on the Phrygian’s speech in *Orestes*.) It divides into two uneven parts, the first (1056-84) where Polymestor chases his opponents alone, and the second (1088-1106) where he calls for assistance from all and sundry. Each part is followed by a couplet of trimeters from the Chorus.

There is also considerable visual stimulus. Polymestor emerges wearing a new, bloodied mask (shown 1066, 1117, cf. Cyc 663, 670, Soph OT 1297-1306 and Hense (1902).) The scene in the *Cyclops* also shows a blind villain groping after his assailants, cf. 679-82, and the drunken (sexual) groping after Silenus 567-89. Since it is known that the *Cyclops* is closely related with the *Hecuba* (see Introduction V), it does not require a huge imaginative leap to allow for similar staging techniques of these scenes, extending to direct visual echoes. There would likely be much rapid movement about the stage. As Mossman (1990) notes, the monody virtually choreographs itself: Polymestor describes his movements in detail because he himself cannot see what he is doing. Finally, Polymestor enters on all fours (1058), the only other extant example of which in tragedy is Aesch *Eum* 35ff., but cf. Rh 210-11, 254ff where Dolon imitating a wolf is described as being on all fours.

The question then arises, what information would the audience retain during this *tour-de-force*: rapid movement of a singer in a new mask in an unusual position, performing an uneven song with musical accompaniment. The impact is both visual and auditory, but the existence of parodies suggests the audience could recognise specific verbal allusions, which is surprising enough in trimeters, let alone lyric. Perhaps this provides one reason for the relatively straightforward sentence construction and word repetition: similarities with *Or* 1369ff would certainly corroborate this. For the repetition, cf. 953-1022 note. In his commentary Collard notes that he has an article forthcoming discussing the monody.

1056/7 The excitement induced by the dochmiacs in these and following lines is heightened by the repetitive sentence structure. There is almost a helplessness in the tricolon.
These verbs are often used together, vaguely to represent all possible action, cf. ALC 863 ποι βῶ; ποι στῶ; Sup 1012-3, Soph AJ 1237, Phil 833-4. The interrogative subjunctive is used in the first question for "questions of appeal, where the speaker asks himself or another what he is to do" (MT 287), cf. 1099.

πο κέλσω "to run (a ship) ashore" which is frequently used as a metaphor in Greek for finding a haven, cf. Hip 139-40 θανάτον θέλουσαν, I κέλσαν ποι τέρμα δύστανον, Rh 752-53 χρῆν γὰρ μ' ἀκλεως Ρησόν τε θανεῖν, I Τροία κέλσαντ' ἐπίκουρον, El 138-39, Aesch PV 183.

Of the many suggested interpretations of these lines, two present themselves as particularly viable:

1. Porson cleverly emended MSS. κατ' to καλ, yielding a phrase = "on hand and foot" (for Ἴχνος = "foot" rather than "track", cf. Bac 1134 ἴ δ' Ἴχνος αὐταῖς ἀρβύλαις, fr. 530.6-7 ο lý δὲ Θεσπίου ι παίδες τὸ λαῦν Ἴχνος ἀνάρβυλοι ποδῶς.) This is followed by Tierney, Diggle, and Collard, who nevertheless feels the language is somewhat strained. This need not be so: Polymestor is unaccustomed to walking on all fours, so his steps need to be deliberately placed. At any rate, clear sense should not be required of a character represented as being in pain. Similar language is used at Rhe 210-12:

βάσαν τε χερσι προσθάλαν καθαρμόσας
καλ κόλα κόλας, τετράσουν μιμήσοιμαι
λύκον κέλευθον πολεμίους δυσεύρχον,

2. Hadley keeps the reading of the MSS. and by repunctuating, translates: "planting the tread of a four-footed beast of the mountains, following on their track (κατ' Ἴχνος), in which direction (πολαν ἐνλ χερσα), this or that, am I to direct my shifting path (ἔξαλλαξω)?" Though this retains the MSS. reading and presents an idea similar to Cyc 681 ποτέρας τῆς χερός, the word order remains tenuous. Hadley does not believe Polymestor enters on all fours.
(suggested by the Scholiast), but such is not precluded by his interpretation. Both interpretations remain not completely convincing, and a further complicating factor is introduced because imperfect sense is what is expected in this context. I tentatively follow Porson.

For the use of ἐξαλλάξας, he compares Xen On Hunting 10.7 ἣνα δέ τὰς ἀρκός ποιηται τὸν δρόμον μὴ ἐξαλλάττων.

1061 ἀνδροφόνος is hyperbole, though Polymestor does clarify his metaphor in 1062. Nevertheless, it echoes Hecuba’s actions with those of her mythological exemplars, 886-87. The word is used significantly of the hands of Achilles in the Iliad 18.317 = 23.18 χεῖρας ἐπ’ ἀνδροφόνος θέμενος στήλεσαν ἐταίρου, 24.479 δεινάς ἀνδροφόνον: "In all three passages the adjective occurs in a context which reveals how sharply Achilles’ intense soul swings between the outermost extremes of love and hate" (Segal (1971) 50.) So here, Polymestor becomes aware that his artificial friendship in the previous episode was known for what it was to Hecuba all along; his false love has become a genuine hatred. Hecuba avenging her son upon Polymestor is identified with Achilles’ vengeance on Hector for Patroclus.

1063-64 The contempt of Polymestor for the Trojan women is reciprocal with Hecuba’s of him, cf. 716 ὁ κατάραστ’ ἀνδρῶν.

1065 There is great conceit in this question of the victim, asked about the attackers: onstage, it would be natural to present silent characters avoiding the futile blind groping of Polymestor. For the use of καί in a request for supplementary information, cf. 515, 1201, GP 312-13. μυχῶν is repeated from 1040, inappropriately since he is now out of doors (unless the word may also have been used to refer to the corners of the stage.) The conflated construction in this sentence is justified by the implied motion in φυγῇ. There is an echo of Cyc 679 πρὸς θεῶν περεύγασα’ ἢ μένος’ ἐσω δόμων, also Cyc 407-08 ἡ ὄλλα δ’ ὄπως ὄρνεται ἐν μυχῶι πέτρας I πτήσαντες εἰχον. πτήσασω is also used of birds cowering at HF 974, Soph Ajax 171.
1066-68 Amidst the standard εἰ + optative construction for a wish, there has been some confusion due to the oxymoron in τυφλών...φέγγος. The figure is used to recall Polymestor’s original cry in 1035. βλέφαρον...δημάτων, lit. "eyelid of (my) eyes," cf. Sup 48-49 ὑπόδως ὀλιγρά μὲν δακρυ ἀμφί βλεφάρος, Cyc 483-86 ἄγε, τίς πρῶτος, τίς δ’ ἐπὶ πρώτῳ ταχθὲς δακτοὺ κόσμησιν ὄχμασιν | Κύκλωμος ἐκὼ βλεφάρον ὄψις λαμπρὰν δίπλα διάκνασαι; Helios, the Sun, is invoked as the giver of light to the world, cf. 68, and see Soph El 86ff. Compare Orion’s being healed of his blindness by the sun, Apollodorus Bibli 1.4.3 ἐκεῖ δὲ παραγενόμενος ἐνέβλησεν ἦλκεσθεὶς ὑπὸ τῆς ἡμιακῆς ἄκτινος καὶ διὰ ταχέων ἐπὶ τὸν Οὐρανίωνα ἔσπευδεν. This might be an oblique continuation of the hunting metaphor (see also 1100-06.) Collard (see his note) suggests the repetition of ἄκτισμα indicates Helios = Apollo. There are examples of each healing blindness, and the two gods do seem to merge in the fifth century. ἀπαλλάξας cf. 1197-98 note.

The unusual metre being used here, enoplians, has not been satisfactorily discussed in the secondary literature, but cf. Ritchie (1964) 310, and Willink Or page 288.

1069 σύγα: Commands to oneself are common in tragic lyric, cf. 725 but also Cyc 488 σύγα σύγα, καὶ δὴ μεθοδῶν... The duplication in the Cyclops does not prejudice in favour of the alternate reading of some MSS., and Christus Patiens; duplication would be impossible metrically.

Tierney sees similarities in this scene with the short horror plays of the Grand Guignol in eighteenth-century Paris.

1070-71 οὐδα is often used redundantly in Greek, cf. 53 - Diggle (1981) 37. Porson (on Or 1427) suggests verbs of motion take an accusative of the instrument or limb used, Denniston El 94 cites other examples, and cf. Jebb on Soph OC 113-4 (but Lloyd-Jones and Wilson’s more recent OCT reads συνήρμομεν τε καὶ σύ μ’ ἐξ ὀδοὺ 'κλέσθων | κρύψων κατ’ ἄλγος, adopting Tournier’s emendation over the MSS. ἐξ ὀδοὺ οὐδα.)


\( \text{\textit{xe}} \) is a simple connective, uniting the two actions, cf. \textit{GP} 497.

The cannibalistic desire Polymestor expresses is of the same ferocity as Achilles' threat to Hector, Hom \textit{II} 22.346-8

\[ \text{\textit{καλ}} \]
\[ \text{\textit{α}ι \ γάρ πως αὐτόν με μένος καὶ θημὸς ἀνείπ} \]
\[ \text{\textit{δύμ} ἀποταιμνόμενου κρέα \ έδημεναι, οἶα \ θεργας,} \]
\[ \text{\textit{ώς σοι \ θερ' δς σης γε κόνας κεφαλῆς \ ἀπαλλάκου} \]

- an utterance Segal (1971) 38 characterises as "one of the most savage utterances of the poem."

\[ \text{\textit{cf. Cyc} 366-67 \xi} \textit{νικον \ θρεάν \ κεχαριόνος \ βορδ. 409, and \textit{Cretans} Austin \textit{fr. 82.38-39 άτρ} \]
\[ \text{\textit{όμοστον τῆς \ εμῆς \ έρας \ φαγεῖν \ σαρκός, ξάρεστι.} \]
\[ \text{\textit{Perhaps most relevant to the present} \]
\[ \text{\textit{passage are Hecuba's words at Hom \textit{II} 24.212-13 \του \ έγώ \ μέσον \ έπερα \ έχουμι \ ἐσθέμεναι \ προσφέσα.} \]
\[ \text{\textit{Though there are no verbal parallels, the wish is a striking counterpoint to the} \]
\[ \text{\textit{Achilles speech (Segal (1971) 61.) It comes after Achilles' anger has begun to abate, and shows} \]
\[ \text{\textit{the ferocity inherent in the character of Hecuba in the myth which Euripides inherits. What} \]
\[ \text{\textit{Polymestor desires on the death of his sons is something Hecuba has herself desired on the death} \]
\[ \text{\textit{of one of hers.}} \]

1072 extends the metaphor begun in 1058.

1073-74 Both the Scholium \textit{λαμβάνων \ καὶ \ ἀφαιρούμενος \ ἀντέκταιν \ τῆς \ εμῆς \ βλάβης \ καὶ \}
\[ \text{\textit{τυφλόσεως}, and the phrase 213 \ λόβαν \ λόμας \ τ', suggests Hadley's correction of \textit{λόβας \ λόμας} \}
\[ \text{\textit{τ'} is right. Diggle (1984) 68 agrees, and accepts Seider's \textit{\sigma} which removes the "unwelcome} \]
\[ \text{\textit{resolved anapest"}.} \]

1075-78 Polymestor's question becomes victim to some rhetorical exaggeration, suggesting perhaps excessive self-interest. \textit{φέρομαι} refers to mental seizure, cf. \textit{HIF} 1246 \textit{ποί \ φέρη} \textit{θημούμενος;} but Polymestor's awareness of his being transported in this way removes credulity. There is irony in the care he expresses for the fates of \textit{his} children after their death when compared
to his treatment of Hecuba's child, Polydorus. Mossman suggests that the children are eventually left unburied onstage at the end of the play. Βάρκας "Αίδα are women possessed by Hades, and driven to a Bacchic frenzy. There is not a necessary inconsistency here (cf. note 676-77) in two deities being represented as the single source of the frenzy. "Αίδα = "hellish", cf. HF 1119 ει μηκάν Αίδου βάρκας εί, φράσαμεν άν, Aesch Ag 1235 θόουσαν Αίδου μητέρ. For the genitive, Seaford on Cyc 397, cf. also Pho 1489 αἰδόμενα φέρομαι βάρκα νεκών, Or 1492-3. That Bacchants could rend one limb from limb is clearly a conscious possibility to the audience, here two decades before the first production of the Bacchae. By using διαμορέσατο (to indicate the possible result - for this use of the infinitive cf. 1107 φέρεται and MT 97 which indicates these infinitives express purpose, cf. Russell p.64 = complimentary acc.), Polymestor echoes Hecuba's descriptions of his actions in 716. By using κακολαν, Polymestor echoes Agamemnon's descriptions of his actions in 781. To be a banquet for dogs is the worst atrocity that can befall a corpse in Homer: cf. a single example, why Achilles will not sack Troy, II 18.283 πρίν μυν κόνος ἀργολ ἔδόνται (see Segal (1971) passim - the index has an entry under κόνο), and in Euripides HF 567-68 κράτα δ' ἀνόδουν τεμίον | βάπτω κυνόν ἐλξιμα, Held 1050-51 κομίζετ' αὐτῶν, διώκεσ, εἶτα χρῆ κυλών | δοθώι κτάνοντας. See Collard on Sup 47 for other scenes involving abandoned corpses.

1079-83 πᾶ βῶ was deleted by Nauck as an intrusive gloss, which Diggle and Collard follow, the latter speculating that the copyist did not read πᾶ κάμψω as "where am I to rest?", lit. bend my knee (sc. γόνυ, cf. 1150.) While this is clearly an attested meaning (also Soph OC 85 ἐκαμψ' ἐγώ), there are several valid arguments against it, and therefore for preserving πᾶ βῶ, for want of any valid reason to remove it:

1. the normal phrase πᾶ βῶ πᾶ στῶ (see note 1056-57) which represents all possible action, should not be quickly removed. If Euripides were using rhetorical variation, πᾶ στῶ would be the intrusive question (but this has not been suggested.) Removing πᾶ βῶ instead merely creates two parallel questions.
Porson’s tidy adjustment moving the question to the beginning of the line strengthens its integrity, but ultimately is not necessary.

2. Collard suggests that the presence of the third question makes the line “metrically disruptive.” If a paroemiad is less desirable than a single dochmius, the paroemiad in 1072 then need also be explained away.

3. line 1056, the opening line to this first part of the monody, asks πδ βώ πδ στῶ and then uses a nautical metaphor (πδ κέλσω). The same happens here, at the close of this part of the monody. Well went so far as to emend κάψκο to κέλσω.

I believe this last point to be decisive, whether πδ βώ is at the beginning of the line (with Porson, a mistake easily explained) or at the end, with the majority of MSS.

Euripides has Polymestor exhibit considerable confusion, with a continual mixing of metaphors. As has been stated, κάψκο is a nautical metaphor for tacking, borrowing the idea of ‘rounding the post’ from running, cf. Aristoph Ach 96 ἦ περι δικραν κάμπτων νεώσικον σκοπεῖ: The nautical metaphor is preserved as he compares himself with a ship at sea, furling its sail with ropes (as it might while tacking) - but instead of as sail, it is λινόχροκον φάρος, his flax-woven robe (sailcloth was made from flax, and λίνον was used = sailcloth (Aristoph Frogs 364 ἀσκόμαμα καὶ λίνα καὶ πττον διαπέμπων εἴς Ἐπίδαρσον.)) His literal meaning, that he wants to lift his robes to be able to move quicker, is not concealed as he says this, and would be made explicit by the actor performing the action itself. Jeffrey also sees metaphors from guardship and blockading squadrons.

Many then see in κόσκαν a return to the animal imagery that has been so prevalent in the monody so far, i.e. "lair" (and see note 1172-75.) This is probable, but the primary association in the present usage is as a lying-place of death: while a bed at Med 151-52 τὰς ἀνάλατου ἱ κόσκας ἔρος, it need not be, viz. El 158 κόσται εν οἰκτροτάτα θανάτου (θανάτου being essentially redundant) and Aesch Ag 1494 κόσκαν τόνδ’ ἀνελεύθερον.

The Scholiast offers alternate explanations of the last lines: Σ AB suggest Polymestor is
seeking to protect his children's bodies from exposure, an ironic interpretation in light of Polydorus, surely - mutilation (1076) is also a threat. Since the monody has been so self-obsessed, it is better to follow Σ M, the reference to the children being only in passing: "to this place where my children lie dead" (Collard.)

δέλθριν is a two-termination adjective, cf. HF 415 δέλθρινος, Sup 116 δέλθρινον: see Collard on Sup 101 Καδμῆς, and Kannicht Hel 335.

For the scansion of 1083, see note 714-15.

1085-86 The chorus' bland interjection both pities and chastises Polymestor. Its purpose is purely functional, breaking the monody into two uneven parts. σοι is the dative of advantage (Smyth 1481.) The warning of the chorus is very much a Greek commonplace for revenge, on how retribution is a necessary consequence of wrong action (cf. 902-04) preserved most succinctly in Aesch Cho 313 δράσαντα παθεῖν, but cf. Ag 1563-64 μήνει δὲ μὴνοντος ἐν θρόνῳ Διός ὶ παθεῖν τὸν ἐρχαντα· θέαμον γάρ, Eur. fr. 979:

οὕτω προσελθοῦσα ὑπὸ Δίκη σε, μὴ τρέςσης,  
πάσηι πρὸς ἱππον οὔδε τῶν ἄλλων βραχίων ποδί  
τὸν ἁλίκον, ἀλλὰ σίγα καὶ βραδεί ποδί  
στᾶεθοςα μάρφει τοὺς κακοὺς διὰν τὺχι.

and Horace Odes 3.2.31-32 raro antecedentem scelestum ĵ deservit pede poena claudio.

1087 Barrett, in making a case for keeping Hip 1049 in light of 898, rightly says interpolation from 723 here is certain, and reflects a common phenomenon, see Page (1934) 103-05.

1088 Collard's psychological justification for Polymestor's calling for his spearmen "as a man of violence himself (9, 25, 877 etc.)" is not necessary. In terms of dramatic necessity, Polymestor shows that he is utterly alone. Having dismissed his personal bodyguard at 981 he is now attempting to summon them. In one sense, everyone that he calls - his spearmen, the Achaeans,
and the Atridae - are just offstage, but nevertheless beyond an ability to help him. He uses ἵνα, which is standard for invoking assistance, Soph Phi 736 ἵνα θεός (this also being an instance of intense pain and loud noise onstage), Eur HF 884 ἵνα πόλις, Or 1296 ἵνα Πέλασγόν Ἀργος.

λογχοφόρον "bearing the cavalry lance" is particularly appropriate for the εὔπποιν Thracians (cf. 9, Hom II 14.227 Ἰπποτάλων Θηρίκων.) The Thracians are associated with Ares at Alc 498 Ἀρεός, ταχυρύσου Θηρίκων πελτῆς ἕνας, Rh 379-87. While Collard's interpretation of κάτοχος = "Ares' own subject people" is defensible, the traditional interpretation of (frenzied) possession (Scholiast κατεχομένους ὑπὸ τοῦ πόθου τοῦ Ἀρεός) is preferable, cf. Or 791 μὴ θεάι μὴ στρωρ κατάσχωσι, Pho 784-85 ὁ πολύμοχος Ἀρης, τὶ ποθ’ αἰματὶ καὶ θανάτῳ κατέχη…; Hip 27-28, Bac 1124, Soph Tra 978. While several words with Ionic associations show ablaut between the thematic alpha and eta, θρήνης remains consistent, cf. Aesch Per 566, Barrett Hip 735-37.

1092-99 As his desperation increases, Polymestor's scansion becomes more irregular. The thrice-uttered βοᾷν, the standard cry for help, in 1092 betrays this desperation.

1093 ὁ ἵνα, μόλις ἐρήμω σβεόν has a ceremonial sound to it, cf. the ritual cry at Bac 152 ὁ ἵνα βάκχαι, and Phae 112 ὁ ἵνα λαοῖ, Plutarch Thes 25.1 δεθρ’ ἵνα πάντες λεψ, Aristoph Peace 298 δεθρ’ ἵνα, ὁ πάντες λεψ. Dale (1968) 73 wrongly states that when "resolution precedes syncopation … [there is] a license not found in iambic-trochaic." Diggle (1981) 18 notes the folly of this opinion, citing Hip 1145, Ion 689-90 = 707-08, 1449-50, And 1219, and Aesch ST 565-67 = 628-30 where resolution takes precedence. Daitz prints ὑ’ ἵνα (therefore scanning a dochmiac and a cretic) but it is clear that the formula is ὁ ἵνα, cf. Bac 152, Phae 112 (both cited above), Callimachus 5.13, Antagoras AP 9.147.1.

1094 ἢ στύετος is scanned dissyllabic, by synexesis, cf. HF 184 ἢ σὺ παιδα τῶν ἐμῶν, ὅν σὺ ψής εἶναι δοκεῖν; Hel 137, Ion 999, Or 597, Bac 649.
This is another notable similarity with the Cyc 672 οὖσις μ’ ἀπώλεσα’, cf. Introduction V.

For the use of the subjunctive in questions, cf. 1056-57 note.

Having received no response yet to his pleas for help, Polymestor vainly desires suicide, as the chorus notes 1107-08, wishing either to fly up to heaven (which Tierney notes does mean death; he cites the fifth-century Potidaean inscription in Hicks and Hill (1901) 54.6-7 αἰθήρ μὲν φευγόσ ὑποδέχεσθο, σῶματα δὲ χθῶν ἐν τόνδε) or descend to Hades. This antithesis seems to have been common in Euripides when characters are in similar desperate situations:

Ion 1238-9  

tίνα φυγάν πτερόσεσαν ἢ

χθονὸς ὑπὸ σκοτίων μυχὸν πορευθῶ

HIF 1157-8  

οἶμοι, τί δράσω; ποι κακῶν ἐρημιάν

ἐδρῶ, πτεροχύτος ἢ κατὰ χθονὸς μολῶν;

Med 1296-7  

δεὶ γὰρ νῦν ἦτοι γῆς γε κρυφθῆναι κάτω,

ἡ πτηνὸν ἔραι σῶμ’ ἐς αἰθέρος βάθος

Hip 1290-3  

πῶς σύχ ὑπὸ γῆς τάρταρα κρύπτεις

dέμας αἰσχυνθεῖς,

ἡ πτηνὸς ἄνω μεταβάς βιοτὸν

πήματος ἐξω πόδα τοῦδ’ ἄνεχας;

(which may be corrupt, see Barrett)

Phae 270-3  

tάλαιν’ ἐγώ τάλαινα ποί

πόδα πτερόσεντα καταστάσω

ἀν’ ἀιθέρ’, ἢ γὰς ὑπὸ κεόθος ἀφαν-

tον ἔξαμαυρωθῶ;

See also Sup 829-30 κατὰ μὲ πέθον γὰς ξόι | διὰ δὲ θύελλα στάσαι, Soph Ajax 1192-94 δρέελε πρότερον αἰθέρα δῶθαι μέγαν ἢ τὸν πολύκοινον Ἀιδαν | κεόνος ἀνύρ, Herodotus 4.132.3 ἢν
Gibbon (1910) 525 "unless you could soar into the air like birds, unless like fishes you could dive into the waves" etc. Wings clearly form a topos in these expressions, ἀναπτήσθε ἐς τὸν οὐρανὸν, ἢ μῦς γενόμενοι κατὰ τῆς καταβύτης...

Though Bond is right to compare the magical association of transferring the evil to another object, the listing of alternatives in the present instance does more than this. By expressing the situation in an either...or construction, there is a suppressed protasis which dupes the evil: it ensures that the status quo (i.e. the evil remaining with the speaker) is not a possibility. In all these wishes, the speaker eliminates formally anything but being raised up or dragged down, which in the present instance means death in either case. As it turns out, Polymestor's wish is not answered.

In Polymestor's antithesis, there is a light/darkness contrast which, though without irony in the use of δεῖσαν, nevertheless does bear on Polymestor's situation. The constellations mentioned (note stars are also mentioned at Ion 796-99 cited above) are appropriate for several reasons:

1. Orion and his dog (found together also, e.g. at Hesiod WD 609-10 εἶν' ἄν δ' Ὄρεστος καὶ Σείριος ἐς μέσον Ἑλθ' ἐς οὐρανὸν) are clearly associated with hunting, thereby maintaining the metaphor used throughout the first part of the monody, as well as 1172-75, as well as with blindness and cures for blindness (= Polymestor's desire?) See note 1066-68.

2. Rising near the summer solstice, the constellations are associated with great heat (hence the redundant πυρὸς φλογέας; Σείριος = "the scorching", where one literally should sc. ἀστήρ) cf. Virgil Aen 10.274 Sirìus ardor, Homer II 22.25-29.

3. As Orion constantly flees the constellation Scorpio (see Frazer (1921) I. 33 n. 2) so Polymestor now flees the Trojan women.

4. Sirius is described as having burning eyes, which gives another positive, divine
association to Hecuba's eventual metamorphosis (see note 1265).

Stanford Ajax p. 289-90 Appendix E "A Note on Suicide", mentions that suicide is a concern particularly of many Sophoclean characters. Of the three motivations he suggests for Ajax, two can be brought to bear for Polymestor: fear of ridicule and mockery (at having been defeated by captive, barbarian (he is to ally himself with the Greeks 1133-82 esp. 1175-76) women), and a desire for vengeance ("suicide after a ritual cursing of one's enemies, was a recognized form of revenge in ancient society" (Stanford Ajax page 289), cf. Delcourt (1939) who discusses suicide in tragedy but does not address this passage because it merely consists of the wish (neither though does she address willing sacrifices, who in tragedy often act as if their death possesses this same nobility (see Introduction III). Stanford Ajax 835 associates suicides with the role of Erinyes and alastores, cf. note 685-87. Before the Platonists and Pythagoreans, suicide was not condemned, but was viewed as a legitimate means of escape from an uncomfortable life. Tierney suggests we contrast HF 1247-48 and 1351. Bond, writing on the former, details the instances of disapproval of suicide. The latter is a notorious crux, dealt with I believe should be understood with the MSS. reading ὅνταρτον, cf. And 252.

Hermann deleted αὕθερπ' which is clearly a gloss, read at the beginning of 1100. Daitz and Diggle cite the Scholiast.

ἀφορμον, while grammatically only of Sirius, in sense applies equally to Orion.

Strictly speaking, "ᾠδα is the ruler of the underworld and not the place itself. It is nevertheless a commonplace to use the one for the other, cf. 418, 483, and to an extent 1076. μελάγχρωτα seems to be used = "black as death" cf. Or 321 μελάγχρωτες εὔμνιδες, and Hec 71, 705. These lines serve to realize the ironic potential of certain lines in the fourth episode, e.g. 954, 968, 972.

πορθμον, accusative of motion towards, used here poetically without a preposition, referring to the Styx.

1107-08 The chorus provide a sympathetic voice, stating the common popular moral sentiment
(see above note) that suicide is an acceptable means of escape for Polymestor. The Scholiast's comment εἰρωνεύωμενος ὁ χορός ταύτα φησι πρὸς τὸν Πολυμήστορα does not impugn this, but suggests that they dissemble in the sense that they conceal the fact that they are passive accessories to the crime, and offer their pity. It is idiomatic in poetry to omit ὡστε between ἦ and φέρειν as would be expected, cf. 844-45 κρείσασον ἦ λέξαι λόγῳ ἵ  τολμήματο, Soph OT 1293 τὸ γὰρ νόσημα μεῖζον ἦ φέρειν. Sometimes ὡστε is found, however: e.g. at Xenophon Ana 3.5.17 φρονοῦσι μὴ τι μεῖζον ἦ ὡστε φέρειν δύνασθαι ξυμβῆ, Herodotus 3.14.10 μέξω καθὰ ἦ ὡστε ἀνακλαίειν. The Ionic form ζῇ (note accent) is required by meter, in iambic trimeters also at Soph fr. 556(Skyrioi) οὐδὲν γὰρ ἀληθὸς οὔν ἢ πολλὴ ζῇ, fr. 592 (Tereus) 4 τὰν γὰρ ἀνθρώπου ζῇν. See Page Med 976 for other metrical restrictions affecting the form this word takes.

1109-1295 Trial and Final Judgment of Polymestor

The conclusion to the play helps unite the overall structure: as in the first and third episodes, the interplay between characters in the exodos commences after an extended lyric passage from the person of lowest status on stage (see Introduction VI.) The action is a formal agon (see below) as at 216-443, and breaks down as follows:

1109-31 Agamemnon establishes himself as the judge
1132-82 Case for the defence: Polymestor's rhesis
1183-86 Choral couplet - end of speech.
1187-1237 Case for the prosecution: Hecuba's rhesis
1238-89 Choral couplet - end of speech
1240-92 Agamemnon's judgment and Polymestor's prophecies
1293-95 Final choral comment

Collard (1975) 63 observes "the Athenian audience no doubt responded as readily as we do to courtroom drama, because of its immediacy to our own experience and our easy identification with the emotions of the stage-persons." Euripides does not make it that easy for his audience,
however. He challenges it with the moral ambiguities of the situation. The scene begins with Agamemnon’s unannounced entry. This suggests that he has been waiting nearby, not at the Greek camp as would be suggested by 1109-11 (note also only he responds to Polymestor’s cries for help.) He is attended by silent characters, presumably an armed guard, who become dramatically necessary at 1282. There are several indications in the text that the character is acting a part in the role of an impartial judge, see notes 1116, 1127-28. In this respect, he is like the merchant in Soph Philoctetes, or the protagonist in Shakespeare’s Macbeth II.iii.89-94, on Duncan’s murder:

> Had I but died an hour before this chance,
> I had but liv’d a blessed time; for, from this instant,
>
> There’s nothing serious in mortality -
>
> All is but toys; renown and grace is dead;
>
> The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
>
> Is left this vault to brag of.

Hecuba has already gained Agamemnon’s duplicity (a fact she tactfully omits in her rhesis) at 898-99. It has therefore been noted that the agon between Hecuba and Polymestor is a farce. That is not to say the scene is "weak in dramatic logic" (Collard (1975) 65). The purpose of the scene is to provide a retroactive confirmation of Hecuba’s just position, which is set against Agamemnon’s pseudo-justice and Polymestor’s injustice. Some judgement is required, and the dramatic logic dictates that it be a repeat of the earlier judgement. Also, Polymestor in his defence does attack Hecuba’s position. This means, crucially, that in her rhesis she must provide some justification of what she has done.

Polymestor’s rhesis (1132-82) is "more a messenger speech than a lawcourt defence" (loc cit) and this helps to define the (moral) short-sightedness of the character. This does serve a secondary function, since the result of the trial is never actually in doubt, the narration of the details of what transpired offstage maintains interest. Kovacs pointedly remarks that "We have heard the false Greek pretending to aloofness from matters barbarian, matters in which he is actually quite intimately involved. Now we must hear the false barbarian showing that he is, at
heart, a loyal servant of the Greek cause" (1987, 106). In contrast, Hecuba's inherent rightness is demonstrated in her rebuttal, which is "a conventionally methodical demolition of Polymestor's case" (loc cit.) The trial before Agamemnon allows the audience as well as the judge to be informed of what transpired within the tent - compare the dramatic effectiveness of this with the way sketchy details are given to Agamemnon at 774, 779. Sheppard believes the audience's reaction is completely negative: "We despise his pretence, and can have no respect for his verdict." But this is to impose what we know of the situation onto Agamemnon. Though he agreed to allow Hecuba's attempts at revenge, he could not know nor be expected to know what form it would take; even the chorus have already been shown to be unaware of the precise details, cf. 1034 and 1037 note. It is surely a more extreme situation than Agamemnon envisaged as being possible by women, however appropriate her actions are in the situation. He is then genuinely surprised on four counts:

(1) to hear Polymestor's cries in the first place, 1108,
(2) to discover Polymestor blinded, 1117,
(3) to discover his children dead, 1118, and
(4) that it was all done by Hecuba, 1122.

This surprise has an effect on his language, which "quickly becomes simpler after his surprise at 1116" (Collard on 1113.) Polymestor presents his case as though he were in the right, and acting in Agamemnon's interests, that it is Hecuba who should be on trial for her atrocities rather than he for his. He admits his guilt in the opening lines of his speech, by confessing to the murder of Polydorus. Hecuba's rebuttal removes all his assumptions, leaving only this fact and his guilt. In Aeschylus Eumenides 566ff., Orestes' case is so balanced that a trial (agon) needs to be held to determine his innocence or guilt, with Athena presiding. Euripides here rejects this indeterminacy, and shows his character to be absolutely morally correct and blameless in her actions. That Polymestor is a significant character in the play, and not a mere messenger brought on specifically for the purpose, means the details are narrated with a definite opinion in mind, not as an impartial observer (and there were surely enough witnesses to the event had Euripides desired.) Taplin
(1977) 82 n.2 lists other examples of this: Tro 1123ff, Rh 756ff, Aesch Sup 605ff, Ag 1380ff, Soph Ajax 1380ff, OT 771ff, Ant 249ff, 407ff, the Gyges fragment POxy 2382; to which add Bond Hyps fr. 18.

This is all reinforced by the structure of the agon: in the contemporary Athenian lawcourts, as today, and in most examples of the tragic agon, the prosecution initiates debate and the defendant closes it, "but there is a tendency to put the stronger case, if there is one, second - stronger either in justice or in debating-points - and occasionally, as with Helen v. Hecuba in Tro., this is allowed to invert the normal order" (Dale Ale 697.) Euripides is therefore stating explicitly, simply by the structure of the scene, that Hecuba's case is the stronger and the just one. In Med 465-575 Medea's stronger case is first, and she, like Hecuba here, is formally the prosecutor, but Medea is the exception: typically, the 'sympathetic' character speaks second, cf. Iolaus in Held, Theseus in Sup, Hippolytus in Hip, Orestes in Or, and Hecuba in Tro. The Troades debate Dale cites (903-1059) and Or 470-629 are like the present debate also in that there is a judge present during the agon, Menelaus in each case. For an agon without a judge, see Stevens And 184ff. Collard (ad loc and (1975) 64-66) also notes the similarities between the present passage and Medea 1317 and Heraclidae 928-1017. In all three scenes, there is an enmity which is not resolved within the context of the agon and endures well after the play. Both of the agon speeches are 51 lines long, whereby Euripides clearly gives each speaker 'equal time', cf. Med 465-575 where Medea and Jason each speak 54 lines (accepting the deletion of 468.) Page says this phenomenon is "very rare in Euripides", clearly opposing Paley, who lists twelve instances in the preface to Euripides vol. 2 xix-xxiv. Though all may not be valid, it is at least clear that Euripides did use the technique from time to time.

Arnott (1991) 110 wrongly identifies Polymestor as the plaintiff, and Hecuba as the defendant. This simply cannot be sustained: Polymestor is not seeking legal redress, he is seeking pity.

1109 It is common for characters to justify an entry by mentioning a loud noise: Hip 790, 902
(cited below), IT 1307, Aristoph Ach 1072. The normal word for such a sound is βοη, but κραυγή (= "shriek" or "croak" of a raven) is used at Hip 902-3 κραυγής ἀκούσας σῆς ἀφικόμεν, πάτερ, ἰ σπουδή, Or 1510, 1529, Ion 893.

1110-11 For this use of παῖς, cf. Held 900, fr. 989 ὁ τῆς τύχης παῖς κλήρος. λέειν' see note 678-79.

This is the earliest extant personification of an echo. It is generally supposed that Echo delivers the prologue in Euripides' Andromeda (412 B.C.), assumed from the Scholiast on Aristoph Thes 1065 τοῦ προλόγου τῆς Ἀνδρομέδας ἔλεος, cf. also Thes 1018 ff = Eur fr. 118.

1112 ήσυχον, "had we not known", is the reading of the Etymologicon Magnum (c. A.D. 1000) and makes sense where the undisputed MSS. reading ἱσούν does not.

1113 The objections of Elmsley and Weil that παρέσχεν ἂν is not Attic and would have been written παρέσχεν ἂν (as in some MSS.) cannot be maintained. Though παρέσχεν "would have caused" represents a phenomenon rare in Greek, but surely not inconceivable: Tro 397 εἰ δ' ἠσθαν ἄκοι, χρηστῶς ἂν ἔλθησας (despite Diggle), where Lee writes, "The omission of ἂν stresses the fact that the idea in the apodosis would definitely be true if the condition had been fulfilled." Cf. Jeffrey: "the sentence starts as a hypothetical form, and suddenly changes into a statement of fact", and also Hec 1218. This use of the indicative for the subjunctive is more common in Latin: Virgil Georg 2.132-3 et, si non alium late iacare odorem, I laurus erat, and cf. also Shakespeare Romeo and Juliet III.i.114-15 "Tybalt's death I was woe enough, if it had ended there." See MT 432, Smyth 2320.

Diggle (1981) 100 (on Ion 354-59) is in the end correct, though: the six MSS. Daitz reads as having παρέσχεν ἂν do in fact read παρέσχεν ἂν. Further "Dr K. Matthiessen tells me that, according to his collations, 'there are twelve manuscripts which have παρέσχεν ἂν, the rest have παρέσχεν, none have παρέσχεν ἂν'. Another probable
instance of this elision is Or. 502 Ἐλαβ’ ἄν ἄντι (Bergk: Ἐλαβεν ἄντι ὦ Ἐλαβεν ἄν τῆς codd.)," (1981, 100) and cf. Diggle (1974) 16-19, (1975) 198.

οὗ μέσως cf. And 873 πόλις τ’ οὗ μέσως εὐδαίμονος, is found also as litotes without the negative at HF 58, Thuc 2.60.7, and in fourth-century comedy.

1114-15 Cf. Bac 178 ὁ φιλταθ’, ὡς σήν γήρων ἤσθημην κλύων (and Christus Patiens 1148) which echoes these lines. Theseus is likewise recognized by the blind Oedipus at Soph OC 891 ὁ φιλταθ’, ἔγνων γὰρ τὸ προσφώνημα σου, cf. Rh 608-09 where Odysseus recognizes Athena’s voice. For the use of γὰρ in the parenthetical clauses, cf. And 64 ὃ φιλτάτη σύνδοε 

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1116 ἐκ extra metrum cf. 733.

1117 For alterations to Polymestor’s mask, cf. note 1056-1108.

1118 For the visibility of Polymestor’s sons, cf. note 1049-53.

1119 ἄρα used after δύος (is there irony in the use of the masculine?), cf. Bac 894 ἵσθον τὸ δ’ ἔχειν, δ’ τι ποτ’ ἄρα τὸ δαμάνιον, Plato Laws 692 B and GP 40.

1121 For the corrective force, with ἄλλα, cf. note 948-49. For the hyperbole, cf. note 668.
1122 τοπρον εξγασει is a *figura etymologica*, used for emphasis, here in the commonest form of verb + cognate accusative, cf. *Sup* 1072 δεινον ἔργον ἔξεργάσω, Soph *Ant* 1228 οἴον ἔργον εξγασει.

1124 Polymestor bursts into renewed frenzy when he discovers that Hecuba has not fled completely (as it is natural for him to expect a woman to act) and may in fact be within arm’s reach, again recalling *Cyc* 679-82, cf. note 1056-1108. ὡμοι, τι λέξαι; cf. 713 note. Line 1128 shows that during this speech Agamemnon signals to his attendants who grab Polymestor and restrain him; Agamemnon performing this action would be unlikely, cf. Philoctetes held by Odysseus’ sailors, Soph *Phi* 1003.

1125 There is a rare double elision, ‘οθ’ for ἐστι.

1126 Tierney accords this line an "almost Aeschylean weight."


1127 Despite Agamemnon’s earlier rhetorical flourish, his pretence is shown here for what it is, by the double colloquialism he utters when caught off guard: οὖτος "you there" (Stevens (1977) 37) is used to introduce a question, and is also found at *Aic* 773, Aesch *Sup* 911, and in its more usual form with σὸν at 1280, Soph *OT* 532, Aristoph *Ach* 564; τί πάσχεις; "what’s up with you?" (Collard; Stevens (1977) 37.)

1128 This form of the participle μαργώσαν appears only here, and the word indicates wildness, idiocy, and lust, cf. *HF* 1005 φόνου μαργώντως, 1082, *Pho* 1156, 1247, of Helen’s lust at *El
1027, of the Furies at Aesch Eum 67. Dawe (1973) 83 believes the variant in Η at Ajax 50 
μαργώσαν is an "emendation by learned reminiscence", which may or may not have been 

1129-31 Agamemnon establishes himself in the same role as an Athenian dicast. Such opening 
statements to an agon are common: some are overt (229, Or 491 πρὸς τὸν δ' ἄγων, Held 116 
πρὸς τούτον ἄγων), and others slightly more circumlocutious (Pho 465 λόγος μὲν οὖν σὸς 
πρόσθε, Tro 907-08 καὶ δὸς τοὺς ἐναντίους λόγους ἰὴμὲν κατ' αὐτής, Hel 944-46.)

By applying τὸ βάρβαρον "savagery" to Polymestor, Agamemnon anticipates much of what 
will follow. Technically, a βάρβαρος was any non-Greek and therefore should apply equally to 
Hecuba. Meridor (1978) 32 believes that the fact that Hecuba is never presented as barbaric means 
that "Hecuba’s act ... does not place her outside of civilized society" and therefore means the 
audience is more inclined to sympathise, Sympathy for Hecuba is not however a genuine problem - 
it has long since been won - and the purpose of the isolated setting of the play is to remove any 
possible influences of 'civilized society'. The distinction does not seem to be Homeric (despite II 
2.867 βαρβαρόφρωνος) and is clearly an indication of contempt, signifying either rudeness and a 
lack of (Hellenic) culture, or, as here, cruelty and brutality, cf. Hel 501-2 ἄνηρ γὰρ σοδεῖς ὃδε 
βάρβαρος φρένας, ἵ ὃς δὲν άποκούσας τούτων σοδόσας βαρόν, Med 536-8 πρῶτον μὲν Ἑλλάδ' 
ἀντί βαρβάρου χθονὸς ἵ γάιαν κατωικεῖς καὶ δίκην ἑπίστασαι ἵ νόμοις τε χρησίματι μὴ πρὸς 
Ισχύος χάριν, Demosthenes 21.150. There is particular irony here because Polymestor is going to 
ally himself with the Greek cause (cf. Hecuba’s reply to this point, 1199-1201). In this matter, too, 
he has been prejudged.

The issue only really exists because Hecuba, too, is presented as a sometime Thracian. In 
line 3 (and by allusion in the following lines), she is described as the child of Cisseus, a famous 
Thracian king in myth. This is the more significant because there were many other options 
available to Euripides in his selection of Hecuba’s parents that would not hold what becomes an 
ironic coincidence: Cisseus is listed in the ancient sources by Nicander of Colophon fr.62.1, Virgil
Aen 7.320, 10.705, Servius ad loc; Dymas by Homer Iliad 16.717, Strabo 13.1.21, Dictys 1.9.6; and Sangarius by Apollodorus Bibliotheca 3.148.1. Suetonius Tibullus 70.3 represents the issue of Hecuba's parentage (specifically her mother) as the sort of arcane mythological knowledge that Tiberius carried to a laughable extreme (see also Mossman 1990 264 n.33). It would therefore seem that Polymestor and she are meant to be thought of as cousins (surely not as brother and sister!), a detail the debasement scholars seem to have missed though could do much with. Her heritage provides a legitimate rationale for Polymestor having been chosen as ward of Polydorus. The reference to him here and at 1200 as a barbarian, then, must be understood in the first instance as a value judgement, rather than as a straightforward description of objective fact. In the agon both Polymestor and Hecuba present their cases in terms of how 'Greek' they behaved, though Hecuba need not make so much of this because of her earlier dialogue with Agamemnon. For how this relates with the notion of ξένων in the play, see notes 710-11 and 793-97. For further discussion of the barbarian in Greek drama, cf. Hall (1989) and Bacon (1961).


It is necessary to identify Polydorus as Ἐκάβης παῖς (cf. 3) in this context because this is one of the divergences from the Homeric story Euripides adopts: whereas at Iliad 21.88 he is the son of Laodice and Priam, he becomes a greater potential threat to the Greeks in this play by being the son of Hecuba. Adjectives in -τος are usually passive (cf. Barrett Hippocrates 768) but here ὅποιτος is active, "suspecting", cf. Iliad 1476 ὁπίτις κλέων ὅποιτος, and Jebb on Sophocles' Oedipus 1031. Thucydides uses τὸ ὅποιτον = "suspicion" at 1.90.2, 6.89.1. δῆ, cf. Gorgias 205.

1136-37 To attribute cunning to Polymestor here is to credit him with too much. It is preferable to have him not fully understanding the judicial process occurring around him, heightening one
manifestation of his savagery in comparison with Hecuba. The rhetorical effectiveness of τοῦτον κατέχειν is equally powerful as an unwanted early confession. There is no dramatic urgency that Polymestor have ‘a good showing’ at the trial since it has already been shown to be a misguided assumption, since the trial serves merely to confirm Hecuba’s vengeance retroactively, in a format (the agon) that would have been pleasing to the Athenian audience. This is reflected in the final judgement, cf. 1243. There is therefore an ironic echo in προμηθείς, recalling 795, regardless of the interpretation of the word there.

1138-41 Polymestor invokes a common Greek notion that your foe’s children must not live (Held 1005-8, And 519-21, Tro 723, HF 166-67. This notion was of course also present when Hecuba’s women killed Polymestor’s sons, the event he will describe 1157ff.

There has been considerable discussion of the significance of the various moods used in the verbs in these lines. The main verb, ἔδεισα, is historic. μὴ after verbs of fearing indicates something that may happen, but is not desired: "The subjunctive can also follow secondary tenses to retain the mood in which the object of the fear originally occurred to the mind" (MT 365), e.g. Xenophon Sym 2.11 ὡστε οἱ μὲν θεόμενοι ἐφοβοῦτο μὴ τι πάθην. The vivid subjunctives ἄθροισα and ξυνοικίσῃ present the immediate consequences (recalling the συνοικίας of Attica by Theseus described at Thuc 2.15.2), which leaves room for more remote consequences to be presented in the optative, ἔρειαν.

1142-5 Polymestor seems bitter at the recent (νῦν + imperfect ἐχόμενον, a word also at line-end at Med 768) marauding presence of the Greeks in his country, whose activities correspond to those Thucydides credits them in 1.11.1 ἀλλὰ πρὸς γεωργίαν τῆς Χερσονήσου τραπόμενοι καὶ ληστεῖαν τῆς τάφρης ἀπορής. LSJ II.3 says the use of 1142 τρίβειν to mean "ravage" is unique. While there may be justice in his indignant attitude, Polymestor’s self-motivation may not sit well with Agamemnon. It certainly would not have been accepted by the Athenians of 427 B.C. (Diodotus at the Mytilenian Debate): Thuc 3.43.1 ἂν τις καὶ ὑποπτεύηται κέρδους μὲν ἤνεκα τὰ
βέλτιστα δὲ δῆμος λέγειν, φθονήσαντες τῆς σοῦ βεβαιού δοξήσως τῶν κερδῶν τὴν φανερῶν ἁφελλαίαν τῆς πόλεως ἄφαιρομεθα.

1148 The postponement and enjambment of χρυσόθ emphasizes the power the lure had on him. For the seeming contradiction in μόνον δὲ σὺν τέκνωσι, cf. Med 513 σὺν τέκνοις μόνη μόνοις, El 628 ἢ μόνος διμώον μέτα.

1150 κάμψαν γόνυ is redundant after Ιξω, but does stress that Polymestor will be slower to react later, cf. 1079 (where the idea of "resting legs" is more immediate), Aesch PV 32 σο κάμπτων γόνυ, Soph OC 19.

1151-54 The complex word order of these lines has led to many corruptions, but I am convinced the original readings have been restored, as printed in Diggle’s text.

al μὲν is in partitive opposition to the subject of the sentence, πολλαί...Τρώων κόραι. This is only clear with Milton’s emendation of χειρός from MSS. χείρες, the reading which is adopted by Daitz and Dodds Bac 745 who reads it as a “grim anonymous threat” while poetic impoverishes the overall sense (for Milton’s work on Euripides in general see entry in bibliography.) For ἠνδε, cf. note 731-32. δὴ is deprecatory (GP 231) as at Bac 224.

A failure to see κεριδά as the object of ἣγον led to the corruption θάκουν for θάκους, which Hermann emended. While at 363 χέρως, literally the shuttle that is thrown back and forth between the woof of a loom, = the loom itself (synecdoche), here it is used for the product of the loom, the cause for effect, in the same way πόνος is used for the product of labour at Or 1570 τεκτῶν πόνον, Aesch Ag 53-54 δεμνιστήρι πόνον ὅρταλίξαξον ὀλέασαντες. The Edonians were a particularly familiar Thracian tribe, based on the East bank of the river Strymon: they had destroyed the first Athenian colony in 465 at what was to become Amphipolis. Thracian textiles were particularly highly regarded, cf. Kazarow (1930) 543 and Hall (1989) 137-38. χερός can function two ways: since the garment is referred to as its creating device - the shuttle on the loom

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- so the hand that throws the shuttle is the referent for the final product; perhaps more straightforward, however, is to read χερῶς as "handiwork", cf. Hom Od 15.126 μνήμη Ἑλένης χερῶν.

λεύσαω and αὐγή are also used together at 925, where see note. The preposition ὑπὸ is used because in a Greek house (as well as, one must assume, a Greek tent) light is admitted from the ceiling. The action, to see how much light would pass through the cloth to determine the tightness of the weave and therefore the cloth's approximate value, seems to have been common enough to become a normal adverb, cf. Aristoph Thes 500 ὡς ἡ γυνὴ δεικνύσα τάνδρι τοδύκυκλον υπαυγάς σίτων, Plato Phaedrus 268A τάφτα δὲ ὑπ’ αὐγάς μᾶλλον ἴδωμεν, τίνα καὶ ποτ’ ἔχε τὴν τῆς τέχνης δύναμιν.

νέπλους need not refer to female garments, as it did at 933 (but see next note), cf. the flowing robes of Agamemnon, IA 1550 πρόσθεν ὄμματων νέπλουν προθεῖς, of a barbarian, Aesch Per 468 βήμας δὲ νέπλους κάνακωκύόσας λαγό, and see Jebb Tra 602.

1155-56 A prima facie reading of the MSS. leads one to conclude that the women inspect a single Thracian lance, and then remove Polymestor's twofold "equipment." While the etymology and usage of στόλισμα and its cognates would suggest that the meaning is seldom beyond that of clothing, and therefore that the twofold equipment here constitutes the aforementioned spear and an outer garment. This is perhaps reinforced by the common use of νέπλος to mean an undergarment (cf. 933) which is easily visible, perhaps suggesting a full costume change for Polymestor at his entry at 1053, thereby adding to the overall spectacle described in note 1049-53, but cf. Sup 559 ἐστολισμένον δορῷ, IA 255. Daitz (1981) provides an alternate translation of these lines, avoiding this: "Others pretend to inspect my Thracian lance and so strip me of my double-edged weapon." It seems that after such a clear reference to the clothwork (1154), it is preferable to preserve the idea that the women were encouraging him to relax completely, taking his spears and loosening his clothing. This supports the idea that Athenian men had a genuine anxiety about a female sexual threat. This straightforward interpretation of στόλισματος seems to be all but universally
disapproved of, I believe unfairly. Part of the difficulty lies in the visualisation of this scene. The audience is not witness to the event, merely to the retelling of it. There are no visual clues to help them envisage what transpired, apart from the lack of one or two spears, and perhaps an ornate outer cloak. The words of the narrative itself need to be considered. The two nouns immediately preceding the word στολισμάτος are 1154 πέπλους and 1155 κάμακα (see below) followed by a word meaning "twofold"; to take these nouns as the twofold equipment is the most natural interpretation. The Scholiast cites Hom Od 21.340 which, when viewed in a larger context (21.338-41), also links a single spear with outer clothing, albeit as part of a longer list:

εἰ κέ μιν ἐντανύση, δῶῃ δὲ οἱ εὐχος Ἀπόλλων,

δόσοι μιν χλαδόν τε χιτώνα τε, εἰματα καλά,

δῶσω δ’ ὥξιν ἀκοντα, κυνών ἀλκτήρα καὶ ἀνδρῶν,

καὶ ξύρος ἐμφρέσ.

Nevertheless, since the preceding lines have been shown to be corrupt, and because the present lines use unusual vocabulary, there has been a tendency to alter the text.

Not without merit is Hartung's "particularly ... crucial correction" (Collard) adopted by Diggle et al. changing the κάμακα θρηκίαν to the dual, κάμακε θρηκίο (an emendation apparently also made by Weil, "Je corrige"). It is of course a commonplace that Homeric heroes carried two spears (Od 1.256 ἡξων πῆληκα καὶ ἀσπίδα καὶ δύο δοῦρε, II 4.495 πᾶλλων δ’ ὥξια δοῦρε), but Lorimer (1940) suggests that this was not the case in the fifth century. Fraenkel at Aesch Ag 643 says δίλογχον and Soph Ajax 408 δίπαλτος refer to two spears, where Stanford follows Lorimer, = "double (spear) wielding", and therefore "fully armed", contra Jebb and Scholiast, = "double-wielded", i.e. "two-handed" as apparently IT 323, cf. also Find P 4.79 αἰχμαίαν διδύμαιαν. There is sufficient iconographic evidence to argue either way: 2 spears, e.g. the 'bilingual' (red and black figure) amphora by the Andokides Painter (ARV 4, 7), a lekythos by the Pan painter (ARV 557, 113); one spear, e.g. an amphora by the Kleophrades Painter (ARV 181, 1), an amphora depicting Athena by the Nikoxenos Painter (ARV 220, 5.) Though the latter seems slightly more prevalent, ultimately the evidence for the emendation is inconclusive. In
Homer, a κόμαξ is a vine-pole (I 18.563), but it appears as a spear (synecdoche) in tragedy at El 852 ἔχον κόμακας. Aesch Ag 66, as well as Aristophanes fr. 404 (Holkades) λόγχας δ' ἐκαυλίζοντο καὶ ξυστῇ κόμαξ. It should also be noted that Polymestor's spear or spears would at most be formal requirements, that exist only to be taken away from him to render him defenceless.

Granting that there is merit in Hartung's emendation, the editors are forced to evaluate στολίσματος, which though uncontested in the MSS., does possess a Scholiast's variant στοχάσματος, which Bond (at HF 1096 on Diggle) equates with στοχάσματος and calls "an apt reference to the δῷ δόσα of a Homeric warrior." The reading στοχάσματος was originally the emendation of Hartung (so Daitz, pace Diggle.) A word derived from στόχος, "pillar", is clearly preferable for spears, cf. Bac 1099-1100 "aim" ἄλλοι δὲ θόρυβος ἔκασαν δ' αἰθέρος 1 Πενθέως, στόχον δύστιγμον. Aesch Sup 243 (metaphorical) "guess" (obolized by Page), and most importantly Bac 1205 "missile" οὐκ ἄγκυλτος ἑος σαλών στοχάσματον. It is my opinion that if one accepts Hartung's emendation in 1155, it only makes sense to remove the allusion to clothing and follow him and the Scholiast later in the same sentence, in 1156. This is not necessary, as the MSS. reading can be clearly construed.

1157-59 τοκάδες, while used of a human mother at Hip 560-1 τοκάδα τὰν διγόνοιο Βάκχου (and this is in lyric), is otherwise always used by Euripides of animals: Med 187-8 (lions) κατ' ουκ ὑποταινόντας θριασίν, Cypr 42 (sheep) γεννάουν δ' ἐκ τοκάδων, cf. Theocritus 8.63 (goats.) The present usage should be taken as a contemptuous slur on the women who have wreaked these atrocities on Polymestor, = "dams", either alluding to their fierceness, or merely their being subhuman.

ἐκταγλούμεναι is always found as a participle, cf. Or 890 ("a very strong epic-toned word" Willink), Tro 829, Aesch Cho 217.

Ἐπαλλον perhaps recalls the use of the same verb with Astyanax in Hom II 6.47 ἀπόκρω δ' ὑπὲρ φίλον τοιὸν ἔτει κύκει πῆλε τε χερόν.
γένοντο is plural, despite the neuter τέκνα, because it refers to living persons (Smyth 959, Porson.)

Diggle follows Elmsley’s διαδοχαίον’ since he "everywhere disallows exactly bisected trimeters unrelieved by elision" (Collard), cf. Diggle (1973) 263-64; (1984) 67, but this is far from universally accepted: Denniston El 546 "no fatal objections to the text", Dodds Bac 1125 "The absence of caesura may be deliberate ... an insufficient ground for drastic emendation, particularly in a play which shows Aeschylean influence" (for which see Introduction IV), Ussher Cyc 7 "flavour of pomposity", Collard Sup 699 "Some defend the phenomenon particularly in messenger speeches (Page on Mel[anippe] D[esmotis] 31 = fr. 495.6 [δρόσοσταδόν λόγχαις ἔπειγοντες φόνον); Broadhead Persae 300)" and cf. 355, 549 (if παρέξω γὰρ is counted as one word), Hel 86, And 397, Sup 303, West (1982) 83 n. 18, Humphreys (1881) 222. Paley posits an intrusive gloss, tentatively suggesting the unattested reading διαδοχαίον τ’ ἤμειβον χειρῶν. This is not necessary.


πῶς δοκεῖς appears as a parenthetical comment also at Hip 446, IA 1590, Aristoph Ach 24, and gives vividness to the description, as does the tense of κεντοῦσα.

The weakness of the simile of πολεμίων (despite 1152 παρὰ φίλῳ which is not being alluded to, and Bac 752 ὡστε πολέμου which "is so different that it does not protect the MSS here" (Collard (1986) 23.) has been countered by Verrall’s vivid suggestion (adopted by Diggle, doubted by Collard) of πολυπόδων. The octopus is found in Homer, also in simile, at Od 5432-5:

ώς δ’ ὁτε ποιησάμεθα θαλάμης ἐξελκομένοι πρὸς κοτιμιδονάριν πυκνιναί λάθηλες ἔχονται, ὃς τω ὁπό πέτρησι θρασεάτων ἀπὸ χειρῶν

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Collard lists later references to the octopus, though he himself doubts the validity of Verrall's conjecture (1986, 23). A complicating factor is that this is the only adverbial use of δίκην in Euripides, but for want of any better suggestions, I follow Verrall. Mossman (1990) 217 agrees, and sees the image as a deliberate change in the animal metaphor Polymestor uses: "The action of the women in the tent might indeed recall dogs pulling down a beast but Euripides introduces at just that moment the off-key image of the octopus." If right, this would suggest that the allusions to dogs earlier are not meant to be an identification to be pressed literally, but merely an evocation. This then informs an interpretation of Hecuba’s metamorphosis, cf. 1265 note.

1165-66 The status reversal is here complete: the women - unnamed, silent women - are treating Polymestor the way he would be expected to treat a woman, cf. Or 1469 (sic) ἐς ἕκαμα δὲ σακτύλους δικών 'Ὀρέστας, And 710, Tro 882. The verb is used in a context of a woman "pulling down" her father for a kiss, Sup 1100-01 κάρα τόδε κατείχε χαρί. For ἔξανστατην, cf. Med 1212-3 χρήζων γεραιῶν ἔξανστήσαι δέμας ἱπραίσθε.’

1167 οὐδὲν ἦνυν, cf. And 1132 ἄλλ᾽ οὐδὲν ἦνυν, Herod 9.66.1 οὐδὲν ἦνυε.

1168-69 τὸ λοίσθιον is connected with an internal accusative as at HIF 196, which itself is a common hyperbole, cf. 233, Aesch Ag 864-65 τὸν δ᾽ ἐπιστῆρεαν κακοῦ κάκιον ἄλλο πῆμα.

1170-71 While it is true that brooches would be necessary to hold male garments together as well as female, πόρπαι seem to indicate long, slender pins, perhaps always made of gold, used particularly by women, cf. of Oedipus’ blinding Pho 62 χρυσηλάτοις πόρπαισιν αλμάτας κόρας, Soph OT 1368-9 ἀποσπάσας γὰρ εἰμάτων χρυσηλάτους ἐπέρνας ἀπ’ αὐτῆς, and also Herod 5.87.2 κεντροὺς τῇ περνήσα τῶν ἱμάτων. If it would be automatic to assume the πόρπαι used here are made of gold, then there is some irony in that ultimately Polymestor did get some
gold within the tent. The active agents of the blinding have not been identified before this.

Shakespeare uses this description to effect a pun in Titus Andronicus I.135-39:

Then, madam, stand resolved, but hope withal
The selfsame gods that armed the Queen of Troy
With opportunity of sharp revenge
Upon the Thracian tyrant in his [Theobald reads "her"] tent
May favour Tamora, the Queen of Goths.

In Ovid's rendering of the story, Hecuba herself blinds Polymestor, and the contrast "may have influenced Hecuba's image ever since" (Meridor (1978) 30 n.11). For asyndeton, cf. 840 note.

The use of ἄνα suggests further up into the recesses of the tent.

1172-76 With the several difficulties that this passage holds, I am tempted to follow at least in part Diggle (1969) 45-46 in his tentative suggestions, not later printed in his text (noted by Collard (1986) 23). Reading θηρῶ for θῆρ ὃς avoids the awkwardness of the inappropriate simile. The initial verbal asyndeton created (see 840 note), as Diggle observes, is very much at home in a passage with two others, 1171 κεντοῦσιν αἵμασσουσιν and 1175 βάλλουν ἀράσσων. Whether this is stylistically desirable or not is a separate matter. The beast throwing missiles is now a hunter. Either reading recalls 1058-82. Mossman (1990) 298 n.45 believes Diggle was right to change his mind, comparing Soph Ajax 5-8 for the same mixed metaphor. θῆρ is used of a murderous person in 1073, Or 1271-72 κεκρυμμένος ἡθέρας ἐκφρύσας αὐτῇ ἔχροσον φανεῖ, Pho 1296, but it is unlikely that even Polymestor would use it of himself in his own defence in the agon. The fact that his quarry are τὰς μυρρόνους κόνας only becomes problematical when the reader (editor) assumes the dogs belong to the hunter. The women have been called κυνοῦ by Polymestor in 1077 and the concept is clear. It will also factor in the prophecy of Hecuba's metamorphosis (cf. 1265 and note, 1273) into a dog.

In 907-11 the use of tmesis could be seen to have rhetorical purpose. Here, though, ἐκ δὲ πηδήσας offers little more than metrical convenience. For other tmeses in dialogue, cf. 504, Alc

Prinz deleted 1174 to remove the second difficulty Diggle (1969) addresses, but that is not the answer: for one thing, the speeches should be kept equal in length (as opposed to only one line difference) and 1191 is the only line that has been suggested (Nauck) for deletion in Hecuba's speech. The problem is that the hunter is searching every *wall*, which is said not to be a typical activity of hunters. Diggle tentatively suggests the anagrammatic κοίτων for τοῖχον, because searching every *lair* is more appropriate (for the noun, cf. *Ion* 154-55 φοινῶσα ήδη λείπουσίν τε ι πτανολ Παρνασσό κοίτας. Homer *Od* 22.470, *Theocritus* 13.12, *Callimachus* 3.96 and (*pace* Diggle) *Hec* 1083 (where see note.) Diggle (1969) 46 n.l adduces 1040 μυχοῦς and 1065 μυχοῦν as supporting the new reading (*corners of the lair*) but these can also be read with τοῖχον: walls of the tent, vs. corners of the tent. Reading the anagram would be preferable if there were any support in the MSS. Without it, it is acceptable to stay with τοῖχον. Other solutions can be found in *Viljoen* (1918) 45 and *Campbell* (1958) 182 neither of which is convincing.

βόλλων ἡράσασον appears to be a stock phrase, found also at *And* 1154 and *IT* 310, which is particularly appropriate because it brings the audience to a point they have actually witnessed: 1040 βόλλων, 1044 ἡράσασον.

Polymestor's claim that he was pursuing Agamemnon's interests is echoed in Hecuba's sneering questions 1201-03. Polymestor is assuming that one's enemy's enemy is one's friend, which is not logically consistent, nor a necessary conclusion in Greek ethics. Diggle's correction from τε to γε (1981, 88) is undoubtedly right, cf. 615, *Alc* 847, *Held* 794, *Or* 118, *Bac* 816.

1177-82 To ascribe Polymestor's views to Euripides himself is of course naïve, and Aristophanic parody of misogynistic views (e.g. *Thes*) proves nothing. Euripides does often present his male character deriding women (e.g. *Agamemnon* 876ff., *Hippolytus* *Hip* 616ff.) The problem is discussed by Lefkowitz (1986) 112-32, notes 143-44, ch. 7 "Misogyny".

1177 The rhetorical flourish of (mildly) deprecating too much talk is common: *Med* 1351, *Sup
1178-79 One example of such men of old (from Euripides' perspective, not Polymestor's) is Semonides of Amorgos, fr. 7 Diehl, cf. Lloyd-Jones (1975). For the repeated τις...τις of the same indefinite person, cf. And 733-34 ἔστι γὰρ τις οὗ πρόσω ἡ Σπάρτης πόλις τις, Or 1218-19 (though Herwerden deletes 1219), Soph Tra 3.

λέγων ἔστιν is an example of the Schema Chalcidiacum (Lesbonax Grammaticus De Schematis IV), an Ionic idiom for λέγει, cf. Cyc 381 ἦτε πάσχοντες, Aesch Ag 1178 ἔσται δεδομένος, Herodotus 3.64 ἀπολογετικός ἔτη, 3.99 ἀπαρνηθέντος ἔτη, 9.51 ἦστι ἰδρύς.

1180 συντειμὼν, sc. λόγον from 1077 λόγος = "condensing", cf. IA 1249 ἐν συντειμοθεσα πάντα νικήσω λόγον, Tro 441 ὡς ἐν συντειμῷ, fr. 28 (Aeolus) παιδε, σοφοῦ πρὸς ἄνδρός ὅποι ἐν βραχές ἡ πολλοῦς καλὸς οἶος τῇ συντείμενεν λόγοι, Telephus 102.8 Austin καὶ πολλ' ἐμόχθησα', ἀλλὰ συντειμῶ λόγον.

1181-82 For women being a separate race from men, cf. 885 note, and for their evil, cf. fr. 1059.4 ἀλλ' σοῦν οὗτοι δεινὸν ὡς γυνὴ κακόν. For explanatory γὰρ, cf. GP 59. It is typical to represent all nature with a polar expression, such as οὗτε πόντος οὗτε γῆ, cf. Barrett on Hip 1277-80.

cel is here used in a standard idiom, also found in English, "ever" = "at any time", cf. PV 973 θῶπτε τὸν κρατοῦντι' κέλ, Cicero Verr 5.12.29 omnes Siciliae semper praetores.

It is probably best to take ἔπιστοταταί in the strongest sense possible, "knows for certain."

Plato contrasts ἐπιστήμη with δόξα "opinion."

1183-84 Polymestor had sought to conclude his speech with an emotional appeal to Agamemnon "man-to-man" by generalising about women. It is immediately countered by this couplet of the chorus, reprimanding both Polymestor's general attitude (present imperative ὑπερσύνοι for
prohibitions against a continual action) and the specific sentiment (aorist subjunctive μέμη for prohibition against a momentary action.) ἑραστώνοι "show shamelessness, act over-bold", cf. 1286, Bac 491 ὡς ἑρασός δ' βάλχος κούκ ἀγώνισσος λόγων, Or 607, Phae 214 (see Diggle (1970) 142 and Aristoph Frogs 846, Aeschylus speaking about Euripides.) The sentiment is also found in fr. 657 (Protesilaus):

διὰ τις δὲ πάσας συνιδεῖς ψέμει λόγω
γυναικις ἄξις, σκιώς ἔστι κοῦ σοφός,
pολλῶν γὰρ οὐσῶν τὴν μὲν εὐρήσεις κακήν

τὴν δ', ἄσπερ αὕτη λήμι' ἔλυσαν εὐγενές.

and cf. Med 747 θεῶν τε συνιδεῖς ἐπαν γένος.

1185-86 That these two lines should be deleted as spurious is all but certain: not only is a couplet expected between two long speeches (though Hadley page 117 rightly notes the couplet at 1238-39 is only contributory evidence), but the lines are incomprehensible and struggle to find an adequate sense. A contrast is being established (ἀδί μὲν...ἀδί δ') which suggests a polar expression. Unfortunately, the most obvious way of translating each of the alternatives is with a negative nuance, when a positive nuance is the point of the contrast. Each can be seen as positive, at a stretch: ἀδί μὲν εἶσ' ἐπιφθοντι "some are regarded with jealousy (because of goodness or excellence)" (Ambrose); ἀδί δ' εἷς ἄριθμον τῶν κακῶν περικλάμεν "and the rest, we come up to the number of the bad" (after Russell.) Neither of these interpretations convinces, nor do the various emendations (discussions of which are in Diggle (1969) 46-47, Jackson (1955) 159-60, Hadley 117-18, and cf. Paley’s μὴ κακῶν for τῶν κακῶν.) Hermann’s ἄντιρίθμοι comes closer to the positive sense suggested above, and Reiske’s εἷς ἄριθμον τῶν καλῶν is plausible, the corruption perhaps even due to Stobaeus to better suit his purposes, but the point is not worth pressing. Stobaeus cites it out of context with other passages condemning women, and the interpolation suits his purpose. This it does not do for Euripides.

Diggle's suggestion of ἡμεῖς for ἡμῶν is unnecessary: "for we are many:..." is not
sufficiently better than "for there are many of us..." to warrant the change.

1187-1237 The audience knows that the trial is specious: Hecuba has already been granted the support of Agamemnon. In order for the trial to have any bearing on an evaluation of the revenge, any conclusions drawn must be self-evident - they cannot, in any way, be dependent upon the verdict given by the judge, or from the fact that judgement has been passed. To a large extent, Euripides has already achieved his aim. Polymestor's speech has rambled, in form more a messenger's speech than a defence. He acknowledges his guilt to the charge, and formulates empty arguments. Hecuba's speech reinforces this, and clearly clinches the debate. Polymestor did make some accusations of Hecuba, though, and to these she provides sufficient responses. The rhetorical flourishes and point-for-point dismemberment of Polymestor's speech can and have been seen to be Hecuba 'selling out' to the sophistry she had earlier disparaged (814-20.) In that earlier great speech, rhetorical effects were present, and Euripides here has a much more immediate dramatic purpose, i.e. to make the contrast between this speech and Polymestor's previous one as sharp as possible. Hecuba needs to persuade both Agamemnon and the audience, and persuasion (πειθῶ) is the end of rhetoric. The speech falls into three parts (the division alone being a rhetorical device) which will be discussed as they arise. Similar threefold divisions can be found in the speeches of Theseus in Sup 426-62 and 517-63, with Collard's discussion ad loc.

1187-96 Hecuba's argument opens with comments directed at the arbiter of the case. It is full of pretence, but a pretence which is comfortable and even to be expected in a forensic oration. Hecuba formally identifies it as an opening 'set-piece' (1195 ἑορμήλος), functioning much the same as Hippolytus' "Unaccustomed as I am to public-speaking..." piece Hip 983-91. Similarly, Plato represents Socrates as speaking a particularly oratorical (and perhaps ironic) exordium (Apology 17a1-18a6.)

Hecuba is expressing a philosophical point that good words should accompany only a good (i.e. just) cause, and should prove false when applied to an evil cause. The premise clearly

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underlines the characters of the Right and Wrong Arguments in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, and is a notion also found in Theseus' words (*Hip* 928-31):

δισάς τε φωνᾶς πάντας ἀνθρώπους ἔχειν,
τὴν μὲν δικαίαν τὴν δ' ὅπως ἑτύγχανεν,
ὡς ἤ φτονοῦσα τάδειν 'ἐξηλέγχετο
πρὸς τὴς δικαίας, κούκ ἄν ἡπατώμεθα.

Hecuba talks of the "clever men", 1192 σοφοί, who have made persuasion a fine art, yet who necessarily fail - 1194 "nobody has escaped." Collard suggests this is a reference to demagogues such as Odysseus (as presented in this play.) That this is not so is shown by the fact that he had success: Polyxena was taken and killed. On the contrary, Hecuba is speaking directly to the point. By momentarily including Polymestor among the σοφοί, she compliments him, only to reveal that all σοφοί must fail if they present a bad case. The audience (dramatic and extra-dramatic) knows that Polymestor has not been eloquent. How much more must he therefore fail! See esp. Dodds on *Bac* 266-71 for the message elsewhere in Euripides.

1187-89 οὖκ ἔχρην λαχύςν and ἔδει λέγειν are examples of "a peculiar form of potential infinitive" (*MT* 415) with an infinitive and the imperfect of a verb of obligation, propriety or possibility. The sense given is "ought", cf. *Hip* 467 οὔδ' ἐκπονεῖν τοις χρὴ βίον λινν βροτούς, 619 οὖκ ἐκ γυναικῶν χρῆν παρακήσθαι τόδε, 925.

1190 σαβρος, "rotten, decayed, unsound" is often used metaphorically by Euripides: *Rh* 639 σαβρος λόγοισαν, *Sup* 1064 τι τούτ' αἵνειμα σημαίνεις σαβρόν; *Bac* 487. The words do not "ring true." The metaphor being found earlier only at Pindar *N* 8.34 σαβρόν κῦδος and Herodotus 8.109.5 πρὶν τι σαβρόν ... ἐγγενέσθαι, but becoming more common in the fourth century. The word is not found in the other tragedians.

1191 This is the line that, unprovoked, Nauck erroneously sought to delete. For the sentiment
expressed, cf. Diodotus in the Mytilenian Debate of 427, Thucydides 3.42.2 βολλόμενος τι αἰσχρόν πείσαι, εὖ μὲν εἰπεῖν ὦκ ἄν ἤγείται περὶ τοῦ μὴ καλοῦ δύνασθαι.

1192 μὲν οὖν is transitional cf. GP 471.

1193 διὰ τέλους "through and through", cf. 817 ἥ τέλος "thoroughly".


1195-96 In these lines Hecuba clearly indicates the transition of her addressee: the introduction (φρομίως, cf. El 1060 ἄρχη δ' ἤδε μοι προομίου) was directed at Agamemnon (1195); she will now turn to confront Polymestor directly, either "in argument" or "(responding) to his words", depending on how λόγως is understood.

1197-1232 Turning to address Polymestor, Hecuba presents her arguments against his case, such as it is. She makes four points:

i. 1197-1205 Polymestor had claimed to be preventing any possibility of a second war between the Greeks and the Trojans (1136-44) in killing Polydorus. Hecuba counters by suggesting that Polymestor was motivated only by self-interest (1142-44) and that there could be no alliance of any kind between Barbarian and Greek (conveniently forgetting for the sake of her argument two details: that she has Agamemnon's compliance, and that she is the daughter of the Thracian King Cisseus (3, cf. Homer II 6.297, 11.223.) While 1202 κηδεύσων does echo 834 κηδεστῆν, it must be remembered that Hecuba's immediate purpose must be seen entirely within the context of the agon.
ii. 1206-16 Hecuba presents a joint accusation of cowardice (in not acting when Troy flourished) and greed. The two points converge, since the only gold Polymestor has mentioned (1148 χρυσό6) is the fictional treasure Hecuba had promised in the irony-laden fourth episode.

iii. 1217-23 A direct rebuttal of 1175-76 where Polymestor claims to be pursuing Agamemnon’s interests, Hecuba notes the inconsistencies between his words and his actions, in keeping the gold for himself.

iv. 1224-32 Her concluding point establishes a polar opposition between what favours Polymestor could have enjoyed, and what he now has for himself. Her summary of his final state shows the reciprocity her revenge has had on Polymestor.

After this she concludes, addressing Agamemnon the arbiter directly again.

1197-98 ὧς is surely a better MSS. reading than the less direct ὧς and the less appropriate question πὸς. It also provides a valuable precedent ἐν 1219 δὲ φῆς where see note.

ἀπαλλάσσων (present, indicating continuous action, taken with Ἀχιλλον, cf. 1068 with τυφλὸν φέγγος, and 1222 with χερός) contrasts with the (momentary) aorist κτανεῖν.

1199-1201 For the repeated δὲ, cf. 742 note. Hadley suggests an allusion to Athenian dissatisfaction with the Thracian Alliance of 431, but if so (and it seems unlikely) this must be seen as being of secondary importance and inconsequential to the present situation. For the distinction between barbarian and Greek, and Hecuba’s ambiguous position, cf. 1129-31 note.

In this speech, Hecuba denies any kind of relationship between Polymestor and the Greeks. Here and at 1218 she denies the possibility of φῶλα existing, and cf. 1216 where she suggests Polymestor has an incomplete understanding of the bonds of ξένια.

Paley is convinced by, and argues strongly for, Hermann’s emendation: πρῶτα ποῦ ποτ’ for πρῶτον οὗτος, and οὗταν (i.e. οὗτος δὲν which is “obviously a great improvement to the
sense") for οὖτ' ἀν, and punctuating with a question at the end of 1200. He therefore suggests ποῦ is being used in the same way as at Hcll 369-70 ποῦ ταῦτα καλῶς ἀν ἦν παρά γ' ἐδ' ἐφευρονοθεῖν; The question is rhetorical, and Hecuba supplies her own definite answer, "In no way could it be so..." However, Dindorf’s οὖδ’ in 1201 is an easier step, which makes the full two-and-a-half lines a powerful, absolute statement: "You coward, first of all the Greek race will never have friendship with a barbarian (sc. such as you), nor could it."

σπεύδων χάριν is repeated from 1175 in sarcastic reference (the sarcasm clear from the emphatic καλ, seeking supplemental information (GP 312) cf. 515, 1066.) It is more than an echo: it is a direct quotation of Polymestor’s words. Collard suggests that there is a subtle shift from the question that should be asked, τίνος χάριν "whose interest...", to that which in fact is asked, and which contains an assumed answer, τίνα χάριν "what interest (of yours)..."

1202 The transitive use of κινδεύειν is found only here and at Phae 241 ὃς θεὰν κινδεύεσαις. For intransitive use, cf. Hip [634] κινδεύεσαις καλῶς, the heavily ironic Med 888 νόμφην τε κινδεύουσαν ἡδεσθαι σέθεν, Aesch PV 890 κινδεύσαι καθ’ έαυτόν.

1204-5 The subject of ἐκεῖλλον is the (hypothetical) Greek army, omitted by Hecuba to prevent any mention of concrete possibility. Hecuba is stressing the unlikelihood of the event in the first place, thereby ignoring a potential accusation of self-interest so that nothing is conceded. She addresses self-interest in the form of greed in the next line.

πελθο + double accusative = "persuade x of y", the second accusative (y) being internal.

δοκεῖς persuasively suggests that any attempt Polymestor might make to persuade would fail.

1206 ὁ χρυσός, stated so clearly and prominently, becomes unambiguous as Hecuba begins to revile Polymestor’s greed. Agamemnon picks up on its prominence in his verdict (1245.)

1207 κέρδη can be used both for "gain, profit" (Sup 236 ἄλλος δὲ κέρδους σώνει' , Soph Ant
221-22 ἄλλ' ὑπ' ἥλιδων | ἄνδρας τὸ κέρδος πολλάκις διώλεσεν) and the hope for it (here, Held 3, fr. 659.7-8 οἱ δ' αἰσχρὰ κέρδη πρόσθε τοῦ καλοῦ βροτῶν | ζητοῦσιν, Aesch Eum 704 κερδῶν ἥθικτον τοῦτο βουλευτήριον.

1208-10 ἐπεὶ δίδαξον τοῦτο is a direct challenge (which must go unanswered, by the conventions of the agon) to Polymestor to present facts which contradict what she is about to say, cf. Soph OC 969 ἐπεὶ δίδαξον, cf..., OT 390. The situation Hecuba describes has many links with the words of the deceased victim (cf. 16-18), providing a subtle but undeniably deliberate authorial connection between the two accounts, further supporting Hecuba’s case.

The alliteration observed by some in 1209 is no more concentrated than, e.g. 1205 and is probably accidental (so Collard), cf. Barrett Hip 656 "Eur. was notoriously indifferent to the accumulation of sibilants (‘sigmatism’), 22-23 in add., and Owen Ion 1294 esp. the apposite anecdote of Tennyson; cf. also Hec 915.

Ἐκτορός τ’ ἠνθεὶ δόρυ, cf. 18, Tro 1162.

1211-12 Wecklein’s deletion of δ’ (=δῆ emphatic (GP 228) as at Aesch Cho 410 δαρῶς) is completely unnecessary, and creates a hiatus which, though it can be explained away (e.g. West (1982) 14-15) is undesirable. The particle emphasizes the question τί, which replaces 1208 πῶς which began a question that was never completed.

τοῦδε’ refers to Agamemnon, and probably was accompanied by an appropriate gesture.

χάριν θέσθαι + dative = "store up favours with, oblige x" cf. Bac 721 χάριν τ’ ἀνακτηθὸς (following Elmsley), El 61, IT 604 (sc. σου), Ion 1104 (πῶς clause replaces dative), and also δοῦναι χάριν El 1138, HF 778.

1214 For a similar conceit, cf. 914 and note.

1215 This line has needed much correction, and Diggle’s text gives the clearest and most probable
sense, understanding ἐστίμην’ in an absolute sense, sc. ὅν. The whole line then becomes almost parenthetical, reflecting the truth of 1214 (which mentioned individual ruin) on a larger scale, and thereby making the consequences in 1216 (the murder of Polydorus) seem more extreme. For the use of ὅτῳ + dative, cf. Held 231 ὅτῳ Ἀργελοὺς, Or 889 ὅτῳ τοῖς δυναμένοις.

For the possibility of genuine smoke effects, cf. 823 note. In Aesch Ag 818, Agamemnon mentions smoke as being representative of the destruction of an entire city: κατνύφ δ’ ἀλοζαμα νῦν ἐτ’ εὑσημος πόλις. There is however something odd about the verb Euripides has chosen, almost as if to suggest that the smoke from the destruction was the first of the chain of beacons, the other end of which the watchman spies in the opening speech of the Agamemnon (cf. also Ag 292-93 ἐκὰς δὲ φρουτοῦ φῶς ἐτ’ Βύριποι βοᾶς 1 Μεσσαπίου φώλαξι σημαίνει μολῶν 496-97 οὔτε σοι δαίων φῶλαγ 1 ἔλης ὀρείας σημανεὶ κατνύφ πυρὸς’)

1216 The non-thematic (poetic second) aorist form κατέκτας, an epicism, is found elsewhere in Euripides (Bac 1289 σὺ νῦν κατέκτας καὶ κασφυνταί σέθεν) and Aeschylus (Eum 460 κατέκτα), cf. HF 424 ἐκτα (in lyric) and Soph Tra 38 ἐκτα (in dialogue.) She seems to imply that Polymestor has no understanding of any social relationships: ξένα here (and see 1221 note) and φίλα in 1199 and 1218.

1217 Diggle has adopted Gloël’s conjecture φανη "(how base) you appear." This is unnecessary. Either of the MSS. readings are viable: Daitz’ choice of φανῇ "(how) you will appear (base)" (though this line is rendered very loosely in Daitz’ published translation, "Next, I’ll show you what a contemptible person you really are"); Murray’s second aorist subjunctive passive φανῆς, being used in a clause of purpose rather than in an indirect question, "(that) you may be shown to be (base)", which has the best MSS. support and makes perfect sense. It also follows the standard rhetorical practice of telling an audience what it is that it is about to be told.

1218-20 For the omission of ὅν with χρῆν σ’ ... δοῦναι, see 1113 note. Here the omission
stresses that the protasis (that Polymestor is a friend to the Greeks) is definitely not the case. For Polymestor not understanding the basic relational concept of φίλος, see 1199-1200 note, and 1216.

The use of ἕν φής is suggestive, since it provides evidence for Hecuba’s case as if it came from Polymestor. Whereas in 1197 when she uses ὡς φής it is true, Polymestor has not said the gold was not his in his speech (though that that is what he believes may reasonably be gleaned from the earlier (pre-blinding) interchange at 994-97. The device makes Hecuba appear to use all the same evidence the defendant used, while clearly arguing for the opposite conclusion. Since she knows she has the last word, this makes for strong argumentation. Again, the fifth-century audience is going to respond more favourably to rhetorical skill than to simple statements concerning innocence or guilt.

1221 ἀπεξενωμένος would probably provide a noticeable echo of 1216 ξένος, and thereby further emphasise Polymestor’s lack of relational understanding. For the verb itself, cf. Soph El 776-77 μαστῶν ἀποστάς καὶ τροφῆς ἐμῆς, φυγάς | ἀπεξενωθο. The use is derived from the secondary meaning of ξένω = "to exile", as at Hip 1085, Ion 820, Soph Tra 65 (as opposed to the more common meaning = "to entertain", where ξένος is a guest, rather than a foreigner; the verb literally means "to make a ξένος of x."

1222-23 ἀπολλάξαι χερὸς, sc. τὸν χρυσὸν, cf. 1197-98 note.


ξένον καρπέτρις, cf. IT 1395-96 οἷ δ᾽ ἐκαρπήσουν | πρὸς κύμα λακτίζωντες.

1224-25 καὶ μήν, as at 824.

πάθος seems slightly out of place; in sense it should go before ὡς σε.

σώσας is also weird, in that to save Polydorus in this instance means not to murder him, which is clearly an unusual rescue. The odd feel reproduces the wrongness of the action.
The two lines are parenthetical, providing proverbial support for the thesis being developed.

ἀγαθὸν is crasis for ὁ ἀγαθὸς (note rough breathing and long initial alpha.)

αὐθ' = αὐτά = per se. For the potential variation of αὐθ’, see MSS. variations and emendations at 958, Pho 557, Or 1393, Tro 1171, none of which represent αὐτὲ.

tὸ χρηστόν, cf. Sup 199 πλειω τὰ χρηστὰ τῶν κακῶν εἶναι βροτοῖς. Or 451 καὶ μὴ μόνος τὸ χρηστὸν ἀπολαβόν ἔχε, Soph Tra 3. There survives a translation of 1226 by Ennius (in Cicero De Amic 17 amicus certus in re incerta cernitur, which clearly follows the sentiment of Ovid Trist 1.8.5-6 donec eris fēlix, multitōs numerābis amicos; ἕν nullus ad amissas ibit amicus opes and Shakespeare Hamlet III.ii.217-19

Who not needs shall never lack a friend
And who in want a hollow friend doth try,
Directly seasons him his enemy.

as well as in several Euripidean passages: e.g IA 408 ἔς κανὼν ὀλγεῖν τοὺς φίλους κρή φίλους. Or 665-7 τοὺς φίλους ἔν τοῖς κακοῖς κρή τοῖς φίλουσιν ὥφρειν ἐν διδῷ, τί δὲ φίλων; The Scholiast however interprets the passage differently, with τὸ χρηστόν = "goodness" and combining it with αὐθ' ἔκαστα: Σ 1226 ἢ γὰρ εὐτυχία πάντας φίλους ποιεῖ. Σ 1227 τὰ χρηστὰ αὐτὰ ἔς αὐτῶν ἔχει τοὺς φίλους. εὶ δὲ καὶ ἀναταφεύγετο τοῦ παιδὸς σοῦ μὲν ἔστέρησο χρημάτων, ὃ δὲ παῖς ἔπλουσε, πάντως ἃν ἐκοινώνεις αὐτῷ τὸ πλοῦτον τὰ τροφεῖά σοι ἀποστύνῃ, by the use of which Paley suggests interpreting as "If you had acted honestly by Polydorus, you would have found him a friend; for he would have supplied you with money in your need."

1228-29 ὁ δ' = Polydorus (παῖς in 1229.)

Collard notes Hecuba’s pun in θησαυρός, Polydorus being prized both as an ally (El 565 λαβέιν φίλον θησαυρόν, ἀν φαίνει θεός) and as a source of revenue (1231.) The same double meaning is found at Sup 1009-11
καὶ μὴν ὁρᾷς τὴν ὕπερ ἡς ἀφάδετηκας πέλας
πυρᾶν, Διὸς θησαυρόν, ἔνθε ένεατι σάς
πόσις δαμασθέλς λαμπάσιν κε ραυνίοις.

cf. also fr. 518 (Meleager)

καὶ κτῆμα δ’, ὅ τεκνοῦσα, κάλλιστον τόδε,
πλουτόν δε κρείσσον τοῦ μὲν ὅκεα πτέρυξ.
παῖδες δὲ χρηστοί, κἀν θάνωσι, δῷμασιν
καλὸν τι θηραύρισμα τοῖς τεκνοῖ τε
ἀνάθημα βιότου κοὐπον’ ἐκλείπει δόμους.

and El 497 θηραύρισμα Διονύσου τόδε.

1230-31 As she closes her main address to Polymestor, Hecuba sums up the wretchedness of his condition. It presents the punishment he has already received as an inevitable consequence of his earlier actions, both prejudging Polymestor and prejudicing Agamemnon. The οὔτε ... τε ("neither ... and") combination seems strange but was common in the tragedians: Alc 70-71, Med 441-45, Soph OC 1397-98, OT 653, Phil 1321, Ant 763, El 350, 1078. ἐκεῖνον refers to Polydorus, giving a balanced structure, though it is possible to understand it as indicating Agamemnon.

1232 With the formulaic phrase which Collard finds "slightly threatening" (σολ δ' ἔγω λέγω, cf. Held 372, Or 622.) Hecuba turns back to Agamemnon for the closing peroration, emphasizing the injustice should Agamemnon acquit Polymestor. In addition to the straightforward assertion that she is right, it is also a backhanded recognition that Polymestor has already received his punishment, and failure to pass the appropriate verdict (as had been earlier agreed, though not in so much detail) would be unjust.

1233 It is standard to use εἶ + the future indicative to represent a future condition, as at 802, perhaps implying a subtle threat, which is intensified perhaps both by the formula in the previous
line and the echo of Hecuba’s words here to Agamemnon, κακός φανή, with those she has so recently used against Polymestor, 1217 ὡς φανή κακός. The echo is deliberate (not sloppy as Hadley suggests) and powerful. Both phrases appear at line-ends, and after the complete decimation of Polymestor’s argument (such as it was), under no circumstances would Agamemnon wish to appear in the same way that Polymestor does, which he would if Agamemnon supports Polymestor in the agon.

1234-35 The conclusion is climactic and absolute: the four negatives again sum up Polymestor’s state, this time in words addressed to Agamemnon. The adjectives form two pairs of associated concepts: A- εὐσεβής, δυσνο; B- πιστός, δίκαιον. This yields not a chiastic pattern (ABBA), but a more regular ABAB. For the combination σοτε ... σο, cf. GP 510. The doubled use is found elsewhere only at Soph Ant 952-44 (sic) σοτ’ ἄν νυν δέλβος σοτ’ Ἀρης, οὐ πύργος, σοχ ἀλκτυνοι κελαιναί νέας ἐκφύγοιεν.

1236-37 The closing couplet represents a complete status transformation (the break-off signalled by δὲ cf. GP 167, 868 note), where Hecuba returns from being a high-status prosecutor to her appropriate servile position. The oratorical style she has exhibited throughout her speech has clearly been that of a master, confirming the appropriateness of her earlier behaviour within the context of the agon to all who have heard her. There is however, a judge present, who must officially pass the sentence. Though he is corrupt, Hecuba must ‘step off her soapbox’ with a mild reproof to herself. In 1233 she had stopped just short of calling Agamemnon κακός. This couplet is her reparation for that. For the imprecise use of τοιοῦτον, cf. El 53 ἵσω καύτος αὐτο τοιοῦτος ὄν, which also concludes a long speech. For the generalising plural to avoid speaking directly of her master, cf. 237, 403, 404, 1253.

1238-39 Φεῦ Φεῦ can be used for admiration, as here, cf. the chorus at Held 535-36 Φεῦ Φεῦ, τί λέξῳ παρθένοι μέγαν λόγον ἱ κλέους, Aristoph Birds 1724 ὡς Ἀφ Φεῦ τῆς ὑφας τοῦ κάλλους

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as well as for distress, e.g. Theocritus 27.55, the use of which has survived into Modern Greek. The chorus' comment is a direct counterpoint to its earlier condemnation of Polymestor's speech (1183-84.) Collard's suggestion that the couplet is sententious and incongruous before Agamemnon's speech fails to recognise that there is no decision to be made: even if the audience did not know already which way Agamemnon was to vote, the words would speak for themselves. This in effect is what the chorus says: providing a positive formulation of Hecuba's earlier sentiment about evil speech (1190-91), the chorus states correct actions help a fine speaker. ἄφορμάς is a technical term for an orator's brief, or case, and is often used by Euripides to mean the factual basis for an argument, to be contrasted with λόγων, the words used in its presentation, cf. Bac 266-67 διὰν λάβῃ τις τῶν λόγων ἀνήρ σοφὸς ἡ καλὰς ἄφορμάς, οὐ μέγ' ἐργον ἐδέλεγεν. HF 236 ἄφορμάς τοῖς λόγοισιν. Pho 199 ἄφορμάς τῶν λόγων. For ἐνδίδωσι', cf. Aristoph Knights 847 λαβήν γὰρ ἐνδέδωκας.

1240-42 Agamemnon's sentence is spoken only to Polymestor: he is the defendant. The opening three lines sound ridiculous after all that has preceded, but even now Agamemnon seems reluctant to commit himself. There is resolution in the fourth foot of 1240 which is found elsewhere in Euripides only at 727 and perhaps Phae fr.inc.sed. 4 (so Zieliński, denied by Diggle ad loc.) The problem is that the fragment (Plutarch Moralia 608E so poorly resembles tragic trimeters, that one or more lacunae have been suggested. Therefore Zieliński's reading γυμνόσας in the fourth foot can be at best regarded as conjectural, and not a meaningful factor for dating that play, based on analogy with the Hecuba lines.

1243-44 Agamemnon echoes Hecuba's request in 874 not to seem to act on her behalf, when he here denies he is doing it for his own sake, or for that of the Achaeans. For the combination ὀδτε ... ὀδτ' ὅν, cf. Soph OT 89-90, and with μὴ OT 271 (GP 420.)

1245 For the subjunctive ἔχεις rather than an optative after 1244 ἀποκτείνων, cf. 27. The effect is
to stress vividness. Agamemnon picks up the emphatic reference to the gold (τὸν χρυσὸν) from 1219.

1246 The sentiment is similar to Tro 1008-09 ἐς τὴν τύχην δ’ ὀρθῶσα τοῦτ’ ἥρκεις, διὼς ἵ ἐποι’ ἰἄμ’ αὐτῆ, τῇ ἅρετῇ δ’ οὐκ ἡθελες.

1247-49 In these three lines, Agamemnon provides an excuse for his judgement. Rather than give reasons for his guilty verdict, he vacillates, worrying only about the possibility of censure (ψύχω, something he had feared earlier - see note 854-56.) The only other use of the word in this play (384) also entails escaping it (here the deliberative ψύχω; 384 φυγέν.) Agamemnon is not precisely echoing the contrast between Greek and barbarian that he had broached earlier in the agon (see note 1129-31), but rather is mentioning the renowned savagery of Thracians in particular (see note 774) who (Agamemnon supposes) treat lightly (δόθειν) something the Greeks rank on a level with sacrilege (e.g. Aesch Eum 269-75, esp. 269-70.)

The particle combination δὲ γ’ is rare in tragedy, and is strongly adversative (GP 155): Agamemnon is setting his moral view clearly in opposition to Polymestor’s. μὴ ἀδίκειν (trisyllabic by synizesis, as at Hip 997 φίλοις τε κρήσατι μὴ ἀδίκειν πειραίμενος, where it occurs at the same place in the line), the negative μὴ marking the conditional force of κρίνας.

1250-51 It is apparent that Agamemnon at no point actually says Polymestor is guilty. After excusing the verdict he is about to make (1247-49), he now muses on the consequences of the verdict, indicating merely that it would be impossible (οὐκ ἅν δυναμήν) to escape censure if he did not cast a guilty vote. This conclusion takes the form of a trite and succinct couplet, with two cognate words being used in different senses (of "enduring": ἐτόλμας, τλῆθαι) and the rhyming line-ends -νεν τὰ μὴ καλὰ and καλὰ τὰ μὴ φίλα, features which reinforce the pithiness of the lines. While rhymes do occur in tragedy for rhetorical effect (e.g. Med 408-09 γυναῖκες, ἐς μὴν ἔσθλ’ ἀμηχανώταται ἰ κακῶν δ’ πάντων τέκτονες σοφῶταται, Held 541-42, Ale 631-32, Soph OT.
110-11) here it marks the finality of Agamemnon’s comments, cf. Med 408-09, cited above, which mark the end of a 46-line speech and the episode.

1252-53 Polymestor’s cry shows that he does not fully understand what has happened. He still conceives Hecuba as an inferior (τοῖς κακώσιν, note the generalising plural, as at 1237.) He does not however deny that the sentence is δέκην, which is the final proof that Hecuba’s blinding him had been appropriate. For ἱπποθύμενος + genitive of cause, cf. Aic 696-98 ἔτι ἐμὴν ἀφυρίσαν τὸν λέγειν, γυναικῶς, ὥς κάκισθ᾽, ἱπποθύμενος, ἡ η τοῦ καλοῦ σοῦ προῦδανεν νεανίου; and Hip 727, 976.

1254-84 The sudden and unexpected break into stichomythia also marks another transition, the introduction of the prophecies. It is a rapid and attention-drawing device with which to end a play (thereby serving the same function as, say, a deus ex machina.) Sophocles uses the technique to end his Electra.

1254 Only one MS. (P) correctly assigns the line to Hecuba. The finality of Agamemnon’s previous words (1250-51) shows that this cannot belong to him. Agamemnon in fact is to remain silent until Polymestor presents a prophecy which threatens him directly. Hecuba’s question is not answered; Polymestor merely wallows in his own suffering.

1256 Diggle’s text is clearly right, marking three separate questions. Hecuba is gloating when she asks ἀλγεῖς, and the lack of response prompts τῇ δ’, perhaps accompanied by a shrug or similar gesture (cf. Or 672, 1326, GP 175-76.) The aphaeresis in Bothe’s emendation is not exceptional (cf. El 343 ἥ μου δεὸμενοι;) and reads much better than, for example, the minority reading δαλ, which is colloquial and inappropriate for Hecuba. The whole line is similar in structure to Aic 691 χαίρεις ὅρων φῶς πατέρα δ’ οὐ χαίρειν δοκεῖς;
A prima facie reading of 1257 can lead to the commonest misinterpretation of the play; it is not the only source for the particular reading, but it is the most obvious. Polymestor says Hecuba has a debased motive, and addresses her as δό πανοθρύγε σού "you knave/villain/rogue". If this opinion represents the view of Euripides (i.e. what he wants his audience to understand of the character of Hecuba), those who believe the play maps φ' the debasement of a once-noble character are correct. But what reason is there to believe Polymestor's judgement? The speaker is a self-confessed murderer, a greedy barbarian, who has just been found guilty of a crime he believed he had concealed (even granted the trial was a sham.) His children are dead; he has lost his sight. It is plausible that the playwright would develop a rash, angry and spiteful outburst at this juncture.

Hecuba's victory is secure: she has attained her retribution for the murder of her son in a just revenge, which has been retroactively confirmed by human justice. This she has done contrary to the adversity she herself faced. The use of ὃμπριξουμ' does invoke certain prejudices in the audience (and probably moreso in the modern reader who is schooled to believe ὃμπριξ is the preeminent tragic flaw) in terms of a moral evaluation of the overall situation. That these prejudices represent Polymestor's view is certain. To ascribe it to Euripides - in fact, to suppose that it could belong to Euripides - would be rash.

Hecuba's response is telling: she substitutes the word τιμωρομένην (see 749-50 note) for ὃμπριξουμ'. That she is taking rightful revenge is her correction of Polymestor's suggestion that she is committing outrage. It is a clear and unequivocal contrast, substituting right for wrong, and adding the notion of necessity (χρή.) This is the culmination of the tragedy; there is nothing more to be said on the subject. Polymestor, to continue the stichomythia, must introduce further information - the prophecies.

The aorist subjunctive ναυστολήσῃ (also transitive at Or 741 καὶ δάμαρτα τὴν κακίστην ναυστολῶν ἑλάμεν; and Pindar N 6.33 ἱδία ναυστολέοντες ἐπικόμια) continues the temporal clause begun by Polymestor in the previous line. In the conventions of stichomythia the interruption is essential, but also is a simple device for delaying the actual statement, increasing the
dramatic tension, cf. 1271-73. \( \mu\delta\nu = "\text{surely not", num forte.} \) \( \delta\rho\omega\varsigma, \) accusative of motion towards, cf. 209, 1106. Hecuba sarcastically suggests the obvious. As a prisoner of war, she knows she is bound for Greece, cf. the second stasimon 444-83. Polymestor's prophecy (that it is a prophecy is only made clear in 1267 once the details have been described) indicates that she will never get that far.

1261 Hecuba’s wrong suggestion is countered by Polymestor, signalled by \( \mu\epsilon\nu \sigma\delta\nu = "\text{nay, rather", immo vero (cf. GP475.)} \) A corrective force is implied, \( \chi\rho\upsilon\psi\eta \) replacing \( \nu\alpha\upsilon\sigma\tau\omicron\lambda\acute{\iota}\sigma\varsigma. \) Polymestor continues his original construction giving few details and thereby inciting Hecuba’s curiosity, and so regain some status. The notion of falling into water recalls the fourth stasimon, cf. esp. 1024/5 note. She will fall \( \epsilon\kappa\chi\chi\varsigma\sigma\lambda\omicron\omicron\omicron\nu \) "from the crow’s nest". The \( \kappa\alpha\rho\chi\varsigma\sigma\lambda\omicron\omicron\omicron\nu \) is a narrow-waisted drinking cup, "a kind of footless kantharos" (Cook (1960) 365), e.g. Sappho 141.4-5 \( \chi\nu\nu\nu\delta\ '\delta\beta\alpha\nu\pi\acute{\alpha}\tau\omicron\epsilon\varsigma\upsilon \kappa\alpha\rho\chi\varsigma\sigma\lambda\omicron\omicron\omicron\nu \) \( \chi\zeta\upomicron\nu. \) The word is used to mean the rope-hold on the mast-head, by direct visual analogy, also at Pindar \( N 5.51 \) \( \alpha\nu\alpha \delta\ '\iota\sigma\tau\iota\tau\alpha\eta \tau\omicron\nu \rho\delta\upsilon \xi\nu\gamma\delta\nu \kappa\alpha\rho\chi\varsigma\sigma\lambda\omicron\omicron\omicron\nu. \) The Scholiast on line 3 preserves a fragment of Nicander (3rd century B.C.) which attests to Hecuba falling into the sea (fr. 62):

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{ἐνθ’ Ἐκάβη Κισηής, ὅτ’ ἐν πυρὶ δέρκετο πάτην} \\
\text{kαὶ πόσιν ἐλκηθέασα παρασπαίροντα θυηλαῖς,} \\
\text{εἰς ᾧλα ποσσίν δροῦσε καὶ ἦν ἡλλάξατο μορφῆν} \\
\text{γρήμον Ὑρκανίδεσσιν ἐειδομένη σκυλάκεσσιν;} \\
\end{align*} \]

The alternate versions of the metamorphosis are summarised in Frazer Apollodorus II p.241n.4.

1263 Euripides consistently uses \( \nu\alpha\delta\varsigma \) over \( \nu\eta\delta\varsigma, \) and this consistently causes confusion. That it is right is shown clearest by the papyrus, but also by \( \text{diff. pat.} \) The confusion is also shown by the MSS. variations at \( \text{Med 523 and Tro 691,} \) and by the general acceptance of Nauck’s emendation at \( \text{IT 1385, and Blaydes’ at Cyc 239.} \)

As at 1100, \( \dot{\alpha}μ- \) is being used for \( \dot{\alpha}να-, \) \( \dot{\alpha}μβης\upsilon \piοδι = "\text{climb up".} \) \( \betaαύνω \) can take many
prefixes, e.g. El 1288 ἄμ-, Soph El 456 ἄμ-. Only ἄμ- is appropriate here. The same variations in the MSS. (ἄμ- being correct over ἄμ-) can be found at Alc 50, Tro 1277.

1264 As it stands, the image of Hecuba shimmying up the mast is ridiculous. She responds by suggesting something that seems equally ridiculous - that she will sprout wings and fly, only to fall again.

1265 No single line is more important to the interpretation of the play, and there is therefore an inherent danger in any attempt to explicate it. I do not believe that the standard and traditional view to be correct, which is to say Euripides’ view. As I understand it, the traditional view is a development of rationalising Alexandrian scholars (or perhaps fourth-century interpreters) who took the line as a literal statement of fact and nothing more; that is, they failed to see the metaphor. The standard view is that Hecuba’s metamorphosis into a dog (χώων) serves as a supernatural punishment befitting her violent and excessive revenge (viewed negatively, as ‘vendetta’, see Introduction I.) This interpretation is adopted by the Latin tradition, esp. Ovid Met 13.565-75, but also Cicero Tusc Disp 3.26. Quintus Smyrnaeus 14.437 remains essentially neutral, and Juvenal 10.271-72 and Plautus Menaechmi 701-05 move a further step, to precisely the notion in modern slang of “bitch”. The view is confirmed by all the debasement-theorists, most recently Collard: “It is a transformation suiting at least Polym[estor]’s view of her” (referring to 1257, where see note.) If this interpretation is right, Euripides must be imagining the scene as Hecuba, aboard ship, is changed into a dog, whereupon she climbs to the mast to leap into the sea.

There are many reasons why this view cannot be tenable as it stands. If it is improbable that an old woman would be able to climb the mast (1264) it is unlikely that a dog would manage any better. Since most interpretations of the line take it literally, it is necessary to address the problem even at this level. Secondly, the cause of the transformation is nowhere specified. It is related by an oracle (see note 1267) and divinities have at any rate been conspicuous by their absence in this play (see note 786 and Segal (1989).) The only divinities that do have an active
place are the Erinyes and the alastores, which are one and the same, the spirits of rightful revenge, at least for the purposes of this play (see 687 note.) Dion of Prusa (ed. von Arnim xxxiii 59) is the only source to identify specifically the cause of the transformation, which is the Erinyes. It is thought that Hecuba being a dog reflects her moral degradation to the baseness of an animal. It is suggested that as a four-legged dog, she is equated with Polymestor who was on all fours at 1057. But this does not follow. In the prologue to Aesch Eum the Pythia also appears on all fours (see 1057 note), and that these three constitute all the examples of appearances in tragedy of characters on all fours (plus the reports in Rhesus) should show that Hecuba predicted to become a base animal on all fours should not necessarily mean she has become identical in terms of moral evaluation with Polymestor.

I have made a point of always speaking of 'base animals' because the general assumption is that Hecuba becoming a dog is degrading, and signifies her moral ruin. There is one other metamorphosis in extant Euripides, also reported in a prophecy at the end of a play of an event that has yet to happen. It is predicted at the end of the Bacchae that Cadmus and his wife Harmonia (who has not appeared in the play) will become snakes. This is (generally accepted as) in no way a moral judgement on the characters (at least, not for any actions done during the play), despite the fact that they become, like Hecuba, a 'base animal.' The standard interpretation of this line therefore rests on two faulty assumptions, first that in Euripides a metamorphosis into an animal reflects a moral judgement (because it does in Ovid?) as well as that to become a dog will automatically evoke the associations of, say, Homer II 1.4-5. Gregory (1991, 110-11) makes this point, that from the Homeric world onwards there are as many positive associations of dogs as negative. Taking this second point alone, however, only means that if the metamorphosis is a value judgement, it could still signify reward. For dogs in Greek literature, see Lilja (1976). Nussbaum (1986) 414 gives a selection of negative associations; Kovacs (1987) 146 n.68 gives some more positive ones. Euripides uses the metamorphosis in the Bacchae to link characters with the larger picture of myth, however improbable it may seem in rationalising terms. This is at least part of the solution here.
But if the standard view is untenable, what is the meaning of the prophecy of metamorphosis? It is reasonable to assume that the Erinyes are involved: there is no other divinity suggested in the tradition (for it would be unfounded to suggest that Dionysus were the cause from 1267), and the Erinyes are appropriate considering the revenge action of the play, and the conscious repeated allusion to the *Oresteia*. The *Oresteia* is the most clear place which identifies the Erinyes with dogs (there is a possible reference in Theognis, for example, for which see Gregory (1991) 110 and Nagy (1985) 68 n.1; for a possible connection with Hecate, see Introduction III.) There is every reason to believe that Euripides is making an innovation in the myth in presenting the metamorphosis: there is certainly no earlier evidence for the metamorphosis, and no different contemporary versions that have survived. It would be well in accordance with Euripides’ programme of Oresteian allusion to introduce the Erinyes as somehow associated with his protagonist. Hecuba then becomes a human embodiment of the divinities of revenge. Her women have already been associated with dogs (117?) and Hecuba has accomplished all that she needs to concerning her revenge. This interpretation gives a clearer link to the overall fabric of myth, and gives yet another sign of approval of Hecuba’s revenge action. Hecuba dies in glory, having been provided with an escape that contrasts directly with the ignominious one selected by Polyxena in the first half of the play.

The line itself provides further evidence that it is not a literal κύκνον that Hecuba becomes. The animal’s eyes (διηρματα = διματα, Hesychius) are fiery-red (τόροσ’) which seems to suggest some supernatural quality apart from the transformation itself. Further, that Hecuba ascends to the masthead with wings, literal or otherwise, is never contradicted. In stichomythia it is common for successive lines to ‘pick up’ on an element in the previous line, either by the use of a particle, e.g. 1258 γὰρ, 1259 δὲλλ’, 1260 μῶν, 1261 μὲν οὖν, or by repeating words, e.g. 1270, 1271 θανόσσα, etc. The lack of an adversative particle suggests that the previous detail is not actually refuted. Representations of Erinyes in fifth-century art divide between presenting them with and without wings (see Harrison (1903) 223-39) but it is certainly not a remote possibility that Euripides would envisage his Erinyes as flying. The metamorphosis is much clearer if seen to
invoke the Furies, the only active divinities in the play, rather than suggest the moral degradation of the queen of Troy. Clearly an actual change in shape is envisaged (see next line) but it is not into the hound envisaged by the Romans. The transformation is supernatural, made appropriate since Hecuba has transcended human/worldly justice with her rightful revenge.

Supporting this interpretation is an anonymous fragment (PMG 965) that survives in Dio Chrysostom 33.59 ἰσιπερ τήν Ἕκάβην οἱ ποιηταὶ λέγουσιν ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς δεινοῖς τελευταῖοι ποιήσαι τὰς Ἐρινύας

χαρατᾶν κύια σχαλκέων δὲ οἱ γνάθων ἐκ πολίουν
φθεγγομένας ὑπάκουε μὲν Ἰ-
δὰ Τένεδος τε περιρρύτα
Θρῆκιοὶ τε φιλήνεμοι πέτραι.

Dio explicitly associates the metamorphosis as being caused by the Erinyes, and abstains from any negative moral judgement. Stephanopoulos (1980) 82-83 believes that this fragment indicates that the metamorphosis is not a Euripidean innovation. Mossman (1990) 25-26 is right to point out that there is no way to assign a date to this fragment, and it need not be pre-Euripidean. For Mossman’s discussion of the metamorphosis, cf. (1990) 218-27, 298-99.

1266 For οἶσθα + accusative, with no preposition, for knowledge of a thing, cf. ΗΗελ 877 οἶδ’ οἶσθα νόστον οἶκαδ’, Ιον 987 οἶσθα γιγανή μάχην; ΙΤ 517 Τροίαν ἵππως οἶσθ’.

1267 The prophecies Polymestor cites are to be though of as valid and binding on the characters that they concern. In some ways, the truth of the prophecy concerning Hecuba could be seen as quite weird, so the truth of the fulfilment needs to be substantiated. The prophecies which follow, concerning the murders of Agamemnon and Cassandra are/have been fulfilled in Aeschylus’ Agamemnon, a text with which Euripides assumes his audience is familiar. That these come true (in the context of the larger fabric of myth) is a clear indication that the associated prophecy -
Hecuba’s metamorphosis - will also be fulfilled. The present line lends further support, by alluding to an actual oracle that existed in contemporary (for Euripides) Thrace as the provenance for what Polymestor is now saying. On the slopes of Mt. Pangaeon there was an oracle which served the Satrae, a Thracian tribe. It seems to have functioned much like Delphi, with a priestess delivering oracles from the god Dionysus. It would appear that the oracle’s fame and accuracy were noted in Athens, and that some thought that it was ‘better’ than Delphi. That assumption at least provides an appropriate context to understand Herodotus 7.111, where he defends Delphi: οὖτοι οἱ τοῦ Διονύσου τὸ μαντήμαν εἰσὶ έκτιμένοι: τὸ δὲ μαντήμαν τοῦτο ἔστι μὲν ἐπὶ τῶν ὅρεων τῶν ψηφιστάτων, Βησσοὶ δὲ τῶν Σατρέων εἰσὶ οἱ προφητεύοντες τοῦ οἴσο, πρόμαντες δὲ ἡ χρέωσα κατὰ περ ἐν Δελφώσι, καὶ οὐδὲν ποικιλότερον. Tierney suggests that Aeschylus may have been the first poet to associate Dionysus with Thrace, in the Lykourgeia, though that it had some basis in fact is probable since the association is so long-lasting: an oracle to Dionysus is attested in Amphikleia in Phocis in the first century A.D. (Pausanias 10.33.11) and cf. Suetonius Aug 84. The familiarity in Athens is further supported by Aristophanes Wasps 9-10, where the god is called Sabazios, of which the Scholiast on Wasps 9 says: Σαβάζιον δὲ τὸν Διόνυσον οἱ Ὁρφικες καλοῦσιν.

The contrast with Delphi is perhaps significant, since Dionysus rivals Apollo as a mantic god. Euripides refers to prophecies of Dionysus at Bac 298-301 (cited by the Scholiast on the present line) and (specifically associated with Thrace) Rhe 972-73 Βάρθου προφήτης ὄστε Παγγαλον πέτραν ἐξαίης, σεμνὸς τοῦτον εἰδόσιν θεῷς (for which see Diggle (1987).) The use of the word μάντις "seer, prophet" in the transferred sense of the god who delivers the prophecy is found in Aeschylus of Apollo: Ag 1202 μάντις μ’ Ἀπόλλων τῷδ’ ἐπεστησαν τέλει, Cho 559 ἄνας Ἀπόλλων, μάντις ἀφειδής τῷ πρὶν, Eum 169 and (of both Apollo and Cassandra) Ag 1275. There are other prophetic associations with Thrace, e.g. Orpheus (cf. Ale 966-69, also cited by the Scholiast on the present line) Linus, etc.

The prophecy therefore comes from an acknowledged prophetic authority, and should be believed, even though its immediate source is the contemptible Polymestor. In many ways it is
like the prophecies uttered at the ends of the *Heraclidae* and the *Cyclops*. In the former instance (*Held* 1028-37) Eurystheus cites an oracle of Loxias given to him long before. In the latter (*Cyc* 696-700) Polyphemus cites 696 παλαῖος χρησμὸς, which may have been given to him by his father Poseidon, though this is never stated explicitly. All three oracles also contain more than one prophetic element, where details familiar to the legend (the murder of Agamemnon, the burial place of Eurystheus, the wanderings of Odysseus) inform the validity of the innovated or less certain elements (see also Introduction I.)

The use of the dative ὑμῖν is not exceptional, depending as it does on the strength of the verbal associations implicit in the noun μάντις, cf. *Or* 363 ὁ ναυτιλοιχι μάντις and also *Hec* 816, *Pho* 17, *IT* 387.

1268-69 These lines introduce two issues concerning prophetic utterances, yet which are left unexamined and unresolved. These are: (1268) the apparent lack of application of oracles, and (1269) the belief that it is possible to avoid their fulfilment. Hecuba asks if the prophecy given (χρῶσ is used for an answering oracle, χρῶσμα for the one consulting it) contained information only about others, and none concerning Polymestor himself. The seeming uselessness to his situation at least provides some rationale for Polymestor putting the prophecy in the back of his mind (cf. the *Cyclops* where the ancient oracle to comic effect is much more relevant to the immediate situation of the absent-minded Polymestor.) The following line shows some hesitancy on Polymestor's part about the inevitability of prophecy. He believes that had he been armed with the prophecy he could have avoided what he has suffered. It is not necessary to extend this to the logical conclusion that it is conceivable that Hecuba will be able to avoid her metamorphosis, etc. Polymestor's statement is made in anger, and tragedy is full of examples (most notably Oedipus) of individuals who believed they alone could avoid fulfilling a prophecy. ἐλέες is a word borrowed from legal terminology, and may be intended to invoke the recent *agon*, though such an understanding is not necessary, cf. *And* 289, *Aesch* ST 183†, *Demosthenes* 26.11 τῶν ἐλέντων = "the successful litigants".
The difficulty with this line was summarized by Musgrave, writing of ἐκπλήσσω βἶον, "hoc cum θεωδοσία conjunctum ridiculi aliquo habet; cum θεωσία tautologiae." Surely something is wrong with the line's interpretation, since as it stands, what editors say must be understood is not in the least bit clear or obvious. Hadley thought θεωδομα was an acceptable emendation to θεωδοσία, but the whole phrase θεωδοσία δ' ὑ θεωσί' seems unimpeachable, especially in light of Polymestor's one-word response in 1271, without particles, which clearly picks up on the entire context of the present line (though I have no doubt that with this same evidence Hadley justifies his correction.) Weil (once) suggested ἐκστήσω for ἐκπλήσσω but this too is unlikely since ἐκπλήσσω seems to be a particularly Euripidean word., cf. Or 293, 463, 657, IT 90 Ion 1108, Hel 753. Again this is not proof, but it does make the suggestion unlikely. Of the proposed emendations to βἶον, Brunck's μόρον is unlikely, due to the standard associations in the tragedians with death. Weil's φάτνε is better, but if βἶον is to be replaced, Musgrave's πότιμον, "destiny, fate" is blessed with an analogous corruption in Soph Ant 83 μὴ ἐμοὶ προτάρβει τὸν σὸν ἔξορεθον πότιμον where in 2 MSS. βἶον is written above πότιμον, and βἶον appears as the only reading in some later MSS.

Does the line actually need correction? Most interpretations of the line as it stands are not tenable, but it is possible that the tautology feared by Musgrave is tolerable. Aristoph Frogs 1151-76 shows Euripides attacking Aeschylus for almost exactly this same fault, and as the commentators are keen to point, the practice is also found in Euripides himself, e.g. Cyc 210 τί φάτε, τί λέγετε; Hip 380 τὰ χρήστ᾽ ἐπιστάμεσθα καὶ γιγνώσκομεν Ion 1446-47 τίν' αὐδὰν ἀσώ, ἢ βοάσω; While the device is easily parodied, it is a form of elevated language, or tragical diction, cf. the liturgical "meekly kneeling upon our knees." To ask "By dying or living am I to complete my life here?" may not be absolutely clear but its sense is sure. This may be preferable to Musgrave's emendation.

The final difficulty is determining the referent of ἐνθάδε. It is not specified, and ultimately not important, as long as "here" is understood in terms of the progress of Polymestor's predictive
narrative, as opposed to Hecuba’s immediate situation or position. Various suggestions have included: after leaping (Ambrose); in the sea (Collard); in slavery (Hadley); in this world (Jeffrey; cf. 418 ἐκεί = in Hades, however the word "Hades" is mentioned in the same line); in the shape of a dog (LSJ II.1, Scholiast.) I believe that the most obvious referent is none of these, but rather that ἐνθάδε = at this point in Polymestor’s predictive narrative, i.e. she wants to know if any further information or details were imparted in the prophecy.

1271-73 As at 1259-61, adherence to the strict form of stichomythia requires Polymestor’s sentence to be fragmented, and again the effect of postponement heightens tension. Polymestor responds to Hecuba’s previous question with a one-word repetition of the correct alternative. He then builds on that, giving detail. His sentence, however, is very abstract, its barest structural form being “its name (ὅνομα) ... will be called (κεκληστέα) ... the sign (σήμα).” τύμβο, dative of thing affected, is similarly abstract, as it does not (immediately) refer to anything physical, since someone drowned at sea has no sepulchre (so Meridor (1978) 32 n.14, followed by Collard.) It is possible that the feature is a bronze-age barrow grave, which could serve as a marker, could overlook the sea, and could be called σήμα, cf. Hector’s challenge in Homer II 7.84-91 esp. 86 σήμα. It would seem Euripides is implying that once drowned, Hecuba is buried (in her metamorphosed state?) on the nearest shore, which will be renamed and shall serve as a marker (which will last until at least the time of Strabo, cf. 7 lr.55 ἐνθάδε δ’ ἔστι τὸ Κυνός Σήμα ἄκρα, οἱ δ’ Ἑκάβης φιλή καλ γαρ δεικνυοντες κάμφαντα τὴν ἄκραν τάφος αὐτῆς, and 13.1.28 ἐν τῇ Χερσονήσῳ τὸ Κυνός σήμα ἔστιν, δ’ φασιν Ἑκάβης εἶναι τάφον. Tombs often have such a significance in tragedy, cf. Held 1030-44, Sup 1205-12, Aesch Eum 767-74, Soph OC 1518-32. Segal (1990) 209 treats the usage of σήμα as paradoxical: “The σήμα that Hecuba will have, however, belongs to shame and monstrosity rather than the godlike immortality of κλέος ἄφθιτον.” This seems artificially contrived: if Euripides had wanted to represent shame, Hecuba would be left unburied, washing in with the tide as Polydorus had done. The use of σήμα is surely intended to evoke the noble grave.

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It will be noticed that many of these examples use a form of ἑπόνυμος, which supports (or at least explains) the Scholiast's view that ἑπρόδον = ἑπόνυμον (Nauck went so far as to emend to μορφῆς ἑπόνυμον τι.) Though this must be a correct understanding, it is not especially clear. Paley takes it in an active sense of "charming against", based on the model of Aeschylus Ag 1418 ἑπρόδον Ἐρήμλων ἀμάτων, therefore understanding it as "to console me for my change of shape", but this is more tenuous still.

The difficulties presented by lines 1270-73 are many, and one can understand Kviečia's desire to delete all of them, restoring clarity. They are however clearly in line with Euripidean practice, and the aetiological connection is an important one for him to make. By establishing a link between his play and a specific geographical location or custom (even if it is not based in fact), the events in the play are accredited with some notion of 'truth' within the world of myth, which functions in the historical continuum much as 'prehistory' does in modern historical thought. From myth did the world the audience knew develop. It is the same motivation for linking a play solidly with a Homeric context, and (in the specific case of the *Hecuba*) with Aeschylus' *Oresteia* (or, for that matter, with a specific known oracle (see 1267 note) or by anachronism.) There is an idea that the information thus presented is somehow verifiable - that one could go to Cynossema and see a barrow grave which would be that of Hecuba. Establishing aetologies is therefore a purposeful and useful action for the playwright. The confusion comes because Euripides is condensing several details into a single event:
1. the existence of a promontory called Cynossema, perhaps originally named after some astronomical phenomenon (Paley) or because the promontory was in some way shaped like a dog’s head. This in 411 B.C. was near the site of the last battle related by Thucydides (8.99-109.)

2. use of the highest point on the promontory by sailors as an aid to navigation, used (perhaps) as a reference point for triangulation (ναυτιλικός τέχμαρ), cf. Thucydides 8.104.5 ἀλλος τε ... καὶ τοῦ χωρίου τοῦ περὶ τὸ Κυνὸς σήμα οξέαν καὶ γωνίωδη τὴν περιβολὴν ἔχοντος, ὡστε τὰ ἐν τῷ ἐπέκεινα αὐτῷ γιγνόμενα μὴ κάτοπτα εἶναι.

3. the need for some kind of memorial to Hecuba, either (as the debasement theorists would say) as a warning, or (rightly, see above) as a positive testimonial to the value of revenge.

4. the invocation by the dog-shape of the Furies, spirits of rightful revenge who have had a continual, though covert, presence throughout the play (see 1265 note.)

By inventing the metamorphosis for Hecuba (or, less likely, adapting an earlier tale) all four are reduced to the one feature being described. ταλαφνής is to be understood as an ‘editorial’ comment by Polymnestor, separating as it does what is effectively two halves of a proper name. Lefkowitz takes a different view of the metamorphosis, suggesting that Hecuba’s "death will be sordid ... and more significantly, anonymous" (1986, 85). If the point of anonymity were a valid one, it would be a necessary consequence of the aetiological compacting of details suggested above. That it is not valid is determined from the fact that "The Sign of the Dog" is used interchangeably with "The Sign of Hecuba" by Strabo (cited above.)

The reading of the papyrus Π2 in 1272 is clearly preferable to any alternative, since it avoids Hecuba asking two separate questions in what is an interruption (adopted by Diggle (1981)120).
This is Hecuba's final triumphant claim: death matters not, since she has her revenge. The wheel of fortune has turned full circle, and the former Queen of Troy, who had been reduced to slavery and suffering, has achieved a moral and physical victory, cf. Cyc 693 δόσειν δ' έμελλες ἀνοσίου δαίτος δίκαιος.

Polymestor responds by reintroducing ἀνάγκη. She who has lost so much will lose everything, for her last living child will also be killed. This forms another definite bridge to the Agamemnon (see Introduction IV).

1276-77 ἀνέπτυσα (instantaneous aorist, as at Hip 614, to suggest that her action is so close in time to that which provoked it) is Hecuba's instinctive reaction to the ill omens of Polymestor. She is (vainly) performing the popular superstitious ritual for avoiding evil (cf. Theoc 6.39 and Gow's note, 7.127). The reaction is protective of her last living child, and shows that Hecuba in her victory has not become some abstraction of revenge, but retains her human foibles and maternal concern. Most editors understand the colloquial αὐτῷ ταῦτα σοι δίδωμι ἔχειν as referring to Polymestor's death. The expression itself is probably parallel to Cyc 270 αὐτὸς ἔχει, and makes much more sense if it refers to the the clarifying of the parallel situation - Polymestor recounts a prediction of absolute childlessness for Hecuba, and she has made him childless (therefore ταῦτα = the death of his children) - or if it simply expands ἀνέπτυσα (ταῦτα = the rejection of Polymestor's prophecy.) Understood in this last way, Polymestor's response makes sense. Hecuba (perhaps irrationally) rejects the information of her daughter's pending death, so Polymestor provides further details, confirming its likelihood. The description of Clytemnestra as οὐκουρός πικρά echoes the description of Phaedra in Hip 787 πικρῶν τόδ' οἰκούρμα δεσποταίς ἐμός, and recalls Clytemnestra's ironic self-description in Aesch Ag 606-12.

This is Hecuba's last line in the play. It would be wrong to think in terms of the ending 'forgetting' the protagonist: her story is complete, and there is no more to be said about it.
Mossman agrees: "it is interesting that Hecuba is silent after 1278. Her task has been accomplished; there is no more to say." There is an irony in the use of μήτω "long may it be before...", as at HCl 357-60 (sic) μήτω ταις μεγάλαισιν οὖσικα καὶ καλλιχόραις Ἀθηναῖς εἶη, Soph El 403 μήτω νοθασινδ’ εἶη νεκρή. Hecuba's reasons for wanting this do extend beyond a protective maternal concern for her daughter. Clytemnestra's actions would (and do) constitute wrongful revenge - the unjust vendetta - and would reintroduce an imbalance which Hecuba by her actions has resolved. It is clear by the patronymic that Clytemnestra is envisaged as committing these crimes, which further suggests that it is the Aeschylean (and Scechorean? - see next note) and not the Homeric version of the story to which Euripides alludes. Hecuba's last line, though outwardly motivated, captures both roles her character has represented in the play, mother and avenger.

1279 οὐτόν and τοῦτον refer to Agamemnon.

If the reading of the majority of the MSS. were followed (στ) it would be necessary to attribute the previous line to Agamemnon, which clearly is not desirable. However, the reading of the papyrus Π2 is unambiguous, and shows that γε is correct. The next direct bridge from this play to the Agamemnon is the prediction of Agamemnon's death. In Scechchourus' account (fr. 15; cited, translated and discussed in Introduction IV) Agamemnon is killed by an axe, which runs counter to the Homeric version (Od 11.424) where he is murdered by a sword. Tragedy seems to favour the axe (El 160, 279, 1160, Tro 361, Soph El 97-99, 195-96, 384-87.) The Oresteia identifies Aegisthus as having used a sword (Cho 1011) but is ambiguous about Clytemnestra's weapon. For sword, cf. Fraenkel Ag vol. 3 Appendix B, pages 806-09, Sommerstein (1989), Prag (1991). For axe, cf. Davies (1987), supported by many vase paintings, e.g. a cup by the Brygos Painter, ARV 378, 129. Correlation with Soph El is probably not valid evidence, cf. Davidson (1990). The weapon used in the Oresteia is ultimately not important for an interpretation of the present line, cf. Introduction IV.
1280 Agamemnon enters the conversation brusquely (for the colloquialism, see 1127 note) as soon as the prophecy affects him directly. It would seem that either Agamemnon, or his (silent) guards (whom he addresses 1284-86), makes a threatening gesture as he asks, "Are you asking for trouble?" This is suggested by Polymestor's response χτεῖν' in the next line.

1281 The imperfect imperative χτεῖν' = "kill away!, kill me as much as you like!", recognizes that Polymestor is in some way threatened. It also suggests that Polymestor believes in these prophecies: hurting him will not affect what he sees as being the eventual punishment of all his oppressors (reading Agamemnon as banishing Polymestor at Hecuba's request, because of his relationship with Cassandra.)

There is a conflation in that Agamemnon is murdered in the bath, combining the two separate events of his death, and the washing of a corpse (cf. 609-13 for Polyxena, Or 367 λοιπεὶ έπεσον άλοχου περπετείων πανυστάτους, El 157-8 λοιπά πανυστάθ' άδρανάμενον χρόνον κοίτα έν οίκτρος κοίτας θανάτου.) Returning after ten years' absence, a bath awaiting (ἐμμένει = ἐμαμένει) his arrival should be welcome and desired. That Agamemnon's bath will prove to be his place of death is bitterly ironic. This is the end of the prophetic utterance, and Polymestor has made prophecies known concerning Hecuba's death, and all the events of the Agamemnon.

The neighbouring cities of Argos and Mycenae both date from the Bronze Age and both were inhabited in the fifth century. Agamemnon's capital was Mycenae, and both cities were situated on the plain which bordered on Ἑλλάς. The plain also was called Argos, and it was this that is Agamemnon's kingdom. έν "Ἀργεια refers not to the city but to the kingdom, and therefore the explanation of Bond and Walpole, that the capital is transferred to Argos in fifth century drama since it is the larger city, is unnecessary.

1282-84 The stichomythia ends with Agamemnon barking orders (οὖ + interrogative future = stern command (Jebb Ajax pp.213-17) cf. Soph Ajax 75 οὖ σιγ' ἀνέχη; Tra 1183, OT 637-38) to his bodyguard to drag Polymestor away and to stop his mouth (and, 1284-86, to desert him on an
island.) Polymestor responds to these orders defiantly, recognizing that the only victory he can win is with Agamemnon: the only hold he has is over the corrupt judge of his trial.

1285 To be marooned on a desert island or otherwise deserted location was not an uncommon penalty in antiquity. Philoctetes is the most obvious example, but cf. Aegisthus and the minstrel in Homer *Od* 3.270-71 δὴ τότε τὸν μὲν ἀοιδοῦν ἄγων ὡς νήσον ἐρήμην | κάλλιτεν οἰωνοίσιν ἐλυτο καὶ κύρια γενέσθαι, Hippolytus to Theseus in Eur *Hip* 1055-56 οὐδ’ ἐφ’ ὀφεῖν οὐδὲ πίστιν | οὐδὲ μάντεον | φήμας ἐλέγχας ἀκριτον ἐκβαλέως με γῆς; and Juvenal 1.73-74 aude aliquid breutibus Gyaris et carcere dignum, is si vis esse aliquid.

1286 καὶ, cf. GP 297

θρασυστομεῖ, cf. 1183-84 note.

Polymestor is forcibly removed by Agamemnon’s personal guards.

1287-88 For the postponed ἕ, cf. GP 189 and Hec 372.

διπτύχος is merely a long word for the number "two", used often by Euripides *metri gratia*, cf. Med 1136 διπτύχος γονή, And 472 διπτυχα τυραννίδες, 578 τήσει χείρας διπτύχους.

Agamemnon is providing a rationale for characters to get off the stage, as is indicated in the Scholiast about ὑμᾶς: καλῶς πρὸς τὸν χορὸν ταυτὰ φησιν, ἵνα εὐπροσώπως ἀναχωρήσῃ.

1289-90 The revenge having been accomplished, the world is back in order and the winds begin to blow. The timing shows definitively that the winds were being held back by some force other than Achilles, and that the sacrifice of Polyxena was unnecessary (see Introduction III "Windlessness" for a full discussion.) Ussher sees a similarity in these lines with Cyc 701-02 (p.196) but this is tenuous: any similarities that do exist are necessitated by the context. The lines recall the close of Seneca’s *Troades*, which borrows heavily from this play: *repetite celeri maria captivae gradu, iam vela puppis laxat et classis movet.*

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These lines are clearly ironic, and show that Agamemnon, though hearing, has not been listening, and does not understand what the future holds for him (in the Oresteia.) They form a suitable close to a play that has been laced with irony and allusions to the Aeschylean trilogy.

For the construction in 1292, cf. Med 1002 ἀκούσεις παιδείς οἴδε σοι φυγής.

Characters begin to exit, Hecuba and her attendants most likely back into Agamemnon’s tent, and Agamemnon back to the Greek camp, or perhaps, if Polymestor had been led off towards the sea, following him (there is effectively no difference between the two for the sake of the drama.)

All of Euripides’ extant plays end with an anapestic tailpiece spoken by the chorus. Often these have nothing to do with the play itself, cf. the repeated ending in Alc, And, Hel, Bac and (with only minimal alteration) Med. This means of course that any and all of the tailpieces may be suspect. Of the five non-recurrent endings (Hec, HF, Sup, Held, El) only Electra is not what Barrett (p.418) calls "a brief anapestic ‘let’s go’." The existence of any tailpiece in the MSS. suggests some basis in fact, and I believe the present lines to be a fitting and Euripidean close to the play. For a fuller discussion of these tailpieces, cf. Roberts (1987) and Barrett Hip 1462-66.

For the evils of slavery, cf. Aesch Per 586-87 δασμοφοροῦσαν η δασμοφοροῦσαν ἄναγκας. ἄναγκη, which has been a key word throughout the play, is involved in the final axiom, which recognises that fate is hard (cf. IT 205-07, And 98-99) and an appropriate perspective on justice is often difficult to discern.

The play is over, and Hecuba has regained her former status through her righteous revenge. What is left on the stage though, might be a factor. Mossman (1990) 81 suggests that the bodies of Polymestor’s children might be left onstage after all have left (making his words at 1075-76 uncomfortably true.) This is certainly a bold stroke, and perhaps not too modern. The play has been motivated by the deaths of children, and taking revenge, even a just revenge, requires at times the death of innocents: cf. Cypria fr. 22 νήπιος δς πατέρα κτείνας παίδας καταλέπτει (and see Bond HF 166ff.) This is a harsh reality, and shows (perhaps) that there are costs in revenge.