TWO TECHNICAL TERMS IN GREEK PROGYMNASMATA TREATISES*

I offer here two discussions of technical terms in Greek progymnasmata treatises: the heading of γνώμη in the exercise in loci communes (κοινὸς τόπος) in Ps.-Hermogenes, Progym. 6 p. 12,8 Rabe; and the heading of ἐν μέρει . . . τὴν ἔκθεσιν in the exercise in Confirmation (κατασκευή) in Aphthonius, Progym. VI p. 14,1 Rabe. My aim is twofold: first, to correct and augment three modern translations; and second, to elucidate the theory and practice of these two headings in ancient and Byzantine progymnasmata (treatises, model exercises, and commentaries). With the exception of the three translations, there is no previous modern scholarship on either heading.

1. The heading of γνώμη in [Hermog.] Progym. 6 p. 12,8 Rabe

The basic definition of γνώμη is a considered thought or judgment. In literature, the γνώμη or “maxim” takes as its subject “human life or the terms of human existence, articulated as a succinct general truth or instruction.” Found especially in archaic poetry, Euripidean tragedy, and the comedies of Menander, many such maxims circulated in collections and were used in ancient schools. In rhetorical theory, a γνώμη could serve in a logical argument as the major premise or conclusion of an enthymeme

*) I am grateful to Jeffrey Beneker, Malcolm Heath, and the editors of this journal for their valuable suggestions and criticisms. This article was accepted for publication by RhM before M. Patillon’s edition had appeared in print (cf. n. 1). To avoid a lengthy postscript, the discussion of Patillon’s views was subsequently integrated into the argument while the article’s main theses remained unchanged.

1) C. S. Baldwin, Medieval rhetoric and poetic to 1400 interpreted from representative works, Gloucester 1928; G. A. Kennedy, Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric, Atlanta 2003; M. Patillon, Corpus Rhetoricum, Paris 2008.
3) Silk (above, n. 2) 640.
(Arist. Rhet. II 21, 1393a25 f.), or could be used simply as a means of adornment (Quint. Inst. or. 8,5). For the authors of progymnasmata treatises, the term γνώμη never takes on the specific Aristotelian meaning and only once refers to a means of adornment. Rather, these writers use the term mainly to refer to (1) the elementary exercise in which students elaborated on the truth of a given γνώμη, and (2) any considered thought or judgment.

How, then, should one understand the term γνώμη in Ps.-Hermogenes’ division of the headings of loci communes? “One should proceed as follows: first, by examination of the opposite; then, the act itself; then, the comparison; then, the γνώμη; then you will slander his past life conjecturally from his present one; then you will reject pity by means of the so-called final headings and a vivid description of the act.” C. S. Baldwin translates γνώμη here as “proverb”, G. A. Kennedy as “maxim”, and M. Patillon as “mentalité”. Ps.-Hermogenes follows this division with a sample elaboration of an exercise against a temple robber, in which he says: “You will also examine the γνώμη on the basis of which he came to this point: ‘Being unwilling to farm, he wished to become rich from such things.’” Patillon again translates γνώμη as “mentalité”. Baldwin again interprets it as a “proverb” and Kennedy as a “max-

4) See R. D. Anderson, Jr., Glossary of Greek Rhetorical Terms, Leuven 2000, 30–32, for further discussion.
6) The exercise is discussed by Theon, Progym. 96,24–97,3 p. 18–19 Patillon as a type of chreia. The exercise is also discussed by [Hermog.] Progym. 4 p. 8,16–10,21 Rabe; Aphth. Progym. IV p. 7,1–10,7 Rabe; and Nicol. Progym. p. 25,1–29,6 Felten. The word γνώμη refers exclusively to the exercise in Nicolaus and (with the exception of the passage under discussion) in Ps.-Hermogenes.
8) Progym. 6 p. 12,6–11 Rabe: χρὴ δὲ οὕτως προάγειν· πρὸτα κατὰ τὴν ἐξέτασιν τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ, εἰτα αὐτὸ τὸ πρᾶγμα, εἰτα ἡ σύγκρισις, εἰτα ἡ γνώμη, εἰτα στοχαστικῶς τὸν παρελθόντα βίον ἀπὸ τοῦ παρόντος διαβαλεῖς, εἰτα εκβαλεῖς τὸν ἔλεον τοῖς τελικοῖς κεφαλαίοις καλουμένοις καὶ ὑποτυπώσει τοῦ πράγματος.
9) Baldwin (above, n. 1) 29; Kennedy (above, n. 1) 79; Patillon (above, n. 1) 191.
10) Progym. 6 p. 14,1–3 Rabe: ἐξετάσεις δὲ καὶ τὴν γνώμην, ἀφ’ ἂς ἦλθεν εἰς τοῦτο, ὡς ἐμὴ βουλομένου γεωργεῖν ὑπὸ τοιούτων πλουτεῖν ἐθέλει. In his sample exercise Ps.-Hermogenes places the heading of γνώμη after the attack on the temple robber’s past life instead of before it, as he recommended in his division.
One could imagine a maxim that would express similar ideas (e.g., “it is better to work the land than to do evil” or “nothing is better than working the land”). However, Ps.-Hermogenes has not presented the heading of γνώμη in the form of a pithy, universal claim about human life. Based on a comparative study of the progymnasmata treatises of Ps.-Hermogenes and Aphthonius, the model exercises in Libanius, and John Doxapatres’ *Homiliae in Aphthonium*, I argue that the heading of γνώμη in Ps.-Hermogenes means “state of mind” or “way of thinking” (Patillon’s “la mentalité”). In fact, it means the same thing in Ps.-Hermogenes as it does in Aphthonius. Aphthonius divides the exercise in loci communes as follows:

After [the introduction] you will place first the heading “from the opposite”; then you will add the exposition – not as though teaching it (for it is well known), but as though provoking the listener. After which you will add the comparison, bringing the greater thing together in juxtaposition with the thing for which he is being accused. Then the so-called heading of γνώμη, slandering the thought process of the agent. Then a digression, vilifying his past life conjecturally. Then a rejection of pity, and the end of the exercise is the final headings: the legal, just, expedient, possible, honorable, result.

Note that in both divisions of the exercise, the heading of γνώμη is placed between the comparison and the criticism of the subject’s past life. Patillon translates Aphthonius’ heading of γνώμη as “l’intention”, whereas he translated the same heading in Ps.-Hermogenes as “la mentalité”. However, he elsewhere shows that Ps.-

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11) Baldwin (above, n. 1) 30; Kennedy (above, n. 1) 80. Kennedy translates τὴν γνώμην, ἀφ’ ἡς ἠλθεν ἐπὶ τόσον as “the maxim which describes how he came to this” (my emphasis).


13) Patillon (above, n. 1) 193.

14) Progym. VII p. 17,5–15 Rabe: μεθ’ ἀ δῆσεις κεφάλαιον πρώτον ἐκ τοῦ ἐναντίου, εἶτα ἐποίσεις τὴν ἐκθέσιν ὑπ’ ὡς διδάσκοντας, ἐγνωσταί γὰρ, ἀλλ’ ὡς παραθέτοις τῶν ἀκροφνέοντο· μεθ’ ἧν ἐποίσεις τὴν σύγκρισιν ἐκ παραθέσεως συνάγει τοῦ κατηγοροῦμένο τὸ μείζον· εἶτα γνώμην κεφάλαιον οὕτω καλοῦμεν, διαβάλλει τὴν τοῦ πράξαντος διάνοιαν· εἶτα παρέκβασιν, στοχαστικάς κακίζων τὸν φθάναντα βίον· ἐπείτα ἐλέυθερον κακίζων, καὶ τελευταῖα τῶν προγυμνάσματος τὰ τελικὰ κεφάλαια, νόμιμον, δίκαιον, σωφρένον, δυνατόν, ἔνδοξον, εκβήσουμεν.

15) Patillon (above, n. 1) 127.
Hermogenes’ heading of γνώμη and Aphthonius’ heading of γνώμη are in fact the same.\(^{16}\)

In his sample exercise against a murderer, Aphthonius elaborates the heading γνώμη as follows:

> It naturally follows for all other men that, even if they do the most terrible things, they at least separate their γνώμη from their action, but the tyrant alone is unable to state that his audacious act was involuntary. For if he attempted to become a tyrant unwillingly, perhaps someone would release him from judgment. But since he acted after full deliberation, how is it just to exclude what originated by means of γνώμη before the deeds?\(^{17}\)

At first glance Aphthonius’ general criticism of the murderer’s wicked intentions seems quite different from Ps.-Hermogenes’ specific criticism of the temple robber’s unwillingness to take up farming. However, Libanius’ model exercises show that the two conceptions could be treated as one in practice. In his elaboration of the heading of γνώμη in his exercises,\(^{18}\) Libanius suggests legitimate occupations that the subject could and should have followed (as in Ps.-Hermogenes) if he had not been so wicked (as in Aphthonius).\(^{19}\) In addition, the Byzantine critic John Doxapatres understood the heading of γνώμη in Ps.-Hermogenes and Aphthonius as aiming at the same goal. In his commentary on the phrase, “next the so-called heading of γνώμη” (Aphth. Progym. VII p. 17,10 Rabe), Doxapatres says:

> In the heading of γνώμη we say either that this man has done the terrible thing not unwillingly, but willingly, and for this reason deserves very great punishment; or that being wicked and having become ac-

\(^{16}\) Patillon (above, n. 1) 231 compares the different ancient divisions of the heading of loci communes. He describes Ps.-Hermogenes and Aphthonius alike as having a heading of “intention”.

\(^{17}\) Progym. VII p. 19,11–17 Rabe: ἕπεται τοῖς ἄλλοις ἁπασιν ἀνθρώποις, κἂν δεινότατα πράξωσι, τὴν γνώμην γοῦν ἔξελέσθαι τῆς πράξεως, μόνος ἰδών τῦραννος ἀκοῦσιν εἰπὲν οὐκ ἔσχε τὴν τύλμαν. εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἂκων ἐνεχείρει τῷ τυραννεῖν, τυχὸν ἄν τις αὐτὸν ἀφέῃ τῇ δίκῃ: ἐπειδὴ δὲ βεβουλευμένος ἔδρασε, ποῦ δίκαιον ὑπὲξελεῖν τῷ πρὸ τοῦ ἔργων τῇ γνώμῃ γενόμενον;

\(^{18}\) Libanius does not label his headings, and so does not actually use the word γνώμη.

\(^{19}\) These occupations include farming, sailing, working in the agora, pursuing a trade, serving as a mercenary, and – with an allusion to the example of Demosthenes – donating money, volunteering to serve as choral producer, and providing dowries to poor men’s daughters. See Libanius, Loci communes 1,26 (VIII p. 169,10–170,3), 2,19 (VIII p. 180,5–13), and 4,17–18 (VIII p. 201,5–16 Foerster).
customed to doing wicked acts, and not wishing to apply himself to farming or commerce, he also wants to become rich from the terrible things. For example, if speaking against a temple robber or tomb robber or thief or violent man or robber, we will say: “All other men, even if they stumble unwillingly, are punished; but this man, not being able to say that he erred unwillingly, how will he go unpunished?” Or “Unwilling to do fitting things and to make his livelihood on a just pretext, he considered how to become rich from other people’s belongings.”

Doxapatres thus shows that the heading of γνώμη can be approached in two ways, following either the method of Aphthonius (i.e. the first example, “All other men . . .”) or that of Ps.-Hermogenes (i.e. the second example, “Unwilling to do fitting things . . .”). Both methods of elaborating the heading emphasize the subject’s evil way of thinking. As Doxapatres explains in a later passage, “the heading of γνώμη is called this because in it we scrutinize the subject’s γνώμη, in accordance with which he did this particular thing.” Rather than referring to one specific (and evil) judgment, γνώμη as a heading of loci communes in Ps.-Hermogenes and Aphthonius refers to the subject’s judgment in general, his entire way of thinking or mental outlook. For Ps.-Hermogenes and Libanius, the subject’s γνώμη is reflected specifically in his choice of occupation; Aphthonius’s conception is more general; Doxapatres allows for both approaches. In all these cases, γνώμη is a fundamentally ethical heading; one might understand it as the mental component of the subject’s character, and thus nearly synonymous with character itself. The goal of this heading in loci communes is to show that the evil of the subject’s actions is matched and caused by the evil of his conscious, informed, and deliberate judgments.

20) II p. 392,11–22 Walz: ἐν τῇ γνώμῃ τῷ κεφαλαίῳ ἦτοι τοῦτο λέγομεν, ὅτι οὐκ ἄκων τὸ δεινὸν ὑπὸ τῆς μοίρας, ἀλλὰ ἔκων καὶ παρὰ τὸ τοῦτο τιμωρίας μεγίστης ἐξίσχος. ἢ ὅτι πονηρός ὑπὸ τὸν πλουτίων, τὰ πονηρὰ ἐθισθεὶς πράττειν, καὶ γεωργία μητζουλόμενος προσενέχει τῇ ἐμπορίᾳ ἀπὸ τὸν δεινὸν πλουτίων βουλεύεται, οἷον εἰ κατὰ ιεροσύλου ἢ τυμβωρύχου ἢ κλέπτου ἢ βιαίου ἢ ἥρπαγος λέγοντες ἔρουμεν· οἱ μὲν ἄλλοι ἀνθρώποι λέγοντες παντίσωσιν, τιμωροῦσιν· οὗτος δὲ μὴ ἔχων εἰσίν ὡς ἄκων ἔμαχα, πῶς ὁ τοῦτο τῇ ἐμπορίᾳ πράττειν μηδὲ τὸν βιον ἐκ δικαιοίς ἔχειν προφάσεος, ἐκ τῶν ἀλλοτρίων πλουτίων ἐσκέψατο.

21) II p. 393,12–14 Walz: οὕτω δὲ καλεῖται τὸ κεφαλαίων γνώμη, διότι ἐν αὐτῷ τὴν τοῦ προσώπου ἐξετάζομεν γνώμην, καὶ ἐν τῇ γνώμῃ ποιεῖται τὸ κεφαλαίων γνώμη.
Aphthonius divides the exercise in Confirmation as follows: “Those confirming must use the headings opposite of those in Refutation, and, first, state the good reputation of the speaker, ἐν μέρει δεῖναι τὴν ἐκθέσιν, and use the opposite headings . . .” 22 Kennedy translates εἰτά ἐν μέρει δείναι τὴν ἐκθέσιν as “then, in turn, provide an exposition”, and Patillon translates it as “et on mettra en deuxième position l’exposé”.23 Kennedy’s “in turn” (ἐν μέρει) is an unnecessary duplication of the sense of εἰτά and is not paralleled in Aphthonius. Patillon’s “en deuxième position” combines εἰτα with ἐν μέρει as one expression. I argue that both translations are incorrect here, as may be seen from ancient and Byzantine theory and practice.

The Byzantine commentator John Doxapatres shows that ἐν μέρει δείναι τὴν ἐκθέσιν means “to provide a piecemeal (i.e. part by part) exposition”. In his discussion of Aphthonius’ sample exercise, Doxapatres paraphrases ἐν μέρει with the adjective μερική in the phrase ἡ μερικὴ ἔκθεσις (II p. 361,9 Walz). In addition, in his commentary on the passage quoted above, he shows that the “piecemeal exposition” of Confirmation presupposes the fuller exposition of the corresponding Refutation that preceded it:

It is not in Refutation that he (sc. Aphthonius) said that one must make a piecemeal exposition (ἐν μέρει . . . τὴν ἐκθέσιν), but in Confirmation, for some such reason as this. For since one must refute the same things as one undertakes to confirm, but we refute first and then confirm, for this reason we expound the matter in its entirety (ὁλοσχερος) in the Refutation, (but not in the Confirmation), 24 be-

22) Progym. VI p. 13,24–14,2 Rabe: δεί δὲ κατασκευάζοντας τοῖς ἔναγτίοις χρήσασθαι τῆς ἁνασκευῆς καὶ πρῶτον μὲν εἰπεῖν εὐφημίαι τοῦ φήσαντος, εἰτα ἐν μέρει δείναι τὴν ἐκθέσιν, καὶ τοῖς ἐναγτίοις χρήσασθαι κεφαλαίως . . .

23) Kennedy (above, n. 1) 103–104; Patillon (above, n. 1) 124.

24) There is apparently a small gap in the text at II p. 357,16 Walz; the phrase ἐν μὲν τῇ ἁνασκευῇ (II p. 357,15) is not answered by a ἐν δὲ τῇ κατασκευῇ, as happens below in II p. 357,20–23. Something like “but not in the Confirmation” or “but only piecemeal in the Confirmation” would supply the necessary sense. Cf. the anonymous scholia to Aphthonius: ἐπειδὴ γὰρ τὸ αὐτὸ δέον ἁνασκευάζειν καὶ κατασκευάζειν, οὐ δὲ προεκδημοῦνος ὅλον ἐν τῇ ἁνασκευῇ τὸ δήμημα ταυτολογεῖν διόλου πάλιν ἐν τῇ κατασκευῇ (“For since one must refute and confirm the
cause the listeners have already learned it in the Refutation and have no need to learn the same things again. Or since dramatic narratives are easy to refute, but difficult to confirm, for this reason in the Refutation we expound the matter gathered in one place (ἀθρόον), inasmuch as we are able to refute everything in the exposition, but in the Confirmation we do not expound it gathered in one place; rather, there are times when we even omit some of the things that were expounded in the Refutation, inasmuch as we are not well equipped for a Confirmation of every detail.

This interpretation of ἐν μέρει θείαιν ἕκθεσιν also makes better sense of surviving examples of the exercise in Confirmation. Aphthonius provides a sample Refutation (ἀνασκευή) of the myth of Daphne and a sample Confirmation of the same. His full exposition of the myth in the Refutation runs as follows:

“Daphne,” he says, “came forth from Earth and Ladon, and, surpassing the majority in beauty, she made the Pythian her lover. And loving, he pursued, but pursuing, did not catch; rather, Earth having received her child produced a flower with the same name as the girl. And he crowned her, transformed, and the plant became a garland set up on the Pythian tripod because of his desire for the mortal girl, and he makes the growth a token of his art.” And that is the myth that they have told, but it remains to test it from the following.

The same thing, one must not, after setting forth the narrative as a whole in the Refutation, repeat it all over again in the Confirmation”, II p. 30,23–25 Walz).


26) II p. 357,11–25 Walz: ἐν τῇ ἀνασκευή ὑσιὲ δεῖν ἐν μέρει ποιεῖσθαι τὴν ἐκθέσιν, ἀλλὰ ἐν τῇ κατασκευῇ διὰ αἰτίας τοιαύτης. ἐπειδὴ γὰρ τὰ αὐτὰ δέον ἀνασκευάζεται, ἀπέρ καὶ κατασκευάζεται ενδέχεται, πρῶτον δὲ ἀνασκευάζομεν καὶ οὕτω κατασκευάζομεν, διὰ τοῦτο ἐν μὲν τῇ ἀνασκευή ὁλοσχερὸς τὸ πράγμα ἐκτιθέμεθα, διὰ τὸ ἴδιο τούς ἀκροατὰς αὐτὸ μαθεῖν ἐν τῇ ἀνασκευή, καὶ μὴ πάλιν χρείαν ἔχειν τὰ αὐτὰ μιανάνειν· ἡ ἐπειδὴ τὰ δραματικὰ διηγήματα εὐκόλως ἀνασκευάζομεν, κατασκευάζομεν δὲ δυσκόλως, διὰ τοῦτο ἐν μὲν τῇ ἀνασκευή ἄθροον εκτιθέμεθα τὸ πράγμα, ὅτε δὴ καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν τῇ ἐκθέσις ἀνασκευάζομαι δυνάμενοι, ἐν δὲ τῇ κατασκευῇ οὐκ ἐκτιθέμεθα αὐτὸ ἄθροον, ἀλλὰ ἐστὶν ὅταν καὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ ἀνασκευῇ |κατασκευῇ Walz] εκτεθέντων παραλιμπάνομεν, ἄτε δὴ μὴ εὐπόρως τῆς πρὸς πάντα κατασκευῆς ἔχοντες. This subject is similarly treated by the anonymous scholia to Aphthonius (II p. 30,22–31,3 Walz).

In the corresponding Confirmation, however, Aphthonius provides only a piecemeal exposition, which begins immediately after the end of the proem: “For although he said such things, some disbelieve. ‘Daphne,’ he says, ‘came forth from Earth and Ladon.’”

Doxapatres quotes this and identifies it as the “piecemeal exposition”: 

το/upsiloncircumτό ἐστιν ἡ μερικὴ ἔκθεσις, /etaaspercircumς ἐν τ/etaiotacircum μεθόδ/omegaiota ἐμνημόνευσε λέγων, ὅτι ἐν μέρει δὲ ἰδιόνοι τὴν ἔκθεσιν (II p. 361,9–10 Walz). In light of his earlier discussion at II p. 357,10–25 Walz, we should understand Doxapatres to mean that this is the beginning of the piecemeal exposition, not the whole thing. Aphthonius’ piecemeal exposition goes on to discuss Daphne’s parents (Progym. VI p. 14,16–20 Rabe; cf. the earlier full exposition in Progym. V p. 11,7 Rabe), her beauty (Progym. VI p. 15,1–7; cf. V p. 11,7–8), Apollo falling in love with her (Progym. VI p. 15,8–13; cf. V p. 11,8–9), Apollo pursuing but not catching her (Progym. VI p. 15,14–21; cf. V p. 11,9), her mother receiving her (Progym. VI p. 15,22–16,2; cf. V p. 11,10), her transformation into the laurel (Progym. VI p. 16,3–5; cf. V p. 11,10–11), and her role in Apollo’s cult (Progym. VI p. 16,6–14; cf. V p. 11,11–14 Rabe).

The practice of supplying a piecemeal exposition in Confirmation is found regularly in other model progymnasmata, as well. In a pair of exercises falsely attributed to Libanius, the Refutation provides a full exposition of the story of the lesser Ajax (Refutation 2,1–2 [VIII p. 128,15–129,13 Foerster]), while the Confirmation gives only a piecemeal exposition, briefly mentioning the circumstances of the rape, the Greeks’ failure to recognize the crime, Ajax’s flight before trial, the public disagreement of Menelaus and Agamemnon, and Menelaus’ misadventures on the return voyage (Confirmation 3,1–13 [VIII p. 150,21–154,22 Foerster]). The practice is also found in pairs of progymnasmata by Ps.-Nicolaus, as


29) Refutation 2 and Confirmation 3 were declared spurious by R. Foerster and K. Münscher, Libanios, RE XII (1925) 2520. A. F. Norman, Libanius: Selected Orations, I, Cambridge, Mass. 1969, xlix, however, believed that Refutation 2 was genuine.

well as in pairs by Nikephoros Basilakes, George Pachymeres, and two anonymous Byzantine authors. In every case in which paired exercises are preserved, the Refutation provides a full exposition of the myth, while the Confirmation gives only a piecemeal exposition. This rule holds true even when only one exercise of a presumed pair appears in a collection. In Ps.-Nicolaus’ Progymnasmata, while the unpaired Refutations of the stories of the Centaurs and Candaules give full expositions of the stories, the unpaired Confirmations of the stories of the judgment over Achilles’ arms, Narcissus, Danae, and Orestes give only piecemeal expositions.

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31) Cf. the full exposition of the story of Atalanta in the Refutation (I p. 450,17–30 Walz) with the piecemeal exposition in the corresponding Confirmation (beginning from I p. 454,26–455,3 Walz).

32) Cf. the full exposition of the story of the rose in the Refutation (I p. 558,1–9 Walz) with the piecemeal one in the Confirmation (beginning from I p. 559,32–560,2 Walz). (The Refutation is wrongly labeled a κατασκευή at I p. 557,17, while the Confirmation is labeled κατασκευή ἐκ τοῦ ἐναντίου at I p. 559,24–25 Walz.)

33) Cf. the full exposition of the story of the plane tree in the Refutation (I p. 609,20–28 Walz) with the piecemeal one in the Confirmation (beginning from I p. 612,12–14 Walz). Cf. also the full exposition of the story of Ganymedes in the Refutation (II p. 350,5–15 Walz) with the piecemeal one in the Confirmation (beginning from I p. 367,1–2 Walz).

34) Full expositions found in Refutations without corresponding Confirmations: Centaurs (I p. 286,5–13 Walz) and Candaules (I p. 287,22–288,1 Walz).

35) Piecemeal expositions found in Confirmations without corresponding Refutations: The judgment over Achilles’ arms (beginning from I p. 292,6–8 Walz), Narcissus (beginning from I p. 294,17–19 Walz), Danae (beginning from I p. 296, 6–7 Walz), and Orestes (beginning from I p. 318,12–17 Walz; the piecemeal exposition begins in the course of the proem).