

## PLURAL IN PLACE OF SINGULAR

A stylistic figure which often comes up to readers of Ancient Greek Literature is the use of Plural in place of singular<sup>1)</sup>. Although scholars have discussed this problem, nevertheless there is always room for fresh investigation into the matter.

My intention in the following pages is, first, to recapitulate the problem and the most important views expressed, and secondly, to improve the understanding of the use of plural in place of singular in Euripides.

Here there is a synopsis of their discussion<sup>2)</sup>:

- a) Plural of *proper names*: it may denote (i) a group of persons bearing the same name, e. g. δύο Κρατύλοι Plat. *Cratyl.* 432 c, and (ii) a class of persons whose behaviour and characteristic attribute is similar to the one denoted by the person bearing the proper name<sup>3)</sup>, e. g. Θησέες Plat. *Theaet.* 169 b,

1) The opposite also exists, i.e. the use of singular in place of plural, but its explanation is not difficult. All the examples of this case could be channelled into two categories: a) the *collective singular*, e.g. τὸ βαρβαρικόν (= οἱ βάρβαροι), τὸ μαχόμενον (= οἱ μαχόμενοι), ὁ Μακεδών (= οἱ Μακεδόνες), Λέσβος (= οἱ Λέσβιοι) ἀπέστη βουλευθέντες καὶ πρὸ τοῦ πολέμου Thuc. 3, 2, το στρατόπεδον (= οἱ στρατιῶται) ἐν αἰτίᾳ ἔχοντες τὸν Ἄγιν ἀνεχώρουν Thuc. 5, 60, τῶν ἐαυτοῦ ἕκαστος καὶ παίδων καὶ χρημάτων ἀρχουσι Xen. *R. L.* 6, 1, πολλὴν ἀθροίσας ἀσπίδ' Ἀργείων Eur. *Phoen.* 78, ἦν μὴ ὁ Λάκων ἡγεμονεύη Hdt. 8, 2, τὸν γε Παίονα καὶ τὸν Ἰλλυριὸν Dem. 1, 23; and b) the *distributive singular*, e.g. ψυχὴν ἄριστοι Aesch. *Pers.* 442, προθύμον εἶχ' ὀφθαλμὸν εἰς Ἰάσονα Eur. *Me.* 1146, διάφοροι τὸν τρόπον Thuc. 8, 96 (Mayser, p. 43 ff.; Leumann-Hofmann-Szantyr, p. 13; Schwyzer, 41 f.; Smyth, § 950-1, 996-8; Kühner-Gerth, p. 13 ff.).

2) Important works on this subject are the following: P. Kühner, *Grammatik der Griechischen Sprache*, besorgt von B. Gerth, II Hannover und Leipzig 1898<sup>3</sup>, § 348; H. W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, revised by G. M. Messing, Cambridge 1956, § 1000-12; E. Schwyzer, *Griechische Grammatik*, München 1959<sup>2</sup>, p. 41 ff., 242 ff.; E. Mayser, *Grammatik der Griechischen Papyri aus der Ptolemäerzeit*, II, 1, Berlin und Leipzig 1926, p. 34 ff., 43 ff.; Leumann-Hofmann-Szantyr, *Lateinische Grammatik*, II, 2, München 1965, p. 13, 15 ff.

3) There is, however, at least one example which cannot be classified in the above mentioned two categories; this is in the *Rhesus* 866 οὐκ οἶδα τοὺς σοὺς οὐδὲ λέγεις Ὀδυσσεάς, spoken by the charioteer in abusing manner in reply to Hector's καὶ ταῦτ' Ὀδυσσεύς (v. 861).

- ὄρων αὖ Φαίδρους, Ἀγάθωνας, Ἐρυνξιμάχους, Πανσανίας, Ἀριστοδήμους τε καὶ Ἀριστοφάνας Plat. *Symp.* 218a b, τὰς Ἀλκμήρας ... τὰς Ἀλόπας καὶ τὰς Σεμέλας Arist. *Birds* 558f.
- b) Plural of *materials*: (i) it may denote the parts of which the material is made of, the different kinds of a material or accumulation, e. g.  
 φύλλοισιν εἰκότες ἢ ψαμάθοισιν<sup>4</sup>) Homer B 800, πυροὶ καὶ κριθαὶ καὶ ὄσπρια Xen. *An.* 4. 5, ὄσμη βροστῆων αἱμάτων Aesch. *Eumen.* 253;  
 (ii) it makes a semasiological distinction between the plural and the singular of a noun, e. g.  
 κρέα (= meat) Arist. *Frogs* 553  
 κρέας (= a piece of meat)
- c) Plural of *abstracts*<sup>5</sup>): it may be used for (i) single kinds, cases, occasions, manifestations of the idea expressed by the abstract substantive, e. g.  
 (Τρωῶες) ἀναλκείησι δαμέντες Homer Z 74;  
 (ii) a repeated phenomenon or activity, e. g.  
 τὰς δύσεις καὶ ἀνατολὰς τῶν ἄστρον  
 (iii) plurality of the abstract idea in reference to plurality of persons, e. g.  
 ὄρθοι τὰς ψυχὰς Plat. *Theaet.* 173 a,  
 ἀγνωμοσύναι (= misunderstandings) Xen. *An.* 2. 5. 6,  
 νεανία τὰς ὄψεις Lys. 10, 29;  
 (iv) a semasiological distinction between the singular and the plural of an abstract noun, e. g.  
 καιροὶ καὶ χρόνοι (= sections and periods of time);  
 (v) the various forms in which a quality is manifested e. g.  
 εἶδὼς τεκτοσυνάων Homer, ε 250;  
 (vi) feelings, emotions, passions and resolutions (especially in lyric and tragic poetry) e. g. φρενοπληγεῖς μανιαὶ θάλαππουσι Aesch. *Prom.* 880, ἃ δ' ἀποφλανρίζαισά νιν ἀμπλακίαισι φρενῶν Pind. *P.* 3, 13.

4) This plural is called by Schwyzer (p. 43a) *collectiv* plural: it may denote a countable plurality of single items (persons, things, events, plots), but also a plurality of things comprehended as a mass or a crowd.

5) Contrary to Homer, lyric and tragic poetry, prose writers make a strict distinction in the use of singular and plural; the former is used to denote real abstracts, the latter single kinds, cases etc. (Kühner-Gerth, p. 17). In Attic the plural of an abstract sometimes expresses a certain concrete meaning, while the singular expresses the abstract meaning, e. g. ταφή/ταφαί, πλοῦτος/πλοῦτοι, νῆξ/νῆκτες (Kühner-Gerth, p. 18 Anmerk. 1).

- d) Plural of concrete substantives<sup>6</sup>): this is used for an entirety consisted of many parts, e. g.  
*στέμματα, δώματα, μέγαρα, κλίμακες, λέκτρα, λέχη, ἄροατα, τόξα<sup>7</sup>*; *πύλαι, θύραι<sup>8</sup>* (in poetic diction); *τὰ Ῥολύμπια, Ῥελευσίαια* (names of Feasts and Games); *Ῥαθήναι, Δελφοί* (names of towns); *οἱ ἦλιοι, ἦλιοι ὄξεις*.  
 The neuter plural and more often the plural of a neuter pronoun is used to represent an idea in its entirety or in its details, e. g..  
*τὰ ἀληθῆ* (the truth)  
*ἐχειρονόμον δέ ταῦτα γὰρ ἠπιστάμην Xen. S. 2. 19.*
- e) 'Komplexiver' plural: this is often used with *προσηγορικά* nouns. Apart from the meaning denoted by the singular, it also carries a second one closely related to it, e. g. *πατέρες* (= *γονεῖς* i. e. father and mother).
- f) *Distributive* plural: this is often used for abstract substantives, e. g. *σιγαὶ τῶν νεωτέρων παρὰ πρεσβυτέρους Plat. R. 425 a.*
- g) Plural *with εἰπέ, φέρε, ἄγε<sup>9</sup>*: e. g. *εἰπέ μοι, ὦ Σώκρατες, καὶ ὑμεῖς οἱ ἄλλοι Plat. Eἰ. 283 b;*  
*ἀλλ' ἄγε, κήρυκες, ... λαὸν ... ἀγειρόντων Homer B 437.*
- h) Plural of *representation*: this is used when someone is addressed as the representative of other persons who are present, or of his family<sup>10</sup>), e. g.

6) Cf. *Pluralia tantum* in Latin.

7) This plural is otherwise called *augmentative plural* (Schwyzer, p. 43 b: see also *γενειάδες, κόμαι, τριχες, στήθη, στέρανα-ἀνατολαί, δυσμαί-Ῥαπατούρια* etc).

8) In these cases the plural stands instead of the original dual number (the same is the case with *τάλαντα, ῥίνες, τοκῆες*: Schwyzer, p. 44 δ).

9) The explanation is not difficult: in the first example the *εἰπέ μοι* is mainly addressed to Socrates and in addition to the *ὑμεῖς οἱ ἄλλοι*; in Eur. *Bacch. 173* the order is given indefinitely to someone, but then the specific order *εἰσάγγελλε* is addressed to the one who volunteered to execute the order. From these usages it was not difficult for these imperatives to become stereotyped adverbial formulas introducing a wish or an order.

10) Or vice versa, i. e. when somebody speaks on behalf not only of himself but also of others who are present, or of his family, or of the household he belongs to: e. g. *Διώνσε, λισσόμεσθά σ', ἠδικήκαμεν* (Eur. *Bacch. 1344*) or *ἐγνώκαμεν ταῦτα 1346* (Cadmus addresses Dionysus on behalf of his whole family); cf. also *ἐπεὶ οὐ τίνα δείδιμεν ἔμπεης* Homer H 196 (Aias speaks for himself including the other Greeks too). This plural is otherwise called *pluralis inclusivus*. In the Hellenistic Times this plural is often employed in the official correspondence and it continues to the present time in the correspondence of business and government offices, e. g. *γεγράφαμεν* (writes

ὦ τέκνον (to Antigone), ἦ πάρεστον; (to Antigone and Ismene) Soph. *OC* 1102,

ὦ ξένοι (to the whole of the chorus), μή μ' ἀνέροη τίς εἶμι (to the coryphaeus) Soph. *OC* 207.

- i) Plural of *generalization*: in the succession of main and secondary clauses a Greek writer may under certain conditions shift from plural to singular and vice versa. Thus a collective singular as a subject with a singular verb may be followed by a plural verb, e. g.

οὐδὲ τότε συγγαίρει ὁ τύραννος ἐνδεεστέροις γὰρ οὔσι ταπεινότεροις αὐτοῖς οἴονται χρῆσθαι Xen. *Hier.* 5. 4,

or after a singular may follow plural, which includes the companion of the singular, e. g.

ἔλεγε... , αὐτοὶ δὲ ἀδικεῖν οὐδὲν ἐξιόντες Herod. 4. 43.

The shift from a particular to a general statement and vice versa permits a free transition from singular to plural, or from plural to singular, e. g.

χαίρουσιν οἱ ἰατρονόμενοι μέγαλον γὰρ κακοῦ ἀπαλλάττεται Plat. *Gorg.* 478bc.

Psychological and emotional motives are at the basis of the choice of plural or singular in the cases under a...i; and the explanation is not problematic. Psychological and emotional motives also cause the use of plural in place of singular in the following cases; here, however, the subtlety of emotion is such that does not allow us an easy interpretation. Things become more complicated and, consequently, explanation is more difficult. Here there are the more complicated cases<sup>11)</sup>:

- j) *Allusive plural*<sup>12)</sup>: one person is alluded to in the plural number, e. g.<sup>13)</sup>

a chief of government office), βασιλεὺς Πτολεμαῖος τοῖς στρατηγοῖς ... χαίρειν ἀπεστάλαξεν ὑμῖν ... (Rev. L. 37, 6 (258a): Mayser II 1, p. 42a). Here the *plural of reverence* could be included, when someone uses the plural in addressing an official, e. g. Ovid. *trist.* 2, 65 vestri ... nominis (for Augustus).

11) The distinction made is not strict; both the examples and the interpretation of one group overlap into others.

12) This is regarded as belonging to the plural of Majesty (Smyth, § 1007).

13) This case may have been used because the women of the chorus shift from the particular case of the murder of Agamemnon to the more general idea of the murder of the master of a household; in the second case Clytaemestra wants to emphasize the fact that she was killed by her dearest ones, and therefore the Erinyes had an obligation to persecute the murderer.

δεσποτῶν θανάτοισι (by the death of our lord) Aesch. *Choe.* 52 παθοῦσα ... πρὸς τῶν φιλτάτων (I, i.e. Clytaemestra, having suffered at the hands of my dearest ones, i.e. Orestes) Aesch. *Eumen.* 100.

Λαβδακίαις (= Λαῖω) ἐπίκουρος ἀδήλων θανάτων (= θανάτου) Soph. *OT* 495 f.

κτενεῖν νιν τοὺς τεκόντας ἦν λόγος Soph. *OT* 1176

γάλα τοκεῦσιν (= τῆ μητρὶ) εἰκότως θυμουμένοις Eur. *Hec.* 403 παῖς ἄτεκνος, ... ἢ στερορὸς οὔσα μόσχος οὐκ ἀνέξεται τίκτοντας ἄλλους, οὐκ ἔχουσα αὐτῆ τέκνα Eur. *Andr.* 709 ff.

- k) Plural of *Majesty* (pluralis *maiestaticus*, pluralis *maiestatis* or *dignitatis* or *poetic* plural)<sup>14</sup>): this is used to lend dignity or to amplify<sup>15</sup>), e. g.

Φοίξον μάχαιραι Pind. *P.* 4, 242

σκήπτρα Aesch. *Ag.* 1265 – θρόνοι Soph. *Antig.* 1041, *El.* 267

συνγκατακτὰς κελαινοῖς ξίφεσιν βοτὰ Soph. *Aj.* 231

πρόσωπα Homer *H* 212 – κάρηνα, στόματα, λαιμοί, στήθη, etc.

λαιοὶ βραχίονες Eur. *Phoen.* 1136

σὺν τοῖς φιλτάτοις αἰσχισθῶ ὁμιλοῦντα Soph. *OT* 366

ἔνν οἷς τ' οὐ χροῖν μ' ὀμιλῶν, οὐς τέ μ' οὐκ ἔδει κτανῶν Soph. *OT* 1184 f.

καὶ μνηῖμα δέξαιθ' ἔν, κέδρον τεχνάσματα Eur. *Or.* 1053

- l) Plural of *Modesty* (pluralis *modestiae* or pluralis *affectus* or *sozialativ-affektischer* Plural): This is almost always connected with the first person plural of the personal or possessive pronoun and is employed as a modest form of statement<sup>16</sup>). In Tragedy and Comedy this plural is especially used by women. Probably it was originated from usages such as ἐπεὶ οὐ τίνα δείδιμεν ἔμπτῆς (*H* 196) in which the speaker wants others to take part in the idea he expresses, or such as ἡράμεθα μέγα κῦδος, ἐπέφρομεν Ἐκτορα δῖον (*X* 393) in which Achilles wants

The more general idea seems to explain the plural in the last two examples too. The third and fourth examples may be due to the indefiniteness of the statements.

14) A distinction between the poetic plural and the plural of majesty is made by J. Humbert: the former concerns only nouns, the latter the personal or possessive pronouns of the first and second persons (J. Humbert–Γ. Κουρμούλη, *Συντ. Αρχ. Ἑλλην. Γλώσσας, Ἀθήναι* 1957, σ. 16 κ.έ.).

15) Cf. Arist. *rhet.* 1407 b 26, 32, and Longinus, *de subl.* 23, 2. The poetic plural sometimes is due to metric licence and sometimes is formed by analogy to the augmentative plural.

16) It appears to work in a contrary way to the recurrent use of the first person singular of the personal and possessive pronoun, which creates the impression of egotism.

his listeners to have a share in his glorious deed.

e. g. ἀλευάμενος χόλον αἰπὴν ἡμέτερον (of Zeus) *O* 223  
 δουρὸς ἀκωκῆς ἡμέτεροιο γένσεται (of Achilles) *φ* 60  
 εἰ κωλύμεθα μὴ μαθεῖν ἃ βούλομαι Eur. *Ion* 391  
 ἀρκοῦμεν ἡμεῖς οἱ προδνήσκοντες σέθεν *Alcestis* 383  
 ἡδικημένοι σιγησόμεσθα, κρείσσόνων νικώμενοι *Med.* 315  
 παθόντες ἄν ξυγγνωῖμεν ἡμαρτηκότες Soph. *Antig.* 926  
 ὦ Ἀλκιβιάδη, καὶ ἡμεῖς τηλικούτοι ὄντες δεινοὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἤμεν  
*Xen. comm.* I 2, 46.

An author by using this plural wants to establish a contact with his listeners or readers (*pluralis auctoris*)<sup>17</sup>, e. g.

ἐννοιά ποθ' ἡμῶν ἐγένετο, ὅσαι δημοκρατίαι κατελύθησαν... ὅσαι τ' αὖ μοναρχίαι ὅσαι τε ὀλιγαρχίαι... ἔδοκοῦμεν *Xen. Cyr.* I, 1, 1.

The very many subtleties of meaning denoted by the use of plural in place of singular, especially in the cases under the headings 'plural of majesty' and 'plural of modesty', which are emotionally loaded, make the problem rather complicated.

What follows is an endeavour to supplement the above drawn picture and improve the interpretation of the matter, especially in regard to Euripides. My research, omitting the easily explainable usages of plural, centres upon the examination of the use of the first person plural of the personal and possessive pronouns (and/or the first person plural of the verb). For each case I give those examples I thought most characteristic, having chosen them from a fairly complete list of all the cases met in Euripides<sup>18</sup>).

The plural is used for the following purposes in Euripides:

a) when someone speaks *on behalf* not only of himself but other persons too, who are either friends or relations to him, or when he speaks on behalf of his people (plural of *representation*). Cadmus, for example, in the *Bacchae* talking to Dionysus employs the plurals ἡδικήκαμεν (1344) and ἐγνώκαμεν (1346), thus showing family solitariness; the charioteer in the *Rhesus* speaks on behalf of his dead master Rhesus too, when he employs the plurals οὐδέν' ἄν δεξαίμεθα (835), οὐδέν' αἰτιώμεθα (851), ἡμεῖς δ' ὑπ' ἐχθρῶν οὐδενὸς πεπλήρημεθα. Adrastus in the *Suppliants* speaks as an inferior to a superior in a supplicatory tone on behalf of his people, and he

17) Humbert, however, opposes to the view that the *pluralis auctoris* carries any real or pretended modesty of an author. In support of his view he refers to Hesiod's *Theog.* 1 and Hesiod's strong individuality (J. Humbert—Γ. Κουρμούλη, σ. 17).

18) See footnote 19.

uses the plural *σφαλέντες οίχόμεσθα. πρὸς σὲ δ' ἤκομεν* (128); and Odysseus with the plural *ἀπολώλαμεν* (194) in the *Cyclops* both amplifies the disaster and connects his fate closely with the fate of his friends;

b) when a person speaks as the *personification* or *representation* of a force or power: e. g. Dionysus in the *Bacchae* says in line 1345 *ὄψ' ἐμάθεθ' ἡμᾶς, ὅτε δὲ χορῆν, οὐκ ἴδετε*, and Aphrodite in the *Hippolytus* *σφάλλω δ' ὅσοι φρονοῦσιν εἰς ἡμᾶς μέγα* (6);

c) *to express shame and humiliation*: in the *Medea* Aegeus feels shame and humiliation for his childlessness (*ἄπαιδές ἐσμεν* 671, *οὐκ ἐσμεν εὐνής ἄζυγες γαμηλίου* 673); Phaedra in the *Hippolytus* feels ashamed for what she had said (*αἰδούμεθα τὰ λελεγμένα μοι* (244); Heracles after the full realization of his crime, when he sees Theseus approaching, feels deep shame and humiliation expressed in his *ὀφθησόμεσθα* (*Her.* 1155); Antigone, like every young girl, feels *αἰδῶς* to walk among crowds (*αἰδούμεθ' ὄχλον Phoe.* 1276); Achilles feels shame when he misunderstands Clytemnestra's words in the *IA* (*αἰδοίμεθ' ἄν* 833); Creusa's childlessness on the one hand and her secret affair with the god make her feel ashamed and humiliated (*ἄπαιδές ἐσμεν* 304, *αἰδούμεθα* 336, *αἰδούμεθ'* 977, *ἠγωνίσμεθα* 939, *ἡμεῖς* 955); and Orestes feels ashamed and humiliated for his state (*ἠλαννόμεσθα φυγάδες* 80, 942, *ᾤφθημεν ἄθλιοι Or.* 933);

d) *to generalize* a single case one includes his single case into a more general statement (plural of *generalization*): Medea decides on her course of action following a general female trend (*ἦ πεφύκαμεν σοφαὶ μάλιστα, φαρμάκοις αὐτοὺς ἐλεῖν* 384f., *πρὸς δὲ καὶ πεφύκαμεν γυναῖκες, ἐς μὲν ἔσθλ' ἀμηχανώταται, κακῶν δὲ πάντων τέκτονες σοφώταται* 407ff.), and in her feigned submission to her husband she admits her fault with the justification that she is a woman after all, and she makes the common mistakes of women (*ἀλλ' ἐσμεν οἷον ἐσμεν γυναῖκες* 889f.); Heracles' contemplation of himself as an exile makes him think in more general terms about the humiliations of a murderer and exile; his single case is included in a general one; in other words Heracles says that it will happen with me as with every other exile, myself not being an exception (*ὑποβλεπόμεθ' ... κληδουχούμενοι* 1287f.); Andromache expresses clemency and politeness through her generalization in line 220f. *νοσοῦμεν ... προύστημεν*;

e) *to express clemency interwoven with politeness*; Medea in her conversation with Aegeus expresses her wish to know in a very polite manner; it sounds as if she says 'I would like to know, if

it is permissible; if it's not please don't tell me; you shouldn't treat me as a special case'; this is conveyed in her simple question *θέμις μὲν ἡμᾶς χορησὸν εἰδέναι θεοῦ;* (676). Andromache shows clemency when she uses the plural in lines 355 ff.: *ἡμεῖς γὰρ εἰ σὴν παῖδα φαρμομακούμεν καὶ νηδὸν ἐξαμβλοῦμεν, ... ἐκόντες οὐκ ἄκοντες, οὐδὲ βώμοι πίττοντες, αὐτοὶ τὴν δίκην ὑφέξομεν ἐν σοῖσι γαμβροῖς, οἷσιν οὐκ ἐλάσσονα βλάβην ὀφείλω προστιθεῖσ' ἀπαιδίαν;*

f) to *amplify* happiness, fear, wonder, or a disaster: Medea amplifies her humiliation in *ἄτιμοι δ' ἔσμεν* (696) or her joy that everything happens as she wishes (*καλλίνικοι ... γενησόμεσθα κεῖς ὁδὸν βεβήκαμεν* (765)); in this case it also conveys *generalization*, for her victory over Jason is a victory of all betrayed wives over their husbands); with the plural in line 1300 Heracles amplifies his previous happiness, and with the plural in 1392f. amplifies his misfortunes (*εὐτυχοῦντες ἦμεν ὄλβιοι - ἐξολώλαμεν ... πληγέντες*); Hermione's *ὀλώλαμεν* (*Andr.* 903) and *δουλεύσομεν* (927) amplify her fears for the imminent misfortunes; and in Andromache's *ἠπατήμεθα* (435) are carried bitterness, regret, humiliation; amplification of Peleus' sense of strength is indicated in the plural *ἡμεῖς* (761), and of his despair in line 1176f. *διολώλαμεν, οἰχόμεθ'*; the use of plural swells up Polyneices' fear (*Phoe.* 269 *φοβούμεθα*), disaster (1444 *ἀπωλόμεσθα*), Antigone's wretchedness (1716 *γενόμεθα, γενόμεθ' ἄθλια*), Orestes' misfortunes in the *Orestes* (200 *ὀλόμεθ' ἰσονέκτες, ὀλόμεθα*, 1271 *ἀπωλόμεσθ'*, 734 *οἰχόμεσθα*), the servant's complaint of injustice on behalf of Menelaus (*IA* 314 *ἀδικούμεσθα*), Agamemnon's despair on learning that Clytaemestra has learnt his secret (1140 *ἀπωλόμεσθα*) and his final delight (1621 *ὄλβιοι γενοίμεθ' ἄν*), Clytaemestra's despair (1353 *ὀλώλαμεν*), and Achilles' promise to protect Iphigenia (1028 *ἡμεῖς σε φύλακες ... φυλάξομεν*). Plural also conveys the charioteer's indignation in the *Rhesus* (849f. *ἡμεῖς ... τετρώμεθ', οἱ δὲ μειζόνως παθόντες οὐχ ὀρῶσιν ἠλίου φάος*), Ion's delight (*ἐκπεφύγαμεν τὸ δοῦλον* 556), and indignation (1221 *θνήσκομεν*), Creusa's fear (1250 *διωκόμεσθα*), and delight after the recognition (1463 *ἄπαιδες οὐκέτ' ἔσμεν οὐδ' ἄτεκνοι*); the servant's *θηρώμεθ'* (1111) expresses both his close association of his fate with that of his mistress and an amplification of the disaster. Hecuba's *ἦμεν τύραννοι* (*Troa.* 474) indicates sorrow and bitterness for the change of her fate. And finally Cyclops' anger, grief, and humiliation, are conveyed in his *κατηρθρακώμεθ'* (663), and *ὡς ὑβρίσμεθ'*, *ὡς ὀλώλαμεν* (665);

g) to *amplify and generalize*: Creusa both generalizes and



amplifies when she uses the plural in line 253f. (*ποι δίκην ἀνοίσομεν εἰ ... ἀδικίας ὀλοῦμεθα*); the generalization makes it possible to conceal her secret but at the same time to speak out her complaint against the god, who wronged her. Another case which offers a good contrast of the use of singular and plural is in the *Cyclops*: Odysseus with the use of plurals generalizes and amplifies, and with the use of the singular boastfully lays emphasis on his bravery (199f. *εἰ φευξόμεσθ' ἐν' ἄνδρα, μυρίον δ' ὄχλον Φρυγῶν ὑπέστην ... εἰ θανεῖν δεῖ, κατανοούμεθ' εὐγενῶς ... συσώσομεν*);

h) *to express obedience and humbleness*: Medea using the plural *φευξόμεθα* (338, 346) expresses her obedience to the wish of Creon; in line 938 she shows feigned humbleness and obedience towards Jason (*ἡμεῖς μὲν ... ἀπαίρομεν φρυγῆ*);

i) *when one admits humbly and regretfully his fault*: Medea conveys with this means her feigned confession of fault and her feigned humbleness, when she plays with Jason's feelings in her pretended speech (892 *παριέμεθα, καί φαμεν κακῶς φρονεῖν*); likewise Theseus admits his fault in the final scene of the *Hippolytus* (*ἦμεν ... ἐσφαλμένοι* 1414), and Hermione in the *Andromache* (835 *δεδράκαμεν*);

j) *to express pride and bitterness*: Heracles after the murder of his wife and children speaks about Hera's vengeance expressing bitterness and pride (1309f. *τοὺς εὐεργέτας Ἑλλάδος ἀπώλεσ' οὐδὲν ὄντας αἰτίους*); in the *IA* Achilles with the plural *ἐς ἡμᾶς* (961) indicates both his pride and amplified feeling of humiliation;

k) *to convey arrogance*: Hermione and Menelaus in the *Andromache* speak with arrogance; both the one and the other indicate this in the use of the plural too (156ff. *ἡμᾶς Herm., 436 οὐ γὰρ ἐξαρονόμεθα Men.*);

l) *when someone acts as an agent of others or as a public servant, and speaks in humbleness and politeness*: Talthybius in the *Hecuba* uses the plural *ἡμᾶς ... πομποῦς καὶ κομιστήρας* (222); Ion repeatedly speaks about himself using the plural, and this indicates his humbleness (102f. *ἡμεῖς ... μοχθοῦμεν, 105 θήσομεν, 311 κεκλήμεθα, 327 κοσμούμεθ' ... δουλεύομεν, 414 ἡμεῖς, 555 ἀφικόμεσθα*); Athena too, who now is in the service of Apollo, uses the plural (*ἡμᾶς δὲ πέμπει Ion* 1559);

m) *to express bitterness and humiliation*: e.g. Polyneices in the *Phoenissae* (607 *ἐξελαυνόμεσθα* 615 *ἔξιμεν*);

n) *to express very close relationship and friendship* towards somebody: e.g. Admetus towards Alcestis in the *Alcestis* (279 *σὶν γὰρ φιλίαν σεβόμεσθα*);

o) to express *aidōs*: e.g. Antigone in the *Phoenissae* (1276 *αἰδοῦμεθ'*), Achilles in the *IA* (833 *αἰδοῖμεθ' ἄν*);

p) when someone regards himself one of the many, rejecting his individuality, because he is in the service of somebody else: e.g. Orestes (*Orestes* 418 *δουλεύομεν θεοῖς*) or Ion (*Ion* 1325 *λεγώμεθ'*).

q) to express inferiority: e.g. the *autourgos* in the *Electra* (34 ff. *ἡμῖν ... γεγῶσων ... λαμπροὶ ... πένητες*) feels inferior to Electra; Orestes speaks to Menelaus as an inferior to a superior (*φειδόμεθ' Or.* 384, *ἔστιν ἡμῖν* 414); Ion with humbleness and inferiority (1040 *ἡμεῖς τετάγμεθ', ἐκπονῆσομεν*); the shepherd in the *Rhesus* to Hector's caustic remarks admits his inferiority saying *βοτῆρὲς ἔσμεν. οὐκ ἄλλως λέγω (Rb.* 271);

r) to express irony: e.g. Clytaemestra in the *IA* (1170 *τᾶχθιστα τοῖσι φιλτάτοις ἀνούμεθα, 1141 πεπύσμεθ'*); Pentheus in the *Bacchae* (800 *ἀπόρω γε τῶδε συμπεπλέγμεθα ξένω*).

The above are only arbitrary examples taken from Euripides' plays, which abound in the use of this kind of plural<sup>19</sup>); it is also

19) It is also clear that it has nothing to do with the chronological order of the plays. We provide here a fairly complete account of the cases met in Euripides. *Cyclops*: Silenus 35, 132, Odysseus 199, 201, 202, Cyclops 663, 665; *Alcestis*: Thanatos 49, Apollo 70, Admetus 278, 279, 335, 531, 543, Alcestis 383, Heracles 536, 795, 1109, Pheres 626, 680, 686, 704, 714, 718, servant 803, 813, 818; *Medea*: Medea 307, 314, 315, 334, 338, 341, 346, 390, 467, 488, 489, 497, 498, 616, 617, 676, 694, 696, 766, 768, 770, 778, 792, 802, 821, 876, 892, 896, 938, 968, 1058, 1063, 1135, 1241, 1242, 1322, 1382; *Aegeus* 671, 673, Jason 962, 1405, 1406; *Heraclidae*: herald 154, 257, Demophon 241, Iolaus 632, 636, 680f., 696, 741, Alcmena 658, 881; *Hippolytus*: Aphrodite 6, 43, Hippolytus 60, 90, 651, 660, 933, 1035, 1052, 1079, 1093, 1099, 1192f., servant 114, 116, Phaedra 244, 331, 343, 349, 419, 565, 575, 670, 672, 677, 688, 690, 703, nurse 301, 302, 524, 704, Theseus 890, 1414, Artemis 1302; *Andromache*: Andromache 91, 93, 142, 355, 356, 357, 358, 361, 435, 462, Hermione 152, 156, 835, 893f., 902, 903, 906, 927, 940, Menelaus 436, 440, 649, Peleus 558, 714, 761, 1176, 1177, Orestes 890, 896; *Hecuba*: Odysseus 222, 244, Hecuba 237, 253, 386, 415, 421, 512, 514, 742, 758, 798, 807, Polyxene 372, Polymestor 1095, 1115; *Suppliants*: Adrastus 128, Theseus 99, 516, 521, herald 409, Iphis 1043, Euadne 1057, 1071; *Heracles*: Amphitryon 230, 1119, Lycus 238, 722, Megara 455, Heracles 578, 1144, 1155, 1241, 1257, 1268, 1287, 1288, 1300, 1301, 1309f., 1423f., Lyssa 858, Theseus 1227, 1323; *Ion*: Apollo 36, Ion 102, 103, 105, 108, 259, 311, 321, 327, 331, 335, 361, 414, 518, 548, 554, 555, 556, 558, 565, 597, 670, 1221, 1288, 1304, 1330, 1342, Creusa 264, 312, 336, 391, 427, 764, 863, 864, 939, 943, 955, 977, 1031, 1250, 1283, 1311, 1613, Xuthus 533, 653, old man 808, 810, 811, 1040, prophethess 1325, 1335, 1341, 1362, 1367, Athena 1559; *Troades*: Athena 57, Hecuba 100, 474, 908, Cassandra 445, 459, Andromache 714, 776, Helena 904, Menelaus 1054; *Electra*: *autourgos* 34, 36, 37, 38, Electra 58, 74, 245, 247, 271, 329, 1009f., 1116, Orestes 392, 393, 632, Aegisthus 784, Clytaemestra 1018; *IT*: Iphigeneia 62, 63, 343, 348, 368, 539, 620, 785, 994, 1035,

noteworthy that this kind of plural is spoken by all types of character irrespective of social class.

The use of the plural is more striking when it is combined with the use of the singular. The most characteristic examples are the following:

<i>Med.</i> 346	Medea	τοῦμοῦ γὰρ οὐ μοι φροντίς, εἴ φευξοῦμεθα
<i>Hipp.</i> 244	Phaedra	αἰδούμεθα γὰρ τὰ λελεγμένα μοι
660	Hippolytus	ἄπειμι· σίγα δ' ἔξομεν στόμα
<i>Andr.</i> 435	Andromache	δόλω μ' ὑπήλθες, ἠπατήμεθα
<i>Suppl.</i> 516	Theseus	ὡς ἔμ' ἡμᾶς δ' ἀποκρίνασθαι χρεῶν
<i>Her.</i> 858	Lyssa	"Ἥλιον μαρτυροῦμεσθα δρωσ' ἂ δρωῖν οὐ βούλομαι
1208f.	Amphitryon	ἰκετεύομεν ἀμφὶ γενειάδα ... προσπίτνων ... ἐκβάλλον
<i>Ion</i> 361	Ion	καὶ μή γ' ἐπ' οἰκτόν μ' ἔξα' οὐ' λελήσμεθα
1250f.	Creusa	διωκόμεσθα θανασίμους ἐπὶ σφαγᾶς, ... κρατηθεῖσ'
<i>Troa.</i> 904	Helena	ὡς οὐ δικάως, ἦν θάνω, θανούμεθα
<i>IT</i> 349	Iphigeneia	ἠγριώμεθα δοκοῦσα
500	Orestes	τὸ μὲν δίκαιον Δυστυχῆς καλοῖμεθ' ἄν
790	Pylades	τόνδ' ὄρκον ὃν κατώμοσ' ἐμπεδώσομεν
<i>Hel.</i> 87	Teucros	ὄνομα μὲν ἡμῖν Τεῦκρος
650f.	Helen	πόσιν ἐμὸν ἔχομεν, ὃν ἔμενον
1010f.	Theonoe	ἀδικοῖμεν ἄν, εἰ μὴ ἀποδώσω
<i>Bacch.</i> 1180	Agave	μάκαρ' Ἀγαθή κληζόμεθ' ἐν θιάσοις
<i>IA</i> 929	Achilles	πεισόμεθ', ὅταν δὲ μὴ καλῶς, οὐ πείσομαι
985f.	Klytaemestra	οἰκτρὰ γὰρ πεπόνθαμεν ... οἴθηεῖσα ... κατέσχον ἐλπίδα

Orestes 80, 500, 502, 575, 605, 690, 711, 929, 933, 942, 979, 980, Pylades 674, 790, Thoas 1172, 1433, 1434, Athena 1442; *Helena*: Helena 16, 22, 99, 133, 269, 305, 550, 552, 590, 594, 650, 799, 801, 909, 1065, 1245, 1247, 1295, 1300, 1426, Teucros 82, 87, Menelaus 475, 500, 510, 549, 553, 581, 704, 949, 959, 990, messenger 620, Theonoe 887, 1010, Theoclymenus 1260, 1264, 1278, 1624, 1638, second messenger 1512, servant 1631, 1640; *Phoenissae*: Iocaste 22, Polyneices 269, 594, 607, 620, Eteocles 582, 781, 1228, Teiresias 849, 926, 953, Kreon 850, 968, 1646, Antigone 1276, 1716, Oedipus 1604; *Orestes*: Orestes 278, 299, 394, 414, 428, 438, 549, 601, 734, 756, 1526, 1594, Menelaus 691, 693, 715, Pylades 769, 771; *Bacchae*: Kadmus 183, 188, 1231, Dionysus 466, 518, 617, 618, 659, 819, 825, 850, 932, 933, 1345, mg. 669, Pentheus 800, 920, 949, Agave 1169, 1180, 1209, 1272, 1382; *IA*: old man 44, 314, 895, Agamemnon 443, 459, 511, 516, 727, 729, 1140, Clytaemestra 607, 722, 730, 823, 916, 985, 1025, 1026, 1141, 1147, 1190, 1436, Achilles 833, 834, 861, 929, 961, 966, 1028, 1358, 1360, Iphigeneia 1215, 1238, 1377, 1420, 1489, 1508; *Rhesus*: Dolon 170, mg. 271, charioteer 835f., 849, 850, 866, Hector 856, 859.

*Hypsipyle* f. 60 v. 58 f. Amphiarauos ἀισχύνομαι δὲ Φοῖβον... ψευδοσ  
(ed. G.W. Bond, Oxford 1963) ε [ἴ τ]ι λέξομεν

In the plays of the other two great tragedians this plural is employed only a few times. In the *Suppliants* of Aeschylus the king uses it thrice (236, 411, 510); it seems that he uses it because of his authority to speak as king. In the *Seven against Thebes* Amphiarauos' use of the plural μαχώμεθα (589) reveals his humbleness; in 702 ff. Eteocles uses the plural in his despair.

Sophocles employs it mainly to express irony and scorn (*Antig.* 726 f., 634: Creon talking to Haemon – *OT* 435 f.: Teiresias talking to Creon – *El.* 399: Electra rejecting Chrysothemis' suggestions – *Aj.* 666, 667: Ajax with irony pretends to have accepted Tecmessa's suggestions). Tecmessa's use of this plural (269, 273, 276) may be due both to her position and her grief.

Aristophanes also employs this plural, but with less variation in regard to its function. More often it is spoken by persons who speak on behalf of other characters too. In a few examples it indicates amplification (e.g. *Plutus* 344, 350, 351), irony (*Frogs* 1214), repentance, generalization, bitterness, shame, or slave-attitude<sup>20</sup>).

Menander employs this plural too, and this might be due partly to the influence of Euripides, at least in those cases where we have common characterization. But it is very difficult, if not impossible, to assess the extent of this influence. Usually it expresses irony interwoven with this or other feelings<sup>21</sup>), humbleness, bitterness and complaint<sup>22</sup>), arrogance<sup>23</sup>), inferiority<sup>24</sup>), or family solitariness<sup>25</sup>).

This plural is also met in the Latin adaptations, and may be due to their Greek originals<sup>26</sup>).

20) *Clouds* 366, *Peace* 292, 410, 417, 418, 668, 669, *Birds* 9, 27, 30, 81, 640, 1171, 1225–6, 1308, 1596, 1570, 1587, 1591, 1636, 1639, 1640, *Lysistrata* 498, 507, 509, 763 f., *Thesm.* 196, *Eccles.* 7, 21, 85, *Plutus* 398, 804, 999.

21) *Epir.* 1117, *Sikyon.* 172, *Dysk.* 554 f.

22) *Dysk.* 209 f.

23) *Sikyon.* 273 (suppl. Austin).

24) *Dysk.* 242, 243, 286, 295, 340, 348, 352 (Gorgias' inferiority).

25) This is usually expressed by family slaves. There are more cases in Menander where plural is used in place of singular: *Sam.* 256–7 (= 37–38), 309 f., *Epir.* 430 f., *Perik.* 379, 393, 386 f., 199, 486 f. The use of plural in these cases is explained by Dedoussi as due to σύνταξη κατά τὸ νοούμενον; the speaker addresses a person either as the representative of others or as the person in charge of others (Chr. Dedoussi, *Menander's Samia*, Athens 1965, comm. on vv. 37–8 (= 256–7)).

26) Pl. *Amph.* 203, 235, 257, 352, 408, *Men.* 303, 321–2, *Mil.* 137, 172,

To recapitulate, we observe the following in regard to Euripides' employment of the plural in place of singular:

- (i) Euripides, more than any other Greek poet, so far as I know, employs this plural to convey many subtleties of meaning, which could not be otherwise expressed.
- (ii) This plural may denote the following shades of meaning:
  - a) a person speaks *on behalf* not only of himself but of others too;
  - b) a person speaks as the *personification* or *representation* of a force or power;
  - c) to express *shame* and *humiliation*;
  - d) to *generalize* a single case;
  - e) to express *clemency* interwoven *with politeness*;
  - f) to *amplify* (happiness, fear, wonder, or a disaster);
  - g) to *amplify* and *generalize*;
  - h) to express *obedience* and *humbleness*;
  - i) to denote *humbly and regretfully* one's fault;
  - j) to convey *pride and bitterness*;
  - k) to underline one's *arrogance*;
  - l) to indicate that someone acts *as an agent* of others;
  - m) to mark one's *bitterness and humiliation*;
  - n) to show close *relationship*;
  - o) to express *αἰδώς*;
  - p) to denote that one *rejects his individuality*, regarding himself as one of the common folk;
  - q) to denote one's *inferiority complex*;
  - r) to express *irony*.
- (iii) Sometimes, when the plural instead of singular is contrasted with the singular, then apart from its own associations the plural transmits to the singular special emphasis.

Ioannina

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*Bacch.* 277-9, 291, 294, 299, 300, 301, 304, 306, *Stich.* 663, *Trin.* 921, *Truc.* 190f., 450; Terence, *Eun.* 456, 1017, *Pborm.* 87, 722, *Ad.* 455ff., 430, 877. Donatus commends on v. 87 of *Phormio* "aut ad pudorem sumitur hoc pronomen in plurali numero aut ad dignitatem. sed nunc potest 'nos' et propter Antiphonem dixisse" (cf. his comment on *Ad.* 430).