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At *Orestes* 211, Orestes awakes to find himself being tended by his sister, under the sympathetic eyes of the chorus. He converses with her about his illness and hears from her the news that Menelaos has returned with Helen. Elektra's association of Klytaimestra with Helen in a reflection on the evil reputé incurred by them both (249–250) serves to turn Orestes' thoughts towards his murdered mother and so to precipitate a new onset of his delirium. In lines 253–276 he imagines that he is attacked by, and repels, the Erinyes:

- Ηλ. οἶμοι, κασίγνητ', ὄμμα σὸν ταρασσεται,
ταχὺς δὲ μετέθου λύσσαν, ἄρτι σωφρονῶν.
Ορ. ὦ μήτερ, ἱκετεύω σε, μὴ 'πίσειέ μοι
τὰς αἱματωποὺς καὶ δρακοντώδεις κόρας.
αὗται γὰρ αὗται πλησίον θρώσκουσί μου.
Ηλ. μέν', ὦ ταλαίπωρ', ἀτρέμα σοῖς ἐν δεμνίοις.
ὄρῃς γὰρ οὐδὲν ὦν δοκεῖς σάφ' εἶδέναι.
Ορ. ὦ Φοῖβ', ἀποκτενοῦσί μ' αἱ κυνώπιδες
γοργώπες, ἐνέρων ἱέραι, δειναὶ θεαί.
Ηλ. οὗτοι μεθήσω. χεῖρα δ' ἐμπλέξασ' ἐμὴν
σχῆσω σε πηδᾶν δυστυχή πηδήματα.
Ορ. μέθες. μί' οὐσα τῶν ἐμῶν Ἐρινύων
μέσον μ' ὀχμάζεις, ὡς βάλλης ἐς Τάρταρον.
Ηλ. οἱ 'γὼ τάλαινα, τίν' ἐπικουρίαν λάβω,
ἐπεὶ τὸ θεῖον δυσμενὲς κεκτῆμεθα;
Ορ. δὸς τόξα μοι κερουλκά, δῶρα Λοξίου,
οἷς μ' εἶπ' Ἀπόλλων ἐξαμύνασθαι θεάς,
εἰ μ' ἐκφοβοῖεν μανιάσιν λυσσήμασιν.
βεβλήσεται τις θεῶν βροτησίᾳ χερί,
εἰ μὴ 'ξαμείψει χωρὶς ὁμμάτων ἐμῶν.
οὐκ εἰσακούετ'; οὐχ ὁρᾷθ' ἐκηβόλων
τόξων πτερωτὰς γλυφίδας ἐξορμωμένας;
τί δῆτα μέλλετ'; ἐξακρίζετ' αἰθέρα
πτεροῖς τὰ Φοίβου δ' αἰτιάσθε θέσφατα.

There are no substantial difficulties in the wording of this passage, on which editors have been virtually unanimous since 1850. Line 257 was, however, excised by most editors of the later 19th century, including Hartung, Nauck, Kirchhoff, Paley, Wecklein; more recent editors have reinstated it, and there is indeed no conclusive case to be made against it.¹

¹The presence of a third line in what is otherwise distichomythia is not sufficient to condemn it. See the defences of W. Biehl, *Textprobleme in Euripides Orestes* (Göttingen 1955) 21–22 and V. di Benedetto, *Euripidis Orestes* (Florence 1965) 54–55. Murray's Oxford text and Chapouthier's Budé text also retain the line. Nevertheless, it would not be surprising if 257 were an interpolation intended to make the situation explicit for readers (as I shall argue is the case with 268–270).

F. W. Schmidt's exchange of 260–261 with 264–265 is not desirable.² And we need not be distracted by the manuscripts' attribution to Elektra of line 271, punctuated as a question ("shall any of the gods be stricken by mortal hand?").

Lines 268–270 have been the object of frequent attention, since they are amongst a few instances where the Euripides Scholia give explicit evidence about actors' handling of the text in performance. These instances have been reviewed by Richard Hamilton,³ who distinguishes them from those where actual interpolation of the text by actors is identified in the Scholia, and suggests that the latter result from mere speculation by scholars of (say) the 1st century B.C., whose thoughts may have been led in this direction by their interest in the former. The validity and implications of Hamilton's conclusion,⁴ however, are not relevant to my present argument, which will simply suggest that discussion of the actors' activity in lines 268–270 has obscured the fact that these lines themselves are due to interpolation (and probably interpolation by an editor rather than by actors).

The relevant passage in the Scholia (ed. E. Schwartz [Berlin 1887] 1.126) reads:

Στησιχόρῳ ἐπόμενος τόξα φησὶν αὐτὸν εἰληφέναι παρὰ Ἀπόλλωνος. ἔδει οὖν τὸν ὑποκριτὴν τόξα λαβόντα τοξεύειν. οἱ δὲ νῦν ὑποκρινόμενοι τὸν ἥρωα αἰτοῦσι μὲν τὰ τόξα, μὴ δεχόμενοι δὲ σχηματίζονται τοξεύειν. εἰ δὲ καὶ μαινόμενος ἐπ' ἐνίων ὑγιαίνει, μὴ θαυμάσωμεν. ἡ γὰρ νόσος ποικίλη τῶν μεμνηνόντων ὥς κὰν ταῖς Τρωάσιν ἡ Κασάνδρᾳ, "τοσόνδε δ' ἐκτὸς στήσομαι βακχευμάτων."

The first sentence is now corroborated by a papyrus fragment (from a book about lyric poetry) which mentions Apollo's gift of a bow to Orestes as an invention of Stesichoros which Euripides followed, and actually quotes *Orestes* 268–269 (*POxy* 2506 fr. 26 = Stesichoros fr. 40 Page; in the *editio princeps* Page dates the papyrus to the 1st or early 2nd century A.D.). The second sentence presumably represents a commentator's inference about what the text requires the actor to do, and it need not be taken as evidence of what Euripides intended should be done in actual performance of the play. Most modern commentators in fact agree, using arguments which I shall exploit below, that it is an unimaginative in-

²Although it is superficially attractive to make οὔτοι μεθήσω (262) follow μέθες (264), the former can be understood (cf. di Benedetto on 264) as Elektra's initial response to Orestes' struggles accompanying 260–261. It is her more forceful attempt to restrain him (χείρα δ' ἐμπλέξας ἐμήν, 262) which he interprets as the grasp of an Erinys (μέσον μ' ὀχμάσεις, 265).

³R. Hamilton, "Objective Evidence for Actors' Interpolations in Greek Tragedy," *GRBS* 15 (1974) 387–402.

⁴*Ibid.* 402: "We can say that although there was clearly reworking of plays for dramatic production, there is no objective external evidence that the dramatic texts had any influence on our texts."

ference which creates a false problem, and that the bow and arrows are as much a part of Orestes' fantasy as are the Erinyes.⁵ I shall argue that this view is probably correct, that alternatively it is conceivable that Orestes was meant to hold a real bow, but that in either case the scene does not make sense if lines 268-270 are included in it.

If Euripides meant the bow and arrows to be presented as real, the first difficulty to be met would be that lines 273-274 would require real arrows to be flying about the theatre. This difficulty cannot be circumvented by mistranslating 273-274 (as does Arrowsmith in the Chicago translation) as though Orestes, like Ion in *Ion* 158-181, only threatens to shoot without actually shooting. It could, however, be surmounted by supposing that the shooting was mimed with a real bow in such a way as to suggest that the arrows too were (dramatically) real though not physically present. This presentation would be viable in the absence of 268-270, since Orestes could simply pick up the bow from (say) beside his bed and mime the shooting of the arrows. But it does not seem viable if 268-270 are included, since these lines can hardly be addressed to anyone except Elektra⁶ and they create serious psychological implausibilities. In the previous lines Orestes has been seeing Elektra as an Erinyes, yet in 268-270 he asks her for help against the Erinyes. (The Scholiast quoted above "solves" this problem, unless he was only addressing the fact that Orestes refers to his own madness in line 270, by suggesting that for just

⁵Cf. W. Malzan, *De Scholiis Euripideis quae ad Res Scaenicas et ad Histriones Spectant* (Giessen 1908) 17; M. Pohlenz, *Die Griechische Tragödie*² (Göttingen 1954) 2.170; Biehl (above, n. 1) 22-23; di Benedetto (above, n. 1) 58; A. Lesky, *Die Tragische Dichtung der Hellenen*³ (Göttingen 1972) 460; W. Steidle, *Studien zum Antiken Drama* (Munich 1968) 102; W. D. Smith, *Hermes* 95 (1967) 298; H. Erbsse, *Hermes* 103 (1975) 438. The bow is seen as real in Arrowsmith's Chicago translation (cf. his stage directions) and apparently in Chapouthier's introduction to the Budé edition (24). A. P. Burnett both accepts the reality of the bow and attaches positive significance to its presence: *Catastrophe Survived* (Oxford 1971) 201-203. She maintains that "the bow is a visible proof of Apollo's presence and of his readiness to aid this miserable Orestes"—a readiness which the same Orestes fails to recognise until the end of the play.

⁶The singular imperative *dôs* in 268 follows a singular imperative *mêthes* in 264 which was addressed to Elektra. It would not be impossible to indicate a different addressee in performance, but who would this be? Neither the chorus-leader nor a *pais* (a possibility raised but rejected by di Benedetto) seems a likely candidate. If the whole business of the bow is fantasized by Orestes, he might be addressing an imaginary donor. (I suppose this is what D. Mastronarde has in mind when he says that 262-264 give "the only indication of Contact [sc. of communication in some degree between Orestes and Elektra] in the passage" (*Contact and Discontinuity* [Berkeley 1979] 76). But whom would Orestes be imagining? The explicitness of *dôs* is surprising by contrast with the vagueness of *Herakles* 942-946. (Since this is a reported scene, it does not matter so much how Herakles is supposed to have got the weapons and implements he uses in 969-1000.) As a referee has put it, "why didn't Euripides write *ποῦ* instead of *dôs* if it really was Euripides?"

lines 268–270 Orestes is relatively sane again. But there is nothing in the text to indicate this.⁷) Moreover, Elektra will have to be understood as giving this madman a loaded bow which he might well use against herself.

If, on the other hand, Euripides meant the bow and arrows to be understood as the figments of Orestes' imagination, and the "shooting" merely part of his ravings, the problem concerning Elektra's reaction to lines 268–270 disappears: she may humour Orestes by pretending to give him what he wants. But the problem of Orestes' state of mind in lines 268–270 still persists. If he thinks Elektra is an Erinys, why does he appeal to her for help? If (less probably) he is temporarily sane enough to recognise her as Elektra, why does he not recognise that he is not really getting hold of a bow and arrows?

Thus, under either of the assumptions discussed above, lines 268–270 create suspicious difficulties, while either of the assumptions might hold good if lines 268–270 are deleted. But the more plausible assumption still seems to be that the bow and arrows are fantasized by Orestes. His questions in lines 273–274 resemble the "don't-you-see?" questions at A. Ag. 1217 (cf. Fraenkel *ad loc.*), E. Alk. 259, and I.T. 285, which all emphasise that what Cassandra, Alkestis, and Orestes describe is real only to them. The present case is not exactly similar, since Orestes' addressees are themselves imaginary. His questions might be taken as accompanying real shooting, conveying what he sees as the imperviousness of the Erinyes to his threats. But it seems more likely that his fantasy is comprehensive.⁸

It would be helpful if corroboration of the inauthenticity of 268–270 could be found in other features of their content and context. As far as language and style are concerned, there is not much that should be pressed very far, although there does seem to me to be a general air of laboriousness in these lines.⁹ It may also be noted, however, that the removal of

⁷Biehl ([above, n. 1] 22–23) rightly points out, against the Scholiast, that Cassandra's change in *Troades* differs in this important respect. It is also longer-lasting.

⁸This seems to be the view underlying Malzan's remark ([above, n. 5] 17): "An dubitas, quin iam Euripidis temporibus nemo histrionum re vera in scaena arcu accepto tela miserit? Neque id voluit poeta nihil agens nisi hoc, ut Orestis mente capti naturam bene describeret, *id quod optime intelleges ex v.271 sqq.*" (my italics).

⁹There are some individual peculiarities, but these are not necessarily un-Euripidean: (a) Whatever the exact meaning of τόξα κερουλκά (cf. di Benedetto *ad loc.*), the sense of κερουλκά will be different from its sense in S. fr. 859 Radt or the sense of its analogue τοξουλκός in A. Persai 85 and 239 (on which see Broadhead *ad locc.*). But in tragic diction a loose relationship between the two parts of the compound is not unexpected, and I am inclined to think the sense is "made with horn that is stretched," on the analogy of (e.g.) E. Ba. 124 βυρσοτόνον κύκλωμα or Ion fr. 40 λινουλκός χλαίνα. (b) λύσσημα in 270 is *hapax*, but this is not in itself suspicious, though *μανιάσιν λυσσήμασιν* might be modelled on 326–327 *λύσσας μανιάδος*. (c) The repetition Δοξίου ... Ἀπόλλων can (as a referee points out) be defended by comparison with (e.g.) *Andromache* 51–53, *Ion* 1547–1548.

268-270 is facilitated by the asyndeton at 271,¹⁰ and further that line 271 follows very well on line 267. In 271, Orestes' threat of human damage to "one of the gods," *βεβλήσεται τις θεῶν*, contrasts effectively with Elektra's reference to the general hostility of the gods, *τὸ θεῖον*, in 267. The interruption of such effects is a symptom of interpolation elsewhere.¹¹

I suggest, then, that lines 268-270 should be removed, and that the shooting at the Erinyes is best seen as purely a part of Orestes' private fantasy. If this is right, the dramatic effect of the fantasy is quite striking. Orestes begins at line 271 with an obscure threat, and holds the audience's attention with a mysterious charade (quite possibly with a break in delivery between lines 272 and 273). Explanation is delayed until 273-274, and these lines are sufficient to clarify what Orestes thinks he is doing, even if the audience will have to be more alert to recognise that his imaginary bow is the one which, according to Steischoros, Apollo had given him. Lines 268-270 contribute nothing to the practical understanding of the scene; they merely clarify its mythological background, while robbing it of its dramatic tension. It is precisely the provision of mythological information in explicit detail, such as really belongs in a commentary, which motivated some interpolations in tragic texts.¹² Others were motivated by another feature of these lines—the provision of explicit guidance (or sometimes misguidance) to readers about the stage-action at points where no spectator at an actual production would need such guidance.¹³ It is no surprise to find an interpolation of this kind established by the 1st c. A.D. or before.¹⁴ As I have just suggested, it was

¹⁰This asyndeton is not fully comparable with those due to apostrophe in the subsequent lines, with which di Benedetto groups it.

¹¹Obvious examples include the intrusion of *Helen* 257-259 (see now Kannicht *ad loc.*) disrupting the sequence from *τέρας* to *τέρας γάρ* . . ., and of *Medeia* 38-43 disrupting the sequence from *δέδουκα* to *δεινὴ γάρ*. (The latter point is made by M. D. Reeve, *GRBS* 13 [1972] 262).

¹²E.g., *E. El* 15 and/or 17, *An* 655-656, *Tro* 13-14, *Hel* 9b-10a, 257-259, 388b-389a, *Pho* 11, 291-292, 428, *Or* 933, *Ba* 182, 229-230, to name only a few on which most scholars might now be expected to agree. Cf. G. Jachmann, *NAWG* 1 (1934-1936) 194-197, 204.

¹³E.g., *An* 154, *El* 651, *Hel* 892, *Pho* 778, *Or* 136-139, 957-959, 1224.

¹⁴As M. W. Haslam says in his illuminating discussion of lines absent from the papyri of *Phoinissai* (*CQ* n.s. 26 [1976] 4-10), "there is no reason to think that the text was kept free of interpolation until the second or third century A.D." The quotation of lines 268-269 in *POxy* 2506 (1st or early 2nd c. A.D.) gives a firm bottom date for the establishment of the lines in the text. The discussion of the bow found in the *Orestes* scholia could have originated in the 1st c. B.C. or well before that. Malzan (above, n. 5), refutes the contention of Wilamowitz that it derives from Aristophanes of Byzantium and (34-35) suggests a peripatetic rhetorical source drawn on by Didymus or a predecessor. *Alii alia*.

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probably made for the benefit of readers. It seems less likely that actors would have created the difficulties of interpreting and enacting Orestes' demand for the bow. At any rate, it is pleasant to learn from the Scholia that some actors performed the scene in a way which allowed the bow and arrows to be understood as imaginary, even though hampered by the presence of three disruptive lines.

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