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HIPPOLYTUS: A TRAGEDY OF HUMAN AMECHANIA

link to the abstract:

<https://camws.org/sites/default/files/meeting2020/abstracts/2089HippolytusAmechania.pdf>

1.A Aeschylus *Agam.* 1112- 1113¹

ΧΟΡΟΣ: οὐπω ξυνῆκα· νῦν γὰρ ἐξ αἰνιγμάτων
ἐπαργέμοισι θεοσφάτοις **ἀμηχανῶ;**

Chorus: I still don't understand; the riddling words in these obscure oracles leave me quite at a loss.

1.B Aeschylus *Agam.* ll. 1173-1177

ΧΟΡΟΣ: ἐπόμενα προτέροισι τὰδ' ἐφημίσω, καί τις σε κακοφρονῶν τίθησι
δαίμων ὑπερβαρῆς ἐμίτων
μελίζειν πάθη γοερὰ θανατοφόρα·
τέρμα δ' ἀμηχανῶ.

Chorus: What you have uttered now follows on from what went before, and some divinity that wishes you ill is assailing you very heavily and causing you to sing of woeful, deadly sufferings; **I am at a loss how it will end**

1.C Aeschylus *Choe.* 220-221

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ: ἀλλ' ἦ δόλον τιν', ὦ ξέν', ἀμφί μοι πλέκεις;
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ: αὐτὸς κατ' αὐτοῦ τᾶρα **μηχανορραφῶ.**

Electra: Look here, sir, are you trying to weave **some web of trickery** around me?

Orestes: If I am, then I must be hatching plots against myself!

2.A Sophocles *Elec.* 140-144

¹ for the *Libation Bearers* and the *Agamemnon*, translations by A.H. Sommerstein; for *Electra*, translation by H. Lloyd-Jones, for *Hippolytus* and *Medea*, translation by D. Kovacs

ΧΟΡΟΣ: ἄλλ' ἀπὸ τῶν μετρίων ἐπ' ἀμήχανον
ἄλγος ἀεὶ στενάχουσα διόλλυσαι,
ἐν οἷς ἀνάλυσίς ἐστιν οὐδεμία κακῶν.
τί μοι τῶν δυσφόρων ἐφίη;

Chorus: No, leaving moderation aside and plunging **into grief irresistible** you lament ever, to your ruin. In this there is no way of undoing evil; why are you set on misery?

2.B Sophocles *Elec.* 1226- 1129

ἭΛΕΚΤΡΑ: ὃ φίλταται γυναῖκες, ὃ πολίτιδες,
ὄρατ' Ὀρέστην τόνδε, **μηχαναῖσι μὲν**
θανόντα, **νῦν δὲ μηχαναῖς** σεσωμένον.

Electra: Dearest women, fellow townswomen, you see here Orestes, **dead by a stratagem, and now by a stratagem** preserved!

3. Euripides *Hipp.* 162-9

ΧΟΡΟΣ: φιλεῖ δὲ τᾶ δυστρόπῳ γυναικῶν
ἄρμονία **κακᾶ** δύστανος **ἀμηχανία** συνοικεῖν
ὠδίνων τε καὶ ἀφροσύνας.
δι' ἐμᾶς ἦξέν ποτε νηδύος ἄδ'
αὔρα: τὰν δ' εὐλοχον οὐρανιαίαν
τόξων μεδέουσαν ἀύτευν
Ἄρτεμιν, καί μοι πολυζήλωτος αἰεὶ
σὺν θεοῖσι φοιτᾷ.

Chorus: Women's nature is an uneasy harmony, and with it is wont to dwell the painful **unhappy helplessness of birth pangs and their delirium**. Through my womb also has this breath darted. But I called on the heavenly easer of travail, Artemis, mistress of arrows, and she is always—the gods be praised—my much-envied visitor.

4. Euripides *Hipp.* 595-601

ΦΑΙΔΡΑ: ἀπώλεσέν μ' εἰποῦσα συμφορᾶς ἐμᾶς
φίλωσ καλῶς δ' οὐ τήνδ' ἰωμένη νόσον.
ΧΟΡΟΣ: πῶς οὔν; τί δράσεις, ὃ παθοῦς' **ἀμήχανα**;
ΦΑΙΔΡΑ: οὐκ οἶδα πλὴν ἔν, **κατθανεῖν ὅσον τάχος**,
τῶν νῦν παρόντων πημάτων ἄκος μόνον.

Phaedra: She has destroyed me by speaking of my troubles, trying—in kindness but dishonorably—to heal this malady of mine.

Chorus Leader: What then? What will you do, **you that have suffered things no one can deal with?**

Phaedra: I know but one thing, **to die with all speed**, the sole remedy for my present troubles.

5. Euripides *Hipp.* 640-45

ΤΙΠΠΟΛΥΤΟΣ:

σοφὴν δὲ μισῶ: μὴ γὰρ ἔν γ' ἔμοις δόμοις
εἶη φρονοῦσα πλείον' ἢ γυναῖκα χρῆ.
τὸ γὰρ **κακοῦργον** μᾶλλον ἐντίκτει **Κύπρις**
ἐν ταῖς σοφαῖσιν: **ἡ δ' ἀμήχανος** γυνή
γνώμη βραχεία μωρίαν ἀφηρέθη.

Hippolytus: But a clever woman—that I loathe! May there never be in my house a woman with more intelligence than befits a woman! For Cypris engenders more mischief in the clever ones. **The woman without ability is kept from indiscretion by the slenderness of her wit.**

6. Euripides *Hipp.* 329-31

ΦΑΙΔΡΑ: ὀλῆ. τὸ μέντοι πρᾶγμ' ἔμοι τιμὴν φέρει.
ΤΡΟΦΟΣ: κάπειτα κρύπτεις, χρήσθ' ἰκνουμένης ἐμοῦ;
ΦΑΙΔΡΑ: ἐκ τῶν γὰρ αἰσχυρῶν **ἔσθλὰ μηχανώμεθα.**

Phaedra: It will be your death. To me the affair brings honor.

Nurse: Why hide it, then, when my request is noble?

Phaedra: Since out of shame **I'm plotting to win credit.**

7. Euripides *Hipp.* 478-82

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ:

εἰσὶν δ' **ἐπωδαὶ καὶ λόγοι θελκτήριοι:**
φανήσεται τι τῆσδε **φάρμακον** νόσου.
ἢ τᾶρ' ἄν ὀψέ γ' ἄνδρες ἐξεύροιεν ἄν,
εἰ μὴ γυναῖκες **μηχανὰς** εὐρήσομεν.

Nurse: There are incantations, and words that charm: something will turn up to cure this love. Men will be slow **to invent such contrivances if** we women do not find them.

8. Euripides *Med.* 260-261

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ: ἦν μοι πόρος **τις μηχανή** τ' ἐξευρεθῆ
πόσιν δίκην τῶνδ' ἀντιτείσασθαι κακῶν
γυνή γάρ τ' ἄλλα μὲν φόβου πλέα
κακή τ' ἐς ἀλκήν καὶ σίδηρον εἰσορᾶν·
ὅταν δ' ἐς εὐνήν ἠδικομένη κυρῆ,
οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλη φρήν μαιφονωτέρα

Medea: if I find any means or contrivance to punish my husband for these wrongs and the bride's father and the bride, keep my secret. In all other things a woman is full of fear, incapable of looking on battle or cold steel; but when she is injured in love, no mind is more murderous than hers.

9. Euripides *Hipp.* 915-20

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ:
ὦ πόλλ' ἀμαρτάνοντες ἄνθρωποι μάτην,
τί δὴ τέχνας μὲν μυρίας διδάσκετε
καὶ **πάντα μηχανᾶσθε** κάξευρίσκετε,
ἐν δ' οὐκ ἐπίστασθ' οὐδ' ἐθηράσασθέ πω,
φρονεῖν διδάσκειν οἷσιν οὐκ ἔνεστι νοῦς.

Theseus: O foolish mankind, so often missing the mark, why do you teach crafts numberless and contrive and invent all things when there is one thing you do not understand and have not hunted after, how to teach the senseless to be sensible!

10. Euripides *Hipp.* 955-57

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ:
ἐπεὶ γ' ἐλήφθης. τοὺς δὲ τοιούτους ἐγὼ
φεύγειν προφωνῶ πᾶσι: θηρεύουσι γὰρ
σεμοῖς λόγοισιν, αἰσχρὰ **μηχανώμενοι.**

Theseus: For you have been found out. To all I give the warning: avoid men like this. For they make you their prey with their holy-sounding words **while they contrive deeds of shame.**

11. Euripides *Hipp.* 1304-6

ἌΡΤΕΜΙΣ:
γνώμη δὲ νικᾶν τὴν Κύπριν πειρωμένη
τροφοῦ διώλετ' οὐχ ἔκοῦσα **μηχαναῖς,**
ἦ σῶ δι' ὄρκων παιδί σημαίνει νόσον.

Artemis: when she attempted to conquer Cypris by her resolve, she was destroyed all **unwitting by the contrivances** of her nurse, who told your son under oath of her malady

12. Euripides *Hipp.* 1034-35

ΉΠΠΟΛΥΤΟΣ:

ἔσωφρόνησε δ' οὐκ ἔχουσα σωφρονεῖν
ἡμεῖς δ' ἔχοντες οὐ καλῶς ἐχρώμεθα

Hippolytus: But she showed chastity, **though she could not be chaste**, while I, who could, have used it to my hurt.

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