

Some Words about Cassandra's Falsehood-infused Words (Lyc. Alex. 1454–58):
Veracity, Medicine, and Genre

Select Outline of *Alexandra*

- Prologue (Messenger): 1–30
- Cassandra's Speech: 31–1460
 - Events before and right after Trojan War: 31–416
 - Homecomings of Greeks: 417–1282
 - Odysseus' *nostos*: 648–819
 - Clashes between East and West: 1283–1450
- Epilogue (Messenger): 1461–74

1. Lycophron *Alexandra* 1454–58¹

πίστιν γὰρ ἡμῶν Λεψιεὺς ἐνόσφισε,
ψευδηγόροις φήμαισιν ἐγγρίσας ἔπη, 1455
καὶ θεσφάτων πρόμαντιν ἀψευδῆ φρόνιν,
λέκτρων στερηθεὶς ὧν ἐκάλχαιεν τυχεῖν.
θήσει δ' ἀληθῆ.

The **Lepsian** [Apollo] deprived me of credibility, when he **smeared** with false-speaking rumors my words and the unerring prophetic wisdom of my oracles. He was robbed of the sexual relations he yearned to acquire. He will render these things true.

2. Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1239–41

καὶ τῶνδ' ὅμοιον εἶ τι μὴ πείθω· τί γάρ;
τὸ μέλλον ἦξει. καὶ σύ μ' ἐν τάχει παρῶν 1240
ἄγαν γ' ἀληθόμεαντιν οἰκτίρας ἐρεῖς.

It does not matter if I do **not persuade**. How could it? The future will come. And soon you will be present, pity me, and call me an all **too truthful prophet**.

3. Gorgias *Helen* 14 (B 11.14 DK)

τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ λόγον ἔχει ἢ τε τοῦ λόγου δύναμις πρὸς τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς τάξιν ἢ τε τῶν φαρμάκων τάξις πρὸς τὴν τῶν σωμάτων φύσιν. ὥσπερ γὰρ τῶν φαρμάκων ἄλλους ἄλλα χυμοὺς ἐκ τοῦ σώματος ἐξάγει, καὶ τὰ μὲν νόσου τὰ δὲ βίου παύει, οὕτω καὶ τῶν λόγων οἱ μὲν ἐλύπησαν, οἱ δὲ ἔτερψαν, οἱ δὲ ἐφόβησαν, οἱ δὲ εἰς θάρσος κατέστησαν τοὺς ἀκούοντας, οἱ δὲ πειθοῖ τινι κακῇ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐφαρμάκευσαν καὶ ἐξεγοήτευσαν.

The effect of speech upon the condition of the soul is comparable to the power of drugs over the nature of bodies. For just as different drugs dispel different secretions from the body, and some bring an end to disease and others to life, so also in the case of speeches, some distress, others delight, some cause fear, others make the hearers bold, and some drug and bewitch the soul with a kind of evil persuasion (Trans: G. Kennedy 1972).

¹ Text of *Alexandra*: Hornblower 2016. All translations my own unless noted otherwise. Link to Abstract:
<https://camws.org/sites/default/files/meeting2020/abstracts/2270SomeWordsaboutCassandra.pdf>

4. Hesiod *Theogony* 53–55

τὰς ἐν Πιερίῃ Κρονίδῃ τέκε πατρὶ μιγεῖσα
Μνημοσύνη, γουνοῖσιν Ἐλευθῆρος μεδέουσα,
λησμοσύνην τε κακῶν ἄμπαυμά τε μερμηράων. 55

Sleeping with their father, Cronus' son [Zeus], Mnemosyne [Memory], lady of the hills of Eleuther, bore them [the Muses] in Pieria, as a forgetfulness of evils and a rest from woes.

5. Lycophron *Alexandra* 1204–8

νήσοις δὲ μακάρων ἐγκατοικήσεις μέγας
ἥρωσ, ἀρωγὸς λοιμικῶν τοξευμάτων, 1205
ὄπου σε **πεισθεῖς** Ὠγύγου σπαρτὸς λεῶς
χρησιμοῖς Ἰατροῦ Λεψίου Τερμινθέως Cf. πίστιν γὰρ ἡμῶν **Λεψιεὺς** ἐνόσφισε 1454
ἐξ Ὀφρυνείων ἡρίων ἀνειρύσας

As a great hero, you [Hector] will inhabit the Islands of the Blessed, a helper against the plague-bearing arrows, when the Sown People of Ogygos [Thebans], **obeying** the oracles of the Doctor, the **Lepsian**, the Terminthian [Apollo], extract you from your tomb at Ophryneion...

6. Theocritus *Idyll* 11.1–4

Οὐδὲν ποττὸν ἔρωτα πεφύκει φάρμακον ἄλλο,
Νικία, οὔτ' **ἔγχριστον**, ἐμὴν δοκεῖ, οὔτ' ἐπίπαστον, Cf. ψευδηγόροις φήμασιν **ἐγχρίσας** ἔπη 1455
ἢ ται Πιερίδες· κοῦφον δέ τι τοῦτο καὶ ἀδύ
γίνετ' ἐπ' ἀνθρώποις, εὐρεῖν δ' οὐ ῥάδιόν ἐστι.

For love, there exists no drug, Nicias, neither **ointment** nor powder, it seems to me, other than the Pierian Muses. This remedy is light and sweet for humans, but it is not easy to find.

7. Sophocles *Trachiniae* 674–798; 689–90

ᾧ γὰρ τὸν ἐνδυτήρα πέπλον ἀρτίως
ἔχριον, ἀργῆς οἶος εὐείρω πόκω, 675
τοῦτ' ἠφάνισται διάβορον πρὸς σὺδενὸς
τῶν ἔνδον, ἀλλ' ἐδεστὸν ἐξ αὐτοῦ φθίνει,
καὶ ψῆ κατ' ἄκρας σπιλάδος.
.....
ἔχρισα μὲν κατ' οἶκον ἐν δόμοις κρυφῆ
μαλλῶ, 690

The thing with which I lately **rubbed** the robe he was to put on, the woolly fleece of a white sheep, has vanished, eaten away by nothing in the house, but consumed by itself, and it is crumbling down from the top of a stone slab..... I **rubbed** it in secret, in a room inside the house, with a fleece of wool (Trans: Lloyd-Jones 1994).

8. *Alexandra* 1458–60

σὺν κακῷ δέ τις μαθῶν,
ὄτ' οὐδὲν ἔσται **μήχος** ὠφελεῖν πάτραν,
τὴν φοιβόληπτον αἰνέσει χελιδόνα. 1460

When there will be no **remedy** to help my fatherland, after learning through suffering, one will praise the swallow who is possessed by Apollo.

9. Aristotle *Poetics* 1449a24–27

λέξεως δὲ γενομένης αὐτὴ ἡ φύσις τὸ οἰκεῖον μέτρον εὔρει· μάλιστα γὰρ λεκτικὸν τῶν μέτρων τὸ ἰαμβεῖον ἔστιν· σημεῖον δὲ τούτου, πλεῖστα γὰρ ἰαμβεῖα λέγομεν ἐν τῇ διαλέκτῳ τῇ πρὸς ἀλλήλους, ἑξάμετρα δὲ ὀλιγάκις καὶ ἐκβαίνοντες τῆς λεκτικῆς ἁρμονίας.

But when spoken dialogue was introduced, tragedy's own nature discovered the appropriate meter. For the iambic trimeter, more than any other meter, has the rhythm of speech: an indication of this is that we speak many trimeters in conversations with one another, but hexameters only rarely and when diverging from the colloquial register (Trans: Halliwell 1995).

10. Callimachus *Aetia* fr. 7.12–13

ἔλλατε νῦν, ἐλέγοισι δ' ἐνινήσασθε λιπώσας
χεῖρας ἐμοῖς, ἵνα μοι πουλὸ μένωσιν ἔτος.

Come now and **rub** your **anointed** hands on my elegies, so they may last many years for me.

11. Hesiod *Theogony* 26–28

ποιμένες ἄγραυλοι, κάκ' ἐλέγχεα, γαστέρες οἶον,
ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα,
ἴδμεν δ' εὖτ' ἐθέλωμεν ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι.

Rustic shepherds, base reproaches, mere bellies, we know how to say many false things like real ones, but we know, whenever we wish, to utter **true things**.

12. Lycophron *Alexandra* 1461–66

Τόσσ' ἠγόρευε καὶ παλίσσυτος ποσὶν
ἔβαινεν εἰρκτῆς ἐντός, ἐν δὲ καρδίᾳ
Σειρήνος ἐστέναξε λοίσθιον μέλος,
Κλάρου Μιμαλλῶν ἢ Μελαγκραΐρας κόπις
Νησοῦς θυγατρός, ἣ τι **Φίκιον τέρας**, 1465
ἐλικτὰ **κωτίλλουσα** δυσφράστως ἔπη.

So many things she said, and she stepped back inside her enclosure. In her heart, she groaned the last song of the Siren, like a Mimallon of Clarus or the babbler of Melanraera, daughter of Neso, or some **Phician monster** [Sphinx], **prattling** her twisted difficult words.

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