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The *Ekkyklema* as Tyrannical Device

1. Aesch. *Ag*. 1438-39 (Clytemnestra):

κεῖται γυναικὸς τῆσδε λυμαντήριος,

Χρυσηίδων μείλιγμα τῶν ὑπ’ Ἰλίῳ...

Here lies the abuser of *this* woman,

The darling of Chryseis and of the rest beneath Ilion…

1. Aesch. *Ag*. 1580-81 (Aegisthus):

ἰδῶν ὑφαντοῖς ἐν πάγαις Ἐρινύων

τὸν ἄνδρα τὸνδε κείμενον, φίλως ἐμοί...

I see this man here lying in the snares

Of the Furies, in a manner pleasing to me…

1. Aesch. *Choe*. 973-74, 980-84 (Orestes):

ἵδεσθε χώρας τὴν διπλῆν τιραννίδα

πατροκτόνους τε δωμάτων πορθήτορας.

Behold the twin tyrants of the land,

The murderers of my father and the destroyers of my house!

ἵδεσθε δ’ αὖτε, τῶνδ’ ἐπήκοοι κακῶν,

τὸ μηχάνηα, δεσμὸν ἀθλίῳ πατρί,

πέδας τε χειροῖν καὶ ποδοῖν ξυνωρίδα.

ἐκτείνατ’ αὐτὸ καὶ κύκλῳ παρασταδὸν

ἀμήχανον τὲχνημα καὶ δυσέκδυτον

στέγαστρον ἀνδρὸς δείξαθ’...

Behold also, you who are listening to these crimes,

The cunning work, the bonds for my wretched father,

The coupling fetter for his hands and feet twain.

Stretch it out, standing beside it in a circle,

And display the indefensible device,

The unremovable covering for a man…

1. Soph. *El*. 1458-63 (Aegisthus):

οἴγειν πύλας ἄνωγα κἀναδεικνύναι

πᾶσιν Μυκηναίοισιν Ἀργείοις θ’ ὁράν,

ὡς εἴ τις αὐτῶν ἐλπίσιν κεναίς πάρος

ἐξῄρετ’ ἀνδρὸς τοῦδε, νῦν ὁρῶν νεκρὸν

στόμια δέχηται τἀμά, μηδὲ πρὸς βίαν

ἐμοῦ κολαστοῦ προστυχὼν φύσῃ φρένας.

I command you to open the doors and to display

To all the Mycenaeans and the Argives for them to see,

So that if any one of them was lifted up formerly

By empty hopes of this man here, now seeing his corpse

Let him accept my bridle-bit, and not grow wits

By force, encountering me as punisher.

1. Eur. *El*. 1176-79 (Orestes):

ἰὼ Γᾶ καὶ Ζεῦ πανδερκέτα

βροτῶν, ἴδετε τάδ’ ἔργα φόνι-

α μυσαρά, δίγονα σώματ’ ἐν

χθονὶ κείμενα, πλαγᾷ

χερὸς ὑπ’ ἐμᾶς, ἄποιν’ ἐμῶν πημάτων...

O Earth and Zeus all-seeing

Over men, behold these bloody

Polluted deeds, double corpses

Lying on the ground, from a blow

Of my hand, a requital for my sufferings…

1. Soph. *Ajax* 364-67 (Ajax):

ὁρᾷς τὸν θρασύν, τὸν εὐκάρδιον,

τὸν ἐν δαίοις ἄτρεστον μάχας,

ἐν ἀφόβοις με θηρσὶ δεινὸν χέρας;

οἴμοι γέλωτος· οἷον ὑβρίσθην ἄρα.

Do you see that I, the bold, the stout-hearted,

The fearless in battle against enemies,

I have done fearsome deeds against harmless beasts?

Ah, the mockery! What an insult I have suffered!

1. Soph. *Ant*. 1295-1300 (Creon):

οἴμοι,

κακὸν τόδ’ ἄλλο δεύτερον βλέπω τάλας.

τίς ἄρα, τίς με πότμος ἔτι περμένει;

ἔχω μὲν ἐν χείρεσσιν ἀρτίως τέκνον,

τάλας, τὰν δ’ ἔναντα προσβλέπω νεκρόν.

φεῦ φεῦ μᾶτερ ἀθλία, φεῦ τέκνον.

Alas,

I look upon this other, second evil, wretched one!

What fate, what fate yet awaits me?

I held my son in my arms just now,

Wretched one, and I see her, a corpse, before me.

Ah, ah, wretched mother, ah son!

1. Eur. *Hipp*. 808-10 (Theseus):

χαλᾶτε κλῇθρα, πρόσπολοι, πυλωμάτων,

ἐκλύεθ’ ἁρμούς, ὡς ἴδω πικρὰν θέαν

γυναικός, ἥ με κατθανοῦσ’ ἀπώλεσεν.

Release the bars of the entryway, servants,

Undo their fastenings, so that I may see the bitter sight

Of my wife, who in dying has destroyed me.

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