

Euripides' *Phoenissae* and Summoned Entrances in Greek Tragedy

James T. Clark

SUMMONED ENTRANCES of one sort or another make up almost ten percent of all entrances in Greek tragedy.¹ It is possible to divide these summoned entrances into several types. In one type, someone is dispatched from the stage to fetch the summoned character, as at Eur. *Med.* 180–181, where the Chorus ask the Nurse to fetch Medea outside.² A second type also uses an intermediary, but instead of sending him from the stage, the summoner calls to someone inside the *skene* and asks him to send out the summoned character. The earliest extant example of this is Orestes knocking on the door at Aesch. *Cho.* 653–667 and asking for the man or woman of the house to be brought out.³ The third category, and the one I focus on in this paper, involves the summoner calling directly to the summoned character, asking him to come out from the *skene* (or implying

¹ This is based on a count of the “called entrances” listed in Richard Hamilton, “Announced Entrances in Greek Tragedy,” *HSCP* 82 (1978) 63–82, at 73–80. I count 33 out of 335 entrances in total. What qualifies as a summoned entrance is subjective, but using Hamilton’s table gives a good estimate of their frequency.

² We might include within this category summonses that we are told about but do not see enacted, e.g., Oedipus says at Soph. *OT* 288 that he has summoned Teiresias.

³ For a discussion of some of these passages see Peter G. McC. Brown “Knocking at the Door in Fifth-Century Greek Tragedy,” in S. Gödde et al. (eds.), *Skenika: Beiträge zum antiken Theater und seiner Rezeption: Festschrift ... Horst-Dieter Blume* (Darmstadt 2000) 1–16. There is some overlap between this type and my third category, direct summonses, e.g. Eur. *Phoen.* 1067–1071.

that he should). I count sixteen examples of this type, which I shall call the direct summons: Soph. *Aj.* 71–90, 784–786; *Phil.* 1261–1262; Eur. *Med.* 894–898; *Heracl.* 642–645; *Hec.* 172–176; *El.* 750; *Phoen.* 296–300, 1067–1071, 1264–1269, 1530–1538; *Or.* 112; *IA* 1–2, 314–316, 1117–1119, 1532–1533.⁴

An interesting pattern emerges when we consider what building the *skene* represents. In particular, I wish to make a distinction between two types of building that I shall call, for convenience, “elite houses” and “humble dwellings.” In fifteen tragedies the *skene* represents an elite house (either a royal palace or the private house of a heroic figure), while there are six tragedies where the *skene* represents a humble dwelling (a cave, a military hut, or a poor farmer’s house).⁵ The distinction I make between these two types is, I think, uncontroversial, but as it is fundamental for my argument, it deserves some defense. The weakest candidate for inclusion in the elite houses category is probably the house in *Medea*. But despite Jason and Medea living in Corinth as

⁴ The line numbers quoted here and throughout are for the summons, rather than for the entrance that follows it. I explain below in more detail the exclusion of some passages from this list. The reason for considering only summoned entrances from the *skene* will become obvious, but there are very few direct summonses of characters from elsewhere than inside the *skene* building. I do not count as summonses those general cries for help that are not aimed at a specific person who is known to be, or at least thought very likely to be, within hearing range. These are better thought of as examples of the *boê*; see Oliver Taplin, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus: The Dramatic Use of Exits and Entrances in Greek Tragedy* (Oxford 1977) 218–220, on the *boê* in tragedy.

⁵ The tragedies with elite houses are: Aesch. *Ag.*, *Cho.*; Soph. *Tr.*, *Ant.*, *OT*, *El.*; Eur. *Alc.*, *Med.*, *Hipp.*, *And.*, *HF*, *Hel.*, *Phoen.*, *Or.*, *Bacch.* The tragedies with humble dwellings are: Soph. *Aj.*, *Phil.*; Eur. *Hec.*, *Tro.*, *El.*, *IA*. I exclude [Eur.] *Rhes.* as several scholars have argued that there is no representative *skene* in the play; see the recent discussion by Simon Perris, “Stagecraft and the Stage Building in *Rhesus*,” *G&R* 59 (2012) 151–164. There is a similar question over the *skene* in Aesch. *Pers.*, *Sept.*, and *Supp.*, so these are excluded from consideration too; see A. F. Garvie, *Aeschylus: Persae* (Oxford 2009) xlvi–xlix, for a discussion of this question and bibliography. There is, in any case, no strong candidate in these three plays for a direct summons from the *skene*.

foreigners (435–436, 554) and Jason’s attempt to present his new marriage as a way of keeping his old family out of poverty (559–561), the depictions of the house and household in this play are no different from when the *skene* represents a royal palace: the house is big enough that the children can potentially be kept apart from Medea (90–91), and it is staffed by several slaves.⁶ By contrast, the poverty of the Farmer’s house in Euripides’ *Electra* is frequently mentioned (252, 305–306, 404–408, 1005, 1139), and there appear to be no (or at least few) slaves in the household, given how much work Electra takes on herself (71–75).⁷ Military huts, such as the one in *Ajax*, can house heroes and were no doubt to be imagined as more elaborate than a simple tent. But despite the length of the Trojan War, they were surely to be thought of as temporary structures of limited grandeur: they are distinguished from permanent houses by being described as *σκηναί*.⁸

When the *skene* represents a humble dwelling, directly summoned entrances are common: five of the six tragedies have at least one such entrance, and there is a possible instance in the sixth play.⁹ By contrast, of the fifteen tragedies where the *skene*

⁶ In addition to the Nurse and Tutor, Medea seems to have other attendants (820–823, 950–951); see Donald J. Mastronarde, *Euripides: Medea* (Cambridge 2002) 42–44.

⁷ I take the imperative at 140 to be addressed to herself; see N. G. L. Hammond, “Spectacle and Parody in Euripides’ *Electra*,” *GRBS* 25 (1984) 373–387, at 378–379.

⁸ Soph. *Aj.* 3, 218, 754, 796; Eur. *Hec.* 53, 733; *Tro.* 139; *IA* 12. It is true that after the initial scene-setting Euripides often reverts to generic terms (*δόμος*, *οἶκος*), but there is no doubt about the setting; see Nicolaos C. Hourmouziades, *Production and Imagination in Euripides: Form and Function of the Scenic Space* (Athens 1965) 13.

⁹ The exception is Eur. *Tro.*, and the possible instance is at 165–167, where one semi-chorus calls the other out of their huts. It is unclear whether the summoned semi-chorus entered from the *skene* (thus David Kovacs, *Euripides: Troades* [Oxford 2018] 155), or from the *eisodos* (so K. H. Lee, *Euripides: Troades* [London 1976] 90).

represents an elite house, only three have a directly summoned entrance, and in two of those the summoned characters are mute.¹⁰ The only tragedy in which a speaking character is directly summoned from an elite house is Euripides' *Phoenissae*, where there are four such entrances. It is extremely unlikely that this difference between the two types of building would emerge by chance, nor does it seem to be a product of another factor, such as the frequency of entrances from the *skene*, as elite-house tragedies and humble-dwelling tragedies are similar in this respect.¹¹ Instead, there must be something about the tragedians' approach to arranging entrances that made them more likely to choose a directly summoned entrance when the *skene* is a humble

¹⁰ The children summoned in Eur. *Med.* 894–898 and Hermione summoned in Eur. *Or.* 112 are mute in these scenes, although when Hermione re-enters she is a speaking character, and we hear the children's off-stage cries later in *Medea*. Because they are mute in these scenes, neither the children nor Hermione are able to explain the motivation for their entrance themselves. Even if they were not mute it would be unusual for the children, and possibly for the young maiden Hermione too, to have their own motivation for emerging. And so, to bring them on stage, Euripides had to have them enter in response to a summons. It need not have been a direct summons, of course; Euripides could have had Medea call on a slave inside to send the children out, particularly as it seems likely that their tutor accompanies them as they enter. But by using a direct summons Euripides makes sure the attention is focused on the children. Compare how he makes the Nurse announce the entrance of the children at 46–48, even though it is their Tutor who speaks, not they, and even though the Nurse is alone on stage; see Michael R. Halleran, *Stagecraft in Euripides* (London 1985) 6–7. C. W. Willink, *Euripides: Orestes* (Oxford 1986) xxxix, takes the scene in which Hermione is summoned to be set within the palace. If this were correct, then it would be a further mitigation of the directly summoned entrance, and indeed the rarity of such entrances from a palace could itself add support for Willink's claim. But the case for an internal setting is, on balance, unconvincing; see Enrico Medda, "La Casa e la Città: Spazio Scenico e Spazio Drammatico nell'*Oreste* di Euripide," *StIt SER.* III 17 (1999) 12–65, at 18–36.

¹¹ Using Hamilton, *HSCP* 82 (1978) 73–80, to make the counts, I found eighty *skene* entrances from the fifteen elite-house tragedies, and thirty-two *skene* entrances from the six humble-dwelling tragedies: both types average a little over five *skene* entrances per drama.

dwelling as opposed to an elite house.

The likely reason for this pattern is that the summoning of a character from within the *skene* is a part of the action that the tragedians generally tried to arrange in a realistic way. Greek tragedy is highly conventionalized in many respects, and of course the tragedians could have characters directly summoned from elite houses if they had reason to (as, it seems, Euripides did in *Phoenissae*). But it would not be surprising if, in the absence of any particular motivation, they chose to use the type of summons that seemed most natural.¹² A direct summons from a humble dwelling would appear more realistic because in a smaller building the summoned character could not be very far from the door and would thus be more likely to hear the summons.¹³ Furthermore, an elite house would be more likely to offer an alternative mode of summons, as one could envision plenty of slaves available to act as intermediaries.¹⁴

¹² Hourmouziades, *Production and Imagination* 85, has observed this tendency towards naturalism in another feature: “nearly all the ‘open-the-gate’ scenes, in which the presence of a porter staying in a lodge behind the door is implied, are confined to plays with a palace as a background.” The exception is Eur. *IT* 1304, where the *skene* represents a temple. The Chorus’ request for the door to be opened at Soph. *Aj.* 344 is obeyed by, and presumably addressed to, Tecmessa. Talthybius’ instruction to open up the hut at Eur. *Tro.* 304 would be addressed to his men, given that he had only just ordered them inside the hut.

¹³ In elite houses the summoned character might be imagined to be in rooms separated by a courtyard from the main door. There are, of course, many instances of characters within elite houses hearing what is said on stage, and also those on stage hearing what happens inside the house; see Marco Catrambone, “Ajax Behind the *Skene*: Staging, Address, and Word Order at Sophocles, *Ajax* 339–343,” *Mnemosyne* 75 (2022) 898–929, at 914–919. But, as Catrambone notes (916), in some places proximity to the door facilitates hearing: Soph. *Ant.* 1183–1189, *El.* 1331–1334; Eur. *Hipp.* 565–600.

¹⁴ No slaves are available for Philoctetes’ cave or Electra’s cottage (see n.7 above). Slaves are not entirely absent when the *skene* represents a military hut: Achilles asks slaves to fetch Agamemnon for him at Eur. *IA* 804, for example,

Whatever the reasons for it, direct summonses from elite houses are a relatively rare occurrence in tragedy: of approximately eighty entrances from the *skene* in these tragedies, only six are directly summoned, and—as mentioned above—two of these are special cases as they are summonses of mute characters. That all four of the direct summonses of speaking characters should occur in a single tragedy, Euripides' *Phoenissae*, makes it likely that the audience would have perceived the use of an unusual technique in this play, and it strongly suggests that Euripides arranged the entrances from the *skene* in *Phoenissae* very deliberately and with a particular purpose in mind.

In the second part of this paper, I make some suggestions for the effect this pattern of summoned entrances in *Phoenissae* might have, but first there are two other matters that deserve attention. One is the question of where those tragedies in which the *skene* represents a temple fit in the schema I have outlined. There are five such tragedies (Aesch. *Eum.*; Eur. *Heracl.*, *Suppl.*, *IT*, *Ion*), but only one certain directly summoned entrance from a temple (Eur. *Heracl.* 642–645). This gives a frequency similar to that for elite houses, but it should be considered that there are no entrances from the *skene* door in Eur. *Suppl.* (and so this play should probably be left out of account) and that there might also be a summoned entrance at Aesch. *Eum.* 140.¹⁵ We could therefore have two directly summoned entrances from just four plays. Temples were generally impressive buildings, of course, but they

while Tecmessa calls on an attendant to bring Eurysaces on stage at Soph. *Aj.* 541–542, and even Hecuba can call on the services of her former slaves, sending one to fetch water at Eur. *Hec.* 609–610. But still the use of a summons via intermediaries might less readily suggest itself to the tragedians in some, if not all, of these tragedies.

¹⁵ It is possible that Clytemnestra directly summons the Furies from the temple here (thus Taplin, *Stagecraft* 369–374), though many scholars argue that at least some of the Furies are on stage; see, e.g., A. L. Brown, "Some Problems in the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus," *JHS* 102 (1982) 26–32, at 26–28, and N. G. L. Hammond, "More on Conditions of Production to the Death of Aeschylus," *GRBS* 29 (1988) 5–33, at 23–26.

were probably not to be imagined as having a courtyard separating the main door from the rooms where the summoned characters were, as would be the case for houses. And so, for my purposes temples may occupy a middle ground between humble dwellings and elite houses.

Secondly, I should explain the exclusion of certain passages from my list of directly summoned entrances. Some are left out because it is uncertain, or unlikely, that the summoned characters emerge from the *skene*: this applies to Eurysaces at Soph. *Aj.* 541–542, a semi-Chorus at Eur. *Tro.* 165–167, and Hector at [Eur.] *Rhes.* 7–10.¹⁶ If we could be certain that any of these entrances were from the *skene*, then that would only strengthen the pattern I have traced, as the *skene* in these tragedies would represent a military hut. At Aesch. *Cho.* 883 the slave mentions Clytemnestra by name, and she enters soon after, but he merely asks where she is and does not directly address or summon her. I exclude Eur. *Bacch.* 912–917, as the summons is uttered by a character who has only just emerged from the *skene* to someone just behind and is presumably spoken through an open door; it seems closer to a double entrance than a summoned entrance. Although Menelaus asks the doorkeeper to come out at Eur. *Hel.* 435, this seems to be an alternative way of asking her to open the door rather than a summons in itself; it is not the doorkeeper but the head of the house whom Menelaus ultimately wants to summon, and so the scene is really an (unsuccessful) indirect summons. I also exclude the Chorus' call for Ajax to leave his hut at Soph. *Aj.* 190–195, as it is unanswered; it is Tecmessa who enters after their song (at 201), and she makes no reference to having heard them.¹⁷

¹⁶ On [Eur.] *Rhes.* see n.5 above; on Eur. *Tro.* 165–167 see n.9. On Soph. *Aj.* 541–542, Malcolm Heath and Eleanor OKell, “Sophocles’ *Ajax*: Expect the Unexpected,” *CQ* 57 (2007) 363–380, at 368 (with bibliography), argue that Eurysaces is brought from a second *skene* door, but P. J. Finglass *Sophocles: Ajax* (Cambridge 2011) 293–294, shows that this is unlikely.

¹⁷ Brown, in *Skenika* 14.

Euripides' Phoenissae

I first present a brief survey of all entrances from the *skene* in *Phoenissae*, including potential or partial entrances, chronologically from the very start of the play. I note when the authenticity of a scene or of lines has been questioned by other scholars, but in general I avoid detailed discussion of such matters. This paper is not intended as a contribution to textual criticism, except to the very limited extent that the themes and patterns identified could sometimes provide a motivation for lines, or stage action, that might otherwise seem redundant. While certain readings of the disputed passages would benefit my approach more than others, it will become clear, I think, that there is enough evidence in the more secure parts of the text alone to support my argument.

Jocasta speaks the prologue in front of the palace, and several scholars assert that she enters from the *skene* to do so.¹⁸ This is probably correct, but it is less certain that the entrance would have been perceived as part of the drama by the audience. Several tragedies begin with a tableau that should be imagined as having been in position for some time, but that must have formed shortly before the start of the play via a cancelled entrance.¹⁹ A cancelled entrance is clearly not required in *Phoenissae*, but the convention may well have made the audience unwilling to consider the drama begun before a word is spoken.²⁰

¹⁸ Elizabeth Craik, *Euripides: Phoenician Women* (Warminster 1988) 163; Donald J. Mastrorarde, *Euripides: Phoenissae* (Cambridge 1994) 139; C. A. E. Luschnig, *The Gorgon's Severed Head: Studies of Alcestis, Electra and Phoenissae* (Leiden 1995) 182.

¹⁹ Taplin, *Stagecraft* 134–136.

²⁰ A lengthy dumb show, such as might occur at the start of Soph. *Aj.*, would be interpreted as part of the drama proper, since it could not be taken for a cancelled entrance. It is possible that there was some signal to mark the start of a drama, as M. L. West, *Euripides: Orestes* (Warminster 1987) 178, speculates; if so, there is no reason why Jocasta should not appear before this

At lines 88–105 an old servant and Antigone appear on the roof of the palace.²¹ This, of course, is not a proper entrance from the *skene*, as they are still within the palace complex, but it deserves consideration, especially as it contains some themes that recur in the proper *skene* entrances. Antigone’s reluctance to appear on the roof and her concern for propriety are made clear: her appearance is delayed—she appears fourteen lines later than the servant—until they know there is no one outside the palace who might see her (92–95), and we are told that she has obtained permission from her mother to be there (89–90).²²

The next entrance from the *skene* is the first of the tragedy’s directly summoned entrances, as Jocasta is called from the palace by the Chorus (296–300):²³

ἰὸ ἰώ· πότνια, μόλε πρόδομος,
ἀμπέτασον πύλας.
κλύεις, ὦ τεκούσα τόνδε μᾶτερ;
τί μέλλεις ὑπόροφα μέλαθρα περᾶν
θιγεῖν τ’ ὠλέναισ(ι) τέκνου;

Ho there! My queen, come out before the house, open its gates wide. Do you hear, mother of this man? Why do you delay to leave your high-roofed house and take your son in your embrace?

Jocasta appears to be slow to leave the house, as the Chorus extend their original summons, asking “do you hear?” and “why do you delay?”

It is uncertain whether Eteocles enters from the *skene* at 690; it

signal. The address to the sun does not show that Jocasta has just emerged from the house: Ajax makes a similar address at *Soph. Aj.* 846, having been on stage for some time.

²¹ The authenticity of the ensuing *teichoskopia* scene has been doubted; see Mastronarde, *Phoenissae* 168–173, for a summary of the scholarship on this question, and 179, for the use of the term ‘servant’ for Antigone’s companion in this scene, as opposed to the manuscripts’ ‘tutor’ (παιδαγωγός).

²² Mastronarde, *Phoenissae* 179.

²³ All Greek is quoted from Mastronarde, *Phoenissae*. The translations are adapted from David Kovacs, *Euripides IV Helen, Phoenician Women, Orestes* (Cambridge [Mass.] 2002).

is possible that instead of entering the *skene* at 637, he remained on stage throughout the preceding choral song.²⁴ But with the manuscript text this would be an unusual piece of dramaturgy: Donald Mastronarde explains that in the few instances where a character remains on stage during a choral song (excepting those, such as suppliants, who must remain) the next episode always begins with the arrival of a new character, and the remaining character speaks first only if announcing the new arrival.²⁵ If the manuscript text is correct, then, it is likely that Eteocles does enter from the *skene* at 690. However, C. W. Willink has argued that Eteocles stays on stage during the choral song *and* that lines 690–696 should be deleted; this scene would then fit an established pattern in tragedy: the next episode begins with the arrival of a new character, Creon, who speaks first.²⁶ The pattern of summoned and delayed entrances from the *skene* I am outlining would be neater if Eteocles does not enter from the *skene* here; and if Euripides is carefully managing the entrances from the *skene* (as I maintain), then this could explain why he—slightly unusually—keeps Eteocles on stage. But we cannot be certain of Eteocles' movements, and an entrance from the *skene* for Eteocles here would not greatly weaken my overall argument.

After the third stasimon, a messenger arrives on stage and summons Jocasta out of the palace first indirectly, calling on the doorkeeper to send her out, and then directly, calling on Jocasta herself (1067–1071):

ὦή, τίς ἐν πύλαισι δωμαίων κυρεῖ;
 ἀνοίγετ', ἐκπορεύετ' Ἰοκάστην δόμων.
 ὦή μάλ' ἀῦθις· διὰ μακροῦ μὲν, ἀλλ' ὅμως
 ἔξελθ', ἄκουσον, Οἰδίπου κλεινὴ δάμαρ,
 λήξασ' ὄδυρμῶν πενθίμων τε δακρύων.

²⁴ Craik, *Phoenician Women* 206.

²⁵ Mastronarde, *Phoenissae* 347–348.

²⁶ C. W. Willink, “The Goddess EYAABEIA and Pseudo-Euripides in Euripides' *Phoenissae*,” *PCPS* 36 (1990) 182–201, at 193–194.

Ho there! Who is manning the palace gate? Open up: bring Jocasta out! Ho there once more! Though it's taking a long time, nevertheless, come out and hear, illustrious wife of Oedipus! Cease your lamentations and tears of grief!

With the text as it stands it is once again clear that Jocasta is slow to emerge from the palace: that the messenger summons her twice, moving from an indirect (1068) to direct (1070) summons, indicates this.²⁷ It may be that the messenger explicitly mentions the delay at 1069; I interpret διὰ μακροῦ as referring to time, as thus it explains why the summons has been repeated, though it could refer to space.²⁸ But the text is not unquestioned: the direct summons (1070–1071) has been suspected by several scholars, while Christian Mueller-Goldingen tentatively identified 1069 as an interpolation.²⁹ However, it is only by deleting all three lines (1069–1071) that the second summons is removed entirely. No scholar has proposed doing so. Whatever the actual text, then, there is some evidence of a delay in Jocasta's entrance in this scene.

Having heard that her sons are about to engage in single combat, Jocasta summons Antigone from the palace (1264–1269):

²⁷ Mastronarde, *Phoenissae* 447–448. In addition, Mastronarde suggests, not unreasonably, there is a pause between the two summonses.

²⁸ Mastronarde, *Phoenissae* 448, and Christine Amiech, *Les Phéniciennes d'Euripide* (Paris 2004) 480, also take it as referring to time. Both Craik, *Phoenician Women* 123, and Kovacs, *Euripides* IV 327, whose translation I have changed here, translate it as a spatial reference.

²⁹ Christian Mueller-Goldingen, *Untersuchungen zu den Phönissen des Euripides* (Stuttgart 1985) 179 n.2. The deletion of both 1070 and 1071 was suggested by Michael D. Reeve, "Interpolations in Greek Tragedy I," *GRBS* 13 (1972) 247–265, at 253–254, and executed by J. Diggle, *Euripidis Fabulae* III (Oxford 1994), and Kovacs, *Euripides* IV, in their editions. See Mastronarde, *Phoenissae* 448, for fuller bibliography, and a defense of these lines. The move from an indirect summons to a direct one is unusual, but given that *Phoenissae* contains three other direct summonses, it could have been motivated by Euripides' desire to develop this pattern.

ὦ τέκνον ἔξελθ' Ἀντιγόνη δόμων πάρος·
 οὐκ ἐν χορείαις οὐδὲ παρθελεύμασιν
 νῦν σοι προχωρεῖ δαιμόνων κατάστασις,
 ἀλλ' ἄνδρ' ἀρίστω καὶ κασιγνήτῳ σέθεν
 εἰς θάνατον ἐκνεύοντε κωλύσαί σε δεῖ
 ξὺν μητρὶ τῇ σῆ μὴ πρὸς ἀλλήλοιν θανεῖν.

Daughter Antigone, come out before the palace. It is not in the choral dances or maidenly pursuits that the fortune sent by the gods proceeds for you: the two heroes, your brothers, are veering toward death, and you and your mother must prevent their being killed each at the other's hand.

While the direct summons itself (1264) has not been suspected, some editors delete the extended address at 1265–1269, which is presumably delivered to Antigone before she has emerged from the palace.³⁰ But if they are genuine, these lines fit well thematically with the play: because Antigone's maidenly propriety has already been stressed (92–95), for Jocasta to state now that the time has come for her to leave “maidenly pursuits” (1265) is particularly appropriate.³¹ And if Antigone's entrance were delayed until after line 1269, this would fit the pattern established for summoned entrances elsewhere in the play.

After Antigone returns on stage with the corpses of her mother and two brothers, there is the final *skene* entrance of the tragedy, as Oedipus is summoned by Antigone (1530–1538):

ὄτοτοτοῖ· λείπε σοὺς
 δόμους, ἀλαδὸν ὄμμα φέρων,
 πάτερ γεραιέ, δεῖξον,
 Οἶδοπόδα, σὸν αἰῶνα μέλεον, ὃς ἔτι
 δώμασιν ἀέριον σκότον ὄμμασι
 σοῖσι βαλὼν ἔλκεις μακρόπνουν ζοάν.
 κλύεις, ὦ κατ' αὐλάν

³⁰ Eduard Fraenkel, *Źu den Phoenissen des Euripides* (Munich 1963) 67–71. The lines are deleted by Diggle, *Euripidis* III, and Kovacs, *Euripides* IV, but defended by Mueller-Goldingen, *Untersuchungen* 197–199; Craik, *Phoenician Women* 240–241; Mastronarde, *Phoenissae* 501; and Amiech, *Phéniciennes* 512.

³¹ L. A. Swift, “Sexual and Familial Distortion in Euripides' *Phoenissae*,” *TAPA* 139 (2009) 53–87, at 63.

ἀλαίνων γεραίων
 πόδ' ἢ δεμνίοις
 δύστανος ἰαύων;

Alas! Leave your house behind, blind though your eyes be, aged father Oedipus, and show your miserable fate, you that still within the house, having cast upon your eyes a murky darkness, drag out your life of long toil! Do you hear, you that in the courtyard wander with aged step or in your wretchedness lie abed?

Here too there is a delayed entrance. Following the completion of her summons at 1533, Antigone sings a further six manuscript lines, and her words suggest a delay (“do you hear?” 1536).

From this survey it is clear that, at least for the most part, entrances from the *skene* in *Phoenissae* occur in response to a summons or involve some delay. Though there are doubts over the original text and over some staging details, it is possible that there are only four entrances from the *skene* in the tragedy (a low number for such a long drama),³² that all of these entrances are directly summoned (which are otherwise very rare when the *skene* represents an elite house), and that in three of the summoned entrances the summoner reacts as though the entrance is delayed (which is also otherwise unusual).³³ Even if we excised those lines commonly suspected as interpolations, we would still be left with a pattern of *skene* entrances that is very unusual for an elite house: three directly summoned entrances and three with clear evidence of a delay.³⁴

³² Of the twenty other tragedies where the *skene* represents any sort of dwelling, fifteen have more than four *skene* entrances, according to a count based on Hamilton, *HSCP* 82 (1978) 73–80.

³³ Of the other twelve examples of directly summoned entrances in extant tragedy only one (*Soph. Aj.* 71–90) has any indication of a delay similar to what we find at lines 298, 1069, and 1536, so this is certainly a feature peculiar to *Phoenissae*.

³⁴ This involves excising 1070–1071 and 1265–1269 as interpolations. Only a few scholars have made greater excisions affecting the four summoned entrances; see Mastronarde, *Phoenissae* 554–555, for bibliography and discussion.

The best explanation, in my view, of Euripides' unusual handling of *skene* entrances is that it helps to emphasize, through stagecraft, aspects of character and themes that can be found elsewhere in the play. This is most obvious in the case of Antigone. Even before she first enters it is made clear that, as an unmarried girl, Antigone's appearances in public should be carefully controlled (89–95; cf. 193–201, 1275–1276).³⁵ That she should leave the house only in response to a summons contributes to this picture. The same can be said of Oedipus. At almost the very start of the play we are told that he has been shut up in the house (64), and we must wait until the moment of crisis for the city is over and three of his family are dead before he eventually appears. By having Oedipus leave the palace only after being summoned, Euripides underlines the seclusion that has been forced on him.

It is also noteworthy that both Oedipus' age (1533 and 1536) and his blindness (1531 and 1534) are mentioned twice when he is summoned. The delay Oedipus shows in responding to this summons would reinforce the impression of Oedipus' difficulty in even moving around. Jocasta's delayed entrance after she is summoned at 296–300 also draws attention to her age; when she eventually enters she appears to explain the delay by reference to her old age (301–303). It is important to note that a delay such

³⁵ Ita Hilton, *A Literary Study of Euripides' Phoinissai* (diss. UC London 2011) 144. The concern to control the movement of *parthenoi* is unique to this play: in other extant tragedies unmarried girls move more freely, with any censure of their behavior seeming superficial; see Swift, *TAPA* 139 (2009) 62–64. This is not the only way that space is used differently in *Phoinissae*. M. Lloyd, "Euripides," in I. J. F. de Jong (ed.), *Space in Ancient Greek Literature* (Leiden 2012) 341–357, at 345, notes that the on-stage space, unusually for Euripides, is the place where political decisions and deliberations take place. It is possible that both these factors are related to the unusual treatment Euripides gives to entrances from the *skene*. This is most obvious in the way that Antigone must be summoned before she enters; but, by locating political discussions just outside the palace to which Oedipus has been banished, Euripides is also able to highlight the way that he is now excluded from public life.

as we have is not inevitable when staging summoned entrances of the elderly. Concern for naturalism of this particular type does not seem to be a feature of the tragic summons in general: at Eur. *Heracl.* 642–645 Iolaus speaks just two lines after the completion of his summons (in 643) before Alcmene arrives and does not need to call a second time; the lame Philoctetes appears immediately after being summoned at Soph. *Phil.* 1261–1262. And so it seems that Euripides has chosen to use the summoned entrance, and the opportunity it provides to stage a delayed entrance, as a way of characterizing Oedipus and Jocasta.

While the motivation behind Jocasta's slow response in her first summoned entrance is fairly clear, it is less immediately obvious why Jocasta would need to be summoned at all, given that she is not confined to the palace like Antigone and Oedipus. And in fact, Ita Hilton goes so far as to link Jocasta's exits from the palace with "the active role she seeks to take in public and political life."³⁶ Compared to Antigone and Oedipus, Jocasta is certainly relatively free in her movement: she is outside the palace to deliver the prologue, and again to arbitrate between her sons in their *agon*, and then she rushes to the battlefield in a final bid to resolve their dispute. How does this align with a Jocasta who leaves the palace only when summoned? First, I would argue that her involvement in public affairs is mitigated by being limited to where it is closely linked with the private. Her prologue speech places particular emphasis on how the crisis affecting the city is a crisis in her family, one that dates back two generations.³⁷ Her active role in the drama is restricted to her

³⁶ Hilton, *A Literary Study* 142. See also Anna A. Lamari, "Aeschylus' Seven Against Thebes vs Euripides' Phoenissae: Male vs. Female Power," *WS* 120 (2007) 22–23.

³⁷ Mueller-Goldingen, *Untersuchungen* 37; Thalia Papadopoulou, *Euripides: Phoenician Women* (London 2008) 90. When one also considers the artificiality of this kind of prologue speech, it is unlikely that the audience would have seen Jocasta's presence outside the palace to speak the prologue as indicative of her being unusually active in the city's business.

attempts to resolve the dispute between Polynices and Eteocles; she does not, of course, have any involvement in planning the defense of the city (703–756) or the consultation of Teiresias (834–959). When she finally takes the undoubtedly extraordinary step of attempting to intervene on the battlefield, it is when the battle between the two armies has been reduced to a single combat between her two sons. This leads me to another mitigating factor: Jocasta makes this transgressive intervention into the male world of battle³⁸—and encourages Antigone to do the same—only when extreme circumstances leave her little choice.³⁹ She makes this explicit to Antigone, when she responds to the objection that Antigone would be ashamed to appear in public on the battlefield (1276): οὐκ ἐν αἰσχύνῃ τὰ σὰ (“Your circumstances do not allow shame”).

A further explanation for the simultaneously dynamic and cautious characterization of Jocasta can be found in the effects that Euripides can derive from it. By hinting, through the way he manages her entrances from the *skene*, that Jocasta is reluctant to leave the palace, the tragedian can also set her final actions into greater relief. Euripides' insistence on the impropriety of Antigone leaving the palace provides a similar effect: it makes it more striking that she should, on her return from the battlefield, defy Creon and choose to leave Thebes with her father, having previously been wary of even leaving the palace.⁴⁰

The summoned entrances of Jocasta may also serve to establish a pattern that the later entrances of Antigone and Oedipus continue, and to thus draw more attention to the technique of the direct summons than might otherwise attend to these later entrances. The sequence of three summoned entrances towards

³⁸ On how this action is transgressive of gender norms see Hilton, *A Literary Study* 143; Lamari, *WS* 120 (2007) 22–23.

³⁹ Hilton, *A Literary Study* 143; Swift, *TAPA* 139 (2009) 63.

⁴⁰ On both the insistent portrayal of Antigone as a modest *parthenos* and on her later transformation see Hilton, *A Literary Study* 143–145; Swift, *TAPA* 139 (2009) 63–64.

the end of the play (1067–1071, 1264–1269, 1530–1538) is remarkable: direct summonses of speaking characters from an elite house are unknown outside of this play, but here we have three in 500 lines. The entrances are linked by this common technique and also by an almost chain reaction effect: Eteocles' messenger summons Jocasta, who summons Antigone, who summons Oedipus. The linked fortunes of the various members of this family are thus emphasized by Euripides' stagecraft, and the pattern of entrances, like this family's destruction and dispersal in this tragedy, culminates with Oedipus, who finally enters from the palace (1539) and is almost immediately (1589) banished from Thebes.⁴¹

August, 2022

jamesclark545@gmail.com

⁴¹ I would like to thank the *GRBS* reviewer for his helpful comments.