

Hekabe's Extended Supplication (*Hec.* 752-888)*

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οἴμοι τάλαινα, ποῖ μ' ὑπεξάγεις πόδα;
ἔοικα πράξειν οὐδέν· ὦ τάλαιν' ἐγώ.
(*Hekabe* 812-13)

What is going on here? Something important and disruptive: Hekabe breaks off after twenty-one lines of *rhesis*. She has begun a long ritual supplication at the knees of Agamemnon, seeking his assistance to avenge her son Polydoros, but she now fears the effort is in vain. What makes her fear this, and more specifically, just what is Agamemnon doing with his foot? These words have provoked interest as an aside or as an example of soliloquy, but not to consider what action might be motivating them or what action they might be indicating. Too vaguely have commentators imagined Agamemnon “making as if to go” without accounting fully for the meaning of the verb ὑπεξάγεις, without explaining precisely what makes him stay, or, most importantly, without integrating an understanding of this action into an account of the whole of Hekabe's suppliance.¹ Considering what this verb means here will lead me to reconstruct the unique action that it marks and to demonstrate the full extent of a scene frequently performed on and characteristic of the Euripidean theater, that of a long, painfully extended supplication at the knees.

The verb ὑπεξάγειν is rare. Its transitive sense is ‘to remove,’ ‘to extricate,’ or ‘to pull from danger’ its accusative object; only intransitively does it mean ‘to escape’ or ‘to retreat.’ There are four attestations before Euripides: Homeric μιν ὑπὲκ θανάτου ἀγάγωμεν (“let us rescue *him* out of death,” *Il.* 20.300); σε δαίμων οἴκαδ' ὑπεξαγάγοι (“the god rescue *you* [out of danger] homeward,” *Od.* 18.146-47); and Herodotean παῖδας τε καὶ γυναῖκας ὑπεξαγάγωνται ἐκ τῆς Ἀττικῆς (“they evacuate *the women and children* out of

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¹Bain 32-33. Schadewaldt 129-30 thought the lines motivated by the despair of Hekabe's helplessness. The view that Agamemnon here simply begins to exit occurs first in the MB scholion's gloss (Schwartz): τοῦ μοι ὑπεξέρχῃ.

Attica,” 8.40.4-5) show the meaning with a direct object ‘extricate out of (a physical danger)’; Herodotean τούτους ὁδῶ. . . ὑπεξάγειν (4.120.15-16) shows the intransitive military meaning ‘retreat.’²

These parallels invite us to take πόδα not as internal accusative, but as direct object (“you are rescuing/extricating your foot”) and με as accusative standing for the genitive in our parallels (“from me”), i.e., as accusative of the person deprived with a verb of depriving taking two accusatives.³ The ποῖ here is preferably (but not necessarily) “to what end...?” rather than “in what direction...?” (cf. *IT* 77, ποῖ μ’ αὖ τήνδ’ ἐς ἄρκυν ἤγαγες with a verb of leading). Accordingly, for ποῖ μ’ ὑπεξάγεις πόδα; I suggest the meaning “why (or whither) are you trying to extricate your foot from me?”

I cannot parallel ὑπεξάγειν with accusative of the person deprived. Collard’s “You turn away from me—where to?” with πόδα as internal accusative remains grammatically possible, even if his two parallels for ὑπεξάγεις πόδα meaning φεύγεις (*Trach.* 339, τοῦ με τήνδ’ ἐφίστασαι βάσιν; *OC* 113-14 with Jebb ad loc., σύ μ’ ἐξ ὁδοῦ πόδα κρύψον) are not entirely satisfactory.⁴ My translation becomes preferable, as I hope to show, when we consider the other indications for action in the scene. Certainly no translation of μ’ ὑπεξάγεις πόδα (and no understanding of the staging) is sufficiently precise if it implies that Agamemnon can escape without first pulling free his foot.⁵ The questions become these: what is the danger to Agamemnon from

²The only other roughly contemporary attestation is *X. Cyr.* 3.3.60.3: ἀνέβαινόν τε...καὶ ὑπεξῆγον πρὸς τὸ ἐαυτῶν πλήθος (“...they retreated...”). Later Greek attests this intransitive use, e.g., *D. S.* 3.28.3.5, *J. BJ* 1.231.5, and frequently in *Plu.*, e.g., *Pyrrh.* 33.3.3, 33.5.6; *Caes.* 8.3.2. More frequently it is transitively ‘to rescue,’ e.g., *App. BC* 2.2.11.18; *D. C.* 42.39.1.2, 47.23.3.3; *Paus.* 10.19.10.9, 10.22.12.3; *Plu. Agis* 16.6.1; *Ach. Tat.* 2.27.1.3; *Hld. Aeth.* 9.10.2.7. ὑπεξάγειν becomes the regular medical term for expelling, discharging, or passing with difficulty, i.e., extricating one piece of the body from another: passing a fetus (*Ar. Byz. Epit.* 2.432.3, 2.507.6; *Hp. de exsec. foet.* 1.10, *de mul. aff.* 84.49), passing bladder stones (*Aetius* 11.9.13), passing plegm (*Aetius* 11.24.27, *Alexander Trall. Ther.* 1.549.6), passing excrement (*Hipp. Cant.* 34.1.6).

³Kühner–Gerth §411.7.10.c, and often in Euripides with singular personal pronoun, e.g., *Alc.* 44, οὐδ’ ἐκείνον . . . σ’ ἀφειλόμην; *Hec.* 285, τὸν πάντα δ’ ὄλβον ἡμᾶρ ἐν μ’ ἀφείλετο; *Ba.* 496, αὐτός μ’ ἀφαίρου (θύρσον τόνδε).

⁴Collard 172. Cf. Diggle 58 on *Tro.* 59-60: νῖν ... ἐς οἶκτον ἦλθες, *LSJ* s.v. ὑπεξάγω II segregates and leaves untranslated our phrase. *Lucian Nigr.* 18.1-2, καθάπερ ὁ Ζεὺς τὸν Ἑκτορα ὑπεξάγαγῶν ἐμαυτὸν ἐκ βελέων, though cited there as parallel, conforms to the transitive use ‘rescue’ with the reflexive pronoun as object (cf. *Aristophanes Byz. Epit.* 2.472.8 ἐαυτὸν ὑπεξάγει).

⁵Bain 32, “making as if to go.” Buxton 178, “...Agamemnon moves to leave—a certain inference from Hekabe’s remark at 812...”; and Collard 172, “seeking to avoid Hec.’s ritual and binding embrace...” seem to me to finesse Hekabe’s position in the embrace. Arthur Way’s

which he needs rescue, and what is the entanglement from which his foot needs extrication? An acute scholiast answers: κρατοῦσα τὰ γόνατα τοῦ Ἀγαμέμνονος ἥσθετο τοὺς πόδας κινουῖντα, ὥστε ἐκβαλεῖν τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῆς (Dindorf ad 812, marked Moschopulean). The danger is the pressure that Hekabe as suppliant can apply to make Agamemnon heed her inconvenient request. The entanglement to which the lines refer is that of Hekabe's arms, which are wrapped around his knees. Before translating 812 we need to imagine the staging of Hekabe's suppliant act, its beginning and its duration.

At the time Hekabe speaks 812-13 she has undertaken the act of ritual supplication of Agamemnon: she has fallen and has grasped his knees with her hands.⁶ This ritual action is not casual, especially for Hekabe; she has weighed it carefully to herself in an impressive and extraordinary aside (Bain 13-16; Schadewaldt 210-13):

πότερα προσπέσω γόνυ
Ἀγαμέμνονος τοῦδ' ἢ φέρω σιγῇ κακά; (737-38)

am I to fall to the knee
of Agamemnon here or bear these troubles in silence?

Nor is it an action that we would expect the now heroically determined Hekabe to break off easily or to perform intermittently. Suppliancy, as Gould established, is no mere figure of speech. It must be enacted, and its ritual action must be maintained with perseverance. When fully enacted, suppliant ritual becomes a compelling and awesome act that demands response. Someone may, of course, use the language of suppliancy metaphorically, "figuratively" in Gould's term, but without performing the act, that person is not a suppliant in a compelling, ritually valid way. The validating ritual act is to gain and to persevere in physical contact with a space or object held to be sacred, an altar or sanctuary, knee and chin. For as long as the suppliant maintains the essential contact, the suppliant is protected and, often, as in the case of suppliants at the knees in Euripidean drama, compels the one supplicated to heed a request that

Loeb translation (1912), "whither wouldst thou withdraw thy foot?" preserves the ambiguity nicely.

⁶In recovering the staging, I begin by joining Taplin 28-38 in assuming the close relation of words to action in tragedy: words mark significant action as it happens and essential stage actions are not unmarked by words. This is a fruitful assumption for discovering the beginnings of actions of personal supplication, but not, as we will see, for discovering their ends.

may be inconvenient or dangerous.⁷ Because the essential act of ritual suppliance is the maintaining of physical contact, we might expect *a priori* and be led to seek evidence that suppliants at the knees in tragedy maintain their hold for a long period, that is, until they get the one being supplicated to grant their request. We find the evidence in this scene.

Let us first establish exactly when Hekabe begins her ritual act by touching the knees and entangling the legs of Agamemnon. There is no disagreement among commentators that at some point Hekabe does fall at and grasp his knees, although there has been disagreement as to precisely when this happens.⁸ This action must begin at line 752, the point at which Hekabe begins to use the language that elsewhere marks undoubted suppliant action in Euripides:

Ἀγαμέμνον, ἱκετεύω σε τῶνδε γυνάτων
καὶ σοῦ γενείου δεξιᾶς τ' εὐδαίμονος. (752-53)

Agamemnon, I supplicate you by these your knees
and by your chin and your blest right hand.

Even though an explicit verb of touching or falling is lacking here, Hekabe's *πότερα προσπέσω γόνυ* (737) is a sufficient marker for what she will do fifteen lines later. We can point to four other invocations of knees in Euripides that lack a word for falling or touching, but nevertheless introduce supplications that are undoubtedly enacted and not metaphoric: Medeia's at *Medeia* 324 (*πρός σε γυνάτων*), accompanied certainly by the action of grasping Kreon's hand (*κοῦκ ἀπαλλάσῃ χερός*, 339 and *οὐδ' ἄν ἠνιάμην χερσὶν*, 370, guaranteeing Wilamowitz's *χερός* in 339); Hermione's at *Andromakhe* 892 (*πρός σε τῶνδε γυνάτων*), accompanied by an action that can be seen (*ἐπισκοπεῖς*, 893 and *μῶν...σαφῶς ὀρῶ*, 896); Helene's at *Helene* 1237 (*πρός νύν σε γυνάτων τῶνδ'*), marked as action by Theoklymenos (*ὠρέχθης*, 1238);

⁷On suppliant ritual, Gould is basic. See also Kopperschmidt, Pedrick, and Freyburger.

⁸Bain 14 seems to take line 752 as indicating action (Hekabe "prevent(s) his departure by detaining him physically"); Collard 172 refers to "Hec.'s ritual and binding embrace of his knee 752-53." Gould 85 n.55, followed by Kaimio 51-52, thought the act began at 841. Gould thinks Hekabe's words at 752-53 are "figurative," claiming obliquely that 787 makes this clear. He finds no significance for action in 812 and finds 841, with no indication for action, the moment at which the ritual contact is achieved. Without refuting in detail his notion of slow crescendi in the scene broken off and renewed, I find the account I am offering here more consistent with Gould's own account of the nature of the ritual (and ultimately more plausible): one action performed, marked several times as it continues, and seen through to a conclusion.

and Kreon's at *Phoinissai* 923 (ὦ πρὸς σε γονάτων καὶ γερασμίου τριχὸς), to which Teiresias responds τί προσπίτνεις με; (924). On the evidence of these parallels, Hekabe's suppliant action undoubtedly begins at line 752. There she falls, touches his chin,⁹ and grasps his knees, not to let go.

Hekabe's πίπτω (787) further guarantees that her language is enacted, not simply metaphoric. In drama, πίπτω / (προσ)πίτνω signal a number of actions of falling including parallels for our action, falling to the knees in personal suppliant ritual: *Andromakhe* 537; *Hekabe* 274, accompanied by other words for action, ἥψω (273) and ἀνθάπτομαι (275); *E. Suppliants* 165 and 285 (with ὦδε pointing to the action); *Herakles* 1208; *Helene* 894, with another word for action προσκαθίζω (895); *Phoinissai* 293; and *Hypsipyle* 22/60.25.¹⁰ Hekabe's language marks a fully realized act of ritual suppliancy at the knees that begins with line 752 and continues through 787, where she marks it again ("I continue to fall...") and insists upon its significance.

Properly understood, line 812 also indicates that the action continues. Hekabe is still in a suppliant position with her arms wrapped around Agamemnon's knees as tightly, we can imagine, as Thetis wrapped hers around Zeus' (ἥψατο γούνων ὥς ἔχεται ἔμπεφυῖα, *Il.* 1.512-13). At line 812, having been held for 63 lines, Agamemnon tries to kick his way out of Hekabe's suppliant clinch. She, however, holds on and does not let him go: ἔοικα πράξιν οὐδέν (813) betrays discouragement, but still looks to the future. She has not yet broken off the action that she began at line 752.

Having established the beginning and the continuation of Hekabe's suppliant grasp, we may now consider why Agamemnon tries to disengage himself. Gould identified in the pattern of suppliant ritual and response to it, both in history and in literature, what he calls the "crisis of indecision" and the "strategy for removal" (82-85). The target of suppliant ritual often recognizes and faces a paralyzing dilemma: to deny the request may bring the wrath of

⁹Hekabe touches Agamemnon's chin only briefly, if at all. In Euripides the phrase πρὸς γενείου is generally figurative and never alone marks a ritually significant act of supplication. *Heracl.* 227 and *IA* 1247 intensify what is already supplication ritually validated by contact. *S. El.* 1208 and *E. Hyps.* 22/60.26 are certainly figurative; Hypsipyle's hands are bound as she speaks.

¹⁰Other actions of πίτνειν include homage βαρβάρωι νόμωι (*A. Pers.* 152, *E. Or.* 1507, *Ph.* 293), kissing (*Alc.* 403, *Ion* 1438), moving beyond a boundary (*OC* 156, *IT* 1229), falling into bed (*Or.* 35, 151, 217), fainting or otherwise collapsing (*Andr.* 1076), and falling to a physical exertion (*Pax* 471, ἐπεπιπτόω, physically rescuing the goddess). πίτνειν in tragedy, to be sure, can be used metaphorically for 'beg,' 'supplicate,' without indicating action, as at *S. El.* 1380, *OC* 1754, and, perhaps, *Ph.* 924, an example I cited above.

Zeus who protects suppliants; to undertake the request brings inconvenience or danger. This dilemma is the kernel of suppliant drama, plays in which a suppliant chorus forces a king to decide whether or not he will receive them at his peril. As a way of escaping the dilemma, the one supplicated may attempt to remove the suppliant and neutralize the threat. He may try to get the suppliant to leave the protection of the holy place “willingly,” so that the one supplicated does not have to outrage the god with violence against the suppliant, but can deal with the suppliant on more advantageous terms. Gould demonstrated that the one supplicated respects suppliant ritual to the degree that, rather than physically violating suppliants at the altar, he will make an effort to void their protective status by such strategies as depriving them of food, threatening to burn and suffocate them with smoke, or making treacherous promises of leniency.¹¹

In Euripides, those who are supplicated at the knees confront crises of indecision analogous to those faced by communities with suppliants in their sanctuaries. Of course, supplication at the knees cannot provoke a crisis of indecision to the same degree, since the one supplicated may lack the time to consider the dilemma lucidly, as the wise rulers in suppliant drama do, while the suppliant hangs on his legs. Nevertheless, we find that Kreon in *Medeia* agonizes between ceding to the *aidôs* provoked by Medeia’s request for one more day in Corinth and the disaster he fears (348-9); that the chorus leader of *IT* hesitates before granting Iphigeneia’s request that the chorus keep her escape plan to themselves (between 1070 and 1072, deleting 1071 with Dindorf and Diggle); and that Menelaos, supplicated at his knees by Orestes in *Orestes* (irregularly, to be sure), articulates his dilemma with an explicitness characteristic of kings of suppliant drama, ἀμύχανῳ (635, cf. Pelasgos, ἀμύχανῳ at *A. Supp.* 379 and Willink ad *Or.* 635). These small crises of indecision within a supplication at the knees correspond, ultimately, to the

¹¹Some examples from history: Kleomenes burning Argive suppliants from the grove of the gods of Argos in the 490s (Hdt. 6.80), the Spartan ephors starving Pausanias from the Brazen House about 470 (Th. 1.135), and the pro-Athenians luring the oligarchs from the sanctuary of Hera in Corcyra with promises of a fair trial in 427 (Th. 3.81). In Euripidean drama we find almost no example of a suppliant dragged violently from the altar, only suppliants “persuaded” away. (Iolaos in *Heracl.* is roughed up but ultimately safe). Strategies for removing suppliants are the stuff of a number of Euripidean scenes: the suppliants at the altar of Zeus *Soter* are weak and starving thanks to the strategy of Lykos as *HF* begins (52-53); Ion subjects Kreousa, suppliant at the altar of Apollo, to a series of taunts to be countered (*Ion* 1260-1319); in *Andr.* Hermione torments suppliant Andromakhe with a virtual catalogue of strategies for suppliant removal. As violent as she is, she will only induce Andromakhe to leave the protection of the sanctuary willingly, ἐκούσας (263).

crisis of Zeus in *Iliad* 1 (498-527), the scene that in all its elements may serve as the paradigm for scenes of supplication in Euripidean drama. There Zeus sits for a long time in silence without confronting his dilemma—dishonor Thetis, in the reciprocity she claims and the ritual he himself guarantees, or anger Hera in the hope, perhaps, that Thetis will simply go away (ἀκέων δὴν ἦστο, 512).

With *Hekabe* 812-13 Agamemnon faces *his* crisis of indecision. He is compelled by the suppliant grasp that Hekabe still maintains to heed her first request that he avenge the murder of Polydoros on Polymestor (787-90). At the same time, although he is not unsympathetic—Hekabe has provoked pity in him—he wants to refuse on the grounds that he cannot be seen in front of the army to favor Hekabe over Polymestor for Cassandra's sake (850-63). Agamemnon will soon articulate the dilemma he faces: ἔστιν γὰρ ἥι ταραγμὸς ἐμπέπτωκέ μοι (857). Thus, with the action of lines 812-13, he attempts, however crudely, to render Hekabe a suppliant no longer: he tries to pull himself loose from her grasp. We see in his attempt a rudimentary form of the strategy to remove a suppliant. He cannot, in fact, remove Hekabe. She perseveres, maintains the physical contact, and continues to pose her request. Although Agamemnon wants to go, he continues to listen, restrained both by the *aidōs* and pity the ritual has aroused and by Hekabe's arms.

This is not the first time in the play that someone has tried to dodge a suppliant at the knees. Earlier, Odysseus comes to take Polyxene away, and Hekabe then pleads for her life by supplicating at his knees (273 ff.). Hekabe does not persevere in this first suppliant act. She gives up at some indeterminate point when Odysseus refuses. She then urges Polyxene herself to supplicate: πρόσπιπτε δ' οἰκτρῶς τοῦδ' Ὀδυσσέως γόνυ / καὶ πεῖθ' (339-40). Odysseus preempts this attempt before it begins (and before he learns that Polyxene has no intention of doing so, cf. Collard 148; Gould 84-85; Kaimio 54):

ὄρῳ σ' Ὀδυσσεὺ δεξιὰν ὕφ' εἵματος
κρύπτοντα χεῖρα καὶ πρόσωπον ἔμπαλιν
στρέφοντα, μὴ σου προσθίγω γενεῖαδος.
θάρσει· πέφευγας τὸν ἐμὸν Ἰκέσιον Δία· (342-45)

I see you, Odysseus, hiding your right hand
under your clothing and turning your face away
lest I touch your beard. Don't worry!
You have avoided my Suppliant Zeus.

Odysseus dodges what he thought would be Polyxene's suppliance by making it physically impossible for her to touch him and establish the ritually significant contact. He evidently felt the pressure of Hekabe's suppliance and anticipates feeling the pressure of Polyxene's now, but he successfully evaded the one with a long, discouraging speech, just as he now prudently evades the other by getting out of the way. Odysseus' routine goes far to demonstrate the compelling force of suppliant ritual at the knees in Euripidean drama: if Odysseus dodges the attempt, it must be worth the dodging.

By line 812 Hekabe has not moved from her suppliant position and has resisted Agamemnon's attempt to void it before being forced to grant her request. At 851 we may have another marker of the continuing action:

ἐγὼ σε καὶ σὸν παῖδα καὶ τύχας σέθεν,
'Εκάβη, δι' οἴκτου χεῖρά θ' ἱκεσίαν ἔχω (850-51)

In pity I hold you and your child and your misfortune,
Hekabe, and your suppliant hand.

If χεῖρά θ' ἱκεσίαν is not metonymic, Agamemnon is referring to Hekabe's hand still on his knee. We now must ask when Hekabe releases her grasp, stands, and terminates her suppliant action. Only once in Euripides is the point at which a fallen suppliant rises marked with words, but that instance shows that to maintain the suppliant position for nearly 100 lines is a stageable action in the Euripidean theater. In *Andromakhe*, Andromakhe falls to the knees of old Peleus, begging him to become her champion and her child's. This action is marked plainly by her words:

ἀλλ' ἀντιάζω σ' ὃ γέρον, τῶν σῶν πάρος
πίτνουσα γονάτων—χειρὶ δ' οὐκ ἔξεστί μοι
τῆς σῆς λαβέσθαι φιλτάτης γενεΐαδος—
ῥῦσαί με πρὸς θεῶν· (572-75)

I face you as suppliant, old man, falling
before your knees—with my hand
I cannot take your beloved beard—
help me by the gods!

Throughout the vicious exchange between Peleus and Menelaos that surrounds her, there is no indication that Andromakhe gets up until line 717, 144 lines later. At that point, having roused himself to expel Menelaos and Hermione

from the house he shared with Thetis, Peleus tells Andromakhe, ἔπαυε σαυτήν. There is nothing metaphoric about the phrase in drama (Stevens ad loc.). It urges someone who is prone to get up: *Andromakhe* 1077, the messenger to Peleus, who has collapsed (μὴ πέσῃς, 1076); *Alkestis* 250, Admetos to his laid-out Alkestis; *Herakleidai* 635, the messenger to Iolaos, who is lying on the ground (τί χρεῖμα κεῖσαι; 633); *Ion* 727, Kreousa to the old man as he makes the climb up to the temple of Apollo; *Wasps* 996, Bdelykleon to his father Philokleon, who faints; and *Lysistrate* 937, Myrrhine to Kinesias in bed. We thus know just how long Andromakhe has stooped on the ground at the legs of Peleus: 144 lines. The action is different, of course, insofar as she cannot grasp his knees; her hands are bound (573-74). This is not a practical problem because Peleus is willing to champion her and does not void the suppliance, as he might have done simply by walking away.¹² Moreover, the action is not as difficult as Hekabe's because Andromakhe crouches mutely at the knees of her protector, whereas Hekabe is herself involved in a long exchange. Still, the substantial duration of Andromakhe's suppliance at the knees is a good parallel for Hekabe's extended suppliance of Agamemnon.

But *Andromakhe* 717 is the exception; nowhere else have we indication of the end of a personal suppliance in Euripides. Euripidean suppliants say, "I fall to your knees." They nowhere say, "Now I rise again." The action of a suppliant rising is a clear exception to the general understanding that all significant action in Greek drama is marked by words. Lacking the evidence, we can only guess an appropriate point (obviously well before Agamemnon exits before the stasimon which follows this scene), for Hekabe, her act of supplication a success, to disengage and stand. Line 888 may mark the end of the suppliance, the point at which Hekabe begins to take advantage of Agamemnon's assumed approval and sets the revenge plot in motion. If so, we have the spectacle of Hekabe suppliant for some 130 lines, a stretch comparable to Andromakhe's supplication of Peleus.

We may now sum up what the words tell us about the staging of this suppliant ritual at the knees: with line 752 Hekabe falls to the knees of Agamemnon and grasps them. Her now heroic resolve—for her, paradoxically, the abasement of the suppliant act has become bold, heroic (τολμᾶν ἀνάγκη, 751)—leads us to expect her not to let go until Agamemnon grants her request. The nature of suppliant ritual leads us to expect this as well; suppliants must

¹²I suggest that Menelaos' invitation to Peleus πέλας πρόσελθέ μου (*Andr.* 589) tries to take advantage of Andromakhe's inability to hold on to him and is a devious strategy to separate him from his suppliant.

often persevere through strategies to ignore and defeat them, yet will try to see the act through until they win their demand. Hekabe's suppliant act plays out this scenario. Agamemnon feels the pressure that Hekabe brings to bear as a suppliant. He then attempts to sidestep both the dilemma and the arms of Hekabe. He tries to pull his leg free, but is thwarted by Hekabe's tenacity (812-13). He must listen to the rest of her speech and eventually gives in to a modified request, that he be a passive ally in her own plot of revenge (870-71). Hekabe performs the act of supplication and has marked it again as it continues with 787 (and Agamemnon may mark it with 851). The personal suppliant's act of rising is a significant action not marked by words in Euripidean drama, so we cannot pinpoint the end of Hekabe's action. But it must come somewhere around line 888, the point at which Hekabe can assume Agamemnon's approval.

Even Gould, who established so forcibly that suppliant ritual is one continuous act, hesitated to conclude that this suppliance in *Hekabe* is performed as one continuous act (85 n. 55). When commentators translate $\mu' \upsilon\pi\epsilon\zeta\acute{\alpha}\gamma\epsilon\iota\varsigma \pi\acute{o}\delta\alpha$ in a way that implies that Hekabe is not still grasping Agamemnon, they have not pictured clearly enough the duration of Hekabe's act. I have tried to show that this suppliant act is exceptionally long. The performance of it is a spectacle; to maintain a physically awkward and humiliating act at such length discomforts suppliant, supplicated, actors, and audience alike. Still, the action of $\upsilon\pi\epsilon\zeta\acute{\alpha}\gamma\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ with *Hekabe* 812, the attempt of Agamemnon to pull his foot away from Hekabe, confirms for us how Euripides can maintain such a scene through scores of lines. Neither Agamemnon nor Hekabe moves away. They perform stichomythia, long *rheseis*, and an exchange while clinched immovably together for more than 120 lines, the suppliant painfully recumbent at the knees, the one supplicated embarrassed by the *aidôs* that the ritual is meant to provoke. We must also picture for *Hekabe* 812-13 an action of indignity: king Agamemnon tries—and unsuccessfully at that—to wrestle his foot away from an old woman.

With its pathos and its insistence on the awkward practicalities of a physical and ritual procedure, the action of the extended suppliant scene of *Hekabe* 752-888 is very much *more Euripideo*. But to visualize the action as I have reconstructed it suggests much else. The scene plays out the religious sensibility Gould demonstrated in the ritual, which is awesome in its ability to compel, yet compels only through a simple technicality that can easily be voided. And if the act I have reconstructed seems impossibly long, we may remember how it justifies the interpretation that suppliants at the knees in

Euripides often put upon their act: they create, with τέχνη, an action within the action of drama and demand that the ones they supplicate look upon the sight they have created with such art.¹³ The ambition of Hekabe's extended performance of suppliance here is limited only by what divine craftsmanship can attain: Δαιδάλου τέχναισιν ἢ θεῶν τινος (838). Hekabe demands that Agamemnon appreciate her performance, bidding him to look upon her and the action she maintains as one painter appreciating the work of another:

ὥς γραφεύς τ' ἀποσταθεῖς
ἰδοῦ με κἀνάθρησον οἱ ἔχω κακά. (807-08)

Stand back as a painter,
look at me and examine how I suffer.

Agamemnon cannot look upon this painting unmoved; this is the point at which he can no longer bear the vision and tries to extricate his foot, erase the painting, and end the annoying suppliant encounter.¹⁴

To conclude, ὑπεξάγεις is a rare word, but one that proves to have been well chosen to mark a rare tragic action, that of one character pulling his foot away from another. The translation “you pull away your foot” marks unambiguously an action that is already unambiguous on the stage. With its two accusatives, ὑπεξάγεις also expresses the doubleness of the suppliant encounter: Hekabe's question to Agamemnon, “Why do you rescue your foot away from me?” from her perspective also has the force, “Why do you deprive me of your foot to supplicate?” Suppliants at the knees in Euripides can claim to be skilled workers of ritual, technicians of pity, and Hekabe here is one of unparalleled magnitude. With the ambition of a painter and the art of Daidalos,

¹³Hermione to cousin Orestes: οὔκτιρον ἡμᾶς ὦν ἐπισκοπεῖς τύχας (*Andr.* 893); Hypsipyle to Amphiaraios: δεσμίαν τέ μ' εἰσορᾷς / πρὸς σοῖσι γόνασι (*Hyps.* 22/60, 29-30); Iphigenia to Agamemnon: βλέψον πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ὅμμα δὸς φίλημά τε (*IA* 1238). For Andromakhe's child the suppliant act is the invented song: τί δ' ἐγὼ μόρου / παράτροπον μέλος εὔρω; (*Andr.* 526-27). Kreon to Medeia: κοῦκ ἔχεις τέχνην ὅπως / μενεῖς (*Med.* 322-23) is answered triumphantly by δοκεῖς γὰρ ἄν με τόνδε θωπεῦσαί ποτε / εἰ μή τι κερδαίνουσιν ἢ τεχνωμένην (368-69).

¹⁴We have one example of personal supplication on stage as painting, a fragment of an Apulian Gnathia kalix-krater of the mid-fourth century at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (10.210.17a) that shows Priam supplicating Akhilleus in a scene from Aiskhylos' *Phrygians, or the Ransom of Hektor*. The fragment is published most recently in *The Art of South Italy; vases from Magna Graecia* (Richmond, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts 1982) #119. On the *Phrygians* in art see Kossatz-Deissmann, 23-32.

she has created, and maintained, even through the rude attempt of Agamemnon to end it, an action and a vision of compelling power. It should not surprise us that Euripides is a playwright capable of staging, however perversely, a scene in which a character must deliver a rhetorical exhibition while painfully stooped on the ground. He is a playwright for whom even the tears of a suppliant, Iphigeneia's in *IA*, can be σοφά.¹⁵

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¹⁵Iphigeneia on her suppliant art: εἰ μὲν τὸν Ὀρφέως εἶχον, ὦ πάτερ, λόγον / πείθειν ἐπαίδουσ', . . . ἐνταῦθ' ἂν ἦλθον· νῦν δέ, τάπ' ἐμοῦ σοφά / δάκρυα παρέξω· ταῦτα γὰρ δυνάμεθ' ἂν (*IA* 1211-15).