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Odyssean Echoes in Euripides' *Medea*

1a. Medea's last lines from offstage before entering, 166-67:

ὦ πάτερ, ὦ πόλις, ὦν ἀπενάσθη

αἰσχρῶς τὸν ἐμὸν κτείνασα κάσιν.

O father, o city, from which I was parted

once I had shamefully killed my own brother.¹

1b. Medea's first lines on entering, 214-17:

Κορίνθιαι γυναῖκες, ἐξήλθον δόμων

μή μοι τι μέμψησθ'· οἶδα γὰρ πολλοὺς βροτῶν,

σεμνοὺς γεγῶτας, τοὺς μὲν ὀμμάτων ἄπο,

τοὺς δ' ἐν θυραίοις·

Women of Corinth, I have come out of the house

so that you won't blame me at all—since I know that many mortals

have shown themselves to be haughty, some when they're out of sight,

and others in public.

2a. Medea assures Creon that she isn't so clever, 303-5:

σοφὴ γὰρ οὖσα, τοῖς μὲν εἰμ' ἐπίφθονος,

[τοῖς δ' ἡσυχαία, τοῖς δὲ θατέρου τρόπου,]

τοῖς δ' αὖ προσάντης· εἰμὶ δ' οὐκ ἄγαν σοφὴ.

Being clever, I am a source of envy for some,

[to some I seem quiet, to others the opposite,]

but for others I am objectionable. But I am not *too* clever.

2b. Medea urges Creon to pity her children, 344-45:

οὔκτιρε δ' αὐτούς· καὶ σύ τοι παίδων πατὴρ

πέφυκας· εἰκὸς δὲ σφιν εὖνοιαν σ' ἔχειν.

Pity them [the children]! You also are a father

of children; it's reasonable for you to be well-intentioned toward them.

2c. Medea explains to the chorus that she was acting, 368-9:

δοκεῖς γὰρ ἂν με τόνδε θωπεύσαι ποτε

εἰ μή τι κερδαίνουσαν ἢ τεχνωμένην;

For do you think I ever would have flattered this man,

unless I were gaining an advantage or making a plot?

¹ The text of the *Medea* is Mastronarde's, and those of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* come from the OCT. All translations are my own.

3. The narrator of the *Odyssey* comments on a lying tale told by Odysseus to Penelope, *Od.* 19.203:

ἴσκει ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγων ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα·

As he spoke, he was making many false things like real ones.

4a. Medea makes a point in her *agon* with Jason, 579-81:

ἦ πολλὰ πολλοῖς εἶμι διάφορος βροτῶν·

ἐμοὶ γὰρ ὅστις ἄδικος ὦν σοφὸς λέγειν

πέφυκε πλείστην ζημίαν ὀφλισκάνει·

Truly I am different from many mortals in many ways!

Since in my opinion whoever is skilled at speaking,

if he is unjust, incurs the greatest penalty.

4b. Achilles responds to Odysseus's speech in the Embassy, *Il.* 9.312-13:

ἐχθρὸς γὰρ μοι κείνος ὁμῶς Ἄϊδαο πύλῃσιν

ὅς χ' ἔτερον μὲν κεύθη ἐνὶ φρεσίν, ἄλλο δὲ εἶπη.

For that man is hateful to me, like the gates of Hades,

who hides one thing in his mind, but says another.

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