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PHILIA IN EURIPIDES' *MEDEA*

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Near the end of Euripides' *Medea* (1329-32, 1339-40), Jason implies that Medea is a barbarian to whom Greek institutions and values are meaningless, and he has been followed in this judgment by many students of the play. In a way, this is understandable: Euripides induces us to agree with Jason by characterizing Medea as a woman who willingly murders not only her enemies but her own children in order to take vengeance on her husband for leaving her to marry another woman. But if we find ourselves in agreement with Jason, this should give us pause. Although he claims to be a "great friend" (μέγας φίλος, 549) to Medea and the children and offers child-support and letters of introduction for use in their exile (459-62), his whole conception of friendship and kinship—in Greek, φιλία (*philia*)—is purely instrumental, and he violates his sworn relationship to Medea for the sake of material advantage far more readily than she brings herself to kill the children. On the subject of Greek institutions and values, Jason speaks with little authority and should command no assent.

I argue in this essay that *Medea* focuses precisely on the nature and value of *philia* and on the significance not only of being a φίλος (*philos*, "friend") but of expressing *philia* in language and action. The play explores the ambiguities of this institution and the ways that these ambiguities invite manipulation by individual characters who are defined by how they exploit them. In particular, Euripides represents Medea herself chiefly through her ability to manipulate *philia*, using it to destroy, and to justify destroying, those she hates. Although the word *philia* does not occur in the play, Medea's contradictory words and actions call into question its meaning and value, even while they illustrate its power. Her ability to control almost everyone she speaks to is based mainly on this power. Our problems in evaluating her ethically disquieting actions and character and interpreting the play accurately reflect the problematic nature of *philia* in classical Athens and of the values attached to it. In this respect, *Medea* is typical of Attic tragedy, one distinctive feature of which is the way the poets challenge their audiences (and readers) to rethink traditional institutions and values by evoking contradictions within (and between) them.

In classical Greek, *philia* signifies a relation or attitude of solidarity or affection between members of the same family, community, social club—even

the same business partnership or occupation. *Philia* allows, even requires, that one person think of another as someone on whom he or she can rely and who [58] can rely on him or her in return, in contrast to those who are “outsiders” (ἄλλότριοι) or “enemies” (ἐχθροί, *echthroi*). The word *philia* does not occur in extant Greek literature before the third quarter of the fifth century, apart from three passages of the sixth-century elegist Theognis.¹ Rather, the traditional word for the relationship later expressed by *philia* is φιλότης (*philotês*). The shift from *philotês* to *philia* as the prevalent word—a shift from a word used of all kinds of reciprocal “friendships” to a word with more purely political and instrumental associations (see below)—is contemporaneous with the increasing disenchantment of Greek culture with its traditional institutions and values.

Originally, as E. Benveniste has shown, “a pact concluded in the name of *philotês*” made “the contracting parties *philoî*; they were henceforth committed to a reciprocity of services which constitute ‘hospitality.’”² Such a pact was not only a contract based on an exchange of services and gifts; it was also “conceived as an act committing the good faith (πίστις) of the contracting parties,”³ and normally it was accompanied by the ritual gesture of one party taking with his right hand the right hand of the other, and often by both parties solemnly taking an oath over a sacrificial victim to abide by the terms of the pact.⁴ In numerous texts from Homer through the classical period, the language of *philotês* and *philia* is closely associated with the language of “faith” and “trust” (πίστις, *pepoithênai*). In fact, the syntagmatic association of these groups of words is so old and so common that J. Taillardat proposed an etymological connection: both may go back to a single root meaning “the one who has committed his or her faith in a pact.”⁵

It is noteworthy that the language of friendship and of faith also tends to be associated contextually with other words denoting reciprocal relationships, such as χάρις (*charis*), meaning both a favor done by one person for another and the feeling of gratitude inspired by such a favor, and αἰδώς (*aidôs*), usually translated as “shame” or “respect”—“an emotion provoked by one’s perception of one’s place in the social structure and of the obligations which accompany that place.”⁶ *Aidôs* is a psychological phenomenon, a state of awareness or consciousness, while *philotês* refers to an external fact, a social condition.⁷ But both words are used of the same persons in reference to the same type of relationship. “All those who are united by reciprocal duties of αἰδώς are called φίλοι,” and both *aidôs* and *philotês* involve actions and sentiments proper to members of a closed group such as a family or community.⁸

In Greek popular thought of the archaic and classical periods, the most highly prized of such actions and sentiments is “to help friends and harm enemies.” Doubts, uncertainties, criticism, and re-evaluation of this ethic are implicit already in the *Iliad*’s critical attitude toward traditional heroic values and appear in fifth- and fourth-century texts. But the standard sense of *philia* is still reflected, for example, in Xenophon’s account of Socrates’ discussion of the topic in *Memorabilia* 2.4-10 and Isocrates’ *Ad Demonicum* 24-26.⁹ Embedded in the traditional value is a fundamentally instrumental notion of

philia: a *philos* was someone who could and did help you to gain some advantage, profit, or power, as well as one to whom you could and did give similar assistance. Such an instrumental notion is explicit or implicit in numerous passages of the orators and comic poets, who reflect popular morality and repeatedly suggest [59] that the main motives of *philia* are cooperation in gaining economic and social advantages, assistance in taking vengeance on personal enemies, and protection in case of economic, legal, or other trouble.¹⁰

When the word *philia* begins to occur commonly in the third quarter of the fifth century, it is used first and foremost of an instrumental friendship or alliance in a specifically political context. This is true even of its earlier occurrences in the poetry of Theognis, and Theognis' usage is paralleled by that of the fifth-century historians and in the diplomatic language of sixth- and fifth-century treaties between city-states.¹¹ Within city-states, too, politics was "built on an elaborate complex of friendship ties" among the leading citizens and the groups with which they were connected, until, in roughly the third quarter of the century, this old politics broke down and "a new pattern emerge[d] which emphasized mass alliances and direct appeals [by leading politicians] to [the] many citizens who formerly had little say in the affairs of the city."¹² In this public context, *philia* came to be seen more and more as merely a useful connection which individuals manipulated and exploited for their own advantage. At the same time, and paradoxically, in contrast to this instrumental sense of the word, and as distinctions became increasingly clear-cut between family and community, private and public identity, *philia* also was used more and more of inner feelings and dispositions and of personal loyalties grounded in such sentiments.

Thus, between the time of Homer and the final third of the fifth century, there were two main developments in the meaning of *philia*: 1) a fundamentally instrumental notion, which had been part of a more general, traditional conception of reciprocal solidarity, became the primary sense of the word; 2) a word that originally signified a social and, later, a political institution came to be used more often of individual, affective relationships. Euripides' *Medea*, like his nearly contemporary *Alcestis*, is a good index of these changes. It juxtaposes old and new kinds of *philia* and achieves much of its effect by showing the shifting meanings of the institution and relationship within the play and the antithetical values it admits.

* * * * *

The keynote is struck in the prologue, when the Nurse states that Medea's feeling for Jason is no longer love but angry hatred—and that this feeling may be turned against her children: *νῦν δ' ἔχθρὰ πάντα καὶ νοσεῖ τὰ φίλτατα* ("Now all things [which are harmonious in a marriage] are hated, and things loved most are sick," 16); *ἔχθροὺς γε μέντοι, μὴ φίλους, δράσειέ τι* ("May she do something to those she hates rather than her loved ones," 95). For the Nurse, the contrast between Medea's "loved ones" and "those she hates," between her "friends" and "enemies," her *philoï* and *echthroï*, is clear. But a confusion of these categories and Medea's inability to distinguish clearly

between them run throughout the play. Her killing of the children is the culmination of such confusion; it also is the occasion for the fullest expression on Medea's part of her true feelings about Jason and for her revelation of her inhumanity in a situation where the crucial human distinction between *philo*i and *echthro*i—a distinction both social and ethical—has no meaning for her.

[60]Of course, as has been pointed out,¹³ Medea does distinguish between friends and enemies: part of Euripides' characterization of her as a "Sophoclean" hero is her determination that "No one should think I am trivial and weak, / nor gentle, but of the opposite character, / oppressive to my enemies and well-disposed toward my friends; / for the life of such people is most glorious" (807-10). But for Medea, this distinction between friends and enemies becomes confused, or rather, as a result of her own passions, she tends to cause turbulence in relations of *philia* both for herself and for others. At 7-10, for example, the Nurse mentions that if Medea hadn't been "struck in her heart with desire for Jason, she would not have persuaded the daughters of Pelias to kill their father..."; Medea herself tells how she shamefully killed her brother and abandoned her father and city (166-67). At 252-58, she reminds the women of Corinth how, unlike them who have a city, a father's house, the "presence of loved ones" (*συνουσία φίλων*), and the advantages of life, "I, isolated, alone, without a city, / am being violated by my husband, since I have been carried off as booty from a foreign land / and have no mother, brother, or kin / to take refuge with from this misfortune." She suppresses mention of her brother's murder and lies about the reason she left Colchis, but the fact of her being without *philo*i is true enough, now that she is on terms of hatred rather than of love and solidarity with Jason (229, 310-11). This change in their relationship is parallel to that in her relationship to her family, with whom, she reminds him, she had exchanged *philia* for *ἐχθρα* (*echthra*, "enmity") for his sake: "To my friends at home I have become an enemy, and those whom I should not have treated / badly, I have as enemies, doing favor to you" (*τοῖς μὲν οἴκοθεν φίλοις / ἐχθρὰ καθέστηχ', οὓς δέ μ' οὐκ ἐχρήνυ κακῶς / δρᾶν, σοὶ χάριον φέρουσα πολεμίους ἔχω*, 506-508).

The way is prepared for Medea's complaint by the conversation between the Nurse and the Paedagogue. The latter says of Jason, "He leaves his old marriage-connections for new ones, / and that man is not a friend to this house" (*παλαιὰ καινῶν λείπεται κηδευμάτων, / κοῦκ ἔστ' ἐκεῖνος τοῖσδε δώμασιν φίλος*, 76-77), and the Nurse tells the children that their father "is caught being bad to his friends" (*κακός γ' ὦν ἐς φίλους ἀλίσκεται*, 84), to which the Paedagogue replies, "Who of mortals isn't [bad to his friends]? Are you just now recognizing that everyone loves (*φιλεῖ*) himself more than the one near him...?" (85-86). Even before Medea is heard offstage, desperate in her wretchedness (96-97) and cursing her children, husband, and household (112-14), it is clear that the reason for her anger will not be merely that Jason has left her for another woman but that he has violated their relationship of *philia*. Moreover, the Paedagogue's words in 85-86 in effect call into question the very

possibility of *philia*, and Medea, by her actions throughout the play, in her own way expresses just this kind of nihilistic self-interest.

On the other hand, for Medea, as much as for any character in extant Attic tragedy, *philia* is a social tie based on a compact in which two parties have committed their faith by oath. She speaks of “having bound my accursed husband with great oaths” (161-63) and recalls to Jason the pledge he has betrayed:¹⁴

[61] ὄρκων δὲ φροῦδῃ πίστις, οὐδ' ἔχω μαθεῖν
εἰ θεοὺς νομίζεις τοὺς τότε οὐκ ἄρχειν ἔτι,
ἢ καινὰ κείσθαι θέσμι' ἀνθρώποις τὰ νῦν,
ἐπεὶ σύνοισθ' ἄ γ' εἰς ἔμ' οὐκ εὖορκος ὤν.
φεῦ δεξιὰ χεῖρ, ἣς σὺ πόλλ' ἐλαμβάνου,
καὶ τῶνδε γονάτων, ὡς μάτην κεχρῶισμεθα
κακοῦ πρὸς ἀνδρός, ἐλπιδῶν δ' ἡμάρτομεν.

The faith of oaths is gone, and I am unable to learn
if you believe that the gods of that time no longer rule
or that new laws for humans are established now,¹⁵
since you know you do not keep your oath to me.
Ah, right hand, which you often grasped,
and knees, how falsely we have been treated
by this man, this villain; how we have failed in our
expectations! (492-98)

In Medea's mind, Jason's violation of faith is connected intimately to his lack of *aidôs*: she tells him (468-72) that “looking friends in the face after doing them wrong / is not boldness or courage / but the greatest of all sicknesses among humans, / shamelessness (*ἀναίδεια*).” The chorus, too, in summing up her troubles, sing (439-40): βέβακε δ' ὄρκων χάρις, οὐδ' ἔτ' αἰδῶς / Ἑλλάδι τῆι μεγάλαί μιν εἰ, αἰθερία δ' ἀνέπτα (“The grace of oaths is gone; no longer does shame / remain in great Greece, but it has flown up into the sky”). These lines unmistakably echo Hesiod's description in *Works and Days* 190-201 of the antisocial evils of the fifth generation of mortals, which culminate in the departure of *Aidôs* and *Nemesis* from the human world to the “tribe of the deathless gods.”¹⁶ Thus Jason's treatment of Medea is associated with the worst moral behavior in Greek poetic tradition. *Charis*, which I have translated as “grace,” is, like *philia*, a quintessentially human quality involving recompense and reciprocity. To say that “the grace of oaths is gone” is another way of saying that Medea is being treated inhumanly.

When Jason treats her faithlessly, like an *echthros* rather than a *philos*, with no *aidôs* or *charis*, he not only treats her immorally in human terms but also, in effect, acts as if he were a god for whom these human standards are irrelevant—a position that his apparent power, in contrast to her apparent powerlessness, would seem to justify in his complacent and self-satisfied mind.¹⁷ Of course, in terms of actual power, which, as always in Euripides, is what counts most in distinguishing gods from humans, it is Medea who resembles a god, not Jason. “The grace of oaths is gone; no longer does shame /

remain in great Greece, but it has flown up into the sky,” applies at least as well to her behavior as to his, given her previous betrayal of her fatherland and murder of her brother. Later in the play, when she murders the princess and Creon through an explicit breach of the social institutions of suppliance (971) and *philia* (1151, 1153) and then kills her children, her metaphorical inhumanity becomes clear. Her final appearance in her grandfather’s chariot even suggests a literal inhumanity: it guarantees her an escape no human could contrive, and her physical location in the crane from which, in Greek tragedy, only a god would speak, characterizes her from 1317 on as more *daimôn* than human.¹⁸

[62]Throughout the play, in her successive encounters with Creon, Aegeus, and Jason, Medea uses her understanding of *philia*, and her ability to exploit it and other traditional institutions and relationships of reciprocity, to achieve her own ends and defeat her enemies. When Creon declares their relationship to be one of enmity (*ἀπεχθέσθαι*, 290) and commands her to leave Corinth, she manipulates him, through gestures of suppliance and an appeal to his *aidôs*,¹⁹ into temporary relations of *philia* that lead to his ruin: *πρὸς σε γονάτων τῆς τε νεογάμου κόρης* (“By your knees and your newly married girl,” 324); *ἀλλ’ ἐξελάις με κούδεν αἰδέσθην λιτάς;* (“But will you drive me out and in no way respect my prayers?” 326). Although Creon, acknowledging the traditional association between *aidôs* and *philia*, replies, “[I will drive you out.] for I do not consider you more dear than my own house” (*φιλω γὰρ οὐ σέ μάλλον ἢ δόμους ἐμούς*, 327), Medea continues to supplicate him: *ἰκέτευσα* (“I supplicated,” 338) strengthens *πρὸς σε γονάτων* and suggests that she had knelt at 324 to embrace his knees in the suppliant’s ritual gesture of placing herself in his power. Finally, Creon relents, claiming that “my spirit is least of all naturally tyrannical / and I have ruined many matters by showing shame” (*ἥκιστα τοῦμόν λῆμ’ ἔφην τυραννικόν, / αἰδούμενος δὲ πολλὰ δὴ διέφθορα*, 348-49). As the word *αἰδούμενος* suggests, he in effect enters into a day-long truce with Medea, a temporary relation of *philia* that leads to his ruin. This would have been clear to an audience familiar with both the close, traditional, formulaic and contextual associations between *philos*, *philotês*, *philein* and *aidoios*, *aidôs*, *aideisthai* in Homeric and archaic Greek poetry, and with the similarity between the language of personal friendship and that of truces and treaties in archaic and classical Greece.²⁰

Medea skillfully fawns on Creon (*θωπεύσαι*, 367) in order to soften his *echthra* and establish a compact. As usual in her compacts of *philia*, she herself manipulatively violates the relationship, in this case at the very start when she tells the chorus, “...this day he allowed me / to stay, in which I will make three corpses of my enemies, / both the father and the daughter and my husband” (*τῆνδ’ ἀφῆκεν ἡμέραν / μείναι μ’, ἐν ἧι τρεῖς τῶν ἐμῶν ἐχθρῶν νεκρούς / θήσω, πατέρα τε καὶ κόρην πόσιν τ’ ἐμόν*, 373-75).²¹

Medea’s ability to wield the conventional language and gestures of *philia* is clear, too, in the scene with Aegeus. They are themselves already *philo*

(663-64), and she loses no time in describing her plight to him in terms of the violation of *philia* and *pistis* by Jason:

Μη. γυναῖκ' ἐφ' ἡμῖν δεσπότιν δόμων ἔχει.

Αι. οὐ που τετόλμηκ' ἔργον αἴσχιστον τόδε;

Μη. σάφ' ἴσθ'· ἄτιμοι δ' ἐσμέν οἱ πρὸ τοῦ φίλοι.

Αι. πότερον ἐρασθεῖς ἢ σὸν ἐχθαίρων λέχος;

Μη. μέγαν γ' ἔρωτα· πιστὸς οὐκ ἔφυ φίλοις.

Me: He has a wife over us as mistress of the house.

Ai: He surely hasn't dared this most shameful deed,
has he?

Me: Know clearly [that he did]; we who were his
friends before are without honor.

[63]Ai: Because he conceived a passion [for someone
else], or hating your bed?

Me: A great passion! He proved not to be faithful to
his friends. (694-98)

The breach of *philia* is first indicated in 694: Jason has taken not simply a lover but a new “mistress of the house,” shattering the domestic unit and belittling Medea’s status and worth.²² Aegeus’ “incredulous surprise,” registered by his οὐ που (“He surely hasn’t..., has he?” 695),²³ suggests the outrageousness of Jason’s behavior, and his terming the deed “most shameful” (αἴσχιστον) makes the usual connection between the values of “friendship” and those of “shame.” Medea’s reply, that Jason’s former “friends” are now “without honor” (ἄτιμοι), reinforces this connection: “honor” (τιμῆ) involves the same basic notion of (re-)payment—and therefore of reciprocity—as do the other social and ethical values associated with *philia*: *aidōs*, *charis* and even *dikē* (*dikē*, “justice”).²⁴ Here, πιστὸς οὐκ ἔφυ φίλοις (“He proved not to be faithful to his friends”), which is made more emphatic by asyndeton, completes her picture of Jason’s betrayal of their compact.

Later in the scene, Medea’s request for asylum in Athens and Aegeus’ agreement to receive her are grounded in their relation of *philia*, strengthened, as in the case of Creon, by Medea’s formal supplication (709-11):²⁵

ἀλλ' ἄντομαί σε τῆσδε πρὸς γενειάδος
γονάτων τε τῶν σῶν ἱκεσία τε γίγνομαι,
οἴκτιρον οἴκτιρόν με τὴν δυσδαίμονα....

But I entreat you by this beard of yours
and by your knees, and I become your suppliant,
have pity, have pity on me, the unfortunate woman....

In return, she promises to end his childlessness, and he agrees “to grant you this favor” (τήνδε σοι δοῦναι χάριν, 719), signifying by χάριν his understanding that they are entering into a compact of reciprocal services. Medea suggests the desirability of strengthening this agreement by reliable assurance (πίστις, 731) in the form of “sworn oaths” (ὀρκίοισι, 735): “Having come to an agreement with me in words but not having sworn by the gods, / you might perhaps become their friend and be persuaded by their approaches” (λόγους δὲ συμβᾶς

καὶ θεῶν ἀνώμοτος / φίλος γένοι' ἂν κἀπικηρυκείμασιν / τάχ' ἂν πίθοιο, 737-39). Aegeus agrees that he will find it strategically easier to refuse to surrender Medea if he is bound by an oath, and at her suggestion swears “by Earth and the bright light of the Sun and all the other gods” to do as she says.²⁶

In her conversation with Aegeus, as in her earlier exchange with Creon and later scene with Jason (866-975), Medea manipulates the rituals and language of suppliance along with oaths of sworn friendship for her own personal advantage. She consciously exploits her talent for such manipulation to serve her goals of vengeance and escape, opportunistically using language and gestures long associated in Greek tradition with the most decent human behavior to succeed in her savage revenge. Given her earlier violations of *philia* in her own family, perhaps a viewer or reader should anticipate little fidelity and stability in the future relationship between Aegeus and Medea. Such an expectation would have been strengthened for Euripides' original audience by [64]their familiarity with the story of Medea's later attempt to make Aegeus murder his son, Theseus.²⁷

When Medea accuses Jason of violating their pledges of *philia*—their oaths and their right hands—she also describes how for his sake (σοι χάριν φέρουσα, 508) she had broken the bonds of *philia* with her own family, making her friends into enemies (οὗς ... πολεμίους ἔχω, 507-508), and now is about to go into exile “isolated from friends, alone with only my children” (φίλων ἔρημος, σὺν τέκνοις μόνη μόνοις, 513). Yet Jason, in his response to Medea's attack, makes no mention of *philo*i or *philia* for twenty-five lines and then claims to be a “great friend” (μέγας φίλος, 549) to her and the children through his new marriage, which will establish for them a connection with the city's rulers. In this way, he says, “...we might live well / and not be in want, since I know that / everyone who is a friend flies away from a poor man” (... οἰκοῖμεν καλῶς / καὶ μὴ σπανιζοίμεσθα, γιγνώσκων ὅτι / πένητα φεύγει πᾶς τις ἐκποδῶν φίλος, 559-61).²⁸ Jason's whole conception of *philia*, like that of Admetus in *Alcestis*, is purely instrumental. Unlike Medea, who uses *philia* instrumentally in contrast to her proclaimed, traditional sense of it as involving personal loyalty and fidelity to one's sworn pledges, Jason's rhetoric and actions are not only self-serving but crass and ethically trivial. He is mainly concerned with competing effectively in the contest of words (522-25, 545-46), as if no more were at stake than winning a formal debate. The only *philia* he can understand is that of social and economic advantage: he contracts his first marriage to achieve personal safety and “heroic” success,²⁹ and his second for the sake of greater wealth, social status, and the εὐτυχία (“good fortune”) and εὐδαιμονία (“prosperity, happiness”) these involve (553-65). When Medea rejects his offer of money and letters of introduction, he characteristically blames the victim for her own misfortune, as if he himself had nothing to do with it: “... by self-willed stubbornness / you push away your friends; therefore you will have more grief” (αὐθαδίαι / φίλους ἀπωθήι· τοιγὰρ ἀλγυνῆι πλέον, 621-22).

At the end of the choral ode that follows this scene, the chorus sing a curse against Jason which brings together many of the main ideas associated with *philia* in the first half of the play:

ἀχάριστος ὄλοιθ', ὅτωι πάρεστιν
μη φίλους τιμᾶν καθαρᾶν
ἀνοίξαντα κλήϊδα φρενῶν
ἔμοι μὲν φίλος οὐποτ' ἔσται.

May he perish without favor or grace, that man who
does not unlock a pure mind
to do honor to friends.

To me he will never be a friend. (659-62)

For the chorus, *philia* means a generous opening up of oneself, not simply one's resources; their wish that a man who is not a true *philos* should "perish without favor or grace" (ἀχάριστος ὄλοιθ') means that when such a man, who cannot share in a reciprocal relationship, is himself destroyed, there should be no reciprocal payment or vengeance for his destruction. This is what happens to Jason, in the chorus' view appropriately. Therefore they agree to help Medea [65] "to punish [her] husband justly" by keeping silent (267), and at 1231-32, after they have heard the messenger's report of the horrible deaths of Creon and his daughter, they comment, "The god seems on this day / justly (ἐνδίκως) to fasten many evils on Jason."

But if the chorus help Medea, they do not enter into *philia* with her. Though she calls them "friends" (φίλοι, *philai*) on five occasions, they never call her "friend" (φίλη, *philē*). Rather, they repeatedly address her as, "woman" (γύναι, *gunai*), both when expressing sympathy (357) and when trying to persuade her not to kill her children (816, cf. 818). This may be partly a matter of social decorum: they are commoners, she a noblewoman. But more significantly it reflects their sense of her as just too far out, too inhuman for their complete solidarity.³⁰

When she first calls them *philai* (227), she is seeking their sympathy and trying, in a calculating way, to create a tie of *philia* by presenting herself as one of them—a typical Greek woman in typical, only worse, circumstances. Her use of *philai* emphasizes her own femaleness and places it on an equal footing with theirs, as do the words in which she continues to seek their solidarity: "Of all things, as many as live and have intelligence, / we women are the most miserable growth" (πάντων δ' ὅσ' ἔστ' ἔμψυχα καὶ γνώμην ἔχει / γυναῖκές ἐσμεν ἀθλιώτατον φυτόν, 230-31). She then goes on to speak of the common hardships women share by virtue of their gender: marriage, childbirth, physical and social subordination to men. Medea is not, of course, simply expressing her fondness for the women or acknowledging a special tie between them and herself. Rather, she is creating that tie in a deliberate effort to exploit it to hurt her enemies.

It makes sense, therefore, that on three occasions (377, 765, 1116) when she addresses the chorus as *philai*, she is discussing ways to kill these enemies or anticipating the report of their deaths. In each instance her certainty or

triumph makes her speak almost euphorically of her future action and satisfaction,³¹ but at these moments the chorus cannot share in her exhilaration. First, after Medea's long speech from 364 to 409, they sing their great ode of sympathy for her as an example of the general pattern of women betrayed by men: in the first strophic pair, speaking in the first person (414/15, 422, 423/24, 430), they include themselves, and presumably Medea, in the *γυναικείω γένει* ("female race," 416), but in the second strophic pair they address her in the second person (431, 438, 441-42), in implicit contrast to themselves, as a separate person.³² Similarly, after Medea's long speech from 764 to 810, which she begins by addressing the chorus as *philai* and ends by telling them of her plans to kill her children as an assertion of her glorious heroism,³³ the chorus explicitly distinguish themselves (*ἡμῶν*, 811) from Medea (*σε*, 812 and 813) and address her as *gunai* in urging her not to kill her offspring (816). Finally, when she catches sight of Jason's servant coming to report the deaths of the princess and "whoever touches the girl" (788), Medea again calls the chorus *philai* (1116) in her announcement of the messenger's entrance (which precludes their response). After his brief exchange with her, in which she calls him too *philos* (1133) in anticipatory relish of his news, she addresses the chorus as *philai* for the last time (1236) when informing them of her final [66]decision to kill the children as quickly as possible and make her escape: *φίλοι, δέδοκται τοῦργον ὡς τάχιστα μοι / παῖδας κτανούση τῆσδ' ἀφορμᾶσθαι χθονός* ("Friends, I have decided on the deed: as quickly as possible / to kill the children and to set off from this land...," 1236-37). Here too Medea anticipates a triumph, but the triumph is not over her enemies, even though she says she is preventing her children from being killed by "another, more hostile hand" (*ἄλλῃ ... δυσμενεστέροι χειρί*, 1239) and later claims she killed them to hurt Jason and prevent him from laughing at her (1360, 1362, 1398). Rather, throughout her speech (1236-50) she is, once again, seeking the solidarity and support of the chorus while steeling and inciting herself to "terrible and necessary...evils" (*τὰ δεινὰ κάναγκαῖα ... κακά*, 1243), the compulsion to which makes her, she says, an "unfortunate...woman" (*δυστυχῆς ... γυνή*, 1250). Addressing the chorus as *philai* is part of Medea's strategy and preparation for her action.³⁴ They, however, do not yield to her implied solidarity. Rather, they sing a short ode (1251-70) in which they again refer to Medea in the third person (1252-53, 1258) and then the second (1262, 1263, 1265), and call attention to her divine lineage, extraordinary suffering, and harsh decision, thus separating her clearly from themselves.

What is most striking about Medea's invocations of the chorus as *philai* is the way these invocations are bound up with murder and triumph over enemies who are themselves *philoï*. Such murder and triumph are characteristic of her behavior in the past evoked during the course of the drama, as well as in the present. Her flight from Colchis after the murder of her brother and betrayal of her father and fatherland is, as it were, repeated in her "going into exile for the murder / of my most beloved children and having dared the most impious deed. / For it was unendurable to be laughed at by enemies, friends" (*φιλιτάτων*

παίδων φόνον / φεύγουσα καὶ τλᾶσ' ἔργον ἀνοσιώτατον. / οὐ γὰρ γελάσθαι τλητὸν ἐξ ἐχθρῶν, φίλαι, 795-97). Medea goes on to make her clearest statement of her determination to live up to the traditional heroic ethic of being “a burden to my enemies and well-minded to my friends; / for the life of such people is most glorious” (809-10).³⁵ But the murder of her “most beloved children” (1247) makes clear the self-defeating quality of this heroism. In her own final words as she departs to kill them, *δυστυχῆς δ' ἐγὼ γυνή* (“I am an unfortunate woman,” 1250).

Of course, Medea not only destroys the children who are most dear to her but, through the children, exploits the conventions and rituals of *philia* to ruin Jason. At 869-71 she tells him that he should pardon what she had spoken against him and tolerate her anger, “for we have done many loving things in the past [sc. as a basis for tolerance now]” (*ἐπεὶ νῶν πόλλ' ὑπέιργασται φίλα*, 871).³⁶ Medea tricks him by appealing to his sense of a relationship which, she has been saying since the beginning of the play, is irrevocably shattered and changed into its opposite. As if she were making a formal treaty with Jason like their original compact, using the children as envoys she instructs them “to change enmity / against dear ones into friendship, along with your mother; / for we [she and Jason] have a truce and my anger is released. / Take his right hand...” (...*διαλλάχθηθ' ἅμα / τῆς πρόσθεν ἐχθρας ἐς φίλους μητρὸς μέτα / σπονδαὶ γὰρ ἡμῖν καὶ μεθέστηκεν χόλος. / λάβεσθε χεῖρὸς [67]δεξιᾶς...*, 896-99). Thus, as with Creon and Aegeus, she manipulates the ritual of *philia* as a means to vengeance.³⁷

As usual, Jason understands nothing: his prayer to see the children “reach the goal of youth / well-reared, higher than my enemies” (920-21), with its characteristically self-centered wish to exploit *philia* for his own ends, is completely deluded and in vain. Both his understanding and his power are far weaker than Medea's, and this is nowhere more clear than in the contrast between his susceptibility to illusions of *philia* and her ability to exploit it triumphantly. Yet these illusions seem real enough to one whose status and very existence are based on an attractive illusion of heroism, unsupported by real power or knowledge.³⁸

In the end, Medea's exploitation of *philia* to serve her own heroic ends is fruitless and self-destructive; this becomes clear in her long speech debating whether or not to go through with her plan to kill the children. As she reverses and again reverses her decision, she dwells on her love of the children, weighing it against her unwillingness to be an object of ridicule by leaving her enemies unpunished (1049-50) and her determination not to let these enemies mistreat (*καθυβρίσαι*, 1061) the children in revenge for her murder of Creon and his daughter.³⁹ Her thought of the irreversibility of this murder finally decides matters for Medea (1064-68), and at this point comes an outpouring of the language of *philia* as she addresses the children (1069-72):

δὸτ', ὦ τέκνα,
δὸτ' ἀσπᾶσασθαι μητρὶ δεξιᾶν χέρα.
ὦ φιλτάτη χεῖρ, φίλτατον δέ μοι στόμα

καὶ σχῆμα καὶ πρόσωπον εὐγενὲς τέκνων.
 Give, O children,
 give your mother your right hand to kiss.
 O dearest hand and mouth dearest to me,
 and form and noble face of [my] children.

Medea, it has been said, “finds herself caught between a pair of passionate imperatives: ‘Kill the children because you hate their father,’ and ‘Do not kill them because you love them as their mother.’”⁴⁰ Yet at some level there is also the imperative, “Kill them because you love them as their mother.”⁴¹ At 1240-41,⁴² as she prepares to enter the house to kill them, she says, “In every way it is necessary that they die; and since they must, / we ourself will kill them, we, the very one who gave birth to them” (πάντως σφ’ ἀνάγκη καταθελὶν ἐπεὶ δὲ χρῆ, / ἡμεῖς κτενοῦμεν, οἵπερ ἐξέφύσαμεν). Here the masculine relative οἵπερ suggests that Medea is renouncing normal feminine (including maternal) feelings, even as she speaks of having given birth. So does her use of ἐκφύω (“give birth”), a verb used “mostly of the male...rarely of the female,”⁴³ as well as her exhortation to her heart to “arm yourself” (ὀπλίζου, 1242). She calls on herself not to be a coward and not to remember how she gave birth to the children (1246-47), reminding herself that she can sing a dirge for them after they are dead (1248-49), and she ends her speech with the comment already quoted, “For even if you will kill them, all the same / they are by nature dear; I am an unfortunate woman” (καὶ γὰρ εἰ κτενεῖς σφ’, ὅμως / φίλοι γ’ ἔφυσαν δυστυχῆς δ’ ἐγὼ γυνή, 1249-50). Although she urges herself to forget for the [68]moment that she gave birth to children who are “most dear” (ὡς φίλταθ’, 1247), the chorus remind her that she is killing those she bore as a “dear family” (γένος φίλιον, 1262). In their next lines (1263-64), they mention Medea’s voyage [from Colchis] through the Symplegades, again evoking the slaughter of her brother, to which her killing of the children is analogous; this makes it clear that her child-murder should be seen as yet another murder of *philoī*—that it is not a matter of fortune, as she suggests (δυστυχῆς, 1250) but of “the heavy anger of her mind” (φρενῶν βαρὺς χόλος, 1265-66).⁴⁴

When Jason learns that he will never have the bodies of the children to lament and bury, he exclaims, “O dearest children,” to which Medea replies, “[Dearest] to their mother, but not to you” (Ia. ὦ τέκνα φίλτατα. Μη. μητρὶ γε, σοὶ δ’ οὐ, 1397). Jason continues, “And yet you killed [them]?” (κᾶπειτ’ ἔκανες;), and Medea responds, “To hurt you” (σέ γε πημαίνουσα, 1398). In other words, Medea consciously killed those who were *philoī* in order to hurt Jason, a *philos* whom she hated. Killing *philoī* is part of what it means and part of what, in this play, it always has meant, to be Medea.⁴⁵ I think it is wrong to see her as changing under the pressure of Jason’s cruel hypocrisy and, as it were, being overwhelmed by or driven into the daemonic.⁴⁶ Medea’s murder of the children, her hatred of Jason, and her virtual divinity as she prophesies *ex machina* present no more than a heightened picture of her as she had always been, when she betrayed her father and murdered her brother. In the

dénouement, her relations to kin and to friends are as twisted and self-serving as ever.

Throughout the play, Medea speaks sincerely and passionately of *philia* as a compact by which two people commit their faith and themselves by sworn oaths, yet at the same time she uses *philia* to destroy, and to justify destroying, those she hates. On the one hand, she is a victim; on the other hand, given the pervasive instrumentality in the play of relationships of *philia*, she is no different from Jason, Creon, or even Aegeus—only more effective. Her terrifying display of her skill and power qualifies whatever sympathy she elicits from both the chorus and the audience or reader, whose difficulties in interpreting her character and the play accurately reflect the ambiguities of *philia* and the problematic moral significance of acting like a *philos*.⁴⁷



NOTES

1. Theognis 306, 600, 1102.
2. E. Benveniste, *Le vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes* I (Paris 1969) 341 = *Indo-European Language and Society*, tr. E. Palmer (*Miami Linguistics Series* 12, Coral Gables 1973) 278.
3. J. Taillardat, “ΦΙΛΟΤΗΣ, ΠΙΣΤΙΣ et FOEDUS,” *REG* 95 (1982) 4.
4. *Ibid.*, 2-5. This ritual was maintained through the classical period. Taillardat (p. 2) refers, for example, to Aeschines *Against Ctesiphon* 224: τὴν δεξιὰν ἐνέβαλες ἄνδρα φίλον καὶ ξένον ποιούμενος. On the ritual and language of friendship, see G. Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City* (Cambridge 1987) 44-72, esp. 44-[69]54. Cf. too Catullus’ remarkable use of *amicitia* and *foedus* as well as *fides* for a personal relationship in poems 76, 87, and 109.
5. Taillardat (*supra* n. 3) 4-9. Taillardat may or may not be correct; the etymology of φίλος has been much debated. Cf. M. Landfester, *Das griechische Nomen ‘philos’ und seine Ableitungen* (*Spudasmata* 11, Hildesheim 1966) 34-41; Benveniste (*supra* n. 2) 338-40 = Eng. tr. 275-77; E. P. Hamp, “ΦΙΛΟΣ,” *Bulletin de la société de linguistique de Paris* 77 (1982) 251-62; J. Hooker, “Homeric φίλος,” *Glotta* 65 (1987) 44-65, esp. 45-47. In this article, Hooker unconvincingly criticizes the “institutional” emphasis of Benveniste (and Taillardat) as grounded in “excessive reliance on theory and insufficient attention to context” (51).
6. J. M. Redfield, *Nature and Culture in the Iliad: the Tragedy of Hector* (Chicago and London 1975) 118. On contextual and formulaic associations of φιλότης, φίλος, φιλεῖν and αἰδώς, αἰδοίος, αἰδείσθαι in Homer, see S. L. Schein, “Ἡ φιλία στην Ἰλιάδα καὶ στην Οδύσσεια,” *Ἰλιάδα καὶ Οδύσσεια: Μύθος καὶ Ἱστορία. Από τα Πρακτικά του Δ΄ Συνεδρίου για την Οδύσσεια (9-15 Σεπτεμβρίου 1984)* (Ἰθάκη 1986) 131-32, drawing on G. Glotz, *La solidarité de la famille dans le droit criminel en Grèce* (Paris 1904, repr. New York 1973) 138-39.
7. Glotz (*supra* n. 6) 138-39.
8. *Ibid.*, 138; Benveniste (*supra* n. 2) 341 = Eng. tr. 278. It is strange that here and elsewhere in his chapter on *philos*, Benveniste does not refer to Glotz’s book, which he clearly uses and sometimes adopts verbatim.

9. See, e.g., Xenophon *Memorabilia* 2.6.35, where Socrates tells Critobulus: ἔγνωκας ἀνδρὸς ἀρετὴν εἶναι νικᾶν τοὺς μὲν φίλους ἐὺ ποιῶντα, τοὺς δ' ἐχθροὺς κακῶς... ("You have realized that a man's virtue is to outdo his friends in doing good and his enemies in doing harm..."); Isocrates *Ad Demonicum* 26: ὁμοίως αἰσχρὸν εἶναι νόμιξε τῶν ἐχθρῶν νικᾶσθαι ταῖς κακοποιαῖς, καὶ τῶν φίλων ἡττᾶσθαι ταῖς εὐεργεσίαις ("Consider that it is equally shameful to be outdone by your enemies in doing harm and to be worsted by your friends in kindnesses").

10. See K. J. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality in the Age of Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford 1974) 180-84, 276-78, 304-306.

11. See S. L. Schein, "Φιλία in Euripides' *Alcestis*," *Mêtis* 3 (forthcoming).

12. W. R. Connor, *The New Politicians of Fifth Century Athens* (Princeton 1971) 194-98.

13. B. M. W. Knox, "The *Medea* of Euripides," *YCS* 25 (1977) 197-202 = *Word and Action: Essays on the Ancient Theater* (Baltimore and London 1979) 297-302.

14. On the fundamental significance throughout the play of Jason as an oath-breaker, see B. Vickers, *Towards Greek Tragedy* (London and New York 1973) 282-86; A. P. Burnett, "Medea and the Tragedy of Revenge," *CP* 68 (1973) 12-14. In addition to 492-98, cf. 21-23, 160-63, 168-70, 208-12, 439-40 (with the whole stasimon), and 1392, cited by P. E. Easterling, "The Infanticide in Euripides' *Medea*," *YCS* 25 (1977) 181 n.13. As Easterling comments (181), "Jason and Medea are to be regarded as permanently pledged, so that when Jason abandons Medea he is breaking faith (and even he does not deny it)." See too S. Saïd, *La faute tragique* (Paris 1978) 431, on the injustice (ἀδικεῖν) of Jason's violation of his oaths and *philia*, and G. Rickert, "Akrasia and Euripides' *Medea*," *HSCP* 91 (1987) 106-13, on the "appropriateness of the children's deaths" (106) as a punishment for this injustice.

15. Translating τὰ νῦν as adverbial, as elsewhere in Euripides, e.g. *Hel.* 631, *Or.* 436, 660. It would be possible, in light of 491, to take καὶνὰ as predicative and θέσμια with τὰ νῦν: "...or that the current laws for humans are new established." Cf. M. L. Earle, *The Medea of Euripides* (New York 1904) and D. L. Page, *Euripides. Medea* (Oxford 1938) *ad loc.*

[70]16. As noted by Burnett (*supra* n. 14) 20, following the scholiast on 439 (E. Schwartz, *Scholia in Euripidem*, vol. II [Berlin 1891] 168). Cf. Theognis' allusion (647-48) to the same Hesiodic passage. If 645-46 belong to the same poem, the loss of αἰδῶς is associated with the speaker's ability to find only a few "reliable" (πιστοὺς) comrades, i.e. comrades who abide by their πίστις ("pledge of good faith").

17. S. F. Scully, *Φιλία and Χάρις in Euripidean Tragedy* (diss. University of Toronto 1973) 45 comments: "Euripides employs *charis*, *philia*, and *aidōs* as distinctively human standards of excellence by which to evaluate and ultimately condemn the gods and their conduct."

18. Cf. M. P. Cunningham, "Medea ΑΠΟ ΜΗΧΑΝΗΣ," *CP* 49 (1954) 152, cited by Knox (*supra* n. 13) 206 n.43 = 319 n.43: "Medea appears aloft in the place and after the manner of a *theos*. She appears as a *theos* appears; she acts as a *theos* acts and she says the sort of things a *theos* says." Cf., however, Easterling (*supra* n. 14) 190.

19. Cf. J. Gould, "Hiketēia," *JHS* 93 (1973) 85-86; Vickers (*supra* n. 14) 476-77; R. G. A. Buxton, *Persuasion in Greek Tragedy* (Oxford 1982) 159-60. F. I. Zeitlin, *The Ritual World of Greek Tragedy* (diss. Columbia 1971) 120-66, provides a useful taxonomy of various kinds of suppliant ritual but does not discuss *Medea*, which would belong in her category of "Internal Suppliants" (150-65).

20. For Homeric associations, see Glotz (supra n. 6) and Schein (supra n. 6); cf. Theognis 399. On the language of truces and treaties, see Herman (supra n. 4) and Schein (supra n. 11).

21. Euripides calls attention to Medea's decisive betrayal of the king, with whom she has just entered into a bond of suppliance and treaty, by the emphatic, first-person *θήσω* ("I shall make") in enjambement at the beginning of 373; the unusual resolution of the fourth element of this trimeter into the final two syllables of *πατέρα* ("the father"); and the climactic *έμόν* ("my") modifying *πόσιω* ("husband") and emphasizing her control over her own husband despite Jason's, Creon's, and the princess' plans. (Cf. the similarly surprising and effective use of *έμῶν* in *Alcestis* 304.) (In 373 I read *ἀφῆκεν* with the manuscripts. J. Diggle, *Euripidis Fabulae* I [Oxford 1984] 110 accepts Nauck's *έφηκεν*).

22. Cf. the situation of Deianeira in Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, whose reaction to Heracles' having brought home Iole is primarily one of sexual jealousy and fear (*Tr.* 539-40, 545-51).

23. Cf. J. D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles*² (Oxford 1954) 492, cited by Page (supra n. 15) 122, on 695.

24. Hence *ἄτιμος*, "dishonored," has the special meaning of politically "deprived" and "disenfranchised" from both the duties and the privileges of citizenship.

25. As Buxton (supra n. 19) 159 points out, the parallel between Medea's supplications of Creon and Aegeus is strengthened by the metrically anomalous double resolutions in 324 and 710, when Medea, in each case, "is initiating her ultimate persuasive resort—the act of supplication," and accompanying her words with the appropriate ritual gestures. Page (supra n. 15) 96, on 324, notes the "irregular rhythm" in these lines (and in 1322) but comments merely that in 324 and 710 it "clearly corresponds to the agitated mood of the speaker."

26. On the special significance of this oath, see Knox (supra n. 13) 205 = 302.

27. Presumably this story was told in Euripides' *Aegeus*, ca. 450, according to T. B. L. Webster, *The Tragedies of Euripides* (London 1967) 77-80 (but see now M. Cropp and G. Fick, *Resolutions and Chronology in Euripides: the Fragmentary Tragedies* [*BICS Suppl.* 43, London 1985] 70-71).

28. Reading *φίλος* in 561 with the manuscripts, gnomologia, and Clement of Alexandria; Diggle (supra n. 21) accepts Driver's *φίλον*.

[71]29. Jason could be considered a "hero," and so a good catch for Creon and his daughter, by virtue of his leadership of the Argonauts and winning of the golden fleece. He did not, however, accomplish this deed through any personally heroic action or planning but by means of his erotic attractiveness to Medea, which prompted her to assist him (8, 529-33). Indeed, Jason is the first unheroic hero in extant Greek literature. Euripides' characterization of him anticipates the *ἀμήχανος ἥρωος* of Apollonius' *Argonautica*. As H. Rohdich, *Die Euripideische Tragödie* (Heidelberg 1968) 56-57, points out, a major feature of this characterization is Jason's desire for "gain" (*κέρδος*), which is reflected in his financial diction (e.g. *λύει*, 566; *ὀνήσαι*, 567); in his economic foresight (459-62); and in his sense of being "entitled" (*χρῆν*, 573—cf. Admetus in *Alcestis* 633). As Rohdich says (58), "Was an ihm unheldlich ausnimmt, ist nicht bloss eine 'Brüchigkeit,' sondern die vollständige Negation der Heldentums überhaupt..." Cf. K. Reinhardt, "Die Sinneskrise im *Orest*," *Tradition und Geist. Gesammelte Essays zur Dichtung* (Göttingen 1960) 237, on Euripides' transformation of Jason from "der abenteuernde kühne Held und furchtbare Rächer" of traditional myth to "einem der moralisch Angeknacksten...."

30. It is by no means unparalleled in Attic tragedy for a character to call the chorus φίλοι or φίλαι, but such addresses 1) usually occur when the chorus are related to the character by kinship (e.g. *A. Su.* 740) or by a bond of solidarity well established in the play (e.g. *A. Pers.* 162, 206, 219, 445, 598, 619; *S. Aj.* 315, 328, 803 and *Ph.* 825; *E. El.* 175, 747, 751, 871); 2) are linguistically or dramatically motivated in context (e.g. *A. Ch.* 100 [explained in 101]; *S. OT* 1321 [explained in 1322-24], 1329, 1339, 1334 and *OC* 1677, 1721, 1738; *E. Hel.* 330 [motivated by 329 and establishing the precedent for 627 and 1369]). In *A. Pers.* and *S. Tr.*, the only plays where a character addresses the chorus as φίλοι or φίλαι as often as does Medea, Atossa and Deianeira are motivated by fear and the concomitant desire for advice and assistance; cf. Tecmessa in *S. Aj.* 315, 328, 803. Elsewhere, e.g. *E. Alc.* 935 and 960, *Hipp.* 419 and 674, *Hel.* 440, and *Ion* 764 and 769, the character may be pointing out, or seeking sympathy for, her sufferings. In no play other than *Medea* does a character repeatedly refer to a chorus as φίλοι when there is no established basis for such a relationship and where the chorus (pointedly) do not answer in kind. For a complete list of passages in which characters address choruses (and other characters) as φίλοι or φίλαι, and choruses address characters (or themselves) as φίλος or φίλη, see T. Wendel, *Die Gesprächsanrede im griechischen Epos und Drama der Blütezeit* (Tübinger Beiträge 6, Stuttgart 1929) 16—a reference I owe to M. Griffith.

31. Cf. the future forms γενησόμεσθα (766), τείσειν (767), προβήσεται (1117), ἀγγελεῖ (1120); ἐγγειρῶ (377) by its very sense looks to the future.

32. In formal terms, as Earle (supra n. 15) 130 remarks, the ode makes a routine movement from the more general in the first pair of stanzas to a specific application in the second pair. But it is possible that even in the first strophic pair, the chorus, by speaking in the first person, may exclude Medea from the γυναικείω γένει. This, at least, is the retrospective effect of their addressing her in the second person in the second strophic pair.

33. Easterling (supra n. 14) 185. On Medea's heroism, see, in addition to Knox (supra n. 13) 197-202 = 297-302, E. Schlesinger, "Zu Euripides' *Medea*," *Hermes* 94 (1966) 26-53, esp. 30, 53. For a completely different perspective on Medea's heroism, see P. Pucci, *The Violence of Pity in Euripides' Medea* (Ithaca 1980) 92-96; Buxton (supra n. 19) 160-61.

34. Just as she addresses the chorus as *philai* at moments of deadly decision and euphoric triumph over her enemies, so Medea answers the messenger who comes with the news of the success of her plot: "You will be among my benefactors / for the rest [of time] now, and among my friends" (ἐν δ' ἐνεργέταις / τὸ λοιπὸν ἤδη καὶ φίλοις ἐμοῖς ἔσσημι, 1127-28)—in a sense perverting the meaning of friendship and benefaction. [72]As already noted, she calls him *philos* again at 1133, when asking him not to hurry his tale of her success.

35. On Medea's heroism, see supra n. 33.

36. My paraphrase follows that of Page (supra n. 15) 136, on 871.

37. It is completely in character that her actual murder of Creon and his daughter is achieved by employing conventions of *philia*—gift-giving (946, 964, 973) and supplication (971)—to pretend to establish a new relationship of solidarity between herself and her children, on the one hand, and the princess, on the other.

38. On Jason's lack of heroism, see supra n. 29.

39. Some scholars, beginning with T. Bergk, *Griechische Literaturgeschichte* III (1884) 512 n. 13, have doubted the authenticity of 1056-80, the final part of Medea's monologue. These lines are deleted by Diggle (supra n. 19) 138, the most recent editor of the play. For a lucid presentation of the reasons for and against deletion and

references to previous discussions, see D. Kovacs, "On Medea's Great Monologue (E. *Med.* 1021-80)," *CQ* 36 (1986) 343-52, to whom I owe the reference to Bergk. Kovacs argues for the excision of 1056-64 but considers the rest of the monologue authentic. M. Dyson, "Euripides' *Medea* 1056-80," *GRBS* 28 (1987) 23-34, defends the authenticity of the entire passage. [See also the contribution of B. Seidensticker in this volume.]

40. Burnett (supra n. 14) 22

41. Easterling (supra n. 14) 187 suggests, in light of modern studies of parents who murder their children, that Medea may "protective[ly] rationaliz[e]" murdering her children by considering that they "would in their own interests be better off dead."

42. Either Page (supra n. 15) 149, on 1062-63, is correct in deleting these lines at 1062-63 or they should be retained in both places.

43. LSJ *s.v.* ἐκφύω. Cf. the opposition between ὁ φύσας and ἡ τεκοῦσα in E. *Alc.* 290, Lysias 10.8.

44. If these words, found in the manuscripts, actually belong in the text: Diggle reads φρενοβαρῆς / χόλος, while Page places 1265-66 between daggers. προσπίτνει (1266), which is probably secure despite the textual uncertainty, may be felt to describe a force or emotion as attacking Medea; this does not, however, mean that the chorus are excusing Medea from personal responsibility for her planned murder. In 856-59, where, whatever the exact text, the chorus ask Medea, "Whence can you get your boldness of mind ... in applying to your children terrible daring?" (πόθεν θράσος ... φρενὸς ... / ... λήψῃ / δεινὸν προσάγουσα τόλμαν;), the θράσος ... φρενὸς is external to Medea, like φρενῶν βαρῆς / χόλος in 1265-66, but there is no doubt about Medea's responsibility for her actions. Cf. 103-104, where the Nurse warns the children of Medea's "savage character and the hateful nature / of her self-willed mind" (ἄγριον ἦθος στυγερὰν τε φύσω / φρενὸς ἀθάδους). (The Nurse also speaks of Medea's βαρεία φρήν [38] in a passage that is deleted by both Page and Diggle and is probably an interpolation.) For the deadly potential of Medea's χόλος, see also 93-95, 171-72; cf. 590, 898.

45. This is true whether or not her intentional murder of the children is a Euripidean innovation. On this question, see Page (supra n. 15) xxi-xxv and G. Paduano, *La formazione del mondo ideologico e poetico di Euripide: Alceste-Medea* (Pisa 1968) 194-206; also D. J. Conacher, *Euripidean Drama* (Toronto 1967) 185-86; A. Lesky, *Die tragische Dichtung der Hellenen*³ (Göttingen 1972) 301 with n. 20; Burnett (supra n. 14) 10-11 with n. 15.

46. Cf. A. Rivier, "L'élément démonique chez Euripide," in *Euripide* (Fondation Hardt, *Entretiens* 6, Geneva 1960) 60-68; *Essai sur le tragique d'Euripide*² (Paris 1975) 44-52.

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