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SOPHOCLES

II

SOPHOCLES

WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES

II

AJAX

ELECTRA TRACHINIAE

PHILOCTETES



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•
AJAX

VOL. II.

B

ARGUMENT

THE arms of Achilles, claimed by Ajax as the bravest warrior in the host, were through intrigue given to Odysseus, and Ajax vows vengeance both on the winner and on the awarders of the prize. But Athena, his patron goddess, whom his arrogance has estranged, sends him a delusion so that he mistakes for his foes the sheep and cattle of the Greeks. Athena, when the play opens, is discovered conversing with Odysseus outside the tent of Ajax; she will show him his mad foe mauling the beasts within. The mad fit passes and Ajax bewails his insensate folly and declares that death alone can wipe out the shame. His wife Tecmessa and the Chorus try to dissuade him, but he will not be comforted and calls for his son Eurysaces. The child is brought, and after leaving his last injunctions for his brother Teucer, Ajax takes a tender farewell. He then fetches his sword from the tent and goes forth declaring that he will purge himself of his stains and bury his sword. Presently a Messenger from the camp announces that Teucer has returned from his foray and has learnt from Calchas, the seer, that if only Ajax can be kept within the camp for that day all may yet be well. The Chorus and Tecmessa set forth in quest of Ajax, and Tecmessa discovers him lying transfixed by his sword. Teucer finds the mourners gathered round the corpse and is preparing to bury him, when Menelaus hurries up to forbid the burial. After an angry wrangle with Teucer, Menelaus departs, but is succeeded by Agamemnon, who enforces his brother's veto and is hardly persuaded by Odysseus to relent. Ajax is carried by his Salaminians to his grave, a grave (so they prophesy) that shall be famous for all time.

ΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΑΘΗΝΑ

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ΑΙΑΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ ΣΑΛΑΜΙΝΙΩΝ ΝΑΥΤΩΝ

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ATHENA.

ODYSSEUS, *King of Ithaca.*

AJAX, *son of Telamon and Euboea, leader of the men of Salamis.*

TECMESSA, *his captive wife, daughter of Telectas, King of Phrygia.*

EURYSAGES, *their infant son.*

TEUCER, *son of Telamon by Hesione.*

MENELAUS, *King of Sparta.*

AGAMEMNON, *his brother, captain of the host.*

MESSENGER, *one of Ajax's men.*

CHORUS, *Mariners of Salamis.*

SCENE: The shore on the Northern coast of the Troad
before the tent of Ajax. TIME: Early morning.

ΑΙΑΣ

ΑΘΗΝΑ

Ἄει μὲν, ὦ παῖ Λαρτίου, δέδορκά σε
πειράν τιν' ἐχθρῶν ἀρπάσαι θηρώμενον·
καὶ νῦν ἐπὶ σκηναῖς σε ναυτικαῖς ὄρω
Αἴαντος, ἔνθα τάξιν ἐσχάτην ἔχει,
πάλαι κυνηγετοῦντα καὶ μετρούμενον
ἴχνη τὰ κείνου νεοχάραχθ', ὅπως ἴδῃς
εἴτ' ἔνδον εἴτ' οὐκ ἔνδον. εὐ δέ σ' ἐκφέρει
κυνὸς Λακαίνης ὡς τις εὖρινος βάσις.
ἔνδον γὰρ ἀνήρ ἄρτι τυγχάνει, κἀρα
στάζων ἰδρῶτι καὶ χέρας ξιφοκτόνους.
καὶ σ' οὐδὲν εἴσω τῆσδε παπταίνειν πύλης
ἔτ' ἔργον ἐστίν, ἐννέπειν δ' ὄτου χάριν
σπουδῆν ἔθου τήνδ', ὡς παρ' εἰδυίας μάθῃς.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ὦ φθέγμ' Ἀθάνας, φιλτάτης ἐμοὶ θεῶν,
ὡς εὐμαθές σου, κἀν ἄποπτος ἦς ὁμως,
φώνημ' ἀκούω καὶ ξυναρπάζω φρενὶ
χαλκοστόμου κώδωνος ὡς Τυρσηνικῆς.
καὶ νῦν ἐπέγνωσ εὐ μ' ἐπ' ἀνδρὶ δυσμενεῖ
βάσιν κυκλοῦντ', Αἴαντι τῷ σακεσφόρῳ·

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AJAX

*Enter ODYSSEUS, scanning recent footprints in the sand
ATHENA, invisible to ODYSSEUS, is seen by the
spectators above the stage in the air.*

ATHENA

Son of Laertes, ever on the prowl
To seize some coign of vantage 'gainst thy foes,
Now at the tent of Ajax by the ships,
Where he is posted on the flank, I see thee
Following the trail and scanning his fresh tracks,
To learn if Ajax be within or no.
Bravely thy long search brings thee to the goal,
Like a keen-scented hound of Spartan breed ;
The man has even now returned, his brow
Bedewed with sweat and hands besmeared with gore
No further need to peer within these doors ;
Say rather what the purpose of thy search
Thus keenly urged, and learn from one who knows.

ODYSSEUS

Voice of Athena, Goddess most by me
Beloved, how clearly, though I see thee not,
Those accents strike my ear and thrill my soul,
Like some Tyrrhenian trumpet, brazen-mouthed.
Yea, thou hast well divined why thus I cast
About in hot pursuance of a foe,
Ajax, the bearer of the seven-fold shield :

κείνον γάρ, οὐδέν' ἄλλον, ἰχνεύω πάλαι.
 νυκτὸς γάρ ἤϊας τῆσδε πράγος ἄσκοπον
 ἔχει περάνας, εἴπερ εἴργασται τάδε·
 ἴσμεν γάρ οὐδέν τρανές, ἀλλ' ἀλώμεθα·
 κἀγὼ θελοντῆς τῶδ' ὑπεξύγην πόνω.
 ἐφθαρμένας γὰρ ἀρτίως εὐρίσκομεν
 λείας ἀπάσας καὶ κατηναρισμένας
 ἐκ χειρὸς αὐτοῖς ποιμνίων ἐπιστάταις.
 τήνδ' οὖν ἐκείνω πᾶς τις αἰτίαν νέμει,
 καὶ μοί τις ὄπτῃρ αὐτὸν εἰσιδὼν μόνον
 πηδῶντα πεδία σὺν νεορράντῳ ξίφει
 φράζει τε κῦδήλωσεν· εὐθέως δ' ἐγὼ
 κατ' ἴχνος ἄσσω, καὶ τὰ μὲν σημαίνομαι,
 τὰ δ' ἐκπέπληγμαι κούκ ἔχω μαθεῖν ὄτυ.
 καιρὸν δ' ἐφήκεις· πάντα γὰρ τὰ τ' οὖν πάρος
 τὰ τ' εἰσέπειτα σῆ κυβερνώμαι χερσί.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

ἔγνω, Ὀδυσσεύ, καὶ πάλαι φύλαξ ἔβην
 τῆ σῆ πρόθυμος εἰς ὄδον κυναγία.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἦ καί, φίλη δέσποινα, πρὸς καιρὸν πονῶ;

ΑΘΗΝΑ

ὡς ἔστιν ἀνδρὸς τοῦδε τάργα ταῦτά σοι.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

καὶ πρὸς τί δυσλόγιστόν ᾧδ' ἦξεν χέρα;

ΑΘΗΝΑ

χόλω βαρυνθεὶς τῶν Ἀχιλλείων ὄπλων.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

τί δήτα ποίμναις τήνδ' ἐπεμπίπτει βάσιν;

ΑΘΗΝΑ

δοκῶν ἐν ὑμῖν χεῖρα χραίνεσθαι φόνω.

AJAX

Him and none other I have tracked full long.
Last night a monstrous thing he wrought on us,
If it be he in sooth—'tis all surmise.
So for the hard task of discovery
I volunteered. This very morn we found
Our herds, the spoil of war, all hacked and hewn,
Slain with their herdsmen by some human hand.
On him with one consent all lay the guilt :
And by a scout who marked him o'er the plain,
In mad career, alone, with reeking sword,
I duly was informed, and instantly
I sped upon the spoor, and now the tracks
I recognise, and now am all at fault,
Without a clue to tell me whose they are.
Most welcome then thy advent ; thine the hand
That ever guided and shall guide my path.

ATHENA

I know, Odysseus, and set forth betimes
To meet thee and abet thee in this chase.

ODYSSEUS

Tell me, dear mistress, will my quest succeed ?

ATHENA

Know that the guilty man is he thou seek'st.

ODYSSEUS

What moved him to this rash, insensate deed ?

ATHENA

Resentment touching dead Achilles' arms.

ODYSSEUS

Why did he fall upon the innocent sheep ?

ATHENA

He thought his hands were gory with *your* blood.

ΑΙΑΣ

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἤ καὶ τὸ βούλευμ' ὡς ἐπ' Ἀργείοις τὸδ' ἦν;

ΛΘΗΝΑ

κὰν ἐξεπράξατ', εἰ κατημέλησ' ἐγώ.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ποίαισι τόλμαις ταῖσδε καὶ φρενῶν θράσει;

ΛΘΗΝΑ

νύκτωρ ἐφ' ὑμᾶς δόλιος ὀρμᾶται μάνος.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἤ καὶ παρέστη κάπῃ τέρμ' ἀφίκετο;

ΛΘΗΝΑ

καὶ δὴ πῖ δισσαῖς ἦν στρατηγίσιν πύλαις.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

καὶ πῶς ἐπέσχε χεῖρα μαιμῶσαν φόνου;

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ΛΘΗΝΑ

ἐγὼ σφ' ἀπείργω, δυσφόρους ἐπ' ὄμμασι
 γνώμας βαλοῦσα τῆς ἀνηκέστου χαρᾶς,
 καὶ πρὸς τε ποίμνας ἐκτρέπω σύμμικτά τε
 λείας ἄδαστα βουκόλων φρουρήματα·
 ἐνθ' εἰσπέσων ἔκειρε πολύκερων φόνον
 κύκλω ραχίζων· κἀδόκει μὲν ἔσθ' ὅτε
 δισσοὺς Ἄτρείδας ἀντόχειρ κτείνειν ἔχων,
 ὅτ' ἄλλοτ' ἄλλον ἐμπίτνων στρατηλατῶν.
 ἐγὼ δὲ φοιτῶντ' ἄνδρα μανιάσιν νόσοις
 ὠτρυνον, εἰσέβαλλον ἕως ἔρκη κακά.
 κᾶπειτ' ἐπειδὴ τοῦδ' ἐλιώφησεν πόνου,
 τοὺς ζῶντας αὐ δεσμοῖσι συνδήσας βοῶν
 ποίμνας τε πάσας εἰς δόμους κομίζεται,
 ὡς ἄνδρας, οὐχ ὡς εὐκερων ἄγραν ἔχων,
 καὶ νῦν κατ' οἴκους συνδέτους αἰκίζεται.
 δείξω δὲ καὶ σοὶ τήνδε περιφανῆ νόσον,
 ὡς πᾶσιν Ἀργείοισιν εἰσιδῶν θροῆς.

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AJAX

ODYSSEUS

What, was this onslaught planned against the Greeks?

ATHENA

Aye, and it had succeeded, but for me.

ODYSSEUS

How could he venture such fool-hardiness?

ATHENA

He schemed a night attack, by stealth, alone.

ODYSSEUS

And did he reach us and arrive his goal?

ATHENA

At the tent door of the two chiefs he stood.

ODYSSEUS

What then arrested him athirst for blood?

ATHENA

I, by the strong delusion that I sent,
A vision of the havoc he should make.
I turned his wrath aside upon the flocks
And the promiscuous cattle in the charge
Of drovers, booty not apportioned yet.
On them he fell and hewing right and left
Dealt death among the horned herd; and now
It was the two Atridae whom he slew,
And now a third, and now some other chief.
'Twas I that goaded him while thus distraught,
And thrust him deeper in the coils of fate.
Then pausing in this toil he turned to bind
The oxen left alive with all the sheep,
And drave them home, as if his spoil were men,
And not poor innocent beasts with hoofs and horns,
And now is mangling them fast bound within.
Thou too this raving madness shalt behold,
That thou mayst bruit the sight to all the Greeks.

ΑΙΑΣ

θαρσῶν δὲ μίμνε μηδὲ συμφορὰν δέχου ^{αὐτῶν}
 τὸν ἄνδρ'· ἐγὼ γὰρ ὀμμάτων ἀποστρόφους
 αὐγὰς ἀπείρξω σὴν πρόσσφιν εἰσιδεῖν.
 οὔτος, σὲ τὸν τὰς αἰχμαλωτίδας χέρας
 δεσμοῖς ἀπευθύνοντα προσμολεῖν καλῶ·
 Αἴαντα φωνῶ· στείχε δωμάτων πάρος.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

τί δρᾶς, Ἀθάνα; μηδαμῶς σφ' ἔξω κάλει.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

οὐ σῖγ' ἀνέξει μηδὲ δειλίαν ἀρεῖ;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

μὴ πρὸς θεῶν, ἀλλ' ἔνδον ἀρκείτω μένων.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

τί μὴ γένηται; πρόσθεν οὐκ ἀνὴρ ὄδ' ἦν;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἐχθρὸς γε τῷδε τάνδρῃ καὶ ταυῖν ἔτι.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

οὐκουν γέλως ἡδιστος εἰς ἐχθροὺς γελᾶν;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἐμοὶ μὲν ἀρκεῖ τοῦτον ἐν δόμοις μένειν.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

μεμηνότ' ἄνδρα περιφανῶς ὀκνεῖς ἰδεῖν;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

φρονοῦντα γάρ νιν οὐκ ἂν ἐξέστην ὀκνῶ.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

ἀλλ' οὐδὲ νῦν σε μὴ παρόντ' ἴδη πέλας.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

πῶς, εἴπερ ὀφθαλμοῖς γε τοῖς αὐτοῖς ὄρᾳ;

ΑΘΗΝΑ

ἐγὼ σκοτώσω βλέφαρα καὶ δεδορκότα.

AJAX

Be of good heart and stand thy ground ; no harm
Shall come from him, for I will turn aside
His vision, lest he should behold thy face.

(To AJAX within the tent.)

Ho, thou that bind'st with cords behind their backs
Thy captives' hands, ho Ajax, hear'st thou not ?
I summon thee to come before the tent.

ODYSSEUS

What dost thou, Goddess ? Nowise call him forth.

ATHENA

Bridle thy tongue ; earn not a coward's name.

ODYSSEUS

Nay, nay ; suffice it that he bide within.

ATHENA

What fear'st thou ? Is he not, as erst, a man ?

ODYSSEUS

Yea, and to me sworn foeman, and is still.

ATHENA

What mockery sweeter than to mock at foes ?

ODYSSEUS

Enough for me to hear of him within.

ATHENA

What, fear to see a madman face to face ?

ODYSSEUS

I had not quailed to face him, were he sane.

ATHENA

Insane, he shall not see thee now, though near.

ODYSSEUS

If he has eyes as erst, how can that be ?

ATHENA

I will obscure his vision, howe'er clear.

ΑΙΑΣ

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

γένοιτο μέντ' ἂν πᾶν θεοῦ τεχνωμένου.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

οἴγα νυν ἑστὼς καὶ μέν' ὡς κυρεῖς ἔχων.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

μένομι' ἂν ἤθελον δ' ἂν ἐκτὸς ὦν τυχεῖν.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

ὦ οὔτος, Αἴας, δεύτερόν σε προσκαλῶ.
τί βαιὸν οὕτως ἐντρέπει τῆς συμμάχου;

ΑΙΑΣ

ὦ χαῖρ' Ἀθάνα, χαῖρε Διογενὲς τέκνον,
ὡς εὖ παρέστης· καὶ σε παγχρύσοις ἐγὼ
στέψω λαφύροις τῆσδε τῆς ἄγρας χάριν.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

καλῶς ἔλεξας· ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνό μοι φράσον,
ἔβαψας ἔγχος εὖ πρὸς Ἀργείων στρατῶ;

ΑΙΑΣ

κόμπος πάρεστι κούκ ἀπαρνοῦμαι τὸ μῆ.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

ἦ καὶ πρὸς Ἀτρείδαισιν ἤχμασας χέρα;

ΑΙΑΣ

ὥστ' οὔποτ' Αἴανθ' οἶδ' ἀτιμάσουσ' ἔτι.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

τεθνῶσιν ἄνδρες, ὡς τὸ σὸν ξυνῆκ' ἐγώ.

ΑΙΑΣ

θανόντες ἤδη τὰμ' ἀφαιρείσθων ὄπλα.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

εἶεν, τί γὰρ δὴ παῖς ὁ τοῦ Λαερτίου,
ποῦ σοι τύχης ἔστηκεν; ἦ πέφευγέ σε;

ΑΙΑΣ

ἦ τοῦπίτριπτον κίναδος ἐξήρου μ' ὄπου;

AJAX

ODYSSEUS

Well, when a god works, all is possible.

ATHENA

Peace ! stand thy ground and budge not from the spot.

ODYSSEUS

So will I—yet had liefer been far hence.

ATHENA (*to AJAX*)

Ho, Ajax ! once again I summon thee.
Say, why this scant regard for thine ally ?

Enter AJAX.

AJAX

Hail O Athena, Zeus-born maiden, hail !
Thine aid how opportune ! for this I'll crown
Thy shrine with votive spoils of purest gold.

ATHENA

Fair words ; but tell me, hast thou well imbrued
Thy sword with carnage of the Argive host ?

AJAX

A glorious deed that I will not disclaim.

ATHENA

Haply thou has assailed the Atridae too ?

AJAX

So that they ne'er will outrage Ajax more.

ATHENA

If I interpret rightly, they are dead.

AJAX

Both dead ; now let them cheat me of my arms !

ATHENA

Good ; and how fares it with Laertes' son ?
How hast thou left him ? or has he escaped ?

AJAX

He ! That sly fox—wouldst know what's come of him ?

ΑΙΑΣ

ΑΘΗΝΑ

ἔγωγ' Ὀδυσσεά τὸν σὸν ἐνστάτην λέγω.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἠδιστος, ὦ δέσποινα, δεσμώτης ἔσω
θακεί· θανεῖν γὰρ αὐτὸν οὐ τί πω θέλω.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

πρὶν ἂν τί δράσης ἢ τί κερδάνης πλέου;

ΑΙΑΣ

πρὶν ἂν δεθεῖς πρὸς κλον' ἔρκειον· στέγης

ΑΘΗΝΑ

τί δῆτα τὸν δύστηνον ἐργάσει κακόν;

ΑΙΑΣ

μάστιγι πρῶτον νῶτα φοινηχθεὶς θάνη.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

μὴ δῆτα τὸν δύστηνον ὠδέ γ' αἰκίση.

ΑΙΑΣ

χαίρειν, Ἀθήνα, τᾶλλ' ἐγὼ σ' ἐφίεμαι·
κεῖνος δὲ τίσει τήνδε κοῦκ ἄλλην δίκην.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

σὺ δ' οὖν, ἐπειδὴ τέρψις ἦδε σοι τὸ δρᾶν,
χρῶ χειρί, φείδου μηδὲν ὡνπερ ἐννοεῖς.

ΑΙΑΣ

χωρῶ πρὸς ἔργον· σοὶ δὲ τοῦτ' ἐφίεμαι,
τοιάνδ' αἰεὶ μοι σύμμαχον παρεστάται.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

ὄρας, Ὀδυσσεῦ, τὴν θεῶν ἰσχὺν ὄση;
τούτου τίς ἂν σοι τάνδρὸς ἢ προνούστερος
ἢ δρᾶν ἀμείνων ἠρέθη τὰ καίρια;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἐγὼ μὲν οὐδέν' οἶδ'· ἐποικτίρω δὲ νιν
δύστηνον ἔμπας, καίπερ ὄντα δυσμενῆ,

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AJAX

ATHENA

Of him—Odysseus, thy antagonist.

AJAX

A welcome guest he sits within, fast bound.
I have no mind that he should die outright.

ATHENA

What would'st thou first? what further profit win?

AJAX

I'll bind him to a pillar of my tent.

ATHENA

What vengeance wilt thou wreak on the poor wretch?

AJAX

Flay with my scourge his back before he die.

ATHENA

O torture not the wretch so savagely.

AJAX

In all but this, Athena, have thy will;
This and none else, must be his punishment.

ATHENA

Well, since it is thy pleasure, be it so:
Lay on, abate no jot of thine intent.

AJAX

I will to work then, and I look to thee
To be my true ally all times, as now.

[*Exit* AJAX.]

ATHENA

Odysseus, see how great the might of gods.
Couldst thou have found a man more circumspect,
Or one more prompt for all emergencies?

ODYSSEUS

I know none such, and though he be my foe,
I still must pity him in his distress.

ΛΙΑΣ

ὄθουνεκ' ἄτη συγκατέζευκται κακῇ,
οὐδέν τὸ τούτου μᾶλλον ἢ τοῦμὸν σκοπῶν·
ὀρῶ γὰρ ἡμᾶς οὐδέν ὄντας ἄλλο πλὴν
εἶδωλ' ὅσοιπερ ζῶμεν ἢ κούφην σκιάν.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

τοιαῦτα τοίνυν εἰσορῶν ὑπέρκοπον
μηδέν ποτ' εἴπης αὐτὸς εἰς θεοὺς ἔπος,
μηδ' ὄγκον ἄρη μηδέν, εἴ τινος πλέον
ἢ χειρὶ βρίθεις ἢ μακροῦ πλούτου βάθει.
ὡς ἡμέρα κλίνει τε κἀνάγει πάλιν
ἅπαντα τάνθρώπεια· τοὺς δὲ σῶφρονας
θεοὶ φιλοῦσι καὶ στυγοῦσι τοὺς κακοὺς.

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ΧΟΡΟΣ

Τελαμώνιε παῖ, τῆς ἀμφιρύτου
Σαλαμῖνος ἔχων βάθρον ἠγχιάλου,
σέ μὲν εὖ πράσσουντ' ἐπιχαίρω·
σέ δ' ὅταν πληγῇ Διὸς ἢ ζαμενῆς
λόγος ἐκ Δαναῶν κακόθρους ἐπιβῆ,
μέγαν ὄκνον ἔχω καὶ πεφόβημαι
πτηνῆς ὡς ὄμμα πελείας.
ὡς καὶ τῆς νῦν φθιμένης νυκτὸς
μεγάλοι θόρυβοι κατέχουσ' ἡμᾶς
ἐπὶ δυσκλείᾳ, σέ τὸν ἵππομανῆ
λειμῶν' ἐπιβάντ' ὀλέσαι Δαναῶν
βοτὰ καὶ λείαν,
ἥπερ δορίληπτος ἔτ' ἦν λοιπή,
κτείνοντ' αἰθωνι σιδήρῳ.
τοιούσδε λόγους ψιθύρους πλάσσω
εἰς ὦτα φέρει πᾶσιν Ὀδυσσεύς,

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AJAX

Bound, hand and foot, to fatal destiny;
And therein mind my case no less than his.
Alas! we living mortals, what are we
But phantoms all or unsubstantial shades?

ATHENA

Warned by these sights, Odysseus, see that thou
Utter no boastful word against the gods,
Nor swell with pride if haply might of arm
Exalt thee o'er thy fellows, or vast wealth.
A day can prostrate and a day upraise
All that is mortal; but the gods approve
Sobriety and frowardness abhor.

[*Exeunt* ATHENA and ODYSSEUS. *Enter* CHORUS.

CHORUS

Son of Telamon, thou whose isle,
Sea-girt Salamis, doth smile
O'er the surge, thy joys I share
When thy fortunes promise fair;
But if stroke of Zeus assail,
Or the slanderous tongues prevail
Of the Danaï, to blast
Thy repute, I cower aghast,
Like a dove with quivering eye.
For of yesternight there fly
Bitter plaints and loud-voiced blame
Crowding on us to our shame—
How thou speddest o'er the meads
Rich in troops of unbacked steeds,
And with flashing sword didst slay
All the yet unparted prey
Of the Greeks, in foray ta'en,
Spoiling all their hard earned gain.
Such the scandal, as we hear,
Odysseus breathes in every ear;

καὶ σφόδρα πείθει· περὶ γὰρ σοῦ νῦν
 εὔπειστα λέγει, καὶ πᾶς ὁ κλύων
 τοῦ λέξαντος χαίρει μᾶλλον
 τοῖς σοῖς ἄχεσιν καθυβρίζων.
 τῶν γὰρ μεγάλων ψυχῶν ἰεῖς
 οὐκ ἂν ἀμάρτοις· κατὰ δ' ἂν τις ἐμοῦ
 τοιαῦτα λέγων οὐκ ἂν πείθῃ·
 πρὸς γὰρ τὸν ἔχονθ' ὁ φθόνος ἔρπει.
 καίτοι σμικροὶ μεγάλων χωρὶς
 σφαλερὸν πύργου ῥῦμα πέλονται·
 μετὰ γὰρ μεγάλων βαιὸς ἄριστ' ἂν
 καὶ μέγας ὀρθοῖθ' ὑπὸ μικροτέρων.
 ἀλλ' οὐ δυνατὸν τοὺς ἀνοήτους
 τούτων γνώμας προδιδάσκειν,
 ὑπὸ τοιούτων ἀνδρῶν θορυβεῖ
 χῆμεῖς οὐδὲν σθένομεν πρὸς ταῦτ'
 ἀπαλέξασθαι σοῦ χωρὶς, ἀναξ.
 ἀλλ' ὅτε γὰρ δὴ τὸ σὸν ὀμμ' ἀπέδραν,
 παταγοῦσιν ἄπερ πτηνῶν ἀγέλαι·
 μέγαν αἰγυπιὸν δ' ¹ ὑποδείσαντες
 τάχ' ἂν ἐξαίφνης, εἰ σὺ φανείης,
 σιγῇ πτήξειαν ἄφωνοι.

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ἦ ῥά σε Ταυροπόλα Διὸς Ἄρτεμις— στρ.
 ὦ μεγάλα φάτις, ὦ
 μᾶτερ αἰσχύναις ἐμᾶς—
 ὄρμωσε πανδάμους ἐπὶ βούς ἀγελείας,
 ἦ πού τινος νίκας ἀκάρπωτον χάριν,
 ἦ ῥα κλυτῶν ἐνάρων
 ψευσθεῖς, ἀδώροις, ² εἴτ' ἐλαφαβολίας;

¹ Dawes adda δ'.

² ψευσθεῖσα δάροις MSS., Stephanus corr.

AJAX

And he wins belief, for now
Thou dost seem thy guilt to avow,
And the rumour spreads and swells.
Even more than he who tells,
Every hearer takes delight
In thy woes, for envious spite. **
So it falls ; the noblest heart
Is a target for each dart ;
Aimed at me such shafts would fail :
Envy doth the great assail.
Yet without the great the small
Ill could guard the city wall ;
Leagued together small and great
Best defend the common state.
Fools this precept will not heed,
And these men are fools indeed
Who against thee rail ; and we
Can do nothing without thee,
To confound their charge, O King.
Like to birds they flap the wing,
And chatter, when they 'scape thine eye ;
But if hovering in the sky
The great vulture should appear,
Mute they cower in sudden fear.

Was it the Tauric Artemis, Jove's daughter, (Str.)
(O dread report, begetter of my shame !)
Drave thee the flocks, our common stock, to
slaughter ?
Didst thou in victory rob her of her claim
To tithe of spoil, her part,
When to thy bow there fell some noble hart ?

ἢ χαλκοθώραξ μή τι¹ Ἐννάλιος
μομφάν ἔχων ξυνοῦ δορὸς ἐννυχίοις
μαχαναῖς ἐτίσατο λώβαν;

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ἀντ.

οὐ ποτε γὰρ φρενόθεν γ' ἐπ' ἀριστερά,
παῖ Τελαμώνος, ἔβας
τόσσον, ἐν ποίμναις πίτνων·
ἦκοι γὰρ ἂν θεία νόσος· ἀλλ' ἀπερύκοι
καὶ Ζεὺς κακὰν καὶ Φοῖβος Ἀργείων φάτιν.
εἰ δ' ὑποβαλλόμενοι
κλέπτουσι μύθους οἱ μεγάλοι βασιλῆς
ἢ τὰς ἀσώτου Σισυφιδᾶν γενεᾶς,
μὴ μὴ, ἄναξ, ἔθ' ᾧδ' ἐφάλοις κλισίαις
ᾧμι ἔχων κακὰν φάτιν ἄρη.

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ἀλλ' ἄνα ἐξ ἐδράνων, ὅπου μακραίωνι
στηρίζει ποτὲ τᾶδ' ἀγωνίῳ σχολᾷ
ἄταν οὐρανίαν φλέγων.
ἐχθρῶν δ' ὕβρις ᾧδ' ἀτάρβητα
ὀρμάται ἐν εὐανέμοις βάσσαις,
πάντων καυχαζόντων
γλώσσαις βαρυνάλγητα·
ἐμοὶ δ' ἄχος ἔστακεν.

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ΤΕΚΜΗΣΙΑ

ναὸς ἀρωγοὶ τῆς Αἴαντος,
γενεᾶς χθονίων ἀπ' Ἐρεχθιδῶν,
ἔχομεν στοναχὰς οἱ κηδόμενοι
τοῦ Τελαμώνος τηλόθεν οἴκου.
νῦν γὰρ ὁ δεινὸς μέγας ὠμοκρατῆς
Αἴας θολερῶ
κεῖται χειμῶνι νοσήσας.

¹ ἢ τι¹ MSS., Musgrave corr.

AJAX

Or did the mail-clad God of War resent
Thy negligence thank-offering to pay?
By him at night was the delusion sent
That led astray?

(*Ant.*)

Ne'er wouldst thou, Ajax, of thine own intent
Have wrought this havoc and the cattle slain.
Such frenzy comes from Heaven in punishment.
(Zeus and Apollo prove the rumour vain!)
And if the great chiefs falsely charge thee, King,
Spreading foul scandal, or the accursed race
Of Sisyphus,¹ let not this ill fame cling
To us thy friends; no longer hide thy face,
Quit, we implore,
Thy tent upon the shore.

Rouse thee, my King, where'er thou sittest brooding;
Too long thou mak'st the stour of battle cease,
While in the camp red ruin flames to heaven,
And, like the west wind souging in the trees,
Unchecked the mockery goes
Of thy o'erweening foes.
My woe no respite knows!

Enter TECMESSA from the tent.

TECMESSA

Crew of Ajax, men who trace
Back to Erechtheus your famed race,
Woe is ours who muse upon
The far-off house of Telamon;
For our lord of dreaded might
Stricken lies in desperate plight,
And his soul is dark as night.

¹ Odysseus, reputed son of Sisyphus, not Laertes.

ΑΙΑΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί δ' ἐνήλλακται τῆς ἡμερίας
 νύξ ἦδε βάρος;
 παῖ τοῦ Φρυγίου Τελεύταντος,
 λέγ', ἐπεὶ σὲ λέχος δουριάλωτου
 στέρξας ἀνέχει θούριος Αἴας·
 ὥστ' οὐκ ἂν αἰδρις ὑπέιποις.

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ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

πῶς δῆτα λέγω λόγον ἄρρητον;
 θανάτῳ γὰρ ἴσον βάρος ἐκπεύσει.
 μανία γὰρ ἄλους ἡμῖν ὁ κλεινὸς
 νύκτερος Αἴας ἀπελωβήθη.
 τοιαῦτ' ἂν ἴδοις σκηνῆς ἔνδον
 χειροδαίικτα σφάγι' αἰμοβαφῆ,
 κείνου χρηστήρια τάνδρος.

220

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οἶαν ἐδήλωσας ἀνέρος¹ αἴθουος
 ἀγγελίαν ἄτλατον οὐδὲ φευκτάν,
 τῶν μεγάλων Δαναῶν ὑπο κληζομέναν,
 τὰν ὁ μέγας μῦθος ἀέξει.

στρ.

οἴμοι φοβοῦμαι τὸ προσέρπον· περίφαντος ἀνὴρ
 θανεῖται, παραπλάκτῳ χερὶ συγκατακτὰς
 κελαινοῖς ξίφεσιν βοτὰ καὶ βοτῆρας ἵππονώμας.

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ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ὦμοι· κείθεν κείθεν ἄρ' ἡμῖν
 δεσμῶτιν ἄγων ἤλυθε ποιίμνην·
 ὦν τὴν μὲν ἔσω σφάζ' ἐπὶ γαίας,
 τὰ δὲ πλευροκοπῶν δίχ' ἀνερρήγνυ.
 δύο δ' ἀργίποδας κριούς ἀνελών
 τοῦ μὲν κεφαλὴν καὶ γλῶσσαν ἄκραν

¹ MSS. ἀνδρός.

AJAX

CHORUS

What the change so grievous, say,
Of the morn from yesterday ?
Daughter of Teleutas, tell ;
Stalwart Ajax loves thee well,
Thee his spear-won bride ; 'tis thine
What befalls him to divine.

TECMESSA

Ah, how tell a tale so drear ?
Sad as death what thou shalt hear
Of great Ajax, undone quite,
Smit with madness, in the night.
Look within and see the floor
Reeking with his victims' gore ;
Slain by his own hand there lies
His ungodly sacrifice.

CHORUS

O fatal tidings of the hot-brained chief; (Str.)
Intolerable, yet without relief !
What flagrant charge amid the Greek host goes
That spread by rumour grows ?
Ah me, doom stalks amain !
And if with his dark blade the man hath slain
The herds and mounted herdsmen, sure he dies, ✓
A malefactor shamed before all eyes.

TECMESSA

Ah me, 'twas thence I saw him come
Driving his captive cattle home.
Of some he gashed the throats amain,
There where they stood upon the ground ;
And some were ripped and rent in twain.
Then two white-footed rams he found ;

ΑΙΑΣ

ρίπτει θερίσας, τὸν δ' ὀρθὸν ἄνω
 κίονι δήσας
 μέγαν ἵπποδέτην ῥυτῆρα λαβῶν
 παίει λιγυρᾶ μάστυγι διπλῆ,
 κακὰ δεινάζων ῥήμαθ', ἃ δαίμων
 κούδεις ἀνδρῶν ἐδίδαξεν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦρα τιν' ἤδη τοι κράτα καλύμμασι ἀντ.
 κρυφάμενον ποδοῖν κλοπὰν ἀρέσθαι
 ἢ θεὸν εἰρεσίας ζυγὸν ἐζόμενον
 ποντοπόρῳ ναὶ μεθεῖναι. 25
 τοίας ἐρέσσουσιν ἀπειλὰς δικρατεῖς Ἀτρεΐδαι
 καθ' ἡμῶν πεφόβημαι λιθόλευστον Ἄρη
 ξυναλγεῖν μετὰ τοῦδε τυπείς, τὸν αἰσ'
 ἄπλατος ἴσχει.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΙΑ

οὐκέτι λαμπρᾶς γὰρ ἄτερ στεροπῆς
 ἄξας ὄξυς νότος ὡς λήγει,
 καὶ νῦν φρόνιμος νέον ἄλγος ἔχει
 τὸ γὰρ ἐσλεύσσειν οἰκεία πάθη,
 μηδενὸς ἄλλου παραπράξαντος,
 μεγάλας ὀδύνας ὀποτείνει.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' εἰ πέπαυται, κάρτ' ἂν εὐτυχεῖν δοκῶ
 φρούδου γὰρ ἤδη τοῦ κακοῦ μείων λόγος.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΙΑ

πότερα δ' ἂν, εἰ νέμοι τις αἴρεσιν, λάβοις,
 φίλους ἀνιῶν αὐτὸς ἡδονὰς ἔχειν,
 ἢ κοινὸς ἐν κοινοῖσι λυπεῖσθαι ξυνῶν;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τό τοι διπλάζου, ὦ γύναι, μείζον κακόν,

AJAX

Of one, beheaded first, the tongue
He snipped, then far the carcase flung.
The other to a pillar lashed
Erect, with doubled rein, he thrashed,
And as he plied the whistling thong
He uttered imprecations strong,
Dread words a god, no man, had taught.

CHORUS

'Tis time to veil the head and steal away (Ant.)
On foot, or straight embarking ply the oar,
And let the good ship bear us from the bay ;
Such bitter threats the Atridae on us pour.
Me too, if I be by him, they will stone ;
He stands alone,
Fate marks him for her own.

TECMESSA

No more ; for like the southern blast
When lightnings flash, his rage is past.
But, now he is himself again,
Reviving memory brings new pain.
What keener anguish than to know
Thyself sole cause of self-wrought woe ?

CHORUS

Nay, if he have surcease, good hope is mine
All may be well, for men are less concerned
With evil doing when the trouble's past.

TECMESSA

Come tell me, which wouldst choose, if choice were
free,
To vex thy friends while thou thyself wert glad,
Or share the pain, grieving with them that grieve ?

CHORUS

The twofold sorrow, lady, is the worse.

ΑΙΑΣ

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἡμεῖς ἄρ' οὐ νοσοῦντες ἀτώμεσθα νῦν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πῶς τοῦτ' ἔλεξας; οὐ κάτοιδ' ὅπως λέγεις. 21

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἀνὴρ ἐκεῖνος, ἠνίκ' ἦν ἐν τῇ νόσῳ,
αὐτὸς μὲν ἦδεθ' οἷσιν εἶχετ' ἐν κακοῖς,
ἡμᾶς δὲ τοὺς φρονούντας ἠνία ξυνίων
νῦν δ' ὡς ἔληξε κἀνέπνευσε τῆς νόσου,
κεῖνός τε λύπη πᾶς ἐλήλαται κακῇ
ἡμεῖς θ' ὁμοίως οὐδὲν ἦσσον ἢ πάρος.
ἄρ' ἔστι ταῦτα δις τόσ' ἐξ ἀπλῶν κακά;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ξύμφημι δὴ σοι καὶ δέδοικα μὴ 'κ θεοῦ
πληγῇ τις ἦκη.¹ πῶς γάρ, εἰ πεπαυμένος
μηδὲν τι μᾶλλον ἢ νοσῶν εὐφραίνεται; 22

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ὡς ᾧδ' ἐχόντων τῶνδ' ἐπίστασθαί σε χρή.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τίς γάρ ποτ' ἀρχὴ τοῦ κακοῦ προσέπτατο;
δήλωσον ἡμῖν τοῖς ξυναλοῦσιν τύχας.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἅπαν μαθήσει τοῦργον ὡς κοινωνὸς ὢν.
κεῖνος γὰρ ἄκρας νυκτός, ἠνίχ' ἔσπεροι
λαμπτήρες οὐκέτ' ἦθον, ἄμφηκες λαβῶν
ἐμαίετ' ἐγχος ἐξόδους ἔρπειν κενάς.
κἀγὼ 'πιπλήσω καὶ λέγω· τί χρῆμα δρᾶς,
Αἴας; τί τῆνδ' ἀκλητος οὐθ' ὑπ' ἀγγέλων
κληθεὶς ἀφορμᾶς πείραν οὔτε τοῦ κλύων 23
σάλπιγγος; ἀλλὰ νῦν γε πᾶς εὐδαι στρατός.
ὁ δ' εἶπε πρὸς με βαί', αἰεὶ δ' ὑμνούμενα·

¹ ἦκοι MSS., Suidas corr.

AJAX

TECMESSA

Then are we losers now our plague is past.

CHORUS

What meanest thou ? it passes my poor wit.

TECMESSA

Yon man, while stricken, had himself delight
In his sick fancies, though his presence grieved
Us who were sane ; but now that he is whole,
Eased of his frenzy, he is racked with grief,
And we are no less troubled than before.
Are there not here two ills in place of one ?

CHORUS

'Tis even so, and much I fear it prove
A stroke from heaven, if indeed, now cured,
He is no gladder than he was when sick.

TECMESSA

His case is as thou sayest, rest assured.

CHORUS

But tell us how the plague first struck him down.
We share thy sorrow and would know it all.

TECMESSA

Hear then the story of our common woe.
At dead of night when all the lamps were out,
He took his two-edged sword, as if intent
On some wild expedition. So I chid him,
Saying, " What dost thou, Ajax, why go forth ?
No summons, messenger or trumpet blast,
Hath called thee ; nay, by now the whole host sleeps."
He answered lightly with an ancient saw,

γύναι, γυναιξὶ κόσμον ἢ σιγὴν φέρει.
 κἀγὼ μαθοῦσ' ἔληξ', ὁ δ' ἐσσύθη μόνος.
 καὶ τὰς ἐκεῖ μὲν οὐκ ἔχω λέγειν πάθας·
 ἔσω δ' ἐσῆλθε συνδέτους ἄγων ὁμοῦ
 ταύρους, κύνας βοτῆρας, εὐερόν¹ τ' ἄγραν.
 καὶ τοὺς μὲν ἠνυχένιζε, τοὺς δ' ἄνω τρέπων
 ἔσφαζε κάρραχιζε, τοὺς δὲ δεσμούς
 ἠκίζεθ' ὥστε φώτας ἐν ποίμναις πίτνων. 300
 τέλος δ' ὑπάξας διὰ θυρῶν σκιά τινι
 λόγους ἀνέσπα, τοὺς μὲν Ἀτρειδῶν κάτα,
 τοὺς δ' ἀμφ' Ὀδυσσεῖ, συντιθεὶς γέλων πολύν,
 ὄσσην κατ' αὐτῶν ὕβριν ἐκτίσαιτ' ἰών·
 κἀπειτ' ἐπάξας αὐθις ἐς δόμους πάλιν,
 ἔμφρων μόλις πῶς ξὺν χρόνῳ καθίσταται,
 καὶ πλήρες ἄτης ὡς διοπτρεύει στέγος,
 παίσας κἀρα θῶύξεν· ἐν δ' ἐρειπίοις
 νεκρῶν ἐρειφθεὶς ἔζετ' ἀρνείου φόνου,
 κόμην ἀπριξ' ὄνυξι συλλαβὼν χερί. 310
 καὶ τὸν μὲν ἦστο πλείστον ἄφθογγος χρόνον·
 ἔπειτ' ἐμοὶ τὰ δεῖν' ἐπηπείλησ' ἔπη,
 εἰ μὴ φανοίην πᾶν τὸ συντυχὸν πάθος,
 κἀνήρετ' ἐν τῷ πράγματος κυροῖ ποτέ.
 κἀγὼ, φίλοι, δείσασα τοῦξεργασμένον
 ἔλεξα πᾶν ὅσον περ ἐξηπιστάμην.
 ὁ δ' εὐθύς ἐξώμωξεν οἰμωγὰς λυγρὰς,
 ἄς εὔποτ' αὐτοῦ πρόσθεν εἰσήκουσ' ἐγώ·
 πρὸς γὰρ κακοῦ τε καὶ βαρυψύχου γόους
 τοιοῦσδ' αἰεί ποτ' ἀνδρὸς ἐξηγεῖτ' ἔχειν· 320
 ἀλλ' ἀψόφητος ὀξέων κωκυμάτων
 ὑπεστέναζε ταῦρος ὡς βρυχώμενος.
 νῦν δ' ἐν τοιαῦδε κείμενος κακῇ τύχῃ

¹ εὐερωτων MSS., Schneidewin corr.

AJAX

“Woman, for women silence is a grace.”
Admonished thus I held my tongue ; but he
Sped forth alone. What happened afterwards
I know not, but he came back with his spoil,
Oxen and sheep dogs with their fleecy charge.
Some he beheads, of some the upturned necks
He cuts, or cleaves the chine ; others again
He buffeted and mangled in their bonds,
Mauling the beasts, as if they had been men.
At last he darted through the door and held
Wild converse with some phantom of the brain ;
Now the Atridae, and Odysseus now,
He mocked with peals of laughter, vaunting loud
The vengeance he had wreaked on them. Anon
He rushed indoors again ; and then in time
With painful struggles was himself again.
And as he scanned the havoc all around,
He smote his head and wailed and sank to earth,
A wreck among the wreck of slaughtered sheep,
Digging into his hair his clenched nails.
At first—a long, long while—he spake no word,
Then against me he uttered those dire threats,
If I declared not all that had befallen,
Bidding me tell him in what plight he stood.
And I a-tremble told him what had chanced,
So far as I had knowledge. Whereat he
Broke into lamentations, piercing, shrill,
Such as I ne'er had heard from him before.
For 'twas his creed that wailings and lament
Are for the craven and faint-hearts ; no shrill
Complaint escaped him ever ; his low moan
Was like the muffled bellowing of a bull.
But now, confounded in his abject woe,

ΑΙΑΣ

ἄσιτος ἀνὴρ, ἄποτος, ἐν μέσοις βοτοῖς
 σιδηροκμήσιν ἤσυχος θακεῖ πεσών·
 καὶ δῆλός ἐστιν ὥς τι δρασεῖων κακόν.
 τοιαῦτα γάρ πως καὶ λέγει κωδύρεται.
 ἀλλ', ὦ φίλοι, τούτων γὰρ οὐνεκ' ἐστάλην,
 ἀρήξατ' εἰσελθόντες, εἰ δύνασθέ τι
 φίλων γὰρ οἱ τοιοῖδε νικῶνται λόγοις.

330

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Τέκμησσα, δεινά, παῖ Τελεύταντος, λέγεις
 ἡμῖν, τὸν ἄνδρα διαπεφοιβάσθαι κακοῖς.

ΑΙΑΣ

ὦ μοί μοι.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

τάχ', ὡς ἔοικε, μᾶλλον ἢ οὐκ ἠκούσατε
 Αἴαντος οἶαν τήνδε θωύσσει βοήν;

ΑΙΑΣ

ὦ μοί μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀνὴρ ἔοικεν ἢ νοσεῖν ἢ τοῖς πάλαι
 νοσήμασιν ξυνοῦσι λυπεῖσθαι παρών.

ΑΙΑΣ

ὦ παῖ παῖ.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ὦμοι τάλαιν'· Εὐρύσκαες, ἀμφὶ σοὶ βοᾶ.
 τί ποτε μενοινᾶ; πού ποτ' εἶ; τάλαιν' ἐγώ.

340

ΑΙΑΣ

Τεῦκρον καλῶ. πού Τεῦκρος; ἢ τὸν εἰσαεῖ
 λεηλατήσῃ χρόνον, ἐγὼ δ' ἀπόλλυμαι;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀνὴρ φρονεῖν ἔοικεν. ἀλλ' ἀνοίγετε.
 τάχ' ἂν τιν' αἰδῶ κάπ' ἐμοὶ βλέψας λάβοι.

AJAX

Refusing food or drink, he sits there still,
Just where he fell amid the carcasses
Of the slain sheep and cattle. And 'tis plain
He meditates some mischief, so I read
His muttered exclamations and laments.
Come, friends, and help me, if so be ye can—
This was my errand—men in case like his
Are won to reason by the words of friends.

CHORUS

Tecmessa, daughter of Teleutas, dread
Thy tidings of our master thus distraught.

AJAX

Woe, woe is me!

TECMESSA

Worse is to come, I fear me. Heard ye not
The voice of Ajax—that heartrending cry?

AJAX

Woe, woe is me!

CHORUS

'Tis a fresh fit, methinks, or else he groans
At sight of all the ills his frenzy wrought.

AJAX

My son, my son!

TECMESSA

Ah me! Eurysaces, 'tis for thee he calls.
What would he? Where art thou, my son? ah me!

AJAX

Ho Teucer! where is Teucer? Will his raid
End never? And the while I am undone!

CHORUS

He seems himself again. Quick, ope the door.
Perchance the sight of us his humble friends
May bring him to a soberer mood.

ΑΙΑΣ

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἰδοῦ, διοίγω· προσβλέπειν δ' ἔξεστί σοι
τὰ τοῦδε πράγη, καὐτὸς ὡς ἔχων κυρεῖ.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἰὼ στρ. α'
φίλοι ναυβάται, μόνοι ἐμῶν φίλων,
μόνοι ἔτ' ἐμμένοντες ὀρθῶ νόμῳ, 350
ἴδεσθέ μ' οἶον ἄρτι κύμα φοινίας ὑπὸ ζάλης
ἀμφίδρομον κυκλείται.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οἴμ' ὡς ἔοικας ὀρθὰ μαρτυρεῖν ἄγαν.
δηλοῖ δὲ τοῦργον ὡς ἀφροντίστως ἔχει.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἰὼ ἀντ. α'
γένος νατας ἀρωγὸν τέχνας,
ἄλιον ὃς ἐπέβας ἐλίσσω πλάταν,
σέ τοι σέ τοι μόνον δέδορκα πημονὰν ἐπαρκέσοντ'. 360
ἀλλά με συνδάϊξον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

εὐφημα φώνει· μὴ κακὸν κακῶ διδοῦς
ἄκος, πλέον τὸ πῆμα τῆς ἄτης τίθει.

ΑΙΑΣ

ὄρᾳς τὸν θρασύν, τὸν εὐκάρδιον, στρ. β'
τὸν ἐν δατοῖς ἄτρεστον μάχαις,
ἐν ἀφόβοις με θηρσὶ δεινὸν χέρας;
ᾧμοι γέλωτος, οἶον ὑβρίσθην ἄρα.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

μή, δέσποτ' Αἴας, λίσσομαί σ', αὔδα τάδε.

ΑΙΑΣ

οὐκ ἐκτός; οὐκ ἄψορρον ἐκνεμεῖ πόδα;
αἰαῖ αἰαῖ. 370

AJAX

TECMESSA

I open,
And thou mayst view his works and his own plight.

AJAX

Mariners, ever leal and true, (Str. 1)
Alas my friends have left me, all but you,
See how disasters whelmed me like a flood,
And now I welter in a surge of blood.

CHORUS

Ah, lady, thy report was all too true,
Too clear the tokens of an unhinged brain.

AJAX

Sailors brave, whose flashing oar (Ant. 1)
Swift and sure the good ship bore,
To you I look for comfort, none but you ;
Come slay me too.

CHORUS

O hush, essay not ill by ill to cure,
Nor aggravate the burden of thy doom.

AJAX

See'st thou the bold, stout-hearted knight (Str. 2)
Who never quailed to face the fight,
Now on tame beasts that fear no harm
He proves the puissance of his arm.
Ah me ! the mockery, the scorn, the shame !

TECMESSA

Ajax, my dearest master, speak not so.

AJAX

Out with thee, woman ; hence, avaunt, begone !
Ah me ! ah me !

ΑΙΑΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ πρὸς θεῶν ὑπέικε καὶ φρόνησον εὖ.

ΑΙΑΣ

ὦ δύσμορος, δεῖ χερὶ μὲν
μεθῆκα τοὺς ἀλάστορας, ἐν δ' ἐλίκεσσι
βουσι καὶ κλυτοῖς πεσῶν αἰπολίοις
ἐρεμνὸν αἰμ' ἔδευσα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί δῆτ' ἂν ἀλγοίης ἐπ' ἐξειργασμένοις;
οὐ γὰρ γένοιτ' ἂν ταῦθ' ὅπως οὐχ ὦδ' ἔχειν.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἰὼ πάνθ' ὀρώων ἀπάντων τ' αἰεὶ ἀντ. β'
κακῶν ὄργανον, τέκνον Δαρτίου,
κακοπινέστατόν τ' ἄλημα στρατοῦ,
ἧ που πολὺν γέλωθ' ὑφ' ἡδονῆς ἄγεις. 380

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ξύν τοι θεῶ πᾶς καὶ γελᾷ κωδύρεται.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἴδοιμι μῆν¹ νιν, καίπερ ὦδ' ἀτώμενος.
ἰὼ μοί μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μηδὲν μέγ' εἵπης· οὐχ ὀράς ἔν' εἰ κακοῦ;

ΑΙΑΣ

ὦ Ζεῦ, προγόνων προπάτωρ,
πῶς ἂν τὸν αἰμυλώτατον, ἐχθρὸν ἄλημα,
τοὺς τε δισσάρχας ὀλέσσης βασιλῆς
τέλος θάνοιμι καυτός; 390

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ὅταν κατεύχη ταῦθ', ὁμοῦ κάμοι θανεῖν
εὐχον· τί γὰρ δεῖ ζῆν με σοῦ τεθηκότος;

¹ Dindorf adds μῆν.

AJAX

CHORUS

O listen, I adjure thee, and be ruled.

AJAX

Wretch to let those fiends, my foes,
Slip, while on the flock my blows
And the goodly cattle rained,
Till with their dark blood all the house was stained.

CHORUS

Why vex thyself for what is past recall?
What's done is done and naught can alter it.

AJAX

Spy of the time, apt tool for any guile, (Ant. 2)
Of all the host the subtlest knave, most vile,
Son of Laertes, loud and long, I trow,
Thou laughest in malignant triumph now.

CHORUS

Laughter or mourning comes as God ordains.

AJAX

Would I could see him, shattered though I be!
Ah me!

CHORUS

No boastful words; see'st not thy piteous case?

AJAX

O Zeus, my grand sire, would that I
Might slay that knave, my bane,
That arch-dissembler and the generals twain.
Then let me die!

TECMESSA

When thus thou prayest, pray that I with thee
May die; why should I live when thou art dead?

ΑΙΑΣ

ΑΙΑΣ

ἰὼ

στρ. γ'

σκότος, ἐμὸν φάος,
 ἔρεβος ὦ φαεννότατον, ὡς ἐμοί,
 ἔλεσθ' ἔλεσθέ μ' οἰκήτορα,
 ἔλεσθέ μ'· οὔτε γὰρ θεῶν γένος οὔθ' ἀμερίων
 ἔτ' ἄξιος βλέπειν τιν' εἰς ὄνασιν ἀνθρώπων.
 ἀλλὰ μ' ἂ Διὸς
 ἀλκίμα θεὸς
 ὀλέθρι' αἰκίζει.
 ποῖ τις οὖν φύγη;
 ποῖ μολῶν μενῶ;
 εἰ τὰ μὲν φθίνει, φίλοι, τοιοῖσδ'¹
 ὀμοῦ πέλας, μῶραις δ' ἄγραις προσκείμεθα,
 πᾶς δὲ στρατὸς δίπαλτος ἄν με
 χειρὶ φονεύοι.

400

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ὦ δυστάλαινα, τοιάδ' ἄνδρα χρήσιμον
 φωνεῖν, ἂ πρόσθεν οὔτος οὐκ ἔτλη ποτ' ἄν.

410

ΑΙΑΣ

ἰὼ

ἀντ. γ'

πόροι ἀλίρροθοι
 παράλα τ' ἄντρα καὶ νέμος ἐπάκτιον,
 πολὺν πολὺν με δαρὸν τε δὴ
 κατεῖχετ' ἀμφὶ Τροίαν χρόνον· ἀλλ' οὐκέτι μ', οὐκ
 ἔτ' ἀμπνοᾶς ἔχοντα· τευτό τις φρονῶν ἴστω.
 ὦ Σκαμάνδριοι
 γείτονες ῥοαί,
 εὐφρονες Ἀργείοις,
 οὐκέτ' ἄνδρα μὴ
 τόνδ' ἴδητ', ἔπος

420

¹ τοῖσδ' MSS., Jebb corr.

AJAX

AJAX

O woe is me! (Str. 3)
Darkness, my light!
O nether gloom to me more bright
Than midday, take, O take me to your care!
I am too vile to share
The kindly aid of mortals, and the gods
Have left me. Nay, the Warrior Maid, Zeus-born,
Laughs me to scorn;
I quail beneath her rods.
Whither to fly? What hope of rest is left,
If of my ancient fame bereft,
Dead as these slaughtered sheep around me slain,
A madman's crown I gain,
While all the host at my devoted head
Would strike, and smite me dead?

TECMESSA

Ah me that one so good should utter words
That hitherto he ne'er had deigned to breathe!

AJAX

Paths of the roaring waves, (Ant. 3)
Ye salt sea caves
And pastures by the shore,
Where long, too long I roam
In Troy-land, far from home;
Me shall ye see no more —
No more in life. Give ear
All who can hear.
Streams of Scamander, rills
That flow from Ida's hills,
Streams to the Greeks so dear,
Ne'er shall ye look on Ajax more;

ΑΙΑΣ

ἔξερῶ μέγ', οἶον οὔτινα
 Τροία στρατοῦ δέρχθη χθονὸς μολόντ' ἀπὸ
 Ἑλλανίδος· τανῦν δ' ἄτιμος
 ὧδε πρόκειμαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὔτοι σ' ἀπείργειν οὐδ' ὅπως ἐῷ λέγειν
 ἔχω, κακοῖς τοιοῖσδε συμπεπτωκότα.

ΑΙΑΣ

αἰαί· τίς ἂν ποτ' ᾤεθ' ὧδ' ἐπώνυμον
 430 τοῦμὸν ξυνοίσειν ὄνομα τοῖς ἐμοῖς κακοῖς;
 νῦν γὰρ πάρεστι καὶ δις αἰάζειν ἐμοὶ
 καὶ τρίς· τοιούτοις γὰρ κακοῖς ἐντυγχάνω·
 ὄτου πατὴρ μὲν τῆσδ' ἀπ' Ἰδαίας χθονὸς
 τὰ πρῶτα καλλιστεῖ ἀριστεύσας στρατοῦ
 πρὸς οἶκον ἦλθε πᾶσαν εὐκλειαν φέρων·
 ἐγὼ δ' ὁ κείνου παῖς, τὸν αὐτὸν ἐς τόπον
 Τροίας ἐπελθὼν οὐκ ἐλάσσοι σθένει
 οὐδ' ἔργα μείω χειρὸς ἀρκέσας ἐμῆς,
 440 ἄτιμος Ἀργείοισιν ὧδ' ἀπόλλυμαι.
 καίτοι τοσοῦτόν γ' ἐξεπίστασθαι δοκῶ·
 εἰ ζῶν Ἀχιλλεὺς τῶν ὅπλων τῶν ἂν πέρι
 κρίνειν ἐμελλε κράτος ἀριστείας τινί,
 οὐκ ἂν τις αὐτ' ἔμαρψεν ἄλλος ἂντ' ἐμοῦ.
 νῦν δ' αὐτ' Ἀτρεΐδαι φωτὶ παντουργῶ φρένας
 ἔπραξαν, ἀνδρὸς τοῦδ' ἀπώσαντες κράτη.
 κεῖ μὴ τόδ' ὄμμα καὶ φρένες διάστροφοὶ
 γνώμης ἀπήξαν τῆς ἐμῆς, οὐκ ἂν ποτε
 δίκην κατ' ἄλλου φωτὸς ὧδ' ἐψήφισαν.
 450 νῦν δ' ἡ Διὸς γοργῶπις ἀδάματος θεᾶ

AJAX

A paladin whose peer
(For I will utter a proud boast)
In all the Grecian host
That sailed from Hellas' shore
Troy ne'er beheld. But now
Low in the dust, o'erthrown, his head doth bow.

CHORUS

How to restrain or how to let thee speak
I cannot tell, beset by endless woes.

AJAX

Ay me! Whoe'er had thought how well my name
Would fit my misery? Ay me! Ay me!¹
Yea, twice and thrice may I repeat the wail
That syllables my woe-begone estate.
My sire, a peerless warrior, home returned
Back from the land of Ida, crowned with fame,
Proclaimed as champion bravest of the brave.
And I, his son, in might not less than he,
Sailed after him to this same land of Troy,
And served the host by deeds of no less worth,
And for reward I perish by the Greeks
Dishonoured. Yet one thing I know full well :
If to Achilles living it had fallen
His arms as meed of valour to award,
No man had grasped the prize, preferred to me.
But now the Atridae, scouting my just claim,
Have yielded to a miscreant's base intrigue.
Had not mine eyes been dazed, my mind distraught
And wrested from its purpose, they had never
Procured false sentence 'gainst a second man.
Alas! the grim-eyed goddess, unsubdued
Daughter of Zeus—as I was at their heels,

¹ Like Shakespeare's 'Gaunt' (*Richard II*, II. i) he plays on his name *Aias*.

ἤδη μ' ἐπ' αὐτοῖς χεῖρ' ἐπεντύνοντ' ἐμῆν
 ἔσφηλεν, ἐμβαλοῦσα λυσσώδη νόσον,
 ὥστ' ἐν τοιοῖσδε χεῖρας αἰμάξαι βοτοῖς·
 κείνοι δ' ἐπεγγελῶσιν ἐκπεφευγότες,
 ἐμοῦ μὲν οὐχ ἐκόντος· εἰ δέ τις θεῶν
 βλάβητοι, φύγοι τᾶν χῶ κακὸς τὸν κρείσσονα.
 καὶ νῦν τί χρὴ δρᾶν; ὅστις ἐμφανῶς θεοῖς
 ἐχθαίρομαι, μισεῖ δέ μ' Ἑλλήνων στρατός,
 ἔχθει δὲ Τροία πᾶσα καὶ πεδία τάδε.
 πότερα πρὸς οἴκους, ναυλόχους λιπὼν ἔδρας
 μόνους τ' Ἀτρείδας, πέλαγος Αἰγαίου περῶ;
 καὶ ποῖον ὄμμα πατρὶ δηλώσω φανείς
 Τελαμῶνι; πῶς με τλήσεται ποτ' εἰσιδεῖν
 γυμνὸν φανέντα τῶν ἀριστείων ἄτερ,
 ὧν αὐτὸς ἔσχε στέφανον εὐκλείας μέγαν;
 οὐκ ἔστι τοῦργον τλητόν. ἀλλὰ δῆτ' ἰὼν
 πρὸς ἔρυμα Τρώων, ξυμπεσὼν μόνος μόνους
 καὶ δρῶν τι χρηστόν, εἶτα λοισθιον θάνω;
 ἀλλ' ὠδέ γ' Ἀτρείδας ἂν εὐφράναιμί που.
 οὐκ ἔστι ταῦτα. πείρά τις ζητητέα
 τοιάδ' ἀφ' ἧς γέροντι δηλώσω πατρὶ
 μή τοι φύσιν γ' ἄσπλαγχρος ἐκ κείνου γεγώς.
 αἰσχρὸν γὰρ ἄνδρα τοῦ μακροῦ χρήζειν βίου,
 κακοῖσιν ὅστις μηδὲν ἐξαλλάσσεται.
 τί γὰρ παρ' ἡμαρ ἡμέρα τέρπειν ἔχει
 προσθεῖσα κἀναθείσα τοῦ γε καθθανεῖν;
 οὐκ ἂν πριαίμην οὐδενὸς λόγου βροτὸν
 ὅστις κεναῖσιν ἐλπίσιν θερμαίνεται·
 ἀλλ' ἢ καλῶς ζῆν ἢ καλῶς τεθνηκέναι
 τὸν εὐγενῆ χρὴ. πάντ' ἀκήκοας λόγον.

460

470

480

AJAX

Almost at grips with them, in act to strike—
Foiled me, abused me by a frenzy fit,
Imbrued my hands with blood of these poor beasts.
And thus my foes exult in their escape,
Albeit I willed it not, and mock at me.
But if some god or goddess intervene,
Even a knave may worst the better man.
And now what's left me? By the gods, 'tis clear,
I am detested, hated by the host
Of Greeks, abhorred by Troy and all the camp.
Shall I sail homeward o'er the Aegean, leave
The sons of Atreus to fight on alone,
This roadstead undefended? Then how face
My father Telamon? How will he endure
To look on me returning empty-handed
Without the meed of valour that he held
Himself, a crown of everlasting fame?
That were intolerable. Am I then
Alone to storm the Trojan battlements,
And facing single-handed a whole host,
Do some high deed of prowess—and so die?
Nay, that methinks would give the Atridae joy.
It may not be; some emprise must be found
That shall convince my aged sire his son
Is not, in soul at least, degenerate.
Base were it that a man whose misery
Knows neither change nor respite should desire
To drain life to the dregs. What joy is there?
Day follows day; each added to the sum
Of life is one step nearer to the grave.
I would not count that mortal worth a doigt
Who lives on, fed by visionary hopes.
Nobly to live—that is the true knight's choice,
Or nobly end his life. I have said my say.

ΑΙΑΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐδείς ἐρεῖ ποθ' ὡς ὑπόβλητον λόγον,
 Αἴας, ἔλεξας, ἀλλὰ τῆς σαυτοῦ φρενός
 παῦσαι γε μέντοι καὶ δὸς ἀνδράσιν φίλοις
 γνώμης κρατῆσαι, τάσδε φροντίδας μεθείς.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ὦ δέσποτ' Αἴας, τῆς ἀναγκαίας τύχης
 οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν μείζον ἀνθρώποις κακόν.
 ἐγὼ δ' ἐλευθέρου μὲν ἐξέφυν πατρός,
 εἴπερ τινὸς σθένοντος ἐν πλοῦτῳ Φρυγῶν
 νῦν δ' εἰμι δούλη· θεοῖς γὰρ ᾧδ' ἔδοξέ που
 καὶ σὴ μάλιστα χειρὶ. τουγαροῦν, ἐπεὶ
 τὸ σὸν λέχος ξυνήλθον, εὐ φρονῶ τὰ σά,
 καὶ σ' ἀντιάζω πρὸς τ' ἐφεστίου Διὸς
 εὐνῆς τε τῆς σῆς, ἣ συνηλλάχθης ἐμοί,
 μὴ μ' ἀξιώσης βάξιν ἀλγεινὴν λαβεῖν
 τῶν σῶν ὑπ' ἐχθρῶν, χειρίαν ἐφείς τι.
 ἦ γὰρ θύνης σὺ καὶ τελευτήσας ἀφῆς,
 ταύτη νόμιζε κάμῃ τῇ τόθ' ἡμέρα
 βία ξυναρπασθεῖσαν Ἀργείων ὑπο
 ξὺν παιδί τῷ σῷ δουλίαν ἔξειν τροφήν.
 καὶ τις πικρὸν πρόσφθεγμα δεσποτῶν ἐρεῖ
 λόγοις ἰάπτων· ἴδετε τὴν ὀμειυέντιν
 Αἴαντος, ὃς μέγιστον ἴσχυσεν στρατοῦ,
 οἷας λατρείας ἀνθ' ὅσου ζήλου τρέφει.
 τοιαυτ' ἐρεῖ τις· κάμῃ μὲν δαίμων ἐλά,
 σοὶ δ' αἰσχρὰ τὰπη ταῦτα καὶ τῷ σῷ γένοι.
 ἀλλ' αἰδεσαι μὲν πατέρα τὸν σὸν ἐν λυγρῷ
 γῆρα προλείπων, αἰδεσαι δὲ μητέρα
 πολλῶν ἐτῶν κληροῦχον, ἣ σε πολλακίς
 θεοῖς ἀράται ζῶντα πρὸς δόμους μολεῖν·
 οἴκτιρε δ', ὦναξ, παῖδα τὸν σόν, εἰ γέας

490

500

510

AJAX

CHORUS

No man will charge thee, Ajax, with feigned words.
'Twas thy heart spoke; yet pause and put aside
These dark thoughts; let thyself be ruled by
friends.

TECMESSA

Ah, my lord Ajax, heavier lot is none
Than to lie helpless in the coils of fate.
I was the daughter of a high-born sire
Of Phrygians unsurpassed in wealth and might.
And now, I am a slave; 'twas so ordained
By Heaven, methinks, and by thy might of arm.
Since fate has willed, then, I should share thy bed,
Thy good is mine; and O by the god of the hearth,
O by the wedded bond that made us one,
Let me not fall into a stranger's hand,
A laughing-stock! For, surely, if thou die
And leave me widowed, on that very day
I shall be seized and haled away by force,
I and thy son, prey to the Argive host,
Our portion slavery. Then shall I hear
The flouts and gibes that my new lords let fly.
"Look on her," one will say, "the leman once
Of Ajax, mightiest of the Argive chiefs,
How has she fallen from her place of pride!"
Thus will they prate, and hard will be my lot,
But on thy race and thee how foul a slur.
Take pity and bethink thee of the sire
Thou leavest, an old man, disconsolate;
Bethink thee of thy mother bowed with years,
Think of her prayers and vows for thy return.
And, O my lord, take pity on thy son,

ΑΙΑΣ

τροφῆς στερηθεὶς σοῦ διοίσεται μόνος
 ὑπ' ὄρφανιστῶν μὴ φίλων, ὅσον κακὸν
 κείνω τε κάμοι τοῦθ', ὅταν θάνης, νεμεῖς.
 ἐμοὶ γὰρ οὐκέτ' ἔστιν εἰς ὃ τι βλέπω
 πλὴν σοῦ. σὺ γάρ μοι πατρίδ' ἤστωσας δόρει,
 καὶ μητέρ' ἄλλη μοῖρα τὸν φύσαντά τε
 καθεῖλεν "Αἰδοῦ θανασίμους οἰκήτορας.
 τίς δῆτ' ἐμοὶ γένοιτ' ἂν ἀντὶ σοῦ πατρίς;
 τίς πλοῦτος; ἐν σοὶ πᾶσ' ἔγωγε σφύζομαι.
 ἀλλ' ἴσχε κάμου μνήστιν ἄνδρί τοι χρεῶν 520
 μνήμην προσεῖναι, τερπνὸν εἴ τί που πάθοι.
 χάρις χάριν γὰρ ἔστιν ἢ τίκτους' αἰεὶ
 ὅτου δ' ἀπορρεῖ μνήστις εὐπεπονθότος,
 οὐκ ἂν γένοιτ' ἔθ' οὗτος εὐγενῆς ἀνὴρ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Αἴας, ἔχειν σ' ἂν οἰκτον ὡς κἀγὼ φρενὶ
 θέλομι' ἂν αἰνοίης γὰρ ἂν τὰ τῆσδ' ἔπη.

ΑΙΑΣ

καὶ κάρτ' ἐπαίνου τεύξεται πρὸς γοῦν ἐμοῦ,
 εἰ μόνον τὸ ταχθὲν εὐτολμᾷ τελεῖν.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἀλλ' ὦ φίλ' Αἴας, πάντ' ἔγωγε πείσομαι.

ΑΙΑΣ

κόμιζέ νῦν μοι παῖδα τὸν ἐμόν, ὡς ἴδω. 530

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

καὶ μὴν φόβοισί γ' αὐτὸν ἐξελυσάμην.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἐν τοῖσδε τοῖς κακοῖσιν; ἢ τί μοι λέγεις;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

μὴ σοὶ γέ που δύστηνος ἀντήσας θάνοι.

ΑΙΑΣ

πρέπον γέ τᾶν ἦν δαίμονος τοῦμοῦ τόδε.

AJAX

Orphaned, without a father's fostering care,
The ward of loveless guardians ; if thou die,
What heritage of woe is his and mine !
For I have naught to look to anywhere
Save thee. By thee my country was laid waste,
My mother and my father too were snatched
To dwell with Hades by another fate.
What home is left me then, if thou art ta'en ?
What weal ? my welfare is bound up in thee.
Think of me also : gratitude is due
From man for favours that a woman gives.
Kindness return of kindness e'er begets.
Who lets the memory of service pass
Him will I ne'er with noble spirits rank.

CHORUS

Ajax, I would that thou wert moved as I
To pity ; then wouldst thou approve her rede.

AJAX

Yea, and my full approval she shall win,
If only she take heart to do my hest.

TECMESSA

Aye, my dear lord, I will obey in all.

AJAX

Bring hither then my son, that I may see him.

TECMESSA

Oh, in alarm I sent him from my charge.

AJAX

When I was stricken ? Or what meanest thou ?

TECMESSA

Yea, lest the poor child meeting thee should die.

AJAX

That fate indeed had matched my fortunes well.

ΑΙΑΣ

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἀλλ' οὖν ἐγὼ φύλαξα τοῦτό γ' ἀρκέσαι.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἐπήνεσ' ἔργον καὶ πρόνοιαν ἦν ἔθου.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

τί δῆτ' ἂν ὡς ἐκ τῶνδ' ἂν ὠφελοῖμί σε;

ΑΙΑΣ

δός μοι προσειπεῖν αὐτὸν ἐμφανῆ τ' ἰδεῖν.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

καὶ μὴν πέλας γε προσπόλοις φυλάσσεται.

ΑΙΑΣ

τί δῆτα μέλλει μὴ οὐ παρουσίαν ἔχειν;

540

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ὦ παῖ, πατὴρ καλεῖ σε. δεῦρο προσπόλων
ἀγ' αὐτὸν ὅσπερ χερσὶν εὐθύνων κυρεῖς.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἔρποντι φωνεῖς ἢ λελειμμένῳ λόγων;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

καὶ δὴ κομίζει προσπόλων ὄδ' ἐγγύθεν.

ΑΙΑΣ

αἶρ' αὐτόν, αἶρε δεῦρο· ταρβήσει γὰρ οὐ
νεοσφαγῆ που τόνδε προσλεύσσω φόνου,
εἵπερ δικαίως ἔστ' ἐμὸς τὰ πατρόθεν.

ἀλλ' αὐτίκ' ὠμοῖς αὐτὸν ἐν νόμοις πατρός
δεῖ πωλοδαμνεῖν κάξομοιοῦσθαι φύσιν.

ὦ παῖ, γένοιο πατρός εὐτυχέστερος,
τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ὅμοιος· καὶ γένοι' ἂν οὐ κακός.

550

καίτοι σε καὶ νῦν τοῦτό γε ζηλοῦν ἔχω,
ὀθούνεκ' οὐδὲν τῶνδ' ἐπαισθάνει κακῶν·
ἐν τῷ φρονεῖν γὰρ μηδὲν ἡδιστος βίος,

AJAX

TECMESSA

Well, I averted that calamity.

AJAX

Thy forethought and the action I commend.

TECMESSA

As the case stands, how can I do thy hest?

AJAX

Let me speak to him—see him face to face.

TECMESSA

Good; he is in our servants' charge close by.

AJAX

Then wherefore is his coming thus delayed?

TECMESSA

My child, thy father calls thee.

(To the SERVANTS)

Bring him hither,

Whoever of you guides his infant steps.

AJAX

Comes he, or has he failed to hear thy call?

TECMESSA

I see one just approaching with the boy.

(EURYBACES is led forward.)

AJAX

Lift him, O lift him to my arms; no dread,
If he be mine, his father's true-born son,
He'll feel in gazing on this fresh spilt blood.
He must be early trained and broken in
To the stern rule of life his father held,
And moulded to the likeness of his sire.

My boy, mayst thou prove happier than thy sire,
But like him in all else, and thou wilt prove
No weakling; nay, e'en now, in this at least
I envy thee: of woes thou wottest naught,

[τὸ μὴ φρονεῖν γὰρ κάρτ' ἀνώδυνον κακόν]¹
 ἕως τὸ χαίρειν καὶ τὸ λυπεῖσθαι μάθης.
 ὅταν δ' ἴκη πρὸς τοῦτο, δεῖ σ' ὅπως πατρὸς
 δείξεις ἐν ἐχθροῖς, οἶος ἐξ οἴου ἑτράφης.
 τέως δὲ κούφοις πνεύμασιν βόσκου, νέαν
 ψυχὴν ἀτάλλων, μητρὶ τῆδε χαρμονήν.
 οὔτοι σ' Ἀχαιῶν, οἶδα, μὴ τις ὑβρίση
 στυγναῖσι λάβαις, οὐδὲ χωρὶς ὄντ' ἐμοῦ.
 τοῖον πυλωρὸν φύλακα Τεῦκρον ἄμφι σοὶ
 λείψω τροφῇ τ' ἄοκνον ἔμπα, κεῖ τανῦν
 τηλωπὸς οἴχνεϊ, δυσμενῶν θήραν ἔχων.
 ἀλλ', ἄνδρες ἀσπιστῆρες, ἐνάλιος λεώς,
 ὑμῖν τε κοινὴν τήνδ' ἐπισκῆπτω χάριν,
 κείνῳ τ' ἐμὴν ἀγγείλατ' ἐντολήν, ὅπως
 τὸν παῖδα τόνδε πρὸς δόμους ἐμοὺς ἄγων
 Τελαμῶνι δείξει μητρὶ τ', Ἐριβοῖα λέγω,
 ὡς σφιν γένηται γηροβοσκὸς εἰσαεῖ,
 [μέχρις οὗ μυχὸς κίχῳσι τοῦ κάτω θεοῦ],²
 καὶ τὰμὰ τεύχη μῆτ' ἀγωνάρχαι τινὲς
 θήσουσ' Ἀχαιοῖς μῆθ' ὁ λυμεῶν ἐμός.
 ἀλλ' αὐτὸ μοι σὺ, παῖ, λαβὼν ἐπώνυμον,
 Εὐρύσακες, ἴσχε διὰ πολυρράφου στρέφῳ
 πόρπακος, ἐπτάβοιον ἄρρηκτον σάκος
 τὰ δ' ἄλλα τεύχη κοῖν' ἐμοὶ τεθάψεται.
 ἀλλ' ὡς τάχος τὸν παῖδα τόνδ' ἤδη δέχου
 καὶ δῶμα πάκτου, μηδ' ἐπισκῆνους γόους
 δάκρυε· κάρτα τοὶ φιλοῖκτιστον γυνή.
 πύκαζε θᾶσσον· οὐ πρὸς ἱατροῦ σοφοῦ
 θρηνεῖν ἐπφῶδες πρὸς τομῶντι πῆματι.

560

570

580

¹ Omitted by Stobaeus.² Omitted as spurious by most Editors.

AJAX

For ignorance is life's extremest bliss—
The years when joy and sorrow are both unknown.
But when thou reachest manhood, then's the time
To prove the inbred virtue of thy race,
And shew thy father's foes whose son thou art.
Meanwhile let light airs feed thee ; cherish thou
Thy tender years to glad thy mother's heart.
Thou need'st not fear that any of the Greeks
Will tease or vex thee, e'en when I am gone.
So stout a guardian will I leave in charge,
Whose watchful eye will slumber not, though now
A foray 'gainst his enemies keeps him hence.
And ye, my seamen, comrades in the fight,
(On you no less than him I lay this charge
Of love) to him convey my last behest.
Bid him from me take home this son of mine
To Eriboea and to Telamon,
That he may comfort their old age till death.
And for my arms, let no Greek arbiter
Of games (so bid him) nor my venomous foe
Set them as prize for the Achaean host.
But this, the shield from which thou took'st thy name,¹
Take this, my son, this sevenfold, spear-proof targe,
Take it and wield it by the close-stitched thongs.
My other arms shall lie with me interred.
Quick, take the child, delay not ; close the doors,
Nor at the tent side moan and make lament.
In sooth a woman is a tearful thing.
Quick, make all fast : 'tis not a skilful leech
Who mumbles charms o'er ills that need the knife.

¹ Eurysaces means 'broad shield.'

ΑΙΑΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

δέδοικ' ἀκούων τήνδε τὴν προθυμίαν·
οὐ γάρ μ' ἀρέσκει γλῶσσά σου τεθηγμένη.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ὦ δέσποτ' Αἴας, τί ποτε δρασεῖεις φρενί;

ΑΙΑΣ

μὴ κρίνε, μὴ ἔξεταζε· σωφρονεῖν καλόν.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

οἴμ' ὡς ἀθυμῶ· καί σε πρὸς τοῦ σου τέκνου
καὶ θεῶν ἰκνοῦμαι, μὴ προδοὺς ἡμᾶς γένη.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἄγαν γε λυπεῖς· οὐ κάτοιισθ' ἐγὼ θεοῖς
ὡς οὐδὲν ἀρκεῖν εἴμ' ὀφειλέτης ἔτι;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

εὐφημα φώνει.

ΑΙΑΣ

τοῖς ἀκούουσιν λέγε.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

σὺ δ' οὐχὶ πείσει;

ΑΙΑΣ

πόλλ' ἄγαν ἤδη θροεῖς.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ταρβῶ γάρ, ὦναξ.

ΑΙΑΣ

οὐ ξυνέρξεθ' ὡς τάχος;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

πρὸς θεῶν, μαλάσσου.

ΑΙΑΣ

μῶρά μοι δοκεῖς φρονεῖν,
εἰ τοῦμὸν ἦθος ἄρτι παιδεύειν νοεῖς.

AJAX

CHORUS

I tremble as I mark this eager haste :
Thy words are sharp as swords and like me not.

TECMESSA

O my lord Ajax, what is in thy heart ?

AJAX

Question not, ask not ; be discreet and wise.

TECMESSA

Ah me, I quail, I faint. O by thy child,
By heaven I implore thee, fail us not.

AJAX

Thou art importunate ; know'st not that I
Henceforward owe no duty to the gods ?

TECMESSA

Oh hush, blaspheme not !

AJAX

Speak to ears that hear.

TECMESSA

Wilt thou not heed ?

AJAX

I have heard from thee too much.

TECMESSA

Fear, my lord, makes me speak.

AJAX

Quick, close the doors.

TECMESSA

Yield, I implore thee.

AJAX

Fond simplicity

If at this hour thou think'st to mould my mood.

[Exit AJAX.]

ΑΙΑΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ κλεινὰ Σαλαμίς, σὺ μὲν που στρ. α'
 ναίεις ἀλίπλακτος, εὐδαίμων,
 πᾶσιν περίφαντος αἰεὶ
 ἐγὼ δ' ὁ τλάμων παλαιὸς ἀφ' οὗ χρόνος 600
 Ἰδαία μίμων λειμώνι ἔπαυλα μηνῶν
 ἀνήριθμος αἰὲν εὐνώμαι¹
 χρόνῳ τρυχόμενος,
 κακὰν ἐλπίδ' ἔχων
 ἔτι μέ ποτ' ἀνύσειν
 τὸν ἀπότροπον αἰδηλον Ἄιδαν.

καί μοι δυσθεράπευτος Αἴας ἀντ. α'
 ξύνεστιν ἔφεδρος, ὦμοι μοι, 610
 θεία μανία ξύναυλος·
 ὃν ἐξεπέμψω πρὶν δὴ ποτε θουρίῳ
 κρατοῦντ' ἐν Ἄρει νῦν δ' αὖ φρενὸς οἰοβώτας
 φίλοις μέγα πένθος ἠϋρηται.
 τὰ πρὶν δ' ἔργα χεροῖν
 μεγίστας ἀρετᾶς
 ἀφιλα παρ' ἀφίλοις 620
 ἔπεσ' ἔπεσε μελέοις Ἀτρεΐδαις.

στρ. β'
 ἦ που παλαιᾶ μὲν σύντροφος² ἀμέρα,
 λευκῶ δὲ γήρα μάτηρ νιν ὅταν νοσοῦντα
 φρενομόρως ἀκούσῃ,
 αἰλινον αἰλινον
 οὐδ' οἰκτρᾶς γόου ὄρνιθος ἀηδοῦς
 ἦσει δὺςμορος, ἀλλ' ὄξυτόνους μὲν ᾠδὰς 630

¹ Ἰδαία μίμων | λειμωνία ποίαι, μήλων | ἀνήριθμος αἰὲν εὐνώμαι
 L.; Lobbeck, Bergk, and Jebb corr.

² σύντροφος MSS., Nauck corr.

AJAX

CHORUS

Ah Salamis, blest isle, (Str. 1)
Secure, serene,
Above the waves that lash thy shore,
As ocean's queen,
Thou sittest evermore.
But I in exile drear,
Month after month, year after year,
On Ida's meads must bivouac, all forlorn
By time outworn;
And ever nearer, ever darker loom
The night of Hades and eternal gloom.

And now to crown my grief (Ant. 1)
Comes a new woe,
My leader Ajax, mad beyond relief,
By heaven laid low;
How fallen from that impetuous chief,
Who sailed to meet the foe.

Now, to his friends' distress,
He sits and broods in sullen loneliness;
Those doughty deeds his right hand wrought
Now count for naught,
And from that loveless pair, those men of sin,
No love but despite win.

(Str. 2)
Ah, when his mother, blanched with age and
frail
Hears of his shattered reason, what wild wail
Will she upraise, a dirge of shrill despair,

ΑΙΑΣ

θρηνήσει, χερόπλακτοι δ'
 ἐν στέρνοισι πεσοῦνται
 δούποι καὶ πολιᾶς ἄμυγμα χαιτάς.

ἀντ. β'

κρείσσων παρ' Ἄϊδα κεύθων ὁ νοσῶν μάταν,
 ὃς ἐκ πατρίδας ἦκων γενεᾶς ἄριστος¹
 πολυπόνων Ἀχαιῶν,
 οὐκέτι συντρόφοις
 ὄργαις ἔμπεδος, ἀλλ' ἐκτὸς ὀμιλεῖ.
 ὦ τλᾶμον πάτερ, οἶαν σε μένει πυθέσθαι
 παιδὸς δύσφορον ἄταν,
 ἂν οὔπω τις ἐθρεψεν
 δίων Αἰακιδᾶν ἄτερθε τοῦδε.

640

ΑΙΑΣ

ἄπανθ' ὁ μακρὸς κἀναρίθμητος χρόνος
 φύει τ' ἄδηλα καὶ φανέντα κρύπτεται
 κούκ' ἔστ' ἄελπτον οὐδέν, ἀλλ' ἀλίσκεται
 χῶ δεινὸς ὄρκος χαι περισκελεῖς φρένες.
 κἀγὼ γάρ, ὃς τὰ δειν' ἐκαρτέρονν τότε,
 βαφῆ σιδήρος ὡς ἐθελύνθην στόμα
 πρὸς τῆσδε τῆς γυναικός· οἰκτίρω δέ νιν
 χήραν παρ' ἐχθροῖς παιδά τ' ὄρφανὸν λιπεῖν.
 ἀλλ' εἶμι πρὸς τε λουτρὰ καὶ παρακτίους
 λειμώνας, ὡς ἂν λύμαθ' ἀγνίσας ἐμὰ
 μῆνιν βαρεῖαν ἐξαλύξωμαι θεᾶς·
 μολών τε χῶρον ἐνθ' ἂν ἀστιβῆ κίχῳ,
 κρύψω τὸδ' ἐγγχος τοῦμόν, ἐχθιστον βελῶν,
 γαίᾳς ὀρύξας ἐνθα μὴ τις ὄψεται·
 ἀλλ' αὐτὸ νύξ' Ἄϊδης τε σφάζόντων κάτω.
 ἐγὼ γὰρ ἐξ οὗ χειρὶ τοῦτ' ἐδεξάμην

650

660

¹ ἄριστος added by Triclinius.

AJAX

(No plaintive ditty of the nightingale)
With beating of the breast and rending of white
hair.

Better be buried with the dead (Ant. 2)
Who lives with brain bewildered.
Of all the Greeks toil-worn
Behold the noblest born,
Now from his native temper warped and strange,
Whose thoughts in alien paths distracted range.
O wretched father, what a curse 'tis thine
Upon thy son to hear—curse that on none
E'er fell of all the Aeacidae's great line
Save him alone.

Enter AJAX.

AJAX

Time in its slow, illimitable course
Brings all to light and buries all again ;
Strange things it brings to pass, the dreadest oath
Is broken and the stubbornest will is bent.
E'en I whose will aforetime was as iron
Steeled in the dipping, now have lost the edge
Of resolution, by this woman's words
Unmanned, to pity melted at the thought
Of her a widow and my orphan son
Left amidst foemen. But I go my way
To the sea baths and meadows by the beach,
That I may there assoil me and assuage
The wrathful goddess, having purged my sin.
Then will I seek some solitary spot
And hide this sword, of weapons most accursed,
Deep under earth, consigned to Night and Hell,
Where never eye of man may see it more ;
For since the day I hanselled it, a gift

παρ' Ἐκτορος δώρημα δυσμενεστάτου,
 οὔπω τι κεδνὸν ἔσχον Ἀργείων πάρα.
 ἀλλ' ἔστ' ἀληθῆς ἢ βροτῶν παροιμία,
 ἐχθρῶν ἄδωρα δῶρα κούκ ὀνήσιμα.
 τοιγὰρ τὸ λοιπὸν εἰσόμεσθα μὲν θεοῖς
 εἴκειν, μαθησόμεσθα δ' Ἀτρείδας σέβειν.
 ἄρχοντές εἰσιν, ὥσθ' ὑπεικτέον. τί μὴν¹ ;
 καὶ γὰρ τὰ δεινὰ καὶ τὰ καρτερώτατα
 ἔτοιμ' ὑπέκειν· τούτο μὲν νιφοστιβεῖς
 χειμῶνες ἐκχωροῦσιν εὐκάρπῳ θέρει·
 ἐξίσταται δὲ νυκτὸς αἰάνης κύκλος
 τῇ λευκοπώλῳ φέγγος ἡμέρα φλέγειν·
 δεινῶν τ' ἄημα πνευμάτων ἐκοίμισε
 στένοντα πόντον· ἐν δ' ὁ παγκρατῆς ὕπνος
 λύει πεδήσας, οὐδ' αἰὲ λαβὼν ἔχει.
 ἡμεῖς δὲ πῶς οὐ γνωσόμεσθα σωφρονεῖν;
 ἐγὼ γ' ἐπίσταμαι γὰρ ἀρτίως ὅτι
 ὃ τ' ἐχθρὸς ἡμῖν ἐς τοσόνδ' ἐχθαρτέος,
 ὡς καὶ φιλήσων αὐθις, ἔς τε τὸν φίλον
 τοσαῦθ' ὑπουργῶν ὠφελεῖν βουλήσομαι,
 ὡς αἰὲν οὐ μενοῦντα· τοῖς πολλοῖσι γὰρ
 βροτῶν ἄπιστός ἐσθ' ἑταιρείας λιμῆν.
 ἀλλ' ἀμφὶ μὲν τούτοισιν εὖ σχήσει· σὺ δὲ
 ἔσω θεοῖς ἐλθοῦσα διὰ τάχους, γύναι,
 εὐχου τελείσθαι τούμῃ ὣν ἐρᾷ κέαρ.
 ὑμεῖς δ', ἑταῖροι, ταῦτ' ἀπὸ τῆδέ μοι τάδε
 τιμᾶτε, Τεύκρῳ τ', ἦν μόλη, σημήνατε
 μέλειν μὲν ἡμῶν, εὐνοεῖν δ' ὑμῖν ἅμα.
 ἐγὼ γὰρ εἴμ' ἐκεῖσ' ὅποι πορευτέον·

670

680

690

¹ τί μὴ MSS., Herwerden corr.

² ἐγὼ δ' ἐπίσταμαι MSS., Blaydes corr.

AJAX

From Hector, my arch-enemy, to this hour,
No favour from Achaeans have I won.
So true the word familiar in men's mouths,
A foe's gifts are no gifts and profit not.
Henceforward I shall know to yield to Heaven,
And school myself the Atridae to respect.
They are our rulers and obey we must ;
How otherwise ? Dread potencies and powers
Submit to law. Thus winter snow-bestrown
Gives place to opulent summer. Night's dim orb
Is put to flight when Dawn with her white steeds
Kindles the day-beams ; and the wind's fierce breath
Can lay the storm and lull the moaning deep.
E'en thus all-conquering sleep holds not for ever
Whom he has bound, and must relax his grasp.
And we, shall we not likewise learn to yield ?
I most of all ; for I have learnt, though late,
This rule, to hate an enemy as one
Who may become a friend, and serve a friend
As knowing that his friendship may not last.
An unsafe anchorage to most men proves
The bond of friendship. As for present needs
All shall be well. Woman, go thou within
And pray the gods that all my heart's desires
May find their consummation to the full.
And ye, my comrades, see that ye respect,
No less than she, my wishes ; and enjoin
On Teucer, when he comes, to care for me,
And show good will to you, my friends, withal.
For I am going whither I am bound.

ΑΙΑΣ

ὑμεῖς δ' ἂ φράζω δρᾶτε, καὶ τάχ' ἂν μ' ἴσως
πύθοισθε, κεί νῦν δυστυχῶ, σεσωσμένον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἔφριξ' ἔρωτι, περιχαρῆς δ' ἀνεπτόμαν. στρ.
 ἰὼ ἰὼ Πᾶν Πάν,
 ὦ Πᾶν Πᾶν ἀλίπλαγκτε, Κυλλανίας χιονοκτύπου
 πετραίας ἀπὸ δειράδος φάνηθ', ὦ
 θεῶν χοροποι' ἀναξ, ὅπως μοι
 Νύσια Κνώσι' ὀρχήματ' αὐτοδαῆ ξυνὸν ἰάψης· 700
 νῦν γὰρ ἐμοὶ μέλει χορεῦσαι.
 Ἰκαρίων δ' ὑπὲρ πελαγέων μολῶν ἀναξ Ἄπολλων
 ὁ Δάλιος εὐγνωστος
 ἐμοὶ ξυνεῖη διὰ παντὸς εὐφρων.

ἔλυσεν αἶνον ἄχος ἀπ' ὀμμάτων Ἄρης. ἀντ.
 ἰὼ ἰὼ, νῦν αὖ,
 νῦν, ὦ Ζεῦ, πάρα λευκὸν εὐάμερον πελάσαι φάος
 θοᾶν ἠκυάλων νεῶν, ὅτ' Αἴας 710
 λαβίπονος πάλιν, θεῶν δ' αὖ
 πάνθ' ἄθ' ἄθ' ἄθ' ἐξήνυσ' εὐνομίᾳ σέβων μεγίστα.
 πάνθ' ὁ μέγας χρόνος μαραίνει,
 κούδεν ἀναύδατον φατίσαιμ' ἂν, εὐτέ γ' ἐξ ἀέλπτων
 Αἴας μετανεγνώσθη
 θυμοῦ τ' ἑ¹ Ἀτρείδαις μεγάλων τε νεικέων.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἄνδρες φίλοι, τὸ πρῶτον ἀγγεῖλαι θέλω·
 Τεῦκρος πάρεστιν ἄρτι Μυσίων ἀπὸ
 κρημνῶν· μέσον δὲ προσμολὸν στρατήγιον 720
 κυδάζεται τοῖς πᾶσιν Ἀργείοις ὁμοῦ.
 στείχοντα γὰρ πρόσωθεν αὐτὸν ἐν κύκλῳ

¹ θυμόν τ' ὅτ θυμόν MSS., Hermann corr.

AJAX

Do ye my bidding, and perchance, though now
I suffer, ye may hear of my release. [*Exit* AJAX.]

CHORUS

I thrill with rapture, all my heart upsprings! (*Str.*)
Pan, Pan, O Pan, appear.

Come to us o'er the sea, sea-rover, leaving
The ridges of Cyllenè's driven snow,
Come to us, hand in hand blithe dances weaving,
Thou leader of the dance in heaven; show
Of Nysa and of Cnosos measures rare,
For in my rapture I the dance would share.
Come, and upon his footsteps swiftly follow,
Winging thy way across the Icarian main,
Show thy bright presence, Delos' own Apollo,
God of my life, thou healer of all pain!

(*Ant.*)

Grim Ares from mine eyes the cloud of sadness
Has lifted; now the radiant Dawn anew,
Angel of light, and harbinger of gladness,
Visits our ships that swiftly cleave the blue.
O joy, when Ajax has forgot once more
His woe, and turns the godhead to adore!
Due rites he pays with contrite heart and lowly.
O all-devouring time, what miracles
Thou workest! lo, his feud forgotten wholly,
Ajax at peace with the Atridae dwells.

Enter MESSENGER.

MESSENGER

Teucer is here—that, friends, is my first news—
Back from the Mysian highlands newly come.
But as he neared headquarters in mid camp,
He was beset with universal shouts
Of obloquy; they spied him from afar,

ΑΙΑΣ

μαθόντες ἀμφέστησαν, εἴτ' ὀνειδέσιν
 ἤρασσον ἔνθεν κᾶνθεν οὔτις ἔσθ' ὃς οὔ,
 τὸν τοῦ μανέντος κἀπιβουλευτοῦ στρατοῦ
 ξύναιμον ἀποκαλοῦντες, ὡς οὐκ ἀρκέσοι
 τὸ μὴ οὐ πέτροισι πᾶς καταξανθεὶς θανεῖν·
 ὥστ' εἰς τοσοῦτον ἦλθον ὥστε καὶ χεροῖν
 κολεῶν ἐρυστὰ διεπεραιώθη ξίφη.
 λήγει δ' ἔρις δραμοῦσα τοῦ προσωτάτῳ
 ἀνδρῶν γερόντων ἐν ξυναλλαγῇ λόγου.
 ἀλλ' ἡμῖν Αἴας ποῦ ἴστιν, ὡς φράσω τάδε;
 τοῖς κυρίοις γὰρ πάντα χρῆ δηλοῦν λόγον.

730

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐκ ἔνδον, ἀλλὰ φροῦδος ἀρτίως, νέας
 βουλὰς νέοισιν ἐγκαταζεύξας τρόποις.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ιοῦ ἰού·
 βραδείαν ἡμᾶς ἄρ' ὁ τήνδε τὴν ὁδὸν
 πέμπων ἔπεμψεν ἢ φάνην ἐγὼ βραδύς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί δ' ἐστὶ χρείας τῆσδ' ὑπεσπανισμένον;

740

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

τὸν ἀνδρ' ἀπηύδα Τεῦκρος ἔνδοθεν στέγης
 μὴ ἔω παρήκειν, πρὶν παρὼν αὐτὸς τύχη.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' οἴχεται τοι, πρὸς τὸ κέρδιστον τραπεῖς
 γνώμης, θεοῖσιν ὡς καταλλαχθῆ χόλου.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ταῦτ' ἐστὶ τάπη μωρίας πολλῆς πλέα,
 εἴπερ τι Κάλχας εὖ φρονῶν μαντεύεται.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ποίον; τί δ' εἰδῶς τοῦδε πράγματος πάρει;¹

¹ κέρι MSS., Schneidewin corr.

AJAX

And crowding round him as he nearer came,
Rained on him taunts from this side and from that,
Railed at the kinsman of the crazy wretch,
Plotter of mischief 'gainst the host—" 'To die
By stoning, mauled and mangled, is thy doom;
Think not to 'scape it, villain," so they cried.
It came to such a pass that swords were drawn
And brandished; then the riot, having run
To the very verge of bloodshed, was allayed
By intervention of the elder men.
But where is Ajax? Him I fain would tell;
'Tis meet your lords should know whate'er befell.

CHORUS

He is not within; but now he went abroad,
Yoking some new resolve to his new mood.

MESSENGER

Alack, alack!
Too late then on this errand was I sent,
Or I, a laggard, have arrived too late.

CHORUS

What pressing business has been slackly done?

MESSENGER

Teucer enjoined his brother should not forth,
Or quit his tent till he himself should come.

CHORUS

Well, he is gone, and with the best resolve
To make his peace with heaven.

MESSENGER

Folly sheer,
If there be sense in Calchas' prophecy.

CHORUS

What prophecy? what knowest thou thereof?

ΑΙΑΣ

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

τοσοῦτον οἶδα καὶ παρῶν ἐτύγχανον.
 ἐκ γὰρ συνέδρου καὶ τυραννικοῦ κύκλου
 Κάλχας μεταστὰς οἶος Ἀτρειδῶν δίχα, 750
 εἰς χεῖρα Τεύκρου δεξιὰν φιλοφρόνως
 θεὸς εἶπε κἀπέσκηψε, παντοῖα τέχνη
 εἰρξαι κατ' ἡμαρ τοῦμφανὲς τὸ νῦν τόδε
 Αἴανθ' ὑπὸ σκηναῖσι μὴδ' ἀφέντ' εἶν,
 εἰ ζῶντ' ἐκείνον εἰσιδεῖν θέλοι ποτέ.
 ἐλᾶ γὰρ αὐτὸν τῆδε θῆμέρα μόνη
 δίας Ἀθάνας μῆνις, ὡς ἔφη λέγων.
 τὰ γὰρ περισσὰ κἀνόνητα σώματα
 πίπτειν βαρείαις πρὸς θεῶν δυσπραξίαις
 ἔφασχ' ὁ μάντις, ὅστις ἀνθρώπου φύσιν 760
 βλαστῶν ἔπειτα μὴ κατ' ἀνθρωπον φρονῆ.
 κείνος δ' ἀπ' οἴκων εὐθύς ἐξορμώμενος
 ἄνους καλῶς λέγοντος ἠῦρέθη πατρός.
 ὁ μὲν γὰρ αὐτὸν ἐννέπει· τέκνον, δόρει
 βούλου κρατεῖν μὲν, σὺν θεῷ δ' αἰεὶ κρατεῖν.
 ὁ δ' ὑψικόμπως κἀφρόνως ἠμείψατο·
 πάτερ, θεοῖς μὲν κἂν ὁ μὴδὲν ὦν ὁμοῦ
 κράτος κατακτήσασιτ'· ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ δίχα
 κείνων πέποιθα τοῦτ' ἐπισπάσειν κλέος. 770
 τοσονδ' ἐκόμπει μῦθον. εἶτα δεῦτερον
 δίας Ἀθάνας, ἠνίκ' ὀτρύνουσά νιν
 ἠὺδᾶτ' ἐπ' ἐχθροῖς χεῖρα φοινίαν τρέπειν,
 τότ' ἀντιφωνεῖ δεινὸν ἄρρητόν τ' ἔπος·
 ἄνασσα, τοῖς ἄλλοισιν Ἀργείων πέλας
 ἴστω, καθ' ἡμᾶς δ' οὐποτ' ἐκρήξει μύχη.
 τοιοῖσδέ τοι λόγοισιν ἀστεργῆ θεᾶς
 ἐκτήσατ' ὀργήν, οὐ κατ' ἀνθρωπον φρονῶν.
 ἀλλ' εἶπερ ἔστι τῆδε θῆμέρα, τάχ' ἂν

AJAX

MESSENGER

Thus much I know, for I was there. The seer
Leaving the council of assembled chiefs,
From the Atridae drew aside and laid
His right hand lovingly in Teucer's hand,
And spake and charged him straitly by all means,
For this one day whose light yet shines, to keep
Ajax within his tent nor let him forth,
If he would see him still a living man.
"Only to-day," said Calchas, "will the wrath
Of dread Athena vex him, and no more.
O'erweening mortals waxing fat with pride
Fall in their folly, smitten by the gods
With dire disaster" (so the prophet spake),
"Whene'er a mortal born to man's estate
Exalts himself in thoughts too high for man.
Thus Ajax, e'en when first he left his home,
In folly spurned his father's monishments—
'Seek victory, my son' (so warned the sire),
'But seek it ever with the help of heaven.'
He in his wilful arrogance, replied,
'Father, with gods to aid, a man of naught
Might well prevail, but I without their help.'
Such was his haughty boast. A second time,
To Queen Athena, as she spurred him on
To turn his reeking hand upon his foes,
He spake a blasphemous, outrageous word,
'Queen, stand beside the other Greeks; where I
Am posted, fear not that our ranks will break.'
Such vaunting words drew on him the dire wrath
Of the goddess—pride too high for mortal man.

ΑΙΑΣ

γενοίμεθ' αὐτοῦ σὺν θεῷ σωτήριοι.
 τοσαῦθ' ὁ μάντις εἶφ'· ὁ δ' εὐθύς ἐξ ἔδρας
 πέμπει με σοὶ φέροντα τάσδ' ἐπιστολάς
 Τεῦκρος φυλάσσειν. εἰ δ' ἀπεστερήμεθα,
 οὐκ ἔστιν ἀνὴρ κείνος, εἰ Κάλχας σοφός.

780

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ δαῖτα Τέκμησσα, δύσμορον γένος,
 ὄρα μολούσα τόνδ' ὅποι' ἔπη θροεῖ·
 ξυρεῖ γὰρ ἐν χρῶ τούτο μὴ χαίρειν τινά.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

τί μ' αὖτάλαιναν, ἀρτίως πεπαυμένην
 κακῶν ἀτρύτων, ἐξ ἔδρας ἀνίστατε;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τοῦδ' εἰσάκουε τάνδρος, ὡς ἦκει φέρων
 Αἴαντος ἡμῖν πράξιν ἣν ἤλγησ' ἐγώ.

790

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

οἴμοι, τί φῆς, ἀνθρωπε; μῶν ὀλώλαμεν;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

οὐκ οἶδα τὴν σὴν πράξιν, Αἴαντος δ' ὅτι,
 θυραῖος εἶπερ ἐστίν, οὐ θαρσῶ πέρι.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

καὶ μὴν θυραῖος, ὥστε μ' ὠδίνειν τί φῆς.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἐκείνον εἶργειν Τεῦκρος ἐξεφίεται
 σκηνῆς ὑπαυλον μῆδ' ἀφιέναι μόνον.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ποῦ δ' ἐστὶ Τεῦκρος, κάπὶ τῷ λέγει τάδε;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

πάρεστ' ἐκεῖνος ἄρτι· τήνδε δ' ἔξοδον
 ὀλεθρίαν Αἴαντος ἐλπίζει φέρειν.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

οἴμοι τάλαινα, τοῦ ποτ' ἀνθρώπων μαθῶν;

800

AJAX

But if he can survive this day, perchance
With God's good aid we may avail to save him."
So spake the seer, and Teucer straightway rose
And sent me with these mandates. Have I failed,
Ajax is doomed, or Calchas is no seer.

CHORUS

Ill-starred Tecmessa, born to woe, come forth,
And hearken to this messenger, whose words
That touch us to the quick brook no delay.

Enter TECMESSA.

TECMESSA

Why break my rest and trouble me again,
Relieved awhile from woes that have no end?

CHORUS

List to this man—the tidings he has brought
Of Ajax' fortunes, filling me with grief.

TECMESSA

What is thy news, man? Say, are we undone?

MESSENGER

I know not of thy fortunes, only this—
If Ajax is abroad, I augur ill.

TECMESSA

Alas! he is. How thy words chill my soul!

MESSENGER

Teucer's injunction is to keep him close
Indoors, nor let him go abroad alone.

TECMESSA

And where is Teucer? Wherefore speaks he thus?

MESSENGER

He hath returned but lately and forbodes
Grave jeopardy, if Ajax goes abroad.

TECMESSA

Ah woe is me! Who warned him of this peril?

ΑΙΑΣ

ΑΙΤΕΛΟΣ

τοῦ Θεσπορείου μάντεως, καθ' ἡμέραν
τὴν νῦν, ὅτ' αὐτῷ θάνατον ἢ βίον φέρει.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΙΑ

οἱ ἄγ' φίλοι, πρόστητ' ἀναγκαίας τύχης,
καὶ σπεύσαθ', οἱ μὲν Τεῦκρον ἐν τάχει μολεῖν,
οἱ δ' ἐσπέρους ἀγκῶνας, οἱ δ' ἀντηλίους
ζητεῖτ' ἰόντες τάνδρὸς ἕξοδον κακῆν.
ἔγνωκα γὰρ δὴ φωτὸς ἠπατημένη
καὶ τῆς παλαιᾶς χάριτος ἐκβεβλημένη.
οἴμοι, τί δράσω, τέκνον; οὐχ ἰδρυντέον
ἀλλ' εἴμι κἀγὼ κείσ' ὅποιπερ ἂν σθένω.
χωρῶμεν, ἐγκονῶμεν, οὐχ ἔδρας ἀκμῆ
σφῆζειν θέλοντας ἄνδρα γ' ὃς σπεύδῃ θανεῖν.

810

ΧΟΡΟΣ

χωρεῖν ἔτοιμος, κοῦ λόγῳ δείξω μόνον·
τάχος γὰρ ἔργου καὶ ποδῶν ἅμ' ἔψεται,

ΑΙΑΣ

ὁ μὲν σφαγεὺς ἔστηκεν ἢ τομώτατος
γένοιτ' ἂν, εἴ τῳ καὶ λογίζεσθαι σχολή·
δώρον μὲν ἄνδρος Ἐκτορος ξένων ἐμοὶ
μάλιστα μισηθέντος ἐχθίστου θ' ὄραν·
πέπηγε δ' ἐν γῆ πολέμια τῇ Τρῳάδι,
σιδηροβρῶτι θηγάνῃ νεηκονῆς·
ἔπηξα δ' αὐτὸν εὖ περιστεύλας ἐγὼ,
εὐνούστατον τῷδ' ἀνδρὶ διὰ τάχους θανεῖν.
οὕτω μὲν εὐσκενοῦμεν· ἐκ δὲ τῶνδέ μοι
σὺ πρῶτος, ὦ Ζεῦ, καὶ γὰρ εἰκός, ἄρκεσον.
αἰτήσομαι δὲ σ' οὐ μακρὸν γέρας λαχεῖν.
πέμψον τιν' ἡμῖν ἄγγελον, κακῆν φάτιν

820

AJAX

MESSENGER

The prophet, son of Thestor, but to-day,
When in the scales for him hang life and death.

TECMESSA

Help, friends, protect me from the impending doom !
Speed, some to hasten Teucer on his way,
Some to the western creeks and some to those
That front the morn ; pursue his ill-starred track.
I see too well my lord hath cheated me,
Withdrawn the favour that long time was mine.
Ah me ! What shall I do, my child ? No time
To sit with folded hands ; I too will go,
So far as this weak frame allows, in search.
Up, quick, to work ! no moment must be lost,
If we would save a man who hastes to death.

CHORUS

Ready am I ; not words alone shall prove,
But speed of act and foot, my readiness. [*Exeunt.*
[AJAX alone on the sea-shore, planting his sword in the
ground.]

AJAX

The slayer standeth where his stroke is sure ;
If I have time to muse thus curiously.
The gift of Hector erst my foeman-friend,
The man most hateful to my soul and sight ;
Now fixed in foemen's land, the land of Troy ;
Fresh edged upon the iron-fretting stone,
Here have I planted it and set it fast,
A friend to help me to a speedy death.
My part is done ; for what remains, O Zeus,
First I invoke thine aid ; and claim my due ;
'Tis no excessive boon I shall demand.
I pray thee send some messenger to bear

Τεύκρω φέροντα, πρῶτος ὧς με βαστάσῃ .
 πεπτῶτα τῶδε περι νεορράντῳ ξίφει,
 καὶ μὴ πρὸς ἐχθρῶν του κατοπτρευθεὶς πάρος
 ριφθῶ κυσὶν πρόβλητος οἰωνοῖς θ' ἔλωρ. 830
 τοσαυτά σ', ὦ Ζεῦ, προστρέπω, καλῶ δ' ἄμα
 πομπαῖον Ἑρμῆν χθόνιον εὐ με κοιμίσαι,
 ξὺν ἀσφαδάστῳ καὶ ταχεῖ πηδήματι
 πλευρὰν διαρρήξαντα τῶδε φασγάνῳ.
 καλῶ δ' ἀρωγούς τὰς αἰεὶ τε παρθένοὺς
 αἰεὶ θ' ὀρώσας πάντα τὰν βροτοῖς πάθη,
 σεμνὰς Ἑρινύς τανύποδας, μαθεῖν ἐμὲ
 πρὸς τῶν Ἀτρειδῶν ὡς διόλλυμαι τάλας,
 καὶ σφας κακοὺς κάκιστα καὶ πανωλέθρους
 ξυναρπάσειαν, ὥσπερ εἰσορῶσ' ἐμὲ 840
 [αὐτοσφαγῆ πίπτοντα, τὼς αὐτοσφαγεῖς
 πρὸς τῶν φιλίστων ἐκγόνων ὀλοίατο].¹
 ἴτ', ὦ ταχεῖαι ποίημοι τ' Ἑρινύες,
 γενέσθε, μὴ φείδεσθε πανδήμου στρατοῦ·
 σὺ δ', ὦ τὸν αἰπὺν οὐρανὸν διφρηλατῶν
 Ἥλιε, πατρώαν τὴν ἐμὴν ὅταν χθόνα
 ἴδῃς, ἐπισχῶν χρυσόνωτον ἠνίαν
 ἄγγελιον ἄτας τὰς ἐμὰς μόρον τ' ἐμὸν
 γέροντι πατρὶ τῇ τε δυστήνῳ τροφῶ.
 ἢ που τάλαινα, τήνδ' ὅταν κλύῃ φάτιν, 850
 ἦσει μέγαν κωκυτὸν ἐν πάσῃ πόλει.
 ἀλλ' οὐδὲν ἔργον ταῦτα θρηνεῖσθαι μάτην,
 ἀλλ' ἀρκτέον τὸ πρᾶγμα σὺν τάχει τινί.
 ὦ Θάνατε Θάνατε, νῦν μ' ἐπίσκεψαι μολῶν.
 καίτοι σὲ μὲν κάκει προσαυδήσω ξυνῶν.
 σὲ δ', ὦ φαεννῆς ἡμέρας τὸ νῦν σέλας,
 καὶ τὸν διφρευτήν Ἥλιον προσεννέπω,

¹ Rejected by Hermann, etc.

AJAX

To Teucer the sad tale, that he may come
To lift me where I lie a bleeding corpse,
Fallen on this gory sword, lest I be first
Discovered by some enemy and cast forth,
A prey to dogs and birds. Thus much, O Zeus,
I crave of thee ; and Hermes I invoke,
Born guide of spirits to the nether world,
To lay me soft to rest at one swift gasp,
Without a struggle, when into my side
I plunge this sword. Ye too I call to aid,
Maidens immortal, with immortal eyes
Beholding all the many woes of man,
Swift-footed hounds of vengeance, mark ye well
How by the Atridae I am all undone.
Swoop on them, Furies, blight and blast them both
In utter ruin, as they see me now !
On, ye Avengers, glut your maw, spare not,
Let ruin seize the whole Achaean host !
And thou whose chariot climbs the steep of heaven,
When in thy course thou see'st my father-land,
Draw in thy gold-bedizened rein and tell
My aged sire and mother of their son,
His sorrows and his end. Poor mother ! when
She hears the tale, her piercing wail will ring
Through all the city. But how profitless
These idle lamentations and delay !
With such despatch as may be let's to work.

• O Death, Death, Death, draw nigh and look on me—
Yet there below I shall have time enow
To converse face to face with Death. But thee,
O bright effulgence of this radiant day,
On thee, the Sun-god charioteer, I call

ΑΙΑΣ

πανύστατον δὴ κοῦποτ' αὐθις ὕστερον.
 ὦ φέγγος, ὦ γῆς ἱερὸν οἰκείας πέδου
 Σαλαμῖνος, ὦ πατρῶον ἐστίας βάθρον
 κλειναί τ' Ἀθῆναι καὶ τὸ σύντροφον γένος
 κρήναί τε ποταμοί θ' οἶδε, καὶ τὰ Τρωϊκὰ
 πεδία προσαυδῶ, χαίρετ', ὦ τροφῆς ἐμοί·
 τοῦθ' ὑμῖν Αἴας τοῦπος ὕστατον θροεῖ,
 τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἐν Ἄιδου τοῖς κάτω μυθήσομαι.

860

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ Α'

πόνος πόνω πόνου φέρει.
 πᾶ πᾶ
 πᾶ γὰρ οὐκ ἔβαν ἐγώ;
 κοῦδεις ἐπίσταται με συμμαθεῖν¹ τόπος.
 ἰδοῦ.
 δοῦπον αὖ κλύω τινά.

870

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ Β'

ἡμῶν γε ναὸς κοινόπλουν ὁμιλίαν.

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ Α'

τί οὖν δῆ;

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ Β'

πᾶν ἐστίβηται πλευρὸν ἔσπερον νεῶν

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ Α'

ἔχεις οὖν;

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ Β'

πόνου γε πλήθης, κοῦδεν εἰς ὄψω πλέον.

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ Α'

ἀλλ' οὐδὲ μὲν δῆ τὴν ἀφ' ἡλίου βολῶν
 κέλευθον ἀνὴρ οὐδαμοῦ δηλοῖ φανείς.

¹ The Greek is obscure and probably corrupt. Jebb suggests, but does not print *σφε συνατειν*.

AJAX

For the last time and never more again.
O light! O sacred soil of mine own land,
My Salamis! my home, my ancestral hearth!
O far-famed Athens, race akin to mine,
Ye Trojan springs and streams, ye plains of Troy,
Farewell, ye nurses of my fame, farewell!
This is the last word Ajax speaks to you.
Henceforth he talks in Hades with the dead.
[He falls upon his sword.]

Re-enter CHORUS.

SEMI-CHORUS 1

Toil, toil, and toil on toil!
Where have my steps not roamed, and yet,
No place that hath a secret for my ear.¹
Hist! hist! what sound was that?

SEMI-CHORUS 2

'Tis we, thy mates.

SEMI-CHORUS 1

What cheer, mates?

SEMI-CHORUS 2

All westward of the fleet we've ranged and found

SEMI-CHORUS 1

Found, say you!

SEMI-CHORUS 2

Of moil enow, of what we sought no trace.

SEMI-CHORUS 1

No better luck to the eastward; on the road
That fronts the sunrise not a trace of him.

¹ Or, 'No spot can tell me of his presence there.'

ΑΙΑΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τίς ἂν δῆτά μοι, τίς ἂν φιλοπόνων
ἀλιαδᾶν ἔχων ἀΰπνους ἄγρας,
ἢ τίς Ὀλυμπιάδων θεᾶν ἢ ῥυτῶν
Βοσπορίων ποταμῶν, τὸν ὠμόθυμον
εἷ ποθι πλαζόμενον λεύσσω
ἀπύοι; σχέτλια γὰρ
ἐμέ γε τὸν μακρῶν ἀλάταν πόνων
οὐρίῳ μὴ πελάσαι δρόμῳ,
ἀλλ' ἀμενηνὸν ἄνδρα μὴ λεύσσειν ὄπου.

στρ. 880

890

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἰὼ μοί μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τίνος βοή πάραυλος ἐξέβη νάπους;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἰὼ τλήμων.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τὴν δουρίληπτον δύσμορον νύμφην ὀρῶ
Τέκμησσαν, οἴκτῳ, τῷδε συγκεκραμένην.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ᾤχωκ', ὄλωλα, διαπεπόρθημαι, φίλοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί δ' ἔστιν;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

Αἴας ὄδ' ἡμῖν ἀρτίως νεοσφαγῆς
κεῖται, κρυφαίῳ φασγάνῳ περιπτυχῆς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ᾧμοι ἐμῶν νόστων
ᾧμοι, κατέπεφνες, ἀναξ,
τόνδε συνναύταν, τάλας
ὦ ταλαίφρων γύναι·

900

AJAX

CHORUS

O that some toiling fisher by the bay, (Str.)
 Dragging his nets all night,
 Some Oread from Olympus' height,
Or nymph who haunts the tides of Bosphorus,
Might spy the wanderer on his wayward way
 And bring the tale to us.

Hard lot is ours who tack
To east, to west, and find no track,
Ne'er in our luckless course descrie
The derelict nor come anigh.
(They hear a cry in the covert.)

TECMESSA

Woe, woe is me !

CHORUS

Whose was that cry from out the covert's fringe ?

TECMESSA

Me miserable !

CHORUS

My hapless mistress, Ajax' spear-won bride,
Tecmessa, whelmed in anguish I behold.

TECMESSA

I'm lost, undone, of all bereft, my friends.

CHORUS

What aileth thee ?

TECMESSA

Here lies our Ajax, newly slain, impaled
Upon his sword, new planted in the ground.

CHORUS

O for my hope of return !
O my chief, thou hast slain
Me thy shipmate ! my heart
Bleeds for thee, lady forlorn.

ΑΙΑΣ

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ὡς ὧδε τοῦδ' ἔχοντος αἰάζειν πάρα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τίνος ποτ' ἄρ' ἔπραξε χειρὶ δύσμορος;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

αὐτὸς πρὸς αὐτοῦ, δῆλον· ἐν γάρ οἱ χθονὶ
πηκτὸν τόδ' ἔγχος περιπετὲς κατηγορεῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦμοι ἐμᾶς ἄτας, οἷος ἄρ' αἰμάχθης, ἄφαρκτος
φίλων
ἐγὼ δ' ὁ πάντα κωφός, ὁ πάντ' αἰδρις, κατ-
ημέλησα. πᾶ πᾶ
κεῖται ὁ δυστράπελος, δυσώνυμος Αἴας;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

οὔτοι θεατός· ἀλλὰ νιν περιπτυχεῖ
φάρει καλύψω τῷδε παμπήδην, ἐπεὶ
οὐδεὶς ἄν, ὅστις καὶ φίλος, τλαίη βλέπειν
φυσῶντ' ἄνω πρὸς ῥίνας ἔκ τε φοινίας
πληγῆς μελανθὲν αἷμ' ἀπ' οἰκείας σφαγῆς.
οἴμοι, τί δράσω; τίς σε βαστάσει φίλων;
ποῦ Τεῦκρος; ὡς ἀκμαῖ' ἄν, εἰ βαίη, μόλοι,
πεπτῶτ' ἀδελφὸν τόνδε συγκαθαρμοῖσαι.
ὦ δύσμορ' Αἴας, οἷος ἄν οἷως ἔχεις,
ὡς καὶ παρ' ἔχθροῖς ἄξιος θρήνων τυχεῖν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἔμελλες, τάλας, ἔμελλες χρόνῳ ἄντ.
στερεόφρων ἄρ' ἐξανύσσειν κακὰν
μοῖραν ἀπειρεσίῳ πόνων. τοιά μοι
πάννυχα καὶ φαέθοντ' ἀνεστέναζες
ὠμόφρων ἐχθροδότη' Ἀτρείδαις

AJAX

TECMESSA

Thus lies he overthrown ; 'tis ours to wail.

CHORUS

By whose hand did he thus procure his death ?

TECMESSA

By his own hand, 'tis manifest ; the sword
Set in the ground, on which he fell, is proof.

CHORUS

Out on my blindness ! All alone
Unwatched of friends he bled to death !
And I saw naught, heard naught, recked naught of
thee !

Where lies he, Ajax, the self-willed,
The unbending, luckless as his name ?

TECMESSA

No eye shall look on him ; this robe around
Shall lap him and enshroud from head to foot.
For none who knew him, not his dearest friend,
Could bear to see him, as the dark blood spurts
Up through his nostrils from the self-wrought wound.
What shall I do ? What friend shall lift him up ?
Where, where is Teucer ? Timely would he come,
If come he might, to raise him and lay out
His brother's corse. Ah me ! How high thou stood'st,
My Ajax, and how low thou liest here !
A sight to melt to tears e'en foemen's eyes !

CHORUS

Ah woeful hero, 'twas thy fate, (Ant.)
With that unyielding soul of thine,
In endless misery to decline,
And reach the goal of ruin, soon or late.
I knew it as I heard thee eve and morn
Against the Atridae vent
Thy passionate complaint,

ΑΙΑΣ

οὐλίφ σὺν πάθει.
 μέγας ἄρ' ἦν ἐκεῖνος ἄρχων χρόνος
 πημάτων, ἦμος ἀριστόχειρ
 — ἴ — ὄπλων ἔκειτ' ἀγὼν πέρι.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΙΑ

ἰὼ μοί μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

χωρεῖ πρὸς ἦπαρ, οἶδα, γενναία δῆ.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΙΑ

ἰὼ μοί μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐδέν σ' ἀπιστῶ καὶ δις οἰμῶξαι, γύναι,
 τοιοῦδ' ἀποβλαφθεῖσαν ἀρτίως φίλου.

940

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΙΑ

σοὶ μὲν δοκεῖν ταύτ' ἔστ', ἐμοὶ δ' ἄγαν φρονεῖν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ξυναυδῶ.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΙΑ

οἴμοι, τέκνον, πρὸς οἷα δουλείας ζυγὰ
 χωροῦμεν, οἴοι νῦν ἐφεστᾶσιν σκοποί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ᾧμοι, ἀναλγήτων
 δισσῶν ἐθρόησας ἀναυδ'
 ἔργ' ¹ Ἀτρειδᾶν τῶδ' ἄχει.
 ἀλλ' ἀπείργοι θεός.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΙΑ

οὐκ ἂν τάδ' ἔστη τῆδε μὴ θεῶν μέτα.

950

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἄγαν ὑπερβριθὲς γὰρ ² ἄχθος ἤνυσαν.

¹ ἔναυδον Ἰργου MSS., Hermann corr.

² Elmsley adds γὰρ.

AJAX

A bitter cry of proud disdain and scorn.
Aye, then began my woes
When first arose
The contest who those arms could claim
As guerdon for the first in warlike fame.

TECMESSA

Woe, woe is me !

CHORUS

The anguish, well I know it,
Pierces to thy true heart.

TECMESSA

Woe, woe is me !

CHORUS

No marvel thou shouldst wail and wail again
Bereft so lately and of one so loved.

TECMESSA

The woe I feel thou canst in part conceive.

CHORUS

'Tis true.

TECMESSA

Alas, my child, to what hard yoke
Of bondage must we come, so merciless
The taskmasters set over thee and me !

CHORUS

The Atridae, ruthless pair,
And their grim deeds ineffable
Thy boding soul prefigures. God avert it !

TECMESSA

Save by God's will we were not in this case.

CHORUS

They have laid on us a load too hard to bear.

ΑΙΑΣ

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΙΑ

τοιόνδε μέντοι Ζηνὸς ἢ δεινὴ θεὸς
Παλλὰς φυτεύει πῆμ' Ὀδυσσεῶς χάριν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἢ ῥα κελαινώπαν θυμὸν ἐφυβρίζει πολύτλας ἀνὴρ,
γελᾷ δὲ τοῖσδε μαινομένοις ἄχρῃσιν πολὺν γέλωτα,
φεῦ φεῦ,

ξύν τε διπλοὶ βασιλῆς κλύοντες Ἀτρεΐδαι.

960

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΙΑ

οἱ δ' οὖν γελώντων κἀπιχαιρόντων κακοῖς
τοῖς τοῦδ' ἴσως τοι, κεῖ βλέποντα μὴ πόθουν,
θανόντ' ἂν οἰμώξειαν ἐν χρεῖα δορός.
οἱ γὰρ κακοὶ γνῶμαισι τὰ γαθὸν χεροῖν
ἔχοντες οὐκ ἴσασι, πρὶν τις ἐκβάλλῃ.
ἐμοὶ πικρὸς τέθνηκεν ἢ κείνοις γλυκύς,
αὐτῷ δὲ τερπνός· ὦν γὰρ ἠράσθη τυχεῖν
ἐκτῆσαθ' αὐτῷ, θάνατον ὄνπερ ἠθελεν.
τί δῆτα τοῦδ' ἐπεγγελῶεν ἂν κάτα;
θεοῖς τέθνηκεν οὗτος, οὐ κείνοισιν, οὔ.
πρὸς ταῦτ' Ὀδυσσεὺς ἐν κενοῖς ὑβρίζειτω.
Αἴας γὰρ ἀντοῖς οὐκέτ' ἐστίν, ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ
λιπὼν ἀνίας καὶ γόους διοίχεται.

970

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

ἰὼ μοί μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

σίγησον· αὐδὴν γὰρ δοκῶ Τεύκρου κλύειν
βοῶντος ἄτης τῆσδ' ἐπίσκοπον μέλος.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

ὦ φίλτατ' Αἴας, ὦ ξύναιμον ὄμμ' ἐμοί,
ἄρ' ἠμπόληκας, ὥσπερ ἢ φάτις κρατεῖ;

80

AJAX

TECMESSA

Yet such the plague wherewith the daughter dire
Of Zeus afflicts us for Odysseus' sake.

CHORUS

Yea, how the patient hero must exult
In his dark soul and mock
With fiendish laughter at our frenzied grief;
And the two chiefs withal,
The Atridae, when they learn his fate.

TECMESSA

Well, let them laugh and mock at Ajax fall'n.
It may be, though they missed him not in life,
When comes the stress of war they'll mourn him
dead.

Men of mean judgment know not the good thing
They have and hold till they have squandered it.
He by his death more sorrow gave to me
Than joy to them; to himself 'twas pure content,
For all he yearned to attain he won himself—
Death that he chose. Then wherefore scoff at him?
The gods were authors of his death, not they.
So let Odysseus, if it please him, vent
Vain taunts; for them there is no Ajax more,
And dying he has left me naught but woe.

TEUCER

Woe, woe is me!

CHORUS

Hist, hist! methinks 'tis Teucer's voice I hear,
That woeful strain of mourning at our loss.

Enter TEUCER.

TEUCER

Beloved Ajax, dearest of my kin,
Did fame not lie then? hast thou fared thus ill?

ΑΙΑΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὄλωλεν ἀνὴρ, Τεῦκρε, τοῦτ' ἐπίστασο.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

ὦμοι βαρείας ἄρα τῆς ἐμῆς τύχης.

980

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὡς ὧδ' ἐχόντων

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

ὦ τάλας ἐγώ, τάλας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πάρα στενάζειν.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

ὦ περισπερχές πάθος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἄγαν γε, Τεῦκρε.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

φεῦ τάλας· τί γὰρ τέκνον
τὸ τοῦδε, ποῦ μοι γῆς κυρεῖ τῆς Τρῳάδος;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μόνος παρὰ σκηναῖσιν.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

οὐχ ὅσον τάχος
δῆτ' αὐτὸν ἄξεις δεῦρο, μὴ τις ὡς κενῆς
σκύμνον λεαίνης δυσμενῶν ἀναρπάσῃ;
ἴθ', ἐγκόνηι, σύγκαμνε· τοῖς θανοῦσί τοι
φιλοῦσι πάντες κειμένοις ἐπεργελᾶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

καὶ μὴν ἔτι ζῶν, Τεῦκρε, τοῦδέ σοι μέλειν
ἐφίεθ' ἀνὴρ κείνος, ὥσπερ οὖν μέλει.

990

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

ὦ τῶν ἀπάντων δῆ θεαμάτων ἐμοὶ
ἄλγιστον ὦν προσειδὼν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἐγώ,

AJAX

CHORUS

He hath perished, Teucer, and report spake true.

TEUCER

Then woe is me for my most grievous loss.

CHORUS

And since 'tis thus—

TEUCER

Alas for me, alas!

CHORUS

The hour for mourning—

TEUCER

O sharp pang of pain!

CHORUS

Is come, O Teucer, as thou say'st.

TEUCER

Ay me!

But his son—where in Troy-land bides he now?

CHORUS

Alone beside the tent.

TEUCER

Then bring him quickly,

Lest of our foemen one should snatch him up,

As from a lioness forlorn her cub.

Go quick, bestir thyself. 'Tis the world's way

To flout and triumph o'er the prostrate dead.

[*Exit* TECMESSA.]

CHORUS

Yea, while he yet lived Ajax left to thee,

Teucer, this child, to tend him, as thou dost.

TEUCER

O saddest sight of all I ever saw,

O bitterest of all paths I ever trod,

ὀδός θ' ὀδῶν πασῶν ἀνιάσασα δὴ
 μάλιστα τούμῶν σπλάγγχον, ἦν δὴ νῦν ἔβην.
 ὦ φίλτατ' Αἴας, τὸν σὸν ὡς ἐπῆσθόμην
 μόρον διώκων κάξιχνοσκοπούμενος.
 ὀξεία γάρ σου βάξις ὡς θεοῦ τιнос
 διήλθ' Ἀχαιοὺς πάντα ὡς οἴχει θανῶν.
 ἀγὼ κλύων δύστηνος ἐκποδῶν μὲν ὦν
 ὑπεστέναζον, νῦν δ' ὀρώων ἀπόλλυμαι.
 οἴμοι.

1000

ἴθ', ἐκκάλυψον, ὡς ἴδω τὸ πᾶν κακόν.
 ὦ δυσθέατον ὄμμα καὶ τόλμης πικρᾶς,
 ὅσας ἀνίας μοι κατασπείρας φθίνεις.
 ποῖ γὰρ μολεῖν μοι δυνατόν, εἰς ποίους βροτούς,
 τοῖς σοῖς ἀρήξαντ' ἐν πόνοισι μηδαμοῦ;
 ἦ πού με ¹ Τελαμῶν, σὸς πατήρ ἐμός θ' ἄμα,
 δέξαιτ' ἂν εὐπρόσωπος Ἰλεῶς τ' ἴσως
 χωροῦντ' ἄνευ σοῦ. πῶς γὰρ οὔχ; ὅτι πάρα
 μηδ' εὐτυχοῦντι μηδὲν ἥδιον γελᾶν.
 οὔτος τί κρύψει; ποῖον οὐκ ἐρεῖ κακὸν
 τὸν ἐκ δορὸς γεγῶτα πολεμίου νόθον,
 τὸν δειλία προδόντα καὶ κακανδρία
 σέ, φίλτατ' Αἴας, ἢ δόλοισιν, ὡς τὰ σὰ
 κράτη θανόντος καὶ δόμους νέμοιμι σούς.
 τοιαῦτ' ἀνὴρ δύσοργος, ἐν γῆρα βαρὺς,
 ἐρεῖ, πρὸς οὐδὲν εἰς ἔριν θυμούμενος.
 τέλος δ' ἀπωστὸς γῆς ἀπορριφθήσομαι,
 δούλος λόγοισιν ἀντ' ἐλευθέρου φανείς.
 τοιαῦτα μὲν κατ' οἶκον· ἐν Τροίᾳ δέ μοι
 πολλοὶ μὲν ἐχθροί, παῦρα δ' ὠφέλησιμα.
 καὶ ταῦτα πάντα σοῦ θανόντος ἠύρομην.
 οἴμοι, τί δράσω; πῶς σ' ἀποσπάσω πικροῦ

1010

1020

¹ MSS. omit με, added by Kuster.

AJAX

The path that led me hither, Ajax loved,
My best-loved Ajax ! when I learnt thy fate,
E'en as I tracked in desperate haste thy steps ;
For a swift rumour, like a voice from heaven,
Ran through the host that thou wert dead and
gone.

I heard it and I moaned in spirit afar,
But now the sight strikes death into my soul.

O woe !

Come, lift the searchcloth ; let me see the worst.

O bleeding form, O agonising sight !

How brave, how rash, how cruel in thy death ;

Thy death, what seed of misery for me !

Where can I turn, what race of men will house me,

The wretch who failed to help thee in thy woes ?

How Telamon, thy sire and mine withal,

Will beam upon me (can'st not picture him ?)

When I return without thee ! Telamon

Who in his hours of fortune never smiles !

Will he refrain ? Will he not curse and ban

The bastard of his spear-won concubine,

The wretch who like a coward and poltroon

Forsook thee, dearest Ajax, or conspired

To hold thy realm and halls when thou wert dead ?

Thus will he rave, the choleric, soured old man,

Ready to pick a quarrel for a straw.

And in the end I shall be banned, defamed,

Rejected, branded—*No free man, a slave.*

Such cheer at home awaits me, and at Troy

My foes are many and my friends to seek.

Thus by thy death I've profited ! Ah me !

How tear thee from this cruel glittering blade,

ΑΙΑΣ

τοῦδ' αἰόλου κνώδοντος, ὦ τάλας, ὑφ' οὐ
 φονέως ἄρ' ἐξέπνευσας; εἶδες ὡς χρόνῳ
 ἐμελλέ σ' "Ἐκτωρ καὶ θανῶν ἀποφθίσειν;
 σκέψασθε, πρὸς θεῶν, τὴν τύχην δυοῖν βροτοῖν.
 "Ἐκτωρ μὲν, ᾧ δὴ τοῦδ' ἐδωρήθη πάρα,
 ζωστήρι πρισθεὶς ἵππικῶν ἐξ ἀντύγων
 ἐκνάπτει αἰέν, ἔστ' ἀπέψυξεν βίον
 οὔτος δ' ἐκείνου τήνδε δωρεὰν ἔχων
 πρὸς τοῦδ' ὄλωλε θανασίμῳ πεσήματι.
 ἄρ' οὐκ Ἐρινὺς τοῦτ' ἐχάλκευσεν ξίφος
 κἀκείνου "Αἰδης, δημιουργὸς ἄγριος;
 ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν καὶ ταῦτα καὶ τὰ πάντ' αἰεὶ
 φάσκοιμ' ἂν ἀνθρώποισι μηχανᾶν θεούς·
 ὅτῳ δὲ μὴ τὰδ' ἐστὶν ἐν γνώμῃ φίλα,
 κείνός τ' ἐκείνα στεργέτω κἀγὼ τάδε.

1030

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μὴ τεῖνε μακρὰν, ἀλλ' ὅπως κρύψεις τάφῳ
 φράζου τὸν ἄνδρα χῶ τι μυθήσει τάχα.
 βλέπω γὰρ ἐχθρὸν φῶτα, καὶ τάχ' ἂν κακοῖς
 γελῶν ἂ δὴ κακοῦργος ἐξίκοιτ' ἀνήρ.

1040

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

τίς δ' ἐστὶν ὄντιν' ἄνδρα προσλεύσεις στρατοῦ;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Μενέλαος, ᾧ δὴ τόνδε πλοῦν ἐστείλαμεν.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

ὀρῶ· μαθεῖν γὰρ ἐγγὺς ὦν οὐ δυσπετής.

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

οὔτος, σὲ φωνῶ τόνδε τὸν νεκρὸν χεροῖν
 μὴ συγκομίζειν, ἀλλ' ἔαν ὅπως ἔχει.

AJAX

That stands arraigned thine executioner ?
See'st thou how Hector dead and turned to dust
Was fated in the end to be thy death ?
Look on the fortunes of the two, I pray ye :
Hector, who by the very belt he wore,
A gift from Ajax, lashed to the car-rail
Was dragged and mangled till his ghost expired ;¹
And this the sword whose murderous edge transfixed
The side of Ajax—this was Hector's gift.
Say, was it not some Fury forged this blade,
Was not that hellish girdle wove by Death ?
I hold, for my part, these and all things else
The gods contrive for mortals. But may be
Some disapprove my creed ; let such an one
Cling to his own belief, as I to mine.

CHORUS

Abridge thy large discourse ; think how to lay
The dead man in his grave and what thy plea
Shall be anon ; I see a foe approach.
Perchance he comes with mocking of our grief,
As miscreants use.

TEUCER

What captain dost thou see ?

CHORUS

Menelaus, he at whose behest we sailed.

TEUCER

'Tis he, not hard to recognise thus near.

Enter MENELAUS

MENELAUS

Stop, sirrah, bear no hand in raising up
The corse, I charge thee ; leave it where it lies.

¹ Homer knows nothing of the belt and it is the *dead* Hector who is dragged round the tomb of Patroclus.

ΑΙΑΣ

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

τίνος χάριω τοσούνδ' ἀνήλωσας λόγον;

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

δοκοῦντ' ἐμοί, δοκοῦντα δ' ὄς κραίνει στρατοῦ. 1050

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

οὔκουν ἂν εἴποις ἦντιν' αἰτίαν προθείς;

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

ὄθούνεκ' αὐτὸν ἐλπίσαντες οἴκοθεν
 ἄγειν Ἀχαιοῖς ξύμμαχόν τε καὶ φίλον,
 ἐξηύρομεν ζητοῦντες ἐχθίῳ Φρυγῶν
 ὅστις στρατῷ ξύμπαντι βουλευσας φόνον
 νύκτωρ ἐπεστράτευσεν, ὡς ἔλοι δόρει
 κεῖ μὴ θεῶν τις τήνδε πείραν ἔσβησεν,
 ἡμεῖς μὲν ἂν τήνδ' ἦν ὄδ' εἴληχεν τύχην
 θανόντες ἂν προκείμεθ' αἰσχίστῳ μορῷ,
 οὗτος δ' ἂν ἔζη. νῦν δ' ἐνήλλαξεν θεός 1060
 τὴν τοῦδ' ὕβριω πρὸς μῆλα καὶ ποιμένας πεσεῖν.
 ὦν εἶνεκ' αὐτὸν οὔτις ἔστ' ἀνὴρ σθένων
 τοσοῦτον ὥστε σῶμα τυμβεῦσαι τάφῳ,
 ἀλλ' ἀμφὶ χλωρὰν ψάμαθον ἐκβεβλημένος
 ὄρνισι φορβῇ παραλίῳις γενήσεται.
 πρὸς ταῦτα μηδὲν δεινὸν ἐξάρης μένος.
 εἰ γὰρ βλέποντος μὴ ἰδυνήθημεν κρατεῖν,
 πάντως θανόντος γ' ἄρξομεν, κὰν μὴ θέλης,
 χερσὶν παρευθύνοντες· οὐ γὰρ ἔσθ' ὅπου 1070
 λόγων γ' ἀκοῦσαι ζῶν ποτ' ἠθέλησ' ἐμῶν.
 καίτοι κακοῦ πρὸς ἀνδρὸς οὐτα δημότην
 μηδὲν δικαιοῦν τῶν ἐφεστῶτων κλύειν.
 οὐ γὰρ ποτ' οὔτ' ἂν ἐν πόλει νόμοι καλῶς
 φέρουντ' ἂν, ἔνθα μὴ καθεστήκη δέος,
 οὔτ' ἂν στρατός γε σωφρόνως ἄρχοιτ' ἔτι,
 μηδὲν φόβου πρόβλημα μηδ' αἰδοῦς ἔχων.

AJAX

TEUCER

Wherefore dost waste thy breath in these proud words?

MENELAUS

Such is my will and the great general's will.

TEUCER

On what pretence? wilt please to tell us that?

MENELAUS

Hear then. We thought to bring from Salamis
For Greeks a friend and firm ally, but found him
On trial worse than any Phrygian foe;
Who plotted death and sallied forth by night
'Gainst the whole host, to slay us with the spear;
And had some god not intervened to foil
This enterprise, his fate had now been ours,
To perish by an ignominious death,
While he had now been living. But a god
Turned his blind malice on the flocks and herds.
Thus hath he done, and no man shall prevail
By might to lay his body in the tomb.
He shall be cast forth on the yellow sands
To feed the carrion birds that haunt the beach.
Rage not nor bluster as thou hear'st, for we,
E'en if we could not master him alive,
In any case will lord it o'er him dead,
Rule him and discipline, in thy despite,
By force—my words he ne'er would heed, alive.
Yet 'tis a mark of villainy when one
Of the common deigns not to obey his lords.
For in a State that hath no dread of law
The laws can never prosper and prevail,
Nor could an armed force be disciplined
Lacking the guard of awe and reverence.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἀλλ' ἄνδρα χρῆ, κὰν σῶμα γεννήσῃ μέγα,
 δοκεῖν πεσεῖν ἂν κὰν ἀπὸ μικροῦ κακοῦ.
 δέος γὰρ ᾧ πρόσσεστιν αἰσχύνῃ θ' ὁμοῦ,
 σωτηρίαν ἔχοντα τόνδ' ἐπίστασο·
 ὅπου δ' ὑβρίζειν δρᾶν θ' ἂ βούλεται παρῆ,
 ταύτην νόμιζε τὴν πόλιν χρόνῳ ποτὲ
 ἐξ οὐρίων δραμοῦσαν εἰς βυθὸν πεσεῖν.
 ἀλλ' ἐστάτω μοι καὶ δέος τι καίριον,
 καὶ μὴ δοκῶμεν δρῶντες ἂν ἠδώμεθα
 οὐκ ἀντιτίσειν αὐθις ἂν λυπώμεθα.
 ἔρπει παραλλάξ ταῦτα, πρόσθεν οὗτος ἦν
 αἰθῶν ὑβριστῆς, νῦν δ' ἐγὼ μέγ' αὐ φρονῶ.
 καὶ σοι προφωνῶ τόνδε μὴ θάπτειν, ὅπως
 μὴ τόνδε θάπτων αὐτὸς εἰς ταφὰς πέσῃς.

1080

1090

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Μενέλαε, μὴ γνώμας ὑπόστησας σοφὰς
 εἰτ' αὐτὸς ἐν θανοῦσιν ὑβριστῆς γένη.

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

οὐκ ἂν ποτ', ἄνδρες, ἄνδρα θαυμάσαιμ' ἔτι,
 ὃς μηδὲν ὦν γοναῖσιν εἶθ' ἀμαρτάνει,
 ὅθ' οἱ δοκοῦντες εὐγενεῖς πεφυκέναι
 τοιαῦθ' ἀμαρτάνουσιν ἐν λόγοις ἔπη·
 ἀγ' εἶπ' ἀπ' ἀρχῆς αὐθις, ἥ σὺ φῆς ἄγειν
 τόνδ' ἄνδρ' Ἀχαιοῖς δεῦρο σύμμαχον λαβῶν;
 οὐκ αὐτὸς ἐξέπλευσεν ὡς αὐτοῦ κρατῶν;
 ποῦ σὺ στρατηγεῖς τοῦδε; ποῦ δὲ σοὶ λεῶν
 ἔξεστ' ἀνάσσειν ὦν ὃδ' ἦγαγ' οἴκοθεν;
 Σπάρτης ἀνάσσων ἦλθες, οὐχ ἡμῶν κρατῶν·
 οὐδ' ἔσθ' ὅπου σοὶ τόνδε κοσμήσαι πλέον
 ἀρχῆς ἔκειτο θεσμὸς ἢ καὶ τῷδε σέ.
 ὑπαρχος ἄλλων δεῦρ' ἐπλευσας, οὐχ ὄλων

1100

AJAX

Nay, though a man should tower in thews and might,
A giant o'er his fellows, let him think
Some petty stroke of fate may work his ruin.
Where dread prevails and reverence withal,
Believe me, there is safety; but the State,
Where arrogance hath licence and self-will,
Though for a while she run before the gale,
Will in the end make shipwreck and be sunk.
Dread in its proper season and degree
Must be maintained; let us not fondly dream
That we can act at will to please ourselves,
Nor pay the price of pleasure by our pains.
'Tis turn and turn; now this man lorded it
In insolence; 'tis now my hour of pride.
So I forewarn thee hury him not, lest thou
In burying shouldst dig thyself a grave.

CHORUS

Sage precepts these, my lord, and do not thou
Thyself become a scoffer of the dead.

TEUCER

Friends, I shall never marvel after this
If any baseborn fellow gives offence,
When men who pride them on their lineage
By their perverted utterance thus offend.
Repeat thy tale: thou claimest to have brought
My brother hither as a Greek ally,
Secured by thee forsooth. Sailed he not forth
As his own master, of his own free will?
Who made thee lord of him? What right hast thou
To rule the clansmen whom he brought from home?
Thou cam'st as Sparta's king, no lord of ours.
Thou hast no more prerogative or right
To govern him than he to govern thee;
Thou sailedst under orders, not as chief,

ΑΙΑΣ

στρατηγός, ὥστ' Αἴαντος ἠγείσθαι ποτε.
 ἀλλ' ὧνπερ ἄρχεις ἄρχε καὶ τὰ σέμν' ἔπη
 κόλαξ' ἐκείνους· τόνδε δ', εἴτε μὴ σὺ φῆς
 εἶθ' ἄτερος στρατηγός, εἰς ταφὰς ἐγὼ
 θήσω δικαίως, οὐ τὸ σὸν δείσας στόμα.
 οὐ γὰρ τι τῆς σῆς εἵνεκ' ἐστρατεύσατο
 γυναικός, ὥσπερ οἱ πόνου πολλοῦ πλέω,
 ἀλλ' εἵνεχ' ὄρκων οἴσιν ἦν ἐνώμοτος,
 σοῦ δ' οὐδέν· οὐ γὰρ ἠξίου τοὺς μηδένας.
 πρὸς ταῦτα πλείους δεῦρο κήρυκας λαβῶν
 καὶ τὸν στρατηγὸν ἦκε, τοῦ δὲ σοῦ ψόφου
 οὐκ ἂν στραφείην, ἕως ἂν ἦς οἴός περ εἰ.

1110

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐδ' αὖ τοιαύτην γλῶσσαν ἐν κακοῖς φιλιῶ·
 τὰ σκληρὰ γὰρ τοι, κἂν ὑπέρδικ' ἦ, δάκνει.

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

ὁ τοξότης ἔοικεν οὐ σμικρὸν φρονεῖν.

1120

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

οὐ γὰρ βάνουσον τὴν τέχνην ἐκτησάμην.

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

μέγ' ἂν τι κομπάσειας, ἀσπίδ' εἰ λάβοις.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

κἂν ψιλὸς ἀρκέσαιμι σοί γ' ὀπλισμένω.

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

ἦ γλῶσσά σου τὸν θυμὸν ὡς δεινὸν τρέφει.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

ξὺν τῷ δικαίῳ γὰρ μέγ' ἔξεστιν φρονεῖν.

AJAX

And captain unto Ajax ne'er couldst be.
Go, lord it o'er thy henchmen, chasten them
With lordly pride ; but this man, whether thou,
Aye, or thy brother-general forbid,
I with due rites and offices will bury
Despite thy threatenings. 'Twas not to bring back
Thy wife that Ajax joined in the campaign,
Like thy serf drudges, but to keep the oath
Whereto he had bound himself, no whit for thee ;
Of underlings like thee he took no heed.
Go then and bring more heralds back with thee
And the commander ; for thy noisy rant,
Whilst thou art what thou art, I care no straw.

CHORUS

This speech again mislikes me in the midst
Of woes ; hard words, how just soever, wound.

MENELAUS

Methinks this archer¹ hath a captain's pride.

TEUCER

Aye, as the master of no vulgar art.

MENELAUS

How wouldst thou strut, promoted to a shield !

TEUCER

Without a shield I were a match for thee
In panoply.

MENELAUS

How valorous with thy tongue !

TEUCER

He can be bold who hath his quarrel just.

¹ 'Archer' like 'ranker' by itself is a term of reproach. In the *Iliad* Teucer is the best bowman in the Achaean host, but also a good man-at-arms.

ΑΙΑΣ

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

δίκαια γὰρ τόνδ' εὐτυχεῖν κτείναντά με;

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

κτείναντα; δεινόν γ' εἶπας, εἰ καὶ ζῆς θανών.

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

θεὸς γὰρ ἐκσφίξει με, τῷδε δ' οἴχομαι.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

μή νυν ἀτίμα θεούς, θεοῖς σεσωσμένος.

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

ἐγὼ γὰρ ἂν ψέξαιμι δαιμόνων νόμους;

1130

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

εἰ τοὺς θανόντας οὐκ ἔἰς θάπτειν παρών.

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

τούς γ' αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ πολεμίους. οὐ γὰρ καλόν.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

ἢ σοὶ γὰρ Αἴας πολέμιος πρῶστη ποτέ;

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

μισοῦντ' ἐμίσει· καὶ σὺ τοῦτ' ἠπίστασο.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

κλέπτῃς γὰρ αὐτοῦ ψηφοποιὸς ἠυρέθῃς.

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

ἐν τοῖς δικασταῖς, κοῦκ ἐμοί, τόδ' ἐσφάλη.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

πόλλ' ἂν κακῶς λάθρα σὺ κλέψειας κακά.

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

τοῦτ' εἰς ἀνίαν τοῦπος ἔρχεται τι.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

οὐ μᾶλλον, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἢ λυπήσομεν.

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

ἐν σοὶ φράσω· τόνδ' ἐστὶν οὐχὶ θαπτέον.

1140

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἀντακούσει τούτον ὡς τεθάψεται.

AJAX

MENELAUS

Justice quotha, to exalt my murderer?

TEUCER

Murdered, and yet thou livest! that is strange!

MENELAUS

Heaven saved me; in intention I was slain.

TEUCER

If the gods saved thee, sin not 'gainst the gods.

MENELAUS

I! could I e'er abuse the laws of Heaven?

TEUCER

Yea, if thou com'st to stop the burial.

MENELAUS

Of mine own foes; to bury them were sin.

TEUCER

Was Ajax e'en thine enemy in the field?

MENELAUS

He loathed me, as I him, thou knowest well.

TEUCER

Aye, thou hadst robbed him by suborning votes.

MENELAUS

'Twas by the judges he was cast, not me.

TEUCER

A fair face thou canst put on foulest frauds.

MENELAUS

Someone I know will suffer for that word.

TEUCER

He who provoked is like to suffer more.

MENELAUS

One word more; he shall not be buried.

TEUCER

One word in answer; buried he shall be.

ΑΙΑΣ

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

ἤδη ποτ' εἶδον ἄνδρ' ἐγὼ γλώσση θρασὺν
 ναύτας ἐφορμήσαντα χειμῶνος τὸ πλεῖν,
 ᾧ φθέγμ' ἂν οὐκ ἂν ἠύρες, ἠνίκ' ἐν κακῷ
 χειμῶνος εἶχετ', ἀλλ' ὑφ' εἵματος κρυφεῖς
 πατεῖν παρείχε τῷ θέλοντι ναυτίλων.
 οὕτω δὲ καὶ σέ καὶ τὸ σὸν λάβρον στόμα
 σμικροῦ νέφους τάχ' ἂν τις ἐκπνεύσας μέγας
 χειμῶν κατασβέσειε τὴν πολλὴν βοήν.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

ἐγὼ δέ γ' ἄνδρ' ὄπωπα μωρίας πλέων,
 δς ἐν κακοῖς ὕβριζε τοῖσι τῶν πέλας.
 κατ' αὐτὸν εἰσιδὼν τις ἐμφορῆς ἐμοὶ
 ὀργήν θ' ὁμοῖος εἶπε τοιοῦτον λόγον·
 ὄνθρωπε, μὴ δρᾷ τοὺς τεθνηκότας κακῶς·
 εἰ γὰρ ποιήσεις, ἴσθι πημανούμενος.
 τοιαυτ' ἀνολβον ἄνδρ' ἐνουθέτει παρών.
 ὀρῶ δέ τοί νιν, κάστιν, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ,
 οὐδεὶς ποτ' ἄλλος ἢ σύ. μῶν ἠνιξάμην;

1150

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

ἄπειμι· καὶ γὰρ αἰσχρόν, εἰ πύθοιτό τις
 λόγοις κολάζειν ᾧ βιάζεσθαι πάρα.

1160

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

ἄφερπέ νιν· κάμοι γὰρ αἰσχιστον κλύειν
 ἀνδρὸς ματαίου φλαυρ' ἔπη μυθουμένου.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἔσται μεγάλης ἔριδος τις ἀγών.
 ἀλλ' ὡς δύνασαι, Τεῦκρε, ταχύνας
 σπεῦσον κοίλην κάπετόν τιν' ἰδεῖν
 τῷδ', ἐνθα βροτοῖς τὸν ἀείμνηστον
 τάφον εὐρώεντα καθέξει.

AJAX

MENELAUS

Once did I see a braggart, bold of tongue,
Who had pressed his crew to sail in time of storm,
But when the storm was on him he was mum—
Lay like a dead log muffled in his cloak,
And let the sailors trample him at will.
E'en so with thee and thy unbridled tongue.
Perchance a mighty hurricane may rise,
Sprung from a cloud no bigger than a hand,
Swoop down on thee and quench thy blustering.

TEUCER

Once too I knew a fool, a silly fool,
Who triumphed at his neighbour's woes and mocked;
And then it chanced that one, a man like me
In looks and character, addressed him thus :
*Man, do not evil to the dead, for if
Thou doest evil, thou wilt surely rue it.*
So to his face he chid that silly fool.
I see that wight before me, and methinks
'Tis none but thou. Can'st read my riddle plain ?

MENELAUS

I go, for 'twould disgrace me, were it known
That I, with power to act, chastised with words.

TEUCER

Begone then ! 'twere for me a worse disgrace
To listen to a bragster's idle prate. [*Exit* MENELAUS.]

CHORUS

Soon a mortal strife will come.
Seek a hollow grave, and haste,
Teucer, with what speed thou may'st,
To prepare the mouldering tomb,
Where the warrior shall lie,
Deathless in men's memory.

ΑΙΑΣ

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

καὶ μὴν ἐς αὐτὸν καιρὸν οἶδε πλησίον
 πάρευσιν ἀνδρὸς τοῦδε παῖς τε καὶ γυνή,
 τάφον περιστελοῦντε δυστήνου νεκροῦ. 1170
 ὦ παῖ, πρόσσελθε δεῦρο καὶ σταθεὶς πέλας
 ἱκέτης ἔφαψαι πατρός, ὃς σ' ἐγείνατο.
 θύκει δὲ προστρόπαιος ἐν χεροῖν ἔχων
 κόμας ἐμὰς καὶ τῆσδε καὶ σαυτοῦ τρίτου,
 ἰκτῆριον θησαυρόν. εἰ δέ τις στρατοῦ
 βία σ' ἀποσπάσειε τοῦδε τοῦ νεκροῦ,
 κακὸς κακῶς ἄθραπτος ἐκπέσοι χθονός,
 γένους ἅπαντος ῥίζαν ἐξημημένος,
 αὐτῶς ὄπωςπερ τόνδ' ἐγὼ τέμνω πλόκον. 1180
 ἔχ' αὐτόν, ὦ παῖ, καὶ φύλασσε, μηδέ σε
 κινησάτω τις, ἀλλὰ προσπεσῶν ἔχου.
 ὑμεῖς τε μὴ γυναῖκες ἀντ' ἀνδρῶν πέλας
 παρέστατ', ἀλλ' ἀρήγετ', ἔστ' ἐγὼ μολῶν
 τάφου μεληθῶ τῷδε, κὰν μηδεὶς ἔῃ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α'

τίς ἄρα νέατος ἐς πότε λήξει πολυπλάγκτων
 ἐτέων ἀριθμός,
 τὰν ἅπανστων αἰὲν ἐμοὶ δορυσσοτήτων
 μόχθων ἅταν ἐπάγων
 ἀν' τὰν εὐρώδεα Τρωτῶν,¹
 δύστανου ὄνειδος Ἑλλάνων;

1190

ἀντ. α'

ὄφελε πρότερον αἰθέρα δύναι μέγαν ἢ τὸν
 πολύκοινον Ἄϊδα
 κείνος ἀνὴρ, ὃς στρυγερῶν ἔδειξεν ὄπλων
 Ἑλλασιν κοινὸν Ἄρη.

¹ ἀνὰ τὰν εὐρώδη Τροίαν MSS., Ahrens corr.

AJAX

Enter TECMESSA and CHILD.

TEUCER

Lo! in good time I see his child and wife
Draw near to tend the hero's obsequies.
Come hither, child, and take thy place beside him
And lay, in suppliant guise, thy hand in his,
And kneel as one who hath taken sanctuary,
With locks of hair as offering in thine hand—
Mine, hers, and thine,—all-potent means of grace.
Then if by violence any of the host
Should drag thee from the dead man, be his lot
To perish banned, cast forth without a grave,
Cut off with kith and kindred, root and branch,
Even as I cut this lock from off my head.
Take it and keep it, child; let no man move thee.
Kneel thou, and clasp in close embrace the dead.
And ye, his comrades, stand not idly by
As women mourners; quit yourselves as men
In his defence, till I have made a grave
To bury him, though all the world forbid.

[*Exit* TEUCER.

CHORUS

(*Str.* 1)

When shall the score be told, the sum of the endless
years?

Weary am I of camps and tramps and the hurtling
of spears.

Hither and thither I roam o'er the windswept
Trojan plain,

Shame and reproach for Greece, for Grecians trouble
and pain.

(*Ant.* 1)

Would he had sunk to hell, or vanished in ether afar,
Who first admonished the Greeks to league them-
selves for the war—

ΑΙΑΣ

ἰὼ πόνοι πρόγονοι πόνων
 κείνος γὰρ ἔπερσεν ἀνθρώπους.

ἐκείνος οὔτε στεφάνων στρ. β'

οὔτε βαθείαν κυλίκων 1200

νεῖμεν ἐμοὶ τέρψιν ὀμιλεῖν,

οὔτε γλυκὺν αὐλῶν δοσβον,

δύσμορος, οὔτ' ἐννυχίαν¹

τέρψιν ἰαύειν.

ἐρώτων δ', ἐρώτων ἀπέπαυσεν, ὦμοι.

κεῖμαι δ' ἀμέριμος οὔτως,

ἄει πυκιναῖς δρόσοις

τεγγόμενος κόμας,

λυγρᾶς μνήματα Τροίας. 1210

καὶ πρὶν μὲν αἰὲν νυχίου ἀντ. β'

δαίματος ἦν μοι προβολὰ

καὶ βελέων θούριος Αἴας·

νῦν δ' οὔτος ἀνεῖται στυγερωῶ

δαίμονι· τίς μοι, τίς ἔτ' οὖν

τέρψις ἐπέσται;

γενοίμαν ἴν' ὑλᾶεν ἔπεστι πόντου

πρόβλημ' ἀλέκλυστον, ἄκραν

ὑπὸ πλάκα Σουνίου,

τὰς ἱερὰς ὄπως

προσεῖποιμεν Ἀθάνας. 1220

¹ ἐννυχίου MSS., Wolff corr.

AJAX

War, the father of toils, whence mortal sorrows
 began ;
 Yea, it was he who begat the plague and ruin of man.

Wretch ! for me no garlands finè, (Str. 2.)
 Cups o'erbrimming with red wine ;
 No shrill flutes didst thou assign.

Wretch ! a foe to all delight.
 E'en the slumbers soft of night
 Thy alarms have banished quite.

And my loves, ah well-a-day !
 Thou hast driven them all away ;
 Here I lie on the cold clay :

All alone, with none to care,
 While the dank dews wet my hair.
 Such, accursèd Troy, thy fare !

Erewhile Ajax, stalwart knight, (Ant. 2.)
 Was my buckler in the fight,
 Shield against the alarm of might.

Now by Fate a victim led
 To the altar, he hath bled ;
 And for me all joy hath fled.

O that from this barren strand
 Wafted to Athena's land
 I on Sunium's brow might stand ;

Hear the waves that round it beat
 Wash the wooded headland's feet,
 Sacred Athens thence to greet !

ΑΙΑΣ

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

καὶ μὴν ἰδὼν ἔσπευσα τὸν στρατηλάτην
 Ἀγαμέμνον' ἡμῖν δεῦρο τόνδ' ὀρμώμενον·
 δῆλος δέ μου στί σκαιὸν ἐκλύσων στόμα.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

σέ δὴ τὰ δεινὰ ῥήματ' ἀγγέλλουσί μοι
 τλήναι καθ' ἡμῶν ὧδ' ἀνοιμωκτὶ χανεῖν;
 σέ τοι, τὸν ἐκ τῆς αἰχμαλωτίδος λέγω,
 ἧ που τραφεῖς ἂν μητρὸς εὐγενούς ἀπο
 ὑψήλ' ἐκόμπεις κάπ' ἄκρων ὠδοιπόρεις, 1230
 ὄτ' οὐδὲν ὦν τοῦ μηδὲν ἀντέστης ὑπερ,
 κοῦτε στρατηγούς οὔτε ναυάρχους μολεῖν
 ἡμᾶς Ἀχαιῶν οὐδὲ σοῦ διωμόσω,
 ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ἄρχων, ὡς σὺ φῆς, Αἴας ἔπλει.
 ταῦτ' οὐκ ἀκούειν μεγάλα πρὸς δούλων κακά;
 ποίου κέκραγας ἀνδρὸς ὧδ' ὑπέρφρονα;
 ποῖ βάντος ἢ ποῦ στάντος οὔπερ οὐκ ἐγώ;
 οὐκ ἄρ' Ἀχαιοῖς ἄνδρες εἰσὶ πλὴν ὄδε;
 πικρούς ἔοιγμεν τῶν Ἀχιλλείων ὄπλων
 ἀγῶνας Ἀργείοισι κηρύξαι τότε, 1240
 εἰ πανταχοῦ φανούμεθ' ἐκ Τεύκρου κακοί,
 κοῦκ ἀρκέσει ποθ' ὑμῖν οὐδ' ἠσσημένοις
 εἴκειν ἂ τοῖς πολλοῖσιν ἤρσκεν κριταῖς,
 ἀλλ' αἰὲν ἡμᾶς ἢ κακοῖς βαλεῖτέ που
 ἢ σὺν δόλῳ κεντήσεθ' οἱ λελειμμένοι.
 ἐκ τῶνδε μέντοι τῶν τρόπων οὐκ ἂν ποτε
 κατάστασις γένοιτ' ἂν οὐδενὸς νόμου,
 εἰ τοὺς δίκη νικῶντας ἐξωθήσομεν
 καὶ τοὺς ὀπισθεν εἰς τὸ πρόσθεν ἄξομεν.
 ἀλλ' εἰρκτέον τάδ' ἐστίν· οὐ γὰρ οἱ πλατεῖς 1250
 οὐδ' εὐρύνωτοι φῶτες ἀσφαλέστατοι,

AJAX

Enter TEUCER.

TEUCER

Lo I return in haste ; I saw approach
Great Agamemnon, captain of the host ;
'Tis plain he means to vent on us his spleen

Enter AGAMEMNON.

AGAMEMNON

So, Sirrah, it is thou (for thus I learn)
Hast dared to rant and curse and threaten us,
Thus far unpunished ; thou the bondmaid's son.
Ha ! had thy mother been a high-born dame,
How grand thy speech, how proud had been thy
gait,

When now, a nobody, thou championest
That thing of naught, maintaining that we kings
Had no commission, or on sea or land,
To rule the Greeks or thee, and (such thy claim)
That Ajax sailed, an independent chief.
Is this not rank presumption in a slave ?
And what is he whose might thou vauntest thus ?
Where did he hold his ground or lead the assault
Where I was not ? Have Greeks no *man* but him ?
'Twas in an evil hour we made proclaim
Of open contest for Achilles' arms,
If Teucer must denounce us as corrupt,
Whate'er the issue, and if ye reject
The adverse judgment of the major part,
But must for ever gird at us and rail,
Or plot to stab us, when ye lose your suit.
Never with tempers such as yours could law
Be firmly based, if we are called to oust
The rightful victors and promote the worse.
This must be stopped. 'Tis not the brawny, big,
Broad-shouldered men who prove the best at need ;

ΑΙΑΣ

ἀλλ' οἱ φρονούντες εὖ κρατοῦσι πανταχοῦ.
μέγας δὲ πλευρὰ βούς ὑπὸ σμικρᾶς ὄμως
μάστιγος ὀρθὸς εἰς ὁδὸν πορεύεται.

καὶ σοὶ προσέρπον τοῦτ' ἐγὼ τὸ φάρμακον
ὀρώ τάχ', εἰ μὴ νοῦν κατακτῆσει τινα·
ὃς ἀνδρὸς οὐκέτ' ὄντος, ἀλλ' ἤδη σκιᾶς,
θαρσῶν ὑβρίζεις κἄξελευθεροστομεῖς.
οὐ σωφρονήσεις; οὐ μαθὼν ὃς εἰ φύσιν
ἄλλον τιν' ἄξεις ἄνδρα δεῦρ' ἐλεύθερον,
ὅστις πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀντὶ σοῦ λέξει τὰ σά;
σοῦ γὰρ λέγοντος οὐκέτ' ἂν μάθοιμ' ἐγὼ·
τὴν βάρβαρον γὰρ γλώσσαν οὐκ ἐπαῖω.

1260

ΧΟΡΟΣ

εἴθ' ὑμῖν ἀμφοῖν νοῦς γένοιτο σωφρονεῖν·
τούτου γὰρ οὐδὲν σφῶν ἔχω λῶφον φράσαι.

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

φεῦ τοῦ θανόντος ὡς ταχεῖά τις βροτοῖς
χάρις διαρρεῖ καὶ προδοῦσ' ἀλίσκεται,
εἰ σοῦ γ' ὄδ' ἀνὴρ οὐδ' ἐπὶ σμικρῶν λόγων,
Αἴας, ἔτ' ἴσχει μνήστιν; οὐ σὺ πολλάκις
τὴν σὴν προτείνων προύκαμες ψυχὴν δόρει.

1270

ἀλλ' οἴχεται δὴ πάντα ταῦτ' ἐρριμμένα.
ὦ πολλὰ λέξας ἄρτι κἀνόητ' ἔπη,
οὐ μνημονεύεις οὐκέτ' οὐδὲν, ἠνίκα
ἐρκέων ποθ' ὑμᾶς οὔτος ἐγκεκλημένους,
ἤδη τὸ μηδὲν ὄντας, ἐν τροπῇ δορὸς
ἐρρύσατ' ἐλθὼν μούνος, ἀμφὶ μὲν νεῶν
ἄκροισιν ἤδη ναυτικοῖς ἐδωλίους
πυρὸς φλέγοντος, εἰς δὲ ναυτικὰ σκάφη
πηδῶντος ἄρδην Ἐκτορος τάφρων ὑπερ;
τίς ταῦτ' ἀπέιρξεν; οὐχ ὄδ' ἦν ὁ δρῶν τάδε,

1280

AJAX

The wise and prudent everywhere prevail.
The broad-ribbed ox is guided on his path
Down the straight furrow by a little goad.
A like corrective is in store for thee,
If thou acquire not some small sense full soon.
The man is dead, a shadow, and yet thou
Let'st thy tongue wag and waxest insolent.
Come to a sober mind; recall thy birth,
Bring hither someone else, a free-born man,
To plead thy cause before us in thy stead;
For when thou speak'st thy words convey no sense;
I understand not a barbarian tongue.

CHORUS

I would ye twain might learn sobriety;
'Tis the best counsel I can give you both.

TEUCER

Out on man's gratitude! how soon it fades,
Or proves a traitor when a friend is dead!
What memory, what tittle of regard
Hath he for thee, my Ajax, thou who oft
At peril of thy life didst toil for him?
Lost labour, cast away and all forgot!
Vain, windy orator, canst not recall
The day when ye were cooped within your lines,
Scattered, half routed and as good as lost,
How single-handed he stood forth and saved you,
Though at your ships the poop decks were ablaze,
And Hector o'er the fosse came bounding, prompt
To board them? Who averted then the rout?
The very man of whom thou sayest now,
"He did no deed I have not done myself."

ὄν οὐδαμοῦ φῆς, οὐ σὺ μὴ, βῆναι¹ ποδί;
 ἄρ' ὑμῖν οὗτος ταῦτ' ἔδρασεν ἔνδικα;
 χῶτ' αὐθις αὐτὸς Ἐκτορος μόνος μόνου
 λαχὼν τε κακέλευστος ἦλθ' ἐναντίος,
 οὐ δραπέτην τὸν κλῆρον ἐς μέσον καθείς,
 ἕγρᾶς ἀρούρας βῶλον, ἀλλ' ὃς εὐλόφου
 κυνῆς ἔμελλε πρῶτος ἄλμα κουφιεῖν;
 ὃδ' ἦν ὁ πρᾶσσω ταῦτα, σὺν δ' ἐγὼ παρών,
 ὁ δούλος, οὐκ τῆς βαρβύρου μητρὸς γεγώς.
 δύστηνε, ποῖ βλέπων ποτ' αὐτὰ καὶ θροεῖς; 1290
 οὐκ οἴσθα σοῦ πατρὸς μὲν ὃς προύφῃ πατῆρ
 ἀρχαῖον ὄντα Πέλοπα βάρβαρον Φρύγα;
 Ἄτρεα δ', ὃς αὐτὸς ἔσπειρε δυσσεβέστατον,
 προθέντ' ἀδελφῶ δείπνον οἰκείων τέκνων;
 αὐτὸς δὲ μητρὸς ἐξέφυς Κρήσσης, ἐφ' ἣ
 λαβὼν ἐπακτὸν ἄνδρ' ὁ φιτύσας πατῆρ
 ἐφήκεν ἑλλοῖς ἰχθύσιν διαφθοράν.
 τοιοῦτος ὦν τοιῶδ' ὄνειδίξεις σποράν;
 ὃς ἐκ πατρὸς μὲν εἰμι Τελαμώνος γεγώς,
 ὅστις στρατοῦ τὰ πρῶτ' ἀριστεύσας ἐμῆν 1300
 ἴσχει ξύνευνον μητέρ', ἣ φύσει μὲν ἦν
 βασιλεία, Λαομέδοντος· ἔκκριτον δὲ νῦν
 δώρημα κείνῳ δῶκεν Ἀλκμήνης γόνος.
 ἄρ' ὧδ' ἄριστος ἐξ ἀριστέων δυοῖν
 βλαστῶν ἂν αἰσχύνοιμι τοὺς πρὸς αἵματος,
 οὓς νῦν σὺ τοιοῖσδ' ἐν πόνοισι κειμένους
 ὠθεῖς ἀθάπτους, οὐδ' ἐπαισχύνει λέγων;
 εὐ νυν τόδ' ἴσθι, τοῦτον εἰ βαλεῖτέ που,

¹ οὐδὲ συμβῆναι MSS., Madvig corr.

AJAX

Was that no loyal service? Judge yourselves;
Or once again when he in single fight
Confronted Hector, under no constraint,
But by the lot he drew—no skulking lot,¹
No lump of loam, but one that well he knew
Would first leap lightly from the crested helm?
Such deeds were his, and at his side was I,
This slave, of a barbarian mother born.
How canst thou prate thus idly? Look at home.
Hast thou forgotten that thine own sire's sire
Was Phrygian Pelops, a barbarian?
That Atreus who begat thee, wretch, did set
Before his brother a most impious feast,
His brother's children's flesh? That thou thyself
Com'st of a Cretan mother whom her sire
Caught with an alien slave, her paramour,
And sent to feed dumb fishes of the deep?
Thus basely born thou twit'st me with my birth!
My sire was Telamon who won the prize
As champion of the host, a peerless bride,
A princess, daughter of Laomedon,
The meed assigned him by Alcmena's son.
She was my mother. And am I, thus born
Nobly of parents both of noblest birth,
Am I to shame my kindred overthrown,
Now helpless, whelmed in utter misery,
Whom thou wouldst spurn and rob of burial rites,
Nor art ashamed to promulgate this ban?
Know this full well, where'er ye cast this man,

¹ An allusion to the story of Cresphontes who after the Dorian Conquest agreed to cast lots for his share of the Peloponnese and in order to secure the last lot, which he coveted, put a lump of clay into the urn instead of a potsherd.

βαλέϊτε χήμᾶς τρεῖς ὁμοῦ συγκειμένους.
 ἐπεὶ καλόν μοι τοῦδ' ὑπερπονουμένῳ
 θανεῖν προδήλως μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς σῆς ὑπὲρ
 γυναικός, ἢ τοῦ σοῦ γ' ὁμαίμονος λέγω;
 πρὸς ταῦθ' ὄρα μὴ τοῦμόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ σόν
 ὡς εἴ με πημανεῖς τι, βουλήσει ποτὲ
 καὶ δειλὸς εἶναι μᾶλλον ἢ ἔμοι θρασύς.

1310

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἄναξ Ὀδυσσεῦ, καιρὸν ἴσθ' ἐληλυθώς,
 εἰ μὴ ξυνίψων, ἀλλὰ συλλύσων πάρει.

ΟΑΤΣΣΕΤΣ

τί δ' ἔστιν, ἄνδρες; τηλόθεν γὰρ ἡσθόμην
 βοήν Ἀτρειδῶν τῷδ' ἐπ' ἀλκίμῳ νεκρῷ.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

οὐ γὰρ κλύοντές ἐσμεν αἰσχίστους λόγους,
 ἄναξ Ὀδυσσεῦ, τοῦδ' ὑπ' ἀνδρὸς ἀρτίως;

1320

ΟΑΤΣΣΕΤΣ

ποίους; ἐγὼ γὰρ ἀνδρὶ συγγνώμην ἔχω
 κλύοντι φλαῦρα συμβαλεῖν ἔπη κακά.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

ἤκουσεν αἰσχρά· δρῶν γὰρ ἦν τοιαῦτά με.

ΟΑΤΣΣΕΤΣ

τί γὰρ σ' ἔδρασεν, ὥστε καὶ βλάβην ἔχειν;

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

οὐ φησ' εἴσειν τόνδε τὸν νεκρὸν ταφῆς
 ἄμοιρον, ἀλλὰ πρὸς βίαν θάψει ἐμοῦ.

ΟΑΤΣΣΕΤΣ

ἔξεστιν οὖν εἰπόντι τάληθῆ φίλῳ
 σοὶ μηδὲν ἡσσον ἢ πάρος ξυνηρετεῖν;²

¹ σοῦ θ' MSS., Bothe corr. ² ξυνηρετεῖν MSS., Lobeck corr,

AJAX

We three, three corpses, ye will cast beside.
For me 'twere nobler before all men's eyes
To fall in his behalf than for a wife
Of thine—or of thy brother, should I say?
Therefore bethink thee—'tis thine interest
No less than mine—if on me thou dar'st lay
A finger, thou wilt surely wish full soon
Rather to bear the brand of cowardice
Than prove thy reckless bravery on me.

Enter ODYSSEUS.

CHORUS

My lord Odysseus, thou art come in time,
If thou art here to mediate, not embroil.

ODYSSEUS

What is it, sirs? Far off I heard loud words
Of the Atridae o'er the hero's corpse.

AGAMEMNON

True, lord Odysseus; were we not provoked
By the most shameful taunts from yonder man?

ODYSSEUS

What taunts? For my part I can pardon one
Who when reviled retorts in angry words.

AGAMEMNON

I did abuse him as his acts deserved.

ODYSSEUS

Say by what action gave he just offence?

AGAMEMNON

He vows he will not leave unseparated
The corpse, but bury it in my despite.

ODYSSEUS

May I be candid with thee as a friend
Without suspicion of my loyalty?

ΑΙΑΣ

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

εἶπ'· ἦ γὰρ εἶην οὐκ ἂν εὖ φρονῶν, ἐπεὶ
 φίλου σ' ἐγὼ μέγιστον Ἀργείων νέμω.

1330

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἄκουέ νυν. τὸν ἄνδρα τόνδε πρὸς θεῶν
 μὴ τλῆς ἄθαπτον ὧδ' ἀναλγήτως βαλεῖν·
 μηδ' ἢ βία σε μηδαμῶς νικησάτω
 τοσόνδε μισεῖν ὥστε τὴν δίκην πατεῖν.
 κάμοι γὰρ ἦν ποθ' οὗτος ἔχθιστος στρατοῦ,
 ἐξ οὗ κράτησα τῶν Ἀχιλλείων ὄπλων,
 ἀλλ' αὐτὸν ἔμπας ὄντ' ἐγὼ τοιόνδ' ἐμοὶ
 οὐκ ἀντατιμάσαιμ' ἂν, ὥστε μὴ λέγειν
 εἴν' ἄνδρ' ἰδεῖν ἄριστον Ἀργείων, ὅσοι
 Τροίαν ἀφικόμεσθα, πλὴν Ἀχιλλέως.
 ὥστ' οὐκ ἂν ἐνδίκως γ' ἀτιμάζοιτό σοι·
 οὐ γάρ τι τοῦτον, ἀλλὰ τοὺς θεῶν νόμους
 φθείροις ἂν. ἄνδρα δ' οὐ δίκαιον, εἰ θάνοι,
 βλάπτειν τὸν ἐσθλόν, οὐδ' ἐὰν μισῶν κυρῆς.

1340

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

σὺ ταῦτ', Ὀδυσσεύ, τοῦδ' ὑπερμαχεῖς ἐμοί;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἔγωγ'· ἐμίσουν δ', ἠνίκ' ἦν μισεῖν καλόν.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

οὐ γὰρ θανόντι καὶ προσεμβῆναί σε χρή;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

μὴ χαῖρ', Ἀτρεΐδη, κέρδεσιν τοῖς μὴ καλοῖς.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

τόν τοι τύραννον εὐσεβεῖν οὐ ῥάδιον.

1350

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἀλλ' εὖ λέγουσι τοῖς φίλοις τιμὰς νέμειν.

AJAX

AGAMEMNON

Surely. I am not senseless, and I count
Thee among all the Greeks my chiefest friend.

ODYSSEUS

Then hear me. O for pity's sake forbear,
Repent, and let not violence and hate
Blind thee to trample justice under foot.
I also counted him my deadliest foe
In all the army, ever since the day
When by award I won Achilles' arms ;
Yet for all that, foe as he was to me,
I would not so requite his wrong with wrong
As not to own that, save Achilles, he
In all the host of Argives had no peer.
Unjustly thou wouldst thus dishonour him ;
For not to him, but to the laws of heaven
Wouldst thou do wrong ; and wrong it is to insult
A brave man dead, e'en if he be thy foe.

AGAMEMNON

Wilt thou, Odysseus, take his part against me?

ODYSSEUS

Yea, yet I hated him so long as hate
Was honourable.

AGAMEMNON

Why not hate him still,
And set thy heel on his dead body too?

ODYSSEUS

Delight not, son of Atreus, in ill gains.

AGAMEMNON

'Tis hard for monarchs to show piety.

ODYSSEUS

But not respect for friends who counsel well.

ΑΙΑΣ

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

κλύειν τὸν ἐσθλὸν ἄνδρα χρῆ τῶν ἐν τέλει.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

παῦσαι· κρατεῖς τοι τῶν φίλων νικώμενος.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

μέμνησ' ὅποιώ φωτὶ τὴν χάριν δίδως.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ᾧδ' ἐχθρὸς ἀνὴρ, ἀλλὰ γενναῖός ποτ' ἦν.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

τί ποτε πῆσαι; ἐχθρὸν ᾧδ' αἰδεῖ νέκυν;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

νικᾷ γὰρ ἀρετὴ με τῆς ἔχθρας πολύ.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

τοιοῖδε μέντοι φῶτες ἔμπληκτοι βροτῶν.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἢ κάρτα πολλοὶ νῦν φίλοι καῦθις πικροί.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

τοιούσδ' ἐπαινεῖς δῆτα σὺ κτᾶσθαι φίλους;

1360

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

σκληρὰν ἐπαινεῖν οὐ φιλῶ ψυχὴν ἐγώ.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

ἡμᾶς σὺ δειλοὺς τῆδε θῆμέρα φανεῖς.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἄνδρας μὲν οὖν Ἑλλησι πᾶσιν ἐνδίκους.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

ἄνωγας οὖν με τὸν νεκρὸν θάπτειν ἔαν;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἔγωγε· καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸς ἐνθάδ' ἴξομαι.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

ἢ πάνθ' ὅμοια πᾶς ἀνὴρ αὐτῷ πονεῖ.

AJAX

AGAMEMNON

A true man ever heeds authority.

ODYSSEUS

Forbear: thou conquerest, yielding unto friends.

AGAMEMNON

Think to what kind of man thou showest grace.

ODYSSEUS

My foe he was, but still a noble foe.

AGAMEMNON

What wouldst thou? Honour a dead foeman's
corpse?

ODYSSEUS

With me his worth outweighs his enmity.

AGAMEMNON

Such sudden change of mind we call caprice.

ODYSSEUS

Common enough the change from friend to foe.

AGAMEMNON

Dost thou commend such fickle friends as these?

ODYSSEUS

A stubborn temper I would ne'er commend.

AGAMEMNON

Thou mind'st this day to make us seem as cowards.

ODYSSEUS

Nay, as just rulers in the eyes of Greece.

AGAMEMNON

Thou bidst me then permit the burial?

ODYSSEUS

Yes, for I too shall come to need the same.

AGAMEMNON

How true the saw, each labours for himself.

ΑΙΑΣ

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

τῷ γάρ με μᾶλλον εἰκὸς ἢ 'μαυτῷ πονεῖν;

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

σὸν ἄρα τοῦργον, οὐκ ἐμὸν κεκλήσεται.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ὥς ἂν ποιήσης, πανταχῇ χρηστός γ' ἔσει.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

ἄλλ' εὖ γε μέντοι τοῦτ' ἐπίστασ' ὡς ἐγὼ
 σοὶ μὲν νέμοιμ' ἂν τῆσδε καὶ μείζω χάριν,
 οὗτος δὲ κάκει κἀνθάδ' ὧν ἔμοιγ' ὁμῶς
 ἔχθιστος ἔσται· σοὶ δὲ δρᾶν ἔξεσθ' ἂ χρῆς.¹

1370

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὅστις σ', Ὀδυσσεῦ, μὴ λέγει γνώμη σοφὸν
 φῦναι, τοιοῦτον ἄντα, μῶρός ἐστ' ἀνὴρ.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

καὶ νῦν γε Τεύκρω τὰπὸ τοῦδ' ἀγγέλλομαι,
 ὅσον τότε ἔχθρὸς ἦ, τοσόνδ' εἶναι φίλος.
 καὶ τὸν θανόντα τόνδε συνθάπτειν θέλω
 καὶ ξυμπονεῖν καὶ μηδὲν ἐλλείπειν ὅσων
 χρῆ τοῖς ἀρίστοις ἀνδράσιν πονεῖν βροτούς.

1380

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

ἄριστ' Ὀδυσσεῦ, πάντ' ἔχω σ' ἐπαινέσαι
 λόγοισι, καὶ μ' ἔψευσας ἐλπίδος πολὺ.
 τοῦτω γὰρ ὧν ἔχθιστος Ἀργείων ἀνὴρ
 μόνος παρέστης χερσίν, οὐδ' ἔτλης παρὼν
 θανόντι τῷδε ζῶν ἐφυβρίσαι μέγα,
 ὡς ὁ στρατηγὸς οὐπιβρόντητος μολῶν
 αὐτὸς τε χῶ ξύναιμος ἠθελησάτην
 λωβητὸν αὐτὸν ἐκβαλεῖν ταφῆς ἄτερ.
 τοιγάρ σφ' Ὀλύμπου τοῦδ' ὁ πρεσβεύων πατήρ

1390

¹ χρῆ MSS., Dindorf corr.

AJAX

ODYSSEUS

And who deserves my labour more than I ?

AGAMEMNON

Well, let it seem thy doing, friend, not mine.

ODYSSEUS

Howe'er 'tis done, 'twill prove thee good and kind.

AGAMEMNON

To thee, my friend, of this be well assured,

I'd grant a favour greater e'en than this.

But that man, as in living so in death,

Shall have my hate. So do as pleaseth thee.

[*Exit* AGAMEMNON.]

CHORUS

Whoe'er, Odysseus, having proof like this,

Denies thy wisdom is himself a fool.

ODYSSEUS

And now to Teucer, once my foe, henceforth

I proffer friendship staunch and true as was

Mine enmity ; and I would ask to share

With you in obsequies and ritual

To grace his grave ; no service would I stint

That man can render to the mighty dead.

TEUCER

Noblest Odysseus, I have naught but praise

For thy good words that all belie my fears.

Of all the Greeks thou wast his deadliest foe,

Yet thou alone didst dare espouse his cause,

And hadst no heart to insult this dumb cold clay,

Like yonder crack-brained chief of the host who came,

He and his brother general, with intent

To cast him forth defamed without a grave.

For that may he who rules in heaven supreme,

ΑΙΑΣ

μνήμων τ' Ἐρινύς καὶ τελεσφόρος Δίκη
κακοὺς κακῶς φθείρειαν, ὥσπερ ἤθελον
τὸν ἄνδρα λώβαις ἐκβαλεῖν ἀναξίως.
σὲ δ', ὦ γεραιοῦ σπέρμα Λαέρτου πατρός,
τάφου μὲν ὀκνῶ τοῦδ' ἐπιψαύειν εἶαν,
μὴ τῷ θανόντι τοῦτο δυσχερὲς ποιῶ·
τὰ δ' ἄλλα καὶ ξύμπρασσε, κεῖ τινα στρατοῦ
θέλεις κομίζειν, οὐδὲν ἄλγος ἔξομεν.
ἐγὼ δὲ τᾶλλα πάντα πορσυνῶ· σὺ δὲ
ἀνὴρ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἐσθλὸς ὢν ἐπίστασο.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἀλλ' ἤθελον μὲν· εἰ δὲ μή' στί σοι φίλον 1400
πράσσειν τὰδ' ἡμᾶς', εἴμ' ἐπαινέσας τὸ σόν.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

ἄλις· ἤδη γὰρ πολὺς ἐκτέταται
χρόνος. ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν κοίλην κάπετον
χερσὶ ταχύνετε, τοὶ δ' ὑψίβατον
τρίποδ' ἀμφίπυρον λουτρῶν ὀσίω
θέσθ' ἐπίκαιρον·
μία δ' ἐκ κλισίας ἀνδρῶν ἴλη
τὸν ὑπασπίδιον κόσμον φερέτω.
παῖ, σὺ δὲ πατρός γ', ὅσον ἰσχύεις,
φιλότῃτι θυγῶν πλευρὰς σὺν ἐμοὶ 1410
τάσδ' ἐπικούφισ'· ἔτι γὰρ θερμαί
σύριγγες ἄνω φυσῶσι μέλαν
μένος. ἀλλ' ἄγε πᾶς, φίλος ὅστις ἀνὴρ



AJAX

And the Erinyes who forgetteth not,
And Justice who accomplisheth the end,
Curse those accursed sinners and confound them,
E'en as they would have wronged the innocent dead.
But for thine aid in these our funeral rites,
Son of Laertes, old and honoured chief,
I must reject the service, though full loath,
Lest I should do displeasure to the dead.
In all the rest be one of us, and if
Thou wouldst invite some comrade from the camp
To join the mourning, we shall welcome him.
All else I will provide. Rest well assured,
We reckon thee a true great-hearted friend.

ODYSSEUS

Well I was fain to assist, but if your will
Consents not, I will acquiesce and go.

TEUCER

Enough: too long have we delayed.
Go some with mattock armed and spade,
Dig the grave pit speedily;
Lustral waters to supply,
Others set the cauldron high,
Piling around it faggots dry,
Let another band be sent
To fetch his harness from his tent.
Thou too, child, draw near and lay
Thy little hands on this cold clay;
Though thy help may not be much,
Thy sire shall feel thy loving touch.
Help to raise this prostrate form.
These limbs are cold, yet still the warm
Veins from the heart and wounded side
Jet forth their dark ensanguined tide.

ΑΙΑΣ

φησὶ παρῆναι, σούσθω, βάτω,
τῷδ' ἀνδρὶ πονῶν τῷ πάντ' ἀγαθῷ
κούδενί πω λῶσι θνητῶν
[Αἴαντος, ὅτ' ἦν, τότε φωνῶ].¹

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἦ πολλὰ βροτοῖς ἔστιν ἰδοῦσιν
γινῶναι· πρὶν ἰδεῖν δ' οὐδεὶς μάντις
τῶν μελλόντων, ὅ τι πράξει.

¹ Rejected by Dindorf.

AJAX

Haste, each who claims the name of friend,
Haste one and all the dead to tend
With service due. Since time began
There lived on earth no nobler man.

CHORUS

Wisdom still by seeing grows,
But no man the unseen knows.
Shall he fare or ill or well
Who of mortals can foretell ?

ELECTRA

ARGUMENT

ORESTES, admonished by the Delphic oracle to avenge his murdered father, sets forth for Mycenae accompanied by his aged Paedagogus and Pylades. When in sight of the palace they lay their plot. The Paedagogus is to present himself as a Phocian messenger and announce to Clytemnestra that Orestes has been killed in a chariot race at the Pythian games. Meanwhile Orestes and Pylades are to make funeral offerings at the tomb of Agamemnon and then, disguised as Phocians, to carry to the Queen a funeral urn, telling her it holds the ashes of Orestes. Clytemnestra, warned by an evil dream, sends Chrysothemis to pour a libation on the tomb. Electra meets her on the way thither and persuades her to leave these impious offerings and take instead such gifts as the two sisters can make to their father's ghost. Clytemnestra enters with a handmaid bearing fruits to be laid on the altar of Apollo. She rates Electra for being abroad without her leave, and defends her past acts against Electra's reproaches. The announcement of a messenger ends the altercation, and the Queen hears with feigned sorrow and ill-concealed joy the news of Orestes' death, and invites the messenger to accompany her to the palace.

ARGUMENT

Chrysothemis returns from the tomb, reporting that someone has been there before her, has wreathed the mound with flowers, and left on the edge a lock of hair. Who can it be but Orestes? Electra disabuses her, repeating the messenger's sad tale, and entreats her aid in executing the resolve to slay with her own hands their unnatural mother and her paramour. Orestes joins them with Pylades and attendants bearing the funeral urn. She takes the urn in her hands and makes her moan over her lost brother. As they converse together Orestes by degrees reveals himself and discloses his purpose. With Pylades he enters the palace, and shortly a death-shriek is heard. He comes forth, and in answer to Electra replies that all is well in the house. Aegisthus is seen approaching, exultant at the report he has heard of Orestes' death. Electra confirms it, and bids him enter the palace and see with his own eyes the corpse. At his bidding the palace doors are thrown open and on a bier is seen a veiled corpse. Aegisthus lifts the face cloth and beholds the corpse of Clytemnestra with Orestes standing hard by. He knows that his fate is sealed, and is driven at the sword's point by Orestes to be slain in the hall where Agamemnon was slain. The Chorus of free Mycenaean women hail the death of the usurper which ends the curse on the house of Atreus.

ΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ΧΡΥΣΘΕΜΙΣ

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ΛΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

AGED SERVANT OF ORESTES

ORESTES, *son of Agamemnon, the late king of Argos, and Clytemnestra*

{ ELECTRA } *daughters of Agamemnon and Clytem-*
{ CHRYSOTHEMIS } *nestra*

CLYTEMNESTRA, *Queen of Argos and Mycenae.*

ÆGISTHUS, *cousin of Agamemnon, sometime paramour of Clytemnestra and now prince consort*

CHORUS OF MYCENEAN WOMEN.

SCENE: At Mycenae before the Palace of Agamemnon.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

ὦ τοῦ στρατηγήσαντος ἐν Τροίᾳ ποτὲ
Ἀγαμέμνωνος παῖ, νῦν ἐκεῖν' ἔξεστί σοι
παρόντι λεύσσειν, ὧν πρόθυμος ἦσθ' αἰεὶ.
τὸ γὰρ παλαιὸν Ἄργος οὐπόθεις τόδε,
τῆς οἰστροπλήγῃος ἄλσος Ἰνάχου κόρης·
αὕτη δ', Ὀρέστα, τοῦ λυκοκτόνου θεοῦ
ἀγορὰ Λύκειος· οὐξ ἀριστερᾶς δ' ὄδε
Ἦρας ὁ κλεινὸς ναός· οἱ δ' ἰκάνομεν,
φάσκειν Μυκῆνας τὰς πολυχρύσους ὀρᾶν
πολύφθορόν τε δῶμα Πελοπιδῶν τόδε,
ὄθεν σε πατρὸς ἐκ φονῶν ἐγὼ ποτε
πρὸς σῆς ὀμαίμου καὶ κασιγνήτης λαβὼν
ἦνεγκα κ' ἰξέσωσα κάξεθρεψάμην
τοσόνδ' ἐς ἦβης, πατρὶ τιμωρὸν φόνου.
νῦν οὖν, Ὀρέστα καὶ σὺ φίλτατε ξένων
Πυλάδῃ, τί χρὴ δρᾶν ἐν τάχει βουλευτέον·

10

ELECTRA

Enter AGED SERVANT with ORESTES and PYLADES.

AGED SERVANT

O Child of Agamemnon, who sometime
Was Captain of the host that leaguered Troy,
'Tis thine at last to view before thee spread
The scene thy heart was set on. Yonder lies
Old Argos thou so long hast yearned to see,
Once refuge of the gadfly-driven maid,¹
Daughter of Inachus; and, Orestes, here
The market-place from the Wolf-slayer² named;
There on our left is Hera's far-famed shrine;
And lo! before us, at our very feet
Thou seest Mycenae of the golden hoard,
And there the palace grim of Pelops' line,
Deep stained with murder. Thence I bore thee once
Snatched from beside thy father's bleeding corpse
By kindly hands, thy sister's; rescued thus
I fostered thee till thou hadst reached the age
To be the avenger of thy father's blood.
But now, Orestes, and thou, Pylades,
Dearest of friends, the hour for you is ripe
To take resolve and that right speedily.

¹ Inachus, the river god, was the legendary founder of Argos, whither his daughter Io, changed by the jealous Hera into a cow, was driven in her wanderings.

² Apollo *Lukaios*, the god of light, but by folk-etymology connected with *λύκος*, wolf.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὡς ἡμῖν ἤδη λαμπρὸν ἡλίου σέλας
 ἔφα κινεῖ φθέγματ' ὀρνίθων σαφῆ
 μέλαινά τ' ἄστρον ἐκλέλοιπεν εὐφρόνη.
 πρὶν οὖν τιν' ἀνδρῶν ἐξοδοιοπορεῖν στέγης, 20
 ξυνάπτετον λόγοισιν· ὡς ἐνταῦθ' ἔμέν,¹
 ἴν' οὐκέτ' ὀκνεῖν καιρός, ἀλλ' ἔργων ἀκμή.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὦ φίλτατ' ἀνδρῶν προσπόλων, ὡς μοι σαφῆ
 σημεῖα φαίνεις ἐσθλὸς εἰς ἡμᾶς γεγώς.
 ὥσπερ γὰρ ἵππος εὐγενῆς, κὰν ἦ γέρον,
 ἐν τοῖσι δεινοῖς θυμὸν οὐκ ἀπώλεσεν,
 ἀλλ' ὀρθὸν οὖς ἴστησιν, ὡσαύτως δὲ σὺ
 ἡμᾶς τ' ὀτρύνεις καὐτὸς ἐν πρώτοις ἔπει.
 τουγὰρ τὰ μὲν δόξαντα δηλώσω, σὺ δὲ 30
 ὀξεῖαν ἀκοὴν τοῖς ἐμοῖς λόγοις διδούς,
 εἰ μὴ τι καιροῦ τυγχάνω, μεθάρμοσον.
 ἐγὼ γὰρ ἠνίχ' ἰκόμην τὸ Πυθικὸν
 μαντεῖον, ὡς μάθοιμ' ὄτ' ἄν τρόφῳ πατρὶ
 δίκας ἀροίμην τῶν φονευσάντων πάρα,
 χρῆ μοι τοιαῦθ' ὁ Φοῖβος ὦν πεύσει τάχα·
 ἄσκευον αὐτὸν ἀσπίδων τε καὶ στρατοῦ
 δόλοισι κλέψαι χειρὸς ἐνδίκους σφαγᾶς.
 ὅτ' οὖν τοιόνδε χρῆσμον εἰσηκούσαμεν,
 σὺ μὲν μολών, ὅταν σε καιρὸς εἰσάγη,
 δόμων ἔσω τῶνδ', ἴσθι πᾶν τὸ δρώμενον, 40
 ὅπως ἂν εἰδῶς ἡμῖν ἀγγελίλης σαφῆ.
 οὐ γὰρ σε μὴ γῆρα τε καὶ χρόνῳ μακρῷ
 γνῶσ', οὐδ' ὑποπτεύσουσιν ὧδ' ἠνθισμένον.
 λόγῳ δὲ χρῶ τοιῶδ', ὅτι ξένος μὲν εἰ
 Φωκέως παρ' ἀνδρὸς Φανοτέως ἦκων· ὁ γὰρ

¹ ἔμέν cannot stand. Hartung's *ὡς, ἴν' ἴσταμεν, οὐκ ἔστ'*
ἔτ' ὀκνεῖν καιρός is the most probable emendation.

ELECTRA

For lo, already the bright beams of day
Waken to melody the pipe of birds,
And black night with her glimmering stars has
waned.

So ere a soul be stirring in the streets
Confer together and resolve yourselves.
No time for longer pause ; now must we act.

ORESTES

Dearest of followers, how well thou show'st
The constant service of thy loyalty !
For as the high-bred steed, though he be old,
Pricks up his ears and champs the bit for joy
When battle rages, even so dost thou
Both urge us on and follow with the first.
Therefore I will unfold our plans, and thou
Note well my words, and if in aught I seem
To miss the mark, admonish and correct.
Know then that when I left thee to consult
The Pythian oracle and learn how best
To execute just vengeance for my sire
On those that slew him, Phoebus answered thus :
*Trust not to shields or armed hosts, but steal
The chance thyself the avenging blow to deal.*
Since then the Pythian god hath thus advised,
Go thou and watch thine opportunity
To enter in the palace and observe
What happens there and bring us full report.
And fear not to be recognised ; long years
And thy white locks, the blossom of old age,
Have changed thee wholly. Forge some specious tale :
Thou art a Phocian stranger hither sent
By Phanoteus their doughtiest ally.

μέγιστος αὐτοῖς τυγχάνει δορυξένων.
 ἄγγελλε δ' ὄρκον¹ προστιθείς ὀθούνεκα
 τέθυγκ' Ὀρέστης ἐξ ἀναγκαίας τύχης,
 ἄθλοισι Πυθικοῖσιν ἐκ τροχηλάτων
 δίφρων κυλισθείς· ᾧ δ' ὁ μῦθος ἐστάτω. 50
 ἡμεῖς δὲ πατὸς τύμβου, ὡς ἐφίετο,
 λοιβαῖσι πρῶτον καὶ κατατόμοις χλιδαῖς
 στέψαντες εἰτ' ἀψορρον ἤξομεν πάλιν,
 τύπωμα χαλκόπλευρον ἠρμένοι χεροῖν,
 ὃ καὶ σὺ θάμνοις οἴσθα που κεκρυμμένον,
 ὅπως λόγῳ κλέπτοντες ἠδείαν φάτιν
 φέρωμεν αὐτοῖς, τοῦμόν ὡς ἔρρει δέμας
 φλογιστὸν ἤδη καὶ κατηρθρακωμένον.
 τί γὰρ με λυπεῖ τοῦθ', ὅταν λόγῳ θανάων
 ἐργοῖσι σωθῶ κάξενέγκωμαι κλέος; 60
 δοκῶ μὲν, οὐδὲν ῥήμα σὺν κέρδει κακόν.
 ἤδη γὰρ εἶδον πολλάκις καὶ τοὺς σοφοὺς
 λόγῳ μάτην θνήσκοντας· εἰθ', ὅταν δόμους
 ἔλθωσιν αὐθις, ἐκτετίμηνται πλέον
 ὡς καὶ ἐπαυχῶ τῆσδε τῆς φήμης ἀπο
 δεδοκότ' ἐχθροῖς ἄστρον ὡς λάμψειν ἔτι.
 ἀλλ', ᾧ πατρώα γῆ θεοὶ τ' ἐγγώριοι,
 δέξασθέ μ' εὐτυχοῦντα ταῖσδε ταῖς ὁδοῖς,
 σὺ τ', ᾧ πατρώον δῶμα· σοῦ γὰρ ἔρχομαι
 δίκη καθαρτῆς πρὸς θεῶν ὠρμημένος· 70
 καὶ μὴ μ' ἄτιμον τῆσδ' ἀποστείλητε γῆς,
 ἀλλ' ἀρχέπλουτον καὶ καταστάτην δόμων.
 εἶρηκα μὲν νυν ταῦτα· σοὶ δ' ἤδη, γέρον,
 τὸ σὺν μελέσθω βάντι φρουρηῆσαι χρέος.
 νῶ δ' ἔξιμεν· καιρὸς γὰρ, ὅσπερ ἀνδράσιν
 μέγιστος ἔργου παντός ἐστ' ἐπιστάτης.

¹ ὄρκῳ MSS., Reiske corr.

ELECTRA

Report, confirming with an oath the tale,
How that Orestes by a fatal chance
Hath perished, from his speeding chariot hurled
(So let thy tale run) at the Pythian games.
And we meanwhile, as the god ordered us,
First having crowned my father's sepulchre
With pure libations and rich offerings
Of new-shorn tresses, will return anon,
An urn of well-wrought brasswork in our hands,
The same we hid in the brush-wood, as thou know'st.
This will confirm the feignèd tale we bring,
That I am dead and to the pyre consigned,
Naught left of me but ashes and grey dust :
Little reck I by rumour to be dead,
So I live on to win me deathless fame.
The end, methinks, gives any fraud excuse.
Oft have I heard of men, reputed wise,
Who spread the rumour of their death, and so
Returning home a heartier welcome found.
Thus by my bruided death I too aspire
To blaze a sudden meteor on my foes.
But O my country and my country's gods,
Give me fair welcome, prosper my emprise !
And greet me too, thou palace of my sires ;
A heaven-sent purger of thy stain I come.
Send me not forth again to banishment,
But O ! restore to me its ancient wealth,
May I refund its old prosperity !
Enough of words ; go presently, old friend,
Attend thy business ; and we two will go,
And watch the time, for opportunity
Is the best captain of all enterprise.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἰὼ μοί μοι δύστηνος.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

καὶ μὴν θυρῶν ἔδοξα προσπόλων τινὸς
ὑποστενούσης ἔνδον αἰσθέσθαι, τέκνον.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἄρ' ἐστὶν ἡ δύστηνος Ἥλέκτρα· θέλεις
μείνωμεν αὐτοῦ κατακούσωμεν¹ γόων;

80

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

ἦκιστα· μηδὲν πρόσθεν ἢ τὰ Λοξίου
πειρώμεθ' ἔρδειν κατὰ τῶνδ' ἀρχηγετεῖν,
πατὴρ χέοντες λουτρά· ταῦτα γὰρ φέρει
νίκην τ' ἐφ' ἡμῖν καὶ κράτος τῶν δρωμένων.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ φάος ἀγνὸν
καὶ γῆς ἰσόμοιρ' ἀήρ, ὣς μοι
πολλὰς μὲν θρήνων ᾤδάς,
πολλὰς δ' ἀντήρεις ἦσθου
στέρνων πληγὰς αἵμασσομένων,
ὅποταν δνοφερὰ νύξ ὑπολειφθῆ·
τὰ δὲ παννυχίδων ἤδη στυγεραὶ
ξυνίσασ' εὐναὶ μογερῶν οἴκων,
ὅσα τὸν δύστηνον ἐμὸν θρηνώ
πατέρ', ὃν κατὰ μὲν βάρβαρον αἶαν
φοίνιος Ἄρης οὐκ ἐξένισεν,
μήτηρ δ' ἡμῆ χάρις κοινολεχῆς
Ἀἴγισθος ὅπως δρῦν ὑλοτόμοι

90

¹ κατακούσωμεν MSS., Nauck corr.

ELECTRA

ELECTRA (*within*)

Ah me ! unhappy me !

AGED SERVANT

Hist ! from the doors a voice, my son, methought,
A wailing as of some handmaid within.

ORESTES

Can it be sad Electra ! Shall we stay
And overhear her lamentable plaint ?

AGED SERVANT

Not so ; we first must strive before all else
To do as Loxias bade us and thence take
Our auspices—with lustral waters lave
Thy father's grave, thus shall we surely win
Vantage at each step, victory in the end.

[*Exeunt. Enter ELECTRA from the palace.*]

ELECTRA

O holy light,
O circumambient air,
What wailings of despair,
What sight

Have ye not witnessed in the first grey morn,
Beatings of breasts and bosoms madly torn !

By night for me is spread

No festal banquet in this haunted hall,

But my lone pallet bed.

All night I muse upon my father dead,

Not in a foreign land at Ares' call,

But here, at home, by my own mother slain ;

Her and Aegisthus, these adulterers twain ;

Felled by their axe's bloody stroke,

E'en as the woodman fells an oak.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

σχίζουσι κἀρα φονίῳ πελέκει,
 κούδεις τούτων οἶκτος ἀπ' ἄλλης
 ἢ 'μοῦ φέρεται, σοῦ, πάτερ, οὔτως
 αἰκῶς οἰκτρῶς τε θανόντος.

100

ἀλλ' οὐ μὲν δὴ
 λήξω θρήνων στυγερῶν τε γόων,
 ἔστ' ἂν παμφεγγεῖς ἄστρον
 ριπᾶς, λεύσσω δὲ τόδ' ἡμαρ,
 μὴ οὐ τεκνολέτειρ' ὥς τις ἀηδῶν
 ἐπὶ κωκυτῷ τῶνδε πατρίων
 πρὸ θυρῶν ἤχῳ πᾶσι προφωνεῖν.
 ὦ δῶμ' Ἀΐδου καὶ Περσεφόνης,
 ὦ χθόνι' Ἑρμῆ καὶ Πότνι' Ἄρα
 σεμναί τε θεῶν παῖδες Ἐρινύες,
 αἱ τοὺς ἀδίκως θνήσκοντας ὀράθ',
 αἱ τοὺς εὐνάς ὑποκλεπτομένους,
 ἔλθετ', ἀρήξατε, τίσασθε πατρὸς
 φόνον ἡμετέρου,
 καί μοι τὸν ἐμὸν πέμψατ' ἀδελφόν'
 μούνη γὰρ ἄγειν οὐκέτι σωκῶ
 λύπης ἀντίρροπον ἄχθος.

110

120

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ παῖ, παῖ δυστανοτάτας
 Ἥλέκτρα ματρός, τίν' αἰεὶ
 τάκεις ὧδ' ἀκόρεστον οἰμωγᾶν
 τὸν πάλαι ἐκ δολερᾶς ἀθεώτατα
 ματρός ἀλόντ' ἀπάταις Ἀγαμέμνονα
 κακῆ τε χειρὶ πρόδοτον; ὡς ὁ τάδε πορῶν
 ὄλοιτ', εἴ μοι θέμις τὰδ' αὐδᾶν.

στρ. α'

ELECTRA

And I, O father, I alone of all
Thy house am left forlorn
To make my moan, to mourn
Thy piteous fall.

Yet never, while these eyes
Behold or sun or star-bespangled skies,
Will I restrain my plaint, my bitter cries ;
But like some nightingale
My ravished nest bewail,
And through these halls shall sound my groans
and sighs.

Halls of Persephonè and Death,
Guide of the shades, O Hermes, and O Wraith,
Ye god-sprung Furies dread
Who watch when blood is shed,
Or stained the marriage bed,
O aid me to avenge my father slain,
O send my brother back again !
Alone, no more I countervail
Grief that o'erloads the scale.

Enter CHORUS.

CHORUS

Child of a mother all unblest, (Str. 1)
Electra, how in grief that knows no rest
Thou witherest ;
Mourning thy father's cruel fate,
By her betrayed and slaughtered by her mate.
Black death await
The plotter of that sin,
If prayer so bold may answer win !

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ γενέθλα γενναίων,
 ἦκετ' ἐμῶν καμάτων παραμύθιον. 130
 οἶδά τε καὶ ξυνίημι τὰδ', οὐ τί με
 φυγγάνει, οὐδ' ἐθέλω προλιπεῖν τόδε,
 μὴ οὐ τὸν ἐμὸν στενάχειν πατέρ' ἄθλιον.
 ἀλλ' ὦ παντοίας φιλότῃτος ἀμειβόμεναι χάριν,
 εἴατέ μ' ὦδ' ἀλύειν,
 αἰαί, ἰκνοῦμαι

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὗτοι τὸν γ' ἐξ Ἴλδα ἀντ. α'
 παγκοίνου λίμνας πατέρ' ἀν-
 στάσεις οὔτε γόοισιν οὔτ' εὐχαῖς.¹
 ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τῶν μετρίων ἐπ' ἀμήχανον 140
 ἄλγος αἰεὶ στενάχουσα διόλλυσαι,
 ἐν οἷς ἀνάλυσίς ἐστίν οὐδεμία κακῶν.
 τί μοι τῶν δυσφόρων ἐφίει;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

νήπιος ὃς τῶν οἰκτρῶς
 οἰχομένων γονέων ἐπιλάβεται.
 ἀλλ' ἐμέ γ' ἄστονός εσ' ἄραρεν φρένας,
 ἃ Ἴτυν, αἰὲν Ἴτυν ὀλοφύρεται,
 ὄρνις ἀτυζομένα, Διὸς ἄγγελος.
 ἰὼ παντλάμων Νιόβα, σὲ δ' ἐγωγε νέμω θεόν, 150
 εἴτ' ἐν τάφῳ πετραίῳ
 αἰεὶ δακρύνεις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὗτοι σοὶ μούνα, τέκνον, στρ. β'
 ἄχος ἐφάνη βροτῶν,

¹ οὔτε γόοις οὔτε λιταῖσις MSS., Erfurdt corr.

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

Ah, noble friends ye come, I see
To ease my misery ;
Your kind intent, O trust me, I perceive.
Yet can I never leave
My task, each day, each hour, anew to shed
Tears o'er my father dead.
O kindly hearts, so ready to repay
All friendship owes,
Leave me, O leave me (this one boon I pray)
To my wiid woes.

CHORUS

Yet him, thy sire, from Acheron's dark shore (*Ant. 1*)
By prayers or cries thou never can'st restore,
 No, never more ;
And by excess of grief thou perishest.
If remedy be none, were it not best
 From grief to rest ?
 O rest thee ! why
Thus nurse thy fruitless misery ?

ELECTRA

That child's insensate who remembers not
 His sire's sad lot.
O bird of Zeus, to thine I'll set my note,
 Who with full throat
For Itys, Itys griev'st from eve till morn.
 Ah ! Niobe forlorn,
How blest art thou who tombed in stone dost lie
 And weep for aye !

CHORUS

Not thou alone, hast sorrow ; others share (*Str. 2*)
 Thy load of care.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πρὸς δ' τι σὺ τῶν ἔνδον εἰ περισσά,
οἷς ὁμόθεν εἰ καὶ γονᾶ ξύναιμος,
οἷα Χρυσόθεμις ζῶει καὶ Ἰφιάνασσα,
κρυπτᾶ τ' ἀχέων ἐν ἡβᾳ,
ὄλβιος, ὃν ἄ κλεινὰ
γᾶ ποτε Μυκηναίων
δέξεται εὐπατρίδαν, Διὸς εὐφροῖ
βήματι μολόντα τάνδε γᾶν Ὀρέσταν.

160

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὄν γ' ἐγὼ ἀκάματα προσμένουσ', ἄτεκνος,
τάλαιν', ἀνύμφευτος αἰὲν οἰχυνῶ,
δάκρυσι μυδαλέα, τὸν ἀνήνυτον
οἶτον ἔχουσα κακῶν· ὁ δὲ λάθεται
ὦν τ' ἔπαθ' ὦν τ' ἐδάη. τί γὰρ οὐκ ἐμοὶ
ἔρχεται ἀγγελίας ἀπατώμενον;
αἰεὶ μὲν γὰρ ποθεῖ,
ποθῶν δ' οὐκ ἀξιοῖ φανῆναι.

170

ΧΟΡΟΣ

θάρσει μοι, θάρσει, τέκνον. ἄντ. β'
ἔτι μέγας οὐρανῷ
Ζεὺς, δὲ ἐφορᾷ πάντα καὶ κρατύνει
ᾧ τὸν ὑπεραλγῆ χόλον νέμουσα
μήθ' οἷς ἐχθαίρεις ὑπεράχθεο μήτ' ἐπιλάθου·
χρόνος γὰρ εὐμαρῆς θεός.
οὔτε γὰρ ὁ τὰν Κρίσαν
βοῦνομον ἔχων ἀκτὰν
παῖς Ἀγαμεινονίδας ἀπερίτροπος
οὔθ' ὁ παρὰ τὸν Ἀχέροντα θεὸς ἀνάσσων.

180

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ' ἐμὲ μὲν ὁ πολὺς ἀπολέλοιπεν ἤδη
βίσιος ἀνέλπιστος, οὐδ' ἔτ' ἀρκῶ

ELECTRA

Think on thy kinsfolk whom afflictions press
Than thine no less,
Iphianassa and Chrysothemis.
Think of thy brother ; sorrow now is his,
An exiled youth, yet shortly shall he come
By heaven's good guidance home,
And glad Mycenæ shall Orestes own
Heir to his father's throne.

ELECTRA

Yea, for him long years I wait,
Unwed, childless, desolate,
Drenched with tears that ever flow
For my barren load of woe ;
And the wrongs whereof he wot,
Or hath heard, are all forgot.
All those messages are vain—
How he hopes to come again,
How for home his heart doth yearn !—
Yet he wills not to return.

CHORUS

(*Ant.* 2)

Take heart, my child, Zeus still in heaven is king,
And orders everything ;
To him commit the wrath that gnaws thy breast,
His will is ever best.
Nurse, as is meet, thy vengeance, but abate
Excess of hate,
For Time can heal, a gentle god and mild.
Nor Agamemnon's child
Who long by Crisa's pastoral shore remains,
Nor he who reigns
O'er Acheron will nevermore relent.

ELECTRA

Nay but for me is spent
The best of life ; I languish in despair.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἄτις ἄνευ τεκέων¹ κατατάκομαι,
 ἄς φίλος οὔτις ἀνὴρ ὑπερίσταται,
 ἀλλ' ἀπερεί τις ἔποικος ἀναξία
 οἰκονομῶ θαλάμους πατρός, ὧδε μὲν
 ἀεικεῖ σὺν στολᾷ,
 κεναῖς δ' ἀμφίσταμαι τραπέζαις.

190

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οἰκτρά μὲν νόστοις αὐδά,
 οἰκτρά δ' ἐν κοίταις πατρώαις
 ὅτε οἱ² παγχάλκων ἀνταῖα
 γενύων ὠρμάθη πλαγιά.
 δόλος ἦν ὁ φράσας, ἔρος ὁ κτείνας,
 δεινὰν δεινῶς προφυτεύσαντες
 μορφάν, εἴτ' οὖν θεὸς εἶτε βροτῶν
 ἦν ὁ ταῦτα πράσσων.

στρ. γ'

200

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ πασᾶν κείνα πλέον ἀμέρα
 ἐλθοῦσ' ἐχθίστα δὴ μοι·
 ὦ νύξ, ὦ δείπνων ἀρρήτων
 ἔκπαυλ' ἄχθη,
 τοὺς ἐμὸς ἴδε πατῆρ
 θανάτους αἰκεῖς διδύμαιν χειροῖν,
 αἱ τὸν ἐμὸν εἶλον βίον πρόδοτον, αἶ μ' ἀπώλεσαν·
 οἷς θεὸς ὁ μέγας Ὀλύμπιος
 ποιῖμα πάθεα παθεῖν πόροι,
 μηδέ ποτ' ἀγλαίας ἀποναιάτο
 τοιάδ' ἀνύσαντες ἔργα.

210

ΧΟΡΟΣ

φράζου μὴ πόρσω φωνεῖν.
 οὐ γνώμαν ἴσχεις ἐξ οἶων

ἀντ. γ'

¹ τοκέων MSS., Meineke corr.

² ὅτε σοι MSS., Hermann corr.

ELECTRA

Fordone with care,
Without a parent's love or husband's aid,
An orphaned maid.
Here in the chambers of my sire I wait
In low estate,
Or like a stranger who in beggar's weeds
On fragments feeds.

CHORUS

(*Str.* 3)

Dire was the voice that greeted first
Thy sire's return, and dire the cry
That from the banquet-chamber burst,
A wail of agony ;
What time the brazen axe's blow
Struck him and laid him low,
'Twas lust begat and craft conceived the deed,
A monstrous offspring of a monstrous seed,
Whether a god or mortal wrought the woe.

ELECTRA

Dawn, the darkest of all morrows,
Night, the crown of all my sorrows,
When that foul feast for the dead
By those traitors twain was spread,
Who slew my sire—me too
In slaying him they slew.
May the great Olympian King
Send on them like suffering ;
Bitter be of sin the fruit ;
May they perish branch and root !

CHORUS

(*Ant.* 3)

O curb thy tongue ! hast thou no thought

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τὰ παρόντ' οἰκεία, εἰς ἄτας
 ἐμπίπτεις οὕτως αἰκῶς;
 πολὺ γάρ τι κακῶν ὑπerekτήσω,
 σὰ δυσθύμῳ τίκτους' αἰεὶ
 ψυχᾶ πολέμους· τὰ δὲ τοῖς δυνατοῖς
 οὐκ ἐριστὰ πλάθειν.

220

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

δεινοῖς ἠναγκάσθην, δεινοῖς·
 ἔξοιδ', οὐ λάθει μ' ὄργα.
 ἀλλ' ἐν γὰρ δεινοῖς οὐ σχήσω
 ταύτας ἄτας,
 ὄφρα με βίος ἔχῃ.
 τίνι γάρ ποτ' ἄν, ὦ φίλια γενέθλα,
 πρόσφορον ἀκούσαιμ' ἔπος, τίνι φρονοῦντι καίρια;
 ἀνετέ μ' ἀνετε, παράγοροι·
 τάδε γὰρ ἄλυτα κεκλήσεται,
 οὐδέ ποτ' ἐκ καμάτων ἀποπαύσομαι
 ἀνάριθμος ὧδε θρήνων.

230

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὖν εὐνοία γ' αὐδῶ,
 μάτηρ ὡσεὶ τις πιστά,
 μὴ τίκτειν σ' ἄταν ἄταις.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

καὶ τί μέτρον κακότατος ἔφυ; φέρε,
 πῶς ἐπὶ τοῖς φθιμένοις ἀμελεῖν καλόν;
 ἐν τίνι τοῦτ' ἔβλαστ' ἀνθρώπων;
 μήτ' εἶην ἔντιμος τούτοις
 μήτ', εἴ τῳ πρόσκειμαι χρηστῷ,
 ξυνναίοιμ' εὐκηλος, γονέων
 ἐκτίμους ἰσχουσα πτέρυγας
 ὄξυτόνων γόνων.

240

ELECTRA

How thine own misery thou hast wrought,
And mak'st a burden of thy life
By ever heaping strife on strife
In sullen mood? Ill fares the right
When feebleness contends with might.

ELECTRA

Bitter constraint compelled me, and I know
My heart with wrath did overflow;
But never while life lasts will I control,
Thus wronged, the indignant passion of my soul.
Ye mean me well, but solace is there none
For woes like mine, so all who know must own.
Forbear, kind comforters, forbear; be sure
A case so desperate admits no cure.
What respite to my sorrows, what relief?
No tears, no moans, can satisfy such grief.

CHORUS

O heap not misery on misery,
As a fond mother I would plead with thee.

ELECTRA

No, for this villainy grows and knows no bound.
Where can a race be found
So vile as they, to disregard the dead?
By praise of such men I were ill bestead.
O may I ne'er, if fate should on me smile,
In careless ease sad memories beguile,
Clipping the pinions of my mournful song,
The dirges due that to my sire belong.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

εἰ γὰρ ὁ μὲν θανὼν γὰρ τε καὶ οὐδὲν ὄν
 κείσεται τάλας,
 οἱ δὲ μὴ πάλιν
 δώσουσ' ἀντιφόνους δίκας,
 ἔρροι τ' ἂν αἰδῶς
 ἀπάντων τ' εὐσέβεια θνατῶν.

250

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἐγὼ μὲν, ὦ παῖ, καὶ τὸ σὸν σπεύδουσ' ἅμα
 καὶ τοῦμόν αὐτῆς ἦλθον· εἰ δὲ μὴ καλῶς
 λέγω, σὺ νίκα· σοὶ γὰρ ἐψόμεσθ' ἅμα.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

αἰσχύνομαι μὲν, ὦ γυναῖκες, εἰ δοκῶ
 πολλοῖσι θρήνοις δυσφορεῖν ὑμῖν ἄγαν.
 ἀλλ' ἢ βία γὰρ ταῦτ' ἀναγκάζει με δρᾶν,
 σύγγνωτε· πῶς γὰρ ἦτις εὐγενῆς γυνή,
 πατρῷ ὀρώσα πήματ', οὐ δρώη τάδ' ἄν;
 ἀγῶ κατ' ἡμᾶρ καὶ κατ' εὐφρόνην αἰεὶ
 θάλλοντα μᾶλλον ἢ καταφθίνονθ' ὀρῶ·
 ἢ πρῶτα μὲν τὰ μητρός, ἢ μ' ἐγείνατο,
 ἔχθιστα συμβέβηκεν· εἶτα δώμασιν
 ἐν τοῖς ἐμαυτῆς τοῖς φονεῦσι τοῦ πατρὸς
 ξύνειμι, κακ τῶνδ' ἄρχομαι κακ τῶνδέ μοι
 λαβεῖν θ' ὁμοίως καὶ τὸ τητᾶσθαι πέλει.
 ἔπειτα ποίας ἡμέρας δοκεῖς μ' ἄγειν,
 ὅταν θρόνοις Αἰγισθον ἐνθακοῦντ' ἴδω
 τοῖσιν πατρώοις, εἰσίδω δ' ἐσθήματα
 φοροῦντ' ἐκείνῳ ταῦτ' αἰ παρσετίους
 σπένδοντα λοιβὰς ἐνθ' ἐκείνον ὤλεσεν,
 ἴδω δὲ τούτων τὴν τελευταίαν ὕβριν,
 τὸν ἀντοέντην ἡμῖν ἐν κοίτῃ πατρὸς
 ξύν τῇ ταλαίῃη μητρὶ, μητέρ' εἰ χρεῶν

260

270

ELECTRA

For if to dust and nothingness the dead
Are doomed, nor blood for blood be shed,
Farewell to sanctities of law,
Farewell to reverence and awe.

CHORUS

I came in thy behalf no less than mine,
Daughter, but if my words displease thee, well,
Have it thy way ; we follow thee no less.

ELECTRA

It shames me, friends, that ye should thus set down
To frowardness my too persistent grief.
But since I yield to hard necessity,
Bear with me. How indeed could any woman
Of noble blood who sees her father's home
Plague-stricken, as I see it night and day,
And each day stricken worse, not do as I ?
For me a mother's love has turned to hate ;
In my own home on sufferance I live
With my sire's murderers, on whose will it rests
To give or to withhold my daily bread.
Think what a life is mine, to see each day
Aegisthus seated on my father's throne,
Wearing the royal robes my father wore,
Pouring libations on the hearth, whereat
He slew him, and, to crown his insolence,
The assassin lays him in my father's bed
Beside my mother—mother shall I call

ταύτην προσαυδᾶν τῷδε συγκοιμωμένην
 ἢ δ' ᾧδε τλήμων ὥστε τῷ μιάστορι
 ξύνεστ', ἐρινὺν οὐτιν' ἐκφοβουμένη·
 ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἐγγελῶσα τοῖς ποιουμένοις,
 εὐρούσ' ἐκείνην ἡμέραν, ἐν ἣ τότε
 πατέρα τὸν ἄμὸν ἐκ δόλου κατέκτανεν,
 ταύτη χοροὺς ἴστησι καὶ μηλοσφαγεῖ 280
 θεοῖσιν ἔμμην' ἱερά τοῖς σωτηρίοις.
 ἐγὼ δ' ὀρώσ' ἢ δύσμορος κατὰ στέγας
 κλαίω, τέτηκα, κάπικωκῶ πατρός
 τὴν δυστάλαιναν δαίτ' ἐπωνομασμένην
 αὐτῇ πρὸς αὐτῆν. οὐδὲ γὰρ κλαῦσαι πάρα
 τοσόνδ' ὅσον μοι θυμὸς ἡδονὴν φέρει.
 αὐτὴ γὰρ ἢ λόγοισι γενναία γυνὴ
 φωνοῦσα τοιάδ' ἐξονειδίζει κακά·
 ὦ δύσθεον μίσσημα, σοὶ μόνῃ πατῆρ
 τέθνηκεν; ἄλλος δ' οὔτις ἐν πένθει βροτῶν; 290
 κακῶς ὄλοιο, μηδέ σ' ἐκ γόων ποτὲ
 τῶν νῦν ἀπαλλάξαιαν οἱ κάτω θεοί.
 τάδ' ἐξυβρίζει· πλὴν ὅταν κλύῃ τινὸς
 ἤξουτ' Ὀρέστην· τηνικαῦτα δ' ἐμμανῆς
 βοᾷ παραστᾶσ'· οὐ σύ μοι τῶνδ' αἰτία;
 οὐ σὸν τόδ' ἐστὶ τοῦργου, ἦτις ἐκ χερῶν
 κλέψασ' Ὀρέστην τῶν ἐμῶν ὑπεξέθου;
 ἀλλ' ἴσθι τοι τίσουσά γ' ἀξίαν δίκην.
 τοιαῦθ' ὑλακτεῖ, σὺν δ' ἐποτρύνει πέλας
 ὁ κλεινὸς αὐτῇ ταῦτ' ἀνυμφίος παρών, 300
 ὁ πάντ' ἀναλκίς οὗτος, ἢ πᾶσα βλάβη,
 ὁ σὺν γυναιξὶ τὰς μάχας ποιούμενος.
 ἐγὼ δ' Ὀρέστην τῶνδε προσμένουσ' αἰεὶ
 παυστῆρ' ἐφήξειν ἢ τάλαιν' ἀπόλλυμαι.
 μέλλων γὰρ αἰεὶ δρᾶν τι τὰς οὔσας τέ μου

ELECTRA

His paramour? So lost to shame is she
That the adulteress fears no vengeance. No,
As if exulting in her infamy,
She watches month to month to know the day
Whereon by treachery she slew my sire,
And keeps that day with dance and sacrifice,
Each month, of sheep to tutelary gods.
Beholding this I weep and waste within,
And to myself bewail the unhallowed feast
Named of my sire, with silent tears, for e'en
The luxury of wailing is denied me.
This woman (saintly is her speech) upbraids
And rates me thus: "Ungodly, hateful girl,
Hast thou alone to bear a father's loss,
Art thou the only mourner? Out upon thee!
Perdition seize thee! and in hell may'st thou
Find no deliverance from thy present grief!"
So rails she, save at times when rumours run
Orestes is at hand, then wild with rage
She thunders in my ears "This is thy doing;
Was it not thou who from my hands didst steal
Orestes and convey him safe away?
Mark my words, thou shalt rue it!" So she screams,
And her abettor's there to egg her on,
Her glorious consort who repeats her gibes,
That rogue in grain, that dastardly poltroon,
Who fights his battles with a woman's aid.
Meanwhile I wait until Orestes comes
To end my woes, and waiting pine away.
Still, still he means to act and never acts,

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

καὶ τὰς ἀπούσας ἐλπίδας διέφθορον.
 ἐν οὖν τοιούτοις οὔτε σωφρονεῖν, φίλαι,
 οὔτ' εὐσεβεῖν πάρεστιν· ἀλλ' ἐν τοι κακοῖς
 πολλή' στ' ἀνάγκη κάπιτηδεύειν κακά.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

φέρ' εἶπέ, πότερον ὄντος Αἰγίσθου πέλας
 λέγεις τὰδ' ἡμῖν ἢ βεβῶτος ἐκ δόμων;

310

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἢ κάρτα· μὴ δόκει μ' ἄν, εἴπερ ἦν πέλας,
 θυραῖον οἴχνειν· νῦν δ' ἀγροῖσι τυγχάνει.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἢ κὰν ἐγὼ θαρσοῦσα μᾶλλον ἐς λόγους
 τοὺς σοὺς ἰκοίμην, εἴπερ ὦδε ταῦτ' ἔχει;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὡς νῦν ἀπόντος ἰστόρει· τί σοι φίλον;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

καὶ δὴ σ' ἐρωτῶ· τοῦ κασιγνήτου τί φῆς,
 ἤξουτος ἢ μέλλοντος; εἰδέναι θέλω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

φησὶν γε· φέσκων δ' οὐδὲν ὦν λέγει ποεῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

φιλεῖ γὰρ ὀκνεῖν πρᾶγμ' ἀνὴρ πρᾶστων μέγα. 320

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

καὶ μὴν ἔγωγ' ἔσωσ' ἐκείνον οὐκ ὀκνῶ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

θάρσει· πέφυκεν ἐσθλός, ὥστ' ἀρκεῖν φίλοις.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πέποιθ', ἐπεὶ τὰν οὐ μακρὰν ἔζων ἐγώ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μὴ νῦν ἔτ' εἴπῃς μηδέν· ὡς δόμων ὀρῶ
 τὴν σὴν ὄμαιμον ἐκ πατρὸς ταύτου φύσιν,

ELECTRA

And all my hopes are blasted, flower and root.
In such a case what room is there, my friends,
For patience, what for piety? In sooth
Those in ill plight are driven to evil ways.

CHORUS

Stay, tell me, is Aegisthus nigh at hand,
While thus thou speakest, or is he from home?

ELECTRA

From home, of course! Think you, were he within,
I should thus venture forth? He is now afield.

CHORUS

More freely then may I converse with thee,
If this is so.

ELECTRA

It is; ask what thou wilt.

CHORUS

'Tis of thy brother I would question thee.
Comes he, or tarries yet? I fain would know.

ELECTRA

He says "I come," but does not what he says.

CHORUS

A man thinks twice with some great work in hand.

ELECTRA

I thought not twice when I delivered him.

CHORUS

Take heart, he is loyal and will not fail his friends.

ELECTRA

I trust him, else I had not lived so long.

CHORUS

No more for this time; at the doors I see
Chrysothemis, thy sister, of one sire

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

Χρυσόθεμιν, ἕκ τε μητρός, ἐντάφια χεροῖν
φέρουσαν, οἷα τοῖς κάτω νομίζεται.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

τίν' αὖ σὺ τήνδε πρὸς θυρῶνος ἐξόδοις
ἐλθούσα φωνεῖς, ὦ κασιγνήτη, φάτω,
κούδ' ἐν χρόνῳ μακρῷ διδαχθῆναι θέλεις 330
θυμῷ ματαίῳ μὴ χαρίζεσθαι κενά;
καίτοι τοσοῦτόν γ' οἶδα κάμαντήν, ὅτι
ἀλγῶ 'πὶ τοῖς παρούσιν· ὥστ' ἂν, εἰ σθένος
λάβαιμι, δηλώσαιμ' ἂν οἷ' αὐτοῖς φρονῶ.
νῦν δ' ἐν κακοῖς μοι πλεῖν ὑφειμένη δοκεῖ,
καὶ μὴ δοκεῖν μὲν δρᾶν τι, πημαίνειν δὲ μῆ·
τοιαῦτα δ' ἄλλα καὶ σὲ βούλομαι ποεῖν.
καίτοι τὸ μὲν δίκαιον οὐχ ἧ' γὰρ λέγω,
ἀλλ' ἧ σὺ κρίνεις· εἰ δ' ἐλευθέραν με δεῖ 340
ζῆν, τῶν κρατούντων ἐστὶ πάντ' ἀκουστέα.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

δεινόν γέ σ' οὔσαν πατρὸς οὐ σὺ παῖς ἔφυς,
κείνου λελησθαι, τῆς δὲ τικτούσης μέλειν.
ἅπαντα γὰρ σοι τὰμὰ νουθητήματα
κείνης διδακτά, κούδεν ἐκ σαντήης λέγεις.
ἔπειθ' ἐλοῦ γε θάτερ', ἧ φρονεῖν κακῶς
ἢ τῶν φίλων φρονούσα μὴ μνήμην ἔχειν
ἧτις λέγεις μὲν ἀρτίως ὡς, εἰ λάβοις
σθένος, τὸ τούτων μίσος ἐκδειξείας ἂν,
ἐμοῦ δὲ πατρὶ πάντα τιμωρουμένης
οὔτε ξυνέρδεις τήν τε δρῶσαν ἐκτρέπεις. 350
οὐ ταῦτα πρὸς κακοῖσι δειλίαν ἔχει;
ἐπεὶ δίδαξον, ἧ μάθ' ἐξ ἐμοῦ, τί μοι
κέρδος γένοιτ' ἂν τῶνδε ληξάσῃ γόων.
οὐ ζῶ; κακῶς μὲν, οἶδ', ἐπαρκούντως δ' ἐμοί.

ELECTRA

Born and one mother ; in her hands she bears
Gifts for the tomb that use and wont ordain.

Enter CHRYSOTHEMIS.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Sister, why com'st thou once more to declaim
In public at the outer gate ? Has time
Not schooled thee to desist from idle rage ?
I too, my sister, chafe no less than thou
At our sad fortunes, and had I the power,
Would make it plain how I regard our masters.
But in the storm 'tis best to reef the sail,
Nor utter threats we cannot execute.
I would thou wert likeminded ; yet I know
Justice is on thy side, and I am wrong.
Yet if I am to keep my liberty,
I needs must bow before the powers that be.

ELECTRA

O shame that thou, the child of such a sire,
Should'st him forget and take thy mother's part ;
For all these admonitions are not thine,
A lesson thou repeatest, learnt of her.
Make thine election then, to be unwise,
Or show thy wisdom by forgetting friends.
Thou saidst, " If but the power were granted me,
I would make plain the hate I feel for them ; "
And yet when I am straining every nerve
To avenge my sire, thou wilt not aid me ; nay,
Dissuadest and wouldst have me hold my hand.
Shall we to all our ills add cowardice ?
Tell me—or let me tell thee—what have I
To gain by ceasing from my sad complaint ?
I still have life ? a sorry life, indeed,

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

λυπῶ δὲ τούτους, ὥστε τῷ τεθνηκότι
 τιμὰς προσάπτειν, εἴ τις ἔστ' ἐκεῖ χάρις.
 σὺ δ' ἤμιν ἢ μισοῦσα μισεῖς μὲν λόγῳ,
 ἔργῳ δὲ τοῖς φονεῦσι τοῦ πατρὸς ξύνει.
 ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν οὐκ ἄν ποτ', οὐδ' εἴ μοι τὰ σὰ
 μέλλοι τις οἴσειν δῶρ', ἐφ' οἷσι νῦν χλιδαῖς, 360
 τούτοις ὑπείκασθαιμι· σοὶ δὲ πλουσία
 τράπεζα κείσθω καὶ περιρρείτω βίος.
 ἐμοὶ γὰρ ἔστω τοῦμὲ μὴ λυπεῖν μόνον
 βόσκημα· τῆς σῆς δ' οὐκ ἐρῶ τιμῆς τυχεῖν,
 οὐδ' ἄν σὺ, σώφρων γ' οὔσα. νῦν δ' ἐξὸν πατρὸς
 πάντων ἀρίστου παιῖδα κεκλήσθαι, καλοῦ
 τῆς μητρὸς· οὕτω γὰρ φανεῖ πλείστοις κακῆ,
 θανόντα πατέρα καὶ φίλους προδοῦσα σούς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μηδὲν πρὸς ὀργήν, πρὸς θεῶν· ὡς τοῖς λόγοις
 ἔνεστιν ἀμφοῖν κέρδος, εἰ σὺ μὲν μάθῃς 370
 τοῖς τῆσδε χρῆσθαι, τοῖς δὲ σοῖς αὕτη πάλιν.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἐγὼ μὲν, ὦ γυναῖκες, ἠθάς εἰμί πως
 τῶν τῆσδε μύθων· οὐδ' ἄν ἐμνήσθην ποτέ,
 εἰ μὴ κακὸν μέγιστον εἰς αὐτὴν ἰὸν
 ἤκουσ', ὃ ταύτην τῶν μακρῶν σχήσει γόων.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

φέρ' εἰπέ δὴ τὸ δεινόν· εἰ γὰρ τῶνδὲ μοι
 μείζον τι λέξεις, οὐκ ἄν ἀντίποιμ' ἔτι.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἀλλ' ἐξερῶ σοι πᾶν ὅσον κάτοιδ' ἐγώ.
 μέλλουσι γὰρ σ', εἰ τῶνδε μὴ λήξεις γόων,
 ἐνταῦθα πέμψειν ἔνθα μὴ ποθ' ἠλίου 380
 φέγγος προσόψει, ζῶσα δ' ἐν κατρηφεῖ
 στέγη χθονὸς τῆσδ' ἐκτὸς ὑμνήσεις κακά.

ELECTRA

But good enough for me ; and them I vex,
And vexing them do honour to the dead,
If anything can touch the world of shades.
Thou hatest ? Nay, thy deeds belie thy words,
While thou consortest with the murderers ;
So would not I, though they should offer me
The pomp that makes thee proud, the loaded board,
Thy life of ease ; no, I would never yield.
Enough for me spare diet and a soul
Void of offence ; thy state I covet not,
Nor wouldst thou, wert thou wise. Men might have
called thee
Child of the noblest sire that ever lived ;
Be called thy mother's, rightly named as base,
Betrayer of thy dead sire and thy kin.

CHORUS

No angry words, I pray, for both of you
There's profit in this parleying, if thou
Wouldst learn of her, and she in turn of thee.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

I know her moods too well to take offence,
Nor had I now approached her, but I learnt
Of new impending peril that is like
To put a finish to her long-drawn woes.

ELECTRA

Say what can be this terror ; if 'tis worse
Than what I now bear, I will call a truce.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

All I have learnt in full I will impart.
They purpose, if thou wilt not stay thy plaints,
To send thee where thou shalt not see the sun,
Far hence, to some dark dungeon, there to spend
Thy days and nights in litanies of woe.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πρὸς ταῦτα φράζου καί με μή ποθ' ὕστερον
παθοῦσα μέμψη· νῦν γὰρ ἐν καλῷ φρονεῖν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἦ ταῦτα δὴ με καὶ βεβούλευνται ποεῖν;

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

μάλισθ'· ὅταν περ οἴκαδ' Αἴγισθος μόλη.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ' ἐξίκοιτο τοῦδέ γ' οὔνεκ' ἐν τάχει.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

τίν', ὦ τάλαινα, τόνδ' ἐπηράσω λόγον;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐλθεῖν ἐκεῖνον, εἴ τι τῶνδε δρᾶν νοεῖ.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ὅπως πάθης τί χρῆμα; ποῦ ποτ' εἰ φρενῶν;

390

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὅπως ἀφ' ὑμῶν ὡς προσωτάτω φύγω.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

βίου δὲ τοῦ παρόντος οὐ μνείαν ἔχεις;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

καλὸς γὰρ οὐμὸς βίωτος ὥστε θαυμάσαι.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἀλλ' ἦν ἄν, εἰ σύ γ' εὖ φρονεῖν ἠπίστασο.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

μή μ' ἐκδίδασκε τοῖς φίλοις εἶναι κακῆν.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἀλλ' οὐ διδάσκω· τοῖς κρατοῦσι δ' εἰκαθεῖν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

σὺ ταῦτα θώπευ'· οὐκ ἐμοὺς τρόπους λέγεις.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

καλὸν γε μέντοι μή 'ξ ἀβουλίας πεσεῖν.

ELECTRA

Therefore reflect, and blame me not too late ;
Take warning and repent while yet 'tis time.

ELECTRA

Have they indeed resolved to treat me thus ?

CHRYSOTHEMIS

The instant that Aegisthus is returned.

ELECTRA

Well, for my part I would he came back soon.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Insensate girl ! What mean'st thou by this prayer ?

ELECTRA

Would he were here, if this be his intent.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

That thou mayst suffer—what ? Hast lost thy wits ?

ELECTRA

A flight long leagues away from all of you.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Art thou indifferent to thy present life ?

ELECTRA

O 'tis a marvellously happy life !

CHRYSOTHEMIS

It might have been, couldst thou have schooled
thyself.

ELECTRA

Teach me not basely to betray my friends.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Not I ; I teach submission to the strong.

ELECTRA

Fawn, if thou wilt ; such cringing suits not me.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Yet not to fall through folly were no blame.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πεσούμεθ', εἰ χρή, πατρὶ τιμωρούμενοι.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

πατὴρ δὲ τούτων, οἶδα, συγγνώμην ἔχει.

400

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ταῦτ' ἐστὶ τᾶπῃ πρὸς κακῶν ἐπαινέσαι.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

σὺ δ' οὐχὶ πείσει καὶ συναινέσεις ἐμοί;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐ δῆτα· μή πω νοῦ τοσονδ' εἶην κενή.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

χωρήσομαί τᾶρ' οἴπερ ἐστάλην ὁδοῦ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ποῖ δ' ἐμπορεύει; τῷ φέρεις τὰδ' ἔμπυρα;

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

μήτηρ με πέμπει πατρὶ τυμβεύσαι χοάς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πῶς εἶπας; ἢ τῷ δυσμενεστάτῳ βροτῶν;

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ὄν ἔκταν' αὐτή· τοῦτο γὰρ λέξαι θέλεις.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐκ τοῦ φίλων πεισθεῖσα; τῷ τοῦτ' ἤρесе;

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἐκ δείματός του νυκτέρου, δοκεῖν ἐμοί.

410

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ θεοὶ πατρῷοι, συγγένεσθέ γ' ἀλλὰ νῦν.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἔχεις τι θάρσος τοῦδε τοῦ τάρβους πέρι;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

εἴ μοι λέγοις τὴν ὄψιν, εἴποιμ' ἂν τότε.

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

If needs be, in a father's cause I'll fall.

CHRYSOthemis

I trust our father pardons us for this.

ELECTRA

Traitors take refuge in like sentiments.

CHRYSOthemis

Thou wilt not heed then or be ruled by me ?

ELECTRA

I am not in my dotage, save the mark !

CHRYSOthemis

Then I will do my errand.

ELECTRA

Whither away ?

For whom art carrying these burnt offerings ?

CHRYSOthemis

My mother bids me crown our father's grave.

ELECTRA

Her mortal enemy's ! How sayest thou ?

CHRYSOthemis

The husband whom she slew, so thou wouldst say.

ELECTRA

Which of her friends advised her ? whence this
whim ?

CHRYSOthemis

A nightly vision warned her, so I think.

ELECTRA

Gods of my fathers, aid me in this pass !

CHRYSOthemis

Dost thou take heart of courage from her dread ?

ELECTRA

Before I answer let me hear the dream.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἀλλ' οὐ κάτοιδα πλὴν ἐπὶ σμικρὸν φράσαι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

λέγ' ἀλλὰ τοῦτο· πολλά τοι σμικροὶ λόγοι
ἔσφηλαν ἤδη καὶ κατώρθωσαν βροτούς.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

λόγος τις αὐτὴν ἔστιν εἰσιδεῖν πατρὸς
τοῦ σοῦ τε κάμου δευτέραν ὀμιλίαν
ἐλθόντος ἐς φῶς· εἶτα τόνδ' ἐφέστιον
πῆξαι λαβόντα σκῆπτρον οὐφόρει ποτὲ
αὐτός, τανῦν δ' Αἴγισθος· ἐκ δὲ τοῦδ' ἄνω
βλαστεῖν βρύνοντα θαλλόν, ᾧ κατάσκιον
πᾶσαν γενέσθαι τὴν Μυκηναίων χθόνα.
τοιαῦτά του παρόντος, ἠνίχ' Ἥλιφ
δείκνυσι τοῦναρ, ἔκλυον ἐξηγουμένου.
πλείω δὲ τούτων οὐ κάτοιδα, πλὴν ὅτι
πέμπει με κείνη τοῦδε τοῦ φόβου χάριν.
πρὸς νυν θεῶν σε λίσσομαι τῶν ἐγγενῶν
ἔμοι πιθέσθαι μηδ' ἀβουλία πεσεῖν
εἰ γάρ μ' ἀπώσει, σὺν κακῷ μέτει πάλιν.

420

430

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ', ὦ φίλη, τούτων μὲν ὧν ἔχεις χεροῖν
τύμβφ προσάψης μηδέν· οὐ γάρ σοι θέμις
οὐδ' ὄσιον ἐχθρᾶς ἀπὸ γυναικὸς ἰστάναι
κτερίσματ' οὐδὲ λουτρὰ προσφέρειν πατρί·
ἀλλ' ἢ πνοαῖσιν ἢ βαθυσκαφεῖ κόνει
κρύψου νιν, ἔνθα μὴ ποτ' εἰς εὐνήν πατρὸς
τούτων πρόσεισι μηδέν· ἀλλ' ὅταν θάνῃ
κειμήλι' αὐτῇ ταῦτα σφζέσθω κάτω.
ἀρχὴν δ' ἄν, εἰ μὴ τλημουεστάτη γυνή
πασῶν ἔβλαστε, τάσδε δυσμενεῖς χοῶς

440

ELECTRA

CHRYSOTHEMIS

There is but little that I have to tell.

ELECTRA

Tell it no less. A little word, men say,
Hath oftentimes determined weal or woe.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

'Tis said that she beheld thy sire and mine
In bodily presence standing by her side,
Revisiting the light of day. He took
The sceptre of Aegisthus, once his own,
And at the household altar planted it,
And from it sprang and spread a fruitful bough;
Till it o'ershadowed all Mycenae's land.
Such is the tale one told me who was by
When to the Sun-god she declared her dream.
Further I know not, save that in alarm
She sent me hither. Hearken then to me.
Sister, I pray thee by our household gods,
Fall not through folly; if thou spurn me now,
Too late in sorrow wilt thou seek my aid.

ELECTRA

Nay, let not aught, my sister, touch the tomb,
Of all thou bearest. 'Twere a shame, a sin,
To offer on behalf of her, the accursed,
Gifts or libations to our father's ghost.
Scatter them to the winds or bury them
Deep in the dust, where nothing may defile
Our father's lone couch; let her find them there,
A buried treasure when she comes to die.
Were she not abjectest of womankind,
She ne'er had thought with offerings of hate

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐκ ἄν ποθ' οὖν γ' ἔκτεινε, τῷδ' ἐπέστεφε.
 σκέψαι γὰρ εἴ σοι προσφιλῶς αὐτῇ δοκεῖ
 γέρα τάδ' οὖν τάφοισι δέξεσθαι νέκυς,
 ὑφ' ἧς θανῶν ἄτιμος, ὥστε δυσμενής,
 ἐμασχαλίσθη, κάπλι λουτροῖσιν κἀρα
 κηλίδας ἐξέμαξεν. ἄρα μὴ δοκεῖς
 λυτήρι' αὐτῇ ταῦτα τοῦ φόνου φέρειν;
 οὐκ ἔστιν. ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν μέθες· σὺ δὲ
 τεμοῦσα κρατὸς βοστρύχων ἄκρας φόβας
 κάμου ταλαίνης, σμικρὰ μὲν τάδ', ἀλλ' ὅμως 450
 ἄχω, δὸς αὐτῷ, τήνδ' ἀλιπαρῆ τρίχα
 καὶ ζῶμα τοῦμόν οὐ χλιδαῖς ἠσκημένον.
 αἰτοῦ δὲ προσπίτνουσα γῆθεν εὐμενῆ
 ἡμῖν ἀρωγὸν αὐτὸν εἰς ἐχθροὺς μολεῖν,
 καὶ παῖδ' Ὀρέστην ἐξ ὑπερτέρας χερὸς
 ἐχθροῖσιν αὐτοῦ ζῶντ' ἐπεμβῆναι ποδί;
 ὅπως τὸ λοιπὸν αὐτὸν ἀφνεωτέραις
 χερσὶν στέφωμεν ἢ ταυῖν δωρούμεθα.
 οἶμαι μὲν οὖν, οἶμαί τι κακείνῳ μέλον
 πέμψαι τάδ' αὐτῇ δυσπρόσοπτ' ὄνειρατα· 460
 ὅμως δ' ἀδελφή, σοί θ' ὑπούργησον τάδε
 ἐμοί τ' ἀρωγὰ τῷ τε φιλτάτῳ βροτῶν
 πάντων, ἐν Ἄιδου κειμένῳ κοινῷ πατρί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πρὸς εὐσέβειαν ἢ κόρη λέγει· σὺ δέ,
 εἰ σωφρονήσεις, ὦ φίλη, δράσεις τάδε.

ΧΡΥΣΘΕΜΙΣ

δράσω· τὸ γὰρ δίκαιον οὐκ ἔχει λόγον
 δυοῖν ἐρίζειν, ἀλλ' ἐπισπεύδειν τὸ δρᾶν.

ELECTRA

To crown her murdered victim's sepulchre.
Thinkst thou 'tis likely that her buried lord
Will take these honours kindly at her hands
Who slew him without pity like a foe,
Mangled¹ his corse, and for ablution washed
The bloodstains on his head? Say, is it like
These gifts will purge her of blood-guiltiness?
It cannot be. Fling them away and cut
A tress of thine own locks; and for my share
Give him from me—a poor thing, but my best—
This unkempt lock, this girdle unadorned.
Then fall upon thy knees and pray that he
May come, our gracious champion from the dead,
And that the young Orestes yet may live
To trample underfoot his vanquished foes.
So may we some day crown our father's tomb
With costlier gifts than these poor offerings.
I can but think, 'tis but a thought, that he
Had part in sending her this ominous dream.
Still, sister, do this service and so aid
Thyself and me, and him the most beloved
Of all men, e'en though dead, thy sire and mine.

CHORUS

'Tis piously advised, and thou, my daughter,
Wilt do her bidding, if thou art discreet.

CHRYSOthemis

I will. When duty calls, 'twere lack of sense
For two to wrangle; both should join to act.

¹ The full meaning is "to cut off the hands and feet and suspend them to the armpits." This was done to prevent the victim from taking vengeance.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πειρωμένη δὲ τῶνδε τῶν ἔργων ἔμοι
 σιγῇ παρ' ὑμῶν, πρὸς θεῶν, ἔστω, φίλαι·
 ὡς εἰ τὰδ' ἢ τεκούσα πεύσεται, πικρὰν
 δοκῶ με πείραν τῆνδε τολμήσειν ἔτι.

470

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ.

εἰ μὴ ἔγωγε παράφρων μάντις ἔφυν καὶ γνώμας
 λειπομένα σοφᾶς,
 εἶσιν ἂ πρόμαντις
 Δίκα, δίκαια φερομένα χεροῖν κράτη
 μέτεισιν, ὧ τέκνον, οὐ μακροῦ χρόνου.
 ὕπεστί μοι θάρσος,
 ἄδυπνόων κλύουσαν

480

ἀρτίως ὄνειράτων.
 οὐ γὰρ ποτ' ἀμναστεῖ γ' ὁ φύσας σ¹. Ἑλλάνων
 ἄναξ,
 οὐδ' ἂ παλαιὰ χαλκὸπλακτος ἀμφάκης γένυς,
 ἃ νιν κατέπεφνευ αἰσχίσταις ἐν αἰκίαις.

ἀντ.

ἤξει καὶ πολύπους καὶ πολύχειρ ἂ δεινοῖς
 κρυπτομένα λόχοις
 χαλκόπους Ἐρινύς.

490

ἄλεκτρ' ἀνυμφα γὰρ ἐπέβα μαιφόνων
 γάμων ἀμιλλήμαθ' οἷσιν οὐ θέμις.

πρὸ τῶνδέ τοι μ' ἔχει
 μὴ ποτε μὴ ποθ' ἡμῖν
 ἀψευγὲς πελᾶν τέρας

τοῖς δρῶσι καὶ συνδρῶσιν. ἢ τοι μαντεῖαι βροτῶν
 οὐκ εἰσιν ἐν δεινοῖς ὄνειροις οὐδ' ἐν θεσφάτοις,
 εἰ μὴ τὸδε φάσμα νυκτὸς εὖ κατασχῆσει.

¹ Wakefield adds σ'.

ELECTRA

+

Only when I essay this perilous task,
 Be silent, an you love me, friends, for if
 My mother hears of it, I shall have cause
 To rue my indiscretion soon or late.

[*Exit* CHRYSOTHEMIS.

CHORUS

(*Str.*)

Count me a prophet false, a witless wight,
 If Justice, who inspires my prophecy,
 Comes not, my child, to vindicate the right.
 She comes and that right speedily.
 My heart grows bold and nothing fears;
 That dream was music in my ears.
 It tells me that thy sire who whilom led
 The Greeks to victory hath not forgot;
 Yea, and that axe with double brazen head
 Still thirsts for blood to wipe away its blot.

(*Ant.*)

So leaping from her ambush, brazen-shod,
 Comes the Erinys with an armed host's tread,
 For she hath seen a pair who knew not God
 Driven by lust to an adulterous bed,
 A bed with stains of murder dyed,
 A bridal without groom or bride.
 Therefore I know that not in vain is sent
 This portent that the fall of guilt foretells,
 For, if this vision fails of its intent,
 Vain is all sooth, all dreams, all oracles.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ Πέλοπος ἄ πρόσθεν
 πολύπονος ἰππεΐα,
 ὡς ἔμολες αἰανῆς
 τᾶδε γὰ.
 εὔτε γάρ ὁ ποντισθεὶς
 Μυρτίλος ἐκοιμάθη,
 παγχρύσεων δίφρων
 δυστάνοις αἰκίαις
 πρόρριζος ἐκριφθεὶς,
 οὐ τί πω
 ἔλειπεν ἐκ τοῦδ' οἴκου
 πολύπονος αἰκία.

510

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ἀνειμένη μὲν, ὡς ἔοικας, αὐ στρέφει
 οὐ γὰρ πάρεστ' Αἴγισθος, ὅς σ' ἐπέιχ' αἰεὶ
 μή τοι θυραΐαν γ' οὔσαν αἰσχύνειν φίλους·
 νῦν δ' ὡς ἄπεστ' ἐκεῖνος, οὐδέν ἐντρέπει
 ἐμοῦ γε· καίτοι πολλὰ πρὸς πολλοὺς με δὴ
 ἐξείπας ὡς θρασεῖα καὶ πέρα δίκης
 ἄρχω, καθυβρίζουσα καὶ σὲ καὶ τὰ σά·
 ἐγὼ δ' ὕβριν μὲν οὐκ ἔχω, κακῶς δέ σε
 λέγω κακῶς κλύουσα πρὸς σέθεν θαμά.
 πατὴρ γάρ, οὐδέν ἄλλο, σοὶ πρόσχημ' αἰεὶ
 ὡς ἐξ ἐμοῦ τέθυηκεν. ἐξ ἐμοῦ· καλῶς
 ἔξοιδα· τῶνδ' ἄρνησις οὐκ ἔνεστί μοι·
 ἢ γὰρ Δίκη νιν εἶλεν, οὐκ ἐγὼ μόνη,
 ἢ χρῆν σ' ἀρήγειν, εἰ φρονοῦσ' ἐτύγχανες·
 ἐπεὶ πατὴρ σὸς οὗτος, ὃν θρηνεῖς αἰεὶ,

520

530

ELECTRA

O chariot-race of Pelops old,
The source of sorrows manifold,
What endless curse hath fallen on us
Since to his sea-grave Myrtilus¹
Sank from the golden chariot hurled ;
Woe upon woe, of woes a world.

Enter CLYTEMNESTRA.

CLYTEMNESTRA

So once again I find thee here at large,
For he who kept thee close and so restrained
Thy scandalous tongue, Aegisthus, is away ;
Yet thy complaints, repeated many a time
To many, censured my tyrannic rule—
The insults that I heaped on thee and thine.
Was it an insult if I paid in kind
The flouts and taunts wherewith thou girdest at me ?
Thy father, the sole pretext of thy grief,
Died by my hand, aye mine, I know it well,
'Tis true beyond denial ; yet not I,
Not I alone, but Justice slew him too :
And thou shouldst side with Justice, wert thou wise.
This sire of thine for whom thy tears still flow

¹ The charioteer of Oenomaüs. In the race for the hand of Hippodameia, the king's daughter, he betrayed his master by removing a linch-pin. Pelops won the race, but afterwards for an insult offered to his wife, he hurled into the sea Myrtilus, who invoked a dying curse on the house.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τὴν σὴν ὄμαιμον μόνος Ἑλλήνων ἔτλη
 θύσαι θεοῖσιν, οὐκ ἴσον καμῶν ἐμοὶ
 λύπης, ὅς ἔσπειρ', ὥσπερ ἡ τίκτουσ' ἐγώ.
 εἰεν, δίδαξον δὴ με τοῦ χάριν, τίνων
 ἔθυσεν αὐτὴν· πότερον Ἀργείων ἑρέϊς;
 ἀλλ' οὐ μετὴν αὐτοῖσι τὴν γ' ἐμὴν κτανεῖν.
 ἀλλ' ἀντ' ἀδελφοῦ δῆτα Μενέλεω κτανῶν
 τᾶμ', οὐκ ἔμελλε τῶνδ' ἐμοὶ δώσειν δίκην;
 πότερον ἐκείνω παῖδες οὐκ ἦσαν διπλοί,
 οὗς τῆσδε μᾶλλον εἰκὸς ἦν θνήσκειν, πατρός 540
 καὶ μητρός ὄντας, ἧς ὁ πλοῦς ὄδ' ἦν χάριν;
 ἢ τῶν ἐμῶν Ἄιδης τιν' ἕμερον τέκνων
 ἢ τῶν ἐκείνης ἔσχε δαίσασθαι πλέον;
 ἢ τῷ πανώλει πατρὶ τῶν μὲν ἐξ ἐμοῦ
 παίδων πόθος παρεῖτο, Μενέλεω δ' ἐνῆν;
 οὐ ταῦτ' ἀβούλου καὶ κακοῦ γνώμην πατρός;
 δοκῶ μὲν, εἰ καὶ σῆς δίχα γνώμης λέγω·
 φαίη δ' ἂν ἡ θανούσά γ', εἰ φωνὴν λάβοι.
 ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν οὐκ εἰμὶ τοῖς πεπραγμένοις
 δύσθυμος· εἰ δὲ σοὶ δοκῶ φρονεῖν κακῶς, 550
 γνώμην δικαίαν σχοῦσα τοὺς πέλας ψέγε.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἑρέϊς μὲν οὐχὶ νῦν γέ μ' ὡς ἄρξασά τι
 λυπηρὸν εἶτα σοῦ τὰδ' ἐξήκουσ' ὑπο·
 ἀλλ' ἦν ἐφῆς μοι, τοῦ τεθνηκότος θ' ὑπερ
 λέξαιμ' ἂν ὀρθῶς τῆς κασιγνήτης θ' ὀμοῦ.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

καὶ μὴν ἐφίημ'· εἰ δέ μ' ὦδ' αἰεὶ λόγους
 ἐξῆρχες, οὐκ ἂν ἦσθα λυπηρὰ κλύειν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

καὶ δὴ λέγω σοι. πατέρα φῆς κτεῖναι. τίς ἂν
 τούτου λόγος γένοιτ' ἂν αἰσχύων ἔτι,

ELECTRA

Alone of all the Greeks could steel his heart
To yield thy sister as a sacrifice ;
A father who begat her and ne'er felt
A mother's pangs of travail. Tell me now
Wherefore he offered her, on whose behalf?
The Greeks, thou sayest. And what right had they
To kill my child? For Menelaus' sake,
His brother? Should such pretext stay my hand?
Had not his brother children twain to serve
As victims? Should not they, as born of sire
And mother for whose sake the host embarked,
Have been preferred before my innocent child?
Had Death forsooth some craving for my child
Rather than hers? or had the wretch, her sire,
A tender heart for Menelaus' brood,
And for my flesh and blood no tenderness?
That choice was for a father rash and base ;
So, though I differ from thee, I opine,
And could the dead maid speak, she would agree.
I therefore view the past without remorse,
And if to thee I seem perverted, clear
Thy judgment ere thou makst thyself a judge.

ELECTRA

This time thou canst not say that I began
The quarrel or provoked thee. But if thou
Wilt give me leave, I fain would speak the truth
Regarding both my sister and my sire.

CLYTEMNESTRA

My leave is given, and, hadst thou always shown
This temper, I had listened without pain.

ELECTRA

Hear then. Thou say'st, "I slew thy father." Who
Could well avow a blacker crime than that?

εἴτ' οὖν δικάϊως εἶτε μή; λέξω δέ σοι 560
 ὡς οὐ δίκη γ' ἔκτεινας, ἀλλά σ' ἔσπασεν
 πειθῶ κακοῦ πρὸς ἀνδρός, φ' ταυῖν ξύνει.
 ἐροῦ δὲ τὴν κυναγὸν Ἄρτεμιν, τίνος
 ποινὰς τὰ πολλὰ πνεύματ' ἔσχ' ἐν Αὐλίδι·
 ἢ γὼ φράσω· κείνης γὰρ οὐ θέμις μαθεῖν.
 πατήρ ποθ' οὐμός, ὡς ἐγὼ κλύω, θεᾶς
 παίζων κατ' ἄλσος ἐξεκίνησεν ποδοῖν
 στικτὸν κερύσστην ἔλαφον, οὐ κατὰ σφαγὰς
 ἐκκομπάσας ἔπος τι τυγχάνει βαλῶν. 570
 κακ τοῦδε μηνίσασα Λητώα κόρη
 κατεῖχ' Ἀχαιοῦς, ὡς πατήρ ἀντίσταθμον
 τοῦ θηρὸς ἐκθύσειε τὴν αὐτοῦ κόρην.
 ᾧδ' ἦν τὰ κείνης θύματ'· οὐ γὰρ ἦν λύσις
 ἄλλη στρατῶ πρὸς οἶκον οὐδ' εἰς Ἴλιον.
 ἀνθ' ὧν, βιασθεῖς πολλὰ κἀντιβάς, μόλις
 ἔθυσεν αὐτήν, οὐχὶ Μενέλεω χάριν.
 εἰ δ' οὖν, ἐρῶ γὰρ καὶ τὸ σόν, κείνον θέλων
 ἐπωφελῆσαι ταῦτ' ἔδρα, τούτου θανεῖν
 χρῆν αὐτὸν οὐνεκ' ἐκ σέθεν; ποίω νόμῳ;
 ὄρα τιθεῖσα τόνδε τὸν νόμον βροτοῖς 580
 μὴ πῆμα σαντῆ καὶ μετάγνοιαν τιθῆς.
 εἰ γὰρ κτενοῦμεν ἄλλον ἀντ' ἄλλου, σύ τοι
 πρώτη θάνοις ἄν, εἰ δίκης γε τυγχάνοις.
 ἀλλ' εἰσόρα μὴ σκῆψιν οὐκ οὔσαν τίθης.
 εἰ γὰρ θέλεις, δίδαξον ἀνθ' ὅτον ταυῖν
 αἰσχιστα πάντων ἔργα δρῶσα τυγχάνεις,
 ἧτις ξυνεύδεις τῷ παλαμναίῳ, μεθ' οὐ
 πατέρα τὸν ἀμὸν πρόσθεν ἔξαπώλεσας,
 καὶ παιδοποιεῖς, τοὺς δὲ πρόσθεν εὐσεβεῖς
 καὶ εὐσεβῶν βλαστόντας ἐκβαλοῦσ' ἔχεις. 590
 πῶς ταῦτ' ἐπαινέσαιμ' ἄν; ἢ καὶ ταῦτ' ἐρεῖς

ELECTRA

Justly or not, what matters? But I'll prove
There was no justice in it; 'twas the lure
Of a vile wretch that hurried thee along,—
Thy lover's. Ask the Huntress Artemis
For what offence she prisoned every gust
That blows at Aulis; rather, as from her
Thou mayst not win an answer, I will tell thee.
My father once—so have I heard the tale—
Taking his pleasure in her sacred glade
Started an antlered stag with dappled hide,
Shot it, and shooting made some careless vaunt
Latona's daughter, wroth thereat, detained
The Achaeans, that in quittance for her hart
My sire might give his daughter, life for life.
And so it came to pass that she was slain:
The fleet becalmed no other way could win
Homeward or Troyward. For that cause alone
Reluctantly, by hard constraint, at last
He slew her, no wise for his brother's sake.
But if, as thou interpretest the deed,
'Twas done to please his brother, even thus
Should he for that have died by hand of thine?
What law is this? In laying down such law
See that against thyself thou lay not up
Dire retribution; for if blood for blood
Be justice, thou wouldst justly die the first.
Look, if thy pleading be not all a lie,
Say, if thou wilt, why thou art living now
A life of shame as partner of his bed,
The wretch who aided thee to slay my sire,
Bearing him children, casting out for them
The rightful heirs in rightful wedlock born.
Can I approve such acts, admit that this,

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὡς τῆς θυγατρὸς ἀντίποινα λαμβάνεις;
 αἰσχροῦ δ', ἐάν περ καὶ λέγῃς· οὐ γὰρ καλὸν
 ἐχθροῖς γαμείσθαι τῆς θυγατρὸς οὐνεκα.
 ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ οὐδὲ νουθετεῖν ἔξεστί σε,
 ἢ πάσαν ἴης γλώσσαν ὡς τὴν μητέρα
 κακοστομοῦμεν. καί σ' ἔγωγε δεσπότην
 ἢ μητέρ' οὐκ ἔλασσον εἰς ἡμᾶς νέμω,
 ἢ ζῶ βίου μοχθηρόν, ἐκ τε σοῦ κακοῖς
 πολλοῖς ἀεὶ ξυνοῦσα τοῦ τε συννόμου·
 δ' δ' ἄλλος ἔξω, χεῖρα σὴν μόλις φυγῶν,
 τλήμων Ὀρέστης δυστυχῇ τρίβει βίον·
 ὃν πολλὰ δὴ με σοὶ τρέφειν μιάστορα
 ἐπητιάσω· καὶ τόδ', εἴπερ ἔσθενον,
 ἔδρων ἄν, εὖ τοῦτ' ἴσθι· τοῦδέ γ' οὐνεκα
 κήρυσσέ μ' εἰς ἅπαντας, εἴτε χρῆς κακὴν
 εἴτε στόμαργον εἴτ' ἀναιδείας πλέαν.
 εἰ γὰρ κέφυκα τῶνδε τῶν ἔργων ἴδρις,
 σχεδόν τι τὴν σὴν οὐ καταισχύνω φύσιν.

600

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὄρω μένος πνέουσας· εἰ δὲ σὺν δίκη
 ξύνεστι, τοῦδε φροντίδ' οὐκέτ' εἰσορῶ.

610

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ποιᾶς δ' ἐμοὶ δεῖ πρὸς γε τήνδε φροντίδος,
 ἣτις τοιαῦτα τὴν τεκοῦσαν ὕβρισεν,
 καὶ ταῦτα τηλικούτος; ἄρά σοι δοκεῖ
 χωρεῖν ἄν εἰς πᾶν ἔργον αἰσχύνης ἄτερ;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

εὖ νυν ἐπίστω τῶνδέ μ' αἰσχύνην ἔχειν,
 κεί μὴ δοκῶ σοι· μανθάνω δ' ὀθούνεκα
 ἔξωρα πράσσω· κούκ ἐμοὶ προσεικότα.
 ἀλλ' ἢ γὰρ ἐκ σοῦ δυσμένεια καὶ τὰ σὰ

ELECTRA

This too was vengeance for a daughter's blood?
A shameful plea, if urged, for shame it is
To wed a foeman for a daughter's sake.
But in convincing thee I waste my breath;
Thou hast no answer but to scream that I
Revile a mother; and in sooth to us
Thou art mistress more than mother, for I pine
A wretched drudge, by thee and by thy mate
Downtrodden; and that other child who scarce
Escaped thy hands, Orestes, wears away
In weary exile his unhappy days.
Oft hast thou taxed me that I reared him up
For vengeance; so I willed it, had I power.
Go to, proclaim me out of my own mouth
A shrew, a scold, a vixen—what thou wilt.
For if I be accomplished in such arts,
Methinks I show my breed, a trick o' the blood.

CHORUS

I see she breathes forth fury and no more
Heeds if her words with justice harmonize.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Why then should I heed one who thus insults
A mother, at her ripe age too? Dost think
That she would stick at any deed of shame?

ELECTRA

Nay, I am shamefast, though to thee I seem
Shameless; I know such manners in a maid
Are ill-becoming, in a daughter strange;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἔργ' ἐξαναγκάζει με ταῦτα δρᾶν βία· 620
αἰσχροῖς γὰρ αἰσχρὰ πράγματ' ἐκδιδάσκειται.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ὦ θρέμμ' ἀναιδές, ἦ σ' ἐγὼ καὶ τὰμ' ἔπη
καὶ τάργα τὰμὰ πόλλ' ἄγαν λέγειν ποεῖ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

σύ τοι λέγεις νιν, οὐκ ἐγώ· σὺ γὰρ ποεῖς
τοῦργον· τὰ δ' ἔργα τοὺς λόγους εὐρίσκειται.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ἀλλ' οὐ μὰ τὴν δέσποιναν Ἄρτεμιν θράσους
τοῦδ' οὐκ ἀλύξεις, εὐτ' ἂν Αἰγισθος μόλη.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὄρᾱς; πρὸς ὄργην ἐκφέρει, μεθεῖσά μοι
λέγειν ἂ χρῆζοιμ', οὐδ' ἐπίστασαι κλύειν.

ΗΛΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

οὐκουν ἐάσεις οὐδ' ὑπ' εὐφήμου βοῆς 630
θῦσαί μ', ἐπειδὴ σοί γ' ἐφήκα πᾶν λέγειν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

εἴω, κελεύω, θῦε· μηδ' ἐπαιτιῶ
τοῦμόν στόμ', ὡς οὐκ ἂν πέρα λέξαιμ' ἔτι.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ἔπαιρε δὴ σὺ θύμαθ' ἢ παρούσά μοι
πάγκαρπ', ἀνακτι τῶδ' ὅπως λυτηρίους
εὐχὰς ἀνάσχω δειμάτων, ἂ νῦν ἔχω.
κλύοις ἂν ἤδη, Φοῖβε προστατήριε,
κεκρυμμένην μου βάζιν· οὐ γὰρ ἐν φίλοις
ὁ μῦθος, οὐδὲ πᾶν ἀναπτύξαι πρέπει 640
πρὸς φῶς παρούσης τῆσδε πλησίας ἐμοί,
μηδ' σὺν φθόνῳ τε καὶ πολυγλώσσῳ βοῇ
σπείρη ματαίαν βάζιν εἰς πᾶσαν πόλιν.
ἀλλ' ὦδ' ἄκουε· τῆδε γὰρ κἀγὼ φράσω.

ELECTRA

But thy malignity, thy cruel acts
Compel me ; baseness is from baseness learnt.

CLYTEMNESTRA

'Thou brasen monster ! I, my words, my acts,
Are matter for thy glib garrulity !

ELECTRA

The fault is thine, not mine ; for thine the acts,
And mine are but the words that show them forth.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Now, by our lady Artemis, thou shalt rue
Thy boldness when Aegisthus comes again.

ELECTRA

See, rage distracts thee ; first thou grantest me
Free speech, and wilt not listen when I speak.

CLYTEMNESTRA

I let thee have thy say, and wilt not thou
Hush thy wild tongue and let me sacrifice ?

ELECTRA

Go, I adjure thee, sacrifice ; nor blame
My voice ; henceforth I shall not speak one word.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Bear this, my maid, this offering of earth's fruits,
That to our King I may uplift my prayers,
To rid me of the dread that haunts my soul.
O Phoebus, our Defender, lend an ear
To my petition ; dark and veiled the words
For those who love me not, nor were it meet
To lay my whole heart bare, while she is by,
Ready to blab with her envenomed tongue
Through all the town some empty, rash report.
Darkly I pray ; to my dark prayer attend !

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἂ γὰρ προσεΐδον νυκτὶ τῆδε φάσματα
 δισσῶν ὀνείρων, ταῦτά μοι, Λύκει' ἄναξ,
 εἰ μὲν πέφηεν ἐσθλά, δὸς τελεσφόρα,
 εἰ δ' ἐχθρά, τοῖς ἐχθροῖσιν ἔμπαλιν μέθες·
 καὶ μὴ με πλούτου τοῦ παρόντος εἴ τινες
 δόλοισι βουλεύουσιν ἐκβαλεῖν, ἐφῆς,
 ἀλλ' ὠδέ μ' αἰεὶ ζῶσαν ἀβλαβεῖ βίῳ
 δόμους Ἀτρειδῶν σκῆπτρά τ' ἀμφέπειν τάδε,
 φίλοισί τε ξυνοῦσαν οἷς ξύνειμι νῦν
 εἰήμεροῦσαν καὶ τέκνων ὄσων ἐμοὶ
 δύσνοια μὴ πρόσσεστιν ἢ λίπη πικρά.
 ταῦτ', ὦ Λύκει' Ἀπολλον, ἴλεως κλύων
 δὸς πᾶσιν ἡμῖν ὥσπερ ἔξαιτούμεθα.
 τὰ δ' ἄλλα πάντα καὶ σιωπῶσης ἐμοῦ
 ἐπαξιῶ σε δαίμον' ὄντ' ἐξειδέναι
 τοὺς ἐκ Διὸς γὰρ εἰκὸς ἐστὶ πάνθ' ὄραν.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

ξέναι γυναῖκες, πῶς ἂν εἰδείην σαφῶς
 εἰ τοῦ τυράννου δώματ' Αἰγίσθου τάδε;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τάδ' ἐστίν, ὦ ξέν'· αὐτὸς ἦκασας καλῶς.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

ἦ καὶ δάμορτα τήνδ' ἐπεικάζων κυρῶ
 κείνου; πρέπει γὰρ ὡς τύραννος εἰσορᾶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μάλιστα πάντων· ἦδε σοι κείνη πάρα.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

ὦ χαῖρ', ἄνασσα· σοὶ φέρων ἦκω λόγους
 ἠδεῖς φίλου παρ' ἀνδρὸς Αἰγίσθου θ' ὀμοῦ.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ἔδεξάμην τὸ ῥηθέν· εἰδέναι δέ σου
 πρώτιστα χρῆζω τίς σ' ἀπέστειλεν βροτῶν.

ELECTRA

The vision that I yesternight beheld
Of double import, if, Lycean King,
It bodes me well, fulfil it; but if ill,
May it upon my enemies recoil!
If there be some who treacherously plot
To dispossess me of my wealth and power,
Prevent them, and vouchsafe that I may rule
The house of Atreus in security,
And wield the sceptre, sharing prosperous days
With the same friends and with my children—those
By malice and blind rancour not estranged.
Grant, O Lycean Phoehus, of thy grace,
To me and mine fulfilment of my prayers.
And for those other things my heart desires,
Though unexpressed, thou as a god dost know them;
For naught is hidden from the sons of Zeus.

AGED SERVANT

Good ladies, might a stranger crave to learn
If this indeed be King Aegisthus' house?

CHORUS

It is, Sir; thou thyself hast guessed aright.

AGED SERVANT

And am I right conjecturing that I see
His royal consort here? She looks a queen.

CHORUS

Indeed thou art, in presence of the queen.

AGED SERVANT

I greet thee, Madam, and I bear to thee
Fair news, and to Aegisthus, from a friend.

CLYTEMNESTRA

I welcome thy fair words, but first would know
Who sends thee.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

Φανοτεὺς ὁ Φωκεὺς, πρᾶγμα ποροσύνων μέγα. 670

ΚΑΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

τὸ ποίου, ὦ ξέν'; εἶπέ· παρὰ φίλου γὰρ ὦν
ἀνδρὸς, σάφ' οἶδα, προσφιλεῖς λέξεις λόγους.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

τέθνηκ' Ὀρέστης· ἐν βραχεῖ ξυθεὶς λέγω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οἶ' γὼ τάλαιν', ὄλωλα τῆδ' ἐν ἡμέρᾳ.

ΚΑΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

τί φῆς, τί φῆς, ὦ ξεῖνε; μὴ ταύτης κλύε.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

θανόντ' Ὀρέστην νῦν τε καὶ πάλαι λέγω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀπωλόμην δύστηνος, οὐδέν εἰμ' ἔτι.

ΚΑΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

σὺ μὲν τὰ σαυτῆς πρᾶσσ', ἐμοὶ δὲ σὺ, ξεῖνε,
τάληθές εἶπέ, τῷ τρόπῳ διόλλυται;

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

κάπεμπόμην πρὸς ταῦτα καὶ τὸ πᾶν φράσω. 680
κεῖνος γὰρ ἐλθὼν εἰς τὸ κλεινὸν Ἑλλάδος
πρόσχημ' ἀγῶνος Δελφικῶν ἄθλων χάριν,
ὅτ' ἦσθετ' ἀνδρὸς ὀρθίων κηρυγμάτων
δρόμον προκηρύξαντος, οὐ πρώτη κρίσις,
εἰσῆλθε λαμπρὸς, πᾶσι τοῖς ἐκεῖ σέβας·
δρόμον δ' ἰσώσας τᾶφέσει¹ τὰ τέρματα
νίκης ἔχων ἐξῆλθε πάντιμον γέρας.

χῶπως μὲν ἐν πολλοῖσι παῦρά σοι λέγω
οὐκ οἶδα τοιοῦδ' ἀνδρὸς ἔργα καὶ κράτη·
ἐν δ' ἴσθ' ὄσων γὰρ εἰσεκέρυξαν βραβύης

¹ τῇ φύσει MSS., Musgrave corr.

ELECTRA

AGED SERVANT

Phanoteus, the Phocian,

On a grave mission.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Tell me, stranger, what.

It must be friendly coming from a friend.

AGED SERVANT

Orestes' death, to sum in brief my tale.

ELECTRA

Me miserable! Now am I undone.

CLYTEMNESTRA

What say'st thou, man, what say'st thou? Heed
not her.

AGED SERVANT

I say again, Orestes is no more.

ELECTRA

Ah me, I'm lost, ah wretched me, undone!

CLYTEMNESTRA

Attend to thine own business. (*To AGED SERVANT.*)

Tell me, Sir,

The circumstance and manner of his death.

AGED SERVANT

That was my errand, and I'll tell thee all.
To the great festival of Greece he went,
The Delphic Games, and when the herald's voice
Announced the opening trial, the foot race,
He stepped into the lists, a radiant form,
The admired of all beholders. Like a shaft
He sped from starting point to goal and back,
And bore the crown of glorious victory.
To speak in brief where there is much to tell,
I never heard of prowess like to his.

[δρόμων διαύλων πένταθλ' ἃ νομίζεται],¹
 τούτων ἐνεγκῶν πάντα τὰ πινίκια
 ὠλβίζειτ', Ἀργεῖος μὲν ἀνακαλούμενος,
 ὄνομα δ' Ὀρέστης, τοῦ τὸ κλεινὸν Ἑλλάδος
 Ἀγαμέμνονος στρατεύμ' ἀγείραντός ποτε.
 καὶ ταῦτα μὲν τοιαῦθ'· ὅταν δέ τις θεῶν
 βλάβη, δύναϊτ' ἂν οὐδ' ἂν ἰσχύων φυγεῖν.
 κείνος γὰρ ἄλλης ἡμέρας, ὅθ' ἰππικῶν
 ἦν ἡλίου τέλλοντος ὠκύπους ἀγών,
 εἰσῆλθε πολλῶν ἀρματηλατῶν μέτα.
 εἰς ἦν Ἀχαιός, εἰς ἀπὸ Σπάρτης, δύο
 Δίβυες ζυγωτῶν ἀρμάτων ἐπιστάται
 κάκεινος ἐν τούτοισι, Θεσσαλὰς ἔχων
 ἵππους, ὁ πέμπτος· ἕκτος ἐξ Αἰτωλίας
 ξανθαῖσι πώλοις· ἕβδομος Μάγνης ἀνήρ·
 ὁ δ' ὄγδοος λεύκιππος, Αἰνιᾶν γένος·
 ἕνατος Ἀθηνῶν τῶν θεοδμήτων ἀπο·
 Βοιωτὸς ἄλλος, δέκατον ἐκπληρῶν ὄχον.
 στάντες δ' ἴν' αὐτοὺς οἱ τεταγμένοι βραβηῆς
 κλήροις ἔπηλαν καὶ κατέστησαν δίφρους,
 χαλκῆς ὑπαὶ σάλπιγγος ἤξαν· οἱ δ' ἅμα
 ἵπποις ὁμοκλήσαντες ἠνίας χερσῶν
 ἔσεισαν· ἐν δὲ πᾶς ἐμεστώθη δρόμος
 κτύπου κροτητῶν ἀρμάτων· κόνις δ' ἄνω
 φορεῖθ'· ὁμοῦ δὲ πάντες ἀναμεμιγμένοι
 φείδοντο κέντρων οὐδέν, ὡς ὑπερβάλοι
 χυῖας τις αὐτῶν καὶ φρυάγμοθ' ἰππικά.
 ὁμοῦ γὰρ ἀμφὶ νῶτα καὶ τροχῶν βάσεις
 ἤφριζον, εἰσέβαλλον ἰππικαὶ πνοαί.
 κείνος δ' ὑπ' αὐτὴν ἐσχάτην στήλην ἔχων

700

710

720

¹ Jebb with most critics rejects the line and alters τούτων in next line to ἐθλων.

ELECTRA

This much I'll add, the judges of the games
Announced no single contest wherein he
Was not the victor, and each time glad shouts
Hailed the award—' An Argive wins, Orestes,
The son of Agamemnon, King of men,
Who led the hosts of Hellas.' So he sped.
But when some angry godhead intervenes
The mightiest man is foiled. Another day,
When at sunseting chariots vied in speed,
He entered; many were the charioteers.
From Sparta one, and one Achaean, two
From Libya, skilled to guide the yokèd team;
The fifth in rank, with mares of Thessaly,
Orestes came, and an Aeolian sixth,
With chestnut fillies, a Megarian seventh,
The eighth, with milk-white steeds, an Aenian,
The ninth from Athens, city built by gods;
Last a Boeotian made the field of ten.
Then, as the appointed umpires signed to each
By lot his place, they ranged their chariots,
And at the trumpet's brazen signal all
Started, all shook the reins and urged their steeds
With shouts; the whole plain echoed with a din
Of rattling cars and the dust rose to heaven.
They drove together, all in narrow space,
And plied their goads, each keen to leave behind
The press of whirling wheels and snorting steeds,
For each man saw his car bespattered with foam
Or felt the coursers' hot breath at his back.
Orestes, as he rounded either goal,

ἔχριμπτ' αἰεὶ σύρυγγα, δεξιὸν δ' ἀνεῖς
 σειραῖον ἵππον εἶργε τὸν προσκείμενον.
 καὶ πρὶν μὲν ὀρθοὶ πάντες ἕστασαν δίφροι·
 ἔπειτα δ' Αἰνιᾶνος ἀνδρὸς ἄστομοι
 πῶλοι βία φέρουσιν· ἐκ δ' ὑποστροφῆς
 τελούντες ἕκτον ἕβδομόν τ' ἤδη δρόμον
 μέτωπα συμπαίουσι Βαρκαίοις ὄχοις·
 κἀντεῦθεν ἄλλος ἄλλον ἐξ ἑνὸς κακοῦ
 ἔθραυε κἀνέπιπτε, πᾶν δ' ἐπίμπλατο
 ναυαγίων Κρισαίων ἵππικῶν πέδον. 730
 γνοὺς δ' οὐξ Ἀθηναίων δεινὸς ἠνιοστρόφος
 ἔξω παρασπᾶ κἀνακωχεύει παρῆς
 κλύδων ἔφιππον ἐν μέσῳ κυκωμενον.
 ἤλαυνε δ' ἔσχατος μὲν, ὑστέρας δ' ἔχων
 πῶλους Ὀρέστης, τῷ τέλει πίστιν φέρων·
 ὅπως δ' ὄρᾳ μόνον νιν ἐλλελειμμένον,
 ὄξυν δι' ὠτων κέλαδον ἐνσείσας θοαῖς
 πῶλοις διώκει, κἀξισώσαντε ζυγὰ
 ἤλαυνέτην, τότε ἄλλος, ἄλλοθ' ἄτερος
 κᾶρα προβάλλων ἵππικῶν ὀχημάτων. 740
 καὶ τοὺς μὲν ἄλλους πάντας ἀσφαλεῖς δρόμους
 ὠρμάθ' ὁ τλήμων ὀρθὸς ἐξ ὀρθῶν δίφρων·
 ἔπειτα λύων ἠνίαν ἀριστερὰν
 κάμπτοντος ἵππου λαυθάνει στήλην ἄκραν
 παίσας· ἔθραυσε δ' ἄξονος μέσας χυβὰς
 κἀξ ἀντύγων ὠλισθεν· ἐν δ' ἐλίσσεται
 τμητοῖς ἰμάσι· τοῦ δὲ πίπτοντος πέδῳ
 πῶλοι διεσπάρησαν ἐς μέσον δρόμον.
 στρατὸς δ' ὅπως ὄρᾳ νιν ἐκπεπτωκότα
 δίφρων, ἀνωλόλυξε τὸν νεανίαν, 750
 οἳ ἔργα δράσας οἶα λαγχάνει κακά,
 φοροῦμενος πρὸς οὐδας, ἄλλοθ' οὐρανῷ

ELECTRA

Steered close and shaved the pillar with his nave,
Urging his offside trace-horse, while he checked
The nearer. For a while they all sped on
Unscathed, but soon the Aenian's hard-moutbed
steeds

Bolted, and 'twixt the sixth and seventh round
'Gainst the Barcaean chariot headlong dashed.
Then on that first mishap there followed close
Shock upon shock, crash upon crash, that strewed
With wrack of cars all the Crisaeian plain.
This the shrewd charioteer of Athens marked,
Slackened and drew aside, letting go by
The surge of chariots running in mid course.
Last came Orestes who had curbed his team
(He trusted to the finish), but at sight
Of the Athenian, his one rival left,
With a shrill holloa in his horses' ears
He followed ; and the two abreast raced on,
Now one, and now the other a head in front.
Thus far Orestes, ill-starred youth, had steered
Steadfast at every lap his steadfast team,
But at the last, in turning, all too soon
He loosed the left-hand rein, and ere he knew it
The axle struck against the pillar's edge.
The axle box was shattered, and himself
Hurled o'er the chariot rail, and in his fall
Caught in the reins' grip he was dragged along,
While his scared team dashed wildly o'er the course
But as the crowd beheld his overthrow,
There rose a wail of pity for the youth—
His doughty deeds and his disastrous end—
Now flung to earth, now bounding to the sky
Feet uppermost. At length the charioteers

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

σκέλη προφαίνων, ἔς τέ νιν διφρηλάται,
 μόλις κατασχεθόντες ἵππικὸν δρόμον,
 ἔλυσαν αἱματηρόν, ὥστε μηδένα
 γνῶναι φίλων ἰδόντ' ἂν ἄθλιον δέμας,
 καὶ νιν πυρᾷ κέαυτες εὐθύς ἐν βραχεῖ
 χαλκῷ μέγιστον σῶμα δειλαίας σποδοῦ
 φέρουσιν ἄνδρες Φωκέων τεταγμένοι,
 ὅπως πατρώας τύμβου ἐκλάχη χθονός.
 τοιαυτὰ σοι ταῦτ' ἐστίν, ὡς μὲν ἐν λόγῳ
 ἀλγεινά, τοῖς δ' ἰδοῦσι, οἵπερ εἶδομεν,
 μέγιστα πάντων ὧν ὄπωπ' ἐγὼ κακῶν.

760

ΧΟΡΟΣ

φεῦ φεῦ· τὸ πᾶν δὴ δεσπότασι τοῖς πάλαι
 πρόρριζον, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἔφθαρται γένος.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ὦ Ζεῦ, τί ταῦτα, πότερον εὐτυχῆ λέγω,
 ἢ δεινὰ μὲν, κέρδη δέ; λυπηρῶς δ' ἔχει,
 εἰ τοῖς ἐμαυτῆς τὸν βίον σφῆζω κακοῖς.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

τί δ' ὦδ' ἀθυμεῖς, ὦ γύναι, τῷ νῦν λόγῳ;

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

δεινὸν τὸ τίκτειν ἐστίν· οὐδὲ γὰρ κακῶς
 πάσχοντι μῖσος ὧν τέκη προσγίγνεται.

770

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

μάτην ἄρ' ἡμεῖς, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἤκομεν.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

οὔτοι μάτην γε· πῶς γὰρ ἂν μάτην λέγοις,
 εἰ μοι θανόντος πίστ' ἔχων τεκμήρια
 προσῆλθες, ὅστις τῆς ἐμῆς ψυχῆς γεγώς,
 μαστῶν ἀποστάς καὶ τροφῆς ἐμῆς, φυγὰς
 ἀπέξενούτο καὶ μ', ἐπεὶ τῆσδε χθονός
 ἐξῆλθεν, οὐκέτ' εἶδεν, ἐγκαλῶν δέ μοι

ELECTRA

Stayed in their wild career his steeds and freed
The corpse all blood-bestained, disfigured, marred
Past recognition of his nearest friend.
Straightway the Phocceans burnt him on a pyre,
And envoys now are on their way to bring
That mighty frame shut in a little urn,
And lay his ashes in his fatherland.
Such is my tale, right piteous to tell;
But for all those who saw it with their eyes,
As I, there never was a sadder sight.

CHORUS

Alas, alas! our ancient masters' line,
So it appears, hath perished root and branch.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Are these glad tidings? Rather would I say
Sad, but of profit. Ah how hard my lot
When I must look for safety to my losses.

AGED SERVANT

Why, lady, why downhearted at my news?

CLYTEMNESTRA

Strange is the force of motherhood; a mother,
Whate'er her wrongs, can ne'er forget her child.

AGED SERVANT

So it would seem our coming was in vain.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Nay, not in vain. How canst thou say "in vain,"
If of his death thou bringst convincing proof,
Who from my life drew life, and yet, estranged,
Forgot the breasts that suckled him, forgot
A mother's tender nurture, fled his home,
And since that day has never seen me more,

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

φόνους πατρώους δειν' ἐπηπείλει τελείν;
ὥστ' οὔτε νυκτὸς ὕπνον οὔτ' ἐξ ἡμέρας
ἐμὲ στεγάζειν ἠδύν, ἀλλ' ὁ προστατῶν
χρόνος διήγέ μ' αἰὲν ὡς θανουμένην.

780

νῦν δ'—ἡμέρα γὰρ τῆδ' ἀπήλλαγμαί φόβου
πρὸς τῆσδ' ἐκείνου θ'. ἦδε γὰρ μείζων βλάβη
ξύνοικος ἦν μοι, τοῦμὸν ἐκπίνουσ' αἰεὶ
ψυχῆς ἄκρατον αἷμα—νῦν δ' ἔκηλά που
τῶν τῆσδ' ἀπειλῶν οὐνεχ' ἡμερεύσομεν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οἷμοι τάλαινα· νῦν γὰρ οἰμῶξαι πάρα,
'Ορέστα, τὴν σὴν ξυμφοράν, ὅθ' ὦδ' ἔχων
πρὸς τῆσδ' ὑβρίζει μητρός. ἄρ' ἔχει καλῶς;

790

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

οὔτοι σύ· κείνος δ' ὡς ἔχει καλῶς ἔχει.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἄκουε, Νέμεσι τοῦ θανόντος ἀρτίως.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ἤκουσεν ὦν δεῖ κάπεκύρωσεν καλῶς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὑβριζε· νῦν γὰρ εὐτυχοῦσα τυγχάνεις.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

οὔκουν 'Ορέστης καὶ σὺ παύσετον τάδε.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πεπαύμεθ' ἡμεῖς, οὐχ ὅπως σὲ παύσομεν.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

πολλῶν ἂν ἦκοις, ὦ ξέν', ἄξιος τυχεῖν,
εἰ τήνδ' ἔπαυσας τῆς πολυγλώσσου βοῆς.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

οὔκουν ἀποστείχοιμ' ἄν, εἰ τάδ' εὐ κυρεῖ.

ELECTRA

Slandered me as the murderer of his sire
And breathed forth vengeance?—Neither night nor
day

Kind slumber closed these eyes, and immanent dread
Of death each minute stretched me on the rack.
But now on this glad day, of terror rid
From him and her, a deadlier plague than he,
That vampire who was housed with me to drain
My very life blood—now, despite her threats
Methinks that I shall pass my days in peace.

ELECTRA

Ah woe is me! now verily may I mourn
Thy fate, Orestes, when thou farest thus,
Mocked by thy mother in death! Is it not well?

CLYTEMNESTRA

Not well with thee, but it is well with him.

ELECTRA

Hear her, Avenging Spirit of the dead
Whose ashes still are warm!

CLYTEMNESTRA

The Avenger heard
When it behoved her, and hath ruled it well.

ELECTRA

This is thine hour of victory; mock on.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Thou and Orestes then should silence me.

ELECTRA

We silence thee! We who are silent, both!

CLYTEMNESTRA

Thy coming, Sir, would merit large reward,
If thou indeed hast stopped her wagging tongue.

AGED SERVANT

Then I may take my leave, if all is well.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΚΑΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ἤκιστ'· ἐπέειπερ οὐτ' ἐμοῦ κατάξϊ' ἄν
 πράξειας οὔτε τοῦ πορεύσαντος ξένου.
 ἀλλ' εἰσιθ' εἴσω· τῆνδε δ' ἔκτοθεν βοᾶν
 ἕα τά θ' αὐτῆς καὶ τὰ τῶν φίλων κακά.

800

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἄρ' ὑμῖν ὡς ἀλγοῦσα κώδυνωμένη
 δεινῶς δακρῦσαι κάπικωκῦσαι δοκεῖ
 τὸν υἱὸν ἢ δύστηνος ᾧδ' ὀλωλότα;
 ἀλλ' ἐγγελῶσα φροῦδος· ᾧ τάλαιν' ἐγώ.
 Ὅρέστα φίλταθ', ὡς μ' ἀπώλεσας θανών.
 ἀποσπάσας γὰρ τῆς ἐμῆς οἴχει φρενός
 αἶ μοι μόναι παρήσαν ἐλπίδων ἐτι,
 σὲ πατρός ἤξειν ζῶντα τιμωρόν ποτε
 κάμου ταλαίνης. νῦν δὲ ποῖ με χρῆ μολεῖν;
 μόνη γὰρ εἰμι, σοῦ τ' ἀπεστερημένη
 καὶ πατρός. ἤδη δεῖ με δουλεύειν πάλιν
 ἐν τοῖσιν ἐχθίστοισιν ἀνθρώπων ἐμοὶ
 φονεῦσι πατρός. ἄρά μοι καλῶς ἔχει;
 ἀλλ' οὔ τι μὴν ἔγωγε τοῦ λοιποῦ χρόνου
 ξύνοικος, εἴσειμ',¹ ἀλλὰ τῆδε πρὸς πύλῃ
 παρεῖσ' ἐμαυτὴν ἀφίλος ἀνανῶ βίον.
 πρὸς ταῦτα καινέτω τις, εἰ βαρύνεται,
 τῶν ἐνδον ὄντων· ὡς χάρις μὲν, ἦν κτάνη,
 λύπη δ', ἐὰν ζῶ· τοῦ βίου δ' οὐδεὶς πόθος.

810

820

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α'

ποῦ ποτε κεραυνοὶ Διὸς ἢ ποῦ φαέθων
 Ἄλιος, εἰ ταῦτ' ἐφορῶντες κρύπτουσιν ἔκηλοι;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἔ ἔ, αἰαῖ.

¹ ἔσομ' MSS., Hermann corr.

ELECTRA

CLYTEMNESTRA

Not so ; such entertainment would reflect
On me and on thy master, my ally.
Be pleased to enter ; leave this girl without
To wail her friends' misfortunes and her own.

[*Exeunt* CLYTEMNESTRA and AGED SERVANT.]

ELECTRA

Seemed she to you a mother woe-begone,
Weeping and wailing for a son thus slain,
This miserable woman? No, she left us
With mocking laughter. Dearest brother mine,
Thy death was my death warrant. Woe is me !
With thee has gone my last fond hope, that thou
Wast living yet and wouldst return some day
To avenge my sire and me, unhappy me.
Now whither shall I turn, alone, bereft
Of thee and of my sire ? Henceforth again
Must I be slave to those I most abhor,
My father's murderers. Is it not well with me ?
No, never will I cross their threshold more,
But at these gates will lay me down to die,
There pine away. If any in the house
Think me an eyesore, let him slay me ; life
To me were misery and death a boon.

CHORUS

(*Str. 1*)

Where, O Zeus, are thy bolts, O Sun-god, where is
thy ray,
If with thy lightning, thy light, these things be not
shewn to the day ?

ELECTRA

Ah me ! Ah me !

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ παῖ, τί δακρύεις;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

φεῦ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μηδὲν μέγ' αὐτοῦσης.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀπολείς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πῶς;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

εἰ τῶν φανερώς οἰχομένων
εἰς Ἄϊδαν ἐλπίδ' ὑποίσεις, κατ' ἐμοῦ τακομένας
μᾶλλον ἐπεμβάσει.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀντ. α'

οἶδα γὰρ ἄνακτ' Ἀμφιάρων χρυσοδέτοις
ἔρκεσι κρυφθέντα γυναικῶν· καὶ νῦν ὑπὸ γαίας

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἔ ἔ, ἰώ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πάμψυχος ἀνάσσει.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

φεῦ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

φεῦ δῆτ'· ὄλοα γὰρ

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐδάμη.

ELECTRA

CHORUS

Daughter, why weepest thou ?

ELECTRA

Woe !

CHORUS

Hush ! No rash cry !

ELECTRA

Thou'lt be my death.

CHORUS

What meanest thou ?

ELECTRA

If ye would whisper hope
That they we know for dead may be alive ;
Ye trample on a bleeding heart.

CHORUS

Nay, I bethink me how (*Ant.* 1)
The Argive seer¹ was swallowed up,
Snared by a woman for a golden chain,
And now in the nether world—

ELECTRA

Ah me !

CHORUS

A living soul he reigns.

ELECTRA

Ah woe !

CHORUS

Aye woe ! for the murderess—

ELECTRA

Was slain.

¹ Amphiaraus. Induced by his wife Eriphyle to join the expedition of Polyneices against Argos, he was swallowed up by an earthquake. His son (like Orestes) avenged his father and Amphiaraus was honoured as an earth-god.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ναί.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οἶδ' οἶδ'· ἐφάνη γὰρ μέλετ' ὠρ
 ἀμφὶ τὸν ἐν πένθει· ἐμοὶ δ' οὔτις ἔτ' ἔσθ'· ὅς γὰρ
 ἔτ' ἦν,
 φροῦδος ἀναρπασθεῖς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

δειλαία δειλαίων κυρεῖς. στρ. β'

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

κἀγὼ τοῦδ' ἴστωρ, ὑπερίστωρ,
 πανσύρτῳ παμμήνῳ πολλῶν
 δεινῶν στυγνῶν τ' αἰῶνι.¹

850

ΧΟΡΟΣ

εἶδομεν ἀθρήνεις.²

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

μή μέ νυν μηκέτι
 παραγάγης, ἵν' οὐ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί φῆς;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πάρεισιν ἐλπίδων ἔτι κοινοτόκων
 εὐπατριδᾶν ἀρωγαί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πᾶσι θνατοῖς ἔφυ μόρος.

ἀντ. β' 860

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἦ καὶ χαλάργοις ἐν ἀμίλλαις
 οὔτως, ὡς κείνῳ δυστάνῳ,
 τμητοῖς ὀλκοῖς ἐγκῦρσαι;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἄσκοπος ἂ λῶβα.

¹ ἀχέων MSS., Hermann corr. ² ἀ θροεῖς MSS., Dindorf corr.

ELECTRA

CHORUS

Aye, slain.

ELECTRA

I know, I know. A champion was raised up
To avenge the mourning ghost.
No champion for me,
The one yet left is taken, reft away.

CHORUS

A weary, weary lot is thine. *(Str. 2)*

ELECTRA

I know it well, too well,
When life, month in month out,
Like a dark torrent flows,
Horror on horror, pain on pain.

CHORUS

We have watched its tearful course.

ELECTRA

Cease then to turn it where—

CHORUS

What wouldst thou say?

ELECTRA

No comfort's left of hope
From him of royal blood,
Sprung from one stock with me.

CHORUS

Death is the common lot. *(Ant. 2)*

ELECTRA

To die as he died, hapless youth,
Entangled in the reins
Beneath the tramp of coursers' hoofs!

CHORUS

Torture ineffable!

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πῶς γὰρ οὐκ; εἰ ξένος
ἄτερ ἐμῶν χερῶν

ΧΟΡΟΣ

παπαῖ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

κέκευθεν, οὔτε του τάφου ἀντιάσας
οὔτε γόων παρ' ἡμῶν.

870

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ὑφ' ἡδονῆς τοι, φιλτάτη, διώκομαι
τὸ κόσμον μεθεῖσα σὺν τάχει μολεῖν·
φέρω γὰρ ἡδονάς τε κἀνάπαυλαν ὧν
πάροιθεν εἶχες καὶ κατέστενες κακῶν

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πόθεν δ' ἂν εὔροις τῶν ἐμῶν σὺ πημάτων
ἄρηξιν, οἷς ἴασιν οὐκ ἔνεστ' ἰδεῖν;

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

πάρεστ' Ὀρέστης ἡμῖν, ἴσθι τοῦτ' ἐμοῦ
κλύουσ', ἐναργῶς, ὥσπερ εἰσορᾶς ἐμέ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ' ἦ μέμνησας, ὦ τάλαινα, κἀπὶ τοῖς
σαυτῆς κακοῖσι κἀπὶ τοῖς ἐμοῖς γελᾶς;

880

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

μὰ τὴν πατρώαν ἐστίαν, ἀλλ' οὐχ ὕβρει
λέγω τάδ', ἀλλ' ἐκείνον ὡς παρόντα νῶν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οἴμοι τάλαινα· καὶ τίνος βροτῶν λόγον
τόνδ' εἰσακούσασ' ὧδε πιστεύεις ἄγαν;

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἐγὼ μὲν ἐξ ἐμοῦ τε κοῦκ ἄλλης, σαφῆ
σημεῖ' ἰδοῦσα, τῷδε πιστεύω λόγῳ.

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

Yea, in a strange land far away—

CHORUS

Alas!

ELECTRA

To lie untended by my hands,
Unwept, ungraced with sepulture by me!

Enter CHRYSOTHEMIS.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Joy, dearest sister, sped me hitherward,
And haply with unseemly haste I ran
To bring the joyful tidings and relief
From all thy woes and weary sufferings.

ELECTRA

And where canst *thou* have found a remedy
For irremediable woes like mine?

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Orestes—hear it from my lips—is here,
In bodily presence, as thou see'st me now.

ELECTRA

Art mad, poor sister, making mockery
Of thine own misery and mine withal?

CHRYSOTHEMIS

I mock not, by our father's hearth I swear it;
In very truth we have him here again.

ELECTRA

O misery! And, prithee, from whose mouth
Hadst thou this tale so blindly credited?

CHRYSOTHEMIS

I trusted to none other than myself,
The clearest proof and evidence of my eyes.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τίν', ὦ τάλαιν', ἔχουσα πίστιν; ἐς τί μοι
βλέψασα θάλπει τῷδ' ἀνηκέστῳ πυρί;

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

πρὸς νυν θεῶν ἄκουσον, ὡς μαθοῦσά μου
τὸ λοιπὸν ἢ φρονοῦσαν ἢ μωρὰν λέγῃς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

σὺ δ' οὖν λέγ', εἴ σοι τῷ λόγῳ τις ἡδονή.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

καὶ δὴ λέγω σοι πᾶν ὅσον κατειδόμην.
ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἦλθον πατρὸς ἀρχαίου τάφον,
ὄρῳ κολώνης ἐξ ἄκρας νεορρύτους
πηγὰς γάλακτος καὶ περιστεφῆ κύκλω
πάντων ὅσ' ἐστὶν ἀνθέων θήκην πατρός.
ἰδοῦσα δ' ἔσχον θαῦμα, καὶ περισκοπῶ
μὴ πού τις ἡμῖν ἐγγυὺς ἐγχρίμπτῃ βροτῶν.
ὡς δ' ἐν γαλήνῃ πάντ' ἔδερχόμεν τόπου,
τύμβιον προσείρπον ἄσσον· ἐσχάτης δ' ὄρῳ
πυρᾶς νεώρη βόστρυχον τετμημένον
κεῖθυς τάλαιν' ὡς εἶδον, ἐμπαίει τί μοι
ψυχῇ σῖνηθες ὄμμα, φιλτάτου βροτῶν
πάντων Ὀρέστου τοῦθ' ὄραν τεκμήριον
καὶ χερσὶ βαστάσασα δυσφημῶ μὲν οὐ,
χαρᾶ δὲ πῖμπλημ' εὐθύς ὄμμα δακρύνων.
καὶ νῦν θ' ὁμοίως καὶ τότε' ἐξεπίσταμαι
μὴ του τόδ' ἀγλαῖισμα πλὴν κείνου μολεῖν·
τῷ γὰρ προσήκει πλὴν γ' ἐμοῦ καὶ σοῦ τόδε;
κἀγὼ μὲν οὐκ ἔδρασα, τοῦτ' ἐπίσταμαι,
οὐδ' αὖ σὺ πῶς γάρ; ἢ γε μηδὲ πρὸς θεοὺς
ἔξεστ' ἀκλαύστῳ τῆσδ' ἀποστήναι στέγῃς.
ἀλλ' οὐδὲ μὲν δὴ μητρὸς οὐθ' ὁ νοὺς φιλεῖ

890

900

910

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

What proof, what evidence ! What sight, poor girl,
Lit this illusion in thy fevered brain ?

CHRYSOTHEMIS

O, as thou lov'st me, listen, then decide,
My story told, if I am mad or sane.

ELECTRA

Well, if it pleases thee to speak, speak on.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

I will, and tell thee all that I have seen.
As I approached our sire's ancestral tomb,
I noted that the barrow still was wet
With streams of milk, and round the monument
Garlands were wreathed of every flower that blows.
I marvelled much and peered around in dread
Of someone watching me ; but when I found
That nothing stirred, nearer the tomb I crept ;
And there upon the grave's edge lay a lock
Of hair fresh-severed ; at the sight there flashed
A dear familiar image on my soul,
Orestes ; 'twas a token and a sign
From him whom most of all the world I love.
I took it in my hands and not a sound
I uttered but my eyes o'erbrimmed for joy.
I knew, I knew it then as now, for sure :
This shining treasure could be none but his.
Who else could set it there save thee or me ?
And 'twas not I assuredly, nor thou ;
How couldst thou, when thou mayst not leave the
house
Not e'en to sacrifice ? Our mother then ?
When did our mother's heart that way incline ?

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τοιαῦτα πρᾶσσει οὔτε δρῶσ' ἐλάνθαν' ἄν¹
 ἀλλ' ἔστ' Ὀρέστου ταῦτα τὰπιτύμβια.²
 ἀλλ', ὦ φίλη, θάρσυνε τοῖς αὐτοῖσί τοι
 οὐχ αὐτὸς αἰεὶ δαιμόνων παραστατεῖ.
 νῶν ἦν τὰ πρόσθεν στυγνός· ἡ δὲ νῦν ἴσως
 πολλῶν ὑπάρξει κῦρος ἡμέρα καλῶν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

φεῦ, τῆς ἀνοίας ὡς σ' ἐποικτίρω πάλαι.

920

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

τί δ' ἔστιν; οὐ πρὸς ἡδονὴν λέγω τάδε;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐκ οἶσθ' ὅποι γῆς οὐδ' ὅποι γνώμης φέρει.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

πῶς δ' οὐκ ἐγὼ κάτοιδ' ἅ γ' εἶδον ἐμφανῶς;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τέθνηκεν, ὦ τάλαινα, τὰκείνου δέ σοι
 σωτήρι' ἔρρει· μηδὲν εἰς κείνόν γ' ὄρα.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

οἴμοι τάλαινα· τοῦ τὰδ' ἤκουσας βροτῶν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τοῦ πλησίον παρόντος, ἠνίκ' ὦλλυτο.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

καὶ ποῦ 'στιν οὗτος; θαῦμά τοί μ' ὑπέρχεται.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

κατ' οἶκον, ἡδὺς οὐδὲ μητρὶ δυσχερῆς.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

οἴμοι τάλαινα· τοῦ γὰρ ἀνθρώπων ποτ' ἦν
 τὰ πολλὰ πατρὸς πρὸς τάφον κτερίσματα;

930

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οἴμαι μάλιστ' ἐγωγε τοῦ τεθνηκότος
 μνημεῖ' Ὀρέστου ταῦτα προσθεῖναι τινα.

¹ ἐλάνθανεν MSS., Heath corr.

² τὰπιτύμβια MSS., Dindorf corr.

ELECTRA

Could she have 'scaped our notice, had she done it?
No, from Orestes comes this offering.
Courage, dear sister. Never destiny
Ran one unbroken course. On us till now
She frowned; to-day gives promise of her smiles.

ELECTRA

Alas! I pity thy simplicity,
Fond sister.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Are not then my tidings glad?

ELECTRA

Thou knowst not in what land of dreams thou art.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Wouldst have me doubt the evidence of my eyes?

ELECTRA

He is dead, I tell thee; look not to the dead
For a deliverer; *that* hope has gone.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Ah woe is me! Who told thee of his death?

ELECTRA

One who was present when he met his fate.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Where is the man? 'Tis strange, 'tis passing strange.

ELECTRA

Within; our mother's not unwelcome guest.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Ah me! Ah me! And whose then can have been
Those wreaths, that milk outpoured upon the grave?

ELECTRA

To me it seems most like that they were brought
A kindly offering to Orestes dead.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΧΡΥΣΘΕΜΙΣ

ὦ δυστυχῆς· ἐγὼ δὲ σὺν χαρᾷ λόγους
τοιούσδ' ἔχουσ' ἔσπευδον, οὐκ εἰδυῖ' ἄρα
ἴν' ἤμεν ἄτης· ἀλλὰ νῦν, ὅθ' ἰκόμην,
τά τ' ὄντα πρόσθεν ἄλλα θ' εὐρίσκω κακά.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὕτως ἔχει σοι ταῦτ'· εἰάν δέ μοι πίθη,
τῆς νῦν παρούσης πημονῆς λύσεις βάρους.

ΧΡΥΣΘΕΜΙΣ

ἦ τοὺς θανόντας ἐξαναστήσω ποτέ; 940

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅ γ' εἶπον· οὐ γὰρ ὦδ' ἄφρων ἔφυν.

ΧΡΥΣΘΕΜΙΣ

τί γὰρ κελεύεις ὦν ἐγὼ φερέγγυος;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τλήναι σε δρῶσαν ἂν ἐγὼ παραινέσω.

ΧΡΥΣΘΕΜΙΣ

ἀλλ' εἴ τις ἀφέλειά γ', οὐκ ἀπόσομαι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὄρα, πόνου τοι χωρὶς οὐδὲν εὐτυχεῖ.

ΧΡΥΣΘΕΜΙΣ

ὀρῶ. ξυνοίσω πᾶν ὅσον περ ἂν σθένω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἄκουε δὴ νυν ἢ βεβούλευμαι ποεῖν.
παρουσίαν μὲν οἶσθα καὶ σύ που φίλων
ὡς οὔτις ἡμῖν ἔστιν, ἀλλ' Αἰδῆς λαβὼν
ἀπεστέρηκε καὶ μόνα λελείμμεθον. 950
ἐγὼ δ' ἕως μὲν τὸν κασίγνητον βίω
θάλλοντ' ἔτ' εἰσήκουον, εἶχον ἐλπίδας
φόνου ποτ' αὐτὸν πράκτορ' ἵξεσθαι πατρός·
νῦν δ' ἠνίκ' οὐκέτ' ἔστιν, εἰς σὲ δὴ βλέπω,
ὅπως τὸν αὐτόχειρα πατρός φόνου

ELECTRA

CHRYSOTHEMIS

And I, poor fool, was hurrying in hot haste
To bring my joyful message, unaware
Of our ill plight ; and now that I have brought it
I find fresh sorrows added to the old.

ELECTRA

So stands the case ; but be advised by me
And lighten this the burden of our woes.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Wouldst have me raise the dead to life again ?

ELECTRA

I meant not that ; I am not so demented.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

What wouldst thou then that lies within my powers ?

ELECTRA

Be bold to execute what I enjoin.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

If it can profit, I will not refuse.

ELECTRA

Success, remember, is the meed of toil.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

I know it, and will help thee all I can.

ELECTRA

Then listen how I am resolved to act.
From friends, thou knowest now as well as I,
We cannot look for succour ; death hath snatched
All from us and we two are left alone.
While yet my brother lived and tidings came
Of his prosperity, I still had hopes
That he would yet appear to avenge his sire :
But now that he is dead, to thee I turn ;
From thee a sister craves a sister's aid,

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ξὺν τῇδ' ἀδελφῇ μὴ κατοκνήσεις κτανεῖν
 Αἰγισθον· οὐδὲν γάρ σε δεῖ κρύπτειν μ' ἔτι.
 ποῖ γὰρ μενεῖς ῥάθυμος, εἰς τίν' ἐλπίδων
 βλέψασ' ἔτ' ὀρθήν; ἢ πάρεστι μὲν στένειν
 πλούτου πατρῷου κτήσιν ἐστερημένη, 960
 πάρεστι δ' ἀλγεῖν ἐς τοσόνδε τοῦ χρόνου
 ἄλεκτρα γηράσκουσαν ἀνυμέναιά τε.
 καὶ τῶνδε μέντοι μηκέτ' ἐλπίσης ὅπως
 τεύξει ποτ'· οὐ γὰρ ᾧδ' ἄβουλός ἐστ' ἀνῆρ
 Αἰγισθος ὥστε σὸν ποτ' ἢ κάμὸν γένος
 βλαστεῖν εἶσαι, πημονὴν αὐτῷ σαφῆ.
 ἀλλ' ἦν ἐπίσπη τοῖς ἐμοῖς βουλευμασιν,
 πρῶτον μὲν εὐσέβειαν ἐκ πατρὸς κάτω
 θανόντος οἴσει τοῦ κασιγνήτου θ' ἅμα·
 ἔπειτα δ', ὥσπερ ἐξέφυς, ἐλευθέρα 970
 καλεῖ τὸ λοιπὸν καὶ γάμων ἐπαξίων
 τεύξει· φιλεῖ γὰρ πρὸς τὰ χρηστὰ πᾶς ὄραν.
 λόγων γε μὴν εὐκλειαν οὐχ ὄρας ὅσην
 σαυτῇ τε κάμοι προσβαλεῖς πεισθεῖς ἐμοί;
 τίς γὰρ ποτ' ἀστῶν ἢ ξένων ἡμᾶς ἰδὼν
 τοιοῖσδ' ἐπαίνοις οὐχὶ δεξιώσεται
 ἴδεσθε τῶδε τῶ κασιγνήτῳ, φίλοι,
 ᾧ τὸν πατρῶον οἶκον ἐξεσωσάτην,
 ᾧ τοῖσιν ἐχθροῖς εὖ βεβηκόσιν ποτὲ
 ψυχῆς ἀφειδήσαντε προύστήτην φόνου· 980
 τούτῳ φιλεῖν χρή, τῶδε χρή πάντας σέβειν,
 τῶδ' ἐν θ' ἑορταῖς ἐν τε πανδήμῳ πόλει
 τιμᾶν ἅπαντας οὐνεκ' ἀνδρείας χρεῶν.
 τοιαῦτά τοι νῦν πᾶς τις ἐξερεῖ βροτῶν,
 ζῶσαιν θανούσαιν θ' ὥστε μὴ κλιπεῖν κλέος.
 ἀλλ', ᾧ φίλη, πείσθητι, συμπόνοι πατρί,
 σύγκαμν' ἀδελφῷ, παῦσον ἐκ κακῶν ἐμέ,

ELECTRA

To slay—shrink not—our father's murderer,
Aegisthus. There, I plainly tell thee all.
Why hesitate? What faintest ray of hope
Is left to excuse thy lethargy, whose lot
Henceforth must be to mourn the ancestral wealth
Whereof thou art defrauded, to lament
A youth that withers fast, unloved, unwed.
For dream not wedded bliss can e'er be thine ;
Too wary is Aegisthus to permit
That children should be born of thee or me
For his destruction. But, if thou attend
My counsel, thou shalt reap large benefits :
First, from our dead sire, and our brother too,
A name for piety ; and furthermore,
A free-born woman thou shalt stand revealed ;
And worthy spousals shall be thine, for worth
In women ever captivates all men.
Seest thou not too the honour thou shalt win
Both for thyself and me, if thou consent ?
What countryman, what stranger will not greet
Our presence, when he sees us, with acclaim ?
“ Look, friends, upon this sister pair,” he'll cry,
“ Who raised their father's house, who dared confront
Their foes in power, who jeopardised their lives
In bloody vengeance. Honour to the pair,
Honour and worship! Yea at every feast
Let all the people laud their bravery.”
So will our fame be bruited far and wide,
Nor shall our glory fail in life or death.
Sweet sister, hear me, take thy father's part,
Side with thy brother, give me, give thyself

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

παύσον δὲ σαυτήν, τοῦτο γινώσκουσ' ὅτι
ζῆν αἰσχροὺν αἰσχροῶς τοῖς καλῶς πεφυκόσιν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἐν τοῖς τοιοῦτοις ἐστὶν ἡ προμηθία
καὶ τῷ λέγουσι καὶ κλύουσι σύμμιαχος.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

καὶ πρὶν γε φωνεῖν, ὦ γυναῖκες, εἰ φρενῶν
ἐτύγχαν' αὐτῆ μὴ κακῶν, ἐσώζετ' ἂν
τὴν εὐλάβειαν, ὥσπερ οὐχὶ σώζεται.
ποῖ γὰρ ποτ' ἐμβλέψασα τοιοῦτον θράσος
αὐτῆ θ' ὀπλίζει καμ' ὑπηρετεῖν καλεῖς;
οὐκ εἰσοράς; γυνὴ μὲν οὐδ' ἀνὴρ ἔφυς,
σθένεις δ' ἔλασσον τῶν ἐναντίων χερσὶ.
δαίμων δὲ τοῖς μὲν εὐτυχεῖ καθ' ἡμέραν,
ἡμῖν δ' ἀπορρεῖ κάπτι μῆδὲν ἔρχεται.
τίς οὖν τοιοῦτον ἀνδρα βουλευῶν ἐλεῖν
ἄλυπος ἄτης ἐξαπαλλαχθήσεται;
ὄρα κακῶς πράσσετε μὴ μείζω κακὰ
κτησώμεθ', εἴ τις τοῦσδ' ἀκούσεται λόγους.
λύει γὰρ ἡμῖν οὐδὲν οὐδ' ἐπωφελεῖ
βάξιν καλὴν λαβόντε δυσκλεῶς θανεῖν.
οὐ γὰρ θανεῖν ἔχθιστον, ἀλλ' ὅταν θανεῖν
χρηζῶν τις εἶτα μῆδὲ τοῦτ' ἔχη λαβεῖν.
ἀλλ' ἀντιάξω, πρὶν πανωλέθρους τὸ πᾶν
ἡμᾶς τ' ὀλέσθαι καξερημῶσαι γένος,
κατάσχεσ ὄργην. καὶ τὰ μὲν λελεγμένα
ἄρρητ' ἐγὼ σοι κατελῆ φυλάξομαι,
αὐτῆ δὲ νοῦν σχέσ ἀλλὰ τῷ χρόνῳ ποτέ,
σθένουσα μῆδὲν τοῖς κρατοῦσιν εἰκαθεῖν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πέιθον· προνοίας οὐδὲν ἀνθρώποις ἔφν
κέρδος λαβεῖν ἄμεινον οὐδὲ νοῦ σοφοῦ.

ELECTRA

Surcease of sorrow ; and remember this,
A life of shame is shame for noble souls.

CHORUS

Forethought for those that speak and those that hear,
In such grave issues, is most serviceable.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Before she spake, were not her mind perverse,
She had remembered caution, but she, friends,
Remembers not. (To ELECTRA.) What glamour
fooled thee thus

To take up arms thus boldly and enlist me ?
Thou art a woman, see'st thou not ? no man,
No match in battle for thine adversaries ;
Their fortune rises with the flowing tide,
Ours ebbs and leaves us soon a stranded hulk ;
Who then could hope to grapple with a foe
So mighty and escape without a fall ?
Bethink thee, if thy speech were overheard,
We are like to change our evil plight for worse.
Small comfort or commodity to win
Glory and die an ignominious death !
Mere death were easy, but to crave for death
And be denied that last boon—there's the sting.
Nay, I entreat, before we wreck ourselves
And perish root and branch, restrain thy rage.
All thou hast said for me shall be unsaid,
An empty breath. O learn at length, though late,
To yield, nor match thy weakness with their strength.

CHORUS

Hearken ! for mortal man there is no gift
Greater than forethought and sobriety.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀπροσδόκητον οὐδὲν εἴρηκας· καλῶς δ'
ἦδη σ' ἀπορρίψουσιν ἀπηγγελῶσιν.
ἰλλ' αὐτόχειρί μοι μόνῃ τε δραστέου
τοῦργον τόδ'· οὐ γὰρ δὴ κενόν γ' ἀφήσομεν. 1020

ΧΡΥΣΘΕΜΙΣ

φεῦ·
εἶθ' ὄφελος τοιάδε τὴν γνώμην πατρός
θυήσκοντος εἶναι· πᾶν γὰρ ἂν κατειργάσω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ' ἦ φύσιν γε, τὸν δὲ νοῦν ἤσσων τότε.

ΧΡΥΣΘΕΜΙΣ

ἄσκει τοιαύτη νοῦν δι' αἰῶνος μένειν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὡς οὐχὶ συνδράσουσα νουθετεῖς τάδε.

ΧΡΥΣΘΕΜΙΣ

εἰκὸς γὰρ ἐγχειροῦντα καὶ πράσσειν κακῶς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ζηλῶ σε τοῦ νοῦ, τῆς δὲ δειλίας στυγῶ.

ΧΡΥΣΘΕΜΙΣ

ἀνέξομαι κλύουσα χῶταν εὖ λέγης.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ' οὐ ποτ' ἐξ ἐμοῦ γε μὴ πάθης τόδε.

ΧΡΥΣΘΕΜΙΣ

μακρὸς τὸ κρίναι ταῦτα χῶ λοιπὸς χρόνος. 1030

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἄπελθε· σοὶ γὰρ ὠφέλησις οὐκ ἔνι.

ΧΡΥΣΘΕΜΙΣ

ἔνεστιν· ἀλλὰ σοὶ μάθησις οὐ πύρα.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐλθοῦσα μητρὶ ταῦτα πάντ' ἔξειπε σῆ.

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

'Tis as I thought : before thy answer came
I knew full well thou wouldst refuse thine aid.
Unaided then and by myself I'll do it,
For done it must be, though I work alone.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Ah well-a-way !
Would thou hadst been so minded on that day
Our father died ! What couldst thou not have
wrought !

ELECTRA

My temper was the same, my mind less ripe.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Study to keep the same mind all thy days.

ELECTRA

This counsel means refusal of thine aid.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Yes, for misfortune dogs such enterprise.

ELECTRA

I praise thy prudence, hate thy cowardice.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

E'en when thou shalt commend me, I will bear
Thy commendation no less patiently.

ELECTRA

That trial thou wilt ne'er endure from me.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Who lives will see ; time yet may prove thee wrong

ELECTRA

Begone ! in thee there is no power to aid.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Not so ; in thee there is no will to learn.

ELECTRA

Go to thy mother ; tell it all to her.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΧΡΤΣΘΘΕΜΙΣ

οὐδ' αὖ τοσοῦτον ἔχθος ἔχθαίρω σ' ἐγώ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ' οὖν ἐπίστω γ' οἷ μ' ἀτιμίας ἄγεις.

ΧΡΤΣΘΘΕΜΙΣ

ἀτιμίας μὲν οὐ, προμηθίας δὲ σοῦ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τῷ σῷ δικαίῳ δῆτ' ἐπισπέσθαι με δεῖ;

ΧΡΤΣΘΘΕΜΙΣ

ὅταν γὰρ εὐ φρονῆς, τόθ' ἠγήσει σὺ νῶν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἢ δεινὸν εὐ λέγουσαν ἐξαμαρτάνειν.

ΧΡΤΣΘΘΕΜΙΣ

εἴρηκας ὀρθῶς ᾧ σὺ πρόσκεισαι κακῷ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τί δ'; οὐ δοκῶ σοι ταῦτα σὺν δίκῃ λέγειν;

ΧΡΤΣΘΘΕΜΙΣ

ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἔνθα χῆ δίκη βλάβην φέρει.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τούτοις ἐγὼ ζῆν τοῖς νόμοις οὐ βούλομαι.

ΧΡΤΣΘΘΕΜΙΣ

ἀλλ' εἰ ποῆσεις ταῦτ', ἐπαινέσεις ἐμέ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

καὶ μὴν ποῆσω γ' οὐδὲν ἐκπλαγεῖσά σε.

ΧΡΤΣΘΘΕΜΙΣ

καὶ τοῦτ' ἀληθές, οὐδὲ βουλεύσει πάλιν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

βουλῆς γὰρ οὐδὲν ἔστιν ἔχθιον κακῆς.

ΧΡΤΣΘΘΕΜΙΣ

φρονεῖν ἔοικας οὐδὲν ὦν ἐγὼ λέγω.

ELECTRA

CHRYSOTHEMIS

My hatred of thee does not reach so far.

ELECTRA

Thou wouldst dishonour me ; that much is sure.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Dishonour ? No, I seek to save thine honour.

ELECTRA

Am I to make thy rule of honour mine ?

CHRYSOTHEMIS

When thou art wise, then thou shalt guide us both.

ELECTRA

Sound words ; 'tis sad they are so misapplied.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Thou hittest well the blot that is thine own.

ELECTRA

How ? dost deny the plea I urge is just ?

CHRYSOTHEMIS

No ; but e'en justice sometimes worketh harm.

ELECTRA

I choose not to conform to such a rule.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Well, if thy purpose hold, thou'lt own me right.

ELECTRA

It holds ; I shall not swerve in awe of thee.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Is this thy last word ? Wilt not be advised ?

ELECTRA

No, naught is loathlier than ill advice.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Thou seemest deaf to all that I can urge.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πάλαι δέδοκται ταῦτα κού νεωστί μοι.

ΧΡΥΣΘΕΜΙΣ

ἄπειμι τοίνυν· οὔτε γὰρ σὺ τᾶμ' ἔπη
τολμᾶς ἐπαινεῖν οὔτ' ἐγὼ τοὺς σοὺς τρόπους.

1050

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἄλλ' εἴσιθ'. οὐ σοι μὴ μεθέψομαί ποτε,
οὐδ' ἦν σφόδρ' ἰμείρουσα τυγχάνης· ἐπεὶ
πολλῆς ἀνοίας καὶ τὸ θηρᾶσθαι κενά.

ΧΡΥΣΘΕΜΙΣ

ἄλλ' εἰ σεαυτῇ τυγχάνεις δοκοῦσά τι
φρονεῖν, φρόνει τοιαῦθ'. ὅταν γὰρ ἐν κακοῖς
ἦδη βεβήκης, τᾶμ' ἐπαινέσεις ἔπη.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α'

τί τοὺς ἄνωθεν φρονιμωτάτους οἰωνοὺς ἐσορώμενοι 1060
τροφᾶς

κηδομένους ἀφ' ὧν τε βλάστωσιν ἀφ' ὧν τ' ὄνασιν
εὐρ-

ωσι, τὰδ' οὐκ ἐπ' ἴσας τελοῦμεν;

ἄλλ' οὐ τὰν Διὸς ἀστραπὰν

καὶ τὰν οὐρανίαν Θέμιν,

δαρὸν οὐκ ἀπόνητοι.

ὦ χθονία βροτοῖσι φάμα, κατὰ μοι βόασον οἰκτρὰν
ὅπα τοῖς ἔνερθ' Ἀτρείδαις, ἀχόρευτα φέρουσ'
ὄνειδῆ

ἀντ. α'

ὅτι σφὶν ἦδη τὰ μὲν ἐκ δόμων νοσεῖ δῆ,¹ τὰ δὲ 1070
πρὸς τέκνων διπλῆ

φύλοπις οὐκέτ' ἐξισοῦται φιλοτασίῳ διαί-
τα· πρόδοτος δὲ μόνα σαλεύει

¹ Triclinius adds δῆ.

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

My resolution was not born to-day.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Then I will go, for thou canst not be brought
To approve my words, nor I to approve thy ways.

ELECTRA

Go in then ; I shall never follow thee,
E'en shouldst thou pray me : 'tis insane to urge .
An idle suit.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Well, if thou art wise
In thine own eyes, so let it be ; anon,
Sore stricken, thou wilt take my words to heart.

[*Exit* CHRYSOTHEMIS.]

CHORUS

Wise nature taught the birds of air (Str. 1)
For those who reared them in the nest to care ;
The parent bird is nourished by his brood,
And shall not we, as they,
The debt of nature pay,
Shall man not show like gratitude ?
By Zeus who hurls the leven,
By Themis throned in heaven,
There comes a judgment day ;
Not long shall punishment delay.
O voice that echoes to the world below,
Bear to the dead a wail of woe,
A coronach, a tale of shame
To Atreus' line proclaim.

Tell him his house is stricken sore, (Ant. 1)
Tell him his children now no more
In amity together dwell ;
Dire strife the twain divides,

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

Ἡλέκτρα, τὸν αἰὶ¹ πατρὸς
 δειλαία στενάχουσ', ὅπως
 ἂ πάνδυρτος ἀηδῶν,
 οὔτε τι τοῦ θανεῖν προμηθῆς τό τε μὴ βλέπειν
 ἔτοιμα,
 διδύμαν ἑλοῦσ' Ἑρινύν· τίς ἂν εὐπατρὶς ὧδε 1080
 βλάστοι;

οὔδεις τῶν ἀγαθῶν γὰρ² στρ. β'
 ζῶν κακῶς εὐκλειαν αἰσχύναι θέλει
 νῶνυμος, ὦ παῖ παῖ.
 ὡς καὶ σὺ πάγκλαυτον αἰῶνα κοινὸν εἴλου,
 τὸ μὴ καλὸν καθοπλίσασα, δύο φέρειν ἐν ἐνὶ
 λόγῳ,
 σοφά τ' ἀρίστα τε παῖς κεκλήσθαι.
 ζῆψι μοι καθύπερθεν ἀντ. β'. 1090
 χειρὶ καὶ πλούτῳ τεῶν ἐχθρῶν ὅσον
 νῦν ὑπόχειρ³ ναίεις·
 ἐπεὶ σ' ἐφηύρηκα μοῖρα μὲν οὐκ ἐν ἐσθλῇ
 βεβῶσαν, ἃ δὲ μέγιστ' ἔβλαστε νόμιμα, τῶνδε
 φερομένην
 ἄριστα τῇ Ζηνὸς⁴ εὐσεβείᾳ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἄρ', ὦ γυναῖκες, ὀρθά τ' εἰσηκούσαμεν
 ὀρθῶς θ' ὀδοιποροῦμεν ἔνθα χρῆζομεν;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί δ' ἐξερευνᾶς καὶ τί βουλευθεῖς πάρει; 1100

¹ The text is corrupt, and no plausible emendation has yet been suggested.

² Hermann adds γὰρ *metri gratia*.

³ ἐπὶ χεῖρα MSS., Musgrave corr.

⁴ Διὸς MSS., Triclinius corr.

ELECTRA

Alone Electra bides,
Alone she braves the surging swell.

Disconsolate doth she her sire bewail,
Like the forlornest nightingale ;
Reckless of life, could she but quell
The cursed pair, those Furies fell.
Where shall ye find on earth
A maid to match her worth ?

No generous soul were fain (Str. 2)
By a base life his fair repute to stain.
Such baseness thou didst scorn,
Choosing, my child, to mourn with them that mourn.
Wise and of daughters best—
With double honours thou art doubly blest.

O may I see thee tower (Ant. 2)
As high above thy foes in wealth and power
As now they tower o'er thee ;
For now thy state is piteous to see.
Yet brightly dost thou shine,
For fear of Zeus far-famed and love of laws divine.
Enter ORESTES.

ORESTES

Pray tell me, ladies, were we guided right,
And are we close upon our journey's end ?

CHORUS

What seek'st thou, stranger, and with what intent ?

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

Αἴγισθου ἐνθ' ᾤκηκεν ἱστορῶ πάλαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' εὐ θ' ἰκάνεις χῶ φράσας ἀζήμιος.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τίς οὖν ἂν ὑμῶν τοῖς ἔσω φράσειεν ἂν
ἡμῶν ποθεινὴν κοινόπουν παρουσίαν;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἦδ', εἰ τὸν ἀγχιστόν γε κηρύσσειν χρεῶν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἴθ', ὦ γυναῖ, δήλωσον εἰσελθοῦσ' ὅτι
Φωκῆς ματεύουσ' ἄνδρες Αἴγισθόν τινες,

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οἴμοι τάλαιν', οὐ δὴ ποθ' ἧς ἠκούσαμεν
φήμης φέροντες ἐμφανῆ τεκμήρια;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐκ οἶδα τὴν σὴν κληδόν'. ἀλλά μοι γέρων
ἐφεῖτ' Ὀρέστου Στρόφιος ἀγγεῖλαι πέρι.

1110

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τί δ' ἔστιν, ὦ ξέν'; ὡς μ' ὑπέρχεται φόβος.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

φέροντες αὐτοῦ σμικρὰ λείψαν' ἐν βραχεῖ
τεύχει θανόντος, ὡς ὄρας, κομίζομεν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οἱ γὰρ τάλαινα, τοῦτ' ἐκεῖν' ἤδη σαφὲς
πρόχειρον ἄχθος, ὡς ἔοικε, δέρκομαι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

εἴπερ τι κλαίεις τῶν Ὀρεστείων κακῶν,
τόδ' ἄγγος ἴσθι σῶμα τοῦκείνου στέγον.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ ξεῖνε, δός νυν, πρὸς θεῶν, εἴπερ τόδε
κέκυθεν αὐτὸν τεύχος, εἰς χεῖρας λαβεῖν,

1120

ELECTRA

ORESTES

I seek and long have sought Aegisthus' home.

CHORUS

'Tis here ; thy guide is nowise blameable.

ORESTES

Would one of you announce to those within
The auspicious advent of our company ?

CHORUS

This maiden, as the next of kin, will do it.

ORESTES

Go, madam, say that visitors have come
And seek Aegisthus—certain Phocians.

ELECTRA

Ah woe is me ! You come not to confirm
By ocular proof the rumours that we heard ?

ORESTES

I've heard no "rumours." Agèd Strophius
Charged me with tidings of Orestes.

ELECTRA

Ha !

What tidings, stranger ? how I quake with dread !

ORESTES

Ashes within this narrow urn we bear,
All that remains of him, as thou mayst see.

ELECTRA

Ah me unhappy ! in my very sight
Lies palpable the burden of my woes.

ORESTES

If for Orestes thou art weeping, know
This brazen urn contains the dust of him.

ELECTRA

O if it hold his ashes, let me, friend,
O let me, let me take it in my hands.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὅπως ἐμαυτὴν καὶ γένος τὸ πᾶν ὁμοῦ
 ξὺν τῆδε κλαύσω κάποδύρωμαι σποδῶ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

δόθ', ἥτις ἐστί, προσφέροντες· οὐ γὰρ ὡς
 ἐν δυσμενείᾳ γ' οὐσ' ἐπαιτεῖται τάδε,
 ἀλλ' ἢ φίλων τις ἢ πρὸς αἵματος φύσιν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ φιλτάτου μνημεῖον ἀνθρώπων ἐμοὶ
 ψυχῆς Ὀρέστου λοιπόν, ὡς σ' ἀπ' ἐλπίδων
 οὐχ ὦνπερ ἐξέπεμπον εἰσεδεξάμην.
 νῦν μὲν γὰρ οὐδὲν ὄντα βαστάζω χεροῖν,
 δόμων δέ σ', ὦ παῖ, λαμπρὸν ἐξέπεμψ' ἐγώ.
 ὡς ὄφελον πάροισεν ἐκλιπεῖν βίον,
 πρὶν ἐς ξένην σε γαῖαν ἐκπέμψαι χεροῖν
 κλέψασα ταῖνδε κάνασώσασθαι φόνου,
 ὅπως θανὼν ἔκτισο τῇ τόθ' ἡμέρᾳ,
 τύμβου πατρώου κοινὸν εἰληχῶς μέρος.
 νῦν δ' ἐκτὸς οἴκων καπὶ γῆς ἄλλης φυγὰς
 κακῶς ἀπώλου, σῆς κασιγνήτης δίχα,
 κοῦτ' ἐν φίλαισι χερσὶν ἢ τάλαιν' ἐγὼ
 λουτροῖς σ' ἐκόσμησ' οὔτε παμφλέκτου πυρὸς
 ἀνειλόμην, ὡς εἰκός, ἄθλιον βάρος,
 ἀλλ' ἐν ξέναισι χερσὶ κηδευθεὶς τάλας
 σμικρὸς προσήκεις ὄγκος ἐν σμικρῷ κύτει.
 οἴμοι τάλαινα τῆς ἐμῆς πάλαι τροφῆς
 ἀνωφελήτου, τὴν ἐγὼ θάμ' ἀμφὶ σοὶ
 πόνῳ γλυκεῖ παρέσχον· οὔτε γὰρ ποτε
 μητρὸς σὺ γ' ἦσθα μᾶλλον ἢ κάμου φίλος,
 οὔθ' οἱ κατ' οἶκον ἦσαν, ἀλλ' ἐγὼ τροφός,
 ἐγὼ δ' ἀδελφῆ σοὶ προσηυδώμην· αἰεὶ.
 νῦν δ' ἐκλέλοιπε ταῦτ' ἐν ἡμέρᾳ μιᾷ

1130

1140

ELECTRA

Not for this dust alone, but for myself
And all my house withal, I'll weep and wail.

ORESTES

Bring it and give it her, whoe'er she be ;
For not as an ill-wisher, but as friend,
Or haply near of kin, she asks the boon.

ELECTRA

Last relics of the man I most did love,
Orestes ! high in hope I sent thee forth ;
How hast thou dashed all hope in thy return !
Radiant as day thou speddest forth, and now
I hold a dusty nothing in my hands.
Would I had died before I rescued thee
From death and sent thee to a foreign land !
Then hadst thou fallen together with thy sire
And lain beside him in the ancestral tomb :
Now in a strange land, exiled, far from home,
Far from thy sister thou hast died, ah me !
How miserably ! I was not by to lave
And deck with loving hands thy corse, and snatch
Thy charred bones from out the flaming pyre.
Alas ! by foreign hands these rites were paid,
And now thou comest back to me, of dust
A little burden in this little urn.
O for the nursing and the toil, no toil,
I spent on thee an infant, all in vain !
For thou wast ne'er thy mother's babe, but mine ;
Thou hadst no nurse in all the house but me,
I was *thy sister*, none so called but me.
But now all this hath vanished in a day,

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

θανόντι σὺν σοί· πάντα γὰρ συναρπάσας 1150
 θύελλ' ὄπως βέβηκας. οἴχεται πατήρ·
 τέθνηκ' ἐγὼ σοί· φρουῶδος αὐτὸς εἰ θανῶν·
 γελῶσι δ' ἐχθροί· μαινεται δ' ὑφ' ἡδονῆς
 μήτηρ ἀμήτωρ, ἧς ἐμοὶ σὺ πολλάκις
 φήμας λάθρα προύπεμπες ὡς φανούμενος
 τιμωρὸς αὐτός. ἀλλὰ ταῦθ' ὁ δυστυχήης
 δαίμων ὁ σὸς τε κάμὸς ἐξαφείλετο,
 ὅς σ' ὠδέ μοι προύπεμψεν ἀντὶ φιλιτάτης
 μορφῆς σποδὸν τε καὶ σκιὰν ἀνωφελῆ.
 οἴμοι μοι. 1160

ὦ δέμας οἰκτρὸν. φεῦ φεῦ.
 ὦ δεινοτάτας, οἴμοι μοι,
 πεμφθεὶς κελεύθους, φίλταθ', ὡς μ' ἀπώλεσας·
 ἀπώλεσας δῆτ', ὦ κασίγνητον κἄρα.
 τοιγὰρ σὺ δέξαι μ' ἐς τὸ σὸν τόδε στέγος,
 τὴν μηδὲν εἰς τὸ μηδέν, ὡς σὺν σοὶ κάτω
 ναίω τὸ λοιπόν· καὶ γὰρ ἡνίκ' ἦσθ' ἄνω,
 ξὺν σοὶ μετείχον τῶν ἴσων, καὶ νῦν ποθῶ
 τοῦ σοῦ θανοῦσα μὴ ἀπολείπεσθαι τάφου.
 τοὺς γὰρ θανόντας οὐχ ὀρῶ λυπουμενούς. 1170

ΧΟΡΟΣ

θνητοῦ πέφυκας πατρός, Ἥλέκτρα, φρόνει,
 θνητὸς δ' Ὀρέστης. ὥστε μὴ λίαν στένε.
 πᾶσιν γὰρ ἡμῖν τοῦτ' ὀφείλεται παθεῖν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

φεῦ φεῦ. τί λέξω; ποῖ λόγων ἀμηχανῶν
 ἔλθω; κρατεῖν γὰρ οὐκέτι γλώσσης σθένω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τί δ' ἔσχατος ἄλγος; πρὸς τί τοῦτ' εἰπὼν κυρεῖς;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἦ σὸν τὸ κλεινὸν εἶδος Ἥλέκτρας τόδε;

ELECTRA

Dead with thy death, a whirlwind that passed by,
And left all desolate ; thy father's gone,
And I am dead in thee, and thou art lost ;
And our foes laugh. That mother, mother none,
Whose crimes, as oft thou gav'st me secret word,
Thou wouldst thyself full speedily avenge,
Is mad for joy. But now malignant fate,
Thy fate and mine, hath blasted all and sent me,
Instead of that dear form I loved so well,
Cold ashes and an unavailing shade.

Ah me ! Ah me !

O piteous corse !

Ah woe is me !

O woeful coming ! I am all undone,
Undone by thee, beloved brother mine !
Take me, O take me to thy last lone home,
A shadow to a shade, that I may dwell
With thee for ever in the underworld ;
For here on earth we shared alike, and now
I fain would die to share with thee thy tomb ;
For with the dead there is no mourning, none.

CHORUS

Child of a mortal sire, Electra, think,
Orestes too was mortal ; calm thy grief.
Death is a debt that all of us must pay.

ORESTES

Ah me ! what shall I say where all words fail ?
And yet I can no longer curb my tongue.

ELECTRA

What sudden trouble made thee speak like this ?

ORESTES

Is this the famed Electra I behold ?

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τόδ' ἔστ' ἐκείνο, καὶ μάλ' ἀθλίως ἔχον.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οἴμοι ταλαίηνης ἄρα τήσδε συμφορᾶς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐ δὴ ποτ', ὦ ξέν', ἀμφ' ἐμοὶ στένεις τάδε; 1180

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὦ σῶμ' ἀτίμως καθέως ἐφθαρμένον.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὔτοι ποτ' ἄλλην ἢ 'μὲ δυσφημεῖς, ξένε.

ΟΤΕΣΤΗΣ

φεῦ τῆς ἀνύμφου δυσμόρου τε σῆς τροφῆς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τί δὴ ποτ', ὦ ξέν', ὧδ' ἐπισκοπῶν στένεις;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὡς οὐκ ἄρ' ἤδη τῶν ἐμῶν οὐδὲν κακῶν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐν τῷ διέγνωσ τούτο τῶν εἰρημένων;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὄρων σε πολλοῖς ἐμπρέπουσαν ἄλγεσιν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

καὶ μὴν ὄρας γε παῦρα τῶν ἐμῶν κακῶν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

καὶ πῶς γένοιτ' ἂν τῶνδ' ἔτ' ἐχθίω βλέπειν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὀθούνεκ' εἰμὶ τοῖς φονεῦσι σύντροφος 1190

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τοῖς τοῦ; πόθεν τοῦτ' ἐξεσήμηνας κακόν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τοῖς πατρός· εἶτα τοῖσδε δουλεύω βία.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τίς γάρ σ' ἀνάγκη τῆδε προτρέπει βροτῶν;

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

'Tis she, and very wretched is her state.

ORESTES

O for the heavy change! Alas, alas!

ELECTRA

Surely thy pity, sir, is not for *me*.

ORESTES

O beauty marred by foul and impious spite!

ELECTRA

Yea, sir, this wreck of womanhood am I.

ORESTES

Alas, how sad a life of singleness!

ELECTRA

Why gaze thus on me, stranger, and lament?

ORESTES

Of my own ills how little then I knew!

ELECTRA

Was this revealed by any word of mine?

ORESTES

By seeing thee conspicuous in thy woes.

ELECTRA

And yet my looks reveal but half my woes.

ORESTES

Could there be woes more piteous to behold?

ELECTRA

Yea, to be houseniate with the murderers—

ORESTES

Whose murderers? at what villainy dost hint?

ELECTRA

My father's; and their slave am I perforce.

ORESTES

Who is it puts upon thee this constraint?

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

μήτηρ καλείται, μητρὶ δ' οὐδὲν ἐξισοῖ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τί δρῶσα; πότερα χερσὶν ἢ λύμη βίου;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

καὶ χερσὶ καὶ λύμαισι καὶ πᾶσιν κακοῖς.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐδ' οὐπαρήξων οὐδ' ὁ κωλύσων πάρα;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐ δῆθ'. ὅς ἦν γάρ μοι σὺ προϋθηκας σποδόν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὦ δύσποτμ', ὡς ὀρών σ' ἐποικτίρω πάλαι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

μόνος βροτῶν νυν ἴσθ' ἐποικτίρας ποτέ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

μόνος γὰρ ἤκω τοῖς ἴσοις ἀλγῶν κακοῖς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐ δὴ ποθ' ἡμῖν ξυγγενῆς ἤκεις ποθέν;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἐγὼ φράσαιμ' ἄν, εἰ τὸ τῶνδ' εὖνουν πάρα.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ' ἐστὶν εὖνουν, ὥστε πρὸς πιστὰς ἐρεῖς.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

μέθες τόδ' ἄγγος νῦν, ὅπως τὸ πᾶν μάθῃς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

μὴ δῆτα πρὸς θεῶν τοῦτό μ' ἐργάσῃ, ξένε.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

πείθου λέγοντι κοῦχ ἁμαρτήσῃ ποτέ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

μή, πρὸς γενείου, μὴ 'ξέλη τὰ φίλτατα.

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

My mother, not a mother save in name.

ORESTES

By blows or petty tyrannies or how ?

ELECTRA

By blows and tyrannies of every kind.

ORESTES

And is there none to help or stay her hand ?

ELECTRA

None ; there *was* one, the man whose dust I hold.

ORESTES

Poor maid ! my pity's stirred at sight of thee.

ELECTRA

Thou art the first who ever pitied me.

ORESTES

I am the first to feel a common woe.

ELECTRA

What, canst thou be some kinsman from afar ?

ORESTES

If these are friends who hear us, I would answer.

ELECTRA

Yes, they are friends ; thou needst not fear to speak

ORESTES

Give back this urn, and then I'll tell thee all.

ELECTRA

Ask not so hard a thing, good sir, I pray.

ORESTES

Do as I bid thee ; thou shalt not repent it.

ELECTRA

O, I adjure thee, rob me not of that
The most I prize on earth.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐ φημ' εἶσεν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ τάλαιν' ἐγὼ σέθεν,

'Ορέστα, τῆς σῆς εἰ στερήσομαι ταφῆς.

1210

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

εὐφημα φώνει· πρὸς δίκης γὰρ οὐ στένεις.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πῶς τὸν θανόντ' ἀδελφὸν οὐ δίκη στένω;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐ σοι προσήκει τήνδε προσφωνεῖν φάτιν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὕτως ἄτιμός εἰμι τοῦ τεθνηκότος;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἄτιμος οὐδενὸς σύ· τοῦτο δ' οὐχὶ σόν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

εἵπερ γ' 'Ορέστου σῶμα βαστάζω τόδε;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἀλλ' οὐκ 'Ορέστου, πλὴν λόγῳ γ' ἠσκημένον.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ποῦ δ' ἔστ' ἐκείνου τοῦ ταλαιπώρου τάφος;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐκ ἔστι· τοῦ γὰρ ζῶντος οὐκ ἔστιν τάφος.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πῶς εἶπας, ὦ παῖ;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ψεύδος οὐδὲν ὦν λέγω.

1220

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἦ ζῆ γὰρ ἀνήρ;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

εἵπερ ἔμψυχός γ' ἐγώ.

ELECTRA

ORESTES

It may not be.

ELECTRA

Ah! woe for thee, Orestes, woe is me,
If I am not to give thee burial.

ORESTES

Guard well thy lips; thou hast no right to mourn.

ELECTRA

No right to mourn a brother who is dead!

ORESTES

To speak of him in this wise is not meet.

ELECTRA

What, am I so dishonoured of the dead?

ORESTES

Of none dishonoured: this is not thy part.

ELECTRA

Not if Orestes' ashes here I hold?

ORESTES

They are not his, though feigned to pass for his.

ELECTRA

Where then is my unhappy brother's grave?

ORESTES

There is no grave; we bury not the quick.

ELECTRA

What sayst thou, boy?

ORESTES

Nothing that is not true.

ELECTRA

He lives?

ORESTES

As surely as I am alive.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἦ γὰρ σὺ κείνος;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τὴνδε προσβλέψασά μου
σφραγίδα πατρὸς ἔκμαθ' εἰ σαφῆ λέγω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ φίλτατον φῶς.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

φίλτατον, συμμαρτυρῶ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ φθέγμ', ἀφίκου;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

μηκέτ' ἄλλοθεν πύθη,

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἔχω σε χερσίν;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὡς τὰ λοιπ' ἔχouis αἰεί.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ φίλταται γυναῖκες, ὦ πολίτιδες,
ὄρᾱτ' Ὀρέστην τόνδε, μηχαναῖσι μὲν
θανόντα, νῦν δὲ μηχαναῖς σεσωσμένον.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὀρῶμεν, ὦ παῖ, κἀπὶ συμφοραῖσί μοι
γεγηθὸς ἔρπει δάκρυον ὀμμάτων ἀπο.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἰὼ γοαί,
γοαὶ σωμάτων ἐμοὶ φιλτάτων,
ἐμόλετ' ἀρτίως,
ἐφηύρετ', ἤλθετ', εἶδεθ' οὓς ἐχρηζετε.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

πάρεσμεν ἀλλὰ σίγ' ἔχουσα πρόσμενε.

1230

στρ.

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

What, art thou he?

ORESTES

Look at this signet ring,
My father's; let it witness if I lie.

ELECTRA

O happy day!

ORESTES

O, happy, happy day!

ELECTRA

Thy voice I greet!

ORESTES

My voice gives greeting back.

ELECTRA

My arms embrace thee!

ORESTES

May they clasp me aye!

ELECTRA

My countrywomen, dearest friends, behold
Orestes who in feigning died, and so
By feigning is alive again and safe.

CHORUS

We see him, daughter, and this glad surprise
Makes our eyes overflow with happy tears.

ELECTRA

Son of my best loved sire,
Now hast thou come, art here to find, to see
Thy heart's desire.

(*Str.*)

ORESTES

E'en so; but best keep silence for a while.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τί δ' ἔστιν;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

σιγᾶν ἄμεινον, μή τις ἔνδοθεν κλύῃ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ' οὐ μὰ τὴν ἄδμητον αἰὲν Ἄρτεμιν,¹
τόδε μὲν οὐ ποτ' ἀξιόσω τρέσαι,
περισσὸν ἄχθος ἔνδον
γυναικῶν ὄν αἰεὶ.

1240

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὄρα γε μὲν δὴ κὰν γυναιξὶν ὡς Ἄρης
ἔνεστιν· εὐ δ' ἔξοισθα πειραθεῖσά που.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὄτοτοτοτοτοῖ τοτοῖ,
ἀνέφελον ἐρέβαλες οὐ ποτε καταλύσιμον,
οὐδέ ποτε λησόμενον ἀμέτερον
οἶον ἔφνυ κακόν.

1250

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἔξοιδα, παῖ, ταῦτ'· ἀλλ' ὅταν παρουσία
φράξῃ, τότε ἔργων τῶνδε μεμνήσθαι χρεών.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὁ πᾶς ἐμοί, ἀντ.
ὁ πᾶς ἂν πρέποι παρὼν ἐννέπειν
τάδε δίκαι χρόνος·
μόλις γὰρ ἔσχον νῦν ἐλεύθερον στόμα.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ξύμφημι κἀγὼ τουγαροῦν σφύζου τόδε.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τί δρῶσα;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐ μὴ ᾽στι καιρὸς μὴ μακρὰν βούλου λέγειν.

¹ ἀλλ' οὐ τὰν Ἄρτεμιν τὰν αἰὲν ἀδμήταν MSS., Fröhlich corr.

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

What need for silence ?

ORESTES

'Twere wise, lest someone from the house should
hear.

ELECTRA

Nay, by Queen Artemis the virgin maid,
Of women-folk I ne'er will be afraid,
Those stay-at-homes, mere cumberers of the ground.

ORESTES

Yet note that in the breasts of women dwells
The War-God too, as thou methinks hast found.

ELECTRA

Ah me, ah me !
Thou wak'st a memory
Inveterate, ineffaceable,
An ache time cannot quell.

ORESTES

I know it too ; but when the hour shall strike
Then it behoves us to recall those deeds.

ELECTRA

All time, each passing hour (Ant.)
Henceforward I were fain
To tell my griefs, my pain,
For late and hardly have I won free speech.

ORESTES

'Tis so ; then forfeit not this liberty.

ELECTRA

How forfeit it ?

ORESTES

By speaking out of season overmuch.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τίς οὖν ἂν ἀξίαν γε σοῦ πεφηνότος
 μεταβάλοιτ' ἂν ὧδε σιγὰν λόγων;
 ἐπεὶ σε νῦν ἀφράστως
 ἀέλπτως τ' ἐσείδον.

1260

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τότ' εἶδες, εὔτε¹ θεοί μ' ἐπώτρυναν μολεῖν

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἔφρασας ὑπερτέραν
 τὰς πάρος ἔτι χάριτος, εἴ σε θεὸς ἐπόρισεν
 ἀμέτερα πρὸς μέλαθρα· δαιμόνιον
 αὐτὸ τίθημ' ἐγώ.

1270

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τὰ μὲν σ' ὀκνῶ χαίρουσαν εἰργασθεῖν, τὰ δὲ
 δέδοικα λίαν ἡδονῇ νικωμένην.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἰὼ χρόνῳ μακρῷ φιλτάταν ὁδόν.
 ἐπαξιώσας ὧδέ μοι φανῆναι,
 μή τί με, πολύπονον ὧδ' ἰδῶν

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τί μὴ ποιήσω;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

μὴ μ' ἀποστερήσης
 τῶν σῶν προσώπων ἀδονὰν μεθέσθαι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἦ κάρτα κὰν ἄλλοισι θυμοίμην ἰδῶν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ξυναιεῖς;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τί μὴν οὐ;

1280

¹ MSS. ἔτε, Jebb. corr. MSS. ὠτρυναν, Reiske corr.

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

But who would barter speech for silence now,
Who could be dumb,
Now that beyond all thought and hope
I've seen thee come?

ORESTES

That sight was then vouchsafed thee when the gods
First monished me to turn my steps towards home.

ELECTRA

If a god guided thee
To seek our halls, this boon
Surpasses all before, I see
The hand of heaven.

ORESTES

To check thy gladness I am loth, and yet
This ecstasy of joy—it makes me fear.

ELECTRA

O after many a weary year
Restored to glad my eyes,
Seeing my utter misery, forbear—

ORESTES

What is thy prayer?

ELECTRA

Forbear to rob me of the light,
The presence of thy face.

ORESTES

If any dared essay it, I were wrath.

ELECTRA

Dost thou consent?

ORESTES

How could I otherwise?

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ φίλοι, ἔκλυον ἂν ἐγὼ οὐδ' ἂν ἤλπισ' αὐδάν,
 οὐδ' ἂν ἔσχον ὄρμαν¹
 ἀναυδον οὐδέ σὺν βοᾷ κλύουσα,
 τύλαινα. νῦν δ' ἔχω σε· προυφάνης δὲ
 φιλτάταν ἔχων προσοψιν,
 ἄς ἐγὼ οὐδ' ἂν ἐν κακοῖς λαθοίμαν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τὰ μὲν περισσεύοντα τῶν λόγων ἄφες,
 καὶ μῆτε μῆτηρ ὡς κακὴ δίδασκέ με,
 μήθ' ὡς πατρώαν κτήσιω Αἴγισθος δόμων
 ἀντλεῖ, τὰ δ' ἔκχει, τὰ δὲ διασπείρει μάτην·
 χρόνου γὰρ ἂν σοι καιρὸν ἐξείργοι λόγος.
 ἂ δ' ἄρμόσει μοι τῷ παρόντι νῦν χρόνῳ
 σήμαιν', ὅπου φανέντες ἢ κεκρυμμένοι
 γελῶντας ἐχθροὺς παύσομεν τῇ νῦν ὀδῷ.
 οὔτω δ' ὅπως μῆτηρ σε μὴ πινυνώσεται
 παιδρῷ προσώπῳ νῶν ἐπελθόντοιιν δόμους·
 ἀλλ' ὡς ἐπ' ἄτη τῇ μάτην λελεγμένη
 στέναξι· ὅταν γὰρ εὐτυχῆσωμεν, τότε
 χαίρειν παρέσται καὶ γελᾶν ἐλευθέρως.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ' ὦ κασίγνηθ', ὧδ' ὅπως καὶ σοὶ φίλον
 καὶ τούμῳ ἔσται τῆδ'· ἐπεὶ τὰς ἡδονὰς
 πρὸς σοῦ λαβοῦσα κοῦκ ἐμὰς ἐκτησάμην,
 κοῦδ' ἂν σε λυπήσασα δεξαίμην βραχὺ
 αὐτὴ μέγ' εὐρεῖν κέρδος· οὐ γὰρ ἂν καλῶς
 ὑπηρετοίην τῷ παρόντι δαίμονι.
 ἀλλ' οἶσθα μὲν τάνθενδε, πῶς γὰρ οὐ; κλύων
 ὀθούνεκ' Αἴγισθος μὲν οὐ κατὰ στέγας,
 μῆτηρ δ' ἐν οἴκοις· ἦν σὺ μὴ δείσης ποθ' ὡς

¹ Arndt adds οὐδ' ἂν. Blomfield reads ὄρμαν for ὄργαν of MSS.

ELECTRA

ELECTRA (*to CHORUS*)

Friends, a voice is in my ear,
That I never hoped to hear.
At the glad sound how could I
Be mute nor raise a joyous cry?
But I have thee, and the light
Of thy countenance so bright
Not e'en sorrow can eclipse,
Or still the music of those lips.

ORESTES

Spare me all superfluity of words—
How vile our mother, how Aegisthus drains
By waste and luxury our father's house;
The time admits not such prolixity.
But tell me rather what will best subserve
Our present need—where we must show ourselves,
Or lie in wait, and either way confound
The mockery and triumph of our foes.
And see that when we twain are gone within
Our mother read not in thy radiant looks
Our secret; weep as overwhelmed with grief
At our feigned story; when the victory's won
We shall have time and liberty to laugh.

ELECTRA

Yea, as it pleaseth thee it pleases me,
Brother, for all my pleasure is thy gift,
Not mine; nor would I purchase for myself
The greatest boon that cost thee the least pang:
So should I cross the providence that guides us.
How it stands with us, doubtless thou hast heard.
Aegisthus, as thou knowest, is away;
Only our mother keeps the house, and fear not

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

γέλῳτι τοῦμόν φαιδρόν ὄψεται κάρα. 1310
 μίσός τε γάρ παλαιὸν ἐντέτηκε μοι,
 κἀπεί σ' ἐσείδον, οὐ ποτ' ἐκλήξω χαρᾶ
 δακρυρροοῦσα· πῶς γὰρ ἂν λήξαιμ' ἐγώ,
 ἣτις μῖα σε τῆδ' ὀδῶ θανόντα τε
 καὶ ζῶντ' ἐσείδον; εἰργασαι δέ μ' ἄσκοπα·
 ὥστ' εἰ πατήρ μοι ζῶν ἴκοιτο, μηκέτ' ἂν
 τέρας νομίζειν αὐτό, πιστεύειν δ' ὄρα·
 ὅτ' οὖν τοιαύτην ἡμῖν ἐξήκεισ ὀδόν,
 ἄρχ' αὐτὸς ὥς σοι θυμός· ὡς ἐγὼ μόνη
 οὐκ ἂν δυοῖν ἤμαρτον· ἧ γὰρ ἂν καλῶς 1320
 ἔσωσ' ἐμαυτὴν ἧ καλῶς ἀπωλόμην.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

σιγαῖν ἐπήνεσ' ὡς ἐπ' ἐξόδῳ κλύω
 τῶν ἐνδοθεν χωροῦντος.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

εἴσιτ', ὦ ξένοι,
 ἄλλως τε καὶ φέροντες οἳ ἂν οὔτε τις
 δόμων ἀπόσαιτ' οὔτ' ἂν ἡσθεῖη λαβῶν.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

ὦ πλεῖστα μῶροι καὶ φρενῶν τητώμενοι,
 πότερα παρ' οὐδὲν τοῦ βίου κήδεσθ' ἐτι
 ἧ νοῦς ἐνεστιν οὔτις ὑμῖν ἐγγενής,
 ὅτ' οὐ παρ' αὐτοῖς, ἀλλ' ἐν αὐτοῖσιν κακοῖς
 τοῖσιν μεγίστοις ὄντες οὐ γιννώσκετε; 1330
 ἀλλ' εἰ σταθμοῖσι τοῖσδε μὴ κύρουν ἐγὼ
 πάλαι φυλάσσω, ἦν ἂν ὑμῖν ἐν δόμοις
 τὰ δρώμεν' ὑμῶν πρόσθεν ἢ τὰ σώματα·
 νῦν δ' εὐλάβειαν τῶνδε προυθέμην ἐγώ.
 καὶ νῦν ἀπαλλαχθέντε τῶν μακρῶν λόγων
 καὶ τῆς ἀπλήστου τῆσδε σὺν χαρᾶ βοῆς

ELECTRA

That she will see my face lit up with smiles ;
My hatred of her is too deep engrained.
Moreover, since thy coming I have wept,
Wept for pure joy and still must weep to see
The dead alive, on one day dead and living.
It works me strangely ; if my sire appeared
In bodily presence, I should now believe it
No mocking phantom but his living self.
Thus far no common fate hath guided thee ;
So lead me as thou wilt, for left alone
I had myself achieved of two things one,
A noble living or a noble death.

ORESTES

Hush, hush ! I hear a stir within the house
As if one issued forth.

ELECTRA (*to ORESTES and PYLADES*)

Pass in, good sirs,

Ye are sure of welcome ; they within will not
Reject your gift, though bitter it may prove.

Enter AGED SERVANT.

AGED SERVANT

Fools ! madmen ! are ye weary of your lives,
Or are your natural wits too dull to see
That ye are standing, not upon the brink,
But in the midst of mortal jeopardy ?
Nay, had I not kept watch this weary while,
Here at the door, your plot had slipped inside
Ere ye yourselves had entered. As it is,
My watchfulness has fended this mishap.
Now that your wordy eloquence has an end,
And your insatiate cries of joy, go in.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

εἶσω παρέλθεθ', ὡς τὸ μὲν μέλλειν κακὸν
ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις ἔστ', ἀπηλλάχθαι δ' ἀκμή.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

πῶς οὖν ἔχει τάντεῦθεν εἰσιόντι μοι;

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

καλῶς· ὑπάρχει γάρ σε μὴ γνῶναί τινα.

1340

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἤγγειλας, ὡς ἔοικεν, ὡς τεθνηκότα.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

εἰς τῶν ἐν Ἄιδου μάνθαν' ἐνθάδ' ὧν ἀνὴρ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

χαίρουσιν οὖν τούτοισιν; ἢ τίνες λόγοι;

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

τελουμένων εἴποιμ' ἄν· ὡς δὲ νῦν ἔχει,
καλῶς τὰ κείνων πάντα, καὶ τὰ μὴ καλῶς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τίς οὗτός ἐστ', ἀδελφέ; πρὸς θεῶν φράσον.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐχὶ ξυνίης;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐδέ γ' ἐς θυμὸν φέρω.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐκ οἶσθ' ὅτφ μ' ἔδωκας εἰς χέρας ποτέ;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ποίφ; τί φωνεῖς;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐ τὸ Φωκέων πέδον

ὑπεξέπέμφθην σῆ προμηθία χεροῖν.

1350

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἢ κείνος οὗτος, ὃν ποτ' ἐκ πολλῶν ἐγὼ
μόνον προσηῦρον πιστὸν ἐν πατρὸς φόνφ;

ELECTRA

'Tis ill delaying in such case, and well
To make an end.

ORESTES

How shall I fare within ?

AGED SERVANT

Right well ; to start with, thou art known to none.

ORESTES

Thou hast reported, I presume, my death.

AGED SERVANT

They'll speak of thee as though thou wert a shade

ORESTES

And are they glad thereat, or what say they ?

AGED SERVANT

I'll tell thee when the time is ripe : meanwhile
Whate'er they do, however ill, is well.

ELECTRA

I pray thee, brother, tell me who is this ?

ORESTES

Dost thou not see ?

ELECTRA

I know not, nor can guess.

ORESTES

Not know the man to whom thou gav'st me once ?

ELECTRA

What man ? how mean'st thou ?

ORESTES

He that stole me hence,
Through thy forethought, and safe to Phocis bore.

ELECTRA

Can this be he who, when our sire was slain,
Faithful among the many false I found ?

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὄδ' ἐστί· μή μ' ἔλεγχε πλείοσιν λόγους.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ φίλτατον φῶς, ὦ μόνος σωτὴρ δόμων
Ἀγαμέμνονος, πῶς ἦλθες; ἢ σὺ κείνος εἶ,
ὃς τόνδε καμ' ἔσωσας ἐκ πολλῶν πόνων;
ὦ φίλταται μὲν χεῖρες, ἡδιστον δ' ἔχων
ποδῶν ὑπηρέτημα, πῶς οὕτω πάλαι
ξυνῶν μ' ἔληθες οὐδ' ἔφαινες, ἀλλὰ με
λόγους ἀπώλλυς, ἔργ' ἔχων ἡδιστ' ἐμοί;
χαῖρ', ὦ πάτερ· πατέρα γὰρ εἰσορᾶν δοκῶ·
χαῖρ'· ἴσθι δ' ὡς μάλιστά σ' ἀνθρώπων ἐγὼ
ἦχθηρα κάφίλησ' ἐν ἡμέρᾳ μιᾷ.

1360

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

ἀρκεῖν δοκεῖ μοι· τοὺς γὰρ ἐν μέσῳ λόγους
πολλὰι κυκλοῦνται νύκτες ἡμέραι τ' ἴσαι,
αἱ ταῦτά σοι δείξουσιν, Ἥλέκτρα, σαφῆ.
σφῶν δ' ἐννέπω γε τοῖν παρεστώτοιν ὅτι
νῦν καιρὸς ἔρδειν· νῦν Κλυταιμνήστρα μόνη,
νῦν οὔτις ἀνδρῶν ἔνδον· εἰ δ' ἐφέξετον,
φροντίζεθ' ὡς τούτοις τε καὶ σοφωτέροις
ἄλλοισι τούτων πλείοσιν μαχοῦμενοι.

1370

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐκ ἂν μακρῶν ἔθ' ἡμῖν οὐδὲν ἂν λόγων,
Πυλάδῃ, τόδ' εἴη τοῦργον, ἀλλ' ὅσον τάχος
χωρεῖν ἔσω, πατρίᾳ προσκύσανθ' ἔδη
θεῶν, ὅσοι περ πρόπυλα ναίουσιν τάδε.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἄναξ Ἀπολλων, ἴλεως αὐτοῖν κλέε

ELECTRA

ORESTES

'Tis he; let that suffice thee; ask no more.

ELECTRA

O happy day! O sole deliverer
Of Agamemnon's house, how cam'st thou hither?
Art thou indeed our saviour who redeemed
From endless woes my brother and myself?
O hands beloved, O messenger whose feet
Were bringers of glad tidings, how so long
Couldst thou be with me and remain unknown,
Stay me with feignèd fables and conceal
The truth that gave me life? Hail, father, hail!
For 'tis a father whom I seem to see.
Verily no man in the self same day
Was hated so and so much loved as thou.

AGED SERVANT

Enough methinks; the tale 'twixt then and now—
Many revolving nights and days as many
Shall serve, Electra, to unfold it all.

(*To ORESTES and PYLADES*)

Why stand ye here! 'tis time for you to act,
Now Clytemnestra is alone; no man
Is now within; but, if ye stay your hand,
Not only with her house-carls will ye fight
But with a troop more numerous and more skilled.

ORESTES

Our business, Pylades, would seem to crave
No longer parley; let us instantly
Enter, but ere we enter first adore
The gods who keep the threshold of the house.

[*ORESTES and PYLADES enter the palace.*]

ELECTRA

O King Apollo! lend a gracious ear

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

έμοῦ τε πρὸς τούτοισιν, ἢ σε πολλὰ δὴ
 ἀφ' ὧν ἔχοιμι λιπαρεῖ προύστην χερί.
 νῦν δ', ὦ Λύκει' Ἀπολλον, ἐξ οἶων ἔχω
 αἰτῶ, προπίτνω, λίσσομαι, γενοῦ πρόφρων
 ἡμῖν ἀρωγὸς τῶνδε τῶν βουλευμάτων,
 καὶ δεῖξον ἀνθρώποισι τὰπιτίμα
 τῆς δυσσεβείας οἷα δωροῦνται θεοί.

1380

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἴδεθ' ὅποι προνέμεται
 τὸ δυσέριστον αἷμα φυσῶν Ἄρης.
 βεβᾶσιν ἄρτι δωμάτων ὑπόστεγοι
 μετάδρομοι κακῶν πανουργημάτων ἄφυκτοι κύνες,
 ὥστ' οὐ μακρὰν ἐτ' ἀμμενεῖ
 τοῦμόν φρενῶν ὄνειρον αἰωρούμενον.

στρ.

1390

παράγεται γὰρ ἐνέρων
 δολιόπους ἀρωγὸς εἴσω στέγας,
 ἀρχαιοπλοῦτα πατρὸς εἰς ἐδώλια,
 νεακόνητον αἷμα χειροῖν ἔχων· ὁ Μαίιας δὲ παῖς
 Ἑρμῆς σφ' ἄγει δόλον σκότῳ
 κρύψας πρὸς αὐτὸ τέρμα κούκέτ' ἀμμένει.

ἀντ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ φίλταται γυναῖκες, ἄνδρες αὐτίκα
 τελοῦσι τοῦργον· ἀλλὰ σῖγα πρόσμενε.

στρ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πῶς δὴ; τί νῦν πράσσουσιν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἢ μὲν ἐς τάφον
 λέβητα κοσμεῖ, τῷ δ' ἐφέστατον πέλας.

1400

ΧΟΡΟΣ

σὺ δ' ἐκτὸς ἤξας πρὸς τί;

ELECTRA

To them and me, to me too who so oft
Laid on thy shrine with humble hands my best.
And now with vows (I cannot offer more),
Apollo, Lord Lycean, I beseech,
Implore, adjure thee, prosper this our work,
Defend the right and show to godless men
How the gods vindicate impiety.

CHORUS

Breathing out blood and vengeance, lo ! (Str.)
Stalks Ares, sure though slow.
È'en now the hounds are on the trail ;
Within, the sinners at their coming quail.
A little while and death shall realise
The vision that now floats before mine eyes.

For now within the house is led (Ant.)
By stealth the champion of the dead ;
He treads once more the ancestral hall of kings,
And death new-whetted in his hands he brings.
Great Maia's son conducts him on his way
And shrouds his guile and brooks not more delay.

ELECTRA

O dearest women, even as I speak (Str.)
The men are at their work ; but not a word,

CHORUS

What work ? what are they at ?

ELECTRA

È'en now she decks
The urn for burial and the pair stand by.

CHORUS

Why spedst thou forth ?

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

φρουρήσουσ' ὅπως
 Αἴγισθος ἡμᾶς μὴ λάθῃ μολῶν ἔσω.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

αἰαί. ἰὼ στέγαι
 φίλων ἔρημοι, τῶν δ' ἀπολλύντων πλέαι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

βοᾶ τις ἔνδον· οὐκ ἀκούετ', ὦ φίλαι;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἤκουσ' ἀνήκουστα δύστανος, ὥστε φρίξαι.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

οἴμοι τάλαιν'· Αἴγισθε, ποῦ ποτ' ὦν κυρεῖς;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἰδοῦ μάλ' αὖ θροεῖ τις.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ὦ τέκνον τέκνον,
 οἴκτιρε τὴν τεκοῦσαν.

1410

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐκ σέθεν
 ὠκτίρεθ' οὔτος οὐδ' ὁ γεννήσας πατήρ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ πόλις, ὦ γενεὰ τάλαινα, νῦν σοι¹
 μοῖρα καθαμερία φθίνει φθίνει.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ὦμοι πέπληγμαί.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

παῖσον, εἰ σθένεις, διπλήν.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ὦμοι μόλ' αὖθις.

¹ νῦν σε MSS., corr. R. Whitelaw

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

To keep a watch for fear
Aegisthus should forestall us unawares.

CLYTEMNESTRA (*within*)

Woe! woe! O woeful house,
Of friends forsaken, full of murderers!

ELECTRA

Listen! a cry within—hear ye not, friends?

CHORUS

I heard and shuddered—oh, an awesome cry.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Ah woe is me! Aegisthus, where art thou?

ELECTRA

Hark; once again a wail.

CLYTEMNESTRA

O son, my son,
Have pity on thy mother!

ELECTRA

Thou hadst none
On him or on the father that begat him.

CHORUS

Unhappy realm and house,
The curse that dogged thee day by day
Is dying, dying fast.

CLYTEMNESTRA

I am stricken, ah!

ELECTRA

Strike, if thou canst, again.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Woe, woe is me once more!

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

εἰ γὰρ Αἰγίσθῳ θ' ὁμοῦ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τελοῦσ' ἀραί· ζῶσιν οἱ γὰς ὑπαὶ κείμενοι.
παλῖρρυτον γὰρ αἴμ' ὑπεξαιροῦσι τῶν
κτανόντων οἱ πάλαι θανόντες.

1420

καὶ μὴν πάρεισιν οἶδε· φοινῖα δὲ χεῖρ
στάζει θνηλῆς Ἄρεος, οὐδ' ἔχω ψέγειν. ἀντ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

Ὅρέστα, πῶς κυρεῖτε;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τῶν δόμοισι μὲν
καλῶς, Ἀπόλλων εἰ καλῶς ἐθέσπισεν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τέθνηκεν ἡ τάλαινα;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

μηκέτ' ἐκφοβοῦ
μητρῶν ὡς σε λῆμ' ἀτιμάσει ποτέ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

παύσασθε· λεύσσω γὰρ Αἰγισθον ἐκ προδῆλου.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ .

ὦ παῖδες, οὐκ ἄψορρον;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

εἰσορᾶτε ποῦ
τὸν ἄνδρ' ;

1430

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐφ' ἡμῖν οὗτος ἐκ προαστίου
χωρεῖ γεγηθῶς

ΧΟΡΟΣ

βᾶτε κατ' ἀντιθύρων ὅσον τάχιστα,
νῦν, τὰ πρὶν εὖ θέμενοι, τὰδ' ὡς πάλιν.

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

I would that woe
Were for Aegisthus not for thee alone.

CHORUS

The curses work ; the buried live again,
And blood for blood, the slayer's blood they drain,
The ghosts of victims long since slain.

Enter ORESTES and PYLADES from the palace.

Lo they come forth with gory hands that reek (*Ant.*)
Of sacrifice to Ares—'twas done well.

ELECTRA

How have ye sped, Orestes ?

ORESTES.

All within

Is well, if Phoebus' oracle spake well.

ELECTRA

The wretched woman's dead ?

ORESTES

No longer fear

Thy mother's arrogance will flout thee more.

CHORUS

Cease, for I see Aegisthus full in sight.

ELECTRA

Back, youths, back to the house !

ORESTES

Where see ye him ?

ELECTRA

Approaching from the suburb with an air
Of exultation. He is ours !

CHORUS

Quick to the palace doorway ! half your work
Is well done ; do no less well what remains.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

θάρσει· τελοῦμεν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἦ νοεῖς ἔπειγέ νυν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

καὶ δὴ βέβηκα.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τὰνθάδ' ἂν μέλοιτ' ἐμοί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

δι' ὧτὸς ἂν παῦρά γ' ὡς ἠπίως ἐννέπειν
πρὸς ἄνδρα τόνδε συμφέροι, λαθραῖον ὡς
ὀρούση πρὸς δίκας ἀγῶνα.

1440

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

τίς οἶδεν ὑμῶν ποῦ ποθ' οἱ Φωκῆς ξένοι,
οὓς φασ' Ὀρέστην ἡμῖν ἀγγεῖλαι βίον
λελοιπόθ' ἰππικοῖσιν ἐν ναυαγίοις;
σέ τοι, σέ κρίνω, ναὶ σέ, τὴν ἐν τῷ πάρος
χρόνῳ θρασεῖαν· ὡς μάλιστα σοὶ μέλειν
οἶμαι, μάλιστα δ' ἂν κατειδυῖαν φράσαι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἔξοιδα· πῶς γὰρ οὐχί; συμφορᾶς γὰρ ἂν
ἔξωθεν εἶην τῶν ἐμῶν τῆς φιλτάτης.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ποῦ δῆτ' ἂν εἶεν οἱ ξένοι; δίδασκέ με.

1450

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἔνδον· φίλης γὰρ προξένου κατήνυσαν.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ἦ καὶ θανόντ' ἤγγειλαν ὡς ἐτητύμως;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐκ, ἀλλὰ καπέδειξαν, οὐ λόγῳ μόνον.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

πάρεστ' ἄρ' ἡμῖν ὥστε κάμφανῆ μαθεῖν;

ELECTRA

ORESTES

Fear not, we shall.

ELECTRA

Then speed thee on thy way.

ORESTES

See, I am gone.

ELECTRA

Leave what is here to me.

[*Exeunt* ORESTES and PYLADES ; AEGISTHUS *approaches*.

CHORUS

'Twere not amiss to breathe some soft words in his ear,
That he may blindly rush into the lists of doom.

AEGISTHUS

Could any of you tell me where to find
The Phocian strangers who, I hear, have brought
News of Orestes midst the chariots wrecked?
Thee, thee I question, thee, in former days
So froward : it concerns thee most, methinks,
And thou, as best informed, canst tell me best.

ELECTRA

I know for sure, else were I unconcerned
In what has happened to my nearest kin.

AEGISTHUS

Where then are these newcomers? Tell me straight.

ELECTRA

Within ; they've won their kindly hostess' heart.

AEGISTHUS

Did they in very truth report his death?

ELECTRA

They did ; and more, they showed us the dead man.

AEGISTHUS

May I too view the body to make sure?

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

παίρεσσι δῆτα, καὶ μάλ' ἄζηλος θέα.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ἦ πολλὰ χαίρειν μ' εἶπας οὐκ εἰωθότως.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

χαίροις ἄν, εἴ σοι χαρτὰ τυγχάνοι τάδε.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

σιγᾶν ἄνωγα κἀναδεικνύναι πύλας
πᾶσιν Μυκηναίοισιν Ἀργείοις θ' ὄραν,
ὡς εἴ τις αὐτῶν ἐλπίσιν κεναῖς πάρος
ἐξήρετ' ἀνδρὸς τοῦδε, νῦν ὄρων νεκρὸν
στόμια δέχεται τὰμὰ μηδὲ πρὸς βίαν
ἐμοῦ κολαστοῦ προστυχῶν φύση φρένας.

1460

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

καὶ δὴ τελεῖται τὰπ' ἐμοῦ· τῷ γὰρ χρόνῳ
νοῦν ἔσχον, ὥστε συμφέρειν τοῖς κρείσσοσιν.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ὦ Ζεῦ, δέδορκα φάσμ' ἀνευ φθόνου μὲν οὐ
πεπτωκός· εἴ δ' ἔπεσσι νέμεσις, οὐ λέγω.
χαλᾶτε πᾶν κάλυμμ' ἀπ' ὀφθαλμῶν, ὅπως
τὸ συγγενές τοι κάπ' ἐμοῦ θρήνων τύχη.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

αὐτὸς σὺ βάσταξ'· οὐκ ἐμὸν τόδ', ἀλλὰ σόν,
τὸ ταῦθ' ὄραν τε καὶ προσηγορεῖν φίλως.

1470

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ἄλλ' εὖ παραινεῖς κἀπιπέισομαι· σὺν δέ,
εἴ που κατ' οἶκόν μοι Κλυταιμνήστρα, κάλει.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

αὕτη πέλας σοῦ· μηκέτ' ἄλλοσε σκόπει.

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

Thou mayst, but 'tis a gruesome spectacle.

AEGISTHUS

Thou givest me much joy against thy wont.

ELECTRA

I wish thee joy, if here is food for joy.

AEGISTHUS

Silence ! attend ! throw open wide the gate,
For all Mycenæ, Argos all, to see.

If any heretofore was puffed with hopes
Of this pretender, now he sees him dead,
Let him in time accept my yoke, nor wait
Wisdom by chastisement to learn too late.

ELECTRA

My lesson's learnt already ; time hath taught me
The wisdom of consenting with the strong.

*(The scene opens showing a shrouded corpse with ORESTES
and PYLADES beside it.)*

AEGISTHUS

O Zeus, I look upon this form laid low
By jealousy of Heaven, but if my words
Seem to thee overbold, be they unsaid.
Take from the face the face-cloth ; I, as kin,
I too would pay my tribute of lament.

ORESTES

Lift it thyself ; 'tis not for me but thee
To see and kindly greet what lieth here.

AEGISTHUS

Well said, so will I. *(To ELECTRA.)* If she be within
Go call me Clytemnestra, I would see her—

ORESTES

She is beside thee ; look not elsewhere.
(AEGISTHUS lifts the face-cloth.)

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

οἶμοι, τί λεύσσω;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τίνα φοβεῖ; τίν' ἄγροεῖς;

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

τίνων ποτ' ἀνδρῶν ἐν μέσοις ἀρκυστάτοις
πέπτωχ' ὁ τλήμων;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐ γὰρ αἰσθάνει πάλαι
ζῶντας¹ θανούσιν οὐνεκ' ἀνταυδᾶς ἴσα;

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

οἶμοι, ξυνήκα τοῦπος· οὐ γὰρ ἔσθ' ὅπως
ὄδ' οὐκ Ὀρέστης ἔσθ' ὁ προσφωνῶν ἐμέ.

1480

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

καὶ μάντις ὦν ἄριστος ἐσφάλλον πάλαι.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ὄλωλα δὴ δείλαιος. ἀλλά μοι πάρες
κἂν σμικρὸν εἰπεῖν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

μὴ πέρα λέγειν ἔα
πρὸς θεῶν, ἀδελφέ, μηδὲ μηκύνειν λόγους.
τί γὰρ βροτῶν ἂν σὺν κακοῖς μεμιγμένων
θνήσκειν ὁ μέλλων οὐ χρόνου κέρδος φέροι;
ἀλλ' ὡς τάχιστα κτεῖνε καὶ κτανῶν πρόθεσ
ταφεύσιν, ὧν τόνδ' εἰκὸς ἐστί τυγχάνειν,
ἄποπτον ἡμῶν· ὡς ἐμοὶ τόδ' ἂν κακῶν
μόνον γένοιτο τῶν πάλαι λυτήριον.

1490

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

χωροῖς ἂν εἴσω σὺν τάχει λόγων γὰρ οὐ
νῦν ἐστὶν ἀγών, ἀλλὰ σῆς ψυχῆς πέρι.

¹ ζῶν τοῖς MSS., Tyrwhitt corr.

ELECTRA

AEGISTHUS

O horror !

ORESTES

Why dost start ? is the face strange ?

AEGISTHUS

Who spread the net wherein, O woe is me,
I lie enmeshed ?

ORESTES

Hast thou not learnt ere this
The dead of whom thou spakest are alive ?

AEGISTHUS

Alas ! I read thy riddle ; 'tis none else
Than thou, Orestes, whom I now address.

ORESTES

A seer so wise, and yet befooled so long !

AEGISTHUS

O I am spoiled, undone ! yet suffer me,
One little word.

ELECTRA

Brother, in heaven's name
Let him not speak a word or plead his cause.
When a poor wretch is in the toils of fate
What can a brief reprieve avail him ? No,
Slay him outright and having slain him give
His corse to such grave-makers as is meet,
Far from our sight ; for me no otherwise
Can he wipe out the memory of past wrongs.

ORESTES (*to AEGISTHUS*)

Quick, get thee in ; the issue lies not now
In words ; the case is tried and thou must die,

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

τί δ' ἐς δομοὺς ἄγεις με; πῶς, τόδ' εἰ καλὸν
τοῦργον, σκότου δεῖ κοῦ πρόχειρος εἶ κτανεῖν;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

μὴ τάσσε· χῶρει δ' ἐνθαπερ κατέκτανες
πατέρα τὸν ἄμόν, ὡς ἂν ἐν ταύτῳ θάνης,

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ἢ πᾶσ' ἀνάγκη τήνδε τὴν στέγην ἰδεῖν
τά τ' ὄντα καὶ μέλλοντα Πελοπιδῶν κακά;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τὰ γοῦν σ'· ἐγὼ σοι μάντις εἰμὶ τῶνδ' ἄκρος.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ἄλλ' οὐ πατρώαν τὴν τέχνην ἐκόμπασας.

1500

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

πόλλ' ἀντιφωνεῖς, ἢ δ' ὁδὸς βραδύνεται.
ἄλλ' ἔρφ'.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ὑφηγοῦ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

σοὶ βαδιστέον πάρος.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ἢ μὴ φύγω σε;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

μὴ μὲν οὖν καθ' ἡδονὴν
θάνης· φυλάξαι δεῖ με τοῦτό σοι πικρὸν.
χρῆν δ' εὐθύς εἶναι τήνδε τοῖς πᾶσι δίκην,
ὅστις πέρα πράσσειν τι τῶν νόμων θέλει,
κτείνειν· τὸ γὰρ πανοῦργον οὐκ ἂν ἦν πολὺ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ σπέρμ' Ἀτρέως, ὡς πολλὰ παθὼν
δι' ἐλευθερίας μόλις ἐξῆλθες
τῇ νῦν ὀρμῇ τελεωθέν.

1510

ELECTRA

AEGISTHUS

Why hale me indoors ? if my doom be just,
What need of darkness ? Why not slay me here ?

ORESTES

'Tis not for thee to order ; go within ;
Where thou didst slay my father thou must die.

AEGISTHUS

Ah ! is there need this palace should behold
All woes of Pelops' line, now and to come ?

ORESTES

Thine own they shall ; thus much I can predict.

AEGISTHUS

Thy skill as seer derives not from thy sire.

ORESTES

Thou bandiest words ; our going is delayed.
Go.

AEGISTHUS

Lead the way.

ORESTES

No, thou must go the first.

AEGISTHUS

Lest I escape ?

ORESTES

Nay, not to let thee choose
The manner of thy death ; thou must be spared
No bitterness of death, and well it were
If on transgressors swift this sentence fall,
Slay him ; so wickedness should less abound.

CHORUS

House of Atreus ! thou hast passed
Through the fire and won at last
Freedom, perfected to-day
By this glorious essay.

TRACHINIAE

ARGUMENT

DEIANIRA, alarmed at the long absence of her husband, resolves to send their son Hyllus in quest of his father. When he left home Heracles had told her that in fifteen months would come the crisis of his fate—either death or glory and rest from his toils. As she meditates, Lichas, the henchman of Heracles, comes in sight, tells her that his master is safe and will shortly follow. He is now at Cape Ceneæ in Eubœa, about to raise an altar to Zeus in honour of his victories. With Lichas are a train of captive maidens and among them she espies Iolè. By cross-questioning she learns that Heracles has transferred to Iolè his love, and determines to win it back by means of a love-charm that the Centaur Nessus had left to her as he lay dying. So she sends by the hand of Lichas a festal robe besmeared with what proves to be a burning poison. Too late she discovers her mistake. The flock of wool that she had used to apply the charm and flung away smoulders self-consumed before her eyes. Hyllus returns from Eubœa and denounces his mother as a murderer, describing the agonies of his tortured father.

ARGUMENT

At the news Deianira passes within the house and slays herself with a sword. The dying Heracles is borne home on a litter. He gives his last injunctions to Hyllus, to bear him to Mount Oeta, there burn him on a pyre, and then to return and take Iolè to wife. With a bitter word against the gods who have thus afflicted their own son, the noblest man on earth, Hyllus gives an unwilling consent.

ΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ΘΕΡΑΠΙΑΝΑ

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ ΠΑΡΘΕΝΩΝ ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΩΝ

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΣ

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

HERACLES, *son of Zeus and Alcmene.*

DEIANIRA, *daughter of Oeneus, his wife*

HYLLUS, *their son.*

LICHAS, *herald of Heracles.*

A MESSENGER.

NURSE.

OLD MAN.

IOLÉ, *daughter of Eurytus, captive wife*
to Heracles } *mute characters.*

CAPTIVE WOMEN.

CHORUS OF TRACHINIAN MAIDENS.

SCENE : Before the house of Heracles at Trachis.

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

Λόγος μὲν ἔστ' ἀρχαῖος ἀνθρώπων φανείς,
 ὡς οὐκ ἂν αἰῶν' ἐκμάθοις βροτῶν, πρὶν ἂν
 θάνῃ τις, οὔτ' εἰ χρηστὸς οὔτ' εἴ τῳ κακός·
 ἐγὼ δὲ τὸν ἑμὸν, καὶ πρὶν εἰς Ἴλιδου μολεῖν,
 ἔξοιδ' ἔχουσα δυστυχῆ τε καὶ βαρύν,
 ἦτις πατὸς μὲν ἐν δόμοισιν Οἰνέως
 ναίουσ' ἐτ'¹ ἐν Πλευρῶνι νυμφείων ὄκνον
 ἀλγιστον ἔσχον, εἴ τις Αἰτωλὶς γυνή.
 μνηστῆρ γὰρ ἦν μοι ποταμός, Ἀχελῷον λέγω,
 ὃς μ' ἐν τρισὶν μορφαῖσιν ἐξήτει πατρός, 10
 φοιτῶν ἐναργῆς ταῦρος, ἄλλοτ' αἰόλος
 δράκων ἐλικτός, ἄλλοτ' ἀνδρείῳ κύτει
 βούπρωρος· ἐκ δὲ δασκίου γενειάδος
 κρουνοὶ διερραίνοντο κρηναίου ποτοῦ.
 τοιόνδ' ἐγὼ μνηστῆρα προσδεδεγμένη
 δύστηνος αἰεὶ κατθανεῖν ἐπηυχόμην,
 πρὶν τῆσδε κοίτης ἐμπελασθῆναι ποτε.
 χρόνῳ δ' ἐν ὑστέρω μὲν, ἀσμένῃ δέ μοι,
 ὃ κλεινὸς ἦλθε Ζηνὸς Ἀλκμήνης τε παῖς·
 ὃς εἰς ἀγῶνα τῷδε συμπεσῶν μάχης 20
 ἐκλύεται με· καὶ τρόπον μὲν ἂν πόνων
 οὐκ ἂν διείποιμ'. οὐ γὰρ οἶδ'· ἀλλ' ὅστις ἦν

¹ ἐτ' added by Erfurdt.

TRACHINIAE

Enter DEIANIRA and NURSE.

DEIANIRA

THERE is an old-world saying current still,
“Of no man canst thou judge the destiny
To call it good or evil, till he die.”
But I, before I pass into the world
Of shadows, know *my* lot is hard and sad.
E'en in my childhood's home, while yet I dwelt
At Pleuron with my father, I had dread
Of marriage more than any Aetolian maid ;
For my first wooer was a river god,
Acheloüs, who in triple form appeared
To sue my father Oeneus for my hand,
Now as a bull, now as a sinuous snake
With glittering coils, and now in bulk a man
With front of ox, while from his shaggy beard
Runnels of fountain-water spouted forth.
In terror of so strange a wooer, I
Was ever praying death might end my woes,
Before I came to such a marriage bed.
Then to my joy, though long delayed, the son
Of Zeus and of Alcmena, good at need,
Grappled the monster and delivered me.
The circumstance and manner of that fight
I cannot tell, not knowing ; whoso watched it,

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

θακῶν ἀταρβῆς τῆς θέας, ὃδ' ἂν λέγοι
 ἐγὼ γὰρ ἤμην ἐκπεπληγμένη φόβῳ
 μή μοι τὸ κάλλος ἄλγος ἐξεύροι ποτέ.
 τέλος δ' ἔθηκε Ζεὺς ἀγώνιος καλῶς,
 εἰ δὴ καλῶς. λέχος γὰρ Ἑρακλεῖ κριτὸν
 ξυστᾶσ' αἰεί τι' ἐκ φόβου φόβον τρέφω,
 κείνου προκηραίνουσα· νύξ γὰρ εἰσάγει
 καὶ νύξ ἀπωθεῖ διαδεδεγμένη πόνον. 30
 κάφυσάμεν δὴ παῖδας, οὓς κείνός ποτε,
 γήτης ὅπως ἄρουραν ἔκτοπον λαβῶν,
 σπείρων μόνον προσεΐδε κάξαμῶν ἄπαξ.
 τοιοῦτος αἰὼν εἰς δόμους τε κάκ δόμων
 αἰεὶ τὸν ἄνδρ' ἔπεμπε λατρεύοντά τῃ.
 νῦν δ' ἠνίκ' ἄθλων τῶνδ' ὑπερτελής ἔφνυ,
 ἐνταῦθα δὴ μάλιστα ταρβήσασ' ἔχω.
 ἐξ οὗ γὰρ ἕκτα κείνος Ἰφίτου βίαν,
 ἡμεῖς μὲν ἐν Τραχίνι τῆδ' ἀνάστατοι
 ξένῳ παρ' ἀνδρὶ ναίομεν, κείνος δ' ὅπου 40
 βέβηκεν οὐδεὶς οἶδε· πλὴν ἐμοὶ πικρὰς
 ὠδῖνας αὐτοῦ προσβαλὼν ἀποίχεται.
 σχεδὸν δ' ἐπίσταμαί τι πῆμ' ἔχοντά νιν
 χρόνον γὰρ οὐχὶ βαιόν, ἀλλ' ἤδη δέκα
 μῆνας πρὸς ἄλλοις πέντ' ἀκήρυκτος μένει.
 κάστίν τι δεινὸν πῆμα· τοιαύτην ἐμοὶ
 δέλτον λιπὼν ἔστειχε, τὴν ἐγὼ θαμὰ
 θεοῖς ἀρῶμαι πημονῆς ἄτερ λαβεῖν.

ΘΕΡΑΠΙΑΝΑ

δέσποινα Δηάνειρα, πολλὰ μὲν σ' ἐγὼ
 κατείδον ἤδη πανδάκρυτ' ὀδύρματα
 τὴν Ἑράκλειον ἐξοδὸν γοωμένην·
 νῦν δ', εἰ δίκαιον τοὺς ἐλευθέρους φρενοῦν 50

TRACHINIAE

Indifferent to the issue, might describe.
For me—I sat distracted by the dread
That beauty in the end might prove my bane.
But Zeus who holds the arbitrament of war
Ordered it well, if well indeed it be.
For since, his chosen bride, I shared the home
Of Heracles, my cares have never ceased;
Terror on terror follows, dread on dread,
And one night's trouble drives the last night's out.
Children were born to us, but them he sees
E'en as the tiller of a distant field
Sees it at seedtime, sees it once again
At harvest, and no more. Such life was his
That kept him roaming to and fro from home,
To drudge for some taskmaster. And to-day
When he has overcome these many toils,
To-day I am terror-stricken most of all.
For since he slew the doughty Iphitus,
We have been dwelling with a stranger, here
In Trachis, banished from our home, and he—
None knoweth where he bides; but this I know,
He has gone and left me here to yearn and pine.
Surely some mischief has befallen him,
(For since he went an age—ten long, long months,
And other five—has passed, and not a word),
Some dread calamity, as signifies
This tablet that he left me. Oh! how oft
I've prayed it prove no harbinger of woe.

NURSE

My lady Deianira, many a time
I've listened to thy lamentable plaints
And groanings for the absence of thy lord.
Now, if I seem not overbold, a slave

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

γνώμαισι δούλαις, κίμῃ χρῆ φράσαι τὸ σόν·
 πῶς παισὶ μὲν τοσοῖσδε πληθύεις, ἀτὰρ
 ἀνδρὸς κατὰ ζήτησιν οὐ πέμπεις τινά,
 μάλιστα δ' ὄνπερ εἰκὸς Ἴλλων, εἰ πατρὸς
 νέμοι τιν' ὄραν τοῦ καλῶς πράσσειν δοκεῖν;
 ἐγγὺς δ' ὄδ' αὐτὸς ἀρτίπους θρώσκει δόμους,
 ὥστ' εἰ τί σοι πρὸς καιρὸν ἐννέπειν δοκῶ,
 πάρεστι χρῆσθαι τάνδρι τοῖς τ' ἐμοῖς λόγοις.

60

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ὦ τέκνον, ὦ παῖ, καὶ ἄγεννήτων ἄρα
 μῦθοι καλῶς πίπτουσιν· ἦδε γὰρ γυνὴ
 δούλη μὲν, εἶρηκεν δ' ἐλεύθερον λόγον.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

ποιόν; δίδαξον, μήτηρ, εἰ διδακτά μοι.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

σὲ πατρὸς οὕτω δαρὸν ἐξενωμένου
 τὸ μὴ πυθέσθαι ποῦ ἔστιν, αἰσχύνην φέρειν.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

ἄλλ' οἶδα, μύθοις εἴ τι πιστεύειν χρεῶν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

καὶ ποῦ κλύεις νιν, τέκνον, ἰδρῦσθαι χθονός;

ΤΑΛΟΣ

τὸν μὲν παρελθόντ' ἄροτον ἐν μήκει χρόνου
 Λυδῇ γυναικί φασὶ νιν λάτρην πονεῖν.

70

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

πάν τοίνυν, εἰ καὶ τοῦτ' ἔτλη, κλύοι τις ἄν.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

ἄλλ' ἐξαφείται τοῦδέ γ', ὡς ἐγὼ κλύω.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ποῦ δῆτα νῦν ζῶν ἢ θανῶν ἀγγέλλεται;

TRACHINIAE

Would lend her counsel to a free-born dame.
Why, since thou art so rich in sons, not send
One on the quest, and Hyllus most of all?
Who could assist thee better, if he cares
To ascertain the safety of his sire?
And lo, I see him in the nick of time
Approaching hotfoot. Wherefore, if I seem
To speak in season, use my rede and him.

Enter HYLLUS.

DEIANIRA

My child, my boy! wise words in sooth may fall.
From humble lips. This woman is a slave,
But her words breathe the spirit of the free.

HYLLUS

What, mother? tell me, if it may be told.

DEIANIRA

She said that never to have gone in search
Of thy long absent father brings thee shame.

HYLLUS

Nay, but if rumour's true, I know of him.

DEIANIRA

Where hast thou heard, my son, that he abides?

HYLLUS

Last season, so they say, the whole year through
He served as bondsman to a Lydian dame.

DEIANIRA

Naught would surprise me if he sank so low.

HYLLUS

Well, that disgrace is over, so I hear.

DEIANIRA

Where is he now reported, living or dead?

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΤΑΛΟΣ

Εὐβοΐδα χώραν φασίν, Εὐρύτου πόλιν,
ἐπιστρατεύειν αὐτὸν ἢ μέλλειν ἔτι.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἄρ' οἶσθα δῆτ', ὦ τέκνον, ὡς ἔλειπέ μοι
μαντεῖα πιστὰ τῆσδε τῆς χώρας πέρι;

ΤΑΛΟΣ

τὰ ποῖα, μήτηρ; τὸν λόγον γὰρ ἀγνοῶ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ὡς ἡ τελευταῖν τοῦ βίου μέλλει τελεῖν
ἢ τοῦτον ἄρας ἄθλον εἰς τό γ' ὕστερον¹
τὸν λοιπὸν ἤδη βίοτον εὐαίων' ἔχειν.
ἐν οὖν ῥοπῇ τοιαῦδε κειμένῳ, τέκνον,
οὐκ εἰ ξυνέρξων, ἠνίκ' ἢ σεσώσμεθα
[ἢ πίπτομεν σοῦ πατρὸς ἐξολωλότος]
κείνου βίου σώσαντος, ἢ οἰχόμεσθ' ἄμα;

ΤΑΛΟΣ

ἀλλ' εἴμι, μήτηρ· εἰ δὲ θεσφάτων ἐγὼ
βάξιν κατήδη τῶνδε, κἂν πάλαι παρῆ
νῦν δ' ὁ ξυνήθης πότμος οὐκ εἶα² πατρὸς
ἡμᾶς προταρβεῖν οὐδὲ δειμαίνειν ἄγαν.
νῦν δ' ὡς ξυνίημι, οὐδὲν ἐλλείψω τὸ μὴ οὐ
πᾶσαν πυθέσθαι τῶνδ' ἀλήθειαν πέρι.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

χῶρει νυν, ὦ παῖ· καὶ γὰρ ὑστέρῳ τὸ γ' εὖ
πράσσειν, ἐπεὶ πύθοιτο, κέρδος ἐμπολᾶ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὄν αἰόλα νυξ ἑναριζομένα στρ. α'
τίκτει κατευνάξει τε, φλογιζόμενον
"Ἄλιον" Ἄλιον αἰτῶ
τοῦτο καρῦξαι, τὸν Ἄλκμηνας πόθι μοι πόθι παῖς

¹ εἰς τὸν ὕστερον MSS., Reiske corr.

² ἐξ MSS., Vauvilliers corr.

TRACHINIAE

HYLLUS

He wars, or is about to war, they say,
Against Euboea and King Eurytus.

DEIANIRA

Know'st thou, my son, that when he went away
He left sure oracles anent that land?

HYLLUS

What, mother? I ne'er heard of them before.

DEIANIRA

That either he should find his death, or when
He had achieved this final task, henceforth
Lead an unbroken life of peaceful ease.
Son, when his fate thus trembles in the scale,
Wilt thou not go to aid him? If he's saved,
We too are saved; if lost, we perish too.

HYLLUS

Ay, mother, I'll away; had I but known
Of this prediction I had long been gone.
But, as it was, his happy star forbade
Excess of fear or doubt; but, now I know,
No pains I'll spare to learn the perfect truth.

DEIANIRA

Go then, my son. However late the quest,
The bringer of good news is well repaid!

Enter CHORUS.

[*Exit* HYLLUS.]

CHORUS

Child of star-bespangled Night, (Str. 1)
Born as she dies,
Laid to rest in a blaze of light,
Tell me, Sun-god, O tell me, where
Tarries the child of Alcmena fair;

- ναιει ποτ', ὦ λαμπρᾷ στεροπᾷ φλεγέθων,
 ἢ ποντίας αὐλῶνος ἢ δισσαῖσιν ἀπείροις κλιθεῖς, 100
 εἶπ', ὦ κρατιστεύων κατ' ὄμμα.

ποθουμένα γὰρ φρενὶ πυνθάνομαι ἀντ. α'
 τὰν ἀμφινεικῆ Δηιάνειραν αἰεί,
 οἰά τιν' ἄθλιον ὄρνιν,
 οὔ ποτ' εὐνάξειν ἀδακρύτων βλεφάρων πόθον, ἀλλ'
 εὐμναστον ἀνδρὸς δεῖμα τρέφουσαν ὁδοῦ
 ἐνθυμίους εὐναῖς ἀνανδρώτοισι τρύχεσθαι, κακὰν 110
 δύστανον ἐλπίζουσαν αἴσαν.

στρ. β'

πολλὰ γὰρ ὥστ' ἀκάμαντος ἢ νότου ἢ βορέα τις
 κύματ' ἂν εὐρέϊ πόντῳ βάντ' ἐπίοντα τ' ἴδοι,
 οὐτῶ δὲ τὸν Καδμογενῆ στρέφει,¹ τὸ δ' αὔξει,
 βίτου πολύπονον ὥσπερ πέλαγος
 Κρήσιον. ἀλλά τις θεῶν αἰὲν ἀναμπλάκητον "Αἶδα
 σφε δόμων ἐρύκει. 120

ἀντ. β'

ὦν ἐπιμεμφομένα σ' αἰδοῖα² μὲν, ἀντία δ' οἴσω.
 φάμι γὰρ οὐκ ἀποτρύειν ἐλπίδα τὰν ἀγαθὰν
 χρῆναί σ' ἀνάληγτα γὰρ οὐδ' ὅ πάντα κραίνων
 βασιλεὺς ἐπέβαλε θνατοῖς Κρονίδας·
 ἀλλ' ἐπὶ πῆμα καὶ χαρὰ πᾶσι κυκλοῦσιν, οἶον
 ἄρκτου στροφάδες κέλευθοι. 130

μένει γὰρ οὐτ' αἰόλα
 νύξ βροτοῖσιν οὔτε κῆρες

¹ τρέφει MSS., Reiske corr.

² ἀδεία MSS., Musgrave corr.

TRACHINIAE

Thou from whose eyes,
Keen as lightning, naught can hide.
Doth he on either mainland bide ?
Roams he over the sea straits driven ?
Thou, omniscient eye of heaven,
Declare, declare !

For like bird bereft of her mate (Ant. 1)
(Sad my tale)
Deianira, desolate,
She the maiden of many wooed,
Pines by fears for her lord pursued ;
Ever she bodes some instant harm
Ever she starts at a new alarm,
With vigils pale.

(Str. 2)
For as the tireless South or Northern blast
Billow on billow rolls o'er ocean wide,
So on the son of Cadmus follows fast
Sea upon sea of trouble, tide on tide ;
And now he sinks, now rises ; still some god
Is nigh to save him from Death's whelming flood.
(Ant. 2)

Bear with me, lady, if I seem to chide thee.
Why by despondency is fair hope slain ?
Think that high Zeus, if evil now betide thee,
No human lot ordaineth free from pain ;
But as the Bear revolves in heaven all night,
So mortals move 'twixt sorrow and delight.

The sheen of night with daybreak wanes ;
Pleasure follows after pains.

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

οὔτε πλοῦτος, ἀλλ' ἄφαρ
 βέβακε, τῷ δ' ἐπέρχεται
 χαίρειν τε καὶ στéρεσθαι.
 ἃ καὶ σὲ τὰν ἀνασσαν ἐλπίσω λέγω
 τάδ' αἰὲν ἴσχειν· ἐπεὶ τίς ὧδε
 τέκνοισι Ζῆν' ἄβουλον εἶδεν;

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ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

πεπυσμένη μὲν, ὡς ἀπεικάσαι, πάρει
 πάθημα τοῦμόν· ὡς δ' ἐγὼ θυμοφθορῶ,
 μήτ' ἐκμάθοις παθοῦσα νῦν τ' ἄπειρος εἶ.
 τὸ γὰρ νεάζον ἐν τοιοῖσδε βόσκεται
 χώροισιν αὐτοῦ, καὶ νιν οὐ θάλλπος θεοῦ
 οὐδ' ὄμβρος οὐδὲ πνευμάτων οὐδὲν κλονεῖ,
 ἀλλ' ἠδοναῖς ἄμοχθον ἐξαίρει βίον
 ἐς τοῦθ' ἕως τις ἀντὶ παρθένου γυνῆ
 κληθῆ λάβῃ τ' ἐν νυκτὶ φροντίδων μέρος,
 ἦτοι πρὸς ἀνδρὸς ἢ τέκνων φοβουμένη.
 τότε ἂν τις εἰσίδοιτο, τὴν αὐτοῦ σκοπῶν
 πράξι, κακοῖσιν οἷς ἐγὼ βαρύνομαι.
 πάθη μὲν οὖν δὴ πόλλ' ἐγωγ' ἐκλαυσάμην·
 ἐν δ' οἶον οὔπω πρόσθεν, αὐτίκ' ἐξερῶ.
 ὁδὸν γὰρ ἤμος τὴν τελευταίαν ἀναξ
 ὠρμᾶτ' ἀπ' οἴκων Ἡρακλῆς, τότε ἐν δόμοις
 λείπει παλαιὰν δέλτον ἐγγεγραμμένην
 ξυυθήμαθ', ἃ μοι πρόσθεν οὐκ ἔτλη ποτέ,
 πολλοὺς ἀγῶνας ἐξιῶν, οὔπω φράσαι,
 ἀλλ' ὡς τι δρῖσων εἶπε κοῦ θανούμενος.
 νῦν δ' ὡς ἔτ' οὐκ ὦν εἶπε μὲν λέχους ὃ τι
 χρεῖτή μ' ἐλέσθαι κτήσιν, εἶπε δ' ἦν τέκνοισ

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TRACHINIAE

If perchance to-day thou art sad,
Then another man is glad.
Gains with losses alternate ;
Naught is constant in one state :
Ponder this, my Queen, nor let
Carking care thy spirit fret.
Tell me hast thou ever known
Zeus unmindful of his own ?

DEIANIRA

Doubtless ye must have heard of my distress,
And therefore come ; but how my heart is racked
Ye cannot know—pray God ye ne'er may know it
By suffering !

Like to us, the tender plant
Is reared and nurtured in some garden close ;
Nor heat, nor rain, nor any breath of air
Vexes it, but unruffled, unperturbed,
It buds and blossoms in sequestered bliss ;
So fare we till the maid is called a wife
And finds her married portion in the night—
Dread terror for her husband or her child.
Only the woman who by trial knows
The cares of wedlock knows what I endure.
Many have been my sorrows in the past,
But now of one, the woofullest of all,
I have to tell. When Heracles, my lord,
On his last travel was about to start,
He left an ancient tablet in the house,
Inscribed with characters that ne'er before,
However desperate the enterprise,
He would interpret ; for he aye set forth
As one about to do and not to die.
This time, as on his death bed, he prescribed
Due portion of his substance as my dower,

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

μοῖραν πατρώας γῆς διαιρετὸν νέμοι,
 χρόνον προτάξας ὡς τρίμηνον ἠνίκα
 χώρας ἀπέιη κάμιαύσιον βεβώς,
 τότ' ἢ θανεῖν χρεῖη σφε τῷδε τῷ χρόνῳ
 ἢ τοῦθ' ὑπεκδραμόντα τοῦ χρόνου τέλος
 τὸ λοιπὸν ἤδη ζῆν ἀλυπήτῳ βίῳ.
 τοιαῦτ' ἔφραζε πρὸς θεῶν εἰμαρμένα
 τῶν Ἡρακλείων ἐκτελευτᾶσθαι πόνων,
 ὡς τὴν παλαιὰν φηγὸν ἀυδήσαι ποτε
 Δωδῶνι δισσῶν ἐκ Πελειάδων ἔφη.
 καὶ τῶνδε ναμέρτεια συμβαίνει χρόνου
 τοῦ νῦν παρόντος, ὡς τελεσθῆναι χρεῶν·
 ὡσθ' ἠδέως εὐδουσαν ἐκπηδᾶν ἐμὲ
 φόβῳ, φίλαι, ταρβοῦσαν, εἴ με χρὴ μένειν
 πάντων ἀρίστου φωτὸς ἐστερημένην.

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ΧΟΡΟΣ

εὐφημίαν νῦν ἴσχυ' ἐπεὶ καταστεφῆ
 στείχουθ' ὀρώ τιν' ἄνδρα πρὸς χαρὰν λόγων.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

δέσποινα Δηάνειρα, πρῶτος ἀγγέλων
 ὄκνου σε λύσω· τὸν γὰρ Ἀλκμήνης τόκου
 καὶ ζῶντ' ἐπίστω καὶ κρατοῦντα κακῆ μάχης
 ἄγοντ' ἀπαρχὰς θεοῖσι τοῖς ἐγχωρίοις.

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ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

τίν' εἶπας, ὦ γεραιέ, τόνδε μοι λόγον;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

τάχ' ἐς δόμους σοὺς τὸν πολύζηλον πόσιιν
 ἤξειν φανέντα σὺν κράτει νικηφόρῳ.

TRACHINIAE

And to his children severally assigned
Their heritage of lands; and fixed a date,
Saying that when a year and three full moons
Had passed since he departed from his home,
He needs must die, or, if he then survived,
Live ever after an untroubled life;
So by the mouth of the two priestly Doves¹
Dodona's sacred oak had once declared.
And now, this very day, the hour has struck
For confirmation of the prophecy.
Thus from sweet slumber, friends, ye see me start
With terror at the thought of widowed days,
If he, the noblest of all men, were gone.

CHORUS

Hush! no ill-omened words! I see approaching
A messenger, bay-wreathed—he brings good news.

Enter MESSENGER.

MESSENGER

Queen Deianira, let me be the first
To rid thee of thy fears. Be well assured
Alcmena's son is living; o'er his foes
Victorious he is bringing home the spoils,
To offer firstfruits to his country's gods.

DEIANIRA

Old man, what dost thou tell me?

MESSENGER

That anon
Thou shalt behold in presence, at thy gate,
Illustrious, crowned with victory, thy lord.

¹ The Peleads were the priestesses of Dodona who interpreted the rustling of the oak or the cooing of the sacred doves and their name in folk etymology was identified with *peleiai*, doves.

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

καὶ τοῦ τόδ' ἀστῶν ἢ ξένων μαθὼν λέγεις;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἐν βουθερεῖ λειμῶνι πρὸς πολλοὺς θροεῖ.
 Λίγας ὁ κῆρυξ ταῦτα· τοῦδ' ἐγὼ κλύων
 ἀπῆξ', ὅπως τοι πρῶτος ἀγγείλας τάδε
 πρὸς σοῦ τι κερδάναιμι καὶ κτώμην χάριν.

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ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

αὐτὸς δὲ πῶς ἄπεστιν, εἴπερ εὐτυχεῖ;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

οὐκ εὐμαρεῖα χρώμενος πολλῇ, γύναι.
 κύκλω γὰρ αὐτὸν Μηλιεὺς ἄπας λεῶς
 κρίνει παραστάς, οὐδ' ἔχει βῆναι πρόσω·
 τὸ γὰρ ποθοῦν ἕκαστος ἐκμαθεῖν¹ θέλων
 οὐκ ἂν μεθεῖτο, πρὶν καθ' ἡδονὴν κλύειν.
 οὕτως ἐκεῖνος οὐχ ἑκὼν, ἐκοῦσι δὲ
 ξύνεστιν· ὄψει δ' αὐτὸν αὐτίκ' ἐμφανῆ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ὦ Ζεῦ, τὸν Οἴτης ἄτομον ὃς λειμῶν' ἔχεις,
 ἔδωκας ἡμῖν ἀλλὰ σὺν χρόνῳ χαράν.
 φωνήσατ', ὦ γυναῖκες, αἱ τ' εἴσω στέγης
 αἱ τ' ἐκτὸς αὐλῆς, ὡς ἄελπτου ὄμμ' ἐμοὶ
 φήμης ἀνασχὸν τῆσδε νῦν καρπούμεθα.

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ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀνολοδυξάτω² δόμοις ἐφεστίοις
 ἀλαλαγαῖς ἅ³ μελλόνυμφος, ἐν δὲ
 κοινὸς ἀρσένων ἴτω
 κλαγγὰ τὸν εὐφάρετραν
 Ἄπόλλω προστάταν· ὁμοῦ δὲ

¹ M. L. Carle's ἐκλήσαι is the likeliest emendation of a probably corrupt line.

² ἀνολοδέατε MSS., Burges corr. ³ ὁ MSS., Erfurdt corr.

TRACHINIAE

DEIANIRA

Some stranger or a native told thee this?

MESSENGER

The herald Lichas is proclaiming it
There in the summer pastures to the crowd.
From him I heard, and sped to be the first
To bring the news and win reward and thanks.

DEIANIRA

If such his news, why comes he not himself?

MESSENGER

That were no light task ; all our Malian folk
Cluster around him, hem him on all sides,
Ply him with questions, one and all intent
To hear his news ; he cannot stir a step,
Midst willing hosts a most unwilling guest,
Till all their eagerness is satisfied.
But thou shalt see him face to face anon.

DEIANIRA

Lord of the unshorn meads of Oeta, Zeus,
Though long delayed, thou giv'st me joy at last.
Women within, and ye without the gates,
Uplift your voices, hail the new-born light
That dawns to glad me when all hope had fled.

CHORUS

Maidens, let your joyous shout
Of triumph from the hearth ring out,
Swell the quire of men who raise
Their paean to Apollo's praise.
Sing, man and maid,
Phoebus our aid,
Lord of the quiver,
Strong to deliver !

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

παιᾶνα παιᾶν' ἀνάγεται, ὦ παρθένοι, 210
 βοᾶτε τὰν ὁμόσπορον
 Ἄρτεμιν Ὀρτυγίαν
 ἐλαφαβόλον ἀμφίπυρον,
 γείτονας τε Νύμφας.
 αἰείρομαι οὐδ' ἀπώσομαι
 τὸν αὐλόν, ὦ τύραννε τᾶς ἐμᾶς φρενός.
 ἰδοῦ μ' ἀναταράσσει,
 εὐοί μ',
 ὁ κισσὸς ἄρτι βακχίαν
 ἵποστρέφων ἄμιλλαν. ἰὼ ἰὼ Παιᾶν. 220
 ἴδ', ὦ φίλα γυναί,
 τάδ' ἀντίπρῳρα δὴ σοι
 βλέπειν πάρεσθ' ἐναργῆ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ὄρω, φίλαι γυναῖκες, οὐδέ μ' ὄμματος
 φρουρὰν παρῆλθε, τύνδε μὴ λεύσσειν στόλον
 χαίρειν δὲ τὸν κήρυκα προυννέπω, χρόνον
 πολλῶ φανέντα, χαρτὸν εἴ τι καὶ φέρεις.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἀλλ' εὐ μὲν ἴγμεθ', εὐ δὲ προσφωνούμεθα,
 γυναί, κατ' ἔργου κτήσιν ἄνδρα γὰρ καλῶς 230
 πρᾶσσουντ' ἀνάγκη χρηστὰ κερδαίνειν ἔπη.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ὦ φίλτατ' ἀνδρῶν, πρῶθ' ἂ πρῶτα βούλομαι
 δίδαξον, εἰ ζῶνθ' Ἡρακλῆ προσδέξομαι.

TRACHINIAE

Hymn his sister, maid and man,
Artemis Ortygian.

Slayer of deer,
With fiery brand
In either hand,
O goddess, hear!

Hymn ye the nymphs too, her attendant band.
My spirit spurns the ground;
Bid the shrill fife outsound,
My sovereign I obey.

Evoë!

The thyrsus, see,
Calls me; I must away
To join the Bacchic rout,
With Maenads dance and shout,
Once more the paean raise;
For, lady, here,
In presence clear,
My joy takes shape and stands before thy gaze.

DEIANIRA

Kind friends, I see, nor have my wistful eyes
Failed to perceive this company's approach—
Hail to thee, herald, if indeed thou bring'st
News that will gladden me, though long delayed.

Enter LICHAS *with* CAPTIVE WOMEN.

LICHAS

Yea, lady, glad is our return and glad
Thy greeting, as befits the deed achieved.
He who speeds well a welcome fair deserves.

DEIANIRA

First tell me what I first would learn, best friend,
Shall I embrace my Heracles alive?

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἔγωγέ τοι σφ' ἔλειπον ἰσχύοντά τε
καὶ ζῶντα καὶ θάλλοντα κού νόσφ βαρύν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ποῦ γῆς; πατρώας εἴτε βαρβάρου; λέγε.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἀκτὴ τις ἔστ' Εὐβοίς, ἐνθ' ὀρίζεται
βωμοὺς τέλη τ' ἔγκαρπα Κηναίῳ Διί.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

εὐκταῖζ φαίνων ἢ ἀπὸ μαντείας τινός;

ΛΙΧΑΣ

εὐχαῖς ὄθ' ἦρει τῶνδ' ἀνάστατον δορὶ
χώραν γυναικῶν ὧν ὄρας ἐν ὄμμασιν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

αὐται δέ, πρὸς θεῶν, τοῦ ποτ' εἰσὶ καὶ τίνες;
οἰκτραὶ γάρ, εἰ μὴ ξυμφοραὶ κλέπτουσί με.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ταύτας ἐκείνος Εὐρύτου πέρσας πόλιν
ἐξείλεθ' αὐτῷ κτήμα καὶ θεοῖς κριτόν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἦ καπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πόλει τὸν ἄσκοπον
χρόνον βεβῶς ἦν ἡμερῶν ἀνήριθμον;

ΛΙΧΑΣ

οὐκ, ἀλλὰ τὸν μὲν πλείστον ἐν Λυδοῖς χρόνον
κατεῖχεθ', ὡς φησ' αὐτός, οὐκ ἐλεύθερος,
ἀλλ' ἐμποληθείς τοῦ λόγου δ' οὐ χρή φθόνον, 250
γύναι, προσεῖναι, Ζεὺς ὅτου πράκτωρ φανῆ.
κεῖνος δέ πραθεὶς Ὀμφάλη τῇ βαρβάρῳ
ἐνιαυτὸν ἐξέπλησεν, ὡς αὐτὸς λέγει.

TRACHINIAE

LICHAS

Surely ; I left him both alive and hale,
In lusty strength and sound in every limb.

DEIANIRA

Where ? upon Greek soil, tell me, or abroad ?

LICHAS

Upon a headland in Euboea, where
He marks out altars to Cœnaean Zeus,
And dedicates the fertile lands around.

DEIANIRA

In payment of some former vow, or warned
By oracles ?

LICHAS

'Tis for a vow he made
When he went forth to conquer and despoil
Oechalia of these women whom thou see'st.

DEIANIRA

O tell me who these captives are and whose ;
So piteous, to judge them by their plight.

LICHAS

He chose them for himself and for the gods,
When he had sacked the town of Eurytus.

DEIANIRA

Was it to take that city he delayed
All those interminable, countless days ?

LICHAS

Not so ; that time he mostly was detained
In Lydia ; by his own account, not free,
But sold in bondage ; nor shouldst thou resent
A tale of outrage, when the doer is Zeus.
Thus he fulfilled (these were his very words)
A year of servitude to Omphalè,
The barbarous queen. So grievous was the sting

χούτως ἐδήχθη τοῦτο τοῦνειδος λαβὼν
 ὡσθ' ὄρκον αὐτῷ προσβαλὼν διώμοσεν,
 ἢ μὴν τὸν ἀγχιστῆρα τοῦδε τοῦ πάθους
 ξὺν παιδι καὶ γυναικὶ δουλώσειν ἔτι.
 κοῦχ ἠλίωσε τοῦπος, ἀλλ' ὄθ' ἀγνὸς ἦν,
 στρατὸν λαβὼν ἐπακτὸν ἔρχεται πόλιν
 τὴν Εὐρυτεῖαν. τόνδε γὰρ μεταίτιον
 μόνον βροτῶν ἔφασκε τοῦδ' εἶναι πάθους·
 ὃς αὐτὸν ἐλθόντ' ἐς δόμους ἐφέστιον,
 ξένον παλαιὸν ὄντα, πολλὰ μὲν λόγους
 ἐπερρόθησε, πολλὰ δ' ἀτηρᾶ φρενί,
 λέγων χεροῖν μὲν ὡς ἄφυκτ' ἔχων βέλη
 τῶν ὦν τέκνων λείποιτο πρὸς τόξου κρίσιν,
 φωνεῖ δὲ δοῦλος ἀνδρὸς ὡς ἐλευθέρου
 ραίοιτο· δειπνοὺς δ' ἠνίκ' ἦν ὠνωμένος,
 ἔρριψεν ἐκτὸς αὐτόν. ὦν ἔχων χόλον,
 ὡς ἴκετ' αὐθις Ἴφιτος Τυρυνθίαν
 πρὸς κλιτύν, ἵππους νομάδας ἐξιχνυσοκοπῶν,
 τότε ἄλλοσ' αὐτὸν ὄμμα, θατέρᾳ δὲ νοῦν
 ἔχοντ', ἀπ' ἄκρας ἤκε πυργώδους πλακός.
 ἔργου δ' ἑκατι τοῦδε μηνίσας ἀναξ'
 ὁ τῶν ἀπάντων Ζεὺς πατήρ Ὀλύμπιος
 πρατὸν νιν ἐξέπεμψε οὐδ' ἠνέσχετο,
 ὀθούνεκ' αὐτὸν μόνον ἀνθρώπων δόλω
 ἔκτειεν· εἰ γὰρ ἐμφανῶς ἠμύνατο,
 Ζεὺς τὰν συνέγνω ξὺν δίκῃ χειρουμένῳ·
 ὕβριν γὰρ οὐ στέργουσιν οὐδὲ δαίμονες.
 κείνοι δ' ὑπερχλίοντες ἐκ γλώσσης κακῆς
 αὐτοὶ μὲν Ἄιδου πάντες εἰς οἰκῆτορες,
 πόλις δὲ δούλη· τάσδε δ' ἄσπερ εἰσορᾶς
 ἐξ ὀλβίων ἄζηλον εὐρούσαι βίον
 χωροῦσι πρὸς σέ· ταῦτα γὰρ πόσις τε σὸς

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TRACHINIAE

Of his reproach, that by a mighty oath
He swore one day to enslave with wife and child
The author of this foul calamity.
Nor vain that vow. No sooner was he purged,
Than he enlisted straight an alien host,
And marched against the city of Eurytus ;
For Eurytus alone of men he deemed
The guilty cause, who when he came a guest
To one by ties of ancient friendship bound,
With many a bitter taunt and bitter spite
Assailed him, saying, "Thou indeed hast shafts
Unerring, yet in feats of archery
My sons surpass thee," or again he'd cry,
"Out on thee, slave, a freeman's down-trod thrall."
Once at a banquet too he cast him forth
When he was in his cups. Whereat incensed,
Encountering Iphitus upon the hill
Of Tiryns in pursuit of his strayed mares,
As the youth stood at gaze, his wits afield,
He hurled him from the craggy battlements.
That deed of violence provoked our King,
The sire of all, Olympian Zeus, who drave him
Forth to be sold, and spared him not, because
That once (his sole offence) he slew a foe
By treachery ; had he slain him in fair fight,
Zeus had approved his righteous wrath, for gods
No more than men can suffer insolence.
So all those braggarts of outrageous tongue
Lie low in Hades and their town's enslaved,
And these, the women whom thou seeest, fallen
To abject misery from their high estate,
Are to thy hands delivered. Thus my lord

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ἔφειτ', ἐγὼ δὲ πιστὸς ὦν κείνῳ τελῶ.
αὐτὸν δ' ἐκείνον, εὐτ' ἂν ἀγνὰ θύματα
ῥέξῃ πατρῷῳ Ζηνὶ τῆς ἀλώσεως,
φρόνει νιν ὡς ἤξοντα· τοῦτο γὰρ λόγου
πολλοῦ καλῶς λεχθέντος ἡδιστον κλύειν.

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ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἄνασσα, νῦν σοι τέρψις ἐμφανῆς κυρεῖ,
τῶν μὲν παρόντων, τὰ δὲ πεπυσμένη λόγῳ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

πῶς δ' οὐκ ἐγὼ χαίροίμ' ἄν, ἀνδρὸς εὐτυχῆ
κλύουσα πράξιν τήνδε, πανδίκῳ φρενί;
πολλή' σι' ἀνάγκη τῆδε τοῦτο συντρέχειν.
ὁμως δ' ἔνεστι τοῖσιν εὖ σκοπούμενοις
ταρβεῖν τὸν εὖ πράσσοντα, μὴ σφαλῆ ποτε.
ἐμοὶ γὰρ οἶκτος δεινὸς εἰσέβη, φίλαι,
ταύτας ὀρώσῃ δυσπότημους ἐπὶ ξένης
χώρας ἀοίκους ἀπάτοράς τ' ἀλωμένας,
αἱ πρὶν μὲν ἦσαν ἐξ ἐλευθέρων ἴσως
ἀνδρῶν, ταυῖν δὲ δούλον ἰσχουσιν βίον.
ὦ Ζεῦ τροπαῖε, μὴ ποτ' εἰσίδοιμί σε
πρὸς τοῦμὸν οὕτω σπέρμα χωρήσαντά ποι,
μηδ', εἴ τι δράσεις, τῆσδέ γε ζώσης ἔτι.
οὕτως ἐγὼ δέδοικα τάσδ' ὀρωμένη.
ὦ δυστάλαινα, τίς ποτ' εἰ νεανίδων;
ἀνανδρος ἢ τεκνοῦσα¹; πρὸς μὲν γὰρ φύσιν
πάντων ἄπειρος τῶνδε, γενναία δέ τις.
Δίχα, τίνος ποτ' ἐστὶν ἡ ξένη βροτῶν;
τίς ἢ τεκοῦσα, τίς δ' ὁ φιτύσας πατήρ;
ἔξειπ'· ἐπεὶ νιν τῶνδε πλείστον ὄκτισα
βλέπουσ', ὄσῳ περ καὶ φρονεῖν οἶδεν μόνη.

300

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¹ τεκοῦσα MSS., Brunck corr.

TRACHINIAE

Charged me, and I, his liegeman true, obey.
Doubt not himself, so soon as he has paid
Due sacrifices for his victory
To Zeus his sire, will presently be here.
This crowns and consummates my happy tale.

CHORUS

Now, lady, is thy joy assured, in part
Present, with promise sure for what remains.

DEIANIRA

Hearing these happy tidings of my lord
How can I but rejoice, as it is meet,
For our two fortunes run in parallels.
Yet one who thinks on change and chance must dread
Lest such success be prelude to a fall.
And a strange pity hath come o'er me, friends,
At sight of these poor wretches, motherless,
Fatherless, homeless, in an alien land,
Daughters, it well may be, of free-born sires,
And now condemned to live the life of slaves.
Never, O Zeus who turn'st the tide of war,
Never may I behold a child of mine
Thus visited, or if such lot must be,
May it not fall while Deianira lives.
Such dread, as I behold these maids, is mine.

(To IOLE)

Say, who art thou, most miserable girl,
Mother or maid? To judge thee by thy looks
Thou hast full warrant of virginity,
Yea and of high birth. Lichas, who is she?
Who was her father, and her mother? Speak.
Her most of all I pity, for she shows
Alone the sense of her calamity.

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΛΙΧΑΣ

τί δ' οἶδ' ἐγώ, τί δ' ἄν με καὶ κρίνοις; ἴσως
γέννημα τῶν ἐκεῖθεν οὐκ ἐν ὑστάτοις.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

μη τῶν τυράννων; Εὐρύτου σπορά τις ἦν;

ΛΙΧΑΣ

οὐκ οἶδα· καὶ γὰρ οὐδ' ἀνιστόρου μακράν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

οὐδ' ὄνομα πρὸς τοῦ τῶν ξυνεμπόρων ἔχεις;

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἦκιστα· συγῆ τούμῶν ἔργον ἦνυτον.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

εἶπ', ὦ τάλαιν', ἀλλ' ἡμῖν ἐκ σαντῆς, ἐπεὶ
καὶ ξυμφορά τοι μὴ εἶδέναι σέ γ' ἦτις εἶ.

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ΛΙΧΑΣ

οὐ τᾶρα τῷ γε πρόσθεν οὐδὲν ἐξ ἴσου
χρόνῳ διήσει¹ γλώσσαν, ἦτις οὐδαμὰ
προύφηεν οὔτε μείζον' οὔτ' ἐλάσσονα,
ἀλλ' αἰὲν ὠδίνουσα συμφορᾶς βᾶρος
δακρυρροεῖ δύστηνος, ἐξ ὅτου πάτραν
διήνεμον λέλοιπεν· ἡ δέ τοι τύχη
κακὴ μὲν αὐτῇ γ', ἀλλὰ συγγνώμην ἔχει.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἡ δ' οὖν εἴσθω, καὶ πορευέσθω στέγας
οὕτως ὅπως ἤδιστα, μηδὲ πρὸς κακοῖς
τοῖς οὖσιν ἄλλην² πρὸς γ' ἐμοῦ λύπην λάβη³
ἄλις γὰρ ἡ παρούσα. πρὸς δὲ δώματα
χωρῶμεν ἤδη πάντες, ὡς σύ θ' οἱ θέλεις
σπεύδης, ἐγὼ τε τᾶνδον ἐξαρκῆ τιθῶ.

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¹ διόσει MSS., Wakefield corr.

² οδοι λύπην MSS., F. W. Schmidt corr.

³ λάβοι MSS., Blaydes corr.

TRACHINIAE

LICHAS

How should I know? Why question me? Perchance
She was of noblest lineage in that land.

DEIANIRA

What, of their kings? Had Eurytus a daughter?

LICHAS

I know not, did not question her at length.

DEIANIRA

Did'st thou not even learn her name from one
Of her companions?

LICHAS

No, I had my work
To do, and had no time for questioning.

DEIANIRA

Then speak to *me* and tell me who thou art,
Poor maid; it grieves me truly not to know.

LICHAS

Well, if she opens now her lips, 'twill be
Unlike her former self, for hitherto
She hath not uttered word or syllable;
But still in travail with her heavy grief
She weeps and stays not weeping since she left
Her wind-swept home. 'Tis sad and ill for 'her,
This melancholy, yet 'tis natural.

DEIANIRA

Leave her in peace and let her pass within,
As is her humour. Heaven forbid that I
Should add another to her present pains,
Enough God knows. Now let us all go in,
That thou may'st start at once upon thy way.
And I make all things ready in the house.

[*Exeunt* LICHAS and CAPTIVES.]

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

αὐτοῦ γε πρῶτον βαιὸν ἀμμίνας', ὅπως
μάθῃς ἄνευ τῶνδ', οὔστινάς τ' ἄγεις ἔσω,
ὦν τ' οὐδὲν εἰσήκουσας ἐκμάθῃς ἂ δει·
τούτων ἔχω γὰρ πάντ' ἐπιστήμην ἐγώ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

τί δ' ἐστί; τοῦ με τήνδ' ἐφίστασαι βάσιν;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

σταθείσ' ἄκουσον· καὶ γὰρ οὐδὲ τὸν πάρος 340
μῦθον μάτην ἤκουσας, οὐδὲ νῦν δοκῶ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

πότερον ἐκείνους δῆτα δεῦρ' αὖθις πάλιν
καλῶμεν, ἢ 'μοὶ ταῖσδέ τ' ἐξειπεῖν θέλεις;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

σοὶ ταῖσδέ τ' οὐδὲν εἴργεται, τούτους δ' ἔα.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

καὶ δὴ βεβῶσι, χῶ λόγος σημαίνεταιω.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἄνῆρ ὄδ' οὐδὲν ὦν ἔλεξεν ἀρτίως
φωρεῖ δίκης ἐς ὀρθόν, ἀλλ' ἦ νῦν κακὸς
ἢ πρόσθεν οὐ δίκαιος ἄγγελος παρῆν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

τί φῆς; σαφῶς μοι φράζε πᾶν ὅσον νεοῖς·
ἂ μὲν γὰρ ἐξείρηκας ἀγνοία μ' ἔχει. 350

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

τούτου λέγοντος τάνδρὸς εἰσήκουσ' ἐγώ,
πολλῶν παρόντων μαρτύρων, ὡς τῆς κόρης
ταύτης ἑκατι κείνος Εὐρυτόν θ' ἔλοι
τήν θ' ὑψίπυργου Οἰχαλίαν, ἦρωσ δέ νιν
μόνος θεῶν θέλξειεν αἰχμάσαι τάδε,

TRACHINIAE

MESSENGER

So be it, but first tarry here awhile
That thou may'st learn in private who are these
Whom thou dost welcome 'neath thy roof, and hear
Matters of import still untold, whereof
I have full cognisance.

DEIANIRA

What meanest thou?
Why dost thou bid me pause and stay my steps?

MESSENGER

Attend and listen. As my former news
Was worth the hearing, so methinks is this.

DEIANIRA

Say, shall I call the others back to hear,
Or wouldst thou speak with me and these alone?

MESSENGER

With thee and these; the rest are well away.

DEIANIRA

See, they are gone; proceed then with thy tale.

MESSENGER

Yon fellow spake not the straightforward truth
In aught he told thee; either now he's false,
Or else before was no true messenger.

DEIANIRA

How say'st thou? Tell me clearly all thy mind.
These covert hints I cannot understand.

MESSENGER

'Twas for this maiden's sake (I heard the man,
And many witnesses were by, declare it)
That Heracles laid prostrate in the dust
Oechalia's battlements and Eurytus.
Love was his leader, love alone inspired
This doughty deed, not his base servitude

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

οὐ τὰ πὶ Λυδοῖς οὐδ' ὑπ' Ὀμφάλῃ πόνων
 λατρεύματ' οὐδ' ὀρυπτὸς Ἰφίτου μόρος·
 ἔν νῦν παρώσας οὗτος ἔμπαλιν λέγει.
 ἀλλ' ἠνίκ' οὐκ ἔπειθε τὸν φυτοσπόρον
 τὴν παῖδα δοῦναι, κρύφιον ὡς ἔχοι λέχος, 360
 ἔγκλημα μικρὸν αἰτίαν θ' ἑτοιμάσας
 ἐπιστρατεύει πατρίδα τὴν ταύτης, ἐν ἧ
 τὸν Εὐρύτου τόνδ' εἶπε δεσπόζειν θρόνων,
 κτείνει τ' ἄνακτα πατέρα τῆσδε καὶ πόλιν
 ἔπερσε. καὶ νῦν, ὡς ὄρᾳς, ἦκει δόμους
 ὡς τοῦσδε πέμπων οὐκ ἀφροντίστως, γύναι,
 οὐδ' ὥστε δούλην· μηδὲ προσδόκα τόδε·
 οὐδ' εἰκός, εἴπερ ἐντεθέρμανται πόθῳ.
 ἔδοξεν οὖν μοι πρὸς σέ δηλῶσαι τὸ πᾶν,
 δέσποιν', ὃ τοῦδε τυγχάνω μαθὼν πάρα. 370
 καὶ ταῦτα πολλοὶ πρὸς μέσῃ Τραχινίων
 ἀγορᾷ συνεξήκουον ὡσαύτως ἐμοί,
 ὥστ' ἐξελέγχειν· εἰ δὲ μὴ λέγω φίλα,
 οὐχ ἤδομαι, τὸ δ' ὄρθον ἐξείρηχ' ὄμωσ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

οἶμοι τάλαίνα, ποῦ ποτ' εἰμι πράγματος;
 τί ν' εἰσδέδεγμαι πημονὴν ὑπόστεγον
 λαθραῖον; ὦ δύστηνος· ἄρ' ἀνώνυμος
 πέφυκεν, ὥσπερ οὐπάγων διώμυνο;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἦ κάρτα λαμπρὰ καὶ κατ' ὄνομα καὶ φύσιν,
 πατρὸς μὲν οὔσα γένεσιν Εὐρύτου ποτε 380
 Ἰόλῃ καλεῖτο, τῆς ἐκείνος οὐδαμὰ
 βλάστας ἐφώνει, δῆθεν οὐδὲν ἰστορῶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἴδωμεν — μὴ τι πάντες οἱ κακοί, τὰ δὲ
 λαθραῖ' ὅς ἀσκεῖ μὴ πρέποντ' αὐτῷ κακά.

TRACHINIAE

As bondsman under Lydian Omphalè,
Nor ruth for Iphitus hurled headlong down,
As Lichas feigned, who shrank to tell of love.
So, when he failed to win her sire's consent
To give the maiden for his paramour,
Ficking some petty cause of quarrel, he
Made war upon her land (the land in which
Eurytus, as the herald said, was King)
And slew the prince her sire and sacked the town.
Now, as thou see'st, he comes and sends before him
The maiden, with set purpose, to his house ;
Not as a slave—how could he so intend,
Seeing his heart is kindled with love's fire ?
So I determined, Queen, to tell thee all
I had heard from Lichas ; many heard it too
Who stood with me in the Trachinean mote,
And can convict him. If my words give pain,
It grieves me, but, alas, they are too true.

DEIANIRA

Ah me unhappy ! in what plight I stand !
What bane have I received beneath my roof,
Unwitting, for my ruin ! Is she then
A nameless maid, as he who brought her sware ?

MESSENGER

Nay, she hath name and fame, a princess born,
Iolè, daughter of-King Eurytus ;
This girl whose parents Lichas could not tell,
Because, forsooth, he had not questioned her.

CHORUS

A curse on evil doers, most on him
Who by deceit worketh iniquity !

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

τί χρῆ ποεῖν, γυναῖκες; ὡς ἐγὼ λόγοις
τοῖς νῦν παρούσιν ἐκπεπληγμένη κυρῶ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πεύθου μολοῦσα τάνδρός, ὡς τάχ' ἂν σαφῆ
λέξειεν, εἴ νιν πρὸς βίαν κρίνειν θέλοις.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἀλλ' εἴμι· καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἀπὸ γνώμης λέγεις.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἡμεῖς δὲ προσμένωμεν; ἢ τί χρῆ ποεῖν;

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

μίμν', ὡς ὄδ' ἀνὴρ οὐκ ἐμῶν ὑπ' ἀγγέλων,
ἀλλ' αὐτόκλητος ἐκ δόμων πορεύεται.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

τί χρῆ, γύναι, μολόντα μ' Ἡρακλεῖ λέγειν;
δίδαξον, ὡς ἔρποντος, ὡς ὄρα¹, ἐμοῦ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ὡς ἐκ ταχείας σὺν χρόνῳ βραδεῖ μολῶν
ἄσσεις, πρὶν ἡμᾶς κἀννεώσασθαι λόγους.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἀλλ' εἴ τι χρήξεις ἱστορεῖν, πάρειμ' ἐγώ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἢ καὶ τὸ πιστὸν τῆς ἀληθείας νέμεις;

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἴστω μέγας Ζεὺς, ὦν γ' ἂν ἐξειδὼς κυρῶ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

τίς ἢ γυνὴ δῆτ' ἐστὶν ἣν ἤκεις ἄγων;

ΛΙΧΑΣ

Εὐβοίης· ὦν δ' ἔβλασταν οὐκ ἔχω λέγειν.

¹ εἰσορᾶς MSS., Wakefield corr

TRACHINIAE

DEIANIRA

My friends, what shall I do? this latest news
Bewilders me.

MESSENGER

Go in and question Lichas;
Perchance, if pressed, he'll tell thee all the truth.

DEIANIRA

There's reason in thy counsel; I will go.

MESSENGER

And I—shall I remain, or what would'st thou
That I should do?

DEIANIRA

Remain, for here he comes
Without my summons, of his own accord.

Re-enter LICHAS.

LICHAS

Lady, what message shall I bear my lord?
Instruct me; I am starting, as thou see'st.

DEIANIRA

Thou can'st at leisure, but dost part in haste,
And hast no time for further talk with me.

LICHAS

If thou wouldst question me, I wait thy pleasure.

DEIANIRA

Say, dost thou reverence the honest truth?

LICHAS

So help me Zeus, I'll speak what truth I know.

DEIANIRA

Who is this woman then whom thou hast brought?

LICHAS

Euboean; of her parents I know naught.

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

οὗτος, βλέφ' ὦδε· πρὸς τίν' ἐννέπειν δοκεῖς;

ΛΙΧΑΣ

σύ δ' εἰς τί δή με τοῦτ' ἐρωτήσας ἔχεις;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

τόλμησον εἰπεῖν, εἰ φρονεῖς, ὃ σ' ἱστορῶ.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

πρὸς τὴν κρατοῦσαν Δηάνειραν, Οἰνέως
κόρην δάμαρτά θ' Ἡρακλέους, εἰ μὴ κυρῶ
λεύσσων μάταια, δεσπότην τε τὴν ἐμήν.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

τοῦτ' αὐτ' ἔχρηξον, τοῦτό σου μαθεῖν· λέγεις
δέσποιναν εἶναι τήνδε σήν;

ΛΙΧΑΣ

δίκαια γάρ.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

τί δῆτα; ποίαν ἀξιοῖς δοῦναι δίκην,
ἦν εὐρεθῆς ἐς τήνδε μὴ δίκαιος ὢν;

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ΛΙΧΑΣ

πῶς μὴ δίκαιος; τί ποτε ποικίλας ἔχεις;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

οὐδέν· σύ μέντοι κάρτα τοῦτο δρᾶν κυρεῖς.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἄπειμι· μῶρος δ' ἦ πάλαι κλύων σέθεν.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

οὐ, πρὶν γ' ἂν εἴπῃς ἱστορούμενος βραχύ.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

λέγ', εἴ τι χρήξεις· καὶ γὰρ οὐ σιγηλὸς εἶ.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

τὴν αἰχμάλωτον, ἦν ἔπεμψας ἐς δόμους,
κάτοισθα δήπου;

TRACHINIAE

MESSENGER

Hark, sirrah, look me in the face : dost know
To whom thou speakest ?

LICHAS

Who art thou to ask me ?

MESSENGER

Be pleased to answer, if thou hast the wit.

LICHAS

To my most gracious mistress whom I serve,
Daughter of Oeneus, spouse of Heracles,
Deianira, if I be not blind.

MESSENGER

My question's answered to the point. Thou sayest
She is thy sovereign.

LICHAS

Whom I am bound to serve.

MESSENGER

Then tell me what should be thy punishment,
If in thy duty thou art proved to fail.

LICHAS

Fail in my duty ? What dark riddle is this ?

MESSENGER

My words are plain, the riddling speech is thine.

LICHAS

I go ; I was a fool to stay for thee.

MESSENGER

Depart, but answer one brief question first.

LICHAS

Ask what thou wilt ; thou hast a wagging tongue.

MESSENGER

That captive whom thou broughtest here—thou
know'st

The maid I mean ?

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΛΙΧΑΣ

φημί· πρὸς τί δ' ἱστορεῖς;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

οὐκουν σὺ ταύτην, ἣν ὑπ' ἀγνοίας ὄρας,
Ἰόλην ἔφασκες Εὐρύτου σποράν ἄγειν;

420

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ποίοις ἐν ἀνθρώποισι; τίς πόθεν μολῶν
σοὶ μαρτυρήσει ταῦτ' ἐμοῦ κλύειν πάρα;¹

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

πολλοῖσιν ἀστῶν· ἐν μέσῃ Τραχινίων
ἀγορᾷ πολὺς σου ταῦτά γ' εἰσήκουσ' ὄχλος.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

κλύειν γ' ἔφασκον· ταῦτ' οὐχὶ γίγνεται
δόκησιν εἰπεῖν κάξ' ἀκριβῶσαι λόγον.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ποίαν δόκησιν; οὐκ ἐπώμοτος λέγων
δάμαρτ' ἔφασκες Ἡρακλεῖ ταύτην ἄγειν;

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἐγὼ δάμαρτα; πρὸς θεῶν, φράσον, φίλη
δέσποινα, τόνδε τίς ποτ' ἐστὶν ὁ ξένος.

430

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ὅς σοῦ παρῶν ἤκουσεν, ὡς ταύτης πόθῳ
πόλις δαμείη πᾶσα, κούχῃ ἢ Λυδία
πέρσειεν αὐτήν, ἀλλ' ὁ τῆσδ' ἔρωσ φανείς.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἄνθρωπος, ὃ δέσποινα, ἀποστήτω· τὸ γὰρ
νοσοῦντι ληρεῖν ἀνδρὸς οὐχὶ σῶφρονος.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

μή, πρὸς σε τοῦ κατ' ἄκρον Οἰταίου νάπος
Διὸς καταστράπτοντος, ἐκκλέψης λόγον.

¹ παρῶν MSS., Bothe corr.

TRACHINIAE

LICHAS

I know, and what of her ?

MESSENGER

Said'st thou not she thou scarce dost know by sight
Was Iolè, the child of Eurytus ?

LICHAS

To whom and when ? What witness canst thou bring
To vouch for hearing such a tale from me ?

MESSENGER

Scores of our townfolk—all the multitude
That heard thee at the great Trachinean mote.

LICHAS

They may have said so, but the vulgar bruit
Of mere surmise is not strict evidence.

MESSENGER

' Surmise, ' quotha ! Did'st thou not say on oath,
' I am bringing home a bride for Heracles ' ?

LICHAS

' Bringing a bride ? ' Dear lady, tell me, pray,
Who is this stranger ?

MESSENGER

One who heard thy tale
How a whole city fell for love of her,
That 'twas the passion kindled by her eyes,
And not the Lydian queen who sacked the town.

LICHAS

Send him away, good lady ; 'tis not wise
To bandy folly with a brain-sick fool.

DEIANIRA

Nay, by the god, I pray, who hurls his bolts
On Oeta's wooded heights, hold nothing back ;

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

οὐ γὰρ γυναικὶ τοὺς λόγους ἑρεῖς κακῇ
οὐδ' ἦτις οὐ κάτοιδε τάνθρώπων, ὅτι
χαίρειν πέφυκεν οὐχὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς αἰεί. 440
Ἐρωτι μὲν νυν ὅστις ἀντανίσταται
πύκτης ὅπως ἐς χεῖρας, οὐ καλῶς φρονεῖ·
οὗτος γὰρ ἄρχει καὶ θεῶν ὅπως θέλει,
κάμου γε· πῶς δ' οὐ χἀτέρας οἴας γ' ἐμοῦ;
ὥστ' εἴ τι τῶμῳ τ' ἀνδρὶ τῆδε τῆ νόσφ
ληφθέντι μεμπτός εἰμι, κάρτα μαίνομαι,
ἢ τῆδε τῆ γυναικὶ τῆ μεταίτια
τοῦ μηδὲν αἰσχροῦ μηδ' ἐμοὶ κακοῦ τινος.
οὐκ ἔστι ταῦτ'· ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν ἐκ κείνου μαθῶν
ψευδεῖ, μάθησιν οὐ καλὴν ἐκμανθάνεις. 450
εἰ δ' αὐτὸς αὐτὸν ὠδε παιδεύεις, ὅταν
θέλης γενέσθαι χρηστός, ὀφθήσει κακός.
ἀλλ' εἰπέ πᾶν τάληθές· ὡς ἐλευθέρῳ
ψευδεῖ καλεῖσθαι κῆρ πρόσεστιν οὐ καλή.
ὅπως δὲ λήσεις, οὐδὲ τοῦτο γίγνεται·
πολλοὶ γὰρ οἷς εἴρηκας, οἱ φράσσουσ' ἐμοί.
κεῖ μὲν δέδοικας, οὐ καλῶς ταρβεῖς, ἐπεὶ
τὸ μὴ πυθέσθαι, τοῦτό μ' ἀλγύνειεν ἄν·
τὸ δ' εἰδέναι τί δεινόν; οὐχὶ χἀτέρας 460
πλείστας ἀνῆρ εἰς Ἡρακλῆς ἔγημε δῆ;
κοῦπω τις αὐτῶν ἐκ γ' ἐμοῦ λόγον κακὸν
ἠνέγκατ' οὐδ' ὄνειδος· ἦδε τ' οὐδ' ἄν εἰ
κάρτ' ἐντακείῃ τῷ φιλεῖν, ἐπεὶ σφ' ἐγὼ
ῥόκτιρα δὴ μάλιστα πρὸςβλέψασ', ὅτι
τὸ κάλλος αὐτῆς τὸν βίον διώλεσεν,
καὶ γῆν πατρώαν οὐχ ἐκοῦσα δύσμορος
ἔπερσε κῆδούλωσεν. ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν
ρεῖτω κατ' οὐρον· σοὶ δ' ἐγὼ φράζω κακὸν
πρὸς ἄλλον εἶναι, πρὸς δ' ἐμ' ἀψευδεῖν αἰεί,

TRACHINIAE

To no ungenerous woman wilt thou speak,
But one that knows the inconstancy of men,
Who e'en in joys delight not in one kind.
The gamester who would pit himself 'gainst Love
Is ill advised. Love rules at will the gods,
And me—why not then others weak as I?
So were I mad indeed either to blame
My husband stricken with love's malady,
Or her the partner of his dalliance :
That brings to them no shame or wrong to me.
I have more sense. But if he taught thee thus
To lie, the lesson thou hast learnt is base ;
Or if thy fraud is self-taught, thou art like
To prove most cruel, meaning to be kind.
Nay, tell me the whole truth. The name of liar
Is to the free-born man a deadly brand.
And think not that thy lying will not out,
For many heard thy tale and will inform me.
Art thou afraid of me ? Thy fears are vain.
'Twould vex me much not to be told the truth ;
To know it hurts not. Hath not Heracles
Had loves before (no mortal more than he)
And no one of them ever had harsh word
Or taunt from me ; nor shall this maid, howe'er
She dotes, consumed with passion, on my lord.
Nay, my heart bled for pity seeing her
Whose beauty was her bane ; poor innocent,
Who brought to wrack and bondage her own land.
All that is past and over, let it sail
Adown the stream of time. But O, be thou,
Whate'er thou art to others, true to me.

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πέιθου λεγούσῃ χρηστά, κοῦ μέμψει χρόνον
 γυναικί τῆδε κάπ' ἐμοῦ κτήσει χάριν.

470

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἀλλ', ὦ φίλη δέσποινα, ἐπεὶ σε μανθάνω
 θνητὴν φρονούσαν θνητὰ κοῦκ ἀγνώμονα,
 πᾶν σοι φράσω τᾶληθές οὐδὲ κρύψομαι.
 ἔστιν γὰρ οὕτως ὥσπερ οὗτος ἐννέπει.
 ταύτης ὁ δεινὸς ἕμερός ποθ' Ἡρακλῆ
 διῆλθε, καὶ τῆσδ' εἶνεχ' ἡ πολύφθορος
 καθηρέθη πατρῷος Οἰχαλία δόρει.
 καὶ ταῦτα, δεῖ γὰρ καὶ τὸ πρὸς κείνου λέγειν,
 οὔτ' εἶπε κρύπτειν οὔτ' ἀπηρηθήθη ποτέ,
 ἀλλ' αὐτός, ὦ δέσποινα, δειμαίνων τὸ σὸν
 μὴ στέρνον ἀλγύνοιμι τοῖσδε τοῖς λόγοις,
 ἡμαρτον, εἴ τι τήνδ' ἀμαρτίαν νέμεις.
 ἐπεὶ γε μὲν δὴ πάντ' ἐπίστασαι λόγον,
 κείνου τε καὶ σὴν ἐξ ἴσου κοινήν χάριν
 καὶ στέργε τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ βούλου λόγους,
 οὐς εἶπας ἐς τήνδ', ἐμπέδως εἰρηκένας
 ὡς τᾶλλ' ἐκείνος πάντ' ἀριστεύων χεροῖν
 τοῦ τῆσδ' ἔρωτος εἰς ἄπαιθ' ἦσσαν ἔφυ.

480

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἀλλ' ὦδε καὶ φρονούμεν ὥστε ταῦτα δρᾶν,
 κοῦτοι νόσον γ' ἐπακτὸν ἐξαρούμεθα,
 θεοῖσι δυσμαχοῦντες. ἀλλ' εἰσω στέγης
 χωρῶμεν, ὡς λόγων τ' ἐπιστολὰς φέρης,
 ἅ τ' ἀντὶ δώρων δῶρα χρῆ προσαρμῶσαι,
 καὶ ταῦτ' ἄγης· κενὸν γὰρ οὐ δίκαιά σε
 χωρεῖν προσελθόνθ' ὦδε σὺν πολλῷ στόλῳ.

490

TRACHINIAE.

CHORUS

Heed her, she counsels well, and thou shalt win
Her commendation soon, and thanks from me.

LICHAS

Nay, then, dear mistress, since I see 'thou hast
A human feeling for the infirmities
Of poor humanity, I will tell thee all
Frankly and fully. 'Tis as this man saith ;
The overmastering passion that inspired
The soul of Heracles was for this maid,
And for her sake he sacked Oechalia,
Her desolate home. This much in his defence
I needs must add, he ne'er himself denied
Nor bade me hide it from thee. It was I,
Fearing to wound thee, lady, I who sinned,
If such concealment should be deemed a sin.
Now, lady, that thou know'st the tale in full,
For both your sakes—thine own no less than his—
Suffer this maiden gladly, and abide
By the kind words thou spak'st concerning her.
For he who never yielded to a foe,
By her was vanquished and by love laid low.

DEIANIRA

This way my thoughts too, as thou bidst, inclined,
Nor will I fondly aggravate my trouble
By warring against Heaven. Let us indoors,
That thou may'st bear a message to my lord,
And, as a fit return for gifts received,
My gift withal. It were not meet that thou
Should'st leave me empty-handed, having come
Accompanied by such a goodly train.

[*Exeunt* LICHAS and DEIANIRA.]

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ.

μέγα τι σθένος ἂ Κύπρις ἐκφέρεται νίκας αἰεί,
καὶ τὰ μὲν θεῶν

παρέβαν, καὶ ὅπως Κρουίδαυ ὑπάτασεν οὐ λέγω, 500

οὐδὲ τὸν ἔννουχον Ἔϊδαυ

ἢ Ποσειδάωνα τινάκτορα γαίας·

ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τάνδ' ἄρ' ἄκουτιυ

τίνες ἀμφίγυοι κατέβαν πρὸ γάμων,

— τίνες πάμπληκτα παγκόνιτά τ' ἐξῆλθον ἀεθλ'
ἀγώνων;

ἀντ.

ὁ μὲν ἦν ποταμοῦ σθένος, ὑψίκερω τετραόρου
φάσμα ταύρου,

Ἄχελῶος ἀπ' Οἰνιαδᾶν, ὁ δὲ Βακχίας ἀπὸ 510

ἦλθε παλίντονα Θήβας

τόξα καὶ λόγγας ῥόπαλόν τε τινάσσων,

παῖς Διός· οἱ τὸτ' ἀολλεῖς

ἴσαν ἐς μέσον ἰέμενοι λεχέων·

μόνα δ' εὐλεκτρος ἐν μέσῳ Κύπρις ῥαβδονόμει
ξυνοῦσα.

τότ' ἦν χερός, ἦν δὲ τόξων πάταγος,

ταυρείων τ' ἀνάμμιδα κεράτων·

ἦν δ' ἀμφίπλεκτοι κλίμακες,

ἦν δὲ μετώπων ὀλόεντα

πλήγματα, καὶ στόνος ἀμφοῖν,

298

520

TRACHINIAE.

CHORUS

(*Str.*)

Many a trophy of war the Cyprian bears away ;
To tell of the triumphs she wins o'er gods I may not
stay,
How the Olympian King and the Lord of the realms
of night,
Yea, and the Shaker of Earth, Poseidon, owns her
might.
Fitter theme for my song the well-matched champion
pair,
Rivals who entered the lists to win the hand of the
fair.
Dread the strife, and the sky with dust of battle was
full.

(*Ant.*)

One was a river-god, four-footed and horned like a
bull,
Oeneadae was his home and Achelous his name ;
But from Thebè, beloved of Bacchus, the other came,
With bow and with brandished club and javelins
twain at his side,
Child of Zeus. So they met and fought for a winsome
bride.
But with her umpire wand the Cyprian Queen was
there,
Goddess who rules the fight and assigns the hand of
the fair.

Hark ! the thud of fisted blow,
Crash of horns and twanging bow,
Grapplings close-entwined, and now
Buttings of the horned brow ;
And amid the storm, in tones
Faint and muffled, deep-drawn groans.

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ἅ δ' εὐώπις ἄβρα
 τηλαυγεί παρ' ὄχθῳ
 ἦστο, τὸν δὲν προσμένουσ' ἀκοίταν.
 ἀγῶν δὲ μαργᾶ¹ μὲν οἶα φράζω·
 τὸ δ' ἀμφινείκητον ὄμμα νύμφας
 ἐλεινὸν ἀμμένει·
 κάπὸ ματρὸς ἄφαρ βέβακεν,
 ὥστε πόρτις ἐρήμα.

530

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἦμος, φίλοι, κατ' οἶκον ὁ ξένος θροεῖ
 ταῖς αἰχμαλώτοις παισὶν ὡς ἐπ' ἐξόδῳ,
 τῆμος θυραῖος ἦλθον ὡς ὑμᾶς λάθρα,
 τὰ μὲν φράσουσα χερσὶν ἀτεχνησάμην,
 τὰ δ' οἶα πάσχω συγκατοικτιουμένη.
 κόρην γάρ, οἶμαι δ' οὐκέτ', ἀλλ' ἐξευγμένην,
 παρειαδέδεγμαί φόρτον ὥστε ναυτίλος,
 λωβητὸν ἐμπόλημα τῆς ἐμῆς φρενός.
 καὶ νῦν δὴ οὖσαι μίμνομεν μιᾶς ὑπὸ
 χλαίνης ὑπαγκάλισμα. τοιάδ' Ἡρακλῆς,
 ὁ πιστὸς ἡμῖν κάγαθὸς καλούμενος,
 οἰκούρι' ἀντέπεμψε τοῦ μακροῦ χρόνου.
 ἐγὼ δὲ θυμοῦσθαι μὲν οὐκ ἐπίσταμαι
 νοσοῦντι κείνῳ πολλὰ τῆδε τῇ νόσῳ·
 τὸ δ' αὖ ξυνοικεῖν τῆδ' ὁμοῦ τίς ἂν γυνῆ
 δύναιτο, κοινωνούσα τῶν αὐτῶν γάμων;
 ὀρῶ γὰρ ἦβην τὴν μὲν ἔρπουσαν πρόσω,
 τὴν δὲ φθίνουσαν ἂν ἀφαρπάξειν φιλεῖ
 ὀφθαλμὸς ἄνθος, τῶν δ' ὑπεκτρέπει πόδα.
 ταῦτ' οὖν φοβούμαι μὴ πόσις μὲν Ἡρακλῆς
 ἐμὸς καλῆται, τῆς νεωτέρας δ' ἀνήρ.

540

550

¹ ἐγὼ δὲ μάτηρ of MSS. is clearly corrupt. Jebb suggests, but does not print, ἀγῶν δὲ μαργᾶ.

TRACHINIAE

But afar upon the sward
Sate the tender tearful maid,
While in doubt the battle swayed,
Musing who should be her lord.
Long she sate and wept forlorn,
Then, like heifer driven to stray,
Weanèd, from her dam away,
Sudden from her home was torn.

Enter DEIANIRA.

DEIANIRA

Friends, while our herald guest is in the house
Conversing with the captives, ere he leaves,
I have stolen forth to speak with you alone ;
Partly to tell you what my hands have wrought,
And to command your sympathy. This maid—
No maiden she but mistress now, methinks—
I have harboured (as some merchant takes on board
An over-freight) to wreck my peace of mind.
And now we twain must share a common couch,
To one lord wedded. Such the recompense
That Heracles, whom I was wont to extol
As model of all virtue, makes me now
For all my faithful service as a wife.
Yet to be wroth with one like him, infect
With this love-plague, I cannot bring myself ;
But then to share his bed and board with her—
What wife could bear it? She's the budding rose,
And I o'erblown and withering on the thorn.
Men cull the flower and when the bloom has fled
Fling it far from them. This then is my fear,
That Heracles will leave me the bare name
Of consort, while the younger is his wife.

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ἀλλ' οὐ γάρ, ὥσπερ εἶπον, ὀργαίνειν καλὸν
 γυναῖκα νοῦν ἔχουσαν· ἧ δ' ἔχω, φίλαι,
 λυτήριον λώφημα,¹ τῆδ' ὑμῖν φράσω.
 ἦν μοι παλαιὸν δῶρον ἀρχαίου ποτὲ
 θηρός, λέβητι χαλκῆφ κεκρυμμένον,
 δ παῖς ἔτ' οὔσα τοῦ δασυστέρνου παρὰ
 Νέσσου φθίνοντος ἐκ φονῶν ἀνειλόμην,
 δς τὸν βαθύρρου ποταμὸν Εὐήνον βροτοὺς
 μισθοῦ ἴπορευε χερσίν, οὔτε πομπίμοις
 κώπαις ἐρέσσω οὔτε λαίφεσιν νεώς. 500
 δς κἀμέ, τὸν πατρῶον ἠνίκα στόλον
 ξὺν Ἡρακλεῖ τὸ πρῶτον εὐνις ἐσπόμην,
 φέρων ἐπ' ὤμοις, ἠνίκ' ἦ μέσφ πόρφ,
 ψαύει ματαίαις χερσίν· ἐκ δ' ἦυσ' ἐγώ,
 χῶ Ζηνὸς εὐθὺς παῖς ἐπιστρέψας χεροῖν
 ἦκεν κομήτην ἰόν· ἐς δὲ πλεύμονας
 στέρνων διερροίζησεν. ἐκθνήσκων δ' ὁ θῆρ
 τοσοῦτον εἶπε· παῖ γέροντος Οἰνέως,
 τοσόνδ' ὀνήσει τῶν ἐμῶν, ἐὰν πίθη, 570
 πορθμῶν, ὀθούνεχ' ὑστάτην σ' ἐπεμψ' ἐγώ·
 ἐὰν γὰρ ἀμφίθρεπτον αἷμα τῶν ἐμῶν
 σφαγῶν ἐνέγκῃ χερσίν, ἧ μελαγχόλους
 ἔβαψεν ἰοὺς θρέμμα Λερναίας ὕδρας,
 ἔσται φρενός σοι τοῦτο κηλητήριον
 τῆς Ἡρακλείας, ὥστε μήτιν' εἰσιδὼν
 στέρξει γυναῖκα κείνος ἀντὶ σοῦ πλέον.
 τοῦτ' ἐννοήσασ', ὦ φίλαι, δόμοις γὰρ ἦν
 κείνου θανόντος ἐγκεκλημένον καλῶς,
 χιτῶνα τόνδ' ἔβαψα, προσβαλοῦσ' ὄσα
 ζῶν κείνος εἶπε· καὶ πεπεύρανται τάδε. 580

¹ λώπημα MSS., Jebb corr.

TRACHINIAE

But, as I said, 'tis folly to be wroth.
I have a better way to ease my pain,
A remedy that I will now reveal.
Stored in an urn of brass I long have kept
A keepsake of the old-world monster ; this
The shaggy-breasted Nessus gave to me
While yet a girl, and from his wounded side
I took it as he lay at point of death ;
Nessus who ferried wayfarers for hire
Across the deep Evenus in his arms,
Without the help of oar or sail. I too,
When first I went with Heracles, a bride
Assigned him by my sire ; I too was borne
On his broad shoulders, and in mid-stream he
Touched me with wanton hands. I shrieked aloud,
He turned, the son of Zeus, and straight let fly
A winged shaft that, whizzing in the air,
Pierced to the lungs. Faint with approaching death
The Centaur spake : " Daughter of Oeneus old,
This profit of my ferrying at least,
As last of all I've ferried, shall be thine,
If thou wilt heed me. Gather with thy hands
The clotted gore that curdles round my wound,
Just where the Hydra, Lerna's monstrous breed,
Has tinged the barbèd arrow with her gall.
Thus shalt thou have a charm to bind the heart
Of Heracles, and never shall he look
On wife or maid to love her more than thee."
So I bethought me of this philtre, friends,
Which since the Centaur's death I had preserved
Locked in a secret place, and I have smeared
This robe as he directed while he lived.
My work is now accomplished. Far from me

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

κακὰς δὲ τόλμας μῆτ' ἐπισταίμην ἐγὼ
 μῆτ' ἐκμάθοιμι, τὰς τε τολμώσας στιγῶ·
 φίλτροις δ' ἂν πως τήνδ' ὑπερβαλώμεθα .
 τὴν παῖδα καὶ θέλκτροισι τοῖς ἐφ' Ἡρακλεῖ,
 μεμηχάνηται τοῦργον, εὖ τι μὴ δοκῶ
 πράσσειν μάταιον· εἰ δὲ μὴ, πεπαύσομαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' εἴ τις ἐστὶ πίστις ἐν τοῖς δρωμένοις,
 δοκεῖς παρ' ἡμῖν οὐ βεβουλεύσθαι κακῶς.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

οὕτως ἔχει γ' ἡ πίστις, ὡς τὸ μὲν δοκεῖν 590
 ἔνεστι, πείρα δ' οὐ προσωμίλησά πω·

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' εἰδέναι χρὴ δρώσαν, ὡς οὐδ' εἰ δοκεῖς
 ἔχειν, ἔχοις ἂν γνώμα, μὴ πειρωμένη.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἀλλ' αὐτίκ' εἰσόμεσθα, τόνδε γὰρ βλέπω
 θυραῖον ἤδη· διὰ τάχους δ' ἐλεύσεται.
 μόνον παρ' ὑμῶν εὖ στεγοίμεθ'· ὡς σκότῳ
 κὰν αἰσχροῦ πράσσης, οὐποτ' αἰσχύνη πεσεῖ.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

τί χρὴ ποεῖν; σήμαινε, τέκνον Οἰνέως,
 ὡς ἐσμέν ἤδη τῷ μακρῷ χρόνῳ βραδεῖς.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἀλλ' αὐτὰ δὴ σοι ταῦτα καὶ πράσσω, Λίχα, 600
 ἕως σὺ ταῖς ἔσωθεν ἠγορῶ ξέναις,
 ὅπως φέρῃς μοι τόνδε ταναῦφῃ πέπλον,
 δώρημ' ἐκείνῳ τάνδρῃ τῆς ἐμῆς χειρός.
 διδοῦς δὲ τόνδε φράζ' ὅπως μηδεὶς βροτῶν
 κείνου πάροιθεν ἀμφιδύσεται χροῖ,
 μηδ' ὄψεται νιν μῆτε φέγγος ἡλίου

TRACHINÆ

Be thought of evil witch-craft or desire
To learn it ; wives who try such arts I hate.
But how by love-charms I may win again
My Heracles and wean him from this maid,
This I have planned—unless indeed I seem
O'erwanton ; if ye think so, I desist.

CHORUS

If thou hast warranty thy charm will work,
We think that thou hast counselled not amiss.

DEIANIRA

No warrant, for I have not tried it yet,
But of its potency I am assured.

CHORUS

Without experiment there cannot be
Assurance, howsoever firm thy faith.

DEIANIRA

Well, we shall know ere long, for there I see
Lichas just starting ; he is at the gate.
Only do you be secret ; e'en dark deeds
If they be done in darkness bring no blame.
Enter LICHAS

LICHAS

What are thy orders, child of Oeneus, say ;
Already I have tarried over long.

DEIANIRA

Whilst thou wert talking with the maids within
I have been busied, Lichas, with thy charge,
This robe ; 'twas woven by my hands, a gift
That thou must carry to my absent lord.
Instruct him straitly, when thou givest it,
That he, and none before him, put it on ;
And let no sunlight, nor the altar flame
Behold it, nor the fire upon his hearth,

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

μήθ' ἔρκος ἱερὸν μῆτ' ἐφέστιον σέλας,
 πρὶν κείνος αὐτὸν φανερός ἐμφανῶς σταθεὶς
 δείξῃ θεοῖσιν ἡμέρα ταυροσφάγῳ.
 οὕτω γὰρ ἠΰγμην, εἴ ποτ' αὐτὸν ἐς δόμους
 ἴδοιμι σωθέντ' ἢ κλύοιμι πανδίκως,
 στελεῖν χιτῶνι τῷδε καὶ φανεῖν θεοῖς
 θυτῆρα καινῷ καινὸν ἐν πεπλώματι.
 καὶ τῶνδ' ἀποίσεις σῆμ', ὃ κείνος εὐμαθὲς
 σφραγίδος ἔρκει τῷδ' ἐπὸν μαθήσεται.¹
 ἀλλ' ἔρπε, καὶ φύλασσε πρῶτα μὲν νόμον,
 τὸ μὴ 'πιθυμῆναι πομπὸς ὧν περισσὰ δρᾶν
 ἔπειθ' ὅπως ἂν ἡ χάρις κείνου τέ σοι
 κάμου ξυνηλθοῦσ' ἐξ ἀπλῆς διπλῆ φανῆ.

610

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἀλλ' εἶπερ Ἑρμοῦ τῆνδε πομπεύω τέχνην
 βέβαιον, οὐ τι μὴ σφαλῶ γ' ἐν σοὶ ποτε,
 τὸ μὴ οὐ τόδ' ἄγγος ὡς ἔχει δείξαι φέρων,
 λόγων τε πίστιν ὧν λέγεις² ἐφαρμόσαι.

620

ΔΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

στείχους ἂν ἤδη· καὶ γὰρ ἐξεπίστασαι
 τὰ γ' ἐν δόμοισιν ὡς ἔχοντα τυγχάνει.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἐπίσταμαί τε καὶ φράσω σεσωσμένα.

ΔΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἀλλ' οἶσθα μὲν δὴ καὶ τὰ τῆς ξένης ὄρων
 προσδέγματ', αὐτὴν ὡς ἐδεξάμην φίλως.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ὥστ' ἐκπλαγῆναι τοῦμόν ἡδονῇ κέαρ.

¹ ἐκ' ὄμμα θήσεται MSS., Billerbeck corr.

² ἔχεις MSS., Wunder corr.

TRACHINIAE

Till he stand forth in sight of all arrayed
For gods to see it, at some solemn feast.
For I had vowed, if ever I should see
Or hear for certain of his safe return,
To invest him in this newly-woven robe,
And so present him duly to the gods,
A votary for the sacrifice new-dight.
And as a token point him out this seal,
The impress of my signet-ring, that he
Will surely recognise.

Now go thy way,
And heed the rule of messengers, nor let
Thy zeal outrun thy orders, but so act
That thou may'st win a double meed of thanks
For service rendered both to him and me.

LICHAS

Call me no master of the mystery
Of Hermes, if in ought I trip or fail—
Deliver not this casket as it is,
And add in attestation of the gift
Thy very words.

DEIANIRA

Thou may'st be going now.
How things are in the house thou know'st full well.

LICHAS

I know, and will report all safe and sound.

DEIANIRA

And thou canst tell him of the captive maid—
How kindly I received and welcomed her.

LICHAS

Yea, I was filled with wonder and delight.

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

τί δῆτ' ἂν ἄλλο γ' ἐννέποις; δέδοικα γὰρ
μὴ πρῶ λόγοις ἂν τὸν πόθον τὸν ἐξ ἐμοῦ,
πρὶν εἶδέναι τὰ κεῖθεν εἰ ποθούμεθα.

630

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ ναύλοχα καὶ πετραία στρ. α'
θερμὰ λουτρὰ καὶ πάγους
Οἴτας παραναιετάοντες, οἳ τε μέσσαν Μηλίδα παρ
λίμναν
χρυσασαλακάτου τ' ἀκτὰν κόρας,
ἐνθ' Ἑλλάνων ἀγοραὶ
Πυλάτιδες κλέονται·

ὁ καλλιβόας τάχ' ὑμῖν ἀντ. α' 640
αὐλὸς οὐκ ἀναρσίαν
ἀχῶν καναχὰν ἐπάνεισιν, ἀλλὰ θείας ἀντίλυρον
μούσας.

ὁ γὰρ Διὸς Ἀλκμήνας κόρος
σοῦται πάσας ἀρετᾶς
λάφυρ' ἔχων ἐπ' οἴκους·

ὄν ἀπόπτολιν εἶχομεν παντᾶ, στρ. β'
δυοκαιδεκάμηνον ἀμμένουσαι
χρόνον, πελάγιον, ἴδριες οὐδέν·
ἀ δέ οἱ φίλα δάμαρ 650
τάλαιναν δυστάλαινα καρδίαν
πάγκλαυτος αἰὲν ὄλλυτο·
νῦν δ' Ἄρης οἰστρηθεὶς
ἐξέλυσ' ἐπίπονον ἀμέραν.

ἀφίκοιτ' ἀφίκοιτο· μὴ σταίη ἀντ. β'
πολύκωπον ὄχημα ναὸς αὐτῷ,

TRACHINIAE

DEIANIRA

What further message have I? None, I fear;
To tell him of my longing were too soon,
Before I know that he too longs for me.

[*Exeunt* LICHAS and DEIANIRA.]

CHORUS

Ye who on Oeta dwell, (Str. 1)
Or where the hot springs well
And down the cliffs their steaming waters pour;
Or by the inmost shore
Of Malis, where the golden-arrowed Maid
Haunts the green glade,
Where at thy Gates, far-famed from times of old,
Greeks counsel hold;

Soon shall the clear-voiced flute (Ant. 1)
Sweet as Apollo's lute,
Echo amid your hills and vales again,
No sad funereal strain,
But hymeneals meet for gods to hear.
For now he draweth near,
The Zeus-born conqueror, Alcmena's son,
His victory won.

Him twelve weary months we wait. (Str. 2)
Wondering what may be his fate;
And his true wife wastes away,
Pining at her lord's delay.
But the War-god, with his foes
Wroth, has given at last repose.

Spread the sail and ply the oar, (Ant. 2)
Waft him, breezes, from the shore,

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

πρὶν τάνδε πρὸς πόλιν ἀνύσειε,
 νασιώτιν ἐστίαν
 ἀμείψας, ἔνθα κλήζεται θυτήρ
 ὅθεν μόλοι πανίμερος,¹
 τᾶς πειθοῦς παγχρίστῳ
 συγκραθεὶς ἐπὶ προφάσει φάρους.²

660

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

γυναῖκες, ὡς δέδοικα μὴ περαιτέρω
 πεπραγμέν' ἢ μοι πάνθ' ὅσ' ἀρτίως ἔδρων.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί δ' ἔστι, Δηάνειρα, τέκνον Οἰνέως;

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

οὐκ οἶδ'. ἀθυμῶ δ', εἰ φανήσομαι τάχα
 κακὸν μέγ' ἐκπράξασ' ἀπ' ἐλπίδος καλῆς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐ δὴ τι τῶν σῶν Ἡρακλεῖ δωρημάτων;

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

μάλιστα γ', ὥστε μήποτ' ἂν προθυμῶν
 ἀδελον ἔργου τῷ παρανέσαι λαβεῖν.

670

ΧΟΡΟΣ

δίδαξον, εἰ διδακτόν, ἐξ ὄτου φοβεῖ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

τοιούτον ἐκβέβηκεν οἶον, ἦν φράσω,
 γυναῖκες, ὑμᾶς³ θαυμ' ἀνέλπιστον μαθεῖν.
 ὃ γὰρ τὸν ἐνδυτήρα πέπλον ἀρτίως
 ἔχριον, ἀργῆς οἶος εὔερου πόκος,⁴
 τοῦτ' ἠφάνισται διάβορον πρὸς οὐδενὸς
 τῶν ἔνδον, ἀλλ' ἔδεστον ἐξ αὐτοῦ φθίνει,

¹ πανάμερος MSS., Mudge corr.

² θηρός MSS., Haupt corr.

³ ὑμῖν MSS., Jebb corr.

⁴ ἀργῆτ' . . . πόκος MSS., Lobeck corr.

TRACHINIAE

Where to Zeus, his vows all paid,
Sacrifices he hath made.
May the magic mantle fire
All his heart with fond desire,
Speed him to his true love's arms
Captive to her subtle charms.

Enter DEIANIRA.

DEIANIRA

Maidens, I fear I have been over bold
And ill advised in all I did of late.

CHORUS

What mean'st thou, Deianira, Oeneus' child.

DEIANIRA

I know not, but I tremble lest deceived
By fond hopes I have wrought a grievous harm.

CHORUS

Thou speak'st not of thy gift to Heracles?

DEIANIRA

'Tis so; and I would henceforth counsel none
To act in haste, unless the issue's clear.

CHORUS

Tell, if thou may'st, the cause of thy alarm.

DEIANIRA

My friends, a thing has come to pass, so strange
That, if I tell it, you will deem you hear
A miracle. The flock of wool wherewith
E'en now I smeared the festal robe ('twas plucked
From a white fleece) has disappeared, untouched
By aught within the house, but self-consumed

καὶ ψῆ κατ' ἄκρας σπιλάδος· ὡς δ' εἶδῃς ἅπαν,
 ἢ τοῦτ' ἐπράχθη, μείζον' ἐκτενῶ λόγον.
 ἐγὼ γὰρ ὦν ὁ θῆρ με Κένταυρος, πονῶν
 680 πλευρὰν πικρᾷ γλωχίνι, προυδιδάξατο
 παρήκα θεσμῶν οὐδέν, ἀλλ' ἐσφζόμην
 χαλκῆς ὅπως δύσνιπτον ἐκ δέλτου γραφήν.
 καὶ μοι τὰδ' ἦν πρόρρητα καὶ τοιαῦτ' ἔδρων
 τὸ φάρμακον τοῦτ' ἄπυρον ἀκτίνος τ' αἰ
 θερμῆς ἄθικτον ἐν μυχοῖς σφάζειν ἐμέ,
 ἕως νιν ἀρτίχριστον ἀρμόσαιμί που.
 κᾶδρων τοιαῦτα. νῦν δ', ὄτ' ἦν ἐργαστέον,
 ἔχρισα μὲν κατ' οἶκον ἐν δόμοις κρυφῆ
 690 μαλλῶ, σπάσασα κτησίῳ βοτοῦ λάχνην,
 κᾶθηκα συμπτύξασ' ἀλαμπές ἡλίου
 κοίλῳ ζυγάστρω δῶρον, ὥσπερ εἶδετε.
 εἴσω δ' ἀποστείχουσα δέρκομαι φάτιν
 ἄφραστον, ἀξύμβλητον ἀνθρώπῳ μαθεῖν.
 τὸ γὰρ κάταγμα τυγχάνω ρίψασά πως
 τῆς οἴος, φ' προύχριον, ἐς μέσσην φλόγα,
 ἀκτίν' ἐς ἡλιώτιν· ὡς δ' ἐθάλπεται,
 ρεῖ πᾶν ἄδηλον καὶ κατέψηκται χθονί,
 μορφῆ μάλιστ' εἰκαστὸν ὥστε πρίονος
 ἐκβρώματ' ἂν βλέψειας ἐν τομῇ ξύλου.
 700 τοιόνδε κείται προπετές· ἐκ δὲ γῆς, ὄθεν
 προύκειτ', ἀναζέουσι θρομβώδεις ἀφροί,
 γλαυκῆς ὀπώρας ὥστε πρίονος ποτοῦ
 χυθέντος εἰς γῆν Βακχίας ἀπ' ἀμπέλου.
 ὥστ' οὐκ ἔχω τάλαινα ποῖ γνώμης πέσω
 ὀρῶ δέ μ' ἔργον δεινὸν ἐξειργασμένην.
 πόθεν γὰρ ἂν ποτ', ἀντὶ τοῦ θνήσκων ὁ θῆρ
 ἐμοὶ παρέσχ' εὐνοίαν, ἧς ἔθνησχ' ὕπερ;
 οὐκ ἔστιν, ἀλλὰ τὸν βαλόντ' ἀποφθίσαι

TRACHINIAE.

It wasted, melting on the flags, away.
But all that chanced I will relate in full.
The precepts given me by the Centaur-beast,
What time the barb was rankling in his side,
Fixed in my memory, like some ordinance
Graven on brass indelible, I kept.
All that he then commanded me I did :
He bade me hide in some dark nook the salve,
Remote from firelight and the sun's hot ray,
Till I had need to use it, freshly smeared.
And so I did, and, when the occasion rose,
I took a tuft of wool that I had plucked
From one of our home flock ; therewith I spread
The unguent in my chamber privily ;
Then folded and within its coffer laid,
Safe from the sunlight, as ye saw, my gift.
But as I passed indoors behold a sight
Portentous, well nigh inconceivable.
It chanced that I had thrown the hank of wool
Used for the smearing into the full blaze
Of sunlight ; with the gradual warmth dissolved
It shrank and shrivelled up till naught was left
Save a fine powder, likest to the dust
That strews the ground when sawyers are at work—
Mere dust and ashes. But from out the spot
Where lay the strewments clotted froth upwelled,
As when the spilth of Bacchus, from the grapes
New pressed and purple, on the ground is poured.
Thus I for trouble know not where to turn,
And only see a fearful thing I have done.
Why should the dying Centaur then have shown
Regard for me, the author of his death ?
Impossible ! no, he was cozening me,

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

χρήζων ἔθελγέ μ'· ὦν ἐγὼ μεθύστερον,
 710 ὅτ' οὐκέτ' ἄρκει, τὴν μάθησιν ἄρνημαι.
 μόνη γὰρ αὐτόν, εἴ τι μὴ ψευσθήσομαι
 γνώμης, ἐγὼ δύστηνος ἔξαποφθερῶ·
 τὸν γὰρ βαλόντ' ἄτρακτον οἶδα καὶ θεὸν
 Χείρωνα πημήναντα, χῶνπερ ἂν θίγη,
 φθείρει τὰ πάντα κνώδαλ'· ἐκ δὲ τοῦδ' ὄδε
 σφαγῶν διελθὼν ἰὸς αἵματος μέλας
 πῶς οὐκ ὀλεῖ καὶ τόνδε; δόξη γοῦν ἐμῆ.
 καίτοι δέδοκται, κείνος εἰ σφαλῆσεται,
 720 ταύτη σὺν ὀρμῇ καμὲ συνθανεῖν ἄμα·
 ζῆν γὰρ κακῶς κλύουσαν οὐκ ἀνασχετόν,
 ἥτις προτιμᾷ μὴ κακῇ πεφυκέναί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ταρβεῖν μὲν ἔργα δεῖν' ἀναγκαίως ἔχει,
 τὴν δ' ἐλπίδ' οὐ χρὴ τῆς τύχης κρίνειν πάρος.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν τοῖς μὴ καλοῖς βουλευμασιν
 οὐδ' ἐλπίς, ἥτις καὶ θράσος τι προξενεῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἀμφὶ τοῖς σφαλεῖσι μὴ ἔξ ἐκουσίας
 ὀργῇ πέπειρα, τῆς σε τυγχάνειν πρέπει.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

τοιαῦτα δ' ἂν λέξειεν οὐχ ὁ τοῦ κακοῦ
 κοινωνός, ἀλλ' ὧ μὴδέν ἐστ' οἴκοι βαρύν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

σιγᾶν ἂν ἀρμόζοι σε τὸν πλείω λόγον,
 εἰ μὴ τι λέξεις παιδί τῷ σαυτῆς· ἐπεὶ
 πάρεστι, μαστῆρ πατρὸς ὃς πρὶν ὄχето.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

ὦ μῆτερ, ὡς ἂν ἐκ τριῶν σ' ἐν εἰλόμην,
 ἢ μηκέτ' εἶναι ζῶσαν, ἢ σεσωσμένην

TRACHINIAE

And sought, through me, his slayer to undo.
Too late, too late, when knowledge naught avails,
My eyes are opened. I alone am doomed,
(Unless my fears prove false) to slay my lord.
I know the shaft that slew the Centaur scathed
E'en Cheiron, though a god, and any beast
It touches dies. So the black venomed gore
That from the wound of Nessus oozed must slay
Likewise my lord. Thus I, alas, must think.
Howbeit I am resolved, if fall he must,
The selfsame stroke of fate shall end my days.
What woman noble born would dare live on
Dishonoured when her fair repute is gone ?

CHORUS

'Tis true dread perils threaten ; yet 'twere well
To cherish hope till the event be known.

DEIANIRA

They who have counselled ill cannot admit
One ray of hope to fortify their soul.

CHORUS

Men will not look severely on an act
Unwittingly committed, as was thine.

DEIANIRA

With a good conscience one might urge this plea
Which ill becomes a partner in the crime.

CHORUS

'Twere better to refrain from further speech,
Unless thou wouldst address thy son ; for he
Who went to seek his father is at hand.

Enter HYLUS.

HYLLUS

Mother, I would that of three wishes one
Were granted me—that thou wert lying dead,

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ἄλλου κεκληῆσθαι μητέρ', ἣ λώους φρένας
τῶν νῦν παρουσῶν τῶνδ' ἀμείψασθαι ποθεν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

τί δ' ἐστίν, ὦ παῖ, πρὸς γ' ἐμοῦ στυγούμενον;

ΤΑΛΟΣ

τὸν ἄνδρα τὸν σὸν ἴσθι, τὸν δ' ἐμὸν λέγω
πατέρα, κατακτείνασα τῆδ' ἐν ἡμέρᾳ.

740

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

οἴμοι, τί ν' ἐξήνεγκας, ὦ τέκνον, λόγου;

ΤΑΛΟΣ

ὄν οὐχ οἷόν τε μὴ οὐ τελεσθῆναι· τὸ γὰρ
φανθῆν τίς ἂν δύναιτ' ἂν ἀγένητον ποεῖν;

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

πῶς εἶπας, ὦ παῖ; τοῦ παρ' ἀνθρώπων μαθῶν
ἄζηλον οὕτως ἔργον εἰργάσθαι με φῆς;

ΤΑΛΟΣ

αὐτὸς βαρεῖαν ξυμφορὰν ἐν ὄμμασιν
πατρός δεδορκῶς κού κατὰ γλῶσσαν κλύων.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ποῦ δ' ἐμπελάζεις τάνδρῃ καὶ παρίστασαι;

ΤΑΛΟΣ

εἰ χρὴ μαθεῖν σε, πάντα δὴ φωνεῖν χρεῶν.
ὄθ' εἶπε κλεινὴν Εὐρύτου πέρσας πόλιν,
νίκης ἄγων τροπαῖα κάκροθνια,
ἄκτῆ τις ἀμφίκλυστος Εὐβοίας ἄκρον
Κήναιόν ἐστιν, ἔνθα πατρώφ Διὶ
βωμοὺς ὀρίζει τεμενίαν τε φυλλάδα·
οὐ νιν τὰ πρῶτ' ἐσείδον ἄσμενος πόθφ.
μέλλοντι δ' αὐτῷ πολυθύτους τεύχειν σφαγὰς
κῆρυξ ἀπ' οἴκων ἴκετ' οἰκεῖος Λίχας,
τὸ σὸν φέρων δῶρημα, θανάσιμον πέπλον·

750

TRACHINIAE

Or, if alive, no mother wert of mine,
Or that thy nature might be wholly changed.

DEIANIRA

What dost thou so abhor in me, my son?

HYLLUS

Woman, I tell thee thou hast done to death
Thy husband, yea my sire, this very day.

DEIANIRA

Ah me! what word hath passed thy lips, my son?

HYLLUS

A word that of fulfilment shall not fail;
For what is done no mortal can undo.

DEIANIRA

What say'st thou, son? What warranty is thine
To charge me with a deed so terrible?

HYLLUS

The evidence of my eyes; myself I saw
My father's anguish; 'tis no hearsay charge.

DEIANIRA

Where didst thou find him? wast thou by his side?

HYLLUS

As thou must hear it, I must tell thee all.
He had sacked the famous town of Eurytus,
And thence returning rich with spoils of war,
Had reached a sea-washed promontory, named
Cenaeum, where Euboea fronts the north.
There I first met him as he marked the bounds
Of altars and a sacred grove to Zeus,
His father. At the sight my heart was glad.
He stood addressed to offer sacrifice,
A lordly hecatomb, when Lichas came,
His own familiar herald, bringing him

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ὃν κείνος ἐνδύς, ὡς σὺ προυξεφίεσο,
 ταυροκτονεῖ μὲν δώδεκ' ἐντελεῖς ἔχων 760
 λείας ἀπαρχὴν βούς· ἀτὰρ τὰ πάνθ' ὁμοῦ
 ἑκατὸν προσήγε συμμιγῆ βοσκήματα.
 καὶ πρῶτα μὲν δεῖλαιος ἴλεφ φρενὶ,
 κόσμφ τε χαίρων καὶ στολῆ, κατηύχετο·
 ὅπως δὲ σεμνῶν ὀργίων ἐδαίετο
 φλόξ αἵματηρὰ καπὸ πιείρας δρυός,
 ἰδρῶς ἀνῆι χρωτὶ, καὶ προσπτύσσεται
 πλευραῖσιw ἀρτίκολλος, ὥστε τέκτονος,
 χιτῶν ἅπαν κατ' ἄρθρον· ἦλθε δ' ὀστέων
 ἀδαγμὸς ἀντίσπαστος· εἶτα φοινίας 770
 ἐχθρᾶς ἐχίδνης ἰὸς ὡς ἐδαίνυτο.
 ἐνταῦθα δὴ βόησε τὸν δυσδαίμονα
 Λίχαν, τὸν οὐδὲν αἴτιον τοῦ σου κακοῦ,
 ποίαις ἐνέγκοι τόνδε μηχαναῖς πέπλον·
 ὁ δ' οὐδὲν εἰδὼς δῦσμορος τὸ σὸν μόνης
 δῶρημ' ἔλεξεν, ὥσπερ ἦν ἐσταλμένον.
 κάκεινος ὡς ἤκουσε καὶ διώδυνος
 σπαραγμὸς αὐτοῦ πλευμόνων ἀνθήφατο,
 μάρψας ποδὸς νιν, ἄρθρον ἧ λυγίζεται,
 ῥιπτεῖ πρὸς ἀμφίκλυστον ἐκ πόντου πέτραν· 780
 κόμης δὲ λευκὸν μυελὸν ἐκραινει, μέσου
 κρατὸς διασπαρέντος αἵματός θ' ὁμοῦ.
 ἅπας δ' ἀνηυφήμησεν οἰμωγῇ λειῶς,
 τοῦ μὲν νοσοῦντος, τοῦ δὲ διαπεπραγμένου·
 κούδεις ἐτόλμα τάνδρὸς ἀντίου μολεῖν.
 ἐσπᾶτο γὰρ πέδονδε καὶ μετάρσιος,
 βοῶν, ἰύζων· ἀμφὶ δ' ἐκτύπουν πέτραι,
 Λοκρῶν τ' ὄρειοι πρῶνες Εὐβοίας τ' ἄκραι.

TRACHINIAE

Thy gift, the fatal robe ; he put it on
According to thy precept ; then began
His sacrifice with twice six faultless bulls,
The firstfruits of the booty ; but in all
A hundred victims at the altar bled.
At first, poor wretch, with joyous air serene,
Proud of the pomp and ceremony, he prayed ;
But when the blood-red flame began to blaze
From the high altars and the resinous pine,
A sweat broke out upon him ; and the coat
Stuck to his side, and clung to every limb,
Glued, as it were, by some skilled artisan.
A pricking pain began to rack his bones.
Soon the fell venom of the hydra dire
Worked inward and devoured him. Thereupon
He called for Lichas, who, poor witless wretch,
Had in thy guilt no part or lot, demanding
Who hatched the plot and why he had brought the
robe.

The youth unwitting said it was thy gift,
Thine only, and delivered as 'twas sent.
While yet he listened a convulsive spasm
Shot through his lungs. He caught him by the foot,
Just at the ankle joint, and hurled him full
Against a rock out-jutting from the foam :
His skull was crushed to fragments, and his hair
Bedaubed with blood and flecked with scattered
brains.

A cry of horror from the crowd arose
At sight of one distraught and one struck dead ;
And no man dared to face him, for the pain
Now dragged him down, now made him leap in air,
While with his yells and screams the rocks resound
From Loerian headlands to Euboean capes.

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ἔπει δ' ἀπέειπε, πολλὰ μὲν τάλας χθονὶ
 ῥίπτων ἑαυτόν, πολλὰ δ' οἰμωγῇ βοῶν, 790
 τὸ δυσπάρεινον λέκτρον ἐνδατούμενος
 σοῦ τῆς ταλαίνης, καὶ τὸν Οἰνέω γάμον
 οἶον κατακτήσαιοτο λυμαντὴν βίου,
 τότε ἐκ προσέδρου λυγνύος διάστροφον
 ὄφθαλμὸν ἄρας εἶδέ μ' ἐν πολλῶ στρατῶ
 δακρυροοῦντα, καὶ με προσβλέψας καλεῖ·
 ὦ παῖ, πρόσελθε, μὴ φύγῃς τοῦμὸν κακόν,
 μηδ' εἴ σε χρὴ θανόντι συνθανεῖν ἐμοί·
 ἀλλ' ἄρον ἔξω, καὶ μάλιστα μὲν με θεῶ
 ἐνταῦθ' ὅπου με μὴ τις ὄψεται βροτῶν 800
 εἰ δ' οἶκτον ἴσχεις, ἀλλά μ' ἔκ γε τῆσδε γῆς
 πόρθμευσον ὡς τάχιστα, μηδ' αὐτοῦ θάνω.
 τοσαῦτ' ἐπισκῆψαντος, ἐν μέσῳ σκάφει
 θέντες σφε πρὸς γῆν τήνδ' ἐκέλευμεν μόλις
 βρυχώμενοι σπασμοῖσι· καὶ νιν αὐτίκα
 ἢ ζῶντ' ἐσόψεσθ' ἢ τεθνηκότ' ἀρτίως.
 τοιαῦτα, μήτερ, πατρὶ βουλευσασ' ἐμῶ
 καὶ δρῶσ' ἐλήφθης, ὧν σε ποίνιμος Δίκη
 τίσαιτ' Ἐρινύς τ'. εἰ θέμις δ', ἐπεύχομαι
 θέμις δ', ἐπεὶ μοι τὴν θέμιν σὺ προύβαλές, 810
 πάντων ἄριστον ἄνδρα τῶν ἐπὶ χθονὶ
 κτείνας', ὅποιον ἄλλον οὐκ ὄψει ποτέ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί σὺγ' ἀφέρπεις; οὐ κάτοισθ' ὀθούνεκα
 ξυνηγορεῖς σιγῶσα τῷ κατηγόρῳ;

ΤΑΛΟΣ

εἶατ' ἀφέρπειν· οὖρος ὄφθαλμῶν ἐμῶν
 αὐτῇ γένοιτ' ἄπωθεν ἐρπούση καλός.
 ὄγκον γὰρ ἄλλως ὀνόματος τί δεῖ τρέφειν

TRACHINIAE

But when his agony had spent itself—
Now writhing prone, now making loud lament,
With curses on his marriage bed and thee,
The bride he won from Oeneus for his bane—
From out the cloud of smoke that compassed him
He wildly gazed and spied me in the throng
Weeping, and fixed his eye on me and spake :
“ Come hither, boy, shun not my misery,
E'en if my son must share his father's death,
But bear me hence and set me, if thou wilt,
Where none shall see me more, no matter where ;
Or if thou hast no heart for this, at least
Ferry me quickly hence, lest here I die.”
So he enjoined. We laid him on the deck
In torment, groaning loud ; and presently
Ye shall behold him living or just dead.

Such, mother, is the evil 'gainst my sire
That thou hast planned and wrought. Thy guilt is
plain :

May Vengeance and the Erinys visit thee !
So pray I, if 'tis right, and right it is,
For I have seen thee trample on the right,
Slaying the noblest man who ever lived,
Whose peer thou never shalt behold again.

[*Exit* DEIANIRA.]

CHORUS

Why dost thou steal away thus silently ?
Such silence sure is eloquent of guilt.

HYLLUS

Let her depart and speed before the gale
Out of my sight. Why should the empty name
Of mother henceforth swell her vanity,

TRACHINIAE

Who in her deeds shows naught of motherhood?
Let her depart in peace, and may she share
Herself the happiness she brings my sire!

CHORUS

Lo, maidens, in our eyes (Str. 1)

Fulfilled this day

The word inspired of ancient prophecies.

Did not the god's voice say,

The twelfth year, when its tale of months is run,
Shall end his toils for Zeus's true-born son?

That promise doth not fail,

'Tis wasted on the gale.

Can he when once the light of life has fled
Be subject still to bondage 'mongst the dead?

(Ant. 1)

And if the mists of death enfold him now,

If the doom grips his heart,

Wrought by the Centaur's art;

How racked by venom bred

Of Death, on asp's blood fed,

How in the clutches of the Hydra, how

Can he survive to see to-morrow's sun,

When through each vein doth run

The leprous bane prepared

By the fell beast, black-haired

Nessus, his life to drain,

And vex him with tumultuous pain?

Of this our ill-starred queen, (Str. 2)

All innocent, knew naught:

Only the curse to void, I ween,

Of a new bride she sought.

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

γνώμας μολόντ' ὀλεθρίαῖσι συναλλαγαῖς
 ἢ που ὀλοὰ στένει,
 ἢ που ἀδινῶν χλωρὰν
 τέγγει δακρύων ἄχραν.
 ἅ δ' ἔρχομένα μοῖρα προφαίνει δολίαν
 καὶ μεγάλην ἄταν.

850

ἄντ. β'
 ἔρρωγεν παγὰ δακρύων· κέχυται νόσος, ὧ πόποι,
 οἶον ἀναρσίων
 οὔπω Ἑρακλέους¹ ἀγακλειτὸν ἐπέμολε πάθος
 οἰκτίσαι.

ἰὼ κελαινὰ λόγχα προμάχου δορός,
 ἅ τότε θοὰν νύμφαν
 ἄγαγες ἀπ' αἰπεινᾶς
 τάνδ' Οἰχαλίας αἰχμᾶ·
 ἅ δ' ἀμφίπολος Κύπρις ἀναυδος φανερὰ
 τῶνδ' ἐφήμη πράκτωρ.

860

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ α'

πότερον ἐγὼ μάταιος, ἢ κλύω τινὸς
 οἴκτου δι' οἴκων ἀρτίως ὀρμωμένου;
 τί φημι;

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ β'

ἦχεῖ τις οὐκ ἄσημον, ἀλλὰ δυστυχή
 κωκυτὸν εἶσω, καί τι καινίζει στέγη.

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ

ξύνες δὲ
 τήνδ' ὡς κατηφῆς² καὶ συνωφρυνωμένη
 χωρεῖ πρὸς ἡμᾶς γραῖα σηματοῦσά τι.

870

¹ Ἑρακλέους is clearly a gloss, and the true reading must remain conjectural. ² ἀήθης MSS., Blaydes curr.

TRACHINIAE

Witless a stranger's remedy she used.
How was her fond simplicity abused !
Too late her error doth she rue,
And pearly tears her eyes bedew :
Awe-stricken we await
The swoop of instant fate.

Our pent up tears outflow. (Ant. 2)
Ye gods ! did e'er such blow
From his worst foes afflict our King before
As this fell plague ? O bloodstained spear that
bore
From proud Oechalia's height
Stormed by the hero's might,
A vanished bride, how clear
The Cyprian's wiles appear !
Unseen, thy spear she steeled,
And now she stands revealed.

SEMI-CHORUS I

Listen ! I seem to hear—or do I dream ? —
A cry of sorrow pealing through the house.
Heard you it ?

SEMI-CHORUS 2

Yea, a despairing wail rings out within,
Distinct ; the house has suffered something
strange.

CHORUS

Mark ye that aged crone !
With what a cloud upon her puckered brow
She comes to bring us news of grave import !

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

ὦ παῖδες, ὡς ἄρ' ἡμῖν οὐ σμικρῶν κακῶν
ἤρξεν τὸ δῶρον Ἡρακλεῖ τὸ πόμπιμον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί δ', ὦ γεραιά, καινοποιηθὲν λέγεις;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

βέβηκε Δηάνειρα τὴν πανυστάτην
ὁδῶν ἀπασῶν ἐξ ἀκινήτου ποδός.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐ δὴ ποθ' ὡς θανούσα;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

πάντ' ἀκήκοας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τέθνηκεν ἡ τάλαινα;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

δεύτερον κλύεις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τάλαιν' ὀλεθρία· τίμι τρόπῳ θανεῖν σφε φῆς;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

σχετλιώτατά γε πρὸς πρᾶξιν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

εἰπέ τῷ μόρφ,

γύναι, ξυντρέχει.

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

αὐτὴν διηίστωσε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τίς θυμὸς ἢ τίνες νόσοι

τάνδ' αἰχμᾶ¹ βέλεος κακοῦ ξυνεῖλε; πῶς ἐμήσατο
πρὸς θανάτῳ θάνατον ἀνύσασα μόνα;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

στονόεντος ἐν τομᾷ σιδάρου.

¹ αἰχμᾶν MSS., Hermann corr.

TRACHINIAE

Enter NURSE from the house.

NURSE

My daughters, what a crop of miseries
We are reaping from that gift to Heracles !

CHORUS

What new misfortune, mother, hast to tell ?

NURSE

Deianira has departed hence
On her last journey, yet not stirred a step.

CHORUS

Thou canst not mean she is dead.

NURSE

My tale is told.

CHORUS

Poor lady, dead !

NURSE

I say it once again.

CHORUS

Alas, poor wretch ! How came she by her end ?

NURSE

O 'twas a gruesome deed !

CHORUS

Say woman, how ?

NURSE

By her own hand.

CHORUS

What rage, what fit of madness,
Whetted the felon blade, how compassed she
This death on death, herself alone the cause ?

NURSE

By the stroke of a dolorous sword.

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἐπείδες, ὦ ματαία, τάνδε τὴν ὕβριν;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

ἐπέιδον, ὡς δὴ πλησία παραστάτις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τίς ἦν; πῶς; φέρ' εἰπέ.

850

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

αὐτὴ πρὸς αὐτῆς χειροποιεῖται τάδε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί φωνεῖς;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

σαφηνῆ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἔτεκεν ἔτεκε δὴ μεγάλην
 ἅ νέορτος ἄδε νύμφα
 δόμοισι τοῖσδ' ἐρινύν.

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

ἄγαν γε· μᾶλλον δ', εἰ παρούσα πλησία
 ἔλευσσεσ οἷ' ἔδρασε, κάρτ' ἂν ἔκτισας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

καὶ ταῦτ' ἔτλη τις χεῖρ γυναικεία κτίσαι;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

δεινῶς γε· πεύσει δ', ὥστε μαρτυρεῖν ἐμοί.
 ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἦλθε δωμάτων εἴσω μόνη
 καὶ παῖδ' ἐν αὐλαῖς εἶδε κοῖλα δέμνια
 στορνύνθ', ὅπως ἄψορρον ἀντῆ πατρί,
 κρίψασ' ἑαυτὴν ἔνθα μή τις εἰσίδοι,
 βρυχᾶτο μὲν βωμοῖσι προσπίπτουσ' ὅτι
 γένοιτ' ἔρημοι, κλαιε δ' ὀργάνων ὅτου
 ψαύσειεν οἷς ἐχρῆτο δειλαία πάρος·
 ἄλλη δὲ κάλλη δωμάτων στρωφωμένη,

900

TRACHINIAE

CHORUS

Saw'st thou the horror, beldam ?

NURSE

I saw it ; I was standing at her side

CHORUS

Saw what ? what did she ? speak !

NURSE

Herself upon herself she did the deed.

CHORUS

What dost thou say ?

NURSE

Plain truth.

CHORUS

Verily this new bride

Hath borne, as the fruit of her womb,

A curse, a curse to the house.

NURSE

Too true ; and had you been at hand to see,
The pity of it would have touched you more.

CHORUS

Could woman's hand perform so bold a deed !

NURSE

'Twas passing strange, but when ye hear the tale
Ye'll bear me out.

She went indoors alone,
And in the court she came upon her son
Preparing a deep litter wherewithal
To bear his sire back. Seeing him she fled,
And, crouching by the altar out of sight,
She groaned aloud, " O altars desolate ! "
Then each familiar chattel in the house
She fingered tenderly, poor wretch, and wept.
Then roaming through the palace, up and down,

εἶ του φίλων βλέψειεν οἰκετῶν δέμας,
 ἔκλαιεν ἢ δύστηνος εἰσορωμένη,
 αὐτὴ τὸν αὐτῆς δαίμαν' ἀνακαλουμένη
 καὶ τὰς ἄπαιδας ἐς τὸ λοιπὸν οὐσίας.¹
 ἐπεὶ δὲ τῶνδ' ἔληξεν, ἐξαίφνης σφ' ὀρώ
 τὸν Ἡράκλειον θάλαμον εἰσορωμένην.
 κἀγὼ λαθραῖον ὄμμ' ἐπεσκιασμένη
 φρούρον· ὀρώ δὲ τὴν γυναῖκα δεμνίως
 τοῖς Ἡρακλείοις στρωτὰ βάλλουσαν φάρη,
 ὅπως δ' ἐτέλεσε τοῦτ', ἐπενθοροῦσ' ἄνω
 καθέζετ' ἐν μέσοισιν εὐνατηρίοις,
 καὶ δακρύων ῥήξασα θερμὰνάματα
 ἔλεξεν· ὦ λέχη τε καὶ νυμφεῖ' ἐμά,
 τὸ λοιπὸν ἤδη χαιρεθ', ὡς ἔμ' οὔποτε
 δέξεσθ' ἔτ' ἐν κοίταισι ταῖσδ' εὐνάτριαν.
 τοσαῦτα φωνήσασα συντόνῳ χειρὶ
 λύει τὸν αὐτῆς πέπλον, ἧ² χρυσήλατος
 προύκειτο μοστῶν περονίς, ἐκ δ' ἐλώπισεν
 πλευρὰν ἄπασαν ὠλένην τ' εὐώνυμον.
 κἀγὼ δρομαία βᾶσ', ὅσον περ ἔσθενον,
 τῷ παιδί φράζω τῆς τεχνωμένης τάδε.
 κὰν ᾧ τὸ κείσε δεῦρὸ τ' ἐξορωμεθα,
 ὀρώμεν αὐτὴν ἀμφιπλήγι φασγάνῳ
 πλευρὰν ὑφ' ἠπαρ καὶ φρένας πεπληγμένην.
 ἰδὼν δ' ὁ παῖς ᾤμωξεν· ἔγνω γὰρ τάλας
 τοῦργον κατ' ὀργὴν ὡς ἐφάψειεν τὸδε,
 ὄψ' ἐκδιδαχθεὶς τῶν κατ' οἶκον οὐνεκα
 ἄκουσα πρὸς τοῦ θηρὸς ἔρξειεν τάδε.
 κἀνταῦθ' ὁ παῖς δύστηνος οὔτ' ὀδυρμάτων

910

920

930

¹ The line is corrupt. The translation follows Jebb's conjecture, καὶ τῆς ἐπ' ἄλλοις ἐς τὸ λοιπὸν οὐσίας,

² φ MSS., Wakefield corr.

TRACHINIAE

As one or other of her maids she met,
She gazed upon her long and wept again,
Bewailing her own fortunes and the house
Henceforth condemned to serve an alien lord.
Then she was silent, and I saw her speed
Within the bed chamber of Heracles.
I from a coign of spial, unobserved
Watched, and I saw her snatch a coverpane
And fling it on the bed of Heracles.
That done, she leapt upon it, sat her down
And loosed the floodgate of hot tears and spake :
" O bridal bed and chamber, fare ye well,
A long farewell ; never again shall ye
Lap me to slumber in your soft embrace !"
That was her last word ; with a sudden wrench
She tore the gold-wrought brooch above her breast
And laid her left arm and her side all bare.
I ran at once, as fast as age allowed,
In haste to warn the son of her intent.
Alack ! between my going and return,
In that brief space, she had driven a two-edged sword
Home through the midriff to the very heart.
He saw and shrieked heart-stricken at the sight,
Knowing his wrath had goaded her to death.
For all too late from those about the queen
He learned that she in utter innocence
Had done according to the Centaur's word.
Since then, poor boy, his misery has no end :

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ελείπετ' οὐδέν, ἀμφί νιν γωόμενος,
 οὐτ' ἀμφιπίπτων στόμασιν, ἀλλὰ πλευρόθεν
 πλευρὰν παρῆς ἔκειτο πόλλ' ἀναστένων,
 ὡς νιν ματαίως αἰτία βάλοι κακῆ,
 κλαίων ὀθούνεκ' ἐκ δύοιν ἔσοιθ' ἅμα,
 πατρός τ' ἐκείνης τ', ὄρφανισμένος βίον.
 τοιαῦτα τάνθ' ἔστιν ὥστ' εἴ τις δύο
 ἢ καὶ τι πλείους¹ ἡμέρας λογίζεται,
 μάταιός ἐστιν· οὐ γὰρ ἔσθ' ἢ γ' αὔριον,
 πρὶν εὖ πάθῃ τις τὴν παροῦσαν ἡμέραν.

940

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πότερα πρᾶτεραν ἐπιστένω, στρ. α'
 πότερα μέλεα² περαιτέρω,
 δύσκριτ' ἔμοιγε δυστάνω.

τάδε μὲν ἔχομεν ἄρ' ἄν δόμοις, ἀντ. α' 950
 τάδε δὲ μένομεν ἐπ' ἐλπίσιν
 κοινὰ δ' ἔχειν τε καὶ μέλλειν.

εἴθ' ἀνεμόεσσά τις στρ. β'
 γένοιτ' ἔπουρος ἐστιῶτις αὔρα,
 ἣτις μ' ἀποικίσειεν ἐκ τόπων, ὅπως
 τὸν Δίον³ ἄλκιμον γόνον
 μὴ ταρβαλέα θάνοιμι 960
 μόνον εἰσιδοῦσ' ἄφαρ·
 ἐπεὶ ἐν δυσάπαλλάκτοις ὀδύνας
 χωρεῖν πρὸ δόμων λέγουσιν
 ἀσπετόν τι θαῦμα.

ἀγχοῦ δ' ἄρα κού μακρὰν ἀντ. β'
 προύκλαιον, ὀξύφωνος ὡς ἀηδῶν.

¹ καὶ πλείους τις MSS., Dindorf corr.

² τέλεα MSS., Musgrave corr. ³ διός MSS., Nauck corr.

TRACHINIAE

He mourned for her with sighs and sobs and groans,
 He kissed her lips, he clasped her in his arms,
 And prone beside her railed against himself:
 "By my foul slander have I stricken her,"
 He cried, "and now am I bereaved of both,
 Of father and of mother, in one day."
 So fares it with us. And if any man
 Counts on the morrow, or on morrows more,
 He reckons rashly. Morrow is there none,
 Until to-day its course has safely run.

CHORUS

Which first of woes, which next, (Str. 1)
 Wherewith my soul is vexed,
 To wail, I am perplexed ;

One here accomplished, (Ant. 1)
 One hanging o'er my head,
 One as the other dread.

O that a gale might suddenly upspring (Str. 2)
 To waft me out of sight,
 Lest when the Zeus-born hero home they bring,
 I die of panic fright.
 E'en now, they say, in pains no leech can quell,
 Home is he borne, O piteous spectacle !

Ah, not far off, but nigh, (Ant. 2)
 The woe that stirred my cry,
 A boding wail
 As of some shrill-voiced nightingale.

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ξένων γὰρ ἐξόμιλος ἦδε τις βάσις.
 πᾶ δ' αὖ φορεῖ νιν; ὡς φίλου
 προκηδομένα βαρεῖαν
 ἄψοφον φέρει βάσιν.
 αἰαῖ, ὄδ' ἀναύδατος φέρεται.
 τί χρῆ θανόντα νιν ἢ καθ'
 ὕπνου ὄντα κρῖναι;

ΥΛΛΟΣ

οἴμοι ἐγὼ σοῦ,
 πάτερ, οἴμοι ἐγὼ σοῦ μέλεος.
 τί πάθω; τί δὲ μήσομαι; οἴμοι.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

σίγα, τέκνον, μὴ κινήσης
 ἀγρίαν ὀδύνην πατρός ὠμόφρονος.
 ζῆ γὰρ προπετής· ἀλλ' ἴσχε δακῶν
 στόμα σόν.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

πῶς φῆς, γέρον; ἢ ζῆ;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

οὐ μὴ ἔξεγερῆς τὸν ὕπνω κάτοχον
 κἀκκινήσεις κἀναστήσεις
 φοιτάδα δεινὴν
 νόσον, ὦ τέκνον.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἐπί μοι μελέφ
 βάρος ἄπλετον ἐμμέμονεν φρήν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὦ Ζεῦ,
 ποῖ γὰς ἤκω; παρὰ τοῖσι βροτῶν
 κεῖμαι πεπονημένος ἀλλήκτοις
 ὀδύναις; οἴμοι μοι¹ ἐγὼ τλάμων
 ἢ δ' αὖ μιὰρὰ βρύκει. φεῦ.

¹ Brunck adds μοι.

TRACHINIAE

Lo a foreign train appear,
And they move with muffled tread,
Mute as bearers of a bier.
Is it sleep, or is he dead ?

Enter HYLLUS, an OLD MAN, and ATTENDANTS bearing
HERACLES on a litter.

HYLLUS

Ah woe is me,
Woe, father, woe for thee !
Alack ! I am undone,
Help know I none.

OLD MAN

Hush, son, lest thou awake
The intolerable ache.
He lives, though nigh to death ;
Hold hard thy breath.

HYLLUS

What, is he still alive ?

OLD MAN

Hush, hush, lest thou revive
And waken from its fitful rest
The plague that racks his breast.

HYLLUS

Beneath this weight of misery
My spirit sinks ; it maddens me.

HERACLES

O Zeus, where am I ? who
These strangers standing by,
As tortured here I lie ?
Ah me ! the foul fiend gnaws anew.

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

ἄρ' ἐξήδη σ' ὅσον ἦν κέρδος
 σιγῇ κεῦθειν καὶ μὴ σκεδάσαι
 τῷδ' ἀπὸ κρατὸς
 βλεφάρων θ' ὕπνου;

990

ΤΑΛΟΣ

οὐ γὰρ ἔχω πῶς ἂν
 στέρξαιμι κακὸν τόδε λεύσσω.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὦ Κηναία κρηπίς βωμῶν,
 ἱερῶν οἶαν οἶων ἐπὶ μοι
 μελέω χάριν ἠνύσω ὦ Ζεῦ.
 οἶαν μ' ἄρ' ἔθου λώβαν, οἶαν
 ἦν μὴ ποτ' ἐγὼ προσιδεῖν ὁ τάλας
 ὄφελον ὄσσοις, τόδ' ἀκήλητον
 μανίας ἄνθος καταδερχθῆναι.
 τίς γὰρ ἀοιδός, τίς ὁ χειροτέχνης
 ἰατρορίας, ὃς τήνδ' ἄτην
 χωρὶς Ζηνὸς κατακλήσει;
 θαῦμ' ἂν πόρρωθεν ἰδοίμην.

1000

εἰ,

στρ. α'

εἰᾶτέ μ', εἰᾶτέ με δύσμορον ὕστατον,
 εἰᾶθ' ὕστατον εὐνάσθαι.¹

πᾶ πᾶ μου ψαύεις; ποῖ κλίνεις;

στρ. β

ἀπολείς μ', ἀπολείς.

ἀνατέτροφας ὃ τι καὶ μύση.

ἦπταί μου, τοτοτοῖ, ἦδ' αὐθ' ἔρπει. πόθεν ἔστ', ὦ 1010

πάντων Ἑλλάνων ἀδικώτατοι ἄνδρες, οὓς δὴ

¹ εἰᾶτέ με δύστανον εὐνάσαι MSS., Wunder corr.

TRACHINIAE

OLD MAN

Did I not bid thee keep
Silence, nor scare the sleep
That over eyes and head
Awhile like balm was spread?

HYLLUS

Nay, how can I refrain
At sight of such grim pain?

HERACLES

O altar on Cenean height,
How ill dost thou requite
My sacrifice and offerings!
O Zeus, thy worship ruin brings.
Accursed headland, would that ne'er
My eyes had seen thine altar-stair!
So had I 'scaped this frenzied rage
No incantation can assuage.
Where is the charmer, where the leech,
Whose art a remedy could teach,
Save Zeus alone? If one could tell
Of such a wizard, 'twere a miracle.

O leave me, let me lie
In my last agony! (Str. 1)

Ye touch me? have a care!
Would turn me? O forbear!
To agony ye wake
The slumbering ache.

Once more it has me in its grip, the fiend comes
on apace.
O Greeks, if ye be Greeks indeed, most faithless of
your race!

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

πολλὰ μὲν ἐν πόντῳ κατὰ τε δρῖα πάντα καθαίρων
ὠλεκόμαν ὁ τάλας, καὶ νῦν ἐπὶ τῶδε νοσοῦντι
οὐ πῦρ, οὐκ ἔγχος τις ὀνήσιμον οὐκ ἐπιτρέψει;

ἔ ἔ, ἀντ. α'
οὐδ' ἀπαράξαι κρᾶτα βία¹ θέλει
μολῶν τοῦ στυγεροῦ; φεῦ φεῦ.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

ὦ παῖ τοῦδ' ἀνδρός, τοῦργον τόδε μείζον ἀνήκει
ἢ κατ' ἐμὰν ῥώμαν σὺ δὲ σύλλαβε. σοὶ γὰρ
ἑτοίμα
ἐς πλεόν ἢ δι' ἐμοῦ σώζειν.²

ΤΑΛΟΣ

ψαύω μὲν ἔγωγε, 1020
λαθίπονον δ' ὀδυνᾶν οὐτ' ἔνδοθεν οὔτε θύραθεν
ἔστι μοι ἐξανύσαι βίοτον· τοιαῦτα νέμει Ζεὺς.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὦ παῖ, ποῦ ποτ' εἶ; τᾶδέ με τᾶδέ με στρ. γ'
πρόσλαβε κουφίσας. ἔ ἔ, ἰὼ δαίμον.

θρόσκει δ' αὖ, θρόσκει δειλαία ἀντ. β'
διολαῖσ' ἡμᾶς
ἀποτίβατος ἀγρία νόσος. 1030

ὦ Παλλὰς Παλλᾶς, τόδε μ' αὖ λωβᾶται. ἰὼ παῖ,
τὸν φύτορ' οἰκτίρας, ἀνεπίφθονον εἴρυσον ἔγχος,
παῖσον ἐμᾶς ὑπὸ κληῖδος· ἀκοῦ δ' ἄχος, ᾧ μ'
ἐχόλωσεν
σὰ μάτηρ ἄθεος, τὰν ὦδ' ἐπίδοιμι πεσοῦσαν
αὐτῶς, ὦδ' αὐτῶς ὥς μ' ὤλεσεν. ὦ γλυκύς Αἶδας, 1040

¹ βίου MSS., Wakefield corr.

² σοὶ τε γὰρ ἕμμα ἔμπλεον MSS., Jebb corr.

TRACHINIAE

For you I laboured hugely and spent myself, to free
Your land from ravening beasts of prey and monsters
of the sea ;

And now in long drawn agony ye leave me to expire.
Will none of you deliver me with sword or kindly fire ?

Would God that I were dead ! (Ant. 1)
Will no man sever at a stroke this head ?

OLD MAN

O help me, son of Heracles, for I am all too frail
To ease him ; if thou lend thine aid, perchance we
may prevail.

HYLLUS

That will I, but nor thou nor I can rid him of the
pain
That haunts him to the very end. Such doom the
gods ordain.

HERACLES

My son, where art thou ? Raise me, hold me here,
here ! (Str. 3)
(Ant. 2)

Ah me ! once more the pest doth leap
Upon me and its fangs bite deep.

Pallas ! 'tis torture. O for pity save
Thy father ; son, unsheath an innocent glaive,
Pierce thy sire's heart and so the wild pain cure
That from thine impious mother I endure.
Thus may I see her die, like mine her end !

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ἀντ. γ'

ὦ Διὸς ἀνθαίμων, εὐνασον εὐνασον μ'
ὠκνπέτα μόρω τὸν μέλεον φθίσας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

κλύουσ' ἔφριξα τάσδε συμφοράς, φίλαι,
ἄνακτος, οἴαις οἶος ὦν ἐλαύνεται.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὦ πολλὰ δὴ καὶ θερμὰ κοῦ λόγῳ¹ κακὰ
καὶ χερσὶ καὶ νώτοισι μοχθήσας ἐγὼ
κοῦπω τοιοῦτον οὔτ' ἄκοιτις ἢ Διὸς
προῦθηκεν οὔθ' ὁ στυγνὸς Εὐρυσθεὺς ἐμοί,
οἶον τόδ' ἢ δολῶπις Οἰνέως κόρη
καθῆψεν ὦμοις τοῖς ἐμοῖς Ἐρινύων
ὑφαντὸν ἀμφίβληστρον, ᾧ διόλλυμαι.
πλευραῖσι γὰρ προσμαχθὲν ἐκ μὲν ἐσχάτους
βέβρωκε σάρκας, πλεύμονός τ' ἀρτηρίας
ροφεῖ ξυνοικούν, ἐκ δὲ χλωρὸν αἷμά μου
πέπωκεν ἤδη, καὶ διέφθαρμαι δέμας
τὸ πᾶν, ἀφράστῳ τῆδε χειρωθεὶς πέδη.
κοῦ ταῦτα λόγῃ πεδιάς, οὔθ' ὁ γηγενὴς
στρατὸς Γιγάντων οὔτε θήρειος βία,
οὔθ' Ἑλλὰς οὔτ' ἄγλωσσος οὔθ' ὄσση ἐγὼ
γαῖαν καθαίρων ἰκόμην, ἔδρασέ πω
γυνὴ δέ, θῆλυς φύσα² κοῦκ ἀνδρὸς φύσιν,
μόνη με δὴ καθεῖλε φασγάνου δίχα.
ὦ παῖ, γενοῦ μοι παῖς ἐτήτυμος γεγώς,
καὶ μὴ τὸ μητρὸς ὄνομα πρεσβεύσης πλέον.
δός μοι χεροῖν σαῖν αὐτὸς ἐξ οἴκου λαβῶν
ἐς χεῖρα τὴν τεκοῦσαν, ὡς εἰδῶ σάφα
εἰ τοῦμόν ἀλγεῖς μᾶλλον ἢ κείνης ὄρων
λωβητὸν εἶδος ἐν δίκῃ κακούμενον.
ἴθ', ὦ τέκνον, τόλμησον οἰκτιρόν τέ με

1050

1060

1070

¹ καὶ λόγῳ MSS., Bothe corr. ² οὔσα MSS., Nauck corr.

TRACHINIAE

(*Ant.* 3)

Brother of Zeus, kind Death, be now my friend ;
Lay me to rest and swift deliverance send.

CHORUS

I shudder, friends, to hear this woful plaint.
How great a hero, and how ill bestead !

HERACLES

Many and grievous, not in name alone,
The toils and burdens of these hands, these loins.
Yet trial like to this was never set me
By Heaven's Queen or grim Eurystheus' hate,
Such as the child of Oeneus, false and fair,
Hath fastened on my back, this hellish net
She wove to snare me, in whose coils I die.
It hugs me close, it eats into my flesh,
It sucks the channels of my breath, hath drained
My life-blood, and my whole frame wastes and
 withers,
Fast locked in these unutterable bonds.
And this my fall no warrior's lance hath wrought
Nor Giant's earth-born brood, nor savage beast,
Nor Grecian nor barbarian, nor the lands
Whither I fared to rid them of their pests ;
No, but a woman, weak as all her sex,
Hath quelled me, single-handed and unarmed.
Son, show thyself thy father's son in deed,
Mine, not thy mother's—mother in name alone.
Hale her thyself, hand her thyself to me,
The wretch, that when she meets her righteous
 doom
I may make trial which sight moves thee more,
A mother's or a father's agony.
For pity's sake shrink not ; to see me thus

πολλοῖσιν οἰκτρὸν, ὅστις ὥστε παρθένος
 βέβρυχα κλαίων, καὶ τὸδ' οὐδ' ἂν εἰς ποτε
 τόνδ' ἄνδρα φαίη πρόσθ' ἰδεῖν δεδρακότα,
 ἀλλ' ἀστένακτος αἰὲν εἰπόμεν κακοῖς.
 νῦν δ' ἐκ τοιούτου θῆλυς ἠῦρημαι τάλας.
 καὶ νῦν προσελθὼν στήθι πλησίον πατρός,
 σκέψαι θ' ὁποίας ταῦτα συμφορᾶς ὑπο
 πέπονθα· δείξω γὰρ τὰδ' ἐκ καλυμμάτων.
 ἰδού, θεᾶσθε πάντες ἄθλιον δέμας,
 ὁράτε τὸν δύστηνον, ὡς οἰκτρῶς ἔχω. 1080
 αἰαί, ἦ τάλας,
 ἔθαλψεν ἄτης σπασμὸς ἀρτίως ὄδ' αὐ,
 διήξε πλευρῶν, οὐδ' ἀγύμναστον μ' εἶαν
 ἔοικεν ἢ τάλαινα διάβορος νόσος.
 ὦναξ Ἄϊδη, δέξαι μ',
 ὦ Διὸς ἀκτίς, παῖσον,
 ἔνσεισον, ὦναξ, ἐγκατάσκηψον βέλος,
 πάτερ, κεραυνοῦ· δαίνυνται γὰρ αὐ πάλιν,
 ἦνθηκεν, ἐξώρμηκεν. ὦ χέρες χέρες,
 ὦ νῶτα καὶ στέρν', ὦ φίλοι βραχίονες, 1090
 ὑμεῖς δὲ κείνοι δὴ καθέσταθ', οἳ ποτε
 Νεμέας ἔνοικον, βουκόλων ἀλάστορα
 λέοντ', ἀπλατον θρέμμα κἀπροσήγορον,
 βία κατειργάσασθε, Λερναίαν θ' ὕδραν,
 διφῦῆ τ' ἄμικτον ἵπποβάμονα στρατὸν
 θηρῶν, ὑβριστὴν ἄνομον, ὑπέροχον βίαν,
 Ἐρυμάνθιον τε θῆρα, τὸν θ' ὑπὸ χθονὸς
 "Αἰδου τρίκρανον σκύλακ', ἀπρόσμαχον τέρας,
 δεινῆς Ἐχίδνης θρέμμα, τὸν τε χρυσεῶν
 δράκοντα μῆλων φύλακ' ἐπ' ἐσχάτοις τόποις. 1100
 ἄλλων τε μόχθων μυρίων ἐγευσάμην,
 κούδεις τροπαί' ἔστησε τῶν ἐμῶν χερῶν.

TRACHINIAE

(T'would move to pity e'en a heart of stone)
Puling and weeping like a girl, unmanned.
So none can boast to have seen me, for till now
I took whate'er befell me with a smile.
And now—'tis I who play the woman now.
Come closer, stand beside me ; see, my son,
To what a pass ill fate hath brought thy sire.
Lo, I will lift the veil ; look all of you
On this poor maimèd body, and declare
Was ever wretch so piteous as I.

Ah me !

Again the deadly spasm ; it shoots and burns
Through all my vitals. Will it never end,
This struggle with the never-dying worm ?
Lord of the Dead, receive me !
Smite me, O fire of Zeus !
Hurl, Father, on my head thy crashing bolt !
Again it burgeons, blossoms, blazes forth,
The all-consuming plague.

O hands, my hands,
Arms, breast and shoulders, once all puissant,
Are ye the same whose thews of old subdued
The scourge of herdsmen in his savage lair,
The Nemean lion, a beast untamable ;
Slew the Lenaeon hydra ; overcame
That twy-form multitude, half man, half horse,
Rude, lawless, savage, unapproachable,
Unmatched in might ; and the Erymanthian boar ;
Tamed in the nether world the monstrous whelp
Of dread Echidna, the three-headed hound
Of Hades, and the dragon-guard who watched
The golden apples at the world's far end.
These were my toils, and others manifold,
And none could ever boast of my defeat.

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

νῦν δ' ὦδ' ἀναρθρος καὶ κατερρακωμένος
 τυφλῆς ὑπ' ἄτης ἐκπεπόρθημαι τάλας,
 ὃ τῆς ἀρίστης μητρὸς ὀνομασμένος,
 ὃ τοῦ κατ' ἄστρα Ζηνὸς αὐδηθεὶς γόνος.
 ἀλλ' εὐ γέ τοι τόδ' ἴστε, κὰν τὸ μηδὲν ὦ
 κὰν μηδὲν ἔρπω, τὴν γε δράσασαν τάδε
 χειρώσομαι κὺκ τῶνδε· προσμάλοι μόνον,
 ἴν' ἐκδιδαχθῆ πᾶσιν ἀγγέλλειν ὅτι
 καὶ ζῶν κακοὺς γε καὶ θανῶν ἐτισάμην.

1110

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ τλήμον Ἑλλάς, πένθος οἶον εἰσορῶ
 ἔξουσαν, ἀνδρὸς τοῦδέ γ' εἰ σφαλῆσεται.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

ἐπεὶ παρέσχεσ ἀντιφωνῆσαι, πάτερ,
 σιγὴν παρασχῶν κλυθί μου, νοσῶν ὅμως·
 αἰτήσομαι γάρ σ' ὦν δίκαια τυγχάνειν.
 δός μοι σεαυτὸν, μὴ τοσοῦτον ὡς δάκνει
 θυμῷ δύσοργος· οὐ γὰρ ἂν γνοίης ἐν οἷς
 χαίρειν προθυμεῖ κὰν ὅτοις ἀλγεῖς μάτην.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

εἰπὼν δ' χρήζεις λῆξον· ὡς ἐγὼ νοσῶν
 οὐδὲν ξυνίημ' ὦν σὺ ποικίλλεις πάλαι.

1120

ΤΑΛΟΣ

τῆς μητρὸς ἦκω τῆς ἐμῆς φρέσων ἐν οἷς
 νῦν ἔστιν ὡς θ' ἡμαρτεν οὐχ ἔκουσία.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὦ παγκάκιστε, καὶ παρεμνήσω γὰρ αὐ
 τῆς πατροφόντου μητρὸς, ὡς κλύειν ἐμέ;

ΤΑΛΟΣ

ἔχει γὰρ οὕτως ὥστε μὴ σιγᾶν πρέπειν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐ δῆτα τοῖς γε πρόσθεν ἡμαρτημένοις.

TRACHINIAE

Now out of joint, a thing of shreds I lie
Baffled by hands invisible, I who claim
A mother of the noblest, and for sire
The ruler of the starry heavens, Zeus.
But of one thing be sure, though I am naught
And cannot stir a step, yet even thus
I am a match for her who wrought my woe.
Let her but come that she may learn of me
This lesson to repeat to all, that I
Living and dying chastened all that's vile.

CHORUS

O hapless Greece, what mourning will be thine,
If thou must lose thy mightiest warrior?

HYLLUS

O father, since thy silence seems to invite
An answer, hear me, stricken though thou art.
I shall but ask what's fair; O be again
Thy true self, not by pain and rage distraught;
Else wilt thou never learn how vain thy thirst
For vengeance, how unjust thy bitterness.

HERACLES

Say what thou wilt and end; I am too sick
To catch the drift of all thy riddling words.

HYLLUS

'Tis of my mother I would tell thee—how
She fares, and how unwittingly she sinned.

HERACLES

O shameless reprobate, thou dar'st to name
Thy father's murderess, name her too to me?

HYLLUS

Her case is such that silence were unmeet.

HERACLES

Of her past misdeeds it was meet to speak.

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΤΑΛΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὐδὲ μὲν δὴ τοῖς γ' ἐφ' ἡμέραν ἐρεῖς.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

λέγ', εὐλαβοῦ δὲ μὴ φανῆς κακὸς γεγώς.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

λέγω· τέθνηκεν ἀρτίως νεοσφαγῆς.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

πρὸς τοῦ; τέρας τοι διὰ κακῶν ἐθέσπισας.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

αὐτὴ πρὸς αὐτῆς, οὐδενὸς πρὸς ἐκτόπου.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οἶμοι· πρὶν ὡς χρῆν σφ' ἐξ ἐμῆς θανεῖν χερός;

ΤΑΛΟΣ

κὰν σοῦ στραφεῖη θυμός, εἰ τὸ πᾶν μάθοις.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

δεινοῦ λόγου κατῆρξας· εἶπέ δ' ἦ νοεῖς.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

ἅπαν τὸ χρῆμ', ἤμαρτε χρηστὰ μωμένη.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

χρήστ', ὦ κάκιστε, πατέρα σὸν κτείνασα δρᾶ;

ΤΑΛΟΣ

στέργημα γὰρ δοκοῦσα προσβαλεῖν σέθεν
ἀπήμπλαχ', ὡς προσεῖδε τοὺς ἔνδον γάμους.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

καὶ τίς τοσοῦτος φαρμακεὺς Τραχινίων;

ΤΑΛΟΣ

Νέσσος πάλαι Κένταυρος ἐξέπεισέ νιν
τοιῶδε φίλτρῳ τὸν σὸν ἐκμήναι πόθον.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ιοῦ ἰοῦ δύστηνος, οἴχομαι τάλας·
ὄλωλ' ὄλωλα, φέγγος οὐκέτ' ἔστι μοι.

TRACHINIAE

HYLLUS

And of her deeds this day, as thou wilt own.

HERACLES

Speak, but I fear thy speech will prove thee base.

HYLLUS

Hear then. She is dead, slain but an hour ago.

HERACLES

By whom? this portent likes me not; 'tis strange.

HYLLUS

By her own hand, none other, was she slain.

HERACLES

Out on her! she hath balked my just revenge.

HYLLUS

E'en thou wouldst soften if thou knewest all.

HERACLES

A wondrous prologue! make thy meaning plain.

HYLLUS

The sum is this: she erred with good intent.

HERACLES

"Good," say'st thou, wretch? Was it good to slay
thy sire?

HYLLUS

Nay, when she saw thy new bride, she devised
A charm to win thee back, but was misled.

HERACLES

Could Trachis boast a wizard of such might?

HYLLUS

The Centaur Nessus taught her long ago
How to enkindle in thy heart love's flame.

HERACLES

Alas, alas! I am undone, undone,
The light of day has left me; now I see

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

οἶμοι, φρονῶ δὴ ξυμφορᾶς ἴν' ἔσταμεν.
 ἴθ', ὦ τέκνον, πατὴρ γὰρ οὐκέτ' ἔστι σοι
 κάλει τὸ πᾶν μοι σπέρμα σῶν ὀμαιμόνων,
 κάλει δὲ τὴν τάλαιναν Ἀλκμήνην, Διὸς
 μάτην ἄκοιτιν, ὡς τελευταίαν ἐμοῦ
 φήμην πύθησθε θεσφάτων ὄσ' οἶδ' ἐγώ.

1150

ΤΛΛΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὔτε μήτηρ ἐνθάδ', ἀλλ' ἐπακτία
 Τίρυνθι συμβέβηκεν ὥστ' ἔχειν ἔδραν.
 παίδων δὲ τοὺς μὲν ξυλλαβοῦσ' αὐτὴ τρέφει,
 τοὺς δ' ἂν τὸ Θήβης ἄστου ναίοντας μάθοις·
 ἡμεῖς δ' ὅσοι πάρεσμεν, εἴ τι χρῆ, πάτερ,
 πράσσειν, κλύοντες ἐξυπηρητήσομεν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

σὺ δ' οὖν ἄκουε τοῦργον· ἐξήκεις δ' ἵνα
 φανεῖς ὅποιος ὦν ἀνὴρ ἐμὸς καλεῖ.
 ἐμοὶ γὰρ ἦν πρόφαντον ἐκ πατρὸς πάλαι,
 τῶν ἐμπνεόντων¹ μηδεὸς θανεῖν ὑπο,
 ἀλλ' ὅστις Ἄιδου φθίμενος οἰκῆτῳ πέλοι.
 ὄδ' οὖν ὁ θῆρ Κένταυρος, ὡς τὸ θεῖον ἦν
 πρόφαντον, οὕτω ζῶντά μ' ἔκτεινεν θανών.
 φανῶ δ' ἐγὼ τούτοισι συμβαίνοντ' ἴσα
 μαντεῖα καινά, τοῖς πάλαι ξυνήγορα,
 ἃ τῶν ὀρείων καὶ χαμαικοιτῶν ἐγὼ
 Σελλῶν ἐσελθὼν ἄλσος εἰσεγραψάμην
 πρὸς τῆς πατρίδας καὶ πολυγλώσσου δρυός,
 ἣ μοι χρόνῳ τῷ ζῶντι καὶ παρόντι νῦν
 ἔφασκε μόχθων τῶν ἐφεστῶτων ἐμοὶ
 λύσειν τελείσθαι· κἀδόκουν πράξειν καλῶς.
 τὸ δ' ἦν ἄρ' οὐδὲν ἄλλο πλὴν θανεῖν ἐμέ.
 τοῖς γὰρ θανοῦσι μόχθος οὐ προσγίγνεται.

1160

1170

¹ πρὸς τῶν πνεόντων MSS., Erfurdtd corr.



TRACHINIAE

In what extremity of fate I stand.
Go, son, thy father is no more ; go summon
Thy brethren one and all, go summon too
Alcmena, bride of Zeus—an empty name—
That from my dying lips ye all may learn
What oracles I know.

HYLLUS

I cannot call
Thy mother ; she at Tiryns by the sea
Far hence abides ; and of thy children some
She took to live with her ; others at Thebes,
As thou may'st learn, are lodged ; but all of us
Here present, father, will obey thy hest.

HERACLES

Then listen thou and heed me. Now's the hour
To prove thy breed—if thou art rightly called
My son. It was foreshown me by my sire
That I should perish by no living wight,
But by a dweller in the realms of Death.
So by this Centaur beast, as was foretold,
I perish, I the living by the dead.
A later oracle, as thou shalt learn,
Meets and confirms the ancient prophecy.
'Twas in the grove whose priests, the Selli, make
The earth their bed, rude hillsmen, that I heard it
Breathed by my Father's oak of many tongues ;
Heard it, and wrote it down, my present doom,
Now at this living moment brought to pass.
Release it promised from my toils, and I
Augured a happy life, but it meant death,
For with the dead there can be no more toil.

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ταῦτ' οὖν ἐπειδὴ λαμπρὰ συμβαίνει, τέκνον,
 δεῖ σ' αὖ γενέσθαι τῷδε τάνδρῳ σύμμαχον
 καὶ μὴ ἴπιμῆναι τοῦμόν ὀξύναι στόμα,
 ἀλλ' αὐτὸν εἰκαθόντα συμπράσσειν, νόμον
 κάλλιστον ἐξευρόντα, πειθαρχεῖν πατρὶ.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ἀλλ', ὦ πάτερ, ταρβῶ μὲν εἰς λόγου στάσιν
 τοιάνδ' ἐπελθόν, πείσομαι δ' ἅ σοι δοκεῖ.

1180

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἔμβαλλε χεῖρα δεξιὰν πρώτιστά μοι

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ὡς πρὸς τί πίστιν τήνδ' ἄγαν ἐπιστρέφεις;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐ θᾶσσον οἴσεις μῆδ' ἀπιστήσεις ἐμοί;

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ἰδοὺ προτείνω, κούδεν ἀντειρήσεται.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὄμνυ Διὸς νυν τοῦ με φύσαντος κᾶρα,

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ἢ μὴν τί δράσειν; καὶ τόδ' ἐχειρήσεται;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἢ μὴν ἐμοὶ τὸ λεχθὲν ἔργον ἐκτελεῖν.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ὄμνυμ' ἔγωγε, Ζῆν' ἔχων ἐπώμοτον.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

εἰ δ' ἐκτὸς ἔλθοις, πημονὰς εὐχον λαβεῖν.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

οὐ μὴ λάβω· δράσω γάρ· εὐχομαι δ' ὁμῶς·

1190

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οἶσθ' οὖν τὸν Οἴτης Ζηνὸς ὑψιστον πάγον;

TRACHINIAE

Since, then, my weird thus plainly comes to pass,
Thou, son, must do thy part and lend thine aid.
Delay not till I goad thee in my wrath,
But aid me with a will as one who knows
The golden rule, a father to obey.

HYLLUS

Yea, father, though the issue gives me pause
And I misdoubt thy purport, I'll obey.

HERACLES

Well said, but first lay thy right hand in mine.

HYLLUS

Wherefore impose on me this needless pledge?

HERACLES

Thy hand at once; obey and argue not.

HYLLUS

Here is my hand; I do as I am bid.

HERACLES

Now by the head of Zeus my Father swear.

HYLLUS

What wouldst thou have me swear? May I not know?

HERACLES

Swear to perform the task that I enjoin.

HYLLUS

I will and take the oath, so help me Zeus.

HERACLES

And add thereto the curse on perjurers.

HYLLUS

No need, for I shall keep it; yet I will.

HERACLES

Thou know'st the peak of Oeta, shrine of Zeus?

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΥΛΛΟΣ

οἶδ', ὡς θυτήρ γε πολλὰ δὴ σταθεὶς ἄνω.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἐνταῦθά νυν χρὴ τοῦμόν ἐξάραντά σε
σῶμ' αὐτόχειρα καὶ ξὺν οἷς χρήξεις φίλων.
πολλὴν μὲν ὕλην τῆς βαθυρρίζου δρυὸς
κείραντα, πολλὸν δ' ἄρσεν' ἐκτεμόνθ' ὁμοῦ
ἄγριον ἔλαιον, σῶμα τοῦμόν ἐμβαλεῖν,
καὶ πευκίνης λαβόντα λαμπάδος σέλας
πρῆσαι. γόου δὲ μηδὲν εἰσίτω δάκρυ,
ἀλλ' ἀστένακτος καδάκρυτος, εἴπερ εἰ
τοῦδ' ἀνδρός, ἔρξον· εἰ δὲ μή, μενῶ σ' ἐγὼ
καὶ νέρθεν ὧν ἀραῖος εἰσαεὶ βαρὺς.

1200

ΥΛΛΟΣ

οἶμοι, πάτερ, τί δ' εἶπας; οἶά μ' εἴργασαι.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὅποια δραστὲ ἐστίν· εἰ δὲ μή, πατρός
ἄλλου γενοῦ του μηδ' ἐμὸς κληθῆς ἔτι.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

οἶμοι μάλ' αὖθις, οἶά μ' ἐκκαλεῖ, πάτερ,
φονεῖα γενέσθαι καὶ παλαμναῖον σέθεν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐ δῆτ' ἔγωγ', ἀλλ' ὧν ἔχω παιώνιον
καὶ μούνον ἰατῆρα τῶν ἐμῶν κακῶν.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

καὶ πῶς ὑπαίθων σῶμ' ἂν ἰόμην τὸ σόν;

1210

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἀλλ' εἰ φοβεῖ πρὸς τοῦτο, τᾶλλα γ' ἔργασαι.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

φορᾶς γέ τοι φθόνησις οὐ γενήσεται.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἦ καὶ πυρᾶς πλήρωμα τῆς εἰρημένης;

TRACHINIAE

HYLLUS

Yea, I have climbed it oft to sacrifice.

HERACLES

Thither thyself, thou with what friends thou wilt,
Must carry me. From the deep-rooted oak
Lop many a branch, and many a faggot hew
From the wild-olive's lusty stock, and lay me
Upon the pyre. Kindle a torch of pine,
And fire it. Not a tear or wail or moan!
Unweeping, unlamenting must thou do
Thy part and prove thou art indeed my son.
Fail, and my ghost shall haunt thee ever more.

HYLLUS

O father, canst thou mean it? Hear I right?

HERACLES

Thou hast thy charge. If thou refuse it, get
Another sire, be called no more my son.

HYLLUS

O woe is me! What dost thou ask, that I
Should be thy murderer, a parricide?

HERACLES

Not so, but bealer of my sufferings,
The one physician that can cure my pains.

HYLLUS

How can I heal thy stricken frame by fire?

HERACLES

Well, if thou shrink from this, perform the rest.

HYLLUS

The task of bearing thee I will not grudge.

HERACLES

Nor yet to heap the pyre, as I have bid?

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΤΑΛΟΣ

ὅσον γ' ἂν αὐτὸς μὴ ποτιψαύων χερσῶν
τὰ δ' ἄλλα πράξω κού καμεί τοῦμὸν μέρος.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἄλλ' ἀρκέσει καὶ ταῦτα· πρόσνειμαι δέ μοι
χάριν βραχεῖαν πρὸς μακροῖς ἄλλοις διδοῦς.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

εἰ καὶ μακρὰ κάρτ' ἐστίν, ἐργασθήσεται.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

τὴν Εὐρυτείαν οἶσθα δῆτα παρθένον;

ΤΑΛΟΣ

Ἰόλην ἔλεξας, ὥς γ' ἐπεικάζειν ἐμέ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἔγνων. τοσοῦτον δὴ σ' ἐπισκῆπτω, τέκνον·
ταύτην ἐμοῦ θανόντος, εἴπερ εὐσεβεῖν
βούλει, πατρῶιον ὀρκίον μεμνημένος,
προσθοῦ δάμαρτα, μῆδ' ἀπιστήσης πατρί·
μῆδ' ἄλλος ἀνδρῶν τοῖς ἐμοῖς πλευροῖς ὁμοῦ
κλιθεῖσαν αὐτὴν ἀντὶ σοῦ λάβῃ¹ πυτέ,
ἀλλ' αὐτός, ὦ παῖ, τοῦτο κήδευσον λέχος.
πείθου· τὸ γάρ τοι μεγάλα πιστεύσαντ' ἐμοὶ
σμικροῖς ἀπιστεῖν τὴν πάρος συγγεῖ χάριν.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

οἴμοι· τὸ μὲν νοσοῦντι θυμοῦσθαι κακόν,
τὸ δ' ὠδ' ὄρᾶν φρονοῦντα τίς ποτ' ἂν φέροι;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὡς ἐργασείων οὐδὲν ὦν λέγω θροεῖς.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

τίς γάρ ποθ', ἦ μοι μητρὶ μὲν θανεῖν μόνῃ
μεταίτιος σοὶ τ' αὐθις ὡς ἔχεις ἔχειν,

¹ λάβοι MSS., Elmsley corr.

1220

1230

TRACHINIAE

HYLLUS

So that I light it not with my own hands ;
All else I will perform and do my part.

HERACLES

That will suffice. But add one other boon,
A little one, to crown the great ones given.

HYLLUS

It shall be granted, be it ne'er so great.

HERACLES

Thou know'st the maiden, child of Eurytus ?

HYLLUS

Methinks thou meanest Iolè.

HERACLES

None else.

This is my charge to thee concerning her.
When I am dead, if thou wouldst keep the oath
Thou sworest to obey thy father's will,
Take her to wife, let not another have her
Who by my side hath lain ; but thine, my son—
Thine let her be, joined in the marriage bond.
Much hast thou granted, to refuse one more,
One little boon, would cancel all the score.

HYLLUS

Ah me ! 'tis ill to quarrel with one sick—
But who could bear to see him in this mind ?

HERACLES

Thy marmuring augurs disobedience.

HYLLUS

What her, the sole cause of my mother's death,
And worse, the cause of this thy grievous plight !

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

τίς ταῦτ' ἄν, ὅστις μὴ ἔξ ἀλαστόρων νοσοῖ,
ἔλοιτο; κρείσσον κάμει γ', ὦ πάτερ, θανεῖν
ἢ τοῖσιν ἐχθίστοισι συναίειν ὁμοῦ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἀνὴρ ὄδ', ὡς ἔοικεν, οὐ νεμεῖν ἐμοὶ
φθίνοντι μοῖραν· ἀλλά τοι θεῶν ἀρὰ
μενεῖ σ' ἀπιστήσαντα τοῖς ἐμοῖς λόγοις.

1240

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ἄμοι, τάχ', ὡς ἔοικας, ὡς νοσεῖς φράσεις.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

σὺ γάρ μ' ἀπ' εὐνασθέντος ἐκκινεῖς κακοῦ.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

δείλαιος, ὡς ἐς πολλὰ τάπορεῖν ἔχω.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐ γὰρ δικαιοῖς τοῦ φυτεύσαντος κλύειν.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἐκδιδαχθῶ δῆτα δυσσεβεῖν, πάτερ;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐ δυσσέβεια, τούμουν εἰ τέρψεις κέαρ.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

πράσσειν ἄνωγας οὖν με πανδίκως τάδε;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἔγωγε· τούτων μάρτυρας καλῶ θεοῦς.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

τοιγὰρ ποιήσω κούκ ἀπώσομαι, τὸ σὸν
θεοῖσι δεικνὺς ἔργον· οὐ γὰρ ἄν ποτε
κακὸς φανείην σοί γε πιστεύσας, πάτερ.

1250

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

καλῶς τελευτᾶς, κάπὶ τοῖσδε τὴν χάριν
ταχέϊαν, ὦ παῖ, πρόσθες, ὡς πρὶν ἐμπεσεῖν
σπαραγμὸν ἢ τιν' οἴστρον, ἐς πυρὰν με θῆς.

TRACHINIAE

Who, were he not possessed of fiends, would do it?
Better, my father, I with thee should die
Than live united with our direst foe.

HERACLES

The boy, it seems, is not inclined to heed
A father's dying prayer; but heaven's curse
Awaits full sure a disobedient son.

HYLLUS

I fear thy frenzy soon will show itself.

HERACLES

Yea, for thou wakenest my pain that slept.

HYLLUS

O what a coil of dread perplexities!

HERACLES

Because thou wilt not deign to heed thy sire.

HYLLUS

What, must I learn impiety from thee?

HERACLES

'Tis piety to glad a father's heart.

HYLLUS

I have thy warrant then for what I do?

HERACLES

I call the gods to witness it is just.

HYLLUS

Then I consent and hesitate no more.
Let heaven attest this act of thine, for I
Cannot be blamed for filial piety.

HERACLES

Thou endest well. Now crown thy gracious words
With action; haste and lay me on the pyre
Before the spasms and fever-fit return.

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ἄγ' ἐγκονεῖτ', αἵρεσθε· παῦλά τοι κακῶν
αὕτη, τελευταῖη τοῦδε τάνδρὸς ὑστάτη.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

ἄλλ' οὐδὲν εἶργει σοὶ τελειοῦσθαι τάδε,
ἐπεὶ κελεύεις κάξαναγκάζεις, πάτερ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἄγε νυν, πρὶν τήνδ' ἀνακινήσαι
νόσον, ᾧ ψυχὴ σκληρὰ, χάλυβος
λιθοκύλλητον στόμον παρέχουσ',
ἀνάπαυε βοήν, ὡς ἐπίχαρτον
τελέουσ' ἀεκούσιον ἔργον.

1260

ΤΑΛΟΣ

αἶρετ', ὄπαδοί, μεγάλην μὲν ἐμοὶ
τούτων θέμενοι συγγνωμοσύνην,
μεγάλην δὲ θεῶν ἀγνωμοσύνην
εἰδότες ἔργων τῶν πρασσομένων,
οἳ φύσαντες καὶ κληζόμενοι
πατέρες τοιαῦτ' ἐφορῶσι πάθη.
τὰ μὲν οὖν μέλλοντ' οὐδεὶς ἐφορᾷ,
τὰ δὲ νῦν ἐστῶτ' οἰκτρὰ μὲν ἡμῖν,
αἰσχρὰ δ' ἐκείνοις,
χαλεπώτατα δ' οὖν ἀνδρῶν πάντων
τῷ τήνδ' ἄτην ὑπέχοντι.

1270

λείπου μηδὲ σύ, παρθέν', ἀπ' οἴκων,
μεγάλους μὲν ἰδοῦσα νέους θανάτους,
πολλὰ δὲ πήματα καὶ καινοπαθῆ,
κούδεν τούτων ὅ τι μὴ Ζεὺς.

TRACHINIAE

(*To ATTENDANTS*)

Ho, haste and lift me. Thus I find repose
The end and consummation of my woes.

HYLLUS

Since, father, this thou straitly dost command,
Naught hinders the fulfilment of thy will.

HERACLES

Rouse, arm thyself, O stubborn heart,
Before again the plague upstart ;
Set on thy lips a curb of steel,
Thy mouth let stony silence seal ;
Go meet thy doom without a cry,
A victim, happy thus to die.

HYLLUS

Lift him, men, nor take amiss
That I bear a part in this.
We are blameless, but confess
That the gods are pitiless.
Children they beget, and claim
Worship in a father's name,
Yet with apathetic eye
Look upon such agony.
What is yet to be none knows,
But the present's fraught with woes,
Woes for us, for them deep shame ;
And of all beneath the sun
Worse than he hath suffered none.

Come, maidens, come away !
Horrors have ye seen this day,
Dire death and direr fall :
And Zeus hath wrought it all.

[*Exeunt* OMNES.]

PHILOCTETES

ARGUMENT

NINE years before the play begins Philoctetes, afflicted by a noisome wound, had been landed by the Greek chiefs on the desert island of Lemnos. He bore with him the famous bow and arrows of Heracles; and without these, as a seer afterwards declared to them, Troy could not be taken. So Odysseus was commissioned to bring back by force or fraud the hero and his arms, and he took with him, to aid him in his purpose, the son of Achilles, Philoctetes' dearest friend.

When the play begins Odysseus has landed and is instructing Neoptolemus in his part. He is to find Philoctetes and reveal who he is, but pretend that he has come to take him back, not to Troy, but home to Greece. Neoptolemus at first indignantly declines the task and is hardly persuaded to play the traitor. He meets Philoctetes coming forth from his cave, makes himself known, and, to gain his confidence, relates fictitious wrongs that he, too, has suffered at the hands of the Greeks. He consents to take Philoctetes home, but as they are starting for the ship a merchant-captain appears (a sailor disguised by Odysseus) who tells them that the Greek captains have sent in pursuit of both. They hasten their departure, but first visit the cave that Philoctetes may fetch away the simples he needs to dress his wound.

ARGUMENT

As he is leaving the cave Philoctetes is seized with a paroxysm of pain. Knowing that after such attacks deep slumber is wont to follow, he entrusts his bow and arrows to Neoptolemus who swears to keep them safe and restore them to their owner. On awaking he demands his bow, but Neoptolemus refuses to give it back and confesses the plot that Philoctetes now suspects. Stung by the denouncement of his treachery and the pathetic appeal to his better nature, Neoptolemus repents him and is in the act of restoring the bow, when Odysseus, who has been watching the scene in hiding, appears to prevent him. The bow Odysseus will have ; Philoctetes may go or stay us he chooses. The pair depart together for the ships and Philoctetes is left behind with the chorus of sailors who endeavour to persuade him to return with them. But he is obdurate and they are about to leave him when Neoptolemus is seen hurrying back with the bow, closely followed by Odysseus who tries in vain to arrest him and threatens to denounce him as a traitor to the host. Philoctetes regains his bow and would have used it to let fly a mortal shaft at Odysseus, had not Neoptolemus stayed his hand. Again he is urged to go back to Troy and again he refuses. Neoptolemus true to his word, reluctantly agrees to convey him home. At this point an apparition is seen in the air above them, the divine form of Heracles, sent by Zeus from Olympus to bid Philoctetes go back to Troy with Neoptolemus and so fulfil the oracle. At last he bows to the will of Heaven.

ΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ΣΚΟΠΟΣ & ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ODYSSEUS.

NEOPTOLEMUS.

PHILOCTETES.

SAILOR (*disguised as Merchant Captain*).

HERACLES.

CHORUS, *Scyrian sailors of Neoptolemus' Crew*.

SCENE: Rocky Coast on the Island of Lemnos.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

Ἄκτῃ μὲν ἦδε τῆς περιρρύτου χθονὸς
Λήμνου, βροτοῖς ἄστιπτος οὐδ' οἰκουμένη,
ἔνθ' ὦ κρατίστου πατρὸς Ἑλλήνων τραφεῖς
Ἄχιλλέως παῖ Νεοπτόλεμε, τὸν Μηλιά
Ποιάντος υἱὸν ἐξέθηκ' ἐγὼ ποτε,
ταχθεὶς τόδ' ἔρδειν τῶν ἀνασσόντων ὑπο,
νόσφ καταστάζοντα διαβόρῳ πόδα·
ὄτ' οὔτε λοιβῆς ἡμῖν οὔτε θυμάτων
παρῆν ἐκήλοις προσθυγεῖν, ἀλλ' ἀγρίαις
κατεῖχ' ἀεὶ πᾶν στρατόπεδον δυσφημίαις, 10
βοῶν, στενάζων. ἀλλὰ τὰντα μὲν τί δεῖ
λέγειν; ἀκμὴ γὰρ οὐ μακρῶν ἡμῖν λόγων,
μὴ καὶ μάθη μ' ἤκοντα κάκχέω τὸ πᾶν
σόφισμα, τῷ νιν ἀντίχ' αἰρήσειν δοκῶ.
ἀλλ' ἔργον ἤδη σὸν τὰ λοιπ' ὑπηρετεῖν
σκοπεῖν θ' ὅπου 'στ' εὐταῦθα δίστομος πέτρα
τοιὰδ', ἴν' ἐν ψύχει μὲν ἡλίου διπλῆ
πάρεστιν ἐνθάκῃσις, ἐν θέρει δ' ὕπνου
δι' ἀμφιτρήτος αὐλίου πέμπει πνοή·
βαιὸν δ' ἐνερθεν ἐξ ἀριστερῶς τάχ' ἂν
ἴδοις ποτὸν κρηναῖον, εἶπερ ἐστὶ σῶν. 20
ἄ μοι προσελθὼν σίγα σήμαιν' εἴτ' ἐκεῖ

PHILOCTETES

Enter ODYSSEUS, NEOPTOLEMUS; in the background, a SAILOR.

ODYSSEUS

Son of Achilles, Neoptolemus,
Sprung from the noblest of the Grecian host,
This is the beach of Lemnos, sea-girt isle,
A land untrod, untenanted, where once,
As bidden by the chiefs, I put ashore
The Malian, son of Poeas, grievously
Afflicted by his foot's envenomed wound.
For us there was no peace at sacrifice
Or at libations, but the whole camp rang
With his discordant screams and savage yells,
Moaning and groaning. But what skills it now
To tell this tale? No time for large discourse
That might betray our presence and undo
The plot I've laid to catch him presently.
To work! it rests with thee to play thy part,
And help me to discover hereabouts
A cave with double mouth by nature made
To catch on either side the winter sun,
Or by the breeze that through the archway blows
Invite in summer's heat to gentle sleep;
And lower down, a little to the left,
A spring, if still it flows, thou art like to find.
Go warily to work and bring me word,

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

χῶρον τὸν αὐτὸν ¹ τόνδ' ἔτ' εἴτ' ἄλλη κυρεῖ,
ὡς τὰπίλοιπα τῶν λόγων σὺ μὲν κλύης,
ἐγὼ δὲ φράζω, κοινὰ δ' ἐξ ἀμφοῖν ἴη.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἄναξ Ὀδυσσεῦ, τοῦργον οὐ μακρὰν λέγεις·
δοκῶ γὰρ οἶον εἶπας ἄντρον εἰσορᾶν.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἄνωθεν ἢ κάτωθεν; οὐ γὰρ ἐννοῶ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τόδ' ἐξῦπερθε· καὶ στίβου γ' οὐδεὶς κτύπος.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

δρα καθ' ὕπνον μὴ καταυλισθεὶς κυρεῖ.

30

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὄρῳ κενὴν οἴκησιν ἀνθρώπων δίχα.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

οὐδ' ἐνδον οἰκοποιός ἐστί τις τροφή;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

στιπτή γε φυλλὰς ὡς ἐναυλίζοντί τφ.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἔρημα, κούδέν ἐσθ' ὑπόστεγον;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

αὐτόξυλόν γ' ἔκπωμα, φλαουουργοῦ τινος
τεχνήματ' ἀνδρός, καὶ πυρεῖ ὁμοῦ τάδε.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

κείνου τὸ θησαύρισμα σημαίνεις τόδε.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ιοῦ ἰοῦ· καὶ ταῦτά γ' ἄλλα θάλπεται
βράκη, βαρείας του νοσηλείας πλέα.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἄνῃρ κατοικεῖ τούσδε τοὺς τόπους σαφῶς,
κάστ' οὐχ ἑκάς που· πῶς γὰρ ἂν νοσῶν ἀνῃρ

40

¹ πρὸς αὐτὸν MSS., Blaydes corr.

PHILOCTETES

Whether he still is there or further gone.
That done, thy part will be to listen, mine
To instruct, that both may gain our common end.

NEOPTOLEMUS

No distant quest, my lord Odysseus, this ;
Here, if I err not, is the cave thou seek'st.

ODYSSEUS

Above me or below ? I see it not.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Up there ; but not a footfall can I hear.

ODYSSEUS

Look if he be not gone within to rest.

NEOPTOLEMUS

The chamber's empty ; no man is within.

ODYSSEUS

And no provision for a man's abode ?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Litter of trodden leaves as for a couch.

ODYSSEUS

And is that all—no other sign of life ?

NEOPTOLEMUS

A cup of uncouth handiwork, rough hewn
From out a log ; some tinder, too, I see.

ODYSSEUS

These are his household treasures.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Faugh ! and here
Spread in the sun to dry, are filthy rags
Dank with the ooze of some malignant sore.

ODYSSEUS

This clearly is his dwelling-place, and he
Hard by, for how could any travel far

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

κῶλον παλαιᾷ κηρὶ προσβαίῃ μακράν;
 ἀλλ' ἢ πὶ φορβῆς νόστον ἐξελήλυθεν
 ἢ φύλλον εἴ τι νῶδνον κάτοιδ' ἔπου.
 τὸν οὖν παρόντα πέμψον εἰς κατασκοπήν,
 μὴ καὶ λάβῃ με προσπεσών· ὡς μᾶλλον ἂν
 ἔλοιτό μ' ἢ τοὺς πάντας Ἀργείους λαβεῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἔρχεται τε καὶ φυλάζεται στίβος.
 σὺ δ', εἴ τι χρήσεις, φράζε δευτέρῳ λόγῳ.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

Ἀχιλλέως παῖ, δεῖ σ' ἐφ' οἷς ἐλήλυθας
 γενναῖον εἶναι, μὴ μόνον τῷ σώματι,
 ἀλλ' ἦν τι καινόν ὧν πρὶν οὐκ ἀκήκοας
 κλύης, ὑπουργεῖν, ὡς ὑπηρέτης πάρει.

50

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί δῆτ' ἀνωγας;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

τὴν Φιλοκτῆτου σε δεῖ
 ψυχὴν ὅπως δόλοισιν¹ ἐκκλέψεις λέγων.
 ὅταν σ' ἐρωτᾷ τίς τε καὶ πόθεν πάρει,
 λέγειν, Ἀχιλλέως παῖς· τόδ' οὐχὶ κλεπτέον·
 πλείς δ' ὡς πρὸς οἶκον, ἐκλιπὼν τὸ ναυτικὸν
 στράτευμ' Ἀχαιῶν, ἔχθος ἐχθήρας μέγα,
 οἳ σ' ἐν λιταῖς στείλαντες ἐξ οἴκων μολεῖν,
 μόνην ἔχοντες τήνδ' ἄλωσιν Ἰλίου,
 οὐκ ἠξίωσαν τῶν Ἀχιλλείων ὀπλων
 ἐλθόντι δοῦναι κυρίως αἰτουμένῳ,
 ἀλλ' αὐτ' Ὀδυσσεῖ παρέδωσαν· λέγων δ'σ' ἂν
 θέλης καθ' ἡμῶν ἔσχατ' ἔσχατων κακά.

60

¹ λέγοισιν MSS., Gedike corr.

PHILOCTETES

Thus maimed and hobbled by an ancient wound ?
Either in quest of food, or else to find
Some simples known to him as anodynes,
He's gone abroad, and shortly will return ;
So post thy henchman there to watch the path,
Lest he surprise me. I of all the Greeks
Am the one foe he liefest here would catch.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Guard shall be kept ; my man is on his way ;
And now if thou hast more to say, say on.

[Exit ATTENDANT

ODYSSEUS

Son of Achilles, not in thews alone
Or prowess must thou prove thy breed to-day.
If tasks be set thee that seem strange, no less
Thou must perform them ; therefore wast thou sent.

NEOPTOLEMUS

What is thy hest ?

ODYSSEUS

Thou must cajole and cheat
The soul of Philoctetes by fair words,
And when he asks thee who and whence thou art,
" Achilles' son," make answer ; hide not this.
But add, " I am sailing homewards and have left
The fleet in dudgeon, wroth against the chiefs
Who first prevailed on me to quit my home,
Because without me Troy could ne'er be taken,
And then upon my coming basely spurned
My righteous title to Achilles' arms,
And gave them to Odysseus." At my name
Heap on me every-scoff and scorn and taunt ;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

τούτῳ¹ γὰρ οὐδέν μ' ἀλγυνεῖς· εἰ δ' ἐργάσει
 μὴ ταῦτα, λύπην πᾶσιν Ἀργείοις βαλεῖς.
 εἰ γὰρ τὰ τοῦδε τόξα μὴ ληφθήσεται,
 οὐκ ἔστι πέρσαι σοι τὸ Δαρδάνου πέδον.
 ὡς δ' ἔστ' ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐχί, σοὶ δ' ὀμιλία
 πρὸς τόνδε πιστὴ καὶ βέβαιος, ἔκμαθε.
 σὺ μὲν πέπλευκας οὐτ' ἔνορκος οὐδενὶ
 οὐτ' ἐξ ἀνάγκης οὔτε τοῦ πρώτου στόλου·
 ἐμοὶ δὲ τούτων οὐδέν ἐστ' ἀρνήσιμον.
 ὥστ' εἰ με τόξων ἐγκρατὴς αἰσθήσεται,
 ὄλωλα καὶ σέ προσδιαφθερῶ ξυνίων.
 ἀλλ' αὐτὸ τοῦτο δεῖ σοφισθῆναι, κλοπεὺς
 ὅπως γενήσεται τῶν ἀνικῆτων ὄπλων.
 ἔξοιδα, παῖ, φύσει σε μὴ πεφυκότα
 τοιαῦτα φωνεῖν μηδὲ τεχνᾶσθαι κακά·
 ἀλλ' ἠδὲ γὰρ τι κτῆμα τῆς νίκης λαβεῖν,
 τόλμα· δίκαιοι δ' αὖθις ἐκφανοῦμεθα.
 νῦν δ' εἰς ἀναιδὲς ἡμέρας μέρος βραχὺ
 δός μοι σεαυτὸν, κᾶτα τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον
 κέκλησο πάντων εὐσεβέστατος βροτῶν.

70

80

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἐγὼ μὲν οὖς ἂν τῶν λόγων ἀλγῶ κλύων,
 Λαερτίου παῖ, τούσδε καὶ πράσσειν στυγῶ·
 ἔφην γὰρ οὐδέν ἐκ τέχνης πράσσειν κακῆς,
 οὐτ' αὐτὸς οὐθ', ὡς φασιν, οὐκφύσας ἐμέ.
 ἀλλ' εἰμ' ἐτοῖμος πρὸς βίαν τὸν ἄνδρ' ἄγειν
 καὶ μὴ δόλοισιν· οὐ γὰρ ἐξ ἑνὸς ποδὸς
 ἡμᾶς τοσοῦσδε πρὸς βίαν χειρώσεται.
 πεμφθεῖς γε μέντοι σοὶ ξυνεργάτης ὀκνῶ
 προδότης καλεῖσθαι· βούλομαι δ', ἀναξ, καλῶς
 δρῶν ἐξαμαρτεῖν μᾶλλον ἢ νικᾶν κακῶς.

90

¹ τούτων MSS., Buttman corr.

PHILOCTETES

It will not hurt me, but if thou should'st fail
'Twill sorely vex the Argives one and all.
This man's artillery we needs must have ;
No hope to capture Troy-town otherwise.
Why *thou* canst hold free converse with the man
Securely and I cannot, thou shalt learn.
Thou wast not bound by oath or pledge to sail
Nor wast^d thou with the fleet that first embarked ;
But naught of this, if taxed, can I deny.
Therefore, if, bow in hand, he counters me,
I die, and shall involve thee in my death.
How to possess us of those matchless arms—
There is the puzzle ; set thy wits to that.
I know, my son, thy honest nature shrinks
From glozing words and practice of deceit ;
But (for 'tis sweet to snatch a victory)
Be bold to-day and bonest afterwards.
For one brief hour of lying follow me ;
All time to come shall prove thy probity.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Son of Laertes, what upon my ear
Grates in the telling, I should hate to do.
Such is my nature ; any taint of guile
I loathe, and such, they tell me, was my sire.
But I am ready, not by fraud, hut force,
To bring the man ; for, crippled in one foot,
Against our numbers he can prove no match.
Nathless, since I was sent to aid thee, prince,
I fear to seem a laggard ; yet prefer
To fail with honour than succeed by fraud.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἔσθλου πατρὸς παῖ, καὐτὸς ὦν νέος ποτὲ
γλώσσαν μὲν ἀργόν, χεῖρα δ' εἶχον ἐργάτιν·
νῦν δ' εἰς ἔλεγχον ἐξίῳν ὀρώ βροτοῖς
τὴν γλώσσαν, οὐχὶ τάργα, πάνθ' ἡγουμένην.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί μ' οὖν ἄνωγας ἄλλο πλήν ψευδῆ λέγειν;

100

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

λέγω σ' ἐγὼ δόλω Φιλοκτῆτην λαβεῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί δ' ἐν δόλω δεῖ μᾶλλον ἢ πείσαντ' ἄγειν;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

οὐ μὴ πίθηται· πρὸς βίαν δ' οὐκ ἂν λάβοις.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὕτως ἔχει τι δεινὸν ἰσχύος θράσος;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ιοὺς γ' ἀφύκτους καὶ προπέμποντας φόνου.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ ἄρ' ἐκείνῳ γ' οὐδὲ προσμῖξαι θρασύ;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

οὐ, μὴ δόλω λαβόντα γ', ὡς ἐγὼ λέγω.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ αἰσχρὸν ἡγεῖ δῆτα τὸ ψευδῆ λέγειν;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

οὐκ, εἰ τὸ σωθῆναί γε τὸ ψεῦδος φέρει.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

πῶς οὖν βλέπων τις ταῦτα τολμήσει λακεῖν;

110

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ὅταν τι δρᾶς εἰς κέρδος, οὐκ ὀκνεῖν πρέπει.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

κέρδος δ' ἐμοὶ τί τοῦτον ἐς Τροίαν μολεῖν;

PHILOCTETES

ODYSSEUS

Son of a gallant sire, I too in youth
Was slow of tongue and forward with my hand ;
But I have learnt by trial of mankind
Mightier than deeds of puissance is the tongue.

NEOPTOLEMUS

It comes to this that thou would'st have me lie.

ODYSSEUS

Entangle Philoctetes by deceit.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Why not persuade him rather than deceive ?

ODYSSEUS

Persuasion's vain, and force of no avail.

NEOPTOLEMUS

What arms hath he of such miraculous might ?

ODYSSEUS

Unerring arrows, tipp'd with instant death.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Might not a bold man come to grips with him ?

ODYSSEUS

No, as I told thee, guile alone avails.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Thou deem'st it, then, no shame to tell a lie ?

ODYSSEUS

Not if success depends upon a lie.

NEOPTOLEMUS

To utter falsehoods I should blush for shame.

ODYSSEUS

If thou wouldst profit thou must have no qualms.

NEOPTOLEMUS

What gain to *me*, should he be brought to Troy ?

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

αἰρεῖ τὰ τόξα ταῦτα τὴν Τροίαν μόνα.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ ἄρ' ὁ πέρσων, ὡς ἐφάσκει, εἴμ' ἐγώ;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

οὐτ' ἂν σὺ κείνων χωρὶς οὐτ' ἐκεῖνα σοῦ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

θηρατέ οὖν γίγνοιτ' ἂν, εἴπερ ὧδ' ἔχει.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ὡς τοῦτό γ' ἔρξας δύο φέρει δωμήματα.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ποιῶ; μαθὼν γὰρ οὐκ ἂν ἀρνοίμην τὸ δρᾶν.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

σοφός τ' ἂν αὐτὸς κάγαθὸς κεκλήῃ ἄμα.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἴτω· ποήσω, πᾶσαν αἰσχύνην ἀφείς.

120

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἦ μνημονεύεις οὖν ἅ σοι παρήνεσα;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

σάφ' ἴσθ', ἐπεὶπερ εἰσάπαξ συνήνεσα.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

σὺ μὲν μένων νῦν κείνον ἐνθάδ' ἐκδέχου,

ἐγὼ δ' ἄπειμι, μὴ κατοπτευθῶ παρών,

καὶ τὸν σκοπὸν πρὸς ναῦν ἀποστελῶ πάλιν.

καὶ δεῦρ', εἴαν μοι τοῦ χρόνου δοκῆτέ τι

κατασχολάζειν, αὖθις ἐκπέμψω πάλιν

τοῦτον τὸν αὐτὸν ἄνδρα, ναυκλήρου τρόποις

μαρφήν δολώσας, ὡς ἂν ἀγνοία προσῆ'

οὐ δῆτα, τέκνον, ποικίλως ἀδωμένον

δέχου τὰ συμφέροντα τῶν ἀεὶ λόγων.

ἐγὼ δὲ πρὸς ναῦν εἶμι, σοὶ παρῆς τάδε·

130

PHILOCTETES

ODYSSEUS

Without these arms Troy-town cannot be sacked.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Ye told me *I* should take it. Was that false?

ODYSSEUS

Not thou apart from these nor these from thee.

NEOPTOLEMUS

The quarry's worth the chase, if this be so.

ODYSSEUS

Know that success a double meed shall win.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Make plain this twofold prize and I'll essay.

ODYSSEUS

Thou wilt be hailed as wise no less than brave.

NEOPTOLEMUS

I'll do it—here's my hand—and risk the shame.

ODYSSEUS

Good. My instructions—thou rememberest them?

NEOPTOLEMUS

I have consented; trust me for the rest.

ODYSSEUS

Stay here then and await his coming, whilst,

Lest I should be espied, I go away

And send back to the ship our sentinel;

But if ye seem to dally overmuch,

He shall return, the same man, but disguised

Past recognition, as a sailor clad.

When he accosts thee, mark each word, my son,

To catch the hid significance, for he

Will speak in riddles. This I leave to thee

And seek the vessel. Hermes aid us both,

Who sent us on our way, the God of cunning,

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

Ἐρμῆς δ' ὁ πέμπων δόλιος ἠγγήσαιο νῦν
 Νίκη τ' Ἀθάνα Πολιάς, ἥ σφῆζει μ' αἰεὶ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α'

τί χρῆ τί χρῆ με, δέσποσ', ἐν ξένα ξένον
 στέγειν ἢ τί λέγειν πρὸς ἄνδρ' ὑπόπταν;
 φράζε μοι, τέχνα γὰρ
 τέχνας ἑτέρας προύχει
 καὶ γνώμα παρ' ὄτῳ τὸ θεῖον
 Διὸς σκῆπτρον ἀνάσσεται.
 σέ δ', ὦ τέκνον, τόδ' ἐλήλυθεν
 πᾶν κράτος ὠγύγιον τό μοι ἔννεπε
 τί σοι χρεῶν ὑπουργεῖν.

140

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

νῦν μὲν, ἴσως γὰρ τόπον ἐσχατιαῖς
 προσιδεῖν ἐθέλεις ὄντινα κείται,
 δέρκου θαρσῶν· ὁπόταν δὲ μόλη
 δεινὸς ὀδίτης, τῶνδ' οὐκ¹ μελάβρων
 πρὸς ἐμὴν αἰεὶ χεῖρα προχωρῶν
 πειρῶ τὸ παρὸν θεραπεύειν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μέλον πάλαι μέλημά μοι λέγεις, ἄναξ, ἀντ. α' 150
 φρουρεῖν ὀμμ' ἐπὶ σῶ μάλιστα καιρῶ·
 νῦν δέ μοι λέγ', αὐλάς
 ποίας ἐνεδρος ναίει
 καὶ χώρον τίν' ἔχει. τὸ γάρ μοι
 μαθεῖν οὐκ ἀποκαίριον,
 μὴ προσπεσῶν με λάθῃ ποθέν·
 τίς τόπος ἢ τίς ἔδρα; τίν' ἔχει στίβον,
 ἔναυλον ἢ θυραῖον;

¹ 4c MSS., Jebb corr.

PHILOCTETES

And she who never failed me yet, my queen,
Athenè Polias, queen of victory!

[*Exit ODYSSEUS.*]

Enter CHORUS OF SCYRIAN SAILORS.

CHORUS

(*Str.* 1)

What, O my master, what must I conceal
And what reveal,
In a strange land a stranger, by what wile
His shrewd suspects beguile?
Instruct me; for his art all art excels
With whom there dwells
The sovereignty of Zeus, the Kingly Crown
That hath to thee come down,
My son, by immemorial right divine;
Such skill is thine;
So teach me, master, how I best may speed
Thy present need.

NEOPTOLEMUS

First to find his lair, no doubt,
Ye are keen; so boldly scout.
When the wild man ye have spied
Who within this cave doth bide,
Watch the motions of my hand,
Prompt to act as I command.

CHORUS

(*Ant.* 1)

Now, as at all times, Prince, I gladly heed,
And serve thy need.
But first to learn his common haunts t'were well;
I pray thee tell,
Lest he should light upon me unaware,
His track, his lair.
Say, if within his den he will be found,
Or roaming round.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οἶκον μὲν οὐκ ἔστι τόνδ' ἀμφίθυρον
πετρίας κοίτης.

160

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ποῦ γὰρ ὁ τλήμων αὐτὸς ἄπεστιν;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

δῆλον ἔμουγ' ὡς φορβῆς χρεία
στίβον ὀγμύει τῆδε¹ πέλας που.
ταύτην γὰρ ἔχειν βιοτῆς αὐτὸν
λόγος ἐστὶ φύσιν, θηροβολούντα
πτηνοῖς ἰοῖς στυγερόν στυγερώς,
οὐδέ τι' αὐτῷ
παιῶνα κακῶν ἐπιωμᾶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οἰκτίρω νιν ἔγωγ', ὅπως,
μὴ του κηδομένου βροτῶν
μηδὲ ξύντροφον ὄμμ' ἔχων,
δύστανος, μόνος αἰεῖ,
νοσεῖ μὲν ἰόσον ἀγρίαν,
ἀλίει δ' ἐπὶ παντί τῳ
χρείας ἰσταμένῳ. πῶς ποτε πῶς δύσμορος ἀν-
τέχει;

στρ. β'

170

ὦ παλάμαι θεῶν,²
ὦ δύστανα γένη βροτῶν,
οἷς μὴ μέτριος αἰὼν.

οὔτος πρωτογόνων ἴσως
οἰκῶν οὐδενὸς ὕστερος,
πάντων ἄμμορος ἐν βίῳ
κεῖται μόνος ἀπ' ἄλλων,

ἀντ. β' 180

¹ τόνδε MSS., Blaydes corr.

² θνητῶν MSS., Lachmann corr.

PHILOCTETES

NEOPTOLEMUS

See you that two-mouthed cavern? There
His rocky dwelling-place.

CHORUS

And where
Is the sad inmate of the grot?

NEOPTOLEMUS

I doubt not somewhere near the spot,
Gone forth in search of daily food,
Dragging his steps through wold or wood;
For so, 'tis said, by toilsome pains
A painful sustenance he gains,
Shooting whatever living thing
Comes within reach of his dread bow.
The years go by and never bring
A leach to heal his woe.

CHORUS

O how piteous thy lot, (Str. 2)
Luckless man, by man forgot;
None thy solitude to share,
None to tend with loving care;
Plagued and stricken by disease,
Never knowing hour of ease,
Facing death each moment, how
Hast, poor wretch, endured till now?
O the crooked ways of heaven!
Hapless men to whom are given
Lots so changeful, so uneven.

He who with the best might vie, (Ant. 2)
Of our Grecian chivalry.
On a desert island left,
Perishes, of all bereft;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

στικτῶν ἢ λασίων μετὰ
 θηρῶν, ἔν τ' ὀδύνας ὁμοῦ
 λιμῶ τ' οἰκτρός, ἀνήκεστα μεριμνήματ' ἔχων· ὄρει-
 α δ' ¹ ἀθυρόστομος
 Ἄχὼ τηλεφανῆς πικραῖς
 οἰμωγαῖς ὑπακούει.²

190

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐδὲν τούτων θαυμαστὸν ἐμοί·
 θεῖα γάρ, εἴπερ κἀγὼ τι φρονῶ,
 καὶ τὰ παθήματα κείνα πρὸς αὐτὸν
 τῆς ὠμόφρονος Χρύσης ἐπέβη,
 καὶ νῦν ἂ πονεῖ δίχα κηδεμόνων,
 οὐκ ἔσθ' ὡς οὐ θεῶν του μελέτη
 τοῦ μὴ πρότερον τόνδ' ἐπὶ Τροίᾳ
 τεῖναι τὰ θεῶν ἀμάχητα βέλη,
 πρὶν ὄδ' ἐξήκοι χρόνος, ᾧ λέγεται
 χρῆναί σφ' ὑπὸ τῶνδε δαμῆναι.

200

ΧΟΡΟΣ

εὔστομ' ἔχε, παῖ.

στρ. γ'

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί τόδε;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

προυφάνη κτύπος,
 φωτὸς σύντροφος ὡς τειρομένου του,³
 ἢ που τῆδ' ἢ τῆδε τόπων.
 βάλλει βάλλει μ' ἐτύμα
 φθογγά του στίβον κατ' ἀνάγκαν
 ἔρποντος, οὐδέ με λάθει
 βαρεῖα τηλόθεν αὐδὰ τρυσάνωρ· διάσημα γὰρ
 θρηνεῖ.

¹ βαρεῖα δ' MSS., Mekler corr.

² πικρᾶς οἰμωγᾶς ὑπάκουται MSS., Blaydes corr.

³ του added by Porson.

PHILOCTETES

With the savage beasts doth dwell
Of spotted hide or shaggy fell ;
Pangs of hunger doth endure,
Racked with aches that know no cure.
Echo, too, with babbling tongue,
As she sits her hills among,
Iterates in undertones
His interminable groans.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Nothing strange I see in this.
By heaven ordained (if not amiss
I augur) comes this punishment;
By the unpitying Chryse¹ sent ;
And what he suffers now must be
Designed by some wise deity,
Lest too soon 'gainst Troy should go
The arrows of his wizard bow,
For when the fated hour has come
By them must Troy-town find its doom.

CHORUS

Hush, my son ! (Str. 3)

NEOPTOLEMUS

Wherefore ?

CHORUS (*back*)

Hist ! there comes a sound
As of one sore afflicted. Is it here
Or here ? 'Tis nearer now, I look around,
The footfall of a laboured tread grows clear ;
And now, though distant still, I catch a cry
Distinct, the voice of human agony.

¹ The nymph by whose guardian serpent Philoctetes was bitten. See l. 1326.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἔχε, τέκνον,

ἀντ. γ'

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
λέγ' ὅ τι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

φροντίδας νέας.

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ὡς οὐκ ἔξεδρος, ἀλλ' ἔντοπος ἀνὴρ,
οὐ μολπᾶν σύριγγος ἔχων,
ὡς ποιμὴν ἀγροβότας, ἀλλ' ἣ που πταίων ὑπ'
ἀνάγκας
βοᾷ τηλωπὸν ἰωάν,
ἣ ναὸς ἄξενον ἀνγάζων ὄρμον προβοᾷ τι γὰρ
δεινόν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἰὼ ξένοι,
τίνες ποτ' ἐς γῆν τήνδε κίκ ποίας πάτρας
κατέσχετ' οὐτ' εὖορμον οὐτ' οἰκουμένην;
ποίας ἂν ὑμῶς πατρίδος¹ ἢ γένους ποτὲ
τύχοιμ' ἂν εἰπών; σχῆμα μὲν γὰρ Ἑλλάδος
στολῆς ὑπάρχει προσφιλεστάτης ἐμοί·
φωνῆς δ' ἀκούσαι βούλομαι· καὶ μὴ μ' ὄκνω
δείσαντες ἐκπλαγῆτ' ἀπηγριωμένον,
ἀλλ' οἰκτίσαντες ἄνδρα δύστηνον, μόνου,
ἔρημον ὧδε κάφιλον κακούμενον,²
φωνήσατ', εἴπερ ὡς φίλοι προσήκετε.
ἀλλ' ἀνταμείψασθ'. οὐ γὰρ εἰκὸς οὐτ' ἐμὲ
ὑμῶν ἀμαρτεῖν τοῦτό γ' οὔθ' ὑμᾶς ἐμοῦ.

220

230

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ', ὦ ξέν', ἴσθι τοῦτο πρῶτον, οὐνεκα
Ἑλληνές ἐσμεν· τοῦτο γὰρ βούλει μαθεῖν.

¹ πάτρας ἂν ὑμᾶς MSS., Dindorf corr.² καλούμενον MSS., Brunck corr.

PHILOCTETES

CHORUS

Bethink thee, Prince.

(*Ant.* 3)

NEOPTOLEMUS

Of what?

CHORUS

Some fresh device;

For now the man approaches very near.

This is no shepherd-swain who homeward hies,

No melody of pastoral pipe I hear;

But as he stumbles 'mid the jagged stones

He rends the air with far resounding gongs,

Or as he eyes the sea without a sail,

He utters (hear his voice!) a hideous wail.

Enter PHILOCTETES.

PHILOCTETES

Sirs, who are ye and whence, who have landed here
Upon this harbourless and desolate shore?

What countrymen and of what race? If I

Might make conjecture by your garb and mien,

Ye are Greeks—a sight most welcome to my eyes;

But I would hear your voices. Shrink not back

In horror at my savage aspect; speak;

Pity a lonely, friendless, stricken man

Thus stranded; if indeed as friends ye come,

Make answer, I entreat ye; fair reply

I may expect from you, as you from me.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Well, I will answer first thy question, Sir;

Thou hast conjectured rightly, we are Greeks.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ φίλτατον φώνημα· φεῦ τὸ καὶ λαβεῖν
 πρόσφθεγμα τοιοῦδ' ἀνδρὸς ἐν χρόνῳ μακρῷ.
 τίς σ', ὦ τέκνον, προσέσχε, τίς προσήγαγεν
 χρεῖα; τίς ὀρμή; τίς ἀνέμων ὁ φίλτατος;
 γέγωνέ μοι πᾶν τοῦθ', ὅπως εἰδῶ τίς εἶ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἐγὼ γένος μὲν εἰμι τῆς περιρρύτου
 Σκύρον· πλέω δ' ἐς οἶκον· ἀνδῶμαι δὲ παῖς 240
 Ἀχιλλέως, Νεοπτόλεμος. οἴσθα δὴ τὸ πᾶν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ φίλτατον παῖ πατρός, ὦ φίλης χθονός,
 ὦ τοῦ γέροντος θρέμμα Λυκομήδους, τίμη
 στόλῳ προσέσχεσ τῆνδε γῆν πόθεν πλέων;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἐξ Ἰλίου τοι δὴ ταυῶν γε ναυστολῶ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

πῶς εἶπας; οὐ γὰρ δὴ σύ γ' ἦσθα ναυβάτης
 ἡμῖν κατ' ἀρχὴν τοῦ πρὸς Ἴλιον στόλου.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἦ γὰρ μετέσχεσ καὶ σὺ τοῦδε τοῦ πόνου;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ τέκνον, οὐ γὰρ οἴσθά μ' ὄντιν' εἰσορᾶς;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

πῶς γὰρ κάτοιδ' ὅν γ' εἶδον οὐδεπώποτε; 250

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐδ' ὄνομ' ἄρ' ἴ οὐδὲ τῶν ἐμῶν κακῶν κλέος
 ἦσθου ποτ' οὐδέν, οἷς ἐγὼ διωλλύμην;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὡς μηδὲν εἰδὸτ' ἴσθι μ' ὧν ἀνιστορεῖς.

¹ ἔρ^ο added by Erfurdt.

PHILOCTETES

PHILOCTETES

O welcome utterance ! Ah how good it is
To hear those accents, long unheard, from thee.
What quest, my son, what venture brought thee here,
What breeze compelled thy canvas ? Happy breeze !
Speak, tell me all, that I may know my friend.

NEOPTOLEMUS

My home's the wave-lapped Scyros, and I sail
Homewards ; my name is Neoptolemus,
My sire Achilles. Now thou knowest all.

PHILOCTETES

Son of a sire most dear, and land most dear,
Old Lycomedes' foster-child, what quest
Has brought thee hither, from what port didst sail ?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Hither I sailed direct from Ilium.

PHILOCTETES

From Ilium ? Surely thou wast not on board
When first our expedition sailed for Troy.

NEOPTOLEMUS

What, wert thou partner in that enterprise ?

PHILOCTETES

Dost thou not know with whom thou speak'st, my
son ?

NEOPTOLEMUS

How should I know a man ne'er seen before ?

PHILOCTETES

Know'st thou not e'en my name ? hast never heard
How I was wasting inch by inch away ?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Of all thou questionest I nothing know.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ πόλλ' ἐγὼ μοχθηρός, ὦ πικρὸς θεοῖς,
 οὐ μὴδὲ κληδῶν ὧδ' ἔχοντας οἴκαδε
 μῆδ' Ἑλλάδος γῆς μῆδαμὸυ διήλθέ που.
 ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν ἐκβαλόντες ἀνοσίως ἐμὲ
 γελῶσι σίγ' ἔχοντες, ἡ δ' ἐμῆ νόσος
 αἰὲ τέθηλε κάπῃ μείζον ἔρχεται.
 ὦ τέκνον, ὦ παῖ πατρός ἐξ' Ἀχιλλέως,
 260 ὃδ' εἴμ' ἐγὼ σοι κείνος, ὃν κλυεῖς ἴσως
 τῶν Ἡρακλείων ὄντα δεσπότην ὄπλων,
 ὃ τοῦ Ποϊάντος παῖς Φιλοκτῆτης, ὃν οἱ
 δισσοὶ στρατηγοὶ χῶν Κεφαλλήνων ἀναξ
 ἔρριψαν αἰσχροῦς ὧδ' ἔρημον, ἀγρία
 νόσῳ καταφθίνοντα, τῆς ἀνδροφθόρου
 πληγέντ' ἐχίδνης ἀγρίῳ χαράγματι
 ξυν ἧ μ' ἐκείνοι, παῖ, προθέντες ἐνθάδε
 ὄχοντ' ἔρημον, ἠνίκ' ἐκ τῆς ποντίας
 270 Χρύσης κατέσχον δεῦρο ναυβάτη στόλῳ.
 τότε ἄσμενοί μ' ὡς εἶδον ἐκ πολλοῦ σάλου
 εὐδοντ' ἐπ' ἀκτῆς ἐν κατηρεφεῖ πέτρα,
 λιπόντες ὄχονθ', οἶα φωτὶ δυσμόρῳ
 ῥάκη προθέντες βαιὰ καὶ τι καὶ βορᾶς
 ἐπωφέλημα σμικρόν, οἳ' αὐτοῖς τύχοι.
 σὺ δὴ, τέκνον, ποῖαν μ' ἀνάστασιν δοκεῖς
 αὐτῶν βεβώτων ἐξ ὑπνου στῆναι τότε;
 ποῖ' ἐκδακρῦσαι, ποῖ' ἀποιμῶξαι κακά;
 ὀρώντα μὲν ναῦς, ἅς ἔχων ἐναυστόλουν,
 280 πάσας βεβώσας, ἄνδρα δ' οὐδέν' ἐντοπον,
 νύχ' ὅστις ἀρκέσειεν οὐδ' ὅστις νόσου
 κάμνοντι συλλάβοιτο· πάντα δὲ σκοπῶν
 ἠῦρισκον οὐδέν' πλὴν ἀνιάσθαι παρόν,
 τούτου δὲ πολλὴν εὐμάρειαν, ὦ τέκνον.

260

270

280

PHILOCTETES

PHILOCTETES

O what a heaven-forsaken wretch am I,
Of whose disastrous plight no rumour yet
Hath reached my home or any Grecian land!
But they, the godless knaves who cast me forth,
Laugh and are mute. My malady the while
Rankles, and daily grows from bad to worse.
O boy, O son sprung from Achilles' loins,
I am that man, of whom thou mayst have heard,
Heritor of the bow of Heracles,
The son of Poeas, Philoctetes, whom
The Atridae and the Cephallenian prince
Cast forth thus shamelessly, a derelict,
Plague-stricken, wasting slowly, marked for death
By a man-slaying serpent's venomous fangs.
Thus plagued, my son, they left me here, what time
Their fleet from sea-girt Chryse touched this shore.
Tired with long tossing I had fallen asleep
Beneath a rock upon the beach; they laughed
To see me witless, laughed and sailed away,
Flinging me, as they went, some cast-off rags,
A beggar's alms, and scraps of food. God grant
That they may some day come to fare like me!
Picture, my son, when I awoke and found
All gone, what waking then was mine; what tears,
What lamentations, when I saw the ships
In which I sailed all vanished; not a soul
To share my solitude or tend my wound.
All ways I gazed and nothing found but pain,
Pain, and of pain, God wot, enow, my son.

ὁ μὲν χρόνος δὴ διὰ χρόνου προὔβαινέ μοι,
 κἀδει τι βαιᾶ τῆδ' ὑπὸ στέγῃ μόνου
 διακονεῖσθαι. γαστρὶ μὲν τὰ σύμφορα
 τόξου τόδ' ἐξηύρισκε, τὰς ὑποπτέρους
 βάλλον πελείας· πρὸς δὲ τοῦθ', ὃ μοι βάλοι
 νευροσπαδῆς ἄτρακτος, αὐτὸς ἂν τάλας 290
 εἰλυόμην, δύστηνον ἐξέλκων πόδα,
 πρὸς τοῦτ' ἂν εἴ τ' ἔδει τι καὶ ποτὸν λαβεῖν,
 καὶ που πάγου χυθέντος, οἷα χεῖματι,
 ξύλον τι θραῦσαι, ταῦτ' ἂν ἐξέρπων τάλας
 ἐμηχανώμην· εἶτα πῦρ ἂν οὐ παρῆν,
 ἀλλ' ἐν πέτροισι πέτρον ἐκτρίβων μόλις
 ἔφην' ἄφαντον φῶς, ὃ καὶ σῶζει μ' αἰεὶ.
 οἰκουμένη γὰρ οὖν στέγῃ πυρὸς μετὰ
 πάντ' ἐκπορίζει πλὴν τὸ μὴ νοσεῖν ἐμέ,
 φέρ', ὧ τέκνον, νῦν καὶ τὸ τῆς νήσου μάθης. 300
 ταύτη πελάζει ναυβάτης οὐδεὶς ἐκῶν
 οὐ γὰρ τις ὄρμος ἔστιν οὐδ' ὅποι πλέων
 ἐξεμπολήσει κέρδος ἢ ξενώσεται.
 οὐκ ἐνθάδ' οἱ πλοῖ τοῖσι σώφροσιν βροτῶν.
 τάχ' οὖν τις ἄκων ἔσχε· πολλὰ γὰρ τάδε
 ἐν τῷ μακρῷ γένοιτ' ἂν ἀνθρώπων χρόνον·
 οὔτοί μ', ὅταν μὀλωσιν, ὧ τέκνον, λόγοις
 ἔλεοῦσι μὲν, καὶ πού τι καὶ βορᾶς μέρος
 προσέδοσαν οἰκτίραντες ἢ τινα στολήν·
 ἐκεῖνο δ' οὐδεὶς, ἠνίκ' ἂν μνησθῶ, θέλει, 310
 σῶσαι μ' ἐς οἶκους, ἀλλ' ἀπόλλυμαι τάλας
 ἔτος τόδ' ἤδη δέκατον ἐν λιμῷ τε καὶ
 κακοῖσι βόσκων τὴν ἀδηφάγον νόσον.
 τοιαῦτ' Ἀτρεΐδαί μ' ἢ τ' Ὀδυσσέως βία,
 ὧ παῖ, δεδράκασ', οἳ Ὀλύμπιοι θεοὶ
 δοῖέν ποτ' αὐτοῖς ἀντίποιν' ἐμοῦ παθεῖν.

PHILOCTETES

So passed the crawling hours, day upon day,
Year after year. I shifted for myself
Beneath this homeless, solitary roof.
To sate my hunger with this bow I shot
The winged doves and ever when my bolt
Sped from the taut string to the mark, I crawled
Thither my lamed foot trailing painfully.
And if of water I had need, or when
In winter time the ground was hoar with frost,
And firewood must be fetched, forth would I creep
Somewise to compass this. I had no fire,
But from the hard rock striking flint on flint
Brought forth the hidden spark that keeps me alive.
For, look ye, a bare roof and fire withal
Serve all my needs, save healing of my sore.

Now let me tell thee of this isle, my son.
No mariner sails hither of his will,
For anchorage is none, nor mart whereat
He may find lodging and exchange his wares
For profit; prudent men sail not this way.
Yet a stray visitor—such accidents
Must happen in long years—puts in perforce.
From such, my son, when they do come, I get
Kind words of pity and perchance an alms
Of food or raiment, but at the first hint
Of passage home, they one and all refuse.
So here for ten long years I linger on,
Consumed with hunger, dying inch by inch;
Only the worm that gnaws me dieth not.
To the Atridae and Odysseus, boy,
I owe this misery. God in heaven requite
In kind the wrongs that they have done to me!

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἔοικα καὶ γὰρ τοῖς ἀφιγμένοις ἴσα
ξένους ἐποικτίρειν σε, Ποίαντος τέκνον.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ τὸς τοῖσδε μάρτυς ἐν λόγοις,
ὡς εἶσ' ἀληθεῖς οἶδα, συντυχῶν κακῶν
ἀνδρῶν Ἀτρειδῶν τῆς τ' Ὀδυσσέως βίας.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἦ γὰρ τι καὶ σὺ τοῖς πανωλέθροις ἔχεις
ἐγκλημ' Ἀτρεΐδαις, ὥστε θυμοῦσθαι παθῶν;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

θυμὸν γένοιτο χειρὶ πληρῶσαι ποτε,
ἴν' αἱ Μυκῆναι γνοίεν ἢ Σπάρτη θ' ὅτι
χῆ Σκύρος ἀνδρῶν ἀλκίμων μήτηρ ἔφθ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

εὐ γ', ὦ τέκνον· τίνος γὰρ ὧδε τὸν μέγαν
χόλον κατ' αὐτῶν ἐγκαλῶν ἐλήλυθας;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὦ παῖ Ποίαντος, ἐξερῶ, μόλις δ' ἐρῶ,
ἄγωγ' ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἐξελωβήθην μολῶν.
ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἔσχε μοῖρ' Ἀχιλλῆα θανεῖν,

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οἴμοι· φράσῃς μοι μὴ πέρα, πρὶν ἂν μάθω
πρῶτον τὸδ', ἢ τέθνηχ' ὁ Πηλέως γόνος;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τέθνηκεν, ἀνδρὸς οὐδενός, θεοῦ δ' ὑπο,
τοξευτός, ὡς λέγουσιν, ἐκ Φοῖβου δαμείς.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀλλ' εὐγενῆς μὲν ὁ κτανῶν τε χῶ θανῶν·
ἀμηχανῶ δὲ πότερον, ὦ τέκνον, τὸ σὸν
πάθῃμ' ἐλέγχω πρῶτον ἢ κείνον στένω.

PHILOCTETES

CHORUS

O son of Poëas, I too pity thee
No less methinks than did those visitors.

NEOPTOLEMUS

And I myself am witness that thy tale
Is true; for I have proved the villainy
Of the Atridae, and Odysseus too.

PHILOCTETES

What have those cursed Atridae wrongèd *thee*?
Art thou too stirred to anger by some wrong?

NEOPTOLEMUS

O that my wrath might vent itself in deeds!
Mycenæ then and Sparta both would learn
That Scyros too is mother of brave sons.

PHILOCTETES

Well said, my son! But I would know the grounds
Of thy resentment, what the charge thou bring'st,
Why thou art here.

NEOPTOLEMUS

I scarce know how, O son
Of Poëas, yet I'll tell the tale of wrongs
I suffered on my coming at their hands.
When by the doom of Fate Achilles died—

PHILOCTETES

Woe's me! No more; first tell me, is he dead,
The son of Peleus?

NEOPTOLEMUS

He is dead indeed,
Slain by no man but by a god; a shaft
Pierced him; by Phoëbus sped, so runs the tale.

PHILOCTETES

Noble alike the slayer and the slain!
I know not whether first, my son, to make
Inquiry of thy woes or weep for him.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οἶμαι μὲν ἀρκεῖν σοί γε καὶ τὰ σ', ὦ τάλας,
ἀλγήμαθ', ὥστε μὴ τὰ τῶν πέλας στένειν.

340

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὀρθῶς ἔλεξας· τοιγαροῦν τὸ σὸν φράσον
αὐθις πάλιν μοι πρᾶγμ', ὅτ' σ' ἐνύβρισαν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἤλθόν με νηὶ ποικιλοστόλῳ μέτα
δῖός τ' Ὀδυσσεὺς χῶ τροφεὺς τοῦμοῦ πατρός,
λέγοντες, εἴτ' ἀληθὲς εἴτ' ἄρ' οὖν μάτην,
ὡς οὐ θέμις γίγνοιτ', ἐπεὶ κατέφθιτο
πατὴρ ἐμός, τὰ πέργαμ' ἄλλον ἢ μ' ἐλεῖν.
ταῦτ', ὦ ξέν', οὕτως ἐνέποντες οὐ πολὺν
χρόνον μ' ἐπέσχον μὴ με ναυστολεῖν ταχύ,
μάλιστα μὲν δὴ τοῦ θανόντος ἡμέρῳ,
ὅπως ἴδοιμ' ἄθαπτον οὐ γὰρ εἰδόμην
ἔπειτα μέντοι χῶ λόγος καλὸς προσῆν,
εἰ τὰπὶ Τροίᾳ πέργαμ' αἰρήσοιμ' ἰών.
ἦν δ' ἡμῶρ ἤδη δεύτερον πλέοντί μοι,
κἀγὼ πικρὸν Σίγειον οὐρίῳ πλάτῃ
κατηγόμην· καὶ μ' εὐθύς ἐν κύκλῳ στρατὸς
ἐκβάντα πᾶς ἠσπάζετ', ὁμνύντες βλέπειν
τὸν οὐκέτ' ὄντα ζῶντ' Ἀχιλλέα πάλιν.
κεῖνος μὲν οὖν ἔκειτ'· ἐγὼ δ' ὁ δῦσμορος
ἐπεὶ δάκρυσα κείνον, οὐ μοκρῶ χρόνῳ
ἐλθὼν Ἀτρεΐδας πρὸς φίλους, ὡς εἰκὸς ἦν,
τὰ θ' ὄπλ' ἀπήτουν τοῦ πατρὸς τὰ τ' ἄλλ' ὅσ' ἦν.
οἱ δ' εἶπον, οἶμοι, τλημονέστατον λόγον
ὦ σπέρμ' Ἀχιλλέως, τᾶλλα μὲν πάρεστί σοι
πατρῶ' ἐλέσθαι, τῶν δ' ὄπλων κείνων ἀνὴρ
ἄλλος κρατύνει νῦν, ὁ Λαέρτου γόνος.

350

360

PHILOCTETES

NEOPTOLEMUS

Thou hast enough of thine own pains, poor soul,
Without lamenting for another's woe.

PHILOCTETES

True, true indeed! So tell me once again
From the beginning how they outraged thee.

NEOPTOLEMUS

To fetch me in a gay decked galley came
Odysseus and my father's foster-sire.¹
They told me (if the tale was true or feigned
I know not) that, my father having fallen,
No hand but mine could take the Citadel.
Thus urged I did not dally or delay.
Forthwith I sailed. Chiefly I longed to see
My father whom in life I had not seen,
Before his burial, and in part, I own,
The promise fair that I should take Troy-town
Flattered my pride. Well, on the second day,
With oars and breeze to speed us, we had reached
Sigeum (hateful name) and when I landed
The whole host pressed to greet me, and they swore
They saw Achilles come to life again.
There lay my sire in death, and I, poor fool,
When I had mourned for him a while, betook me
To the Atridae as my natural friends,
Claiming my sire's arms and what else was his.
O 'twas a sorry answer that they made:
"Child of Achilles, all that was thy sire's
Is thine and welcome—all except his arms;
These to Laertes' son have been assigned."

¹ Phoenix.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

κάγω δακρύσας εὐθὺς ἐξανίσταμαι
 ὀργῇ βαρεία, καὶ καταλήσας λέγω
 ὦ σχέτλι, ἢ τολμήσατ' ἀντ' ἐμοῦ τι
 δοῦναι τὰ τεύχη τάμα, πρὶν μαθεῖν ἐμοῦ; 370
 ὁ δ' εἶπ' Ὀδυσσεύς, πλησίον γὰρ ὢν κυρεῖ,
 ναί, παῖ, δεδώκασ' ἐνδίκως οὔτοι τάδε·
 ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτ' ἔσωσα κάκεινον παρών.
 κάγω χολωθείς εὐθὺς ἤρασσον κακοῖς
 τοῖς πᾶσι, οὐδὲν ἐνδεὲς ποιούμενος,
 εἰ τάμα κείνος ὄπλ' ἀφαιρήσοιτό με.
 ὁ δ' ἐνθάδ' ἤκων, καίπερ οὐ δύσοργος ὢν,
 δηχθεὶς πρὸς ἀξήκουσεν ὠδ' ἠμείψατο·
 οὐκ ἦσθ' ἴν' ἡμεῖς, ἀλλ' ὑπήσθ' ἴν' οὐ σ' ἔδει· 380
 καὶ ταῦτ', ἐπειδὴ καὶ λέγεις θραυστομῶν,
 οὐ· μήποτ' ἐς τὴν Σκύρου ἐκπλεύσης ἔχων.
 τοιαῦτ' ἀκούσας κάξονειδισθεὶς κακὰ
 πλέω πρὸς οἴκους, τῶν ἐμῶν τητῶμενος
 πρὸς τοῦ κακίστου κάκ κακῶν Ὀδυσσέως.
 κούκ αἰτιῶμαι κείνον ὡς τοὺς ἐν τέλει·
 πόλις γὰρ ἐστὶ πᾶσα τῶν ἡγουμένων
 στρατός τε σύμπας· οἱ δ' ἀκοσμοῦντες βροτῶν
 διδασκάλων λόγοισι γίνονται κακοί.
 λόγος λέλεκται πᾶς· ὁ δ' Ἀτρεΐδας στυγῶν 390
 ἐμοί θ' ὁμοίως καὶ θεοῖς εἴη φίλος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὀρεστέρα παμβῶτι Γᾶ, μᾶτερ αὐτοῦ Διός, στρ.
 ἅ τὸν μέγαν Πακτωλὸν εὔχρυσον νέμεις,
 σὲ κάκει, μᾶτερ πότνι, ἐπηυδώμαν,

PHILOCTETES

I wept, I started to my feet in wrath,
 And bitterly I spake, "O tyrannous men,
 How dare ye give these arms, my own by right,
 My leave unasked, to any man but me?"
 Then said Odysseus who was standing by,
 "Yes, boy, and rightly are they given to me,
 Who rescued both their master and his arms."¹
 I boiled with rage, I hurled at him abuse
 The bitterest tongue could frame, I cursed the man
 Who would defraud me of my rightful arms.
 He, though not choleric, challenged thus direct,
 Stung to the quick by my retort, replied:
 "Thou wast not with us, a malingerer thou!
 Take this for answer to thy blustering boasts:
 To Scyros with these arms thou ne'er shalt sail."
 Thus flouted and abused I left the host,
 And now am sailing homewards, robbed by him,
 Odysseus, the base villain, basely born.
 Yet is he less to blame than those who rule;
 For like a commonwealth each armed host
 Perforce is subject to authority,
 And all the lawless doings in the world
 Spring from ill teaching. All my tale is told.
 But whoso hates the Atridae, as do I,
 May he find Heaven, no less than me, his friend!

CHORUS

O mother Earth, enthronèd on the hills, (Str.)
 Mother of Zeus himself, who feedest all;
 From thee Pactolus draws his brimming rills,
 His golden sands; Mother, to thee I call,

¹ According to the tradition that Ovid followed (*Met.* 13. 284) Odysseus rescued the body and arms of Achilles from the fray.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὄτ' ἐς τόνδ' Ἀτρείδαν ὕβρις πᾶσ' ἐχώρει,
 ὄτε τὰ πάτρια τεύχεα παρεδίδοσαν,
 ἰὼ μάκαιρα ταυροκτόνων
 λεόντων ἔφεδρε, τῷ Λαρτίου
 σέβας ὑπέρτατον.

400

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἔχοντες, ὡς ἔοικε, σύμβολον σαφὲς
 λύπης πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ὧ ξένοι, πεπλεύκατε,
 καί μοι προσάδεθ' ὥστε γιγνώσκειν ὅτι
 ταῦτ' ἐξ Ἀτρείδων ἔργα καὶ Ἔδουσσέως.
 ἔξοιδα γάρ νιν παντὸς ἀν λόγου κακοῦ
 γλώσση θιγόντα καὶ πανουργίας, ἀφ' ἧς
 μηδὲν δίκαιον ἐς τέλος μέλλοι ποεῖν.
 ἀλλ' οὐ τι τοῦτο θαυμ' ἔμοιγ', ἀλλ' εἰ παρὼν 410
 Αἴας ὁ μείζων ταῦθ' ὀρώων ἠνείχετο.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ ἦν ἔτι ζῶν, ὦ ξέν'. οὐ γὰρ ἄν ποτε
 ζῶντός γ' ἐκείνου ταῦτ' ἐσυλήθην ἐγώ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

πῶς εἶπας; ἀλλ' ἡ χούτος οἴχεται θανών;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὡς μηκέτ' ὄντα κείνον ἐν φάει νόει.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οἴμοι τάλας. ἀλλ' οὐχ ὁ Τυδέως γόνος
 οὐδ' οὐμπολητὸς Σισύφου Λαερτίῳ,
 οὐ μὴ θάνωσι. τούσδε γὰρ μὴ ζῆν ἔδει.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐ δῆτ'. ἐπίστω τοῦτό γ'. ἀλλὰ καὶ μέγα
 θάλλοντές εἰσι νῦν ἐν Ἀργείων στρατῷ.

420

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

τί δ'; οὐ παλαιὸς¹ κάγαθὸς φίλος τ' ἐμός,

¹ τί δ' ὦ παλαιός (or δε π.) MSS., Meineke corr.

PHILOCTETES

As once I called when, flushed with upstart pride,
The fierce Atridae 'gainst my master raged,
(O lady who on yokèd lions doth ride,
Their bloody ravening by thee assuaged,)
What time the tyrants to Laertes' son
The guerdon gave, those arms his sire had won.

PHILOCTETES

Good sirs, ye bring me as a talisman,
A common grief; a plaint attuned to mine.
Full well I recognise in this your tale
The Atridae and Odysseus. He, I warrant,
Would have a hand and lend his tongue to abet
Any conspiracy, any deep-laid plot,
If he could compass some dishonest end.
This is not wonderful; but was indeed
The greater Ajax by, to see and brook it?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Ajax, my friend, was dead; had he been living
They would not thus have robbed me and despoiled.

PHILOCTETES

What say'st thou, boy? is he too dead and gone?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Yea he hath left the light.

PHILOCTETES

Alas, alas!

But not the son of Tydeus, nor the son
Named of Laertes, bred of Sisyphus;
They die not who should never have been born.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Not they indeed, I warrant; they live on,
And in the Argive host are mighty men.

PHILOCTETES

And what of him, my good old friend and true,

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

Νέστωρ ὁ Πύλιος, ἔστιν; αὐτος γὰρ τά γε
κείνων κάκ' ἐξήρκε, βουλευὼν σοφά.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

κείνός γε πρᾶσσει νῦν κακῶς, ἐπεὶ θανὼν
'Αντίλοχος αὐτῷ φροῦδος, ὅς παρήν, γόνος.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

αἶμοι, δὴ αὐτῷδ' ἄνδρ' ἔλεξας,¹ οἷν ἐγὼ
ἦκιστ' ἂν ἠθέλησ' ὀλωλότοιμ κλύειν.
φεῦ φεῦ· τί δῆτα δεῖ σκοπεῖν, ὅθ' οἶδε μὲν
τεθνᾶσ', Ὀδυσσεὺς δ' ἔστιν αὐτὸς κἀνταῦθ' ἵνα
χρῆν ἀντὶ τούτων αὐτὸν αὐδάσθαι νεκρὸν;

430

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

σοφὸς παλαιστῆς κείνος· ἀλλὰ χαί σοφαί
γνώμαι, Φιλοκτῆτ', ἐμποδίζονται θαμά.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

φέρ' εἰπέ πρὸς θεῶν, ποῦ γὰρ ἦν ἐνταῦθά σοι
Πάτροκλος, ὃς σοῦ πατὴρ ἦν τὰ φίλτατα;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

χοῦτος τεθνηκὼς ἦν· λόγῳ δέ σ' ἐν βραχεῖ
τούτ' ἐκδιδάξω· πόλεμος οὐδέν' ἄνδρ' ἐκῶν
αἰρεῖ πονηρὸν, ἀλλὰ τοὺς χρηστοὺς αἰεῖ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ξυμμαρτυρῶ σοι· καὶ κατ' αὐτὸ τοῦτό γε
ἀναξίου μὲν φωτὸς ἐξερῆσομαι,
γλώσση δὲ δεινοῦ καὶ σοφοῦ, τί νῦν κυρεῖ.

440

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ποίου δὲ τούτου πλήν γ' Ὀδυσσεὺς ἐρεῖς;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐ τοῦτον εἶπον, ἀλλὰ Θερσίτης τις ἦν,
ὃς οὐκ ἂν εἴλετ' εἰς ἀπαξ εἰπεῖν, ὅπου
μηδεὶς ἐφῆ· τοῦτον οἶσθ' εἰ ζῶν κυρεῖ;

¹ αὐτως δειν' ἔλεξας MSS., Jebb corr.

PHILOCTETES

The Pylian Nestor, lives he not? for he
Oft by his wisdom checked their ill designs.

NEOPTOLEMUS

He is not what he once was, since he lost
His best belovèd son, Antilochus.

PHILOCTETES

Alas! thou tell'st me of a double loss,
The two men whom of all I least could spare.
Ah me! What hope is there when two such men
Are taken and Odysseus lives, whose death
Instead of theirs thou hadst by rights announced?

NEOPTOLEMUS

A cunning gamester, but the cunningest,
O Philoctetes, are full often thrown.

PHILOCTETES

But tell me, prithee, where was he the while,
Patroclus, once thy father's bosom friend?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Dead like the rest, for this in sooth is true:
War never slays an evil man by choice,
But still the good.

PHILOCTETES

In that I'll bear thee out.
By the same token, I would ask of one,
A worthless wight, but shrewd and glib of tongue.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Thou mean'st Odysseus, surely?

PHILOCTETES

Not of him
I asked, but of Thersites, one whose tongue
Was ever wagging most when wanted least,
An empty babbler. Know'st thou if he lives?

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ εἶδον αὐτόν, ἤσθόμην δ' ἔτ' ὄντα νιν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἔμελλ' ἐπεὶ οὐδέν πω κακόν γ' ἀπώλετο,
 ἀλλ' εὖ περιστέλλουσιν αὐτὰ δαίμονες,
 καὶ πῶς τὰ μὲν πανούργα καὶ παλιυτριβῆ
 χαίρουσ' ἀναστρέφοντες ἐξ Ἰδίου, τὰ δὲ
 δίκαια καὶ τὰ χρηστ' ἀποστέλλουσ' αἰεὶ.
 ποῦ χρῆ τίθεσθαι ταῦτα, ποῦ δ' αἰνεῖν, ὅταν
 τὰ θεῖ' ἐπαινῶν τοὺς θεοὺς εὖρω κακοὺς;

450

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἐγὼ μὲν, ὦ γένεθλον Οἰταίου πατρός,
 τὸ λοιπὸν ἤδη τηλόθεν τό τ' Ἴλιον
 καὶ τοὺς Ἀτρείδας εἰσορῶν φυλάξομαι
 ὅπου δ' ὁ χείρων τὰγαθοῦ μείζον σθένει
 κάποφθίνει τὰ χρηστὰ χῶ δειλὸς κρατεῖ,
 τούτους ἐγὼ τοὺς ἄνδρας οὐ στέρξω ποτέ
 ἀλλ' ἢ πετραία Σκύρος ἐξαρκοῦσά μοι
 ἔσται τὸ λοιπόν, ὥστε τέρπεσθαι δόμῳ.
 νῦν δ' εἶμι πρὸς ναῦν καὶ σὺ, Ποίαντος τέκνον,
 χαῖρ' ὡς μέγιστα, χαῖρε' καὶ σε δαίμονες
 νόσου μεταστήσειαν, ὡς αὐτὸς θέλεις.
 ἡμεῖς δ' ἴωμεν, ὡς ὀπηνικ' ἂν θεὸς
 πλοῦν ἡμῖν εἴκη, τηνικαῦθ' ὀρμώμεθα.

460

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἤδη, τέκνον, στέλλεσθε;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

καιρὸς γὰρ καλεῖ
 πλοῦν μὴ ἔξ ἀπόπτου μᾶλλον ἢ ἰγγύθεν σκοπεῖν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

πρὸς νῦν σε πατὴρ πρὸς τε μητρός, ὦ τέκνον,
 πρὸς τ' εἰ τί σοι κατ' οἶκόν ἐστι προσφιλές,

PHILOCTETES

NEOPTOLEMUS

I saw him not, but heard he was alive.

PHILOCTETES

I thought as much ; for evil never dies,
Fostered too well by gods who take delight,
Methinks, to turn back from the gates of hell
All irredeemable rascality,
But speed the righteous on their downward way.
What should I deem of this, how justify
The ways of Heaven, finding Heaven unjust ?

NEOPTOLEMUS

For my part, son of an Oetean sire,
I shall take heed henceforward to behold
Troy and the two Atridae from afar.
Where villainy to goodness is preferred,
And virtue withers, and the base hold sway,
Such company I never will frequent.
Enough for me henceforth my native rocks,
My island home in Scyros ; there I'll bide.
Now to the ships. Farewell, a fond farewell,
O son of Poëas ; may the gods fulfil
Thy heart's desire and heal thee of thy wound !
Now we must leave thee and prepare to sail
Whene'er the gods shall send a favouring breeze.

PHILOCTETES

So soon, my son, departing ?

NEOPTOLEMUS

'Tis high time,
Not here, but from the strand to watch the tide.

PHILOCTETES

Oh ! in thy father's, in thy mother's name,
By all the sanctities of home, my son,

ἰκέτης ἰκνοῦμαι, μὴ λήψης μ' οὕτω μόνου,
 ἔρημον ἐν κακοῖσι τοῖσδ' οἷοις ὄρας
 ὅσοισί τ' ἐξήκουσας ἐνναίοντά με·
 ἀλλ' ἐν παρέργῳ θεοῦ με. δυσχέρεια μὲν,
 ἔξοιδα, πολλή τούδε τοῦ φορήματος·
 ὁμῶς δὲ τλήθι· τοῖσι γενναίοισί τοι
 τό τ' αἰσχρὸν ἐχθρὸν καὶ τὸ χρηστὸν εὐκλεές.
 σοὶ δ' ἐκλιπόντι τοῦτ' ὄνειδος οὐ καλόν,
 δράσαντι δ', ὦ παῖ, πλείστον εὐκλείας γέρας,
 εἰάν μὲν γὰρ ζῶν πρὸς Οὐταίαν χθόνα.
 ἴθ' ἡμέρας τοι μόχθος οὐχ ὅλης μίας.
 480 τὸλμησον. ἐμβαλοῦ μ' ὄπη θέλεις ἄγων,
 εἰς ἀντλίαν, εἰς πρῶραν, εἰς πρύμνην, ὅποι
 ἦκιστα μέλλω τοὺς ξυνόντας ἀλγυνεῖν.
 νεῦσον, πρὸς αὐτοῦ Ζηνὸς ἱκεσίον, τέκνον,
 πείσθητι· προσπίτνω σε γόνασι, καίπερ ὦν
 ἀκρίτωρ ὁ τλήμων, χωλός. ἀλλὰ μὴ μ' ἀφῆς
 ἔρημον οὕτω χωρὶς ἀνθρώπων στίβου,
 ἀλλ' ἢ πρὸς οἶκον τὸν σὸν ἔκσωσόν μ' ἄγων
 ἢ πρὸς τὰ Χαλκῳδόντος Εὐβοίας σταθμά·
 490 κακέῖθεν οὐ μοι μακρὸς εἰς Οἴτην στόλος
 Τραχινίαν τε δεράδα¹ καὶ τὸν εὐροῦ
 Σπερχεῖον ἔσται πατρί μ' ὡς δείξῃς φίλῳ,
 ὃν δὴ παλαιὸν ἐξ ὄτου δέδοικ' ἐγὼ
 μὴ μοι βεβήκη. πολλὰ γὰρ τοῖς ἰγμένοις
 ἔστελλον αὐτὸν ἱκεσίους πέμπων λιτάς,
 αὐτόστολον πέμψαντά μ' ἐκσῶσαι δόμους.
 ἀλλ' ἢ τέθνηκεν ἢ τὰ τῶν διακόνων,
 ὡς εἰκός, οἶμαι, τοῦμόν ἐν σμικρῷ μέρος
 ποιούμενοι τὸν οἶκαδ' ἠπειγου στόλον.
 νῦν δ', εἰς σὲ γὰρ πομπὸν τε καὶ τὸν ἄγγελον

¹ Δεράδα MSS., Toup corr. Jebb reads Δεράδ' ἢδ' ἐξ εὐροῦ.

PHILOCTETES

Leave me not, I adjure thee, here alone,
Abandoned to such ills as thou hast seen
And others worse whereof thou hast been told.
Think of me as a stowaway! well I know
The irksomeness of such a passenger.
Bear it! to true nobility of soul
All shame is shameful, honour honourable.
And it would smirch thine honour to decline
This task, my son; to do it, bring thee fame
And glory, if ye carry me alive
To Oeta. Come, 'tis but a day's annoy.
Take heart of courage; stow me where thou wilt—
The hold, the bows, the stern, no matter where—
Wherever I shall least offend my mates.
By Zeus, the god of suppliants, O consent,
O hearken! at thy knees I fall, albeit
A cripple maimed and helpless. Leave me not
An outcast in a land where no man dwells;
But either take me safe to thine own home,
Or to Euboea and Chalcodon's realm,
Whence I may cross to Oeta ('tis not far)
And the Trachinean passes and the stream
Of broad Spercheius, and behold once more
My father. Ah! these weary years I've feared
He must be dead, for messages full oft
I sent by those who passed my way, entreating
That he would fetch me in his own ship home
But either he is dead, or, like enough,
My envoys ('tis the way of envoys) recked
Little of my concerns and hastened home.
But now to thee, my messenger at once

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἦκω, σὺ σῶσον, σὺ μ' ἐλέησον, εἰσορῶν
ὡς πάντα δεινὰ κάπικινδύνως βροτοῖς
κέϊται παθεῖν μὲν εὖ, παθεῖν δὲ θάτερα.
χρῆ δ' ἐκτὸς ὄντα πημάτων τὰ δειν' ὄραν,
χῶταν τις εὖ ζῆ, τηλικαῦτα τὸν βίον
σκοπεῖν μάλιστα, μὴ διαφθαρεῖς λάθῃ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀντ.

οἴκιρ', ἀναξ· πολλῶν ἔλεξεν δυσοίστων πόνων
ἄθλ', οἷα μηδεὶς τῶν ἐμῶν τύχοι φίλων.
εἰ δὲ πικρούς, ἀναξ, ἔχθεις Ἀτρείδας,
ἐγὼ μὲν, τὸ κείνων κακὸν τῷδε κέρδος
μετατιθέμενος, ἔνθαπερ ἐπιμέμονεν,
ἐπ' εὐστόλου ταχείας νεῶς
πορεύσαιμ' ἂν ἐς δόμους, τὰν θεῶν
νέμεσιν ἐκφυγῶν.

510

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὄρα σὺ μὴ νῦν μὲν τις εὐχερῆς παρήης,
ὅταν δὲ πλησθῆς τῆς νόσου ξυνουσία,
τότ' οὐκέθ' αὐτὸς τοῖς λόγοις τούτοις φανῆς.

520

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἦκιστα· τοῦτ' οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅπως ποτ' εἰς ἐμέ
τοῦνειδος ἔξεις ἐνδίκως ὄνειδίσαι.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἄλλ' αἰσχρὰ μέντοι σοῦ γέ μ' ἐνδεέστερον
ξένῳ φανῆναι πρὸς τὸ καίριον πονεῖν.
ἄλλ' εἰ δοκεῖ, πλέωμεν, ὀρμάσθω ταχύς·
χῆ ναὺς γὰρ ἄξει κούκ ἀπαρνηθήσεται.
μόνον θεοὶ σφύζοιεν ἔκ τε τῆσδε γῆς
ἡμᾶς ὅποι τ' ἐνθένδε βουλοίμεσθα πλεῖν.

PHILOCTETES

And saviour, I appeal ; save, pity me,
Seeing upon how slippery a place
Fortune for mortals and misfortune stand.
Therefore the man that lives at ease should look
For rocks ahead, and when he prospers most
Watch lest he suffer shipwreck unawares.

CHORUS

Pity, my chief! (Ant.)
Pity a tale of agonizing grief!
Pray God no friend
Of mine may ever come to such an end!
O pity him!
I know thou hatest, prince, the Atridae grim;
Turn to his gain
The villainy they plotted for his bane.
O take him home!
With him let our brave vessel cleave the foam;
There would he be;
Thus from the dread Avengers shall we flee.

NEOPTOLEMUS

See that your present kindness be not
A passing mood, lest after, when ye come
In closer contact with his malady,
Ye falter and belie these promises.

CHORUS

No, I shall ne'er be open to such charge.

NEOPTOLEMUS

'Twere shame indeed should I less zealous prove
Than thou to help a stranger in his need.
So, if you please, we'll sail; let him aboard;
Our ship methinks will not refuse her aid.
Only may heaven convey us from this shore
Safe to the haven whither we would sail!

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ φίλτατον μὲν ἡμαρ, ἡδιστος δ' ἀνὴρ,
 φίλοι δὲ ναῦται, πῶς ἂν ὑμῖν ἐμφανῆς
 ἔργω γενοίμην, ὡς μ' ἔθεσθε προσφιλῆ;
 ἴωμεν, ὦ παῖ, προσκύσαντε τὴν ἔσω
 ἄοικον εἰσοίκησιν, ὡς με καὶ μάθης
 ἀφ' ὧν διέζων ὡς τ' ἔφυν εὐκάρδιος.
 οἶμαι γὰρ οὐδ' ἂν ὄμμασι μόνην θέαν
 ἄλλον λαβόντα πλὴν ἐμοῦ τλῆναι τάδε·
 ἐγὼ δ' ἀνάγκη προύμαθον στέργειν κακά.

530

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἐπίσχετον, μάθωμεν· ἄνδρε γὰρ δύο,
 ὁ μὲν νεὼς σῆς ναυβάτης, ὁ δ' ἀλλόθρους,
 χωρεῖτον, ὧν μαθόντες αὐθις εἴσιτον.

540

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

Ἄχιλλέως παῖ, τόνδε τὸν ξυνέμπορον,
 ὃς ἦν νεὼς σῆς σὺν δυοῖν ἄλλοιιν φύλαξ,
 ἐκέλευσ' ἐμοί σε ποῦ κυρῶν εἰς φράσαι,
 ἐπεὶ πῆρ ἀντέκυσσα, δοξάζων μὲν οὔ,
 τύχη δέ πως πρὸς ταῦτόν ὀρμισθεὶς πέδον.
 πλέων γὰρ ὡς ναύκληρος οὐ πολλῶ στόλῳ
 ἀπ' Ἴλιου πρὸς οἶκον ἐς τὴν εὐβοτρυν
 Πεπάρηθον, ὡς ἤκουσα τοὺς ναύτας ὅτι
 σοὶ πάντες εἶεν συννεναυστοληκότες,
 ἔδοξέ μοι μὴ σῖγα, πρὶν φράσαιμί σοι,
 τὸν πλοῦν ποεῖσθαι, προστυχόντι τῶν ἴσων.
 οὐδὲν σύ που κάτοιισθα τῶν σαυτοῦ πέρι,
 ἃ τοῖσιν Ἀργείοισιν ἀμφὶ σοῦ νέα
 βουλευμάτ' ἐστί, κοῦ μόνον βουλευμάτα,
 ἀλλ' ἔργα δρώμεν', οὐκέτ' ἔξαργούμενα.

550

PHILOCTETES

PHILOCTETES

O gladdest day, O dearest, dearest friend,
And ye, kind sailors, would that I could prove
By acts my heartfelt gratitude! My son,
Let us be going, but before I go
Salute this homeless home, that thou mayst learn
How hard my life, how great my hardihood.
I think scarce any other man than I,
Had he but seen it once, could have endured;
But I was schooled by hard necessity.

[NEOPTOLEMUS *is about to enter the cave with him.*

CHORUS

Stay, for I see two men approach, the one
A sailor from thy ship, and one a stranger.
First let us learn their errand, then go in.

Enter TWO SAILORS, one disguised as a Merchant Captain

SAILOR

Son of Achilles, finding I was moored
In the same roadstead as thyself (by chance
Not of intent), I asked thy shipmate here,
Who with two other hands was left aboard
On board, to tell me where thou might'st be found.
For I, the captain of a single craft,
Was on my way from Ilium, homeward bound,
To Peperethus, for its vintage famed;
And learning that the crew I met ashore
Were all thy fellow-voyagers, I thought
It would be well, before I sailed away,
To have a word with thee and earn my dues.
I doubt thou knowest naught of thy concerns—
What new designs the Argives have upon thee:
Designs, say I? Nay rather, plots full hatched.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἡ χάρις μὲν τῆς προμηθείας, ξένη,
εἰ μὴ κακὸς πέφυκα, προσφιλῆς μενεΐ·
φράσον δ' ἄπερ, γ' ἔλεξας, ὡς μάθω τί μοι
νεώτερον βούλευμ' ἀπ' Ἀργείων ἔχεις.

560

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

φρούδοι διώκοντές σε ναυτικῶ στόλῳ
Φοῖνιξ ὁ πρέσβυς οἷ τε Θησέως κόροι.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὡς ἐκ βίας μ' ἄξοντες ἢ λόγους πάλιν;

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

οὐκ οἶδ' ἀκούσας δ' ἄγγελος πάρεμί σοι.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἢ ταῦτα δὴ Φοῖνιξ τε χοῖ ξυνναυβάται
οὕτω καθ' ὀρμὴν δρώσιν Ἀτρείδων χάριν;

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

ὡς ταῦτ' ἐπίστω δρώμεν', οὐ μέλλοντ' ἔτι.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

πῶς οὖν Ὀδυσσεὺς πρὸς τὰδ' οὐκ ἀντάγγελος
πλεῖν ἦν ἔτοιμος; ἢ φόβος τις εἰργέ νιν;

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

κεῖνός γ' ἐπ' ἄλλον ἄνδρ' ὁ Τυδέως τε παῖς
ἔστελλον, ἠνίκ' ἐξανηγόμεν ἐγώ.

570

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

πρὸς ποῖον αὖ τόνδ' αὐτὸς οὐδυσσεὺς ἔπλει;

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

ἦν δὴ τις—ἀλλὰ τόνδε μοι πρῶτον φράσον
τίς ἐστίν· ἂν λέγῃς δὲ μὴ φάωει μέγα.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ᾧδ' ἔσθ' ὁ κλεινός σοι Φιλοκτῆτης, ξένη.

PHILOCTETES

NEOPTOLEMUS

I shall remember, sir, thy zealous care
On my behalf ; I am no graceless churl.
But tell me more precisely : let me learn
These strange designs against me of the Greeks.

SAILOR

Old Phoenix has embarked with Theseus' sons
On a war galley in pursuit of thee.

NEOPTOLEMUS

To bring me back by force or of my will ?

SAILOR

I know not ; I report but what I heard.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Are Phoenix and his co-mates fired with zeal
To pleasure the Atridae ? can this be ?

SAILOR

'Tis no surmise of mine ; they are on the way.

NEOPTOLEMUS

How came it that Odysseus had no mind
To sail on his own business ? Was he afraid ?

SAILOR

He and the son of Tydeus were engaged
In quest of yet another, when I sailed.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Another ? Who this second man for whom
Odysseus sailed himself ?

SAILOR

A certain one . . .

Stay, who is this beside thee ? tell me first
His name, and breathe it softly in my ear.

NEOPTOLEMUS

This, sir, is Philoctetes of world fame.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

μή νύν μ' ἔρη τὰ πλείον', ἀλλ' ὅσον τάχος
ἐκπλει σεαυτὸν ξυλλαβὼν ἐκ τῆσδε γῆς.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

τί φησι, ὦ παῖ; τί με κατὰ σκότον ποτὲ
διεμπολᾷ λόγοισι πρὸς σ' ὁ ναυβάτης;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ οἶδά πω τί φησι· δεῖ δ' αὐτὸν λέγειν
εἰς φῶς ἢ λέξει, πρὸς σὲ κάμῃ τούσδε τε.

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

ὦ σπέρμ' Ἀχιλλέως, μή με διαβάλης στρατῶ
λέγουθ' ἂ μὴ δεῖ· πόλλ' ἐγὼ κείνων ὑπο
δρῶν ἀντιπάσχω χρηστά θ', οἳ ἀνήρ πένης.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἐγὼ εἰμ' Ἀτρείδαις δυσμενής· οὗτος δέ μοι
φίλος μέγιστος, οὐνεκ' Ἀτρείδας στυγεῖ.
δεῖ δὴ σ' ἔμουγ' ἐλθόντα προσφιλῆ, λόγων
κρύψαι πρὸς ἡμᾶς μηδέν' ὦν ἀκήκοας.

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

ὄρα τί ποιεῖς, παῖ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

σκοπῶ κάγῳ πάλαι.

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

σὲ θήσομαι τῶνδ' αἴτιον.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ποιοῦ λέγων.

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

λέγω. 'πὶ τούτου ἄνδρε τῶδ' ὥπερ κλύεις,
ὁ Τυδέως παῖς ἢ τ' Ὀδυσσέως βία,
διώμοτοι πλέουσιν ἢ μὴν ἢ λόγῳ
πέισαντες ἄξειν ἢ πρὸς ἰσχύος κράτος.

PHILOCTETES

SAILOR

Stop not for further questioning! Remove!
Fly with all speed thou mayest from this land.

PHILOCTETES

What says he, boy? What does he whisper thee,
As though I were a piece of merchandise.

NEOPTOLEMUS

I know not yet, but he shall tell his tale
Aloud, for thee and me and these to hear.

SAILOR

Child of Achilles, charge me not to the host
For blabbing secrets. I'm a poor man and
Greatly beholden to the generals,
Who've paid me for my service handsomely.

NEOPTOLEMUS

The Atridae are my enemies, and this man
Because he hates them is my dearest friend.
And, if indeed thou comest as a friend,
Thou art bound to tell me all that thou hast learnt.

SAILOR

Take heed, boy, what thou'rt asking.

NEOPTOLEMUS

I have heeded.

SAILOR

Then thou must bear the consequence.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Say on.

SAILOR

Hear then : the two I named, Odysseus and
The son of Tydeus now are hither bound
To fetch this man, and they have sworn an oath
To bring him by persuasion or by force.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

καὶ ταύτ' Ἀχαιοὶ πάντες ἤκουον σαφῶς
Ὀδυσσεύς λέγοντος· οὔτος γὰρ πλέον
τὸ θάρσος εἶχε θατέρου δράσειν τάδε.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ·

τίνος δ' Ἀτρεΐδαι τοῦδ' ἄγαν οὕτω χρόνῳ
τοσῶδ' ἐπεστρέφοντο πράγματος χάριν,
ὄν γ' εἶχον ἤδη χρόνιον ἐκβεβληκότες;
τίς ὁ πόθος αὐτοὺς ἴκετ'; ἢ θεῶν βία
καὶ νέμεσις, οὔπερ ἔργ' ἀμύνουσιν κακά;

600

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

ἐγὼ σε τοῦτ', ἴσως γὰρ οὐκ ἀκήκοας,
πᾶν ἐκδιδάξω, μάντις ἦν τις εὐγενής,
Πριάμου μὲν υἱός, ὄνομα δ' ὠνομάζετο
Ἐλενος, ὃν οὔτος νυκτὸς ἐξελθὼν μόνος,
ὁ πάντ' ἀκούων αἰσχρὰ καὶ λαβηῖτ' ἔπη
δόλιος Ὀδυσσεὺς εἶλε· δέσμιόν τ' ἄγων
ἔδειξ' Ἀχαιοῖς ἐς μέσον, θήραν καλήν·
ὃς δὴ τὰ τ' ἄλλ' αὐτοῖσι πάντ' ἐθέσπισεν
καὶ τὰπὶ Τροίᾳ πέργαμ' ὡς οὐ μὴ ποτε
πέρσοιεν, εἰ μὴ τόνδε πείσαντες λόγῳ
ἄγοιντο νήσου τῆσδ' ἐφ' ἧς ναίει ταυῶν.
καὶ ταῦθ' ὅπως ἤκουσ' ὁ Λαέρτου τόκος
τὸν μάντιν εἰπόντ', εὐθέως ὑπέσχετο
τὸν ἄνδρ' Ἀχαιοῖς τόνδε δηλώσειν ἄγων
οἶοιτο μὲν μάλισθ' ἐκούσιον λαβῶν,
εἰ μὴ θέλοι δ', ἄκουτα· καὶ τοῦτων κᾶρα
τέμνειν ἐφέϊτο τῷ θέλοντι μὴ τυχῶν.
ἤκουσας, ὦ παῖ, πάντα· τὸ σπεύδειν δέ σοι
καὶ τῷ παραινῶ κεῖ τινος κήδει πέρι.

610

620

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οἶμοι τάλας· ἢ κείνος, ἢ πᾶσα βλάβη,
ἔμ' εἰς Ἀχαιοὺς ὤμοσεν πείσας στελεῖν;

PHILOCTETES

This by Odysseus plainly was professed
In presence of the host ; for he, more bold
Than his co-partner, staked his credit on it.

NEOPTOLEMUS

But wherefore now, after the lapse of years
Should the Atridae be concerned about
A man they had abandoned and forgot?
Was it compassion touched them, of the dread
Of retribution and the avenging gods?

SAILOR

A matter that perchance to thee is strange
I will unfold. There was a high born seer,
A son of Priam, Helenus was his name.
Him that vile wretch—what epithet can match
His utter villainy?—that sly old fox,
Odysseus, on a nightly prowl waylaid,
Bound, and displayed him to the Argive host,
A goodly prize. Much else of grave import
The prophet uttered, and he spake this word:
“ Ne'er can ye take the citadel of Troy
Till by persuasion ye have won him over
And brought him from the island where he bides.”
Hearing the prophet's word, Odysseus straight
Engaged himself to bring the man away
And show him to the host. “ Willing ” (he said),
“ I hope, but at the worst, against his will.”
He staked his head on the venture ; any one
Who chose might be his headsman if he failed.
Thou hast heard all, my son ; be warned in time ;
Take heed for thine own safety and thy friend's.

PHILOCTETES

Ah me ! did that arch-felon swear indeed
To bring me by persuasion to the Greeks ?

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ.

πεισθήσομαι γὰρ ὧδε καὶ "Αιδου θανῶν
πρὸς φῶς ἀνελθεῖν, ὥσπερ οὐκείνου πατῆρ.

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

οὐκ οἶδ' ἐγὼ ταῦτ'· ἀλλ' ἐγὼ μὲν εἴμ' ἐπὶ
ναῦν, σφῶν δ' ὅπως ἄριστα συμφέροι θεός.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐκουν τάδ', ὦ παῖ, δεινά, τὸν Λαερτίου
ἐμ' ἐλπίσαι ποτ' ἂν λόγοισι μαλθακοῖς
δείξαι νεὼς ἄγοντ' ἐν Ἀργείοις μέσοις; 630
οὐ· θᾶσσον ἂν τῆς πλείστον ἐχθίστης ἐμοὶ
κλύοιμ' ἐχίδνης, ἣ μ' ἔθηκεν ὧδ' ἄπουν.
ἀλλ' ἔστ' ἐκείνῳ πάντα λεκτά, πάντα δὲ
τολμητά· καὶ νῦν οἶδ' ὀθούνεχ' ἕξεται.
ἀλλ', ὦ τέκνον, χωρῶμεν, ὡς ἡμᾶς πολὺ
πέλαγος ὀρίζῃ τῆς Ὀδυσσέως νεώς.
ἴωμεν ἣ τοι καίριος σπουδὴ πόνου
λήξαντος ὕπνον κἀνάπαυλαν ἤγαγεν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκοῦν ἐπειδὰν πνεῦμα τοῦκ πρῶρας ἀνῆ,
τότε στελοῦμεν· νῦν γὰρ ἀντισστατεῖ. 640

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀεὶ καλὸς πλοῦς ἔσθ', ὅταν φεύγῃς κακά.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ, ἀλλὰ κάκείνοισι ταῦτ' ἐναντία.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐκ ἔστι λησταῖς πνεῦμ' ἐναντιούμενον,
ὅταν παρῆ κλέψαι τι χάρπασαι βίᾳ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' εἰ δοκεῖ, χωρῶμεν, ἐνδοθεν λαβὼν
ὄτου σε χρεία καὶ πόθος μάλιστ' ἔχει.

PHILOCTETES

As soon by prayers shall I be brought again
From death, as was his father,¹ to the light.

SAILOR

That's not for me to say, I must be going
To join my ship. Farewell, and may the gods
Be with you both and order all things well.

PHILOCTETES

What say'st thou, boy? That he, Laertes' son,
Should think to wheedle me aboard his ship,
And make a show of me to the Greek host!
Is it not monstrous? Sooner would I heed
My mortal foe, the snake that crippled me.
But he—no word, no practice is too vile
For him to stick at. He will come for sure.
Haste thee, my son, and put a many leagues
Of ocean 'twixt Odysseus and our ship.
Bestir ye! Who in season labours best,
His labours ended, has the sweetest rest.

NEOPTOLEMUS

All in good time; soon as the headwind drops
We will weigh anchor; now 'tis in our teeth.

PHILOCTETES

To those who fly from ill all winds are fair.

NEOPTOLEMUS

But this wind's contrary for them no less.

PHILOCTETES

For pirates no wind's adverse, when there's chance
Of pillaging or robbery under arms.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Well, as thou will'st, we'll sail; but from the cave
Take anything thou needest or dost prize.

¹ Sisyphus, the reputed father of Odysseus, ordered his wife to leave his body unburied and so obtained leave from Pluto to return to earth in order to punish her impiety.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀλλ' ἔστιν ὦν δεῖ, καίπερ οὐ πολλῶν ἄπο.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί τοῦθ' ὃ μὴ νεῶς γε τῆς ἐμῆς ἔπι;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

φύλλον τί μοι πάρεστιν, φ' μάλιστ' αἰεὶ
κοιμῶ τόδ' ἔλκος, ὥστε πραῦνειν πάνυ.

650

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἔκφερ' αὐτό. τί γὰρ ἔτ' ἄλλ' ἐρᾶς λαβεῖν;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

εἰ μοί τι τόξων τῶνδ' ἀπημελημένον
παρερρύηκεν, ὡς λίπω μὴ τφ λαβεῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἦ ταῦτα γὰρ τὰ κλεινὰ τόξ' ἃ νῦν ἔχεις;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ταῦτ', οὐ γὰρ ἄλλ' ἔστ', ἀλλ' ἃ βαστάζω χεροῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἄρ' ἔστιν ὥστε καγγύθεν θέαν λαβεῖν
καὶ βαστάσαι με προσκύσαι θ' ὥσπερ θεόν;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

σοί γ', ὦ τέκνον, καὶ τοῦτο κἄλλο τῶν ἐμῶν
ὁποῖον ἂν σοι ξυμφέρῃ γενήσεται.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

καὶ μὴν ἐρῶ γε, τὸν δ' ἐρωθ' οὕτως ἔχω·
εἰ μοι θέμις, θέλοιμ' ἂν εἰ δὲ μὴ, πάρες.

660

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἴστιά τε φωνεῖς ἔστι τ', ὦ τέκνον, θέμις,
ὅς γ' ἡλίου τόδ' εἰσορᾶν ἐμοὶ φάος
μόνος δέδωκας, ὅς χθόν' Οἰταίαν ἰδεῖν,
ὅς πατέρα πρέσβυν, ὅς φίλους, ὅς τῶν ἐμῶν

PHILOCTETES

PHILOCTETES

My store is scant, but certain things I need.

NEOPTOLEMUS

What that thou wilt not find on board my ship ?

PHILOCTETES

A herb of wondrous virtue wherewithal
I use to mollify and lull my wound.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Then bring it with thee. What else wouldst thou
take ?

PHILOCTETES

Some shafts, that may have dropped by accident,
Lest a chance-comer find them, I would fetch.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Is that then in thy hands the famous bow ?

PHILOCTETES

This and none other is the famous bow.

NEOPTOLEMUS

May I have leave to gaze upon it close,
Handle it, aye adore it as a god ?

PHILOCTETES

Right willingly, my son, and aught beside
That I can do to profit thee, command.

NEOPTOLEMUS

I have this longing, I confess, but if
My longing seem not lawful, let it be.

PHILOCTETES

A pious scruple ; but this privilege,
My son, is thine by right, for thou alone
Hast given me to behold the light of day,
And Oeta, and my aged sire, and friends ;
For when I lay beneath my enemies' heel,

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἐχθρῶν μ' ἐνερθεν ὄντ' ἀνέστησας πέρα.
 θάρσει, παρέσται ταῦτά σοι καὶ θιγγάνειν
 καὶ δόντι δοῦναι κάξευξασθαι βροτῶν
 ἀρετῆς ἕκατι τῶνδ' ἐπιψαῦσαι μόνον·
 εὐεργετῶν γὰρ καυτὸς αὐτ' ἐκτησάμην.

670

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ ἄχθομαί σ' ἰδὼν τε καὶ λαβῶν φίλον·
 ὅστις γὰρ εὐ δρᾶν εὐ παθῶν ἐπίσταται,
 παντὸς γένοιτ' ἂν κτήματος κρείσσων φίλος.
 χωροῖς ἂν εἴσω.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

καὶ σέ γ' εἰσάξω· τὸ γὰρ
 νοσοῦν ποθεῖ σε ξυμπαραστάτην λαβεῖν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

λόγῳ μὲν ἐξήκουσ', ὄπωπα δ' οὐ μάλα, στρ. α'
 τὸν πελάταν λέκτρων ποτὲ τῶν Διὸς
 κατὰ δρομάδ' ἄμπυκα δέσμιον ὡς ἔβαλεν¹ παγ-
 κρατῆς Κρόνου παῖς·
 ἄλλον δ' οὔτιν' ἔγωγ' οἶδα κλύων οὐδ' ἐσιδὼν μοίρα
 τοῦδ' ἐχθίοι σιντυχόντα
 θνατῶν, δεσ οὔτ' ἔρξας τιν' οὔ τι² νοσφίσας,
 ἀλλ' ἴσος ὦν ἴσοις ἀνὴρ,
 ὄλλυθ' ὦδ' ἀναξίως.
 τότε τοι θαῦμά μ' ἔχει,
 πῶς ποτε πῶς ποτ' ἀμφιπλάκτων ῥοθίων μόνος
 κλύων,

680

πῶς ἄρα πανδάκρυτον οὕτω βιοτὰν κατέσχεν·

690

ἀντ. α'

ἴν' αὐτὸς ἦν πρόσουρος, οὐκ ἔχων βάσιω,
 οὐδέ τιν' ἐγγύρων κακογείτονα,

¹ Ἰξίονα κατ' ἄμπυκα δὴ δρομάδα δέσμιον ὡς ἔλαβ' ὁ MSS., Schneidewin corr. ² οὔτε MSS., Schneidewin corr.

PHILOCTETES

'Twas thou upliftedst me above their heads,
It shall be thine to handle and return;
Fear not, and thou shalt boast that thou alone
Of mortals, for thy worth, hast handled it.
'Twas for a service done it came to me.¹

NEOPTOLEMUS

'Tis pleasant to have found and proved a friend;
For him who good for good returns I hold
A friend more precious than unnumbered gold.
Now go within.

PHILOCTETES

That will I, and entreat
Thine escort, for my ailment craves thine aid.
(*They enter the cave.*)

CHORUS

I saw him not, yet fame affirms the tale (Str. 1)
Of one who dared the bed of Zeus assail.
Him to the wheel that never stays its round
Of torture, the great son of Kronos bound.

But, save of him alone,
To me no sadder fate is known
Than of this saddest wight,
Or by report or sight:
Poor innocent who here to death art done!

He robbed or wronged none
I marvel how thus desolate, all forlorn,
These long long years of anguish he hath borne,
Hearing the breakers gride the cold grey stones,
(Ant. 1)

Himself for neighbour to himself he groans;
Limping with crippled feet,
He treads his weary beat;

¹ For kindling the funeral-pyre of Heracles on Mount Oeta.

παρ' ᾧ στόνον ἀντίτυπον βαρυβρώτ' ἀποκλαύ-
 σειεν αἱματηρόν
 ὃς τὰν θερμοτάταν αἱμάδα κηκιομένην ἐλκέων
 ἐνθήρου ποδὸς ἠπίοισι
 φύλλοις κατευνάσειεν, εἴ τις ἐμπέσοι,
 φορβάδος ἐκ γαίας ἐλίων
 εἶρπε γὰρ ἄλλοτ' ἄλλαχᾶ
 τότ' ἂν εἰλυόμενος
 παῖς ἄτερ ὡς φίλας τιθήνας ὅθεν εὐμάρει' ὑπάρ-
 χοι πόρου, ἀνικ' ἐξανείη δακέθυμος ἄτα·

700

στρ. β'

οὐ φορβὰν ἱερᾶς γᾶς σπόρον, οὐκ ἄλλων
 αἴρων τῶν νεμόμεσθ' ἀνέρες ἀλφησταί,
 πλὴν ἐξ ὠκυβόλων εἴ ποτε τόξων
 πτανοῖς ἰοῖς ἀνύσειε γαστρὶ φορβάν.
 ὦ μελέα ψυχά,
 ὃς μῆδ' οἰνοχύτου πώματος ἤσθη δεκέτει χρόνῳ,
 λεύσσων δ' ὅπου γνοιῆ στατὸν εἰς ὕδωρ,
 ἀεὶ προσενώμα.

710

ἀντ. β'

νῦν δ' ἀνδρῶν ἀγαθῶν παιδὸς ὑπαντήσας
 εὐδαίμων ἀνύσει καὶ μέγας ἐκ κείνων
 ὃς νιν ποντοπόρῳ δούρατι, πλήθει
 πολλῶν μηνῶν, πατρίαν ἄγει πρὸς αὐλὰν
 Μαλιαδῶν νυμφᾶν
 Σπερχειοῦ τε παρ' ὄχθας, ἴν' ὁ χάλκασπις ἀνήρ
 θεοῖς
 πλάθει πατρός¹ θείῳ πυρὶ παμφαίης,
 Οἴτας ὑπὲρ ὄχθων.

720

¹ κᾶσι MSS., Jebb corr.

PHILOCTETES

No comrade by
To give him sigh for sigh,
No friend in whose responsive ear to pour
His woes—the anguish of his festering sore ;
To quell the burning rage,
The throbs assuage
With simples gathered from the kindly soil ;
But 'twixt the spasms he must crawl and moil
To find the herb, a spell to lay the curse,
Like some weak infant parted from its nurse.

Not his to sow the seed (Str. 2)
Or on the largesse feed
That boon earth showers on all the sons of men ;
Happy, if now and then
The bolt from his unerring bow can wing
Some living thing.
Poor wretch, who ten long years athirst did pine,
Without one draught of soul-refreshing wine,
But sought some stagnant pool
His parchèd throat to cool.

(Ant. 2)

Now hath he found a champion good and true,
And by his woes ennobled shall renew
His pristine fame. The tale of months complete,
Home shall he journey with our homing fleet.
There on Spercheios' marge, his ancient home,
The haunt of Malian naiads, he shall roam,
Where the famed hero of the brazen shield,
His full divinity in flames revealed
And in a fiery car ascending high
O'er Oeta was translated to the sky.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἔρπ', εἰ θέλεις. τί δὴ ποθ' ᾧδ' ἐξ οὐδενός
λόγου σιωπᾶς κάποπληκτος ᾧδ' ἔχει;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἁἶ, ἁἶ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί δ' ἑστίν;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐδὲν δεινόν' ἀλλ' ἴθ', ᾧ τέκνον.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

μῶν ἄλγος ἴσχεις τῆς παρεστώσης νόσου;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐ δῆτ' ἔγωγ', ἀλλ' ἄρτι κουφίξειν δοκῶ.
ᾧ θεοί.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί τοὺς θεοὺς ᾧδ' ἀναστένων καλεῖς;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

σωτῆρας αὐτοὺς ἠπίους θ' ἡμῖν μολεῖν.
ἁἶ, ἁἶ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί ποτε πέπονθας; οὐκ ἐρεῖς, ἀλλ' ᾧδ' ἔσει
σιγηλός; ἐν κακῷ δέ τῳ φαίνει κυρῶν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀπόλωλα, τέκνον, κοῦ δυνήσομαι κακὸν
κρύψαι παρ' ὑμῖν, ἀτταταῖ· διέρχεται
διέρχεται. δύστηνος, ᾧ τάλας ἐγώ.
ἀπόλωλα, τέκνον· βρύκομαι, τέκνον· παπαῖ,
ἀπαππαπαῖ, παπαππαπαππαπαππαπαῖ.
πρὸς θεῶν, πρόχειρον εἴ τί σοι, τέκνον, πάρα
ξίφος χεροῖν, πάταξον εἰς ἄκρον πόδα·
ἀπάμησον ὡς τάχιστα· μὴ φείσῃ βίου,
ἴθ', ᾧ παῖ.

¹ Erfardt added δ',

PHILOCTETES

NEOPTOLEMUS

Be moving if it please thee . . . Why, what means
This sudden silence, this amazedness?

PHILOCTETES

Ah me! Ah me!

NEOPTOLEMUS

What is it?

PHILOCTETES

A mere nothing, boy; go on.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Thou feelest thine old malady again?

PHILOCTETES

No, a mere twinge; I think 'tis passing now—
O God!

NEOPTOLEMUS

Why groan aloud and call on God?

PHILOCTETES

To save me and deliver me. . . . Ah me!

NEOPTOLEMUS

What ails thee? Wilt not tell me? Wilt not speak?
That something troubles thee is very plain.

PHILOCTETES

My son, I am lost, undone! Impossible
To hide it longer from you; lost, undone!
It stabs me, stabs me through and through and
through.

Ah me! ah me! ah me!

For heaven's sake, if thou hast a sword at hand,
Draw it, my son, strike swiftly, at a stroke
Cut off this foot, no matter if it kill me;
Quick, quick, my son!

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί δ' ἔστιν οὕτω νεοχμὸν ἐξαίφνης, ὅτου
τοσῆνδ' ἰυγὴν καὶ στόνον σαυτοῦ ποεῖ;

♦ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οἶσθ', ὦ τέκνον;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί δ' ἔστιν;

♦ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οἶσθ', ὦ παῖ;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί σοί;

οὐκ οἶδα.

♦ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

πῶς οὐκ οἶσθα; παππαπαππαπαῖ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

δεινὸν γε τοῦπίσαγμα τοῦ νοσήματος.

♦ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

δεινὸν γὰρ οὐδὲ ῥητόν· ἀλλ' οἴκτιρέ με.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί δῆτα δράσω;

♦ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

μή με ταρβήσας προδῶς·
ἦκει γὰρ αὐτῆ δια χρόνου πλάνοις ἴσως
ὡς ἐξεπλήσθη.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἰὼ ἰὼ δύστηνε σύ,

δύστηνε δῆτα διὰ πόνων πάντων φανεῖς.
βούλει λάβωμαι δῆτα καὶ θίγω τί σου;

♦ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

μή δῆτα τοῦτό γ'· ἀλλὰ μοι τὰ τόξ' ἐλὼν
τάδ', ὥσπερ ἦτου μ' ἀρτίως, ἕως ἀμῆ

PHILOCTETES

NEOPTOLEMUS

What is this sudden fit
That makes thee moan so and bewail thyself?

PHILOCTETES

Thou knowest, boy.

NEOPTOLEMUS

What is it?

PHILOCTETES

Thou knowest.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Nay,

What ails thee?

PHILOCTETES

Knowest thou not? Ah me! Ah me!

NEOPTOLEMUS

The burden of thy pain is terrible.

PHILOCTETES

Yea, terrible, past words. O pity me.

NEOPTOLEMUS

What shall I do?

PHILOCTETES

Fear me not, leave me not:
My ailment loves to play the truant, stray
Awhile, and then come home again, belike
Tired with its holiday.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Ales! poor wretch,
Wretched indeed in all thy suffering proved.
Wilt lean on me? Shall I take hold of thee?

PHILOCTETES

Nay touch me not, I beg, but take this bow
Which thou didst crave to handle, and until

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

τὸ πῆμα τοῦτο τῆς νόσου τὸ νῦν παρόν,
 σφῶζ' αὐτὰ καὶ φύλασσε. λαμβάνει γὰρ οὖν
 ὕπνος μ', ὅταν περ τὸ κακὸν ἐξίῃ τόδε·
 κούκ ἔστι λῆξαι πρότερον· ἀλλ' ἔάν χρεῶν
 ἔκηλον εὔδειν. ἦν δὲ τῷδε τῷ χρόνῳ
 μόλωσ' ἐκείνοι, πρὸς θεῶν ἐφίεμαι
 ἔκοντα μηδ' ἄκοντα μηδέ τῳ τέχνῃ
 κείνοις μεθεῖναι ταῦτα, μὴ σαντόν θ' ἅμα
 κάμ', ὄντα σαντοῦ πρόστροπον, κτείννας γένη.

770

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

θάρσει προνοίας οὔνεκ'· οὐ δοθήσεται
 πλὴν σοί τε κάμοι· ξὺν τύχῃ δὲ πρόσφερε.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἰδοὺ δέχου, παῖ· τὸν φθόνον δὲ πρόσκυσον
 μὴ σοι γενέσθαι πολὺπον' αὐτὰ μηδ' ὅπως
 ἐμοί τε καὶ τῷ πρόσθ' ἐμοῦ κεκτημένῳ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὦ θεοί, γένοιτο ταῦτα νῦν· γένοιτο δὲ
 πλοῦς οὐριός τε κεύσταλῆς ὅποι ποτὲ
 θεὸς δικαιοῖ χῶ στόλος πορσύνεται.

780

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀλλ' οὖν δέδοικα μὴ ἀτέλεστ' εὐχῆ, τέκνον.¹
 στάζει γὰρ αὐ μοι φοίνιον τόδ' ἐκ βυθοῦ
 κηκίον αἶμα, καὶ τι προσδοκῶ νέον.
 παπαῖ, φεῦ.
 παπαῖ μάλ', ὦ πούς, οἶά μ' ἐργάσει κακά.
 προσέρπει,
 προσέρχεται τόδ' ἐγγύς. οἶμοι μοι τάλας.
 ἔχετε τὸ πρᾶγμα· μὴ φύγητε μηδαμῆ.
 ἀτταταῖ.

790

¹ ἀλλὰ δέδοικ', ὦ και, μὴ μ' ἀτελής εὐχή MSS. The text is a combination of Triolinus and Jebb.



PHILOCTETES

The spasm that now disables me is gone,
Keep it and guard it well ; for when the fit
Passes, a drowsiness comes over me ;
And sleep's the only medicine that gives ease.
So let me slumber undisturbed, and if
They come the while, I charge thee, boy, by heaven,
Let them not have it, yield not up the bow,
Willing or nilling, or by force or fraud ;
Lest thou should'st prove a double murderer,
And slay thyself and me thy suppliant.

NEOPTOLEMUS

I will be vigilant, fear not ; none shall have it
But thou and I alone ; so give it to me.
Good luck attend it !

PHILOCTETES

Take it then, my son,
But first propitiate the Jealous God,
Lest it should prove to thee a bane, as erst
To me and to its former lord it proved.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Heaven grant this prayer to both of us, and grant
A fair and prosperous voyage whitherso'er
Our destined course is set and heaven ordains !

PHILOCTETES

Alas, my son ! I fear thy prayers are vain ;
For once again upwelling from the wound
The black blood trickles auguring a relapse.
Out, out upon thee, damnèd foot ! Alack !
What plague hast yet in store for me ? Alack !
It prowls, it stalks amain, ready to spring.
Woe ! Now ye know my torture, leave me not !
Ah me ! Ah me !

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ ξένη Κεφαλλήν, εἴθε σου διαμπερὲς
στέρνων ἔχοιτ' ἄλγησις ἦδε. φεῦ, παπαῖ,
παπαῖ μάλ' αὖθις· ὦ διπλοῖ στρατηλάται,
Ἀγάμεμνον, ὦ Μενέλαε, πῶς ἂν ἀντ' ἐμοῦ
τὸν ἴσον χρόνον τρέφοιτε τήνδε τὴν νόσον;
ἰὼ μοι.

ὦ Θάνατε Θάνατε, πῶς αἰεὶ καλούμενος
οὕτω κατ' ἡμαρ, οὐ δύνα μολεῖν ποτε;
ὦ τέκνον ὦ γενναῖον, ἀλλὰ συλλαβῶν
τῷ Δημῖφ τῷδ' ἀνακαλουμένῳ πυρὶ
ἔμπρησον, ὦ γενναῖε· κἀγὼ τοί ποτε
τὸν τοῦ Διὸς παῖδ' ἀντὶ τῶνδε τῶν ὄπλων,
ἂ νῦν σὺ σώξεις, τοῦτ' ἐπηξίωσα δρᾶν.
τί φῆς, παῖ;
τί φῆς; τί συγᾶς; ποῦ ποτ' ὄν, τέκνον, κυρεῖς;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλγῶ πάλαι δὴ τάπιδ' ἰσοῖ στέρνων κακά.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀλλ', ὦ τέκνον, καὶ θάρσος ἰσχ'· ὡς ἦδε μοι
ὀξεῖα φοιτᾶ καὶ ταχεῖ ἀπέρχεται.
ἀλλ' ἀντιάξω, μὴ με καταλίπῃς μόνον.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

θάρσει, μενούμεν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἦ μενεῖς;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

σαφῶς φρόνει.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐ μὴν σ' ἔνορκόν γ' ἀξιῶ θέσθαι, τέκνον.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὡς οὐ θέμις γ' ἐμοῦστι σοῦ μολεῖν ἄτερ.



PHILOCTETES

Would God, O Cepallenian, through thy breast
This spasm might pass and hold thee in its grip!
Woe's me and woe once more! Ye generals twain,
Menelaus, Agamemnon, might this worm
Devour your vitals no less time than mine!
O Death, Death, Death! how is it that invoked
Day after day, thou wilt not heed my call?
Boy, noble boy, of thy nobility
I pray thee take and in those Lemnian flames
Consume me, welcome now to me as when
I dared to do it for the son of Zeus,
And won for meed the bow thy bearest now.
Speak! answer! why thus absent, O my son?

NEOPTOLEMUS

My heart was heavy, musing on thy woes.

PHILOCTETES

Nay, be of better cheer, my son; this pain,
As in its onset sudden, so departs.
Only, I pray thee, leave me not alone.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Take heart; we'll stay.

PHILOCTETES

Thou wilt?

NEOPTOLEMUS

In sooth I will.

PHILOCTETES

It were not meet to bind thee with an oath.

NEOPTOLEMUS

I am bound in honour not to leave thee here.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἔμβαλλε χεῖρὸς πίστιν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἔμβάλλω μενεΐν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἐκείσε νῦν μ', ἐκείσε

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ποῖ λέγεις;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἄνω

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί παραφρονεῖς αὖ; τί τὸν ἄνω λεύσσεις κύκλου;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

μέθες μέθες με.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ποῖ μεθῶ;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

μέθες ποτέ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐ φημ' εἶσσειν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀπό μ' ὀλεῖς, ἦν προσθίγῃς.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

καὶ δὴ μεθίημ', εἴ τι¹ δὴ πλέον φρονεῖς.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ γαῖα, δέξαι θανάσιμόν μ' ὅπως ἔχω
τὸ γὰρ κακὸν τόδ' οὐκέτ' ὀρθοῦσθαί μ' εἶα.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τὸν ἄνδρ' εἰκεν ὕπνος οὐ μακροῦ χρόνου
ἔξειν· κἄρα γὰρ ὑπτιάζεται τόδε·
ἰδρῶς γέ τοι νιν πᾶν καταστάζει δέμας,

¹ μεθίημι· τί δὲ MSS., Hermann corr.

PHILOCTETES

PHILOCTETES

Thy hand upon it.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Here's my hand in pledge.

PHILOCTETES

Then yonder, let me yonder—

NEOPTOLEMUS

Whither then?

PHILOCTETES

Up higher—

NEOPTOLEMUS

Art thou wandering once again?

Why starest at the firmament on high?

PHILOCTETES

Let me go.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Whither?

PHILOCTETES

Let me go, I say.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Thou shalt not.

PHILOCTETES

Touch me not, 'twould be my death.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Well, I release thee. Thou art calmer now.

PHILOCTETES

Take me, O Earth, a dying man, so near
His end with sickness that he cannot stand.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Methinks in no long time he'll be asleep ;
For, see, his head sinks backward, and o'er all
His body, look you, trickle beads of sweat,

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

μέλαινά τ' ἄκρου τις παρέρρωγεν ποδὸς
αἰμορραγῆς φλέψ. ἀλλ' ἐάσωμεν, φίλοι,
ἔκηλον αὐτόν, ὡς ἂν εἰς ὕπνου πέσῃ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Ἔπν' ὀδύνας ἀδαῆς, Ἔπνε δ' ἀλγέων, στρ.
εὐαῆς¹ ἡμῖν ἔλθοις,
εὐαίων εὐαίων, ὦναξ·
ἄμμασι δ' ἀντίσχοις 830
τάνδ' αἴγλαν, ἃ τέταται τανῦν.
ἴθι ἴθι μοι παιῶν.
ὦ τέκνον, ὄρα ποῦ στάσει,
ποῖ δέ μοι τάνθενδε βάσει,²
φροντίδος. ὀρᾶς ἤδη.
πρὸς τί μενοῦμεν πράσσειν;
καιρὸς τοι πάντων γνώμαν ἰσχων
πολύ τι πολὺ παρὰ πόδα κράτος ἄρνυται.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' ὅδε μὲν κλύει οὐδέν, ἐγὼ δ' ὀρῶ οὐνεκα θήραν 840
τήνδ' ἀλίως ἔχομεν τόξων, δίχα τοῦδε πλέοντες.
τοῦδε γὰρ ὁ στέφανος, τοῦτον θεὸς εἶπε κομίζειν.
κομπεῖν δ' ἔστ' ἀτελῆ σὺν ψεύδεσιν αἰσχροὺν
ὄνειδος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλά, τέκνον, τάδε μὲν θεὸς ὄψεται ἀντ.
ὦν δ' ἂν ἀμείβῃ μ' αὖθις,
βαιάν μοι, βαιάν, ὦ τέκνον,
πέμπε λόγων φάμαν·

¹ εὐαῆς MSS., Hermann corr.

² ποῖ δέ βάσει, πῶς δέ μοι τάντευθεν MSS., Jebb corr.

PHILOCTETES

And from an artery in his wounded foot
The black blood spurts. So let us leave him, friends
In peace and quiet till he fall asleep.

CHORUS

Sleep immune of cares, (Str.)
Sleep that knows not cumber,
Breathe thy softest airs,
Prince of painless slumber!
O'er his eyes always
Let thy dream-light play;
Healer come, we pray.

My son, bethink thee how
Thou standest, and what next
Thou purposest; not now
The time to halt perplexed.
Why longer here remain?
Ever occasion ta'en
At the full flood brings gain.

NEOPTOLEMUS

We might escape and steal his bow indeed
(He hears us not); but little should we speed
Without the man. Himself he must be brought,
So the God bade; he is the prize we sought;
He crowns our triumph, and 'twere double shame
Falsely a fraud-won victory to claim.

CHORUS

Far things with Heaven lie, (Ant.)
Look thou to what is near,
And, when thou mak'st reply,
Low breathe it in my ear:

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὡς πάντων ἐν νόσῳ εὐδρακῆς
 ὕπνος ἄὑπνος λεύσσειν.
 ἀλλ' ὅτι δύνα μάκιστον
 κείνο δὴ μοι κείνο λάθρα
 ἐξιδού ὅπα πράξεις.
 οἶσθα γὰρ ἂν¹ αὐδῶμαι,
 εἰ ταύταν τούτων γνώμαν ἴσχεις,
 μάλα τοι ἄπορα πυκινοῖς ἐνιδεῖν πάθη.

850

οὐρός τοι, τέκνον, οὐρος·
 ἀνὴρ δ' ἀνόμματος οὐδ' ἔχων
 ἀρωγὰν ἐκτέταται νύχιος,
 (ἀλεῆς ὕπνος ἐσθλός,)
 οὐ χερός, οὐ ποδός, οὐ τινος ἄρχων,
 ἀλλὰ τις ὡς Ἴδρα παρακείμενος.
 ὄρα, βλέπ' εἰ καίρια
 φθέγγει τὸ δ' ἀλώσιμον
 ἐμᾶ φροντίδι, παῖ,
 πόνος ὁ μὴ φοβῶν κράτιστος.

860

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

συγᾶν κελεύω μῆδ' ἀφεστάναι φρενῶν·
 κινεῖ γὰρ ἀνὴρ ὄμμα κανάγει κύρα.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ φέγγος ὕπνου διάδοχον τό τ' ἐλπίδων
 ἄπιστον οἰκούρημα τῶνδε τῶν ξένων.
 οὐ γὰρ ποτ', ὦ παῖ, τοῦτ' ἂν ἐξηύχης¹ ἐγώ,
 τλήναι σ' ἐλεινῶς ὧδε τὰ μὰ πῆματα
 μείναι παρόντα καὶ ξυνωφελούντά μοι.
 οὐκουν Ἄτρεῖδαι τοῦτ' ἔτλησαν εὐφόρως²
 οὕτως ἐνεγκεῖν, ἀγαθοὶ στρατηλάται.

870

¹ ἄν or ἔν MSS., Hermann corr.

² εὐφόρως MSS., Brunck corr.

PHILOCTETES

Sleepless the sick man's sleep,
Quick-eared to catch each sound ;
His eyes, though closed, yet keep
Sharp watch around.

Wherefore explore in stealth, my son,
How what thou dost may best be done.
If thy plan be still the same,
What it is I need not name,
Plain to one who looks before
Are his troubles vast and sore.

The breeze sets fair, sets fair, my son,
And there outstretched he lies
As one who hath nor ears nor eyes.
(How good to sleep i' the sun !)
Of hand or foot, no motion has he, none
More than the dead who in Earth's bosom rest.
Then look, my son, look that thou utterest
Sane counsels. If a plain man might advise
Thy wisdom, the discreetest way is best.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Silence, and keep your wits ; his eyes begin
To open and he raises now his head.

PHILOCTETES

O sweet to wake to the broad day and find,
What least I hoped, my kindly guardians by.
For this, my son, I never had presumed
To hope, that thou would'st thus compassionately
Wait to attend my woes and minister.
The Atridae, those brave captains never showed
Courage to bear them patiently. But thou

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀλλ' εὐγενῆς γὰρ ἢ φύσις κάξ' εὐγενῶν,
ὦ τέκνον, ἢ σή, πάντα ταῦτ' ἐν εὐχερεῖ
ἔθου, βοῆς τε καὶ δυσσομίας γέμων.
καὶ νῦν ἐπειδὴ τοῦδε τοῦ κακοῦ δοκεῖ
λήθη τις εἶναι κἀνάπαυλα δῆ, τέκνον,
σύ μ' αὐτὸς ἄρον, σύ με κατὰστησον, τέκνον,
ἴν', ἠνίκ' ἂν κόπος μ' ἀπαλλάξῃ ποτέ,
ὀρμώμεθ' ἐς ναῦν μηδ' ἐπίσχωμεν τὸ πλεῖν.

880

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἤδομαι μὲν σ' εἰσιδὼν παρ' ἐλπίδα
ἀνώδυνον βλέποντα κάμπνέοντ' ἔτι·
ὡς οὐκέτ' ὄντος γὰρ τὰ συμβόλαιά σου
πρὸς τὰς παρούσας ξυμφορὰς ἐφαίνετο.
νῦν δ' αἶρε σαντόν· εἰ δέ σοι μᾶλλον φίλον,
οἴσουσί σ' οἴδε· τοῦ πόνου γὰρ οὐκ ὄκνος,
ἐπεὶ περ οὕτω σοί τ' ἔδοξ' ἐμοί τε δρᾶν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

αἰνῶ τάδ', ὦ παῖ, καὶ μ' ἔπαιρ', ὥσπερ νοεῖς·
τούτους δ' ἔασον, μὴ βαρυνθῶσιν κακῇ
ὁσμῇ πρὸ τοῦ δέοντος· οὐπὶ νηὶ γὰρ
ἄλις πόνος τούτοισι συνναλεῖν ἐμοί.

890

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἔσται τάδ'· ἀλλ' ἴστω τε καὶ τὸς ἀντέχου.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

θάρσει τό τοι σύννηθες ὀρθῶσει μ' ἔθος.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

παπαῖ· τί δῆτ' ἂν δρῶμ' ἐγὼ τοῦνθένδε γε;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

τί δ' ἔστιν, ὦ παῖ; ποῖ ποτ' ἐξέβης λόγῳ;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ οἶδ' ὅποι χρὴ τᾶπορον τρέπειν ἔπος.

PHILOCTETES

By nature noble as by birth, my son,
Mad'st light of all the sores to eye and ear,
And nostrils, that my malady inflicts.
But now at last, 'twould seem, a lull has come,
A respite and oblivion of my ills ;
Raise me thyself, boy, set me on my feet,
That, when the attack has wholly spent itself,
We may aboard and instantly set sail.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Right glad am I to see thee breathing still,
Alive, beyond all hope, and freed from pain ;
For to appearance thou didst bear the seal
And signature of death. Now raise thyself,
Or if thou choosest, these shall carry thee ;
Such service will they readily perform,
Since thou and I alike are thus resolved.

PHILOCTETES

I thank thee, son, and, if it pleaseth thee,
Raise me thyself and spare thy men this task,
Lest they be sickened with my fetidness
Before the time ; they'll have enough to bear
With me for messmate when we are aboard.

NEOPTOLEMUS

So be it ; now, stand up, lay hold of me.

PHILOCTETES

Fear not, long use and wont has taught me how.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Ye Gods ! What now remains for me to do ?

PHILOCTETES

What is it, my son, what mean these whirling
words ?

NEOPTOLEMUS

I speak perplexedly, know not how to speak.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀπορεῖς δὲ τοῦ σύ; μὴ λέγ', ὦ τέκνον, τάδε.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἐνθάδ' ἤδη τοῦδε τοῦ πάθους κυρῶ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐ δὴ σε δυσχέρεια τοῦ νοσήματος
ἔπεισεν ὥστε μὴ μ' ἄγειν ναύτην ἔτι;

900

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἅπαντα δυσχέρεια, τὴν αὐτοῦ φύσιν
ὅταν λιπὼν τις δρᾷ τὰ μὴ προσεικότα.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀλλ' οὐδὲν ἔξω τοῦ φυτεύσαντος σύ γε
δρᾷς οὐδὲ φωνεῖς, ἐσθλὸν ἄνδρ' ἐπωφελῶν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

αἰσχρὸς φανούμαι· τοῦτ' ἀνιώμαι πάλαι.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐκουν ἐν οἷς γε δρᾷς· ἐν οἷς δ' αὐδᾶς ὀκνῶ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὦ Ζεῦ, τί δράσω; δεύτερον ληφθῶ κακός,
κρύπτων θ' ἂ μὴ δεῖ καὶ λέγων αἰσχιστ' ἐπῶν;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀνὴρ ὄδ', εἰ μὴ ἴγῳ κακὸς γνώμων ἔφυν,
προδοῦς μ' ἔοικε κάκλιπὼν τὸν πλοῦν στελεῖν.

910

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

λιπὼν μὲν οὐκ ἔγωγε· λυπηρῶς δὲ μὴ
πέμπω σε μᾶλλον, τοῦτ' ἀνιώμαι πάλαι.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

τί ποτε λέγεις, ὦ τέκνον; ὡς οὐ μανθάνω.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐδὲν σε κρύψω· δεῖ γὰρ ἐς Τροίαν σε πλεῖν
πρὸς τοὺς Ἀχαιοὺς καὶ τὸν Ἀτρειδῶν στόλον.

PHILOCTETES

PHILOCTETES

What can perplex thee? say not so, my son.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Too deep involved, I cannot otherwise.

PHILOCTETES

What! the offensiveness of my complaint
Will stay thee now from taking me aboard?

NEOPTOLEMUS

All is offensive when a man is false
To his true self and, knowing right, does wrong.

PHILOCTETES

But thou dost naught in word or deed to shame
Thy birth in succouring a worthy man.

NEOPTOLEMUS

I shall be proved a rogue; this tortures me.

PHILOCTETES

Not in thy deeds—thy words do give me pause.

NEOPTOLEMUS

God help me now! Must I appear twice base,
Hide what I should not and my shame reveal?

PHILOCTETES

The youth, if I misjudge him not, intends
To play me false and leave me stranded here.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Leave thee? Not so, but what will irk thee more,
Convey thee hence. 'Tis this that tortures me.

PHILOCTETES

Thy words are dark, I cannot catch their drift.

NEOPTOLEMUS

I will be plain and round with thee. To Troy
Thou sailest, to the Atridae and the host,

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οἶμοι, τί εἶπας;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

μὴ στέναζε, πρὶν μάθης.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ποῖον μάθημα; τί με νοεῖς δρᾶσαι ποτε;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

σῶσαι κακοῦ μὲν πρῶτα τοῦδ', ἔπειτα δὲ
ξὺν σοὶ τὰ Τροίας πεδία πορθῆσαι μολῶν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

καὶ ταῦτ' ἀληθῆ δρᾶν νοεῖς;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

πολλὴ κρατεῖ
τούτων ἀνάγκη, καὶ σὺ μὴ θυμοῦ κλύων.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀπόλωλα τλήμων, προδέδομαι. τί μ', ὦ ξένε,
δέδρακας; ἀπόδος ὡς τάχος τὰ τόξα μοι.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὐχ οἶόν τε· τῶν γὰρ ἐν τέλει κλύειν
τότ' ἔνδικόν με καὶ τὸ συμφέρον ποεῖ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ πῦρ σὺ καὶ πᾶν δεῖμα καὶ πανουργίας
δεινῆς τέχνημ' ἔχθιστον, οἶά μ' εἰργάσω,
οἷ' ἠπάτηκας· οὐδ' ἐπαισχύνει μ' ὄρων
τὸν προστρόπαιον, τὸν ἰκέτην, ὦ σχέτλιε;
ἀπεστέρηκας τὸν βίον τὰ τόξ' ἑλόν.
ἀπόδος, ἰκνούμαι σ', ἀπόδος, ἰκετεύω, τέκνον·
πρὸς θεῶν πατρώων, τὸν βίον με μὴ ἀφέλη.¹

¹ μή μ' ἀφέλης MSS., Elmsley corr.

PHILOCTETES

PHILOCTETES

Alas ! What say'st thou ?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Murmur not but hear me—

PHILOCTETES

Hear me, quoth he ! what wilt thou do with me ?

NEOPTOLEMUS

First from this misery rescue thee, and then,
With thee to aid me, ravage Ilium.

PHILOCTETES

Wilt thou indeed do this ?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Necessity

Leaves me no choice ; so take it not amiss.

PHILOCTETES

Me miserable ! I am undone, betrayed
How hast thou used me, sir ! I charge thee straight
Give back my bow !

NEOPTOLEMUS

• That cannot be, for I

By policy and duty both am bound
To obey my chiefs.

PHILOCTETES

Thou fire, thou utter monster,
Abhorred masterpiece of knavery,
How hast thou served me, cheated me, abused ?
Art not ashamed to look on me, thou wretch,
Thy suppliant, thy bedesman ? Robbing me
Of this my bow thou robbest me of life.
Restore it, I beseech thee, O my son,
Oh, an thou lov'st me, give me back my bow ;
Rob me not, by thy gods I pray, of life !

ὦμοι τάλας. ἀλλ' οὐδὲ προσφωνεῖ μ' ἔτι,
 ἀλλ' ὡς μεθήσων μήποθ', ὦδ' ὄρα πάλιν.
 ὦ λιμένες, ὦ προβλήτες, ὦ ξυνουσίαι
 θηρῶν ὀρείων, ὦ καταρρώγες πέτραι,
 ὑμῖν τὰδ', οὐ γὰρ ἄλλον οἶδ' ὅτ' ἔγωγε,
 ἀνακλαίομαι παροῦσι τοῖς εἰωθόσιν,
 οἳ ἔργ' ὁ παῖς μ' ἔδρασεν οὐξ Ἀχιλλέως· 940
 ὁμόσας ἀπάξειν οἴκαδ', ἐς Τροίαν μ' ἄγει·
 προσθεῖς τε χεῖρα δεξιάν, τὰ τόξα μου
 ἱερὰ λαβῶν τοῦ Ζηνὸς Ἡρακλέους ἔχει,
 καὶ τοῖσιν Ἀργείοισι φήνασθαι θέλει·
 ὡς ἄνδρ' ἔλῶν ἰσχυρόν ἐκ βίας μ' ἄγει,
 κοῦκ οἶδ' ἐναίρων νεκρὸν ἢ καπνοῦ σκιάν,
 εἶδωλον ἄλλως· οὐ γὰρ ἂν σθένοντά γε
 εἶλέν μ'· ἐπεὶ οὐδ' ἂν ὦδ' ἔχοντ', εἰ μὴ δόλω·
 νῦν δ' ἠπάτημαι δύσμορος. τί χρὴ με δρᾶν;
 ἀλλ' ἀπόδος, ἀλλὰ νῦν ἔτ' ἐν σαυτῷ γενοῦ. 950
 τί φῆς; σιωπᾶς; οὐδέν εἰμ' ὁ δύσμορος.
 ὦ σχῆμα πέτρας δίπυλον, αὐθις αὐτὸν πάλιν
 εἴσειμι πρὸς σὲ ψιλός, οὐκ ἔχων τροφήν·
 ἀλλ' ἀυανούμαι τῷδ' ἐν αὐλίφ' ἄλλος,
 οὐ πτηνὸν ὄρνιν οὐδὲ θῆρ' ὀρειβάτην
 τόξοις ἐναίρων τοισίδ', ἀλλ' αὐτὸς τάλας
 θανὼν παρέξω δαῖθ' ὑφ' ὧν ἐφερβόμην,
 καὶ μ' οὐς ἐθήρων πρόσθε θηράσουσι νῦν
 φόνον φόνου δὲ ῥύσιον τίσω τάλας
 πρὸς τοῦ δοκοῦντος οὐδέν εἶδέναι κακόν.
 ὄλοιο—μὴ πω, πρὶν μάθοιμ' εἰ καὶ πάλιν
 γνώμην μετόισις· εἰ δὲ μὴ, θάνοις κακῶς. 960

PHILOCTETES

Ah me ! he turns away, he will not speak ;
His silence says he will not give it back.

Ye creeks, ye promontories, dens and lairs
Of mountain beasts, ye cliffs precipitous,
To you—none else will heed me—I appeal,
On you, familiars of my woes, I call ;
Hear what I suffer from Achilles' son !
He swore to bring me home again, and now
To Troy he takes me ; on his plighted troth
I gave, he keeps my bow, the sacred bow
That erst to Zeus-born Heracles belonged,
To flout it 'fore the Argive host as his ;
He takes me hence his prisoner, as if
His arm had captured some great warrior,
And sees not he is slaying a dead man,
A shade, a wraith, an unsubstantial ghost ;
For in my strength he had not ta'en me, no,
Nor as I am, disabled, save by guile.
But now, entrapped, ah whither shall I turn ?

Have pity, give me, give me back my bow !
Be once again thy true self, even now.
What answer ? None. O woe is me, I am lost !
O cave with double mouth, to thee I turn ;
Stripped of my arms and lacking means of life,
Here shall I wither in this lonely cell.
No bird of air, no beast of the upland wold
Yon bow shall slay, but dying I shall make
A feast for those who fed me when alive,
A quarry for the creatures I pursued,
My blood for their blood shed. And this I owe
To one who seemed a child in innocence.
My curse upon thee—nay I will forbear,
Till first I hear whether thou wilt repent
Or not ; if no, die blasted by my curse !

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί δρῶμεν; ἐν σοὶ καὶ τὸ πλεῖν ἡμᾶς, ἀναξ,
ἦδη ὅτι καὶ τοῖς τοῦδε προσχωρεῖν λόγοις.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἐμοὶ μὲν οἶκτος δεινὸς ἐμπέπτωκέ τις
τοῦδ' ἀνδρὸς οὐ νῦν πρῶτον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πάλαι.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἐλέησον, ὦ παῖ, πρὸς θεῶν, καὶ μὴ παρῆς
σαντοῦ βροτοῖς ὄνειδος, ἐκκλέψας ἐμέ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οἴμοι, τί δράσω; μὴ ποτ' ὄφελον λιπεῖν
τὴν Σκῦρον· οὕτω τοῖς παροῦσιν ἄχθομαι.

970

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐκ εἰ κακὸς σύ, πρὸς κακῶν δ' ἀνδρῶν μαθῶν
ἔοικας ἤκειν αἰσχρά· νῦν δ' ἄλλοισι δοῦς
οἷς εἰκὸς ἐκπλεῖ, τὰμά μοι μεθεῖς ὄπλα.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί δρῶμεν, ἄνδρες;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ὦ κάκιστ' ἀνδρῶν, τί δράς;
οὐκ εἰ μεθεῖς τὰ τόξα ταῦτ' ἐμοὶ πάλι;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οἴμοι, τίς ἀνήρ; ἄρ' Ὀδυσσέως κλύω;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

Ὀδυσσέως, σάφ' ἴσθ', ἐμοῦ γ', ὅν εισορᾶς.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οἴμοι· πέπραμαι κάπολωλ'· ὄδ' ἦν ἄρα
ὁ ξυλλαβὼν με κάπονοσφίσας ὄπλων.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἐγώ, σάφ' ἴσθ', οὐκ ἄλλος· ὁμολογῶ τάδε.

980

PHILOCTETES

CHORUS

What shall we do, prince? 'tis for thee to say
Whether we sail or hearken to his prayer.

NEOPTOLEMUS

My heart is strangely wrought, and from the first
I have been moved with pity for the man.

PHILOCTETES

In heaven's name show mercy, let not men
Brand thee as my betrayer, O my son!

NEOPTOLEMUS

What shall I do? Would I had never left
Scyros, to fall into this desperate plight.

PHILOCTETES

Thou art not base, but coming here wast schooled
To play the rogue by villains; leave that part
To others framed by nature to be rogues.
Sail hence, hut ere thou sail give back my arms.

NEOPTOLEMUS

What shall we do, friends?

ODYSSEUS appears suddenly from behind the cave.

ODYSSEUS

Wretch, what art thou at?
Back with thee, sirrah! give the bow to me—

PHILOCTETES

Ah who is here? Is that Odysseus' voice?

ODYSSEUS

Odysseus, as thou seeest. Here am I.

PHILOCTETES

Oh I am sold, betrayed. So it was he
Who trapped me and bereft me of my arms.

ODYSSEUS

I and no other. I avow 'twas I.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀπόδος, ἄφες μοι, παῖ, τὰ τόξα.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

οὐδ' ἦν θέλη, δράσει ποτ'· ἀλλὰ καὶ σὲ δεῖ
στείχειν ἄμ' αὐτοῖς, ἢ βία στελοῦσί σε.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἔμ', ὦ κακῶν κάκιστε καὶ τολμήστατε,
οἶδ' ἐκ βίας ἄξουσιν;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἦν μὴ ἔρπης ἐκῶν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ Λημνία χθῶν καὶ τὸ παγκρατὲς σέλας
Ἑφαιστότευκτου, ταῦτα δῆτ' ἀνασχετά,
εἰ μ' οὔτος ἐκ τῶν σῶν ἀπάξεται βία;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

Ζεὺς ἐσθ', ἴν' εἰδῆς, Ζεὺς, ὁ τῆσδε γῆς κρατῶν,
Ζεὺς, ᾧ δέδοκται ταῦθ'· ὑπηρετῶ δ' ἐγώ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ μῖσος, οἷα κάξανευρίσκεις λέγειν
θεοὺς προτείνων τοὺς θεοὺς ψευδεῖς τίθης.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

οὐκ, ἀλλ' ἀληθεῖς· ἢ δ' ὁδὸς πορευτέα.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐ φημ'.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἐγὼ δέ φημι. πειστέον τάδε.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οἶμοι τάλας. ἡμᾶς μὲν ὡς δούλους σαφῶς
πατὴρ ἄρ' ἐξέφυσεν οὐδ' ἐλευθέρους.

PHILOCTETES

PHILOCTETES
(*To CHORUS*)

Ye also, friends, will ye abandon me
And show no pity for my sad estate ?

CHORUS

This stripling is our captain, and whate'er
He says, we say the same ; his word is law.

NEOPTOLEMUS

I know I shall be twitted by my chief
As weak and tender-hearted ; but what odds ?
If our friend wills it, tarry here until
Our crew have made all tight and yare, and we
Have offered prayers, as fitting. He the while
Perchance may come to a better mind and melt.
So we will hasten forward, he and I,
And ye, make haste to follow when we call.

[*Exeunt ODYSSEUS and NEOPTOLEMUS.*]

PHILOCTETES

O cavern'd rock, my cell (*Str. 1*)
Now hot, now icy chill,
How long with thee it was my lot to dwell :
To thee till death I shall be constant still.
Tell me, sad lodging, haunted by my pain,
How shall I day by day my life sustain ?
Ye timorous doves whose flight
Whirrs in the air o'erhead,
Now where ye will unharmed alight ;
No shafts of mine henceforward need ye dread.

CHORUS.

'Tis thou hast willed it thus, infatuate,
Thou art the author of thy sad estate ;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἄλλοθεν ἔχει τύχῃ τᾶδ' ἀπὸ μείζονος,
εὐτέ γε παρὸν φρονῆσαι
τοῦ λόφονος δαίμονος εἴλου τὸ κάκιον αἰνεῖν.¹

110

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ τλάμων τλάμων ἄρ' ἐγὼ ἀντ. α'
καὶ μόχθῳ λωβατός, ὃς ἤδη μετ' οὐδενὸς ὕστερον
ἀνδρῶν εἰσοπίσω τάλας ναίων ἐνθάδ' ὀλοῦμαι,
αἰαὶ αἰαὶ,
οὐ φορβὰν ἔτι προσφέρων,
οὐ πτανῶν ἀπ' ἐμῶν ὄπλων
κραταιαῖς μετὰ χερσὶν
ἰσχῶν· ἀλλὰ μοι ἄσκοπα 1110
κρυπτά τ' ἔπη δολερᾶς ὑπέδν φρενός·
ἰδοίμαν δέ νιν,
τὸν τάδε μησάμενον, τὸν ἴσον χρόνον
ἐμὰς λαχόντ' ἀνίας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πότμος, πότμος σε δαιμόνων τὰδ',
οὐδὲ σέ γε δόλος,
ἔσχευ ὑπὸ χειρὸς ἀμᾶς.² 1120 στυγερὰν ἔχε
δύσποτμον ἄρὰν ἐπ' ἄλλοις.
καὶ γὰρ ἐμοὶ τοῦτο μέλει, μὴ φιλότητ' ἀπώσῃ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οἶμοι μοι, καὶ πού πολιᾶς στρ. β'
πόντου θινὸς ἐφήμενος
ἐγγελά, χερὶ πάλλων
τὰν ἐμὰν μελέου τροφάν,
τὰν οὐδεὶς ποτ' ἐβάστασεν.
ὦ τόξον φίλον, ὦ φίλων
χειρῶν ἐκβεβιασμένον,

¹ ἐλεῖν MSS., Hermann corr.

² ἰσχ' ὑπὸ χειρὸς ἐμᾶς MSS., Bergk corr.

PHILOCTETES

Nor to some higher force canst thou assign
Thy woes, but, when free choice was thine,
The good thou did'st reject,
The worse elect.

PHILOCTETES

Ah wretched, wretched then am I, (*Ant. 1*)
Consumed with utter misery,
Doomed for all time to linger on.
Without one friend, one comrade, one,
 To aid me till I die.
 No more my arrows fleet
 Shall win my daily meat;
Poor unsuspecting fool,
A base intriguer's tool,
By his forged legend caught!
Wretch who my ruin wrought,
Would I might see him pine
Long years like me in agony like mine!

CHORUS

By destiny, hy destiny 'twas sent.
To treachery my hand was never lent;
Point not at me thy baleful curse, for fain
Thy friend, as heretofore, I would remain.

PHILOCTETES

Ah me! he's sitting now (*Str. 2*)
 Upon the grey sea sands,
And laughs at me, I trow;
 My bow is in his hands,
The bow that was my life, the bow
That never lord save me did know.
My bow, my matchless bow of yew,
 If thou canst feel, how must thou grieve,

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἦ που ελεινὸν ὄρας, φρένας εἴ τινας
 ἔχεις, τὸν Ἡράκλειον
 ἄρθμον ὠδέ σοι
 οὐκέτι χρῆσόμενον τὸ μεθύστερον,
 ἄλλου δ' ἐν μεταλλαγᾷ
 πολυμηχάνου ἀνδρὸς ἐρέσσει,
 ὄρων μὲν αἰσχροῦς ἀπάτας, στυγνὸν δὲ φῶτ' ἐχθο-
 δοπόν,
 μυρὶ', ἀπ' αἰσχροῶν ἀνατέλλονθ', ὃς ἐφ' ἡμῖν κάκ'
 ἐμήσατ', ὦ Ζεῦ.¹

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀνδρὸς τοι τὰ μὲν ἔνδικ' αἰὲν² εἰπεῖν,
 εἰπόντος δὲ μὴ φθουερὰν
 ἐξῶσαι γλώσσας ὀδύνας.
 κείνος δ' εἰς ἀπὸ πολλῶν
 ταχθεὶς τῶνδ' ἐφημοσύνα
 κοινὰν ἤνυσεν ἐς φίλους ἀρωγάν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ πταναὶ θῆραι χαροπῶν τ' ἀντ. β'
 ἔθνη θηρῶν, ὃς ὃδ' ἔχει
 χῶρος οὐρεσιβώτας,
 μηκέτ' ἀπ' ἀλλίων φύγα
 πηδᾶτ'.³ οὐ γὰρ ἔχω χεροῖν
 τὰν πρόσθεν βέλεων ἀλκάν,
 ὦ δύστανος ἐγὼ τανῦν,
 ἀλλ' ἀνέδην, ὃ δὲ χῶρος ἄρ' οὐκέτι
 φοβητὸς οὐκέθ' ὑμῖν,⁴
 ἔρπετε· νῦν καλὸν
 ἀντίφονον κορέσαι στόμα πρὸς χάριν

¹ Ὀδυσσεύς MSS., Dindorf corr.!

² τὸ μὲν εἰς δίκαιον MSS., Arnōt corr.

³ φυγῆ μ' οὐκέτ' ἀπ' ἀλλίων | πελάτ' MSS., Jebb corr.

⁴ ὅδε χῶρος ἐρύκεται | οὐκέτι φοβητὸς ὑμῖν MSS., Jebb corr.

PHILOCTETES

Thus wrested from thy master true,
 Constrained his loving hands to leave,
Thy master who, through Hellas famed,
The friend of Heracles was named.

Now art thou handled by a knave,
 Past master in each cunning art,
Must do his bidding, as a slave,
 In all his misdeeds take thy part.
And aid the unrelenting foe,
The source and spring of all my woe.

CHORUS

A man should aye his rightful cause maintain,
But from malign and venomous taunts refrain ;
And he but serves the common interest,
Speaks for the host, obeying their behest.

PHILOCTETES

Ye feathered tribes, my prey, (*Ant.* 2)
 Ye bright-eyed beasts who roam
The hills, start not away
 Scared from the hunter's bome.
Stray where ye will, secure, unharmed ;
Why shun a helpless man unarmed ?

Gone is the mighty bow ;
 Flock hither without dread,
Why should ye fear a foe
 So weak, so ill bestead.
Draw near your gluttonous mouths to fill,
Mangle my carrion flesh at will.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἐμᾶς σαρκὸς αἰόλας·
 ἀπὸ γὰρ βίον αὐτίκα λείψω.
 πόθεν γὰρ ἔσται βιοτά; τίς ὦδ' ἐν αὔραις τρέφεται, 116
 μηκέτι μηδενὸς κρατύνων ὅσα πέμπει βιόδωρος
 αἶα;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πρὸς θεῶν, εἴ τι σέβει ξένον, πέλασσον,
 εὐνοία πάσα πελάταν·
 ἀλλὰ γνῶθ', εὖ γνῶθ' ἐπὶ σοὶ¹
 κῆρα τάνδ' ἀποφεύγειν.
 οἰκτρὰ γὰρ βόσκειν, ἀδαῆς δ'
 ἔχειν μυρίον ἄχθος, ὃ ξυνοικεῖ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

πάλιν πάλιν παλαιὸν ἄλγημ' ὑπέμνασας, ὦ
 λῶστε τῶν πρὶν ἐντόπων. 1170
 τί μ' ὄλεσας; τί μ' εἵργασαι;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί τοῦτ' ἔλεξας;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

εἰ σὺ τὰν ἐμοὶ στυγερὰν
 Τρῳάδα γὰρ μ' ἤλπισας ἄξειν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τόδε γὰρ νοῶ κράτιστον.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀπὸ νῦν με λείπετ' ἤδη.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

φίλα μοι, φίλα ταῦτα παρήγγειλας ἐκόντι τε
 πράσσειν.

ἴωμεν ἴωμεν

ναὸς ἴν' ἡμῖν τέτακται.

1180

¹ ὅτι σοὶ MSS., Seyffert corr.

PHILOCTETES

Here shall I waste away,
 Soon will ye eye me dead ;
Who can survive one day
 By airs of heaven fed ?
Of all that Earth affords each son,
Herb, root and fruit, possessing none.

CHORUS

If thou regardest a well-wishing friend,
Draw near and to his kindly rule attend.
Think well ; from this intolerable bane,
That thou dost feed, and aggravate thy pain,
With thee it rests deliverance to gain.

PHILOCTETES

O why recall my ancient grief once more,
Kindest of all who e'er have touched this shore ?
Why twice undo a wretch undone before ?

CHORUS

What meanest thou ?

PHILOCTETES

I mean that thou wast fain
To take me to the Troy I hate again.

CHORUS

'Tis for thy good.

PHILOCTETES

O leave me then, begone !

CHORUS

Thanks for that word. We will be off anon,
Back to the ship, and each man to his oar.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

μή, πρὸς ἀραίου Διός, ἔλθης, ἱκετεύω.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μετρίαξ'.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ ξένοι,
μείνατε, πρὸς θεῶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί θροεῖς;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

αἰαῖ αἰαῖ, δαίμων δαίμων·
ἀπόλωλ' ὁ τάλας·
ὦ πούς πούς, τί σ' ἔτ' ἐν βίῳ
τεύξω τῷ μετόπι τάλας;
ὦ ξένοι, ἔλθετ' ἐπήλυδες αὖθις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί ῥέξοντες ἀλλοκότῳ
γνώμα τῶν πάρος, ὧν προύφαινες;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὔτοι νεμεσητόν,
ἀλύοντα χειμερίῳ
λύπα καὶ παρὰ νοῦν θροεῖν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

βᾶθί νυν, ὦ τάλαν, ὧς σε κελεύομεν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐδέποτ' οὐδέποτ', ἴσθι τόδ' ἔμπεδον,
οὐδ' εἰ πυρφόρος ἀστεροπητῆς
βροντᾶς ἀνγαῖς μ' εἰσι φλογίζων.
ἔρρέτω Ἴλιον οἳ θ' ὑπ' ἐκείνῳ
πάντες ὅσοι τόδ' ἔτλασαν ἐμοῦ ποδὸς ἄρθρον
ἀπῶσαι.

ἀλλ', ὦ ξένοι, ἐν γέ μοι εὖχος ὀρέξατε.

464

1190

1200

PHILOCTETES

PHILOCTETES

O leave me not, for God's sake, I implore.

CHORUS

Calm thyself.

PHILOCTETES

Stay, O stay!

CHORUS

Why should we wait?

PHILOCTETES

O woe is me! Out on my fate, my fate!
Accursed foot, what shall I make of thee?
I am undone! O friends, come back to me.

CHORUS

What would'st thou? First thou bid'st us go, and
then
In the same breath thou biddest us remain.

PHILOCTETES

O be not wrath if one distraught with pain
Blurts out discordant words beside the mark.

CHORUS

Come then, unhappy man, with us embark.

PHILOCTETES

Never, no never, though the King of Heaven
Should threat to blast me with his fiery leven.
No, perish rather Ilium, perish all
The Achæan host that batter at its wall;
Hard hearts who cast me forth as halt and maim
From you, my friends, one parting boon I claim.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ποῖον ἔρεῖς τόδ' ἔπος:

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ξίφος, εἴ ποθεν,
ἢ γένυν ἢ βελέων τι προπέμψατε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὡς τίνα δὴ ῥέξης παλάμαν ποτέ;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

χρῶτ' ¹ ἀπὸ πάντα καὶ ἄρθρα τέμω χερσί·
φονᾶ φονᾶ νόος ἤδη.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί ποτε;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

πατέρα ματεύων.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ποῖ γὰς;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

εἰς Ἄιδου·

οὐ γάρ ἐστ' ἐν φάει γ' ἔτι.
ὦ πόλις, ὦ πατρία,
πῶς ἂν εἰσίδοιμ' ἄθλιός σ' ἀνὴρ,
ὅς γε σὰν λιπῶν ἱερὰν
λιβάδ' ἐχθροῖς ἔβαν Δαναοῖς
ἄρωγός· ἔτ' οὐδέν εἰμι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἐγὼ μὲν ἤδη καὶ πάλαι νεὸς ὀμοῦ
στείχων ἂν ἢ σοι τῆς ἐμῆς, εἰ μὴ πέλας
'Οδυσσεά στείχοντα τόν τ' Ἀχιλλέως
γόνου πρὸς ἡμᾶς δεῦρ' ἴοντ' ἐλεύσομεν.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

οὐκ ἂν φράσειας ἦντιν' αὐτὸν παλίντροπος
κέλευθον ἔρπεις ὧδε σὺν σπουδῇ ταχύς;

¹ κρᾶτ' MSS., Hermann corr.

PHILOCTETES

CHORUS

What would'st thou ask ?

PHILOCTETES

An axe, a spear, a brand,
No matter what—the weapon first to hand.

CHORUS

Wherefore ! What deed of violence wouldst thou do ?

PHILOCTETES

Hack, mangle, limb by limb my body hew ;
My thoughts are bloody.

CHORUS

Wherefore ?

PHILOCTETES

I would go

To seek my father.

CHORUS

In what land ?

PHILOCTETES

Below ;

For I shall find him nowhere on this earth.
My native land, fair land that gave me birth,
Might I but see thee ! Wherefore did I roam
And leave the sacred stream that guards my home ?
To help the Greeks those stormy seas I crossed,
My mortal foes, by them undone, lost, lost !

CHORUS

I should have left thee long ago and now
Be near my ship, but that I saw Odysseus
Advancing towards us and Achilles' son.

Enter NEOPTOLEMUS *followed by* ODYSSEUS.

ODYSSEUS

Wilt thou not tell me why thou hurriest back
In such hot haste and on what errand bound ?

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

λύσων ὄσ' ἐξήμαρτον ἐν τῷ πρὶν χρόνῳ.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

δεινόν γε φωνεῖς· ἢ δ' ἄμαρτία τίς ἦν;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἦν σοὶ πιθόμενος τῷ τε σύμπαντι στρατῷ

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἔπραξας ἔργον ποῖον ὧν οὐ σοὶ πρόπον;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἠπάταισιν αἰσχροῖς ἄνδρα καὶ δόλοισι ἐλών.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

τὸν ποῖον; ὦμοι· μῶν τι βουλεύει νέον;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

νέον μὲν οὐδέν, τῷ δὲ Ποίαντος τόκῳ,

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

τί χρήμα δράσεις; ὡς μ' ὑπήλθέ τις φόβος.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

παρ' οὐπερ ἔλαβον τάδε τὰ τόξ', αὐθις πάλιν

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ὦ Ζεῦ, τί λέξεις; οὐ τί πον δοῦναι νοεῖς;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

αἰσχροῦς γὰρ αὐτὰ κού δικῆ λαβῶν ἔχω.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

πρὸς θεῶν, πότερα δὴ κερτομῶν λέγεις τάδε;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

εἰ κερτόμησίς ἐστι τάληθῆ λέγειν.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

τί φῆς, Ἀχιλλέως παῖ; τίν' εἴρηκας λόγον;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

δὶς ταῦτά βούλει καὶ τρίς ἀναπολεῖν μ' ἔπη;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἀρχὴν κλίειν ἂν οὐδ' ἄπαξ ἐβουλόμην.

PHILOCTETES

NEOPTOLEMUS

I come to expiate all former wrongs.

ODYSSEUS

A strange reply. What wrong did'st thou commit?

NEOPTOLEMUS

When in obedience to the host and thee—

ODYSSEUS

Prithee, what did'st thou that beseeemed thee not?

NEOPTOLEMUS

I snared a man by base deceit and guile.

ODYSSEUS

What man? Thou hast not something rash in hand?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Naught rash, but to the son of Pœas I—

ODYSSEUS

What wilt thou do? My soul forbodes some ill.

NEOPTOLEMUS

From whom I took the bow, to him again—

ODYSSEUS

Great Zeus! What meanest thou? Not give it back?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Yes, for I got it basely, shamefully.

ODYSSEUS

In Heaven's name, say'st thou this to mock at me?

NEOPTOLEMUS

If it be mockery to speak the truth.

ODYSSEUS

What now? What meanest thou, Achilles' son?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Must I repeat the same words twice and thrice?

ODYSSEUS

Far better had I never heard them once.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

εὐ νῦν ἐπίστω πάντ' ἀκηκοῶς λόγον.

1244

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἔστιν τις, ἔστιν ὃς σε κωλύσει τὸ δρᾶν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί φῆς; τίς ἔσται μ' οὐπικωλύσων τάδε;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ξύμπας Ἀχαιῶν λαός, ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἐγώ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

σοφὸς πεφυκῶς οὐδὲν ἐξαυδάς σοφόν.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

σύ δ' οὔτε φωνεῖς οὔτε δρασεῖεις σοφά.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' εἰ δίκαια, τῶν σοφῶν κρείσσω τάδε.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

καὶ πῶς δίκαιον, ἃ γ' ἔλαβες βουλαῖς ἡμαῖς,
πάλιν μεθεῖναι ταῦτα;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τὴν ἁμαρτίαν
αἰσχρὰν ἁμαρτῶν ἀναλαβεῖν πειράσομαι.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

στρατὸν δ' Ἀχαιῶν οὐ φοβεῖ, πράσσω τάδε; 1250

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ξὺν τῷ δικαίῳ τὸν σὸν οὐ ταρβῶ φόβον.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

[ξὺν τῷ δικαίῳ χεῖρ ἐμή σ' ἀναγκάσει.]¹

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὐδέ τοι σῆ χειρὶ πείθομαι τὸ δρᾶν.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

οὐ τᾶρα Τρωσίν, ἀλλὰ σοὶ μαχούμεθα.

¹ Hermann pointed out that a verse is here missing. The line in the text (one of Jebb's suggestions) with the same beginning would explain the omission.

PHILOCTETES

NEOPTOLEMUS

Rest well assured I have nothing more to add.

ODYSSEUS

There is, I tell thee, one to stay thy hand.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Who prithee? who to stay me or prevent?

ODYSSEUS

The whole Achæan host, and I for one.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Thy words lack wisdom though thou lack'st not wits.

ODYSSEUS

Unwisdom marks thy words and actions both.

NEOPTOLEMUS

If just, 'tis better than unjust and wise.

ODYSSEUS

Can it be justice to give back the prize
Won by my policy?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Shameful was my fault,
And I will try to make amends for it.

ODYSSEUS

Hast thou no terror of the Achæan host?

NEOPTOLEMUS

A bugbear this with justice on my side.

ODYSSEUS

[Justice must yield if I resort to force.]

NEOPTOLEMUS

Not even thou canst force me 'gainst my will.

ODYSSEUS

Then not with Trojans must we war, but thee.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἴτω¹ τὸ μέλλον.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

χείρα δεξιὰν ὄρῃς
κώπης ἐπιψάουσαν;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλὰ καὶ μέ τοι
ταύτων τὸδ' ὄψει δρώντα κοῦ μέλλοντ' ἔτι.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

καί τοι σ' εἰάσω· τῷ δὲ σύμπαντι στρατῷ
λέξω τάδ' ἐλθῶν, ὅς σε τιμωρήσεται.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἔσωφρόνησας· κὰν τὰ λοίφ' οὔτω φρονῆς,
ἴσως ἂν ἐκτὸς κλαυμάτων ἔχοις πόδα.
σύ δ', ὦ Ποίαντος παῖ, Φιλοκτῆτην λέγω,
ἔξελθ', ἀμείψας τάσδε πετρήρεις στέγας.

1260

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

τίς αὖ παρ' ἄντροις θόρυβος ἴσταται βοῆς;
τί μ' ἐκκαλεῖσθε; τοῦ κεχρημένοι, ξένοι;
ὦμοι· κακὸν τὸ χρῆμα. μῶν τί μοι νέα
πάρεστε πρὸς κακοῖσι πέμποντες κακά;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

θάρσει· λόγους δ' ἄκουσον οὐδ' ἤκω φέρων.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

δέδοικ' ἐγωγε· καὶ τὰ πρὶν γὰρ ἐκ λόγων
καλῶν κακῶς ἔπραξα, σοῖς πεισθεὶς λόγοις.

1270

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὔκουν ἔνεστι καὶ μεταγνῶναι πάλιν;

¹ ἴτω MSS., Wecklein corr.

PHILOCTETES

NEOPTOLEMUS

So be it, if it must be.

ODYSSEUS

See'st my hand

Upon my sword-hilt?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Me too shalt thou see

Ready to follow suit and keen to draw.

ODYSSEUS

Well, I will leave thee, but I shall report
To the whole army. They shall punish thee.

NEOPTOLEMUS

A wise discretion. Keep this prudent mind,
So mayest thou henceforth with a whole skin live.

[Exit ODYSSEUS

Ho! Philoctetes, son of Poeas, leave
The shelter of thy rocky home; come forth!

PHILOCTETES

What means this hubbuh at my cave again?
Why summon me, what would ye with me, Sirs?

(*Appears at mouth of cave and sees* NEOPTOLEMUS.)

Ha! I mislike the look of it. Are ye come
As heralds of new woes to crown the old?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Take heart and listen to the news I bring.

PHILOCTETES

I am afraid. Thou camest once before;
I trusted thy fair words and ill I sped.

NEOPTOLEMUS

May not a man repent him?

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

τοιούτος ἦσθα τοῖς λόγοισι χῶτε μου
τὰ τόξ' ἔκλεπτες, πιστός, ἀτηρὸς λάθρα.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἄλλ' οὐ τι μὴν νῦν βούλομαι δέ σου κλύειν,
πότερα δέδοκται σοι μένοντι καρτερεῖν
ἢ πλεῖν μεθ' ἡμῶν;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

παῦε, μὴ λέξης πέρα
μάτην γὰρ ἂν εἴπης γε πάντ' εἰρήσεται.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὕτω δέδοκται;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

καὶ πέρα γ' ἴσθ' ἢ λέγω.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἄλλ' ἤθελον μὲν ἂν σε πεισθῆναι λόγοις
ἐμοῖσιν· εἰ δέ μή τι πρὸς καιρὸν λέγων
κυρῶ, πέπαυμαι.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

πάντα γὰρ φράσεις μάτην.
οὐ γάρ ποτ' εὖνουν τὴν ἐμὴν κτήσει φρένα,
ὅστις γ' ἐμοῦ δόλοισι τὸν βίον λαβὼν
ἀπεστέρηκας, κἄτα νουθετεῖς ἐμέ
ἐλθῶν, ἀρίστου πατρὸς αἰσχιστος γεγώς.
ὄλοισθ', Ἀτρεΐδαι μὲν μάλιστ', ἔπειτα δὲ
ὁ Λαρτίου παῖς καὶ σύ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

μὴ πεύξῃ πέρα·
δέχου δὲ χειρὸς ἐξ ἐμῆς βέλη τάδε.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

πῶς εἶπας; ἄρα δεύτερον δολούμεθα;

PHILOCTETES

PHILOCTETES

Such thou wast,
No less fair-spoken, when thou wert about
To steal my bow, black treachery in thy heart.

NEOPTOLEMUS

But now another man, who fain would learn
Whether thou still persistest to stay here,
Or wilt embark with us.

PHILOCTETES

Stop, say no more !
All that thou sayest will be wasted breath.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Art resolute ?

PHILOCTETES

More resolute than words can tell.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Well, I would gladly have persuaded thee
By argument, but if thou wilt not heed,
Why, I have done.

PHILOCTETES

Thou needs must speak in vain.
How canst thou win me o'er to friendliness,
Thou who didst rob me of my life by fraud,
And then dost come to counsel me ? Base son
Of noblest sire ! Perdition on you all ;
The Atridae first, Odysseus then, and thee !

NEOPTOLEMUS

Forbear thy curses. Take from me thy bow.

PHILOCTETES

What say'st thou ? Am I tricked a second time ?

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀπόμοσ' ἀγνὸν Ζητὸς ὑψίστου σέβας.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ φίλτατ' εἰπών, εἰ λέγεις ἐτήτυμα.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τοῦργον παρέσται φανερόν· ἀλλὰ δεξιὰν
πρότεινε χεῖρα, καὶ κράτει τῶν σῶν ὄπλων.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἐγὼ δ' ἀπαυδῶ γ', ὧ θεοὶ ξυνίστορες,
ὑπὲρ τ' Ἀτρειδῶν τοῦ τε σύμπαντος στρατοῦ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

τέκνον, τίος φώνημα, μῶν Ὀδυσσέως,
ἐπησθόμην;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

σάφ' ἴσθι· καὶ πέλας γ' ὄρας,
ὅς σ' ἐς τὰ Τροίας πεδὶ ἀποστελῶ βία,
εἴαν τ' Ἀχιλλέως παῖς εἴαν τε μὴ θέλῃ·

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἄλλ' οὐ τι χαίρων, ἦν τόδ' ὀρθωθῆ βέλος.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἦ, μηδαμῶς, μή, πρὸς θεῶν, μεθῆς βέλος.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

μέθες με, πρὸς θεῶν, χεῖρα, φίλτατον τέκνον.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ ἂν μεθείην.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

φεῦ· τί μ' ἄνδρα πολέμον
ἐχθρόν τ' ἀφείλου μὴ κτανεῖν τόξοις ἐμοῖς;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἄλλ' οὐτ' ἐμοὶ τοῦτ' ἐστὶν οὔτε σοὶ καλόν.

PHILOCTETES

NEOPTOLEMUS

No, by the name of Zeus most high, I swear it.

PHILOCTETES

O comfortable words, if they be true.

NEOPTOLEMUS

The deed shall follow to attest this truth
Reach hither thy right hand and take thy bow.

*(As he is handing the bow to PHILOCTETES, ODYSSEUS
appears.)*

ODYSSEUS

Hold ! I protest 'fore Heaven, and in the name
Of the Atridae and the host forbid it.

PHILOCTETES

Who spake, my son, was that Odysseus' voice
I heard ?

ODYSSEUS

None other ; and he's hard at hand,
Ready to take thee back to Troy by force,
Whether it please Achilles' son or no.

PHILOCTETES

But at thy peril, if this shaft fly straight.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Hold, hold ! in heaven's name let not fly thy shaft !

PHILOCTETES

Let go my hand in heaven's name, dearest son !

NEOPTOLEMUS

I will not.

PHILOCTETES

Why, O why didst thou prevent me
From slaying with my bow the man I hate ?

NEOPTOLEMUS

That were dishonourable for thee and me.

[Exit ODYSSEUS.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀλλ' οὖν τοσοῦτόν γ' ἴσθι, τοὺς πρώτους στρατοῦ,
τοὺς τῶν Ἀχαιῶν ψευδοκῆρυκας, κακοὺς
ὄντας πρὸς αἰχμῆν, ἐν δὲ τοῖς λόγοις θρασεῖς.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

εἰεν τὰ μὲν δὴ τόξ' ἔχεις, κοῦκ ἔσθ' ὄτου
ὄργην ἔχοις ἂν οὐδὲ μέμψιν εἰς ἐμέ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ξύμφημι τὴν φύσιν δ' ἔδειξας, ὦ τέκνον,
ἐξ ἧς ἔβλαστες, οὐχὶ Σισύφου πατρός,
ἀλλ' ἐξ Ἀχιλλέως, ὃς μετὰ ζώντων ὄτ' ἦν
ἦκου' ἄριστα, νῦν δὲ τῶν τεθνηκότων.

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ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἦσθην πατέρα τὸν ἄμὸν εὐλογοῦντά σε
αὐτόν τ' ἔμ'. ὦν δέ σου τυχεῖν ἐφίεμαι,
ἄκουσον. ἀνθρώποισι τὰς μὲν ἐκ θεῶν
τύχας δοθείσας ἔστ' ἀναγκαῖον φέρειν·
ὅσοι δ' ἐκουσίοισιν ἔγκεινται βλάβαις,
ὥσπερ σύ, τούτοις οὔτε συγγνώμην ἔχειν
δίκαιόν ἐστιν οὔτ' ἐποικτίρειν τινά.

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σὺ δ' ἠγρίωσαι, κοῦτε σύμβουλον δέχει,
εἰάν τε νουθετῇ τις εὐνοία λέγων,
στρυγεῖς, πολέμου δυσμενῆ θ' ἠγούμενος.
ὅμως δὲ λέξω· Ζῆνα δ' ὄρκιον καλῶ·
καὶ ταῦτ' ἐπίστω καὶ γράφου φρενῶν ἔσω.
σὺ γὰρ νοσεῖς τόδ' ἄλγος ἐκ θείας τύχης,
Χρῦσης πελασθεὶς φύλακος, ὃς τὸν ἀκαλυφῆ
σηκὸν φυλάσσει κρύφιος οἰκουρῶν ὄφιν·
καὶ παῦλαν ἴσθι τῆσδε μή ποτ' ἂν τυχεῖν
νόσου βαρείας, ἕως ἂν αὐτὸς ἥλιος
ταύτη μὲν αἶρη, τῆδε δ' αὖ δύνῃ πάλιν,
πρὶν ἂν τὰ Τροίας πεδί' ἐκὼν αὐτὸς μόλῃς.

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PHILOCTETES

PHILOCTETES

Well of one thing thou may'st be sure, the chiefs,
Those lying heralds of the Achaean host,
Are brave in words and cowards in the fight.

NEOPTOLEMUS

So be it. The bow is thine again, and now
Thou hast no grief or quarrel against me.

PHILOCTETES

None, my brave boy, for thou hast proved this day
Thy race and lineage, not of Sisyphus,
But of Achilles, noblest once of men
In life, and now the noblest of the dead.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Sweet to my ears the praises of my sire,
And of myself; but now I crave of thee
A boon. What fates the gods allot to men
They needs must bear, but whoso hug their griefs,
As thou dost,—who can pity or condone
Such self-tormentors? Thou, inexorable,
Wilt tolerate no counsel, deemest him
Who would admonish thee in love a foe;
Yet will I speak the truth, so help me Zeus!
Write on the table of thy memory
These words: thy sore plague is a heaven-sent doom;
With foot profane, in Chryse's roofless shrine,
Thou didst insult her tutelary snake.
For this sin wast thou stricken, and no relief
Canst win from thy affliction, whilst the sun
Shall run from East to West his daily course,
Before of thy free will thou com'st to Troy.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

καὶ τοῖν παρ' ἡμῖν ἐντυχῶν Ἀσκληπίδαι
 νόσου μαλαχθῆς τῆσδε, καὶ τὰ πέργαμα
 ξύν τοῖσδε τόξοις ξύν τ' ἐμοὶ πέρσας φανῆς.
 ὡς δ' οἶδα ταῦτα τῆδ' ἔχοντ' ἐγὼ φράσω.
 ἀνὴρ γὰρ ἡμῖν ἐστὶν ἐκ Τροίας ἀλούς,
 Ἔλενος ἀριστόμαντις, ὃς λέγει σαφῶς
 ὡς δεῖ γενέσθαι ταῦτα· καὶ πρὸς τοῖσδ' ἔτι
 ὡς ἔστ' ἀνάγκη τοῦ παρεστῶτος θέρους
 Τροίαν ἀλῶναι πᾶσαν ἢ δίδωσ' ἐκὼν
 κτείνειν ἑαυτὸν, ἣν τάδε ψευσθῆ λέγων.
 ταῦτ' οὖν ἐπεὶ κάτοισθα, συγχώρει θέλων.
 καλὴ γὰρ ἡ πίκτησις, Ἑλλήνων ἓνα
 κριθέντ' ἄριστον τοῦτο μὲν παιωνίας
 ἐς χεῖρας ἔλθειν, εἶτα τὴν πολύστονον
 Τροίαν ἐλόντα κλέος ὑπέρτατον λαβεῖν.

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ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ στυγνὸς αἰὼν, τί με, τί δῆτ' ἔχεις ἄνω
 βλέποντα κοῦκ ἀφήκας εἰς Αἶδου μολεῖν;
 οἴμοι, τί δράσω; πῶς ἀπιστήσω λόγοις
 τοῖς τοῦδ', ὃς εὖνους ὦν ἐμοὶ παρήνευσεν;
 ἀλλ' εἰκάθω δῆτ'; εἶτα πῶς ὁ δύσμορος
 εἰς φῶς τὰδ' ἔρξας εἴμι; τῷ προσήγορος;
 πῶς, ὦ τὰ πάντ' ἰδόντες ἀμφ' ἐμοὶ κύκλοι,
 ταῦτ' ἐξανασχῆσεσθε, τοῖσιν Ἀτρέως
 ἐμὲ ξυνόντα παισίν, οἳ μ' ἀπώλεσαν;
 πῶς τῷ πανώλει παιδὶ τῷ Λαερτίου;
 οὐ γὰρ με τᾶλγος τῶν παρελθόντων δάκνει,
 ἀλλ' οἷα χρὴ παθεῖν με πρὸς τούτων ἔτι
 δοκῶ προλεύσσειν οἷς γὰρ ἡ γνώμη κακῶν
 μήτηρ γένηται, τᾶλλα παιδεύει κακοῦς.
 καὶ σοῦ δ' ἔγωγε θαυμάσας ἔχω τόδε.
 χρῆν γὰρ σε μήτ' αὐτὸν ποτ' ἐς Τροίαν μολεῖν

1350

1360

PHILOCTETES

There shalt thou find our famed Asclepidae,
And healed by them, with thy bow's aid and mine,
Shalt take and sack the towers of Ilium.
Thou askest how I know all this. Attend :
We have a Trojan prisoner, Helenus,
Chiefest of seers, who plainly prophesied
All I have told thee, and revealed besides
That, ere this summer passes, Troy must fall ;
His life the forfeit if his word proved false.
Now that thou know'st this, yield with a good grace.
How fair a vision—to be singled out
As bravest of the host, and, first made whole
By healing hands, as conqueror of Troy,
Woe-wearied city, win undying fame !

PHILOCTETES

O hateful life that keep'st me lingering on
In this vile world and wilt not let me join
The world of shades ! Ah me ! What can I do ?
How turn a deaf ear to the kindly words
Of one who counsels well and seeks my good ?
Shall I then yield ? How, having yielded, face
The public gaze ? Will not all turn from me ?
Ye eyes, so long the witness of my wrongs,
How will ye brook to see me once again
Consorting with my torturers, the sons
Of Atreus and Odysseus, the arch-fiend ?
'Tis not resentment for the past that stings,
But a prevision of the ills to come ;
For when a mind is warped it takes the ply,
And evil-doers will be evil still.
Thee too, my son, I marvel much at thee ;
Never should'st thou have gone thyself to Troy,

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἡμᾶς τ' ἀπείργειν, οἳ γέ σου καθύβρισαν,
 πατρός γέρας συλῶντες, εἴτα τοῖσδε σὺ
 εἰ ξυμμαχήσων,¹ κάμ' ἀναγκάζεις τόδε;
 μὴ δῆτα, τέκνον· ἄλλ' ἅ μοι ξυνῶμοσας,
 πέμψον πρὸς οἴκους· καὐτὸς ἐν Σκύρῳ μένων
 ἕα κακῶς αὐτοὺς ἀπόλλυσθαι κακοὺς.
 χούτῳ διπλῆν μὲν ἐξ ἑμοῦ κτήσει χάριν,
 διπλῆν δὲ πατρός, κοῦ κακοὺς ἐπωφελῶν
 δόξεις ὁμοῖος τοῖς κακοῖς πεφυκέναί.

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ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

λέγεις μὲν εἰκότ', ἄλλ' ὅμως σε βούλομαι
 θεοῖς τε πιστεύσαντα τοῖς τ' ἑμοῖς λόγοις
 φίλου μετ' ἀνδρὸς τοῦδε τῆσδ' ἐκπλεῖν χθονός.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἦ πρὸς τὰ Τροίας πεδία καὶ τὸν Ἀτρέως
 ἐχθιστον υἱὸν τῷδε δυστήνῳ ποδί;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

πρὸς τοὺς μὲν οὖν σε τήνδε τ' ἔμπνου βάσιν
 παύσοντας ἄλγους κάποσώσοντας νόσου.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ δεινὸν αἶνον αἰνέσας, τί φῆς ποτε;

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ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἅ σοί τε κάμοι λῦσθ' ὀρώ τελούμενα.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

καὶ ταῦτα λέξας οὐ καταισχύνει θεούς;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

πῶς γάρ τις αἰσχύνοιτ' ἂν ὠφελῶν φίλους;²

¹ l. 1365:

[οἳ τὸν ἄθλιον

Ἄλανθ' ἔπλων σοῦ πατρός ὑστερον δίκη
 Ὀδυσσεύς ἐκριναν.]

These lines, clearly an interpolation, have been omitted.

² ὠφελόμενος MSS., Buttman corr.

PHILOCTETES

Nor sought to bring me thither. How could'st thou,
When they had robbed thee of thy father's meed
And flouted thee?¹ How can'st thou after that
Fight at their side thyself, or bid me fight?
Not so, my son, but do as thou hast sworn,
Convey me home; thyself in Scyros bide;
Leave those ill-doers to their evil doom.
Thus shalt thou win a double thanks from me
And from my sire; nor will men say of thee:
Abetting base men he himself is base.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Thy words are reasonable; nathless I
Would have thee trust my promise and the god's,
And confidently sail with me, thy friend.

PHILOCTETES

What! to the plains of Troy, to him I loathe,
The son of Atreus, with this curséd foot?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Nay, but to kind physicians who will treat
Thy ulcered limb and heal thee of thy hurt.

PHILOCTETES

O wondrous weird! What means this mystery?

NEOPTOLEMUS

One fraught with happy issue for us both.

PHILOCTETES

Hast thou no fear of heaven, thus to speak?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Why should a man feel fear who helps his friends?

¹ The omitted lines are:

Who judged Odysseus of thy father's arms
More worthy than the hapless Ajax.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

λέγεις δ' Ἀτρείδαις ὄφελος ἢ 'π' ἐμοὶ τότε;

· ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

σοὶ που, φίλος γ' ὦν, χῶ λόγος τοῖσδε μου.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

πῶς, ὅς γε τοῖς ἐχθροῖσί μ' ἐκδοῦναι θέλεις;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὦ τᾶν, διδάσκου μὴ θρασύνεσθαι κακοῖς.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὀλεῖς με, γιγνώσκω σε, τοῖσδε τοῖς λόγοις.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκουν ἔγωγε· φημί δ' οὐ σε μανθάνειν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἐγὼ οὐκ Ἀτρείδας ἐκβαλόντας οἶδά με;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἐκβαλόντες εἰ πάλιν σώσους' ὄρα.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐδέποθ' ἐκόντα γ' ὥστε τὴν Τροίαν ἰδεῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί δῆτ' ἂν ἡμεῖς δρῶμεν, εἰ σέ γ' ἐν λόγοις
πείσειν δυνησόμεσθα μηδὲν ὦν λέγω;
ὡς ῥᾶσ' ἐμοὶ μὲν τῶν λόγων λῆξαι, σέ δὲ
ζῆν, ὥσπερ ἤδη ζῆς, ἄνευ σωτηρίας.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἔα με πάσχειν ταῦθ' ἄπερ παθεῖν με δεῖ·
ἂ δ' ἦνεσάς μοι δεξιᾶς ἐμῆς θιγῶν,
πέμπειν πρὸς οἴκους, ταῦτά μοι πρᾶξον, τέκνον,
καὶ μὴ βράδυνε μηδ' ἐπιμνησθῆς ἔτι
Τροίας· ἄλις γάρ μοι τεθρήνηται γόοις.

PHILOCTETES

PHILOCTETES

Help for the sons of Atreus, or for me ?

NEOPTOLEMUS

For thee, as these my words attest, thy friend.

PHILOCTETES

A friend, when thou would'st hand me to my foes ?

NEOPTOLEMUS

O let not suffering make thee truculent.

PHILOCTETES

I know thou would'st undo me pleading thus.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Not I, but thou thyself, who wilt not learn.

PHILOCTETES

Do I not know the Atridae cast me forth ?

NEOPTOLEMUS

'Tis true, but now they would deliver thee.

PHILOCTETES

Not with my will, if first I must to Troy.

NEOPTOLEMUS

What must I do, if all persuasion fails
To make thee budge an inch ? 'Twere easier
To cease from words and leave thee here to live,
As thou hast lived, a hopeless castaway.

PHILOCTETES

Well, let me dree my weird ; but thou, my son,
Perform the promise made with clasp of hands,
Take me straight home, and talk no more of Troy.
My cup of lamentations I have drained.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

εἰ δοκεῖ, στείχωμεν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ γενναῖον εἰρηκῶς ἔπος.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀντέρειδε νῦν βάσιν σῆν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

εἰς ὅσον γ' ἐγὼ σθένω.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

αἰτίαν δὲ πῶς Ἀχαιῶν φεύξομαι;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

μὴ φροντίσης.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί γάρ, εἴαν πορθῶσι χώραν τὴν ἐμήν;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἐγὼ παρῶν

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τίνα προσωφάλησιν ἔρξεις;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

βέλεσι τοῖς Ἡρακλέους

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

πῶς λέγεις;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

εἶρξω πελάζειν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

στεῖχε προσκύσας χθόνα.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

μήπω γε, πρὶν ἂν τῶν ἡμετέρων
αἴης μύθων, παῖ Ποίαντος·
φάσκειν δ' αὐδὴν τὴν Ἡρακλέους

PHILOCTETES

NEOPTOLEMUS

As thou wilt then ; let us forward.

PHILOCTETES

Nobly spoken, let us go.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Forward ! plant thy footsteps firmly.

PHILOCTETES

To my utmost will I so.

NEOPTOLEMUS

But the wrath of the Achaeans will pursue me.

PHILOCTETES

Never care.

NEOPTOLEMUS

What if they lay waste my borders ?

PHILOCTETES

Never fear, I shall be there—

NEOPTOLEMUS

What assistance canst thou render ?

PHILOCTETES

Heracles, his mighty bow—

NEOPTOLEMUS

Say'st thou ?

PHILOCTETES

Will prevent their landing.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Kiss the earth and let us go.

Apparition of HERACLES behind the stage.

HERACLES

Go not yet till thou hast heard,

Son of Poeas, first my word :

Heracles to thee appears,

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀκοῇ τε κλύειν λεύσσειν τ' ὄψιν.
 τὴν σὴν δ' ἤκω χάριν οὐρανίας
 ἔδρας προλιπών,
 τὰ Διός τε φράσων βουλευμάτά σοι
 κατερητύσων θ' ὁδὸν ἦν στέλλει·
 σὺ δ' ἐμῶν μύθων ἐπάκουσον.

καὶ πρῶτα μὲν σοὶ τὰς ἐμὰς λέξω τύχας,
 ὅσους πονήσας καὶ διεξελθὼν πόνους
 ἀθάνατον ἀρετὴν ἔσχον, ὡς πάρεσθ' ὄραν. 142
 καὶ σοί, σάφ' ἴσθι, τοῦτ' ὀφείλεται παθεῖν,
 ἐκ τῶν πόνων τῶνδ' εὐκλεᾶ θέσθαι βίον.
 ἐλθὼν δὲ σὺν τῷδ' ἀνδρὶ πρὸς τὸ Τρωικὸν
 πόλισμα, πρῶτον μὲν νόσου παύσει λυγρᾶς,
 ἀρετῇ τε πρῶτος ἐκκριθεὶς στρατεύματος,
 Πάριν μὲν, ὃς τῶνδ' αἴτιος κακῶν ἔφν,
 τόξοισι τοῖς ἐμοῖσι νοσφιεῖς βίου,
 πέρσεις τε Τροίαν, σκῦλά τ' εἰς μέλαθρα σὰ
 πέμψεις, ἀριστεῖ' ἐκλαβὼν στρατεύματος,
 Ποίαντι πατρὶ πρὸς πάτρας Οἴτης πλάκα. 143
 ἂ δ' ἂν λάβῃς σὺ σκῦλα τοῦδε τοῦ στρατοῦ,
 τόξων ἐμῶν μνημεῖα πρὸς πυρὰν ἐμὴν
 κόμιζε. καὶ σοὶ ταῦτ', Ἀχιλλέως τέκνον,
 παρήνεσ'· οὔτε γὰρ σὺ τοῦδ' ἄτερ σθένεις
 ἐλεῖν τὸ Τροίας πεδῖον οὔθ' οὔτος σέθεν.
 ἀλλ' ὡς λέοντε συννόμῳ φυλάσσειτον
 οὔτος σὲ καὶ σὺ τόνδ'· ἐγὼ δ' Ἀσκληπιῶν
 παυστήρα πέμψω σῆς νόσου πρὸς Ἴλιον.
 τὸ δεύτερον γὰρ τοῖς ἐμοῖς αὐτὴν χρεῶν

PHILOCTETES

His the voice that thrills thine ears.
'Tis for thy sake I have come,
Leaving my Olympian home.
Mandate from high Zeus I bring
To forbid thy journeying :
Hear the will of heaven's King.

But first I'll mind thee of my own career,
How, having laboured hugely and endured,
I won immortal glory, as thou seest.
Know that thy fortune like to mine shall be,
Through suffering to glorify thy life.
Go with yon man to Ilium. There first
Thou shalt be healèd of thy grievous sore ;
Then, chosen as the champion of the host,
With these my arrows thou shalt pierce to the heart
Paris, the guilty cause of all that woe.
Troy shalt thou sack, and, winning from the host
The meed of bravest, carry home rich spoils
To glad old Pœas and the Oetaean halls.
But of the spoils, whate'er the host assigns thee,
Bring to my pyre, as tribute to my bow,
A tithe.

I have a message too for thee,
Son of Achilles. Thou without his aid
Can'st not take Troy, nor he apart from thine ;
But like two lions together on the prowl,
Either the other guards.

To cure thy wounds
Asclepius, the healer, will I send
To Troas ; for a second time Troy towers

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

τόξοις ἀλῶναι. τοῦτο δ' ἐννοεῖθ', ὅταν
πορθήτε γαῖαν, εὐσεβεῖν τὰ πρὸς θεούς·
ὡς τὰλλα πάντα δεύτερ' ἡγείται πατὴρ
Ζεὺς· οὐ γὰρ εὐσέβεια συνθνήσκει βροτοῖς·
κἂν ζῶσι κἂν θάνωσιν, οὐκ ἀπόλλυται.

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ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ φθέγμα ποθεινὸν ἐμοὶ πέμψας
χρόνιός τε φανείς,
οὐκ ἀπιθήσω τοῖς σοῖς μύθοις.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

κἀγὼ γνώμην ταύτη τίθεμαι.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

μῆ νυν χρόνιοι μέλλετε πράσσειν·
καιρὸς καὶ πλοῦς
ὄδ' ἐπείγει γὰρ κατὰ πρύμνην.

143

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

φέρε νυν στείχων χώραν καλέσω.
χαῖρ', ὦ μέλαθρον ξύμφρουρον ἐμοί,
νύμφαι τ' ἔνυδροι λειμωνιάδες,
καὶ κτύπος ἄρσην πόντου προβολῆς,¹
οὐ πολλάκι δὴ τοῦμὸν ἐτέγγθη
κρᾶτ' ἐνδόμυχον πληγαῖσι νότου,
πολλὰ δὲ φωνῆς τῆς ἡμετέρας
Ἑρμαῖον ὄρος παρέπεμψεν ἐμοὶ
στόνον ἀντίτυπον χειμαζομένῳ.
νῦν δ', ὦ κρῆναι Λυκίων τε ποτόν,
λείπομεν ὑμᾶς, λείπομεν ἤδη
δόξης οὐ ποτε τῆσδ' ἐπιβάντες.

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¹ προβολῆς MSS., Hermann corr.

PHILOCTETES

Must fall before my shafts. Only take heed,
In laying waste the land to reverence
Its gods ; all else by Zeus my sire is less
Regarded. Piety can never die ;
It lives on earth and blossoms in the grave.

PHILOCTETES

Voice for which I long have yearned,
Form, long visioned, now discerned !
Thee I cannot disobey.

NEOPTOLEMUS

I too obey.

HERACLES

Then to work ! No time to spare ;
Seize the hour ; the wind sets fair.

PHILOCTETES

Yet ere I part I fain would bid farewell.
Home of my vigils, rocky cell,
Nymphs of the streams and grass-fringed shore,
Caves where the deep-voiced breakers roar,
When through the cavern's open mouth,
Borne on the wings of the wild South,
E'en to my dwelling's inmost lair,
The rain and spray oft drenched my hair ;
And oft responsive to my groan
Mount Hermaeum made his moan ;
O Lycian fount, O limpid well,
I thought with you all time to dwell ;
And now I take my last farewell.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

χαῖρ', ὦ Λήμνου πέδον ἀμφιάλον,
καί μ' εὐπλοία πέμψον ἀμέμπτως,
ἔνθ' ἡ μεγάλη Μοῖρα κομίζει
γνώμη τε φίλων χά' πανδαμάτωρ
δαίμων, ὃς ταῦτ' ἐπέκρανευ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

χωρῶμεν δὴ πάντες ἀολλεῖς,
νύμφαις ἀλίσαισιν ἐπευξάμενοι
νόστου σωτήρας ἰκέσθαι.

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PHILOCTETES

Sea-girt Lemnos, hear my prayer,
Bid thy guest a voyage fair
Speed him to the land where he,
Borne by mighty Destiny,
And the god at whose decree
All was ordered, fain would be.

CHORUS

Let us to the Sea Nymphs pray
To waft us on our Troy-ward way.
Mariners, attend my call ;
Let us voyage, one and all.

END OF VOL. II.

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