

LOEB CLASSICAL LIBRARY

FOUNDED BY JAMES LOEB

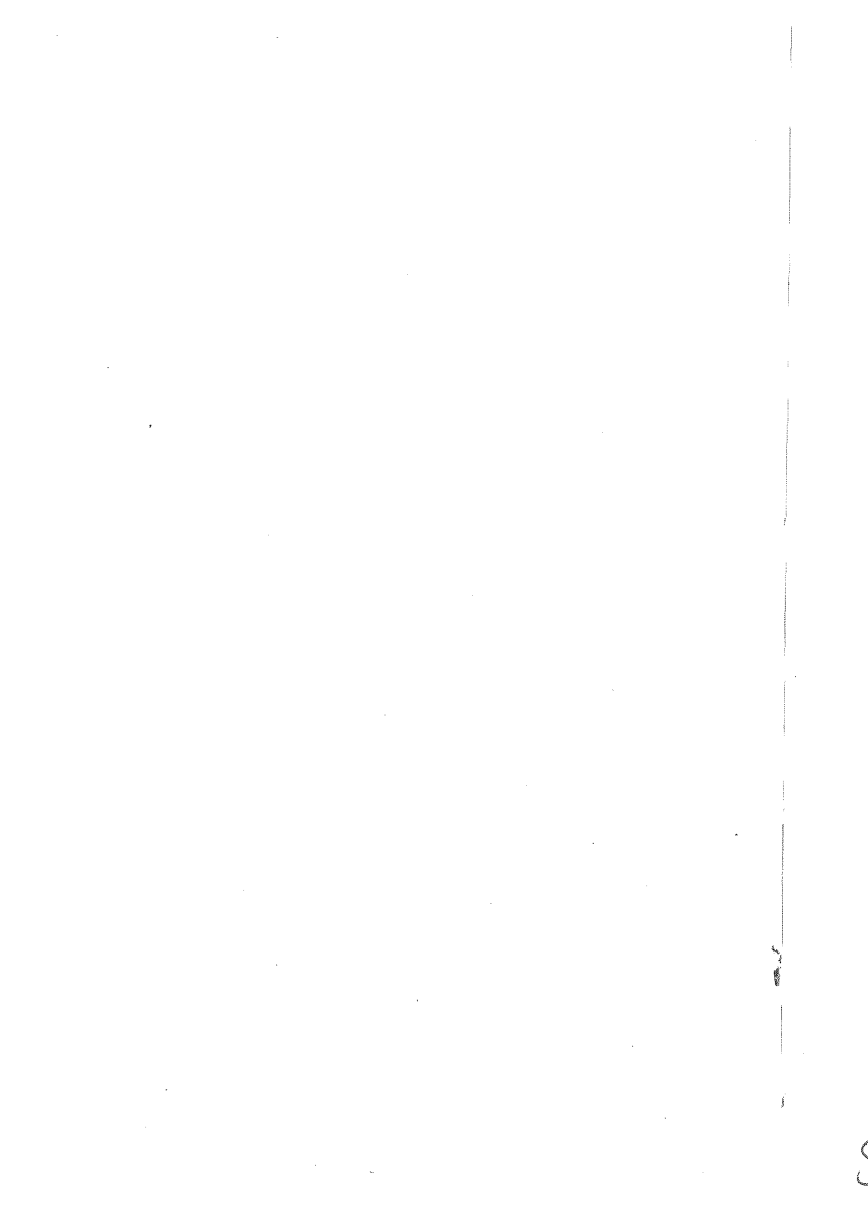
EDITED BY

JEFFREY HENDERSON

EURIPIDES

III

LCL 9



EURIPIDES
SUPPLIANT WOMEN
ELECTRA • HERACLES

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY
DAVID KOVACS



HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
LONDON, ENGLAND
1998

Copyright © 1998 by the President and Fellows
of Harvard College
All rights reserved

First published 1998

Loeb Classical Library® is a registered trademark
of the President and Fellows of Harvard College

Library of Congress Control Number 97-36082
CIP data available from the Library of Congress

ISBN 978-0-674-99566-6

*Composed in ZephGreek and ZephText by
Technologies 'N Typography, Merrimac, Massachusetts.
Printed on acid-free paper and bound by
The Maple-Vail Book Manufacturing Group*

CONTENTS

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| Introduction | 1 |
| Text and Translation | 12 |

ELECTRA

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| Introduction | 141 |
| Text and Translation | 152 |

HERACLES

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| Introduction | 301 |
| Text and Translation | 310 |

For Ellen

PREFACE

This volume, like its two predecessors, presents a new Greek text as well as a new translation. For an explanation of my editorial principles and of the simplified system for reporting manuscript readings, see the general introduction in Volume One. I have discussed in my *Euripidea Altera* (Leiden, 1996) some of the readings and conjectures adopted here. Readers unfamiliar with the conventions of classical editing should note that text (whether Greek or English) enclosed between square brackets is deemed to be spurious. Angle brackets mark words or lines thought to have been accidentally omitted by copyists. As in previous volumes, where I have marked a lacuna of a line or more I have usually filled in, purely by way of illustration, what the sense seems to require. Unattributed supplements are my own.

The translation contains one new departure from the practice of previous volumes: the treatment of lyric verse, those parts of the plays that were sung in the original performance. I have marked passages as lyric by translating them line-for-line to match the Greek in contrast to the prose typography I use for spoken verse.

I have received help of various kinds that I am delighted to acknowledge here. A grant from the Division of Research of the National Endowment for the Humanities, an

PREFACE

independent federal agency, enabled me to devote half of my time in the two academic years 1990-92 to this volume and its predecessor. In 1996-97 I received a second such grant to work on this volume and its successor. I am grateful to the Endowment for its support of my work. I was also elected, for that year, to a Visiting Fellowship at Balliol College, Oxford. My thanks to the Master and Fellows for their splendid hospitality. An exchange program between the University of Virginia and the Terza Università di Roma enabled me to check manuscript readings in the Vatican Library.

Several people discussed textual problems with me or criticized my translation. I have had profitable discussions with Martin West, James Diggle, Charles Willink, Jasper Griffin, and Chris Collard. George Goold's criticisms and queries have been invaluable, and he, Philippa Goold, and Margaretta Fulton have all improved the English translation. Finally, my wife supplied advice and encouragement at crucial points.

This volume carries a proud father's dedication to his daughter, to whose growing love of the theater he hopes it will contribute.

David Kovacs

University of Virginia

SUPLIANT WOMEN

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------------|--|
| <i>BICS</i> | <i>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies,</i> London |
| <i>CA</i> | <i>Classical Antiquity</i> |
| <i>CP</i> | <i>Classical Philology</i> |
| <i>CO</i> | <i>Classical Quarterly</i> |
| <i>GRBS</i> | <i>Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies</i> |
| <i>HSCP</i> | <i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i> |
| <i>JHS</i> | <i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i> |
| <i>MH</i> | <i>Museum Helveticum</i> |
| <i>RhM</i> | <i>Rheinisches Museum</i> |
| <i>TAPA</i> | <i>Transactions of the American Philological</i> Association |
| <i>YCS</i> | <i>Yale Classical Studies</i> |

INTRODUCTION

Suppliant Women, like *Children of Heracles*, mirrors the political realities of its day. It belongs to the late 420s B.C., perhaps being produced in 423, and is full of reflection on democracy and autocracy, the rule of law, and the undesirability—or necessity—of going to war. The action centers on the right of the dead to a proper burial, an issue that was a live one in the aftermath of the battle of Delium (424), when the victorious Boeotians refused the defeated Athenians permission to take up their dead. Contemporary theological reflection also comes to the fore in a debate about whether the gods govern the world with man's interest in mind and man has only himself to blame for trouble, or whether there is an element of tragedy in human life because of divine malice or indifference.

A fragment of ancient literary criticism, preserved in our only manuscript, says "The play is an encomium of Athens." It is true that in Attic tragedy Athens and Athenians are almost always sympathetically portrayed. But patriotic fervor alone does not explain why this play has been constructed as it has. The theological issues seem to make the largest and most encompassing frame for what is here, though it must be admitted that it is hard to be sure how the first audience reacted to some speeches or scenes and what contribution they make to the whole. The following

EURIPIDES

is a tentative attempt to describe the action and issues of the play.

In all versions of the legend of Thebes' dynasty the two sons of Oedipus, Eteocles and Polynices, kill each other in battle as the result of their father's curse that they would "divide their inheritance with the sword." Polynices, in exile in Argos, appeals for help against his brother and together with six Argive champions mounts the expedition of the Seven Against Thebes. The attackers are defeated, and Creon, the new king of Thebes, refuses to grant them burial.

In our play Adrastus, king of Argos, and the mothers and sons of the Seven have come to Eleusis in Attica to appeal to the Athenians for help in burying their dead. They first approach Aethra, Theseus' mother, who is in Eleusis to sacrifice to the two goddesses of Eleusis, Demeter and Kore (Persephone). But then Theseus, king of Athens, arrives, and Adrastus addresses him. At first he refuses to help: Adrastus, he has learned, ignored warnings against the expedition from god and seer alike. Theseus does not want to involve himself in the affairs of such an imprudent person. He sets forth a view of the world in which the gods give mortal men everything they need to deliver their life from brutishness—including divination in regard to the uncertain future—and any tragedy in mortal life is the fault of men themselves. Theseus' views are up-to-date (this optimistic view of human life here has affinities with the late-fifth-century Sophists). But it is out of character, in an Athenian myth, for Athenians to refuse a request for help.

Aethra causes him to change his mind. After noting that it is unconventional for women to be in the public eye by giving advice, she points out that if Theseus takes up the

SUPLIANT WOMEN

Argive cause he will be bringing about what the gods approve, winning credit for restoring the common laws of Hellas, and continuing the city's policy of studied vigor and activism. (With this view, that Athens flourishes by pushing herself forward even into matters that might be thought not to concern her, cf. Thucydides 1.70.) Theseus is persuaded and goes off to win the people's assent to this expedition: for although Athens is ruled by the people, Theseus is the man who gave the people their power, and he still retains much influence. Euripides' audience might have thought of Pericles, who had helped to make Athens more democratic but who seemed to enjoy an almost monarchical power and prestige, as Thucydides points out (2.65).

The next scene pits Theseus against a Theban herald, who has come to tell Athens to refuse Adrastus' request and to expel him from Attica before sundown. Before delivering his message he casts aspersions on democratic government, saying that its leaders are upstart knaves who impose upon a farmer citizenry who have no leisure to learn the art of government. Theseus replies by extolling the rule of law and the equality of citizens. He then tells the Herald that Athens will not take orders from foreign powers and that unless Thebes allows burial, he will come and bury them by force. He exits to join the army.

After a choral ode in which the mothers express their doubts about the justice of the gods, a messenger speech of unusual length and detail announces the result of the expedition. Creon and the Thebans, after once more refusing burial, have been defeated by the bravery and sagacity of Theseus. Theseus further distinguishes himself by his restraint in refusing to harm the defeated city once

EURIPIDES

he has recovered the dead and by his tender care for the bodies of the seven champions and their soldiers.

Theseus' heroism on behalf of the laws of the gods has been rewarded by success. But the rest of the play seems designed to show that the world, in spite of the occasional correspondence between deserts and reward, is full of tragic suffering. The Chorus respond to the news of their sons' imminent burial not with joy but with renewed grief. Their grieving is redoubled when the cortege arrives bearing the bodies of their sons, and Adrastus joins the Chorus in a long duet of lamentation.

Theseus asks Adrastus for an oration over the fallen, an explanation of their great courage. It was the custom at Athens for a public oration to be made each year over those who died for the city in war. Here Adrastus, in myth a speaker notable for his eloquence, is given the role that fell to Pericles and others in historical times. He describes the way of life adopted by the five men he praises, a life of modesty, poverty, and physical austerity. Training like this, he says, taught them to be brave. (Only Capaneus, Eteoclus, Hippomedon, Parthenopaeus, and Tydeus are eulogized by Adrastus. Amphiarus' body is not available since both he and his chariot were swallowed up in the earth. Polynices himself was presumably buried in Theban soil.) The speech chimes in well with the democratic belief that virtue can be acquired by education and counters the aristocratic belief in the necessity of noble birth. After this speech Theseus announces that he is making a separate pyre for Capaneus, who as a victim of Zeus's lightning is holy; the others are to be cremated together.

Capaneus' pyre is the focus of the next scene. Evadne, Capaneus' widow, appears suddenly above the *skene* and

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

announces that she intends to join her husband in death by leaping onto his pyre. Her father Iphis comes on the scene looking for her, discovers her intention, and tries to dissuade her. But she is bent on making a glorious end for herself and surpassing all other women in wifely devotion. She leaps to her death, and Iphis is left to lament the loss of his daughter as well as of his son, who was one of the Seven. The Chorus again blame the ruinous fate of Oedipus for causing suffering in Argos.

The strains of tragedy continue when the sons of the Argive heroes, who form a second chorus, appear bearing urns containing their fathers' ashes. In the course of their antiphonal lament with the mothers they announce their intention of sacking Thebes once they grow to manhood. Though this will involve still more suffering, Thebes is, as we learn, fated to fall to the sons of the Seven.

Then Theseus addresses Adrastus and the mothers: he is giving them the ashes but asks them to remember for all time the gratitude they owe Athens. Just as they are making their final farewells, Athena appears aloft. She tells Theseus to exact an oath that Argos will never invade Attica and will help to prevent invasion by others. The terms of the oath are to be inscribed on a bronze tripod and dedicated in Delphi. As for the sons of the Seven, Athena predicts that they will one day take Thebes and win glory.

To find the whole to which these parts contribute is not at all easy. Most of the play's episodes, however, ring changes on the themes of heroism and the tragic view of life. Theseus in his first speech to Adrastus attempts to show that tragedy is avoidable. His mother corrects him and demonstrates that he must take up Adrastus' cause and heroically shoulder his burden. The debate with the herald

EURIPIDES

pits arguments of prudence from despotic Thebes against the noble altruism of democratic Athens, whose leader is willing to risk his life on behalf of Panhellenic law and the law of the gods. Athenian success in recovering the dead does not, however, change the basically tragic nature of human life, and the mothers' laments, the deaths of Evadne and Iphis, and the cries for vengeance of the sons show a world in which fate and the gods often bring misery on humankind. In almost the last words of the play, Athena promises the sons of the Seven that they will provide generations to come with a theme for song, one of the few consolations left to unhappy mortals whose lives have been crossed by inscrutable destiny.

One conundrum deserves mention here. The Chorus represents the mothers of the Argive heroes. They are described as seven in number (lines 12-13 by implication, 100-2, 963-5), but a tragic chorus in Euripides' time consisted of fifteen. There are also several references to "servants" or "attendants," probably of the mothers. Boeckh and Hermann suggested that seven mothers plus seven attendants made up a chorus of fourteen, an unlikely arrangement. Wilamowitz, though he remarks that the Athenian theatergoer did not expect realism as his modern counterpart does (since the chorus of Aeschylus' *Suppliants* had to represent the fifty daughters of Danaus), posits a chorus of mothers (presumably seven) and a chorus of attendants (presumably eight), who combine after line 286 and thereafter all represent the mothers. The situation is further complicated by the use of a second chorus of Sons of the Seven, which ought to be of the same size as the chorus of mothers. The solution adopted in this edition is that of Collard, who accepts Wilamowitz' admonition

SUPLIANT WOMEN

against literal-mindedness and draws the most natural conclusion, namely that a chorus of fifteen is being used to represent the collective notion of the mothers of the fallen. The chorus of sons would then also be fifteen. The attendants are referred to in the third person in the lines Wilamowitz assigns to them, and it is likely that they are stage extras rather than a separate chorus. I have called them attendants of the mothers since they seem closely identified with their fortunes, but it is just possible that they are identical with the attendants of the temple mentioned in line 2.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Editions

- U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Analecta Euripidea* (Berlin, 1875; rpt. Hildesheim, 1963), pp. 73-130.
——— *Griechische Tragödien Übersetzt I*⁸ (Berlin, 1919), pp. 193-284.
N. Wecklein (Leipzig, 1913).
T. Nicklin (Oxford, 1936).
C. Collard (Groningen, 1975).
——— (Leipzig, 1984).

Literary Criticism

- C. Collard, "The Funeral Oration in Euripides' *Supplices*," *BICS* 19 (1972), 39-53.
J. W. Fitton, "The Suppliant Women and the Heraclidae of Euripides," *Hermes* 89 (1961), 430-61.

EURIPIDES

- R. B. Gamble, "Euripides' Suppliant Women: Decision and Ambivalence," *Hermes* 98 (1970), 385-404.
- R. Goossens, *Euripide et Athènes* (Brussels, 1962), pp. 417-66.
- R. Rehm, "The Staging of Suppliant Plays," *GRBS* 29 (1988), 263-307.
- W. D. Smith, "Expressive Form in Euripides' *Suppliants*," *HSCP* 71 (1966), 151-70.
- G. Zuntz, *The Political Plays of Euripides* (Manchester, 1955).
- "Über Euripides' Hiketiden," *MH* 12 (1955), 20-34.

Dramatis Personae

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| ΑΙΘΡΑ | AETHRA. mother of Theseus |
| ΧΟΡΟΣ | CHORUS of the mothers of the Seven |
| ΘΗΣΕΥΣ | THESEUS. King of Athens |
| ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ | ADRASTUS. king of Argos |
| ΚΗΡΥΞ | HERALD from Thebes |
| ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ | MESSENGER, former servant of Capaneus |
| ΕΥΑΔΝΗ | EVADNE, wife of Capaneus, one of the Seven |
| ΙΦΙΣ | IPHIS. aged father of Evadne |
| ΠΑΙΔΕΣ | Chorus of the SONS of the Seven |
| ΑΘΗΝΑ | ATHENA |
| Nonspeaking roles: | Attendants of the mothers, Athenian herald |

A Note on Staging

The *skene* represents the temple of Demeter and Persephone at Eleusis in Attica. In front of it is an altar. Eisode A leads to places in Eleusis and Athens, Eisode B to Thebes and Argos.

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

ΑΙΘΡΑ

Δήμητερ ἐστιούχ' Ἐλευσίνος χθονὸς
τῆσδ', οἳ τε ναοὺς ἔχετε πρόσπολοι θεᾶς,
εὐδαιμονεῖν με Θησέα τε παῖδ' ἐμὸν
πόλιν τ' Ἀθηνῶν τήν τε Πιτθέως χθόνα,
5 ἐν ἧ με θρέψας ὀλβίοις ἐν δώμασιν
Αἴθραν πατὴρ δίδωσι τῷ Πανδίωνος
Αἰγεί δάμαρτα Λοξίου μαντεύμασιν.
ἐς τάσδε γὰρ βλέψασ' ἐπηνξάμην τάδε
γραῦς, αἶ λιπούσαι δώματ' Ἀργείας χθονὸς
10 ἰκτῆρι θαλλῶ προσπίτνονοσ' ἐμὸν γόνυ,
πάθος παθοῦσαι δεινόν· ἀμφὶ γὰρ πύλας
Κάδμου θανόντων ἐπτὰ γενναίων τέκνων
ἄπαιδές εἰσιν, οὓς ποτ' Ἀργείων ἄναξ

² αἶ Willink

¹ Trozen, in the Peloponnesus. Pittheus was its king.

² In the usual version of the myth of Theseus' parentage, Aegeus begets Theseus by a casual encounter with Aethra in Trozen. Theseus, when grown to manhood, makes his way to Athens and is united with his father, but Aethra remains in Trozen. Here she is made the wife of Aegeus—the marriage sanctioned

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

When the action of the play begins, AETHRA is at an altar in front of the temple of Demeter, surrounded by the CHORUS, representing the mothers of the Seven against Thebes, who sit holding suppliant branches. On either side of the Chorus are their attendants. At the door of the temple lies the prostrate ADRASTUS surrounded by young boys, the Sons of the Seven, who later form a second chorus.

AETHRA

Demeter, guardian of this land of Eleusis, and you servants of the goddess who keep her temple, I pray for prosperity for myself, my son Theseus, the city of Athens and Pittheus' land!¹ It was in Trozen that Pittheus, my father, raised me, Aethra, in a prosperous house and gave me as wife to Pandion's son Aegeus at the behest of Apollo's oracles.²

I make this prayer as I look upon these old women. They have left their homes in Argos and are falling with suppliant branches at my knees because of their terrible sufferings. They have lost their children: their seven noble sons perished before Cadmus' gates,³ men once led by

by Apollo—and occupies a position of importance in the Athenian state. ³ Thebes is called "city of Cadmus" and the Thebans "Cadmeans" throughout this play.

EURIPIDES

- Ἄδραστος ἤγαγ', Οἰδίπου παγκληρίας
 15 μέρος κατασχεῖν φυγάδι Πολυνείκει θέλων
 γαμβρῶ. νεκροὺς δὲ τοὺς ὀλωλότας δορὶ
 θάψαι θέλουσι τῶνδε μητέρες χθονί,
 εἵργουσι δ' οἱ κρατοῦντες οὐδ' ἀναίρεσιν
 δοῦναι θέλουσι, νόμιμ' ἀτίζοντες θεῶν.
 20 κοινὸν δὲ φόρτον ταῖσδ' ἔχων χρείας ἐμῆς
 Ἄδραστος ὄμμα δάκρυσιν τέγγων ὄδε
 κείται, τό τ' ἔγχος τήν τε δυστυχεστάτην
 στένων στρατείαν ἣν ἔπεμψεν ἐκ δόμων
 ὅς μ' ἐξοτρύνει παῖδ' ἐμὸν πείσαι λιταῖς
 25 νεκρῶν κομιστήν ἢ λόγοισιν ἢ δορὸς
 ῥώμη γενέσθαι καὶ τάφου μεταίτιον,
 κοινὸν τόδ' ἔργον προστιθεῖς ἐμῶ τέκνω
 πόλει τ' Ἀθηνῶν. τυγχάνω δ' ὑπὲρ χθονὸς
 ἀρότου προθύουσ', ἐκ δόμων ἐλθοῦσ' ἐμῶν
 30 πρὸς τόνδε σηκόν, ἔνθα πρῶτα φαίνεται
 φρίξας ὑπὲρ γῆς τῆσδε κάρπιμος στάχυς.
 δεσμὸν δ' ἄδεσμον τόνδ' ἔχουσα φυλλάδος
 μένω πρὸς ἀγναῖς ἐσχάrais δυοῖν θεαῖν
 Κόρης τε καὶ Δήμητρος, οἰκτίρουσα μὲν
 35 πολιάς ἄπαιδας τάσδε μητέρας τέκνων,
 σέβουσα δ' ἱερὰ στέμματ'. οὔχεται δέ μοι

27 κοινὸν Stahl: μόνον L

4 Oedipus, angry with his two sons Eteocles and Polynices, laid a curse upon them that they would divide their inheritance with a sword. In most versions of the story, after the brothers had

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

Adrastus, king of Argos, when he tried to secure for his son-in-law, the exiled Polynices, his portion of the heritage of Oedipus.⁴ The spear laid these men low, and their mothers want to bury them. But those in power prevent them: flouting the gods' ordinances they refuse them permission to take up their dead.

Sharing the burden of these women's appeal to me is Adrastus here. His face is wet with tears as he lies upon the ground, lamenting the ill-fated expedition he led from home. He urges me to supplicate my son and persuade him to recover the dead, either by parley or by might of spear, and be the cause of their winning a burial, laying this task in common upon my son and the city of Athens. I happen to be offering sacrifice for the plowing of the earth and have left my house and come to this sanctuary, where the stalk of grain first appeared bristling over our land.⁵ Since I feel the constraint of these suppliant branches—which bind without any chain—I stay here at the sacred hearths of the two goddesses, Kore and Demeter, in pity for these gray-headed mothers bereft of their sons and in reverence

made an agreement that each should rule a year in turn, with the other leaving the country, Eteocles refused to give up the throne when his year was over. Polynices sought help from Adrastus, whose daughter he had married, and an Argive army tried to put him on the throne. But Eteocles and Polynices, facing each other at one of the seven gates, each received a mortal wound at the other's hand, and the attack on Thebes failed.

⁵ The festival of the Proerosia was celebrated before the fall planting. The Athenians at about the time of this play greatly expanded the festival by requiring their allies and inviting others to contribute a percentage of their produce to the goddesses at Eleusis.

EURIPIDES

κῆρυξ πρὸς ἄστν δεῦρο Θησέα καλῶν,
 ὡς ἦ τὸ τούτων λυπρὸν ἐξέλη χθονὸς
 ἢ τάσδ' ἀνάγκας ἱκεσίους λύση, θεοὺς
 40 ὄσιόν τι δράσας· πάντα γὰρ δι' ἀρσένων
 γυναιξὶ πράσσειν εἰκὸς αἴτινες σοφαί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α

ἱκετεύω σε, γεραία, γεραιῶν ἐκ στομάτων πρὸς
 γόνυ πίπτουσα τὸ σόν·
 †ἄνομοι τέκνα λῦσαι φθιμένων νεκύνων† οἶ
 45 καταλείπουσι μέλη
 θανάτῳ λυσιμελεῖ θηρσὶν ὀρείοισι βοράν·

ἀντ. α

ἔσιδοῦσ' οἰκτρὰ μὲν ὄσσων δάκρυ' ἀμφὶ βλεφάροις,
 ῥν-
 50 σὰ δὲ σαρκῶν πολιᾶν
 καταδρῦμματα χειρῶν· τί γάρ; ἅ φθιμένους παῖ-
 δας ἐμοὺς οὔτε δόμοις
 προθέμαν οὔτε τάφων χώματα γαίας ἐσορῶ.

στρ. β

55 ἔτεκες καὶ σύ ποτ', ὦ πότνια, κούρον φίλα ποιη-
 σαμένα λέκτρα πόσει σῶ· μετά νιν
 δὸς ἐμοὶ σᾶς διανοίας, μετάδος δ' ὄσσων ἐπαλγῶ
 μελέα <᾿γῶ> φθιμένων οὓς ἔτεκον·

⁴⁴ ἀνόμους καταπαῦσαι Campbell, tum fort. νεκύνων φθι-
 μένων (Italie) cl. 52: possis etiam ἀνόμων ἀπο λῦσαι / νέκνας
 φθιμένων ⁵⁹ <᾿γῶ> Kirchhoff

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

for their suppliant wreaths. I have sent a herald to the city to summon Theseus here so that either he will remove from the land the distress they cause or discharge his duty to the suppliants by doing an act of piety toward the gods. It is proper for women, if they are wise, to do everything through their men.

CHORUS

I beseech you, aged lady, from aged lips,
falling at your knees:
stop the lawless men⁶ who are leaving the bodies of the
slain
in limb-loosening death
as food for mountain beasts!

Look at the pitiable tears upon our cheeks
and the gashes our hands have torn
in our old and wrinkled flesh! How can we do otherwise?

Our dead sons
we could not lay out in the house for burial or see a mound
of earth raised over their tombs.

You too once bore, my lady, a son, making your bed pleas-
ing
to your husband. So grant me
a portion of your kind regard, grant it, in pity for the grief
that I, unlucky one,
feel for my son's death.

⁶ I translate Campbell's attractive but uncertain conjecture. The rest of the line is likewise uncertain.

EURIPIDES

60 παράπεισον δὲ σὸν, ὦ, λίσσομαι, ἔλθειν τέκνον
Ἴσμη-

νὸν ἐμάν τ' ἐς χέρα θεῖναι νεκύων
θαλερῶν σώματ' ἀλαίνοντ' ἄταφα.

ἀντ. β

ὀσίως οὔχ, ὑπ' ἀνάγκας δὲ προπίπτουσα
προσαιτούσ'

ἔμολον δεξιπύρους θεῶν θυμέλας·

65 ἔχομεν δ' ἔνδικα, καὶ σοί τι πάρεστι σθένος ὥστ'
εὐ-

τεκνία δυστυχίαν τὰν παρ' ἐμοὶ
καθελεῖν· οἰκτρὰ δὲ πάσχουσ' ἱκετεύω σὸν ἐμοὶ παῖ-
δα ταλαίνα ἔν χερὶ θεῖναι νέκυν, ἀμ-

70 φιβαλεῖν λυγρὰ μέλη παιδὸς ἐμοῦ.

στρ. γ

ἀγὼν ὄδ' ἄλλος ἔρχεται
γῶν γόοις διάδοχος· ἀ-
χοῦσι <δὲ> προσπόλων χέρες.

ἴτ' ὦ ξυνωδοὶ κακοῖς,

ἴτ' ὦ ξυναλγηδόνας

75 χορὸν τὸν Ἄιδας σέβει·

διὰ παρῆδος ὄνυχι λευ-

κὸν αἵματόυτε χρώτα φόνιον· <αἰαῖ.>

60 λίσσομαι Stinton: λισσόμ' Tr 62 σώματ' ἀλαίνοντ'
ἄταφα Murray: σώματα λάινον τάφον L

68 σὸν ἐμοὶ Musgrave: τὸν ἐμόν L

69 ταλαίνα ἔν Wilamowitz: τάλαιν' ἐν L

71 γόοις Valckenaer: γῶν L 72 <δὲ> Willink

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

Prevail on your son, I beg you, to go to the Ismenus River⁷
and put into my hands the bodies
of the young dead who are unburied.

It was not in pious worship but under compulsion, falling
in entreaty,
that I came to the goddesses' fire-receiving altars.
But my plea is just, and you have some power to relieve
my misfortune by the noble son
you bore. Because of my pitiable sufferings I entreat your
son
to put in my luckless hands my dead child so that I may
embrace
his heart-grieving limbs.

*The attendants beat their breasts and scratch their cheeks
in gestures of mourning.*

See, others in emulation
take up the lament with lament of their own,
and attendants' hands resound on their breasts.
Take up, O fellow singers with misfortune,
fellow mourners,
the dance Hades honors!
Across your cheek with your nails
bloody your white skin! <Ah me!>

⁷ One of the rivers of Boeotia, running through the city of Thebes. Ismenus is properly spelled Hismenus and Ismene (Antigone's sister) Hismene (see Mastronarde on *Phoenissae* 101), but I have kept the customary English spelling.

⁷⁷ <αἰαῖ> post Wilamowitz (ἐ̂ ἐ̂) Diggle

EURIPIDES

τὰ γὰρ φθιτῶν τοῖς ὀρώσι κόσμος.

ἀντ. γ

- ἄπληστος ἄδε μ' ἐξάγει
 χάρις γόνων πολύπονος, ὡς
 80 ἀλιβάτου <τις> ἐκ πέτρας
 ὕγρὰ ρέουσα σταγῶν
 ἄπανστος αἰεὶ †γόνων†.
 τὸ γὰρ θανόντων τέκνων
 ἐπίπονον τι κατὰ γυναῖ-
 85 κας ἐς γόους πάθος πέφυκεν· αἰαί.
 θανοῦσα τῶνδ' ἀλγέων λαθοίμαν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

- τίνων γόους ἤκουσα καὶ στέρνων κτύπον
 νεκρῶν τε θρήνους, τῶνδ' ἀνακτόρων ἀπο
 ἤχους ἰούσης; ὡς φόβος μ' ἀναπτεροῖ
 90 μὴ μοί τι μήτηρ, ἣν μεταστείχω ποδι
 χρονίαν ἀποῦσαν ἐκ δόμων, ἔχῃ νέον.
 ἔα·

- τί χρήμα; καινὰς ἐσβολὰς ὀρῶ λόγων,
 μητέρα γεραιὰν βωμίαν ἐφημένην
 ξένας θ' ὁμοῦ γυναῖκας οὐχ ἓνα ῥυθμὸν
 95 κακῶν ἐχούσας· ἐκ τε γὰρ γερασμίων
 ὄσσων ἐλαύνουσ' οἰκτρὸν ἐς γαῖαν δάκρυ,
 κουραὶ τε καὶ πεπλώματ' οὐ θεωρικά.
 τί ταῦτα, μήτηρ; σὸν τὸ μηνύειν ἐμοί,
 ἡμῶν δ' ἀκούειν· προσδοκῶ τι γὰρ νέον.

⁸⁰ ἀλιβάτου τις ἐκ Willink: ἐξ ἀλιβάτου πέτρας L

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

The rites we owe the dead adorn the living.

Insatiable pleasure in tears, unstinting of labor,
brings forth my utterance,
like some stream of water pouring
from a steep cliff
in never-ceasing flow!
For when their children die,
the grief in women's hearts is ever involved
in the toil of lamentation. Ah me!
In death may I forget these woes!

Enter THESEUS with retinue by Eisodos A.

THESEUS

Whose is the wailing, the beating of breasts, and the keening for the dead that I have heard? The sound has come from this temple. How fearful I am that my mother may have met with some mischance! She has been long away from the house, and I have come to find her.

But what is this? Here are strange things to speak of, my aged mother sitting at the altar, and foreign women with her in many attitudes of misery. From their aged eyes they shed pitiable tears on the ground, and the cut of their hair and the garments they wear are not fit for a festival. What does this mean, mother? It is your task to tell me and mine to listen. I expect bad news.

⁸² δρόσων Camper: ῥοᾶν Eden

⁸⁵ πάθος πέφυκεν Zuntz: πέφυκε πάθος L

⁸⁷ γόους Elmsley: γόων L ⁹⁴ ξένας Elmsley: -ους L

⁹⁷ τε Markland: δὲ L

EURIPIDES

ΑΙΘΡΑ

100 ὦ παῖ, γυναῖκες αἶδε μητέρες τέκνων
 τῶν καθανόντων ἀμφὶ Καδμείας πύλας
 ἐπτὰ στρατηγῶν ἱκεσίους δὲ σὺν κλάδοις
 φρουρούσι μ', ὡς δέδορκας, ἐν κύκλῳ, τέκνον.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τίς δ' ὁ στενάζων οἰκτρὸν ἐν πύλαις ὄδε;

ΑΙΘΡΑ

105 Ἄδραστος, ὡς λέγουσιν, Ἀργείων ἄναξ.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

οἱ δ' ἀμφὶ τόνδε παῖδες; ἦ τούτων τέκνα;

ΑΙΘΡΑ

οὔκ, ἀλλὰ νεκρῶν τῶν ὀλωλότων κόροι.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τί γὰρ πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἦλθον ἱκεσία χερί;

ΑΙΘΡΑ

οἶδ'· ἀλλὰ τῶνδε μῦθος οὖν τεύθεν, τέκνον.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

110 σὲ τὸν κατήρη χλανιδίοις ἀνιστορῶ.
 λέγ' ἐκκαλύψας κρᾶτα καὶ πάρες γόον·
 πέρας γὰρ οὐδὲν μὴ διὰ γλώσσης ἰόν.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ὦ καλλίνικε γῆς Ἀθηναίων ἄναξ,
 Θησεῦ, σὸς ἱκέτης καὶ πόλεως ἤκω σέθεν.

SUPLIANT WOMEN

AETHRA

My son, these women are the mothers of sons, the seven generals who died before Cadmus' gates. They keep watch, encircling me, as you see, with their suppliant boughs.

THESEUS

But who is this man who weeps so pitifully in the doorway?

AETHRA

Adrastus, they say, king of the Argives.

THESEUS

And the boys round about him? Are they these women's sons?

AETHRA

No, they are the sons of the slain warriors.

THESEUS

Well, why have they come to supplicate us?

AETHRA

I know why, but from this point on it is their turn to speak, my son.

THESEUS

You there, with your head wrapped in your garments, my question is for you! Uncover your head, leave off your weeping, and speak! Nothing is ever achieved unless it is spoken.

ADRASTUS

Theseus, king of Athens, glorious in victory, I have come as suppliant to you and your city!

EURIPIDES

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

115 τί χρῆμα θηρῶν καὶ τίνος χρείαν ἔχων;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

οἶσθ' ἦν στρατείαν ἐστράτευσ' ὀλεθρίαν;

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

οὐ γάρ τι σιγῇ διεπέρασας Ἑλλάδα.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ἐνταῦθ' ἀπόλεσ' ἄνδρας Ἀργείων ἄκρους.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τοιαῦθ' ὁ τλήμων πόλεμος ἐξεργάζεται.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

120 τούτους θανόντας ἦλθον ἐξαιτῶν πόλιν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

κήρυξιν Ἑρμοῦ πίσυνος, ὡς θάψῃς νεκρούς;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

κᾶπειτά γ' οἱ κτανόντες οὐκ ἐώσῃ με.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τί γὰρ λέγουσιν, ὅσια χρήζοντος σέθεν;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

τί δ'; εὐτυχοῦντες οὐκ ἐπίστανται φέρειν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

125 ξύμβουλον οὖν μ' ἐπῆλθες; ἢ τίνος χάριν;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

κομίσαι σε, Θεσεῦ, παῖδας Ἀργείων θέλων.

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

THESEUS

What are you seeking? What is it you need?

ADRASTUS

Do you know the disastrous expedition I led?

THESEUS

Yes: not in silence did you pass through Hellas.

ADRASTUS

On this expedition I lost the finest men of Argos.

THESEUS

That is what cruel-hearted war does.

ADRASTUS

I went to ask the return of their bodies from Thebes.

THESEUS

Relying on Hermes' heralds,⁸ so that you might bury the dead?

ADRASTUS

Yes, and the slayers forbade me.

THESEUS

What did they say? Your request was a pious one.

ADRASTUS

Say? Their prosperity proved too much for them to bear.

THESEUS

Have you come to me for advice? Or for what?

ADRASTUS

I want you, Theseus, to recover Argos' sons.

⁸ Hermes was patron of heralds, who carried messages between armies and peoples at war.

EURIPIDES

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τὸ δ' Ἄργος ὑμῖν ποῦ ἔστιν; ἢ κόμποι μάτην;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

σφαλέντες οἰχόμεσθα. πρὸς σέ δ' ἤκομεν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ἰδίᾳ δοκῆσάν σοι τόδ' ἢ πάσῃ πόλει;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

130 πάντες σ' ἰκνοῦνται Δαναΐδαι θάψαι νεκρούς.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ἐκ τοῦ δ' ἐλαύνεις ἑπτὰ πρὸς Θήβας λόχους;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

δισσοῖσι γαμβροῖς τήνδε πορσύνων χάριν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τῷ δ' ἐξέδωκας παῖδας Ἀργείων σέθεν;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

οὐκ ἐγγενῆ συνῆψα κηδείαν δόμοις.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

135 ἀλλὰ ξένοις ἔδωκας Ἀργείας κόρας;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

Τυδεῖ <γε> Πολυνείκει τε τῷ Θηβαιγενεῖ.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τίν' εἰς ἔρωτα τῆσδε κηδείας μολών;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

Φοίβου μ' ὑπήλθε δυστόπαστ' αἰνίγματα.

SUPLIANT WOMEN

THESEUS

But where is your Argos? Is it merely an idle boast?

ADRASTUS

We have fallen and are in ruins. We have come to you.

THESEUS

Was it you alone or the whole city that decided this?

ADRASTUS

All the offspring of Danaus beg you to bury our dead.

THESEUS

But why did you march seven companies against Thebes?

ADRASTUS

I did this as a favor to my two sons-in-law.

THESEUS

To which of the Argives did you give your daughters?

ADRASTUS

It was no native marriage tie that I made for my house.

THESEUS

So you gave Argive girls to foreign husbands?

ADRASTUS

<Yes,> to Tydeus and to Theban-born Polynices.

THESEUS

What made you desire such a marriage?

ADRASTUS

I was beguiled by Apollo's dark oracles.

131 λόχους Pierson: ὄχους L 136 <γε> Hermann
136-7 suspectos habebat Wecklein

EURIPIDES

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τί δ' εἶπ' Ἀπόλλων παρθένοις κραίνων γάμον;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

140 κάπρω με δοῦναι καὶ λέοντι παῖδ' ἐμώ.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

σὺ δ' ἐξελίσσεις πῶς θεοῦ θεσπίσματα;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ἐλθόντε φυγάδε νυκτὸς εἰς ἐμὰς πύλας . . .

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τίς καὶ τίς; εἶπέ· δύο γὰρ ἐξαυδᾶς ἅμα.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

. . . Τυδεὺς μάχην ξυνήψε Πολυνείκης θ' ἅμα.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

145 ἦ τοῖσδ' ἔδωκας θηρσὶν ὧς κόρας σέθεν;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

μάχην γε δισσοῖν κνωδάλοιν ἀπεικάσας.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ἦλθον δὲ δὴ πῶς πατρίδος ἐκλιπόνθ' ὄρους;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

Τυδεὺς μὲν αἶμα συγγενὲς φεύγων χθονός.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ὁ δ' Οἰδίπου <παῖς> τίνι τρόπῳ Θήβας λιπών;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

150 ἀραῖς πατρώαις, μὴ κασίγητον κτάνοι.

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

THESEUS

What did Apollo say to ordain marriage for the maidens?

ADRASTUS

"Your daughters to a boar and lion marry."

THESEUS

And how did you interpret the god's oracle?

ADRASTUS

Two exiles came to my door by night . . .

THESEUS

You tell me two at once. What men are they?

ADRASTUS

. . . and fought each other, Tydeus and Polynices.

THESEUS

You gave your daughters to these men, thinking they were beasts?

ADRASTUS

Yes: I thought they battled like two wild animals.

THESEUS

Why did they leave their own countries?

ADRASTUS

Tydeus was in exile for shedding kindred blood.

THESEUS

And the <son> of Oedipus, why did he leave Thebes?

ADRASTUS

Because of his father's curse, to avoid killing his brother.

EURIPIDES

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

σοφήν γ' ἔλεξας τήνδ' ἐκούσιον φυγῆν.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ἀλλ' οἱ μένοντες τοὺς ἀπόντας ἠδίκουν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

οὐ πού σφ' ἀδελφὸς χρημάτων νοσφίζεται;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ταῦτ' ἐκδικάζων ἦλθον· εἶτ' ἀπωλόμην.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

155 μάντις δ' ἐπῆλθες ἐμπύρων τ' εἶδες φλόγα;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

οἴμοι· διώκεις μ' ἢ μάλιστ' ἐγὼ σφάλην.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

οὐκ ἦλθες, ὡς ἔοικεν, εὐνοία θεῶν.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

τὸ δὲ πλέον, ἦλθον Ἀμφιάρεώ γε πρὸς βίαν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

οὕτω τὸ θεῖον ραδίως ἀπεστράφης;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

160 νέων γὰρ ἀνδρῶν θόρυβος ἐξέπλησσε με.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

εὐψυχίαν ἔσπευσας ἀντ' εὐβουλίας.

¹⁵⁴ ταῦτ' ἐκδικάζων Hermann, Lenting: ταυτὶ δικάζων L

¹⁵⁸ τὸ Musgrave: τί L

¹⁵⁹ ἀπεστράφης Reiske: σ' ἀπεστράφη L

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

THESEUS

A wise act, this voluntary exile!

ADRASTUS

But those who stayed behind wronged those who left.

THESEUS

Surely his brother did not rob him of his property?

ADRASTUS

It was this crime I came to punish. And there I was destroyed.

THESEUS

Did you consult seers and examine the flames of burnt offerings?

ADRASTUS

Ah! You press me hard just where my failure is greatest!

THESEUS

It appears you went to war without the gods' good will.

ADRASTUS

And what is more I went against the wish of Amphiaraus.⁹

THESEUS

Did you so lightly turn aside from divine guidance?

ADRASTUS

Yes: the shouting of young men put me out of my wits.

THESEUS

It was bravery rather than prudence that you pursued.

⁹ A seer and the only pious man among the Seven, Amphiaraus was forced by his wife to take part in the expedition.

EURIPIDES

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

- ὁ δὴ γε πολλοὺς ὤλεσε στρατηλάτας.
 ἀλλ', ὦ καθ' Ἑλλάδ' ἀλκιμώτατον κάρα,
 ἄναξ Ἀθηνῶν, ἐν μὲν αἰσχύναις ἔχω
 165 πῖτνων πρὸς οὐδας γόνυ σὸν ἀμπίσχειν χερὶ
 [πολιὸς ἀνὴρ τύραννος εὐδαίμων πάρος].
 ὅμως δ' ἀνάγκη συμφοραῖς εἴκειν ἐμαῖς.
 σῶσον νεκροὺς μοι τὰμὰ τ' οἰκτίρας κακὰ
 καὶ τῶν θανόντων τάσδε μητέρας τέκνων,
 170 αἷς γῆρας ἤκει πολιὸν εἰς ἀπαιδίαν,
 ἐλθεῖν δ' ἔτλησαν δεῦρο καὶ ξένον πόδα
 θεῖναι μόλις γεραιὰ κινουῦσαι μέλη,
 πρεσβεύματ' οὐ Δῆμητρος ἐς μυστήρια
 ἀλλ' ὡς νεκροὺς θάψωσιν, ἅς αὐτὰς ἐχρῆν
 175 κείνων ταφείσας χερσὶν ὠραίων τυχεῖν.
 σοφὸν δὲ πενίαν τ' εἰσορᾶν τὸν ὄλβιον,
 [πένητά τ' ἐς τοὺς πλουσίους ἀποβλέπειν
 ζηλοῦνθ', ἵν' αὐτὸν χρημάτων ἔρωσ ἔχη.]
 τά τ' οἰκτρὰ τοὺς μὴ δυστυχεῖς δεδορκεῖναι.
 <ἀλλ' οὐ δέδοικα τὰμὰ δυστυχήματα
 μή μ' οὐκ ἐάσῃ τῷδε πρὸς χάριν λέγειν
 πείθειν θ' ἂ χρῆζω; τόν τε γὰρ πειστήριον
 εἶναι θέλοντα φαιδρόνουν εἶναι χρεῶν,>
 180 τόν θ' ὕμνοποιὸν αὐτὸς ἂν τίκτη μῆλη
 χαίροντα τίκτειν· ἦν δὲ μὴ πάσχη τόδε,

162 fort. δὴ· μέ πολλοὺς τ' v. del. Dindorf

166 del. Dindorf 174 ἅς versio Melanchthonis et Xylandri:

ὡς L 177-8 del. Bothe

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

ADRASTUS

Yes, the very thing that destroys many generals.

But, O most valiant warrior in Greece, king of Athens, though I consider it disgraceful to fall upon the ground and cover your knees with my hands, [since I am an old king who was once prosperous,] yet I must yield to my misfortunes. (*He kneels before Theseus.*) Bring the dead safely back, I pray, take pity on my troubles and on these mothers whose sons have been slain! Gray old age has come upon them in childlessness, and they have taken it upon themselves to come and plant their foreign steps here, though they can barely move their aged limbs. This is no sacred embassy to Demeter's mysteries: they have come to bury their dead sons, though it is by these sons' hands that they themselves ought to be buried and receive a funeral. It is a wise thing for the rich man to look on poverty [and the poor man to turn his gaze on the rich in envy, so that desire for money may seize him,] and for those who are not unfortunate to look at what is pitiable.

<But am I not afraid that the ruin of my fortunes will prevent me from pleasing this man by my speech and gaining what I want? The speaker who wants to be persuasive must be cheerful,¹⁰ just as the poet must compose in joy the songs he composes. If that is not the case with him, he

¹⁰ Unless 180–3 are an alien addition whose presence here is wholly mysterious, we must place a lacuna before 180 of indeterminate length whose content may have been something like what is given above.

¹⁷⁹ *δεδορκέναι* Tyrwhitt: *δεδοικέναι* L
dic. Matthiae

¹⁸⁰ *αὐτὸν* Scaliger

post h. v. lac. in-

EURIPIDES

οὔτοι δύναιτ' ἂν οἴκοθέν γ' ἀτώμενος
τέρπειν ἂν ἄλλους· οὐδὲ γὰρ δίκην ἔχει.

- τάχ' οὖν ἂν εἴποις· Πελοπίαν παρὲς χθόνα
185 πῶς ταῖς Ἀθήναις τόνδε προστάσσεις πόνον;
ἐγὼ δίκαιός εἰμ' ἀφηγέισθαι τάδε.
Σπάρτη μὲν ὠμῆ καὶ πεποίκιλται τρόπους,
τὰ δ' ἄλλα μικρὰ κάσθενῆ· πόλις δὲ σὴ
μόνη δύναιτ' ἂν τόνδ' ὑποστήναι πόνον·
190 τὰ τ' οἰκτρὰ γὰρ δέδορκε καὶ νεανίαν
ἔχει σε ποιμέν' ἐσθλόν· οὐ χρεία πόλεις
πολλαὶ διώλοντ', ἐνδεεῖς στρατηλάτου.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

κἀγὼ τὸν αὐτὸν τῷδέ σοι λόγον λέγω,
Θησεῦ, δι' οἴκτου τὰς ἐμας λαβεῖν τύχας.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

- 195 ἄλλοισι δὴ ἴπνησ' ἀμιλληθεῖς λόγῳ
τοιῷδ'. ἔλεξε γάρ τις ὡς τὰ χείρονα
πλείω βροτοῖσιν ἐστὶ τῶν ἀμεινόνων.
ἐγὼ δὲ τούτοις ἀντίαν γνώμην ἔχω,
πλείω τὰ χρηστὰ τῶν κακῶν εἶναι βροτοῖς.
200 εἰ μὴ γὰρ ἦν τόδ', οὐκ ἂν ἦμεν ἐν φάει.
αἰνῶ δ' ὅς ἡμῖν βίοντον ἐκ πεφυρμένου
καὶ θηριώδους θεῶν διεσταθμῆσατο,
πρῶτον μὲν ἐνθεῖς σύνεσιν, εἶτα δ' ἄγγελον
γλῶσσαν λόγων δούς, ὥστε γιγνώσκειν ὅπα,
205 τροφήν τε καρποῦ τῇ τροφῇ τ' ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ
σταγόνας ὑδρηλὰς ὡς τὰ τ' ἐκ γαίας τρέφῃ

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

cannot give pleasure to others if he himself is suffering; that is not the way of things.

Perhaps you might object, "Why do you pass over the Peloponnesus and lay this task on Athens?" It is my duty to explain this. Sparta is savage and devious in its ways, and the other states are small and weak. It is your city alone that could undertake this labor. It looks on what is pitiable and it has in you a good leader who is vigorous. For want of such a general many cities have perished.

CHORUS LEADER

I make the same plea as he, Theseus: pity my misfortunes!

THESEUS

I once had a debate with other men, and my argument was of this nature. Someone said that mortals have more of bad than of good. But I hold the opposite view, that mortals enjoy more good things than bad. If it were not so, we would not be looking on the light of day. I praise the god who set our life in order, rescuing it from its confused and brutish state. First he put reason in us, then he gave us a tongue to utter words, so that we can understand speech, gave us too the fruit of the ground as nourishment and with it the rain from heaven, so that it might nourish what grows in the earth and quench our bellies' thirst. Furthermore he

187 ὠμῆ Canter: ἦ' μῆ L

190 νεανιωῶν Markland

190-2 del. Dindorf

206 τ' Markland: γ' L

EURIPIDES

- ἄρδη τε νηδύν· πρὸς δὲ τοῖσι χείματος
 προβλήματ' αἰθόν <τ' > ἑξαμύνασθαι θεοῦ
 πόντου τε ναυστολήμαθ', ὡς διαλλαγὰς
 210 ἔχοιμεν ἀλλήλοισιν ὧν πένουτο γῆ.
 ἂ δ' ἔστ' ἄσημα κοῦ σαφῶς γιγνώσκομεν,
 ἐς πῦρ βλέποντες καὶ κατὰ σπλάγχχνων πτυχὰς
 μάντεις προσημαίνουσιν οἰωνῶν τ' ἄπο.
 ἄρ' οὐ τρυφῶμεν, θεοῦ κατασκευὴν βίω
 215 δόντος τοιαύτην, οἷσιν οὐκ ἄρκει τάδε;
 ἀλλ' ἢ φρόνησις τοῦ θεοῦ μείζον σθένειν
 ζητεῖ, τὸ γαῦρον δ' ἐν φρεσὶν κεκτημένοι
 δοκοῦμεν εἶναι δαιμόνων σοφώτεροι.
 ἦς καὶ σὺ φαίνη δεκάδος οὐ σοφῆς γεγώς,
 220 ὅστις κόρας μὲν θεσφάτοις Φοῖβον ζυγεῖς
 ξένοισιν ὧδ' ἔδωκας ὡς δόντων θεῶν,
 [λαμπρὸν δὲ θολερῶ δῶμα συμμείξας τὸ σὸν
 ἠλκωσας οἴκους· χρῆ γὰρ οὔτε σώματα
 ἄδικα δικαίοις τὸν σοφὸν συμμειγνύναι
 225 εὐδαιμονοῦντας τ' ἐς δόμους κτᾶσθαι φίλους.
 κοινὰς γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τὰς τύχας ἡγούμενος
 τοῖς τοῦ νοσοῦντος πῆμασιν διώλεσεν
 τὸν οὐ νοσοῦντα κοῦδὲν ἠδικηκότα,]
 ἐς δὲ στρατείαν πάντας Ἀργείους ἄγων,
 230 μάντεων λεγόντων θέσφατ' εἶτ' ἀτιμάσας,
 βία παρελθὼν θεοὺς ἀπώλεσας πόλιν.
 [νέοις παραχθεῖς οἵτινες τιμώμενοι
 χαίρουσι πολέμους τ' αὐξάνουσ' ἄνευ δίκης,
 φθείροντες ἀστούς, ὁ μὲν ὅπως στρατηλατῆ,

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

gave us protection against the winter cold <and> a way to ward off the sun god's blazing heat, and the means to sail the sea so that each land might trade with others for the things it lacks. Matters that are unclear and of which we have no reliable knowledge are foretold to us by seers who examine fire, the folds of entrails, or the flight of birds. The god has made provision like this for our life: are we not being hard to please if this is not enough for us? But arrogance tries to be mightier than the god. With our vainglorious minds we think we are wiser than the powers divine.

You too clearly belong to this foolish band. You gave your daughters under compulsion of Phoebus' oracles to foreigners on the understanding that the gods had bestowed them; [but by mixing your bright house with mud you ruined it. The wise man should not mingle unjust bodies with just: he ought to win prosperous friends for his house. Considering their lots to be cast together the gods destroy the healthy and innocent with the troubles of the diseased;] yet when you were leading all the Argives on an expedition, when seers were uttering prophesies, you set them at nought, forcibly transgressed the will of the gods, and destroyed your city. [You were led astray by young men who enjoy being honored and who multiply wars without justice to the hurt of the citizens. One wants to be gen-

208 <τ' > Faber, Milton 219 σοφῆς Markland: σοφὸς L

221 δόντων Scaliger: ζώντων L 222-8 del. Lueders

223 χρῆ Hartung: χρῆν L 225 τ' Markland: δ' L

228 οὐ νοσοῦντα Lambinus: συννοσοῦντα L

230 del. Wilamowitz

232-45 suspectos hab. Wecklein (238-45 del. Th. Miller)

EURIPIDES

- 235 ὁ δ' ὡς ὑβρίζει δύναμιν ἐς χεῖρας λαβών,
 ἄλλος δὲ κέρδους οὐνεκ', οὐκ ἀποσκοπῶν
 τὸ πλῆθος εἴ τι βλάπτεται πάσχον τάδε.
 τρεῖς γὰρ πολιτῶν μερίδες· οἱ μὲν ὄλβιοι
 ἀνωφελεῖς τε πλειόνων τ' ἐρώσ' αἰεί·
- 240 οἱ δ' οὐκ ἔχοντες καὶ σπανίζοντες βίου
 δεινοί, νέμοντες τῷ φθόνῳ πλέον μέρος,
 ἐς τοὺς <τ'> ἔχοντας κέντρ' ἀφιάσιν κακά,
 γλώσσαις πονηρῶν προστατῶν φηλούμενοι·
 τριῶν δὲ μοιρῶν ἢ ἕν μέρει σῶζει πόλεις,
- 245 κόσμον φυλάσσοις ὄντιν' ἂν τάξῃ πόλις.]
 κᾶπειτ' ἐγὼ σοὶ σύμμαχος γενήσομαι;
 τί πρὸς πολίτας τοὺς ἐμοὺς λέγων καλόν;
 χαίρων ἴθι· εἰ γὰρ μὴ βεβούλευσαι καλῶς
 αὐτός, πιέζειν σὴν τύχην ἡμᾶς τί δεῖ;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- 250 ἡμαρτεν· ἐν νέοισι δ' ἀνθρώπων τόδε
 ἔνεστι· συγγνώμην δὲ τῷδ' ἔχειν χρεῶν.
 [ἀλλ' ὡς ἱατρὸν τῶνδ', ἀναξ, ἀφίγμεθα.]

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

- οὔτοι δικαστὴν σ' εἰλόμην ἐμῶν κακῶν
 οὐδ', εἴ τι πράξας μὴ καλῶς εὐρίσκομαι,
- 255 τούτων κολαστὴν κάπιτιμητὴν, ἀναξ,
 ἀλλ' ὡς ὀναίμην. εἰ δὲ μὴ βούλη τάδε,
 στέργειν ἀνάγκη τοῖσι σοῖς· τί γὰρ πάθω;
 ἄγ', ὦ γεραιαί, στείχετε, γλαυκὴν χλόην
 αὐτοῦ λιποῦσαι φυλλάδος καταστεφῆ,

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

eral, another to get power into his hands and commit wanton abuse, another wants wealth and does not consider whether the majority is at all harmed by being so treated. There are three classes of citizens: the rich are useless and always lusting for more; the poor, who lack their their daily bread, are dangerous, for they assign too great a place to envy <and> hurl their stings at the rich, being deceived by the tongues of wicked leaders; of the three classes the one in the middle preserves states by keeping to the discipline that the city establishes.] And after this shall I become *your* ally? What creditable explanation can I offer my citizens? Farewell, go your way! If you yourself have acted rashly, why should your misfortune press upon us?

CHORUS LEADER

He has made a mistake. But this is natural in young men, and you should forgive him. [But to a healer of these things, my lord, we have come.]

ADRASTUS

I did not choose you, sir, to be the judge of my troubles or the punisher and rebuker of any discreditable deeds I am found to have committed, but to win benefit. If you refuse me this, I must put up with your decision: what else can I do?

Come, aged ladies, leave your gray-green branches

²⁴² <τ> Kirchhoff ²⁴⁸ ἴθ'· εἰ γὰρ μὴ edd. post Matthiae et Hermann: ἴθι· μὴ γὰρ L

²⁴⁹ σὴν . . . τί δέῃ Hermann: τήν . . . λίαν L

²⁵² del. Matthiae

²⁵⁹ καταστεφῆ Scaliger: καταστροφῆ L

EURIPIDES

- 260 θεούς τε καὶ γῆν τήν τε πυρφόρον θεῶν
 Δήμητρα θέμεναι μάρτυρ' ἡλίου τε φῶς
 ὡς οὐδὲν ἡμῖν ἤρκεσαν λιταὶ θεῶν.
 <καίτοι τί πάσχω; χεῖρα σὴν ἰκνούμενος
 ἀπείπον, ἐν μέγιστον διολέσας ἔπος;
 ἢ γὰρ τεκούσά σ' ἐστὶ Πιθθέως κόρη, >
 ὃς Πέλοπος ἦν παῖς, Πελοπίας δ' ἡμεῖς χθονὸς
 ταῦτον πατρῶον αἷμα σοὶ κεκτήμεθα.
- 265 τί δρᾶς; προδώσεις ταῦτα κάκβαλεῖς χθονὸς
 γραῦς οὐ τυχούσας οὐδὲν ὦν αὐτὰς ἐχρήν;
 μὴ δῆτ' ἔχει γὰρ καταφυγὴν θῆρ μὲν πέτραν,
 δούλος δὲ βωμοὺς θεῶν, πόλις δὲ πρὸς πόλιν
 ἔπτηξε χειμασθεῖσα· τῶν γὰρ ἐν βροτοῖς
- 270 οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν διὰ τέλους εὐδαιμονοῦν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- βᾶθι, τάλαιν', ἱερῶν δαπέδων ἀπὸ Περσεφονείας,
 βᾶθι καὶ ἀντίασον γονάτων ἐπὶ χεῖρα βαλοῦσα,
 τέκνων τεθνεώτων κομίσει δέμας, ὦ μελέα ἄγῳ,
 οὐς ὑπὸ Καδμείοισιν ἀπώλεσα τείχεισι κούρους.
- 275 [ἰὼ μοι· λάβετε φέρετε πέμπετε †κρίνετε†
 ταλαίνας χέρας γεραιάς.]
 πρὸς <σε> γενειάδος, ὦ φίλος <ὦ φίλος>,
 ὦ δοκιμώτατος Ἑλλάδι <γαῖα>,

262 post h. v. lac. indic. Melanchthon-Xylander

273 τεθνεώτων Reiske: τε θνατῶν L

274 Καδμείοισιν

ἀπώλεσα τείχεσι Hermann: τ- K- ἄ- L

275-6 del. Dindorf

277 <σε> Markland

<ὦ φίλος> Willink

<γαῖα> Willink

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

decked with foliage here and go, calling the gods, the earth, Demeter the torchbearer, and the light of the sun to witness that your petitions in the gods' name have been unavailing.

<But what is wrong with me? Have I given up supplicating your hand and forgotten my single strongest argument? Your mother was the daughter of Pittheus,> who was the son of Pelops, and we of Pelops' land have the same ancestral blood in our veins as you. What are you doing? Will you abandon this tie and expel from the land old women who have received nothing of what is owed them? No! The beast has the cliff as its refuge, the slave the gods' altars, and one city when storm-beaten takes refuge with another. Where mortal fortunes are concerned, nothing remains prosperous to the end.

The Chorus leave their suppliant boughs in a circle around Aethra and group themselves in supplication around Theseus.

CHORUS

Go then, unfortunate women, from the sacred precinct of Persephone!

Go, grasp his knees in supplication, and entreat him to recover the bodies of your fallen sons, O unhappy me, sons we have lost under the walls of Cadmus' city.

[Ah me! Take, bear, send, lift
the old and wretched hands.]

By your beard, dear friend, <dear friend,>
most glorious man in the eyes of Hellas' <land>,

EURIPIDES

- ἄντομαι ἀμφιπίτνουσα τὸ σὸν γόνυ
 καὶ χέρα δειλαία, οἴκτισαι <οἴκτισαι>
 280 ἀμφὶ τέκνων μ' ἰκέτιν καὶ ἀλάταν
 οἰκτρὸν ἰήλεμον οἰκτρὸν ἰείσαν.
 μηδ' ἀτάφους, τέκνον, ἐν Κάδμου χθονὶ χάρματα
 θηρῶν
 παῖδας ἐν ἡλικίᾳ τῆ σῆ κατίδης, ἰκετεύω.
 βλέψον ἐμῶν βλεφάρων ἔπι δάκρυον, ἃ περὶ σοῖσι
 285 γούνασιν ὧδε πίτνω τέκνοις τάφον ἐξανύσασθαι.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

- μῆτερ, τί κλαίεις λέπτ' ἐπ' ὀμμάτων φάρη
 βαλοῦσα τῶν σῶν; ἄρα δυστήνους γόους
 κλυοῦσα τῶνδε; καμὲ γὰρ διήλθ' ἑ τι.
 ἔπαιρε λευκὸν κρᾶτα, μὴ δακρυρροεῖ
 290 σεμναῖσι Δηοῦς ἐσχάραις παρημένῃ.

ΑΙΘΡΑ

αἰαί.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τὰ τούτων οὐχὶ σοὶ στενακτέον.

ΑΙΘΡΑ

ὦ πλήμονες γυναῖκες.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

οὐ σὺ τῶνδ' ἔφυς.

279 δειλαία Hermann: -αν L

<οἴκτισαι> Musgrave

280 ἰκέτιν Markland: -ταν L

καὶ Stinton ap. Collard: ἤ

των' L

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

I beg you, clasping your knees
and hand in my misery: pity, <O pity> me,
the suppliant and wanderer on my sons' behalf,
as I utter a pitiable, pitiable cry!
Do not, my son, stand by in your youthful vigor
and let my sons lie unburied in Cadmus' land to delight the
wild beasts, I implore you!
Look at the tears on my cheeks! See how I fall
at your knees entreating you to win burial for my sons!

Aethra covers her face with the folds of her robe and weeps aloud.

THESEUS

Mother, why are you weeping, holding your fine-spun garments before your eyes? Is it because you hear the unhappy wailing of these women? In some measure it has affected me also. Raise up your white head, do not shed tears as you sit by the holy altar of Deo.¹¹

AETHRA

Ah me!

THESEUS

You must not groan at these women's fate.

AETHRA

O luckless women!

THESEUS

You are not one of their number.

¹¹ Another name for Demeter.

²⁸² Κάδμου χθονί Wilamowitz: χ- K- L κύρματα Wakefield

EURIPIDES

ΑΙΘΡΑ

εἴπω τι, τέκνον, σοί τε καὶ πόλει καλόν;

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ὡς πολλά γ' ἐστὶ κἀπὸ θηλειῶν σοφά.

ΑΙΘΡΑ

295 ἄλλ' εἰς ὄκνον μοι μῦθος ὄν κεύθω φέρει.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

αἰσχρόν γ' ἔλεξας, χρήστ' ἔπη κρύπτειν φίλους.

ΑΙΘΡΑ

οὔτοι σιωπῶσ' εἶτα μέμφομαί ποτε
τὴν νῦν σιωπὴν ὡς ἐσιγήθη κακῶς,
οὐδ', ὡς ἀχρεῖον τὰς γυναικάς εὔ λέγειν
300 δείσασ' ἀφήσω τῷ φόβῳ τοῦμὸν καλόν.

ἐγὼ δέ σ', ὦ παῖ, πρῶτα μὲν τὰ τῶν θεῶν
σκοπεῖν κελεύω μὴ σφαλῆς ἀτιμάσας.
[σφαλῆς γὰρ ἐν τούτῳ μόνῳ, τᾶλλ' εὔ φρονῶν.]

305 πρὸς τοῖσδε δ', εἰ μὲν μὴ ἀδικουμένοις ἐχρῆν
πολημρὸν εἶναι, κάρτ' ἂν εἶχον ἡσύχως.
†ννὶ δὲ σοί τε τοῦτο τὴν τιμὴν φέρει†
κἀμοὶ παραινεῖν οὐ φόβον φέρει, τέκνον,
ἄνδρας βιαίους καὶ κατείργοντας νεκροὺς
τάφου τε μοῖραν καὶ κτερισμάτων λαχεῖν
310 ἐς τήνδ' ἀνάγκην σῆ καταστῆσαι χερί,

²⁹⁶ ἔπη κρύπτειν Hermann: ἐπικρύπτειν L φίλους
Barnes: -οις L ²⁹⁹ post h. v. lac. fort. indicanda, e.g. <δοκοῦν
ἄπασι, μή μ' ἐπαιέση πόλις>

SUPLIANT WOMEN

AETHRA

Shall I say something, my son, that brings honor to you and to the city?

THESEUS

Yes, for much wise advice can be heard even from women.

AETHRA

But the suggestion I have in my heart causes me to hesitate.

THESEUS

For shame—keeping good words from your near and dear!

AETHRA

I shall not hold my peace and then at some later time reproach myself for my present silence, nor, since it is a useless thing for women to be eloquent, shall I, out of fear, let go of the noble task that is mine.

I urge you first of all, my son, to consider the will of the gods lest you meet with disaster by neglecting it. [You fail in this one thing, being sensible in all else.] In addition, if you were not called to be courageous on behalf of the wronged, I would hold my peace. As matters stand, my son, this course of action brings you honor, and I feel no fear in recommending it, urging you to use force to compel men who are violent and deprive the dead of due burial to grant

303 del. A. Schmidt

305 τιμωρὸν Kirchhoff

306 fort. νῦν δ' ἐστὶ σοί τε τοῦτο δρᾶν τιμὴν φέρον (δρᾶν Wilamowitz, δ' ἐστὶ . . . φέρον Wecklein olim)

309 μοῖραν Herwerden: μοίρας L

310 καταστήσαι Reiske: -στήναι L

EURIPIDES

νόμιμά τε πάσης συγχέοντας Ἑλλάδος
 παῦσαι· τὸ γάρ τοι συνέχον ἀνθρώπων πόλεις
 τοῦτ' ἔσθ', ὅταν τις τοὺς νόμους σφίξει καλῶς.

- ἐρεῖ δὲ δὴ τις ὡς ἀνανδρία χερῶν,
 315 πόλει παρόν σοι στέφανον εὐκλείας λαβεῖν,
 δείσας ἀπέστης, καὶ σὺς μὲν ἀγρίου
 ἀγῶνος ἤψω φαῦλον ἀθλήσας πόνον,
 οὐδ' ἐς κράνος βλέφαντα καὶ λόγχης ἀκμὴν
 χρῆν ἐκπονήσαι δειλὸς ὢν ἐφηυρέθης.
 320 μὴ δῆτ' ἐμός γ' ὢν, ὦ τέκνον, δράσης τάδε.
 ὀρᾶς; ἄβουλος ὡς κεκερτομημένη
 τοῖς κερτομοῦσι γοργὸν ὄμμ' ἀναβλέπει
 σὴ πατρίς· ἐν γὰρ τοῖς πόνουσι αὖξεται.
 αἱ δ' ἤσυχαι σκοτεινὰ πράσσουσαι πόλεις
 325 σκοτεινὰ καὶ βλέπουσιν εὐλαβούμεναι.
 οὐκ εἶ νεκροῖσι καὶ γυναιξὶν ἀθλίας
 προσωφελήσων, ὦ τέκνον, κεκρημέναις;
 ὡς οὔτε ταρβῶ σὺν δίκη σ' ὀρμώμενον
 Κάδμου θ' ὀρώσα λαὸν εὖ πεπραγότα
 330 ἔτ' αὐτὸν ἄλλα βλήματ' ἐν κύβοις βαλεῖν
 πέποιθ'. ὁ γὰρ θεὸς πάντ' ἀναστρέφει πάλιν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ φιλάτη μοι, τῷδέ τ' εἴρηκας καλῶς
 κάμοι· διπλοῦν δὲ χάρμα γίγνεται τόδε.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

- ἐμοὶ λόγοι μὲν, μήτηρ, οἱ λελεγμένοι
 335 ὀρθῶς ἔχουσ' ἐς τόνδε, κάπεφηνάμην

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

it, preventing them from violating what all Greece holds lawful. It is the decent observance of the laws that holds together all human communities.

Furthermore someone will say that you timidly stood aside out of physical cowardice, although you could have won for the city a crown of glory. They will say that you struggled against a wild boar, a trivial labor, but where you ought to have struggled through in the face of enemy helmets and spear points, you showed yourself a coward. You are my child, son—do not act thus! Don't you see? Your country, when it is taunted with rashness, turns its fierce visage against its taunters. It flourishes in strenuous action. Cities that keep quiet and do no deeds of glory have no glory in their glances but only caution.¹²

Go, my son, and help the dead and these unhappy women in their hour of need! I have no fear for you. You are setting out in a just cause, and I am confident, as I see the people of Cadmus prospering, that their future dice casts will be different. Heaven overturns all things.

CHORUS LEADER

O dearest of women to me, your words were nobly spoken both in his eyes and in mine! This is a double joy!

THESEUS

Mother, the words I spoke to this man were the truth: I

¹² Athens had a reputation among the Greeks for vigorous (and meddlesome) activism. Compare the remarks of the Corinthian ambassadors at Thucydides 1.70.

³²² γοργόν ὄμμ' Wecklein: γοργόν' ὦς L

³³⁰ ἄλλα βλήματ' αὐτὸν Broadhead

EURIPIDES

- γνώμην ὑφ' οἴων ἐσφάλη βουλευμάτων·
 ὀρῶ δὲ καὶ γὼ ταῦθ' ἅπερ με νουθετεῖς,
 ὡς τοῖς ἐμοῖσιν οὐχὶ πρόσφορον τρόποις
 φεύγειν τὰ δεινά. πολλὰ γὰρ δράσας καλὰ
 340 ἔθος τόδ' εἰς Ἑλληνας ἐξεδειξάμην,
 αἰεὶ κολαστῆς τῶν κακῶν καθεστάναι.
 οὐκουν ἀπαυδᾶν δυνατόν ἐστί μοι πόνους.
 τί γάρ μ' ἐροῦσιν οἳ γε δυσμενεῖς βροτῶν,
 ὅθ' ἡ τεκοῦσα χυπερορρωδοῦσ' ἐμοῦ
 345 πρώτη κελεύεις τόνδ' ὑποστῆναι πόνον;
 δράσω τάδ'· εἶμι καὶ νεκροὺς ἐκλύσομαι
 λόγοισι πείθων· εἰ δὲ μή, βία δορὸς
 ἤδη τότ' ἔσται κοῦχι σὺν φθόνῳ θεῶν.
 δόξαι δὲ χρήζω καὶ πόλει πάσῃ τόδε,
 350 δόξει δ' ἐμοῦ θέλοντος· ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου
 προσδοῦς ἔχοιμ' ἂν δῆμον εὐμενέστερον.
 καὶ γὰρ κατέστησ' αὐτὸν ἐς μοναρχίαν
 ἐλευθερώσας τήνδ' ἰσόψηφον πόλιν.
 λαβὼν δ' Ἄδραστον δεῖγμα τῶν ἐμῶν λόγων
 355 ἐς πλῆθος ἀστῶν εἶμι· καὶ πείσας τάδε,
 λεκτοὺς ἀθροίσας δεῦρ' Ἀθηναίων κόρους
 ἤξω· παρ' ὅπλοις θ' ἤμμενος πέμψω λόγους
 Κρέοντι νεκρῶν σώματ' ἐξαιτούμενος.
 ἀλλ', ὦ γεραιαί, σέμν' ἀφαιρέετε στέφη
 360 μητρός, πρὸς οἴκους ὡς νιν Αἰγέως ἄγω,
 φίλην προσάψας χεῖρα· τοῖς τεκοῦσι γὰρ

340 ἐξεδειξάμην Hermann: -λεξάμην L

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

spoke my mind about the counsels that ruined him. Yet I can also see what you say to me, that it is not like me to run from danger. By many glorious deeds I have demonstrated to the Greeks that my custom is always to be a punisher of the wicked. So I cannot refuse hard tasks. What will my enemies say about me when you, who bore me and would naturally be worried about me, are the first to urge me to undertake this toil?

Here is what I shall do: I shall go and win release of the bodies, persuading the Thebans with my words. If that fails, then it shall be done by force, and the gods will not begrudge it. I want the city too to ratify this decision, and ratify it they will since that is what I wish. But if I add my reasons I will have more of the people's good will. And in fact I have made the people sovereign by freeing this city and giving them equal votes. I shall take Adrastus along as the proof of what I am saying and appear before the citizen assembly. When I have won them over on this point, I shall gather a picked band of Athenian youth and return here. Sitting in encampment I shall send a message to Creon, asking for the bodies of the dead.

So, aged women, remove your suppliant boughs from my mother so that I may bring her to Aegeus' house,¹³ taking her beloved hand in mine. That son is a poor wretch

¹³ I.e. his own house: Aegeus, now dead, was Theseus' father.

³⁴⁷ *πείθων* Nauck: *πείσων* L

³⁴⁸ *τότ'* Diggle: *τόδ'* L

³⁵⁰ *τοῦ]* fort. *τοι*

³⁵² *αὐτὸς* Kirchhoff

³⁵⁵ *ἀστῶν* Elmsley: *αὐτῶν* L

EURIPIDES

δύστηνος ὅστις μὴ ἀντιδουλεύει τέκνων
 κάλλιστον ἔρανον· δούς γὰρ ἀντιλάζνται
 παίδων παρ' αὐτοῦ τοιάδ' ἂν τοκεῦσι δῶ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α

365 ἰππόβοτον Ἄργος, ὦ πάτριον ἐμὸν πέδον,
 †ἐκλύετε τάδ', ἐκλύετε†
 ἄνακτος ὅσια περὶ θεοῦς
 καὶ μεγάλα Πελασγία
 καὶ κατ' Ἄργος;

ἀντ. α

εἰ γὰρ ἐπὶ τέρμα καὶ τὸ πλεόν ἐμῶν κακῶν
 370 †ἰκόμενος ἔτι ματέρος
 ἄγαλμα† φόνιον ἐξέλοι,
 γὰν δὲ φίλιον Ἰνάχου
 θεῖτ' ὀνήσας.

στρ. β

καλὸν δ' ἄγαλμα πόλεσιν εὐ-
 σεβῆς πόνος χάριν τ' ἔχει
 τὰν ἐς αἰεί.
 τί μοι πόλις κρανεῖ ποτ'; ἂ-
 375 ρα φίλιά μοι
 τεμονῦσι καὶ τέκνοις ταφὰς
 ληψόμεσθα;

366 ἐκλύετ' <ἔπεα> τάδ', ἐκλύετ' <ὦ> Willink

368 fort. κατ' ἄνδρας, tum γὰ pro καὶ Willink

SUPLIANT WOMEN

who does not serve his parents, making his noble contribution to the feast. When he has made it, he receives back from his own children services like those he gave his parents.

The Chorus pick up their suppliant boughs. Exit THESEUS with retinue, AETHRA, and ADRASTUS by Eisdos A.

CHORUS

Horse-pasturing Argos, ground my fathers trod,
have you heard, have you heard
from the king these words god-fearing
and great in the eyes of Pelasgia and Argos?

May he go to the utmost end of my troubles and beyond,
rescue a mother's
blood-stained darling,
and make a friend of the land of Inachus¹⁴
by doing her good!

Pious toil is a glorious adornment
to cities, and it wins gratitude
for all time.

What will the city decide to do for me?
Will they make a treaty
of friendship with me, and will we win
burial for our sons?

¹⁴ The chief river of Argos.

370-1 *ἰκόμενος ἔτι ματέρος ἄγαλ-/μα <λῦμα> φόνιον* Willink
376 *τεμοῦσι* Willink: *τεμεῖ* L

ἀντ. β

ἄμυνε ματρί, πόλις, ἄμυ-
νε, Παλλάδος, νόμους βροτῶν
μὴ μαίνειν.
σύ τοι σέβεις δίκαν, τὸ δ' ἦσ-
σον ἀδικία

380 νέμεις αἰεί τε δυστυχῆ
πάντα ρύη.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τέχνην μὲν αἰεὶ τήνδ' ἔχων ὑπηρετεῖς
πόλει τε κάμοι διαφέρων κηρύγματα·
ἐλθῶν δ' ὑπὲρ τ' Ἀσωπὸν Ἴσμηνοῦ θ' ὕδωρ
σεμνῷ τυράννῳ φράζε Καδμείων τάδε·

385 Θησεύς σ' ἀπαιτεῖ πρὸς χάριν θάψαι νεκρούς,
συγγείτον' οἰκῶν γαίαν, ἀξίων τυχεῖν,
φίλον τε θέσθαι πάντ' Ἐρεχθιδῶν λεῶν.
κἂν μὲν θέλωσιν, αἰνέσας παλίσσυτος
στεῖχ' ἦν δ' ἀπιστῶσ', οἶδε δεῦτεροι λόγοι,
390 κῶμον δέχεσθαι τὸν ἐμὸν ἀσπιδηφόρον.
στρατὸς δὲ θάσσει κἄξετάζεται παρὼν
Καλλίχορον ἀμφὶ σεμνὸν εὐτρεπῆς ὄδε.
καὶ μὴν ἐκούσά γ' ἀσμένη τ' ἐδέξατο
πόλις πόνον τόνδ', ὡς θέλοντά μ' ἦσθετο.

380 τε Willink: τὸν L

388 αἰνέσας Cobet: αἰνέσαι L

393 γ' Hermann: τ' L

SUPLIANT WOMEN

O city of Pallas, protect, protect
a mother: see that the laws
of mortals are not defiled!
You honor justice, paying
no honor to injustice,
and always rescue
all that is unfortunate.

*Enter THESEUS with retinue, ADRASTUS, and an Athenian
herald by Eisodos A.*

THESEUS

As on all other occasions you have served the city and me by this art you practice of carrying proclamations, so now cross the Asopus and the waters of the Ismenus and tell the haughty king of the Cadmeans the following: "Theseus asks you as a favor to bury the dead; he is your neighbor and thinks it right that his request be granted; do this and you will make the whole host of the Erechtheids your friends." If they consent, thank them and hurry back home. But if they refuse to listen, then give them a second message: they should expect revelers of mine at their door, revelers who carry shields. Our army here sits in readiness and is being reviewed around the holy spring of Callichorus.¹⁵ The city gladly and willingly took up this task when they heard that I wished them to do so.

Enter a Theban HERALD by Eisodos B.

¹⁵ A sacred spring at Eleusis, famous in the legend of Demeter.

EURIPIDES

395 ἔα· λόγων τίς ἐμποδῶν ὄδ' ἔρχεται;
 Καδμείος, ὡς ἔοικεν οὐ σάφ' εἰδότε,
 κῆρυξ. ἐπίσχεσ, ἦν σ' ἀπαλλάξῃ πόνου
 μολῶν ὑπαντα τοῖς ἐμοῖς βουλευμασιν.

ΚΗΡΥΞ

τίς γῆς τύραννος; πρὸς τίν' ἀγγεῖλαί με χρῆ
 400 λόγους Κρέοντος, ὃς κρατεῖ Κάδμου χθονὸς
 Ἐτεοκλέους θανόντος ἀμφ' ἑπταστόμους
 πύλας ἀδελφῆ χειρὶ Πολυνείκους ὑπο;

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

πρῶτον μὲν ἤρξω τοῦ λόγου ψευδῶς, ξένε,
 ζητῶν τύραννον ἐνθάδ'. οὐ γὰρ ἄρχεται
 405 ἐνὸς πρὸς ἀνδρὸς ἀλλ' ἐλευθέρα πόλις.
 δῆμος δ' ἀνάσσει διαδοχαῖσιν ἐν μέρει
 ἐνιαυσίαισιν, οὐχὶ τῷ πλούτῳ διδοὺς
 τὸ πλείστον, ἀλλὰ χῶ πένης ἔχων ἴσον.

ΚΗΡΥΞ

ἐν μὲν τόδ' ἡμῖν ὥσπερ ἐν πεσσοῖς δίδωσ
 410 κρεῖσσον· πόλις γὰρ ἧς ἐγὼ πάρεμι' ἀπο
 ἐνὸς πρὸς ἀνδρός, οὐκ ὄχλω, κρατύνεται·
 οὐδ' ἔστιν αὐτῆν ὅστις ἐκχαυνῶν λόγοις
 πρὸς κέρδος ἴδιον ἄλλοτ' ἄλλοσε στρέφει.
 [ὁ δ' αὐτίχ' ἠδὺς καὶ διδοὺς πολλὴν χάριν
 415 ἐσαῦθις ἔβλαψ', εἶτα διαβολαῖς νέαις
 κλέψας τὰ πρόσθε σφάλματ' ἐξέδεν δίκης.]
 ἄλλως τε πῶς ἂν μὴ διορθεύων λόγους
 ὀρθῶς δύναιτ' ἂν δῆμος εὐθύνειν πόλιν;

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

But what is this? Who is this coming to stand in the way of my message? I cannot tell for sure, but he seems to be a Cadmean herald. Wait a minute to see whether he will save you effort by coming to meet my intentions.

HERALD

Who is the land's master? To whom shall I bring a message from Creon, who controls Cadmus' land since Eteocles was killed near the seven gates in fraternal bloodshed by Polynices?

THESEUS

To begin with, stranger, you started your speech on a false note by asking for the master here. The city is not ruled by a single man but is free. The people rule, and offices are held by yearly turns: they do not assign the highest honors to the rich, but the poor also have an equal share.

HERALD

Your words put me one point ahead, as in a game of draughts. The city I have come from is ruled by one man and not by a rabble. There is no one to fool the city with flattering speech and lead it this way and that to suit his own advantage. [At first he is welcome and gives much pleasure, but later he causes harm, and then, by the further expedient of slander, he conceals his earlier misdeeds and slips out of the reach of justice.] And anyway how can the common people, if they cannot even make a speech properly, know the right way to guide a city? It is time, not

402 ἀδελεφῆ Camper: -φου L ὑπο] θ' ὀμου Camper

408 ἴσον σθένει Herwerden: sed fort. delendi 406-8

414-6 del. Kovacs 414 ὁ] τὸ Wilamowitz

EURIPIDES

- ὁ γὰρ χρόνος μάθησιν ἀντὶ τοῦ τάχους
 420 κρείσσω δίδωσι. γαπόνος δ' ἀνὴρ πένης,
 εἰ καὶ γένοιτο μὴ ἀμαθήs, ἔργων ὑπο
 οὐκ ἂν δύναιτο πρὸς τὰ κοῖν' ἀποβλέπειν.
 ἦ δὴ νοσῶδες τοῦτο τοῖs ἀμείνοισιν,
 ὅταν ποιηρὸs ἀξίωμ' ἀνὴρ ἔχη
 425 γλώσση κατασχὼν δῆμον, οὐδὲν ἂν τὸ πρίν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

- κομφός γ' ὁ κῆρυξ καὶ παρεργάτης λόγων.
 ἐπεὶ δ' ἀγῶνα καὶ σὺ τόνδ' ἠγωνίσω,
 ἄκου· ἄμιλλαν γὰρ σὺ προύθηκας λόγων.
 οὐδὲν τυράννου δυσμενέστερον πόλει,
 430 ὅπου τὸ μὲν πρῶτιστον οὐκ εἰσὶν νόμοι
 κοινοί, κρατεῖ δ' εἰς τὸν νόμον κεκτημένους
 αὐτὸs παρ' αὐτῶ· καὶ τόδ' οὐκέτ' ἔστ' ἴσον.
 γεγραμμένων δὲ τῶν νόμων ὃ τ' ἀσθενῆs
 ὁ πλούσιός τε τὴν δίκην ἴσην ἔχει,
 435 [ἔστιν δ' ἐνισπείν τοῖσιν ἀσθενεστέροις
 τὸν εὐτυχοῦντα ταῦθ', ὅταν κλύη κακῶs,]
 νικᾷ δ' ὁ μείων τὸν μέγαν δίκαι' ἔχων.
 τοῦλεύθερον δ' ἐκείνο· Τίς θέλει πόλει
 χρηστόν τι βούλευμ' ἐs μέσον φέρειν ἔχων;
 440 καὶ ταῦθ' ὁ χρήζων λαμπρός ἐσθ', ὁ δ' οὐ θέλων
 σιγᾷ. τί τούτων ἔστ' ἰσαίτερον πόλει;
 [καὶ μὴν ὅπου γε δῆμος αὐθέντης χθονός,
 ὑποῦσιν ἀστοῖs ἠδεται νεανίαις·
 ἀνὴρ δὲ βασιλεὺs ἐχθρὸν ἠγεῖται τόδε,

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

haste, that gives superior learning. Now the poor farmer, even if he is no fool, has no chance, because of his labor, to attend to the city's business. What is more, the better sort find it a sorry business when a man of low birth, a former nonentity, achieves prominence by entrancing the common people with his glib tongue.

THESEUS

This herald is a clever talker and loves to speak elaborately on what is no part of his errand! Well, since you have begun this contest, hear me out: for it was you who proposed this debate.

There is nothing more hostile to a city than a tyrant. In the first place, there are no common laws in such a city, and one man, keeping the law in his own hands, holds sway. This is unjust. When the laws are written, both the powerless and the rich have equal access to justice, [and it is possible for the weaker man to address the same words to the fortunate man whenever he is badly spoken of,] and the little man, if he has right on his side, defeats the big man. Freedom consists in this: "Who has a good proposal and wants to set it before the city?" He who wants to enjoys fame, while he who does not holds his peace. What is fairer for a city than this?

[Wherever the people rule the land, they take pleasure in the young citizens that are its strength. But a king thinks this hateful, and he kills the nobles <and> all he

421 *μη ἀμαθής* Lobeck: *κάμαθής* L fort. *ἔργων <θ>*

423-5 del. Kirchhoff: *ἦ δὲ* hic tantum apud Eur.

432 *ἔστ' ἴσον* Tyrwhitt: *ἐστὶ σοι* L 435-6 del. Nauck

440 *δ' οὐ* Hartung: *μη* L 442-55 del. Kovacs

EURIPIDES

- 445 καὶ τοὺς ἀρίστους οὖς <τ' > ἂν ἡγήται φρονεῖν
 κτείνει, δεδοικῶς τῆς τυραννίδος πέρι.
 πῶς οὖν ἔτ' ἂν γένοιτ' ἂν ἰσχυρὰ πόλις
 ὅταν τις ὡς λειμῶνος ἠρινοῦ στάχυν
 τόλμας ἀφαιρῆ κάπολωτίζη νέων;
- 450 κτᾶσθαι δὲ πλοῦτον καὶ βίον τί δεῖ τέκνοις
 ὡς τῷ τυράννῳ πλείον' ἐκμοχθῆ βίον;
 ἢ παρθευεῖν παιδας ἐν δόμοις καλῶς,
 τερπνὰς τυράννοις ἡδονάς, ὅταν θέλη,
 δάκρυα δ' ἐτοιμάζουσι; μὴ ζῶην ἔτι
- 455 εἰ τὰμὰ τέκνα πρὸς βίαν νυμφεύσεται.]
 καὶ ταῦτα μὲν δὴ πρὸς τὰ σ' ἐξηκόντισα.
 ἦκεις δὲ δὴ τί τῆσδε γῆς κεχρημένους;
 κλαίων γ' ἂν ἦλθες, εἴ σε μὴ ἔπεμψεν πόλις,
 περισσὰ φωνῶν τὸν γὰρ ἄγγελον χρεῶν
- 460 λέξανθ' ὅσ' ἂν τάξῃ τις ὡς τάχος πάλιν
 χωρεῖν. τὸ λοιπὸν δ' εἰς ἐμὴν πόλιν Κρέων
 ἦσσον λάλον σου πεμπέτω τιν' ἄγγελον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

φεῦ φεῦ. κακοῖσιν ὡς ὅταν δαίμων διδῶ
 καλῶς, ὑβρίζουσ' ὡς αἰεὶ πράξοντες εὔ.

ΚΗΡΥΞ

- 465 λέγοιμ' ἂν ἤδη. τῶν μὲν ἡγωνισμένων

445 <τ' > Markland 449 νέων Kirchhoff: νέους L: quo ac-
 cepto τομαῖς pro τόλμας Nauck

455 νυμφεύσεται Hermann: -εύεται L

458 γ' Lenting: δ' L 460 πάλιν Reiske: πόλει L

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

regards as proud, fearing for his power. How then could a city be strong in the future when someone culls and cuts away the boldest of the young as one does the towering stalk in a springtime meadow?¹⁶ And why should one acquire wealth and a livelihood for one's children merely to produce greater livelihood for the tyrant? And why gently raise girls in the house only to be a sweet pleasure for the ruler when he wants them and a source of tears for those who raised them? Better to die than see one's children forcibly molested!]

This is the answer I have launched in reply to your words. But what is your errand, what do you want from this land? If your city had not sent you, we would have made you regret coming here and talking so much. A messenger should say what he has been told to say and then depart at once. Henceforth let Creon send to my city a messenger less talkative than you!

CHORUS LEADER

Ah, how true it is that when fortune favors the base, they behave insolently, thinking they will be prosperous for ever!

HERALD

Now I shall speak. As regards our debate, you hold to your

¹⁶ Perhaps an allusion to the story, told in Herodotus 5.92, that when a messenger was sent by Periander, tyrant of Corinth, to Thrasybulus, tyrant of Miletus, to ask how to make his reign secure, Thrasybulus proceeded to lop the tallest of the ears of wheat, hinting that Periander should kill those ablest to oppose him.

EURIPIDES

- σοὶ μὲν δοκείτω ταῦτ', ἐμοὶ δὲ τὰντία.
 ἐγὼ δ' ἀπαυδῶ πᾶς τε Καδμείος λεῶς
 Ἄδραστον ἐς γῆν τήνδε μὴ παριέναι
 εἰ δ' ἔστιν ἐν γῆ, πρὶν θεοῦ δῦναι σέλας
 470 λύσαντα σεμνὰ στεμμάτων μυστήρια
 τῆσδ' ἐξελαύνειν, μηδ' ἀναιρεῖσθαι νεκροὺς
 βία, προσήκουτ' οὐδὲν Ἀργείων πόλει.
 κἂν μὲν πίθη μοι, κυμάτων ἄτερ πόλιν
 σὴν ναυστολήσεις· εἰ δὲ μή, πολὺς κλύδων
 475 ἡμῖν τε καὶ σοὶ συμμάχοις τ' ἔσται δορός.
 σκέψαι δέ, καὶ μὴ τοῖς ἐμοῖς θυμούμενος
 λόγοισιν, ὡς δὴ πόλιν ἐλευθέραν ἔχων,
 σφριγῶντ' ἀμείψῃ μῦθον ἐκ βραχιόνων.
 ἐλπίς γάρ ἐστ' ἄπιστον, ἢ πολλὰς πόλεις
 480 συνῆψ' ἄγουσα θυμὸν εἰς ὑπερβολάς.
 ὅταν γὰρ ἔλθῃ πόλεμος ἐς ψῆφον λεῶ,
 οὐδεὶς ἐφ' αὐτοῦ θάνατον ἐκλογίζεται,
 τὸ δυστυχὲς δὲ τοῦτ' ἐς ἄλλον ἐκτρέπει.
 εἰ δ' ἦν παρ' ὄμμα θάνατος ἐν ψήφου φορᾶ,
 485 οὐκ ἂν ποθ' Ἑλλὰς δοριμανῆς ἀπώλλυτο.
 καίτοι δυοῖν γε πάντες ἄνθρωποι λόγοιν
 τὸν κρείσσον' ἴσμεν, καὶ τὰ χρηστὰ καὶ κακά,
 ὅσῳ τε πολέμον κρείσσον εἰρήνη βροτοῖς·
 ἢ πρῶτα μὲν Μούσαισι προσφιλεστάτη,
 490 Ποιναιῖσι δ' ἐχθρά, τέρπεται τ' εὐπαιδία,
 χαίρει δὲ πλούτῳ. ταῦτ' ἀφέντες οἱ κακοὶ
 πολέμους ἀναιρούμεσθα καὶ τὸν ἥσσονα
 δουλούμεθ', ἄνδρες ἄνδρα καὶ πόλις πόλιν.

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

opinions and I shall hold to the opposite. But I and all the people of Cadmus' city forbid you to admit Adrastus into your land. If he is already here, break the sacred spell of suppliant boughs and drive him from this land before the sun god's light goes down. Do not attempt to take up the dead by force, since you have no connection to the city of Argos. If you do as I say, you will steer your city out of the waves. If you do not, both we and you and your allies will have heavy seas.

Think this over, and do not, from anger at my words, make some boastful answer on slender grounds, claiming that you live in a free city. Hope is a thing not to be trusted, and it has set cities at war with each other by kindling anger to excess. When a war comes to be voted on by the people, no one reckons on his own death: others, he thinks, will suffer that misfortune. If death stood before his eyes as he cast his vote, Hellas would not be perishing from spear madness.

Yet all men know which of two speeches is better, what is good and what is bad, and how much better for mortals is peace than war. Peace is beloved by the Muses and hated by the Avenging Spirits, she delights in lovely children and glories in wealth. We worthless mortals let these good things go, starting wars and enslaving the weaker party, men enslaving men and cities cities.

466 τάντῖα Porson, Hermann: τάναντία L

469 γῆ Reiske: τῆ L 471 τῆσδ'] γῆς Jacobs

479 ἐστ' ἄπιστον Fix: ἔστι κάκιστον L

482 ἐφ' Fritzsche: ἔθ' L

487 καὶ καλά Reiske: χοὶ κακοὶ West

EURIPIDES

- σὺ δ' ἄνδρας ἐχθροὺς καὶ θανόντας ὠφελεῖς,
 495 θάπτων κομίζων θ' ὕβρις οὓς ἀπώλεσεν;
 οὐ τάρ' ἔτ' ὀρθῶς Καπανέως κεραύνιον
 δέμας καπνοῦται, κλιμάκων ὀρθοστάτας
 ὃς προσβαλὼν πύλαισιν ὤμοσεν πόλιν
 πέρσειν θεοῦ θέλοντος ἦν τε μὴ θέλη,
 500 οὐδ' ἤρπασεν χάρυβδις οἰωνοσκόπον
 τέθριππον ἄρμα περιβαλοῦσα χάσματι,
 ἄλλοι τε κεῖνται πρὸς πύλαις λοχαγέται
 πέτροις καταξανθέντες ὀστέων ραφάς.
 ἦ νυν φρονεῖν ἄμεινον ἐξαύχει Διὸς
 505 ἢ θεοὺς δικαίως τοὺς κακοὺς ἀπολλύναι.
 φιλεῖν μὲν οὖν χρὴ τοὺς σοφοὺς πρῶτον τέκνα,
 ἔπειτα τοκέας πατρίδα θ', ἦν αὔξειν χρεῶν
 καὶ μὴ κατὰξαι. σφαλερὸν ἡγεμῶν θρασὺς
 νέος τε ναύτης· ἦσυχος καιρῶ σοφός.
 510 καὶ τοῦτό μοι τάνδρείον, ἢ προμηθία.

< ΧΟΡΟΣ >

ἐξαρκέσας ἦν Ζεὺς ὁ τιμωρούμενος,
 ὑμᾶς δ' ὑβρίζειν οὐκ ἐχρῆν τοιάνδ' ὕβριν.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ὦ παγκάκιστε . . .

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

σίγ', Ἄδραστ', ἔχε στόμα,

494 ἐχθροὺς θεοῖς Markland

496 οὐ τάρ' Markland: οὐτ' ἂν L

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

Will you help men who were hostile and have been killed? Will you give burial to those who were destroyed by their own insolence? It was wrong, then, that Capaneus' body was turned to smoke by the thunderbolt, he who put his ladders against the gates and swore that he would sack the city whether the gods wanted him to or not! It was wrong that a chasm swallowed up the seer, engulfing his four-horse chariot in its gaping hole, and that the other captains lie near the gates, their skulls smashed by boulders! Therefore either confidently claim that you are wiser than Zeus or admit that the gods are right to destroy the wicked.

Wise men should love their children first, then their parents, then their country, which they should make great and not destroy. A brash leader, like a young sailor, is prone to error. The man inactive in season is wise. In my view, bravery really amounts to discretion.

<CHORUS LEADER>

Zeus who punished them was enough, and you ought not to have committed such an outrage.

ADRASTUS

Unspeakable villain . . .

THESEUS

Hold your tongue, Adrastus: do not shove your reply in

497 ὀρθοστάτας Nauck: -τάτων L

498 ὄς Nauck: ἄς L 505 δικαίου Markland

509 νέος Orelli: νεός L: λεός Diggle ἥσυχος <δὲ καὶ πόλιν / καὶ ναῦν ἔσωσε χρώμενος> καιρῶ σοφῶς Hartung

510 τοι Hermann 511n <Χο.> Elmsley

EURIPIDES

- καὶ μὴ ἴπιπροσθεν τῶν ἐμῶν τοὺς σοὺς λόγους
 515 θῆς· οὐ γὰρ ἤκει πρὸς σέ κηρύσσων ὄδε
 ἀλλ' ὡς ἔμ' ἡμᾶς κάποκρίνασθαι χρεῶν.
 καὶ πρῶτα μὲν σε πρὸς τὰ πρῶτ' ἀμείψομαι.
 οὐκ οἶδ' ἐγὼ Κρέοντα δεσπόζοντ' ἐμοῦ
 οὐδὲ σθένοντα μείζον, ὥστ' ἀναγκάσαι
 520 δρᾶν τὰς Ἀθήνας ταῦτ'· ἄνω γὰρ ἂν ρέοι
 τὰ πράγμαθ', οὕτως εἰ ἴπιταξόμεσθα δῆ.
 πόλεμον δὲ τοῦτον οὐκ ἐγὼ καθίσταμαι,
 ὃς οὐδὲ σὺν τοῖσδ' ἦλθον ἐς Κάδμου χθόνα,
 νεκροὺς δὲ τοὺς θανόντας, οὐ βλάπτων πόλιν
 525 οὐδ' ἀνδροκμητᾶς προσφέρων ἀγωνίας,
 θάψαι δικαίῳ, τὸν Πανελλήνων νόμον
 σῶζων. τί τούτων ἐστὶν οὐ καλῶς ἔχον;
 εἰ γάρ τι καὶ πεπόνθατ' Ἀργείων ἕπο,
 τεθναῖσιν, ἡμύνασθε πολεμίους καλῶς,
 530 αἰσχρῶς δ' ἐκείνοις, χῆ δίκη διοίχεται.
 ἐάσατ' ἤδη γῆ καλυφθῆναι νεκρούς,
 ὅθεν δ' ἕκαστον ἐς τὸ φῶς ἀφίκετο
 ἐνταῦθ' ἀπελθεῖν, πνεῦμα μὲν πρὸς αἰθέρα,
 τὸ σῶμα δ' ἐς γῆν· οὐτι γὰρ κεκτῆμεθα
 535 ἡμέτερον αὐτὸ πλὴν ἐνοικῆσαι βίον,
 κάπειτα τὴν θρέψασαν αὐτὸ δεῖ λαβεῖν.
 δοκεῖς κακουργεῖν Ἄργος οὐ θάπτων νεκρούς;
 ἦκιστα· πάσης Ἑλλάδος κοινὸν τόδε,
 εἰ τοὺς θανόντας νοσφίσας ὦν χρῆν λαχεῖν
 540 ἀτάφους τις ἔξει· δειλίαν γὰρ ἐσφέρει
 τοῖς ἀλκίμοισιν οὗτος ἦν τεθῆ νόμος.

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

ahead of mine! This man's message is not to you but to me, and it is I who must answer.

I shall address your first point first. I am not aware that Creon is my master or mightier than I, or that he can force Athens to carry out these commands of his. Things will be completely topsy-turvy if we allow ourselves to be dictated to in this way. As for this war, it was not I who began it: I did not come to the land of Cadmus with these Argives but am merely asking you, without harming your city or bringing man-wearying war against it, to allow the burial of the dead, maintaining the custom of all the Greeks. What is improper in this? Whatever you have suffered at the hands of the Argives, they are dead: you have fought off the enemy to your glory and their shame. Justice has run its course. Now let the dead be buried in the earth, and let each element return to the place from whence it came into the light of day, the spirit to the upper air, the body to the earth. We do not possess our bodies as our own: we live our lives in them, and thereafter the earth, our nourisher, must take them back.

Do you think it is Argos you harm by not burying the dead? You are wrong: all Hellas is concerned if the dead are deprived of their due and kept unburied. If your action becomes customary, it will turn brave men into cowards.

523-4 fort. ὅς οὔτε (Kirchhoff) . . . νεκρούς τε (Paley)

532 ἐκάτερον Paley φῶς Porson: σῶμ' L

539 νοσφίσας Markland: -ίσεις L

EURIPIDES

- κάμοι μὲν ἤλθες δεῖν' ἀπειλήσων ἔπη,
 νεκροὺς δὲ ταρβέιτ' εἰ κρυφήσονται χθονί;
 τί μὴ γένηται; μὴ κατασκάψωσι γῆν
 545 ταφέντες ὑμῶν; ἢ τέκν' ἐν μυχοῖς χθονοὺς
 φύσωσιν, ἐξ ὧν εἰσὶ τις τιμωρία;
 σκαιόν γε τὰνάλωμα τῆς γλώσσης τόδε,
 φόβους ποιηροὺς καὶ κενοὺς δεδοικέναι.
 [ἀλλ', ὦ μάταιοι, γνῶτε τὰνθρώπων κακά·
 550 παλαίσμαθ' ἡμῶν ὁ βίος· εὐτυχοῦσι δὲ
 οἱ μὲν τάχ', οἱ δ' ἔσαυθις, οἱ δ' ἤδη βροτῶν,
 τρυφᾷ δ' ὁ δαίμων· πρὸς τε γὰρ τοῦ δυστυχοῦς,
 ὡς εὐτυχῆση, τίμιος γεραίρεται,
 ὃ τ' ὄλβιός νιν πνεῦμα δειμαίνων λιπεῖν
 555 ὑψηλὸν αἶρει. γνόντας οὖν χρεῶν τάδε
 ἀδικουμένους τε μέτρια μὴ θυμῷ φέρειν
 ἀδικεῖν τε τοιαῦθ' οἶα μὴ βλάψει πόλιν.]
 πῶς οὖν ἂν εἴη; τοὺς ὀλωλότας νεκροὺς
 θάψαι δόθ' ἡμῖν τοῖς θέλουσιν εὐσεβεῖν.
 560 ἢ δῆλα τὰνθένδ' εἶμι καὶ θάψω βία.
 οὐ γάρ ποτ' εἰς Ἑλληνας ἐξοισθήσεται
 ὡς εἰς ἔμ' ἔλθων καὶ πόλιν Πανδίοιοι
 νόμος παλαιὸς δαιμόνων διεφθάρη.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- 565 θάρσει· τὸ γάρ τοι τῆς Δίκης σῶζων φάος
 πολλοὺς ὑπεκφύγοις ἂν ἀνθρώπων ψόγους.

⁵⁴³ κρυφήσονται Elmsley: κρυβ- L

⁵⁴⁵ μυχοῖς Markland: -ῶ L ⁵⁴⁷ γνώμης Markland

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

To me you have come uttering dreadful threats: are you nevertheless afraid of the dead if they are hidden in the earth? What are you afraid may happen? That they will overthrow your land from the grave? Or that in the depths of the earth they will beget children who will avenge them? It is a foolish waste of breath to give voice to fears that are base and idle.

[Foolish mortals, learn of mankind's woes! Our life is a struggle. Some had good fortune once, some will in the future, some have it now. But it is the deity who enjoys himself. The poor man praises and honors him in the hope of prospering, and the rich man exalts him for fear that he will be lose his favoring breeze. Knowing this, we should not get angry if moderate wrong is done to us, and we should do such wrongs as will not harm the city.]

Well, what will it be? We want to act piously: grant us permission to bury the dead. Otherwise, what comes next is plain: I will come and bury them by force. The news shall never be brought to the Greeks that the ancient law of the gods, coming before me and the city of Pandion, was there annulled.

CHORUS LEADER

Be of good cheer! If you keep the light of Lady Justice from being extinguished, you will escape much censure by mortals.

549-57 del. Kovacs (post 179 collocavit Murray)

551 τóθ' Markland 554 τ' Markland: δ' L

557 βλάψει Matthiae: -ψαι L πάλιν Canter

559 δόθ' Kirchoff: δός L εὔσεβείν Markland: εἰσιδεῖν L

565 ψόγους Hartung: λόγους L

EURIPIDES

ΚΗΡΥΞ

βούλη συνάψω μῦθον ἐν βραχεῖ τιθείς;

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

λέγ', εἴ τι βούλη· καὶ γὰρ οὐ σιγηλὸς εἶ.

ΚΗΡΥΞ

οὐκ ἄν ποτ' ἐκ γῆς παῖδας Ἀργείων λάβεις.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

κάμου ἢν ἀντάκουσον, εἰ βούλη, πάλιν.

ΚΗΡΥΞ

570 κλύοιμ' ἄν· οὐ γὰρ ἀλλὰ δεῖ δοῦναι μέρος.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

θάψω νεκροὺς γῆς ἐξελὼν Ἀσωπίας.

ΚΗΡΥΞ

ἐν ἀσπίσιν σοι πρῶτα κινδυνευτέον.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

πολλοὺς ἔτλην δὴ χιτέρους ἄλλους πόρους.

ΚΗΡΥΞ

ἦ πᾶσιν οὖν σ' ἔφυσεν ἐξαρκεῖν πατήρ;

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

575 ὅσοι γ' ὑβρισταί· χρηστὰ δ' οὐ κολάζομεν.

ΚΗΡΥΞ

πράσσειν σὺ πόλλ' εἴωθας ἢ τε σὴ πόλις.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τοιγὰρ πονούσα πολλὰ πόλλ' εὐδαιμονεῖ.

566 τιθείς Diggle: σέθεν L

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

HERALD

Do you wish me to make a brief reply?

THESEUS

Say anything you like: you are not one to keep quiet.

HERALD

You will never take the sons of the Argives from our land.

THESEUS

Hear me then in reply, if you please.

HERALD

I shall: I can hardly refuse you your turn.

THESEUS

I shall take the dead from Asopus' land and bury them.

HERALD

You will first have to run risks behind your shield.

THESEUS

I have had other hard tasks many and various.

HERALD

Did your father beget you then to be a match for all comers?

THESEUS

Yes, all who are insolent. I do not punish what is virtuous.

HERALD

You and your city are always busybodies.

THESEUS

Her toils are great. Hence great is her good fortune.

573 *χάτέρους ἄλλοις* Blomfield: *χάτέροις ἄλλοις* Diggle

EURIPIDES

ΚΗΡΥΞ

ἔλθ', ὥς σε λόγῃ σπαρτὸς ἐν κόνει βάλη.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τίς δ' ἐκ δράκοντος θοῦρος ἂν γένοιτ' Ἄρης;

ΚΗΡΥΞ

580 γνώση σὺ πάσχων· νῦν δ' ἔτ' εἶ νεανίας.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

οὔτοι μ' ἐπαρεῖς ὥστε θυμοῦσθαι φρένας
τοῖς σοῖσι κόμποις· ἀλλ' ἀποστέλλου χθονὸς
λόγους ματαίους οὔσπερ ἠνέγκω λαβῶν.
περαίνομεν γὰρ οὐδέν.

ὀρμᾶσθαι χρεῶν

585 πάντ' ἄνδρ' ὀπλίτην, ἀρμάτων τ' ἐπεμβάτην
μοναμπύκων τε φάλαρα †κινεῖσθαι στόμα†
ἀφρῶ καταστάζοντα Καδμείαν χθόνα.

χωρήσομαι γὰρ ἐπτα πρὸς Κάδμου πύλας
590 αὐτὸς σίδηρον ὄξυν ἐν χεροῖν ἔχων

589 αὐτὸς τε κῆρυξ. σοὶ δὲ προστάσσω μένειν,
Ἄδραστε, κάμοι μὴ ἀναμείγνυσθαι τύχας
τὰς σάς. ἐγὼ γὰρ δαίμονος τοῦμοῦ μέτα
στρατηλατήσω καινὸς ἐν καινῷ δορί.

ἐν δεῖ μόνον μοι, τοὺς θεοὺς ἔχειν ὅσοι
595 δίκην σέβονται· ταῦτα γὰρ ξυνόνθ' ὁμοῦ
νίκην δίδωσιν. ἀρετὴ δ' οὐδὲν φέρει
βροτοῖσιν, ἣν μὴ τὸν θεὸν χρήζοντ' ἔχη.

578 κόνει βάλη Kirchhoff: πόλει λάβη L 581 ἐπαρεῖς
Cobet: ἐπαίρει L θυμοῦσθαι Musgrave: θυμῶσαι L

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

HERALD

Come and let the Sown Men's spear¹⁷ hurl you into the dust!

THESEUS

What sort of martial fury can come from a dragon?

HERALD

You'll learn by painful experience. You are still young.

THESEUS

You will not stir me up to anger with your boastful talk. Leave the country, and take with you the foolish words you brought here! We are accomplishing nothing.

Exit HERALD by Eisodos B.

(*to his retinue*) All hoplites must march, and all riders of chariots and of single horses must set their cheekpieces, dripping with foam, in motion onward to the land of Cadmus! I shall proceed to Cadmus' seven gates: I myself shall wield a whetted sword and I myself shall be my herald. Adrastus, I order you to stay behind: do not mingle your fortunes with mine. I shall lead the expedition accompanied by my own destiny, a fresh general with a fresh fighting force. I need only one thing more, to have as my allies the gods who reverence justice. The presence of these things together gives victory. Valor accomplishes nothing for mortals unless it has the gods on its side.

¹⁷ Referring to the legend that the original population of Thebes sprang up from a dragon's teeth, sown in the ground by Cadmus.

586 fort. κινῆσαι πρόσω 589 et 590 inter se trai. Markland

596 φέρει L^γ marg.: λέγει L: fort. τελεί

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α

—ὦ μέλαι μελέων ματέρες λοχαγῶν,
ὥς μοι ὑφ' ἥπατι χλωρόν <τι> δεῖμα θάσσει . . .

600—τίν' αὐδὰν τάνδε προσφέρεις νέαν;

— . . . στράτευμα πᾶ Παλλάδος κριθήσεται.

—διὰ δορὸς εἶπας ἢ λόγων ξυναλλαγαῖς;

—γένοιτ' ἂν κέρδος· εἰ

δ' ἀρειφάτῳ φόνοι μάχα,

στερνότυπες <εἶτ'> ἀνὰ πτόλιιν

605 κτύποι φανήσονται, τάλαι-

να τίνα λόγον, τίν' ἂν τῶνδ'

αἰτίαν λάβοιμι;

ἀντ. α

—ἀλλὰ τὸν εὐτυχία λαμπρὸν ἄν τις αἰροῖ
μοῖρα πάλιν· τόδε μοι θάρσος ἀμφιβαίνει.

610—δικαίους δαίμονας σύ γ' ἐννέπεις.

—τίνες γὰρ ἄλλοι νέμουσι συμφοράς;

—διάφορα πολλὰ θεῶν βροτοῖσιν εἰσορῶ.

599 <τι> Hartung θάσσει Murray: ταράσσει L

603 ἀρειφάτῳ Willink: -τοι L

604 στερνότυπες Hartung: στερνοτυπεῖς τ' L <εἶτ'>

Willink ἀνὰ πτόλιιν post Markland Murray: ἀνὰ τόπον
πάλιν L

605 τάλαινα Hermann: ὦ τ- L

608 εὐτυχία Markland: εὐτυχῆ L

609 θάρσος Heath: θράσος L

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

Exit THESEUS with retinue and Athenian herald by Eisosdos B.

CHORUS A

O luckless mothers of luckless captains,
how pale fear sits upon my heart . . .

CHORUS B

What is this strange word you utter?

CHORUS A

. . . to learn how Pallas' army will be put to judgment!

CHORUS B

Do you mean by the spear or in exchanges of words?

CHORUS A

May the result be good! But if
slaughters occur in murderous battle
and <then> throughout the city is heard
the thud of hand upon breast,
what then? What accounting, what blame
will fall to unhappy me?

CHORUS B

But the man glorious in good fortune
may be destroyed in turn by fate: that is the confidence that
surrounds me.

CHORUS A

You speak of gods who are just.

CHORUS B

Yes, for who else is it that metes out what befalls?

CHORUS A

Yet I see that the gods' ways are different from those of
mortals.

—φόβῳ γὰρ τῷ πάρος
 διόλλυσαι· δίκαι δίκαι
 δ' ἐκάλεσε καὶ φόνος φόνον,
 615 κακῶν δ' ἀναψυχὰς θεοὶ
 βροτοῖς νέμουσι, πάντων
 τέρμ' ἔχοντες αὐτοί.

στρ. β

—τὰ καλλίπυργα πεδία πῶς ἰκοίμεθ' ἄν,
 Καλλίχορον θεᾶς ὕδωρ λιποῦσαι;
 620—ποτανὰν εἴ σέ τις θεῶν κτίσαι,
 διπόταμον ἵνα πόλιν μόλοις,
 εἰδείης ἄν φίλων
 εἰδείης ἄν τύχας.
 —τίς ποτ' αἶσα, τίς ἄρα πότμος
 ἐπιμένει τὸν ἄλκιμον
 625 τᾶσδε γὰς ἄνακτα;

ἀντ. β

κεκλημένους μὲν ἀνακαλούμεθ' αὐθ' θεοῦς·
 ἀλλὰ φόβων πίστις ἄδε πρῶτα.
 ἰὼ Ζεῦ, τᾶς παλαιομάτορος
 παιδογόνε πόριος Ἰνάχου,
 630 πόλει μοι ξύμμαχος
 γενοῦ τᾶδ' εὐμενής.

621 μόλοις Wilamowitz: μόλω L

622 τύχας Heath, Tyrwhitt: ψυχὰς L

623 τίς (prius) Reiske: ἔτι L

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

CHORUS B

It is your earlier fear
that is destroying your good sense. One plea of justice,
like one murder, calls forth another,
and the gods, who hold the destiny
of all things in their own hands,
grant respite from misfortune to mortals.

CHORUS A

*O how I would like to go to the land of fair towers¹⁸
and leave behind the goddess' spring of Callichorus!*

CHORUS B

If some god gave you wings
to go to the city of two rivers,
you would know, you would know
how your friends are faring.

CHORUS A

What fate, what outcome
awaits this land's
brave king?

CHORUS

I call once more on the gods I invoked before.
Yet this is my only hope in time of fear.
O Zeus, who sired the children
of our ancestress, Inachus' heifer daughter,¹⁹
for my sake be this city's
stout ally!

¹⁸ Thebes. ¹⁹ Io, daughter the river god Inachus, was beloved by Zeus and became the father of the Argive royal house. She was transformed into a heifer, either by Zeus to conceal his amour from Hera, or by Hera as part of her revenge.

EURIPIDES

τὸ σὸν ἄγαλμα, τὸ σὸν ἴδρυμα
 πόλεος ἐκκόμιζέ μοι
 πρὸς πυρὰν ὑβρισθέν.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

635 γυναιῖκες, ἦκω πόλλ' ἔχων λέγειν φίλα,
 αὐτός τε σωθείς (ἠρέθην γὰρ ἐν μάχῃ
 ἣν οἱ θανόντες ἑπτὰ δεσπόται λόχων
 ἠγωνίσαντο ρεῦμα Διρκαῖον πάρα)
 νίκην τε Θησέως ἀγγελῶν. λόγου δέ σε
 μακροῦ ἀπολύσω. Καπανέως γὰρ ἦ λάτρις,
 640 ὃν Ζεὺς κεραυνῶ πυρπόλῳ καταιθαλοῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ φίλτατ', εὖ μὲν νόστον ἀγγέλλεις σέθεν
 τήν τ' ἀμφὶ Θησέως βάζειν· εἰ δὲ καὶ στρατὸς
 σῶς ἐστ' Ἀθηῶν, πάντ' ἂν ἀγγέλλοις φίλα.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

645 σῶς, καὶ πέπραγεν ὡς Ἄδραστος ὄφελεν
 πράξαι ξὺν Ἀργείοισιν οὓς ἀπ' Ἰνάχου
 στείλας ἐπεστράτευσε Καδμείων πόλιν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πῶς γὰρ τροπαῖα Ζηνὸς Αἰγέως τόκος
 ἔστησεν οἳ τε συμμετασχόντες δορός;
 λέξον· παρῶν γὰρ οὐ παρόντας εὐφρανεῖς.

632 ἐκκόμιζέ μοι Musgrave: ἐκκομίζομαι L

636 ἦν Dobree: ἴν' L δεσπόται λόχων Musgrave: δε-
 σποτῶν λόχοι L 639 ἀπολύσω Herwerden: ἀποπαύσω L

642 βάζειν Reiske: τάξειν L

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

The darling of your city, its stay and shield,
insulted by the Thebans,
bring him back, I pray, for burial!

Enter MESSENGER by Eisodos B.

MESSENGER

Women, I have come with much welcome news to report!
I was captured in the battle the seven fallen captains fought
beside the stream of Dirce, but I have come home safely
and bring you news of Theseus' victory! To save you much
talk, I was the servant of Capaneus, whom Zeus burned up
with his fiery thunderbolt.

CHORUS LEADER

O welcome messenger! What good news is your return
home and the report you bring about Theseus! If the Athe-
nian army is safe, your news will be wholly good.

MESSENGER

Yes, it is safe and is faring well: would that Adrastus had
fared so and the Argives with whom he set out from the
Inachus to the city of the Cadmeans!

CHORUS LEADER

How did the son of Aegeus and his fellow soldiers win the
victory?²⁰ Tell us: you were there and will bring joy to those
who were not.

²⁰ Lit. "set up Zeus's trophy." A *tropaion*, or trophy to mark a
military victory, was a marker set up in honor of Zeus Tropaios,
"Zeus god of the rout," who gave the victory.

644 *πέπραγεν* Pierson: *πεπραγμέν'* L

645 *οὐς* Reiske: *ὡς* L 649 *οὐ* Wecklein: *τοὺς* L

EURIPIDES

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

- 650 λαμπρὰ μὲν ἀκτὶς ἡλίου, κανὼν σαφῆς,
 ἔβαλλε γαῖαν· ἀμφὶ δ' Ἥλέκτρας πύλας
 ἔστην θεατῆς πύργον εὐαγῆ λαβῶν.
 ὀρῶ δὲ φύλα τρία τριῶν στρατευμάτων·
 τευχεςφόρον μὲν λαὸν ἐκτείνοντ' ἄνω
- 655 Ἴσμήμιον πρὸς ὄχθον, ὡς μὲν ἦν λόγος,
 αὐτόν τ' ἄνακτα, παῖδα κλεινὸν Αἰγέως,
 καὶ τοὺς σὺν αὐτῷ δεξιὸν τεταγμένους
 κέρας, παλαιᾶς Κεκροπίας οἰκῆτορας,
 λαιῷ τε Πάραλον ἐστολισμένον δορὶ
- 660 κρήνην παρ' αὐτὴν Ἄρεος· ἰππότην <δ'> ὄχλον
 πρὸς κρασπέδοισι στρατοπέδου τεταγμένον,
 ἴσους ἀριθμόν· ἀρμάτων δ' ὀχήματα
 ἔνερθε σεμνῶν μνημάτων Ἀμφίονος.
 Κάδμου δὲ λαὸς ἦστο πρόσθε τειχέων,
- 665 νεκροὺς ὄπισθε θέμενος, ὧν ἔκειτ' ἀγών,
 ἰππεῦσι δ' ἰππῆς ἦσαν ἀνθρωπισμένοι
 τετραόροισί τ' ἀντί ἄρμαθ' ἄρμασιν.
 κῆρυξ δὲ Θεσέως εἶπεν ἐς πάντας τάδε·
 Σιγᾶτε, λαοί· σίγα, Καδμείων στίχες,
- 670 ἀκούσαθ'· ἡμεῖς ἤκομεν νεκροὺς μέτα,
 θάψαι θέλοντες, τὸν Πανελλήνων νόμον
 σφῶζοντες, οὐδὲν δεόμενοι τεῖναι φόνου.

659 λαιῷ Diggle: αὐτόν L, ex 656 lapsum

660 <δ'> Reiske 666 δ' Hermann: θ' L

τε Murray: δὲ L

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

MESSENGER

Bright rays of the sun, sure measure of truth, were striking the earth. I stationed myself to watch at the Electran gate on a tower commanding a good view. I saw the three divisions of the army. The hoplites extended themselves upwards to a hill (Ismenus' Hill, I have heard it called). The king himself, the glorious son of Aegeus, and his own men, the ancient settlers of Cecropia,²¹ formed the right wing. On the left stood Paralus,²² equipped with a spear, right next to Ares' Spring.²³ The cavalry were stationed in two equal companies on the edges of the army, and the chariots were below the august Tomb of Amphion. The Cadmean army sat before the walls, with the corpses, the object of the fighting, behind them. Cavalry were stationed opposite cavalry, and four-horsed chariots opposite chariots. Theseus' herald spoke as follows to all: "Silence, men at arms, be still, you ranks of Cadmeans, and listen! We have come for the dead, wishing to bury them! We are upholding the law of all the Greeks! It is not our desire to shed blood!"

²¹ Cecropia, from Cecrops, King of Athens, was an old name for the acropolis.

²² The unifying of Attica under the leadership of Athens was the work of Theseus and is represented here as a recent accomplishment. Paralus, the eponymous hero of the coastal people, leads the forces of Attica, and Theseus leads the Athenian contingent.

²³ The hoplites are stationed to the south of the city between the Hill of Ismenus (SE) and the Spring of Ares (SW). The cavalry are stationed on either side of the hoplites (E and W), and the chariots occupy the area north of the city, where the tomb of Amphion is located.

- κούδεν Κρέων τοῖσδ' ἀντεκήρυξεν λόγους,
 ἀλλ' ἦστ' ἐφ' ὄπλοις σίγα. ποιμένες δ' ὄχων
 675 τετραόρων κατήρχον ἐντεῦθεν μάχης·
 πέραν δὲ διελάσαντες ἀλλήλων ὄχους
 παραιβάτας ἔστησαν ἐς τάξιν δορός.
 χοῖ μὲν σιδήρῳ διεμάχονθ', οἱ δ' ἔστρεφον
 πώλους ἐς ἀλκὴν αὐθις ἕς παραιβάτασ'.
 680 ἰδὼν δὲ Φόρβας, ὃς μοναμπύκων ἀναξ
 ἦν τοῖς Ἐρεχθείδαισιν, ἀρμάτων ὄχλον
 οἱ τ' αὖ τὸ Κάδμου διεφύλασσον ἵππικὸν
 συνήψαν ἀλκὴν κἀκράτουν ἡσσωτὸ τε.
 λεύσσων δὲ ταῦτα κοῦ κλύων (ἐκεῖ γὰρ ἦ
 685 ἔνθ' ἄρματ' ἠγωνίζεθ' οἱ τ' ἐπεμβάται)
 τὰκεῖ παρόντα πολλὰ πῆματ' οὐκ ἔχω
 τί πρῶτον εἶπω, πότερα τὴν ἐς οὐρανὸν
 κόνιν προσαντέλλουσαν, ὡς πολλὴ παρῆν,
 ἢ τὰς ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω φορουμένας
 <ὥσπερ κλύδωνας συστάσεις ἐπεμβατῶν,
 εἶτ' ἐμπλακέντας ἵππικαῖς ἐν ἠνίαις
 ἀνδρας τραχείας πρὸς πέτρας φορουμένους>
 690 ἱμάσιν, αἵματός τε φοινίου ροᾶς
 τῶν μὲν πιτνόντων, τῶν δὲ θραυσθέντων δίφρων
 ἐς κρᾶτα πρὸς γῆν ἐκκυβιστώντων βία
 πρὸς ἀρμάτων τ' ἀγαῖσι λειπόντων βίον.
 νικῶντα δ' ἵπποις ὡς ὑπείδετο στρατὸν
 695 Κρέων τὸν ἐνθένδ', ἰτέαν λαβὼν χερὶ
 696 χωρεῖ πρὶν ἔλθειν ξυμμάχοις δυσθυμίαν.
 699 κὰς μέσον ἅπαντα συμπάτάξαντες στρατὸν

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

Creon made no proclamation in answer to this speech but sat near his weapons in silence. It was the drivers of four-horse chariots who then began the battle. Driving their chariots through each other's lines they set down their armed passengers in battle ranks. As these men battled it out with swords, the drivers wheeled their horses about to come to their aid. Phorbas, leader of the Athenian cavalry, saw the throng of chariots, and so did the marshals of the Cadmean horse, and they joined battle, by turns victorious and vanquished. Since I stood at the spot where both chariots and cavalry were fighting, I saw first-hand the many travails that took place there. I do not know what I should mention first, the great clouds of dust, rising up to heaven, or how <troops of cavalry, like sea waves,> swept back and forth, <how men entangled in the gear of their horses were dragged onto rough rocks> by the leather straps, how crimson blood flowed in rivers as some men were cut down and others, their chariots being smashed, were hurled head-long to earth and lost their lives in the wreckage of the chariots.

Now when Creon saw that the army on this side was winning with its cavalry, he took up his shield and moved forward before his allies could be discouraged. Dashing their whole force into the breach, the Thebans gave death

679 *αὐ̄ παραιβάταις* Hartung

681 *ὄχλον* Markland: *ὄχον* L

689 post h. v. lac. indic. Kirchhoff 697-8 vide post 702

699 ita Diggle: *καὶ συμπατάξαντες μέσον πάντα στρατὸν* L

EURIPIDES

- 700 ἔκτεινον ἐκτείνοντο καὶ παρηγγύων
κελευσμὸν ἀλλήλοισι σὺν πολλῇ βοῇ·
- 702 Θεῖν', ἀντέρειδε τοῖς Ἐρεχθεΐδαις δόρυ.
697 καὶ μὴν τὰ Θησεῶς γ' οὐκ ὄκνω διεφθάρη,
698 ἀλλ' ἴετ' εὐθύς λάμπρ' ἀναρπάσας ὄπλα.
703 λόχος δ' ὀδόντων ὄφθεος ἐξηνδρωμένος
δεινὸς παλαιστῆς ἦν· ἔκλινε γὰρ κέρας
705 τὸ λαιὸν ἡμῶν· δεξιού δ' ἠσώμενον
φεύγει τὸ κείνων· ἦν δ' ἀγὼν ἰσόρροπος.
κάν τῷδε τὸν στρατηγὸν αἰνέσαι παρῆν·
οὐ γὰρ τὸ νικῶν τοῦτ' ἐκέρδαιεν μόνον
ἀλλ' ὄχετ' ἐς τὸ κάμνον οἰκείου στρατοῦ.
- 710 ἔρρηξε δ' αὐδὴν, ὥσθ' ὑπηχῆσαι χθόνα·
ᾧ παῖδες, εἰ μὴ σχήσετε στερρὸν δόρυ
Σπαρτῶν τόδ' ἀνδρῶν, οἴχεται τὰ Παλλάδος.
θάρσος δ' ἐνῶρσε παντὶ Κραναϊδῶν στρατῷ.
αὐτός θ' ὄπλισμα τοῦπιδαύριον λαβῶν
- 715 δεινῆς κορύνης διαφέρων ἐσφενδόνα
ὁμοῦ τραχήλους κάπικειμένας κάρα
κυνέας θερίζων κάποκαυλίζων ξύλῳ.
μόλις δέ πως ἔτρεψαν ἐς φυγὴν πόδα.
ἐγὼ δ' ἀνηλάλαξα κἀνωρχησάμην
- 720 κᾶκρουσα χεῖρας· οἱ δ' ἔτεινον ἐς πύλας.
βοῇ δὲ καὶ κωκυτὸς ἦν ἀνὰ πτόλιν
νέων γερόντων ἱερά τ' ἐξεπίμπλασαν
φόβῳ· παρὸν δὲ τειχέων ἔσω μολεῖν
Θησεὺς ἐπέσχε· οὐ γὰρ ὡς πέρσων πόλιν
- 725 μολεῖν ἔφασκεν ἀλλ' ἀπαιτήσων νεκρούς.

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

and received it, passing the command along the ranks with great shouts: "Strike, push hard against the sons of Erechtheus!" For his part Theseus did not allow his own affairs to be ruined by hesitation: snatching up his bright armor he rushed forward. But the company of men sprung from the dragon's teeth was hard to wrestle against: they turned back our left wing, while their own left was beaten and put to flight by our right. The battle was evenly balanced.

At this point the general did a praiseworthy deed. He not only got the benefit of his victorious wing but went off toward the part of his army that was struggling. His shout burst forth so that the land echoed with it: "Either stop these Sown Men's hard spears, lads, or it's all over for Pallas Athena!" That put courage in the hearts of all the Athenian army. Then taking in his hands the Epidaurian weapon,²⁴ a fearful mace, he kept laying about him with it, snapping necks and harvesting helmeted heads with it. The Thebans barely managed to turn and flee. I raised a shout of joy, leapt into the air, and clapped my hands. They meanwhile were making for the gates. In the city young and old were crying and lamenting and crowding into the shrines in terror. But though he could have entered the city, Theseus halted. "I have not come," he said, "to sack the city but to ask for the dead."

²⁴ Theseus in his youth had killed the Epidaurian robber Periphetes, who used a club to kill his victims.

697-8 post 702 *traî*. Murray 705 *δεξιού* Markland: -όν L

713 *Κραναϊδών* Musgrave: *Δαναϊδών* L

716 *κάπικειμένας* Reiske: -ον L

718 *ἔτρεψαν* Hermann: -εν L

EURIPIDES

τοιόνδε τοι στρατηγὸν αἰρέεισθαι χρεών,
 ὃς ἔν τε τοῖς δεινοῖσιν ἔστιν ἄλκιμος
 μισεῖ θ' ὑβριστὴν λαόν, ὃς πράσσων καλῶς
 ἐς ἄκρα βῆναι κλιμάκων ἐνήλατα
 730 ζητῶν ἀπώλεσ' ὄλβον ᾧ χρήσθαι παρῆν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

νῦν τήνδ' ἄελπτου ἡμέραν ἰδοῦσ' ἐγὼ
 θεοὺς νομίζω καὶ δοκῶ τὰς συμφορὰς
 ἔχειν ἐλάσσους τῶνδε τεισάντων δίκην.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ὦ Ζεῦ, τί δῆτα τοὺς ταλαιπώρους βροτοῦς
 735 φρονεῖν λέγουσι; σοῦ γὰρ ἐξηρτήμεθα
 δρῶμέν τε τοιαῦθ' ἂν σὺ τυγχάνης θέλων.
 ἡμῖν γὰρ ἦν τό τ' Ἄργος οὐχ ὑποστατὸν
 αὐτοῖ τε πολλοὶ καὶ νέοι βραχίουσιν.
 Ἐτεοκλέους δὲ σύμβασιμ ποιουμένου,
 740 μέτρια θέλοντος, οὐκ ἐχρήζομεν λαβεῖν,
 κᾶπειτ' ἀπωλόμεσθ'. ὁ δ' αὖ τότ' εὐτυχῆς,
 λαβὼν πένης ὡς ἀρτίπλουτα χρήματα,
 ὑβρίζ', ὑβρίζων τ' αὖθις ἀνταπώλετο
 Κάδμουν κακόφρων λαός. ὦ κενοὶ βροτῶν,
 745 οἱ τόξον ἐντείνοντες ττοῦ καιροῦτ' πέρα
 καὶ πρὸς δίκης γε πολλὰ πάσχοντες κακά,
 φίλοις μὲν οὐ πείθεσθε, τοῖς δὲ πράγμασιμ
 πόλεις τ', ἔχουσαι διὰ λόγον κάμψαι κακά,
 φόνῳ καθαιρείσθ', οὐ λόγῳ, τὰ πράγματα.
 750 ἀτὰρ τί ταῦτα; κείνο βούλομαι μαθεῖν,

SUPLIANT WOMEN

This is the kind of general one should choose, a man who is brave in the hour of danger and who hates an insolent people, a people who in their prosperity tried to climb to the highest rung of the ladder, and lost the blessedness they might have enjoyed.

CHORUS LEADER

Now that I have seen this unlooked for day I believe in the gods and think that my misfortunes have grown less since these men have paid the penalty!

ADRASTUS

O Zeus, why do men say that hapless mortals have any wisdom? We are dependent upon you and do whatever is your will. Argos, we thought, was irresistible, and we ourselves were many and had young, strong arms. Eteocles proposed terms of agreement and made moderate requests, but we refused to accept them and were ruined. In its turn the foolish people of Cadmus, once so prosperous, acted insolently, like a poor man who suddenly becomes rich, and in their insolence were destroyed. O foolish mortals, who shoot beyond the mark and justly suffer much calamity, you do not learn from your friends but only from events! Cities, you could bring your misfortunes to an end by speech, but you carry out your affairs by bloodletting, not words!

But what use are these reflections? I want to know how

726 *τοι* Elmsley: *τὸν* L 733 *ἐλάσσοις* Markland: *ἐλασσον* L: *quo servato fort. σθένειν*

739 *δὲ* Jacobs: *τε* L

745 *εὐκαίρου* vel *εἰκότος* Page: *ὦν ἐχρῆν* Kovacs

747 *λόγοις* Wecklein cl. *Ion* 649, S. Ai. 330

EURIPIDES

πῶς ἐξεσώθης· εἶτα τᾶλλ' ἐρήσομαι.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἐπεὶ ταραγμὸς πόλιν ἐκίνησεν δορός,
πύλας διήλθον ἥπερ εἰσῆει στρατός.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ὦν δ' οὐνεχ' ἀγὼν ἦν νεκροὺς κομίζετε;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

755 ὄσοι γε κλεινοῖς ἔπτ' ἐφέστασαν λόχοις.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

πῶς φῆς; ὁ δ' ἄλλος ποῦ κεκμηκότων ὄχλος;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

τάφῳ δέδονται πρὸς Κιθαιρῶνος πτυχαῖς.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

τοῦκείθεν ἢ τοῦνθένδε; τίς δ' ἔθαιπέ νιν;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

Θησεύς, σκιώδης ἔνθ' Ἐλευθερὶς πέτρα.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

760 οὓς δ' οὐκ ἔθαιψε ποῦ νεκροὺς ἦκεις λιπών;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἐγγύς· πέλας γὰρ πᾶν ὃ τι σπουδάζεται.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ἢ που πικρῶς νιν θέραπες ἦγον ἐκ φόνου;

752 δορός Hermann: δορί L

755 λόχοις Reiske: δόμοις L

760 ποῦ Hermann: ποῖ L

ἦκεις Heath: ἦκει L

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

you got safely home. After that I will ask my other questions.

MESSENGER

When the tumult of war stirred up the city, I went out by the gates where the army was coming in.

ADRASTUS

The corpses for which they fought, did you bring them back?

MESSENGER

Yes, those who led the seven famous companies.

ADRASTUS

What do you mean? Where are the rest of the dead?

MESSENGER

They are buried near the glens of Cithaeron.

ADRASTUS

On the far or near side? By whom were they buried?

MESSENGER

By Theseus, near Eleutherae's shady eminence.²⁵

ADRASTUS

Where have you left the bodies he did not bury?

MESSENGER

Close by: whatever we earnestly work for is near.

ADRASTUS

Was it gruesome for the servants to remove the bodies from the carnage?

²⁵ A small village on the Attic side of the mountain.

EURIPIDES

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

οὐδείς ἐπέστη τῷδε δούλος ὦν πόνω.

<ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

πῶς εἶπας; Αἰγέως σφ' ᾧδ' ἐτίμησεν τέκνον;>

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

φαίης ἂν εἰ παρήσθ' ὅτ' ἠγάπα νεκρούς.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

765 ἔνυφεν αὐτὸς τῶν ταλαιπώρων σφαγάς;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

κᾶστρωσέ γ' εὐνάς κακάλυψε σώματα.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

δεινὸν μὲν ἦν βάσταγμα κᾶσχύνην ἔχον.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

τί δ' αἰσχρὸν ἀνθρώποισι τᾶλλήλων κακά;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

οἴμοι πόσω σφιν συνθανεῖν ἂν ἤθελον.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

770 ἄκραντ' ὀδύρη ταῖσδέ τ' ἐξάγεις δάκρυ.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

δοκῶ μὲν, αὐταί γ' εἰσὶν αἱ διδάσκαλοι.

ἀλλ' εἴμ' ἔν' αἴρω χεῖρ' ἀπαντήσας νεκροῖς
Ἄιδου τε μολπὰς ἐκχέω δακρυρρόους,
φίλους προσανδῶν ὦν λελειμμένος τάλας

763 post h. v. lac. indic. Hermann

765 αὐτὸς Reiske: αὐτῶν L

SUPLIANT WOMEN

MESSENGER

No slave was set to do this task.

<ADRASTUS

What? Did Theseus show them so much honor?>

MESSENGER

You would have said so if you had been there when he tended them.

ADRASTUS

Did he himself wash the poor men's wounds?

MESSENGER

Yes, and he spread out biers for them and covered their bodies.

ADRASTUS

Carrying them was dreadful task, and a shameful one.

MESSENGER

Why should men consider one other's misfortunes shameful?

ADRASTUS

Ah me! How much better for me to have died with them!

MESSENGER

Your tears are useless, and you make these women weep too.

ADRASTUS

It is they, I think, who are the teachers in this.

Well I shall go to meet the dead, raise my hand in farewell to them, and offer them the tearful songs of Hades, bidding farewell to my friends. Left behind by them

768 κακά] fort. φέρειν

772 εἶμ' ἴν' Blaydes: εἶεν L

EURIPIDES

775 ἔρημα κλαίω· τοῦτο γὰρ μόνον βροτοῖς
οὐκ ἔστι τὰνάλωμ' ἀναλωθὲν λαβεῖν,
ψυχὴν βροτείαν· χρημάτων δ' εἰσὶν πόροι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α

τὰ μὲν εὖ, τὰ δὲ δυστυχῆ·
πόλει μὲν εὐδοξία

780 καὶ στρατηλάταις δορὸς
διπλάζεται τιμά·
ἐμοὶ δὲ παίδων μὲν εἰσιδεῖν μέλη
πικρόν, καλὸν θέαμα δ' εἴπερ ὄψομαι,
τὰν ἄελπτον ἀμέραν

785 ἰδοῦσα, πάντων μέγιστον ἄλγος.

ἀντ. α

ἄγαμόν μ' ἔτι δεῦρ' αἰεὶ
Χρόνος παλαιὸς πατὴρ
ᾧφελ' ἀμερᾶν κτίσαι.

τί γάρ μ' ἔδει παίδων;

790 τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἤλπιζον ἂν πεπονθέναί
πάθος περισσόν, εἰ γάμων ἀπεζύγην,
νῦν δ' ὀρώ σαφέστατον
κακὸν τέκνων φιλτάτων στέρεσθαι.

—ἀλλὰ τὰδ' ἤδη σώματα λείσσω

775 ἔρημα] ἀνόνητα Wecklein

788 ἀμερᾶν Porson: ἀμέρα L

790 fort. πρὶν μὲν vel τὸ πρὶν

793 στέρεσθαι Blomfield: στερεῖσθαι Tr²: στερεῖ L

SUPLIANT WOMEN

I, unlucky man, weep in loneliness. For mortals there is only one thing that cannot be regained once it is spent: a man's life. Money can be recovered.

Exit ADRASTUS and MESSENGER by Eisodos B.

CHORUS

Some things are well, others ill.
The city has won glory,
and its generals have
a double meed of honor.
But for us to look on the bodies of our sons
is painful (though it will be a fair sight if we ever behold
it),
seeing that day we never looked for,
the greatest of all woes.

Would that old Time, father of our days,
had made me
ever unwedded to this day!
What need had I of children?
I would have thought that I had suffered
some strange fate if I had been deprived of marriage,
but now I see that the keenest
misfortune is to be bereft of my dear children.

Enter ADRASTUS and THESEUS by Eisodos B with a procession carrying five draped corpses on biers.

CHORUS LEADER

But now I behold the bodies of our perished sons! O how

EURIPIDES

795 τῶν οἰχομένων παίδων· μελέα
 πῶς ἂν ὀλοίμην σὺν τοῖσδε τέκνοις
 κοινὸν ἐς Ἄιδην καταβάσα;

στρ. β

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

στεναγμόν, ὦ ματέρες,
 τῶν κατὰ χθονὸς νεκρῶν
 800 ἀύσατ' ἀπύσατ' ἀντίφων' ἐμῶν
 στεναγμάτων κλυοῦσαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ παῖδες, ὦ πικρὸν φίλων
 προσηγόρημα ματέρων,
 προσαιδῶ σε τὸν θανόντα.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

805 ἰὼ ἰώ.

<ΧΟΡΟΣ>

τῶν γ' ἐμῶν κακῶν ἐγώ.

<ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ>

αἰαῖ <αἰαῖ>.

<ΧΟΡΟΣ>

μεγάλα δ' αἰάζειν πάρα.>

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ἐπάθομεν ὦ . . .

<ΧΟΡΟΣ>

. . . τὰ κύντατ' ἄλγη κακῶν.

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

I wish I could die with these children, treading with them
the downward path to Hades!

ADRASTUS²⁶

Utter, speak aloud, mothers,
a groan for your sons below the earth!
Listen to my groans
and answer!

CHORUS

O my son, a word
that gives pain to a loving mother,
I speak to you in death!

ADRASTUS

Alas, alas!

<CHORUS>

Yes, alas for my own woes!

<ADRASTUS>

Ah me, <ah me>!

<CHORUS

Terrible are the woes we must lament!>

ADRASTUS

We have suffered . . .

<CHORUS>

. . . the sharpest of griefs!

²⁶ From here to 837, Adrastus sings in answer to the Chorus.

805n <Xo.> Hermann

806nn <Aδ.> et <Xo.> Hermann

806 <αἰαῖ> Wilamowitz

lac. indic. Tr²

807n <Xo.> Hermann

EURIPIDES

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ὦ πόλις Ἀργεία, τὸν ἐμὸν πότμον οὐκ ἐσοράτε;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὀρώσι καμὲ τὰν τάλαι-

810 ναν τέκνων ἄπαιδα.

ἀντ. β

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

προσάγετ' <ἄγετε> δυσπότμων
σώμαθ' αἱματοσταγῆ,
σφαγέντας οὐκ ἄξι' οὐδ' ὑπ' ἀξίων,
ἐν οἷς ἀγὼν ἐκράνθη.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

815 δόθ' ὡς περιπτυχαῖσι δῆ
χέρας προσαρμόσασ' ἐμοῖς
ἐν ἀγκῶσι τέκνα θῶμαι.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ἔχεις ἔχεις . . .

ΧΟΡΟΣ

. . . πημάτων γ' ἄλις βάρος.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

αἰαῖ <αἰαῖ>.

<ΧΟΡΟΣ>

τοῖς τεκούσι δ' οὐ λέγεις;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

820 αἰετέ μου.

SUPLIANT WOMEN

ADRASTUS

O city of Argos, do you not see the fate I suffer?

CHORUS

They see me too, the poor wretch
bereft of her children!

ADRASTUS

Bring near, <bring near> the blood-spattered
bodies of our unfortunate sons,
who died an undeserved death at undeserving hands!
In their death the contest was decided.

CHORUS

Let me put
my arms about my son
and embrace him!

ADRASTUS

You have, you have . . .

CHORUS

. . . a weight of grief that suffices!

ADRASTUS

Ah me, <ah me>!

<CHORUS>

Is it not to his mother that you speak?

ADRASTUS

Hear me!

811 <ἄγετε> Diggle

813 σφαγέντας Fritzsche: σφαγέντ' L

814 ἐν] ἐφ' Wilamowitz 819 <αἰαῖ> Wilamowitz

819n <Χο.> Musgrave

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στένεις ἐπ' ἀμφοῖν ἄχη.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

εἴθε με Καδμείων ἔναρον στίχες ἐν κονίαισιν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἐμὸν δὲ μήποτ' ἐζύγη
δέμας ἐς ἀνδρὸς εὐνάν.

ἐπωδ

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ἴδετε κακῶν πέλαγος, ὦ
825 ματέρες τάλαιναι τέκνων.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

κατὰ μὲν ὄνυξιν ἠλοκίσμεθ', ἀμφὶ δὲ
σποδὸν κάρᾳ κεχύμεθα.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ἰὼ ἰὼ μοί μοι
κατὰ με πέδον γᾶς ἔλοι,
830 διὰ δὲ θύελλα σπάσαι,
πυρός τε φλογμὸς ὁ Διὸς ἐν κάρᾳ πέσοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πικροὺς ἐσειδες γάμους,
πικρὰν δὲ Φοῖβον φάτιν
835 ἐς ἡμᾶς ἅ πολύστονος λιποῦσ'
Οἰδιπόδα δώματ' ἦλθ' Ἐρινύς.

825 ἐλεῖναι Kayser

835 ἐς ἡμᾶς Bothe: ἔγημας L

SUPLIANT WOMEN

CHORUS

You lament both your woes and mine!

ADRASTUS

Would that the Cadmean ranks had felled me in the dust!

CHORUS

And I, would that I had never
been brought to a man's bed!

ADRASTUS

Look on this sea of troubles,
O unhappy mothers of these sons!

CHORUS

Our cheeks are furrowed with our nails,
our heads besprinkled with dust!

ADRASTUS

Ah me, ah me!
May the earth swallow me up,
the whirlwind rend me in two,
the flash of Zeus's fire fall on my head!

CHORUS

Disastrous were the marriages you have seen,
disastrous the prophecy of Phoebus!
The grim Erinys,²⁷ has come to us, leaving
the house of Oedipus!

²⁷ Oedipus cursed his sons for filial impiety as he died, thereby letting loose upon them the Erinys, a spirit of destruction associated with Zeus.

835-6 λιποῦσ' Οἰδιπόδα δώματ' Wilamowitz (λ- Οἰδίπου δ-) et
Collard: Οἰ- δ- λ- L

EURIPIDES

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

- μέλλων σ' ἐρωτᾶν, ἠνίκ' ἐξήντας στρατῶ
 γόους ἀφήσων, τοὺς ἐκεῖ μὲν ἐκλιπῶν
 840 εἶασα μύθους, νῦν δ', Ἄδραστ', ἀμιστορῶ·
 πόθεν ποθ' οἶδε διαπρεπεῖς εὐψυχία
 θνητῶν ἔφυσαν; εἰπέ δ' ὡς σοφώτερος
 843 νέοισιν ἀστῶν τῶνδ'· ἐπιστήμων γὰρ εἶ.
 846 ἔν δ' οὐκ ἐρήσομαί σε, μὴ γέλωτ' ὄφλω,
 ὄτῳ ξυνέστη τῶνδ' ἕκαστος ἐν μάχῃ
 ἢ τραῦμα λόγχης πολεμίων ἐδέξατο.
 κενοὶ γὰρ οὔτοι τῶν τ' ἀκούνων λόγοι
 850 καὶ τοῦ λέγοντος, ὅστις ἐν μάχῃ βεβῶς
 λόγχης ἰούσης πρόσθεν ὀμμάτων πυκνῆς
 σαφῶς ἀπήγγειλ' ὅστις ἐστὶν ἀγαθός.
 οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην οὔτ' ἐρωτῆσαι τάδε
 οὔτ' αἶ πιθέσθαι τοῖσι τολμῶσιν λέγειν·
 855 μόλις γὰρ ἂν τις αὐτὰ τὰναγκαῖ' ὄρᾶν
 δύναιτ' ἂν ἐστὼς πολεμίοις ἐναντίος.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

- ἄκουε δὴ νυν· καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἄκοντί μοι
 δίδως ἔπαινον ὧν ἔγωγε βούλομαι
 859 φίλων ἀληθῆ καὶ δίκαι' εἰπεῖν πέρι.
 844 εἶδον γὰρ αὐτῶν κρείσσον' ἢ λέξαι λόγῳ
 845 τολμήμαθ', οἷς ἤλπιζον αἰρήσειν πόλιν.
 860 ὄρᾳς τὸ λάβρον οὐ βέλος διέπτατο;
 Καπανεὺς ὄδ' ἐστίν· ᾧ βίος μὲν ἦν πολὺς,
 ἤκιστα δ' ὄλβῳ γαῦρος ἦν· φρόνημα δὲ

SUPLIANT WOMEN

THESEUS

I intended to ask you when you came to meet the army and shed your tears for the dead, but since I did not do so at that time, now I ask you, Adrastus: how did it happen that these men were so superior to other men in bravery? Tell the young sons of these citizens, since you are wiser and have the requisite skill. One thing I will not ask or I'd be laughed at: whom each of these men stood facing in the battle and by what foeman he was wounded. Such a recital wastes the time of both hearers and speaker: can a man stand in battle as the spears fly thick and fast before his eyes and tell us clearly who was brave? I could not ask for such a report nor believe anyone who ventured to give it. When a man stands face to face with the enemy, he is barely able to see what he needs to see.

ADRASTUS

Listen, then. In fact the task you assign me of praising these friends is not unwelcome since I want to say what is true and just about them. I saw their bold deeds, greater than words can describe, by which they expected to take the city.

Do you see the man transfixed by the violent thunderbolt? That is Capaneus. Though he was rich, he did not at

838-9 ἐξήντας . . . ἀφήσω Bothe: ἐξήντλεις . . . ἀφήσω L
 840 εἴασα Elmsley: εἰς τὰ σὰ L Ἄδραστ', ἀμιστορῶ Jacobs: Ἄδραστον εἰσορῶ L
 842 εἰπέ δ' Elmsley: εἰπέ γ' Tr¹: quid L habuerit incertum
 844-5 vide post 859 854 ἀν Reiske: ἄν L
 858 ᾧν Pierson: τῶν L 844-5 post 859 trai. Camper
 860 τὸ λάβρον Tyrwhitt: τὸν ἀβρὸν L: τὸ δῖον t

EURIPIDES

- οὐδέν τι μείζον εἶχεν ἢ πένης ἀνὴρ,
 φεύγων τραπέζαις ὅστις ἐξογκοῖτ' ἄγαν
 865 τάρκοῦντ' ἀτίζων· οὐ γὰρ ἐν γαστρὸς βορᾷ
 τὸ χρηστὸν εἶναι, μέτρια δ' ἐξαρκεῖν ἔφη.
 φίλοις τ' ἀληθῆς ἦν φίλος, παρούσί τε
 καὶ μὴ παροῦσιν· ὧν ἀριθμὸς οὐ πολὺς.
 <πρὸς οὓς ἔδειξεν ἐν βίου συναλλαγαῖς>
 ἀψευδὲς ἦθος, εὐπροσήγορον στόμα,
 870 ἄκρατον οὐδὲν οὔτ' ἐς οἰκέτας ἔχων
 οὔτ' ἐς πολίτας.

- τὸν δὲ δεύτερον λέγω
 Ἐτέοκλον, ἄλλην χρηστότητ' ἠσκηκότα·
 νεανίας ἦν τῷ βίῳ μὲν ἐνδεής,
 πλείστας δὲ τιμὰς ἔσχ' ἐν Ἀργείᾳ χθονί.
 875 φίλων δὲ χρυσὸν πολλακίς δωρουμένων
 οὐκ εἰσεδέξατ' οἶκον ὥστε τοὺς τρόπους
 δούλους παρασχεῖν χρημάτων ζευχθεῖς ὑπο.
 τοὺς δ' ἐξαμαρτάνοντας, οὐχὶ τὴν πόλιν,
 ἤχθαιρ'· ἐπεὶ τοι κοῦδὲν αἰτία πόλις
 880 κακῶς κλύουσα διὰ κυβερνήτην κακόν.
 ὁ δ' αὖ τρίτος τῶνδ' Ἴππομέδων τοιόσδ' ἔφν·
 παῖς ὧν ἐτόλμησ' εὐθὺς οὐ πρὸς ἡδονὰς
 Μουσῶν τραπέσθαι πρὸς τὸ μαλθακὸν βίου,
 ἀγροὺς δὲ ναίων, σκληρὰ τῇ φύσει διδούς,
 885 ἔβαινε πρὸς τ' ἀνδρείον, ἔς τ' ἄγρας ἰὼν
 ἵπποις τε χαίρων τόξα τ' ἐντείνων χεροῖν,
 πόλει παρασχεῖν σῶμα χρήσιμον θέλων.
 ὁ τῆς κυναγοῦ δ' ἄλλος Ἀταλάντης γόνος

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

all give himself airs but had no more pride than a poor man. He shunned men who boasted too much of their luxurious fare and scorned mere sufficiency. The good life, he said, does not consist in food for the belly: modest fare is enough. He was true to his friends, both present and absent. These were few in number. <Toward them in his dealings he displayed> a character that knew no falsehood and a manner of speech that was approachable, behaving with moderation toward both his family and his fellow citizens.

The second man I mention is Eteoclus, who practiced another sort of goodness. Though poor in means this young man held many high offices in Argos. When his friends repeatedly offered him money, he would not take it into his house: that would enslave his way of life and halter it with gold. His hatred was directed not at the city but at those who did wrong. For, you know, the city is not at fault if a bad steersman causes her to be ill spoken of.

The third of them, Hippomedon, was like this: right from childhood he had the strength of mind to reject the Muses' pleasures and the soft delights of life; dwelling in the countryside and setting his nature harsh tasks he progressed toward manly valor by hunting, taking pleasure in horses, and bending the bow with his hands. He wanted to make his own body a useful gift to the city.

Another was the son of Atalanta the huntress, the splen-

867 φίλοις . . . παροῦσί Reiske: φίλος . . . τοῖς παροῦσί L

869 ante h. v. lac. indic. Kovacs

870 ἄκρατον Lenting: ἄκρανον L

885 ἔβαινε Hartung: ἔχαιρε L

EURIPIDES

παῖς Παρθενοπαῖος, εἶδος ἐξοχώτατος,
 890 Ἄρκας μὲν ἦν, ἐλθὼν δ' ἐπ' Ἰνάχον ῥοὰς
 παιδεύεται κατ' Ἄργος. ἐκτραφεὶς δ' ἐκεῖ
 πρῶτον μὲν, ὡς χρὴ τοὺς μετοικούντας ξένους,
 λυπηρὸς οὐκ ἦν οὐδ' ἐπίφθονος πόλει
 οὐδ' ἐξεριστῆς τῶν λόγων, ὅθεν βαρὺς
 895 μάλιστ' ἂν εἴη δημότης τε καὶ ξένος.
 λόχοις δ' ἐνεστῶς ὥσπερ Ἀργεῖος γεγῶς
 ἤμυνε χώρα, χῶπότ' εὖ πράσσοι πόλις
 ἔχαιρε, λυπρῶς δ' ἔφερεν εἴ τι δυστυχοῖ.
 πολλοὺς δ' ἔραστὰς καπὸ θηλειῶν ἴσασσ'†
 900 ἔχων ἐφρούρει μηδὲν ἐξαμαρτάνειν.

Τυδέως δ' ἔπαινον ἐν βραχεῖ θήσω μέγαν·
 [οὐκ ἐν λόγοις ἦν λαμπρός, ἀλλ' ἐν ἀσπίδι
 δεινὸς σοφιστῆς πολλά τ' ἐξευρεῖν σοφός.
 γνώμη δ' ἀδελφοῦ Μελεάγρου λελειμμένος
 905 ἴσον παρέσχευ ὄνομα διὰ τέχνης δορός,
 εὐρὼν ἀκριβῆ μουσικὴν ἐν ἀσπίδι.]
 φιλότιμον ἦθος πλούσιον, φρόνημα δὲ
 ἐν τοῖσι ἔργοις, οὐχὶ τοῖς λόγοις, ἴσων†.

ἐκ τῶνδε μὴ θαύμαζε τῶν εἰρημένων,
 910 Θησεῦ, πρὸ πύργων τούσδε τολμῆσαι θανεῖν.
 τὸ γὰρ τραφῆναι μὴ κακῶς αἰδῶ φέρει·
 αἰσχύνεται δὲ τὰγάθ' ἀσκήσας ἀνὴρ
 κακὸς γενέσθαι πᾶς τις. ἢ δ' εὐανδρία
 διδακτόν, εἴπερ καὶ βρέφος διδάσκεται

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

didly handsome lad Parthenopaeus. He was an Arcadian, but he came to the streams of the Inachus and was raised in Argos. Since he was reared to manhood there, in the first place—as befits all foreign visitors—he caused no pain or resentment to the city and was never a wrangler in words, which is what most makes both citizen and foreigner hard to bear. He took his place in the military companies like an Argive born and fought for his country. When the city prospered, he was glad, but he grieved if it met with any misfortune. He had many admirers of both sexes, but he took care to avoid any wrongdoing.

As for Tydeus, I shall give him high praise in brief compass. [He was not brilliant in words but a great expert with the shield and wise at inventing many things. Though he was bested by his brother Meleager in intelligence, he won equal glory through the fine art of the spear, inventing subtle music on the shield.] His richly endowed mind was eager for honor, but the source of his pride was in deeds, not words.

From what I have said, Theseus, you should not be surprised that these men had the courage to die before the ramparts. A noble upbringing produces a sense of shame. Every man who is trained in good deeds is prevented by shame from becoming base. Courage is teachable: even a

896 ἐφ'εστῶς Blomfield cl. 755

899-900 del. L. Dindorf 899 τόσας England

902-6 om. t, del. Bruhn: 903 del. Porson, 904-8 Dindorf

903 σοφός Toup: σοφά L

908 ἴσον L: ἔχων t: fort. ἔχου

EURIPIDES

- 915 λέγειν ἀκούειν θ' ὧν μάθησιν οὐκ ἔχει.
 ἃ δ' ἂν μάθη τις, ταῦτα σῶζεσθαι φιλεῖ
 ἐς γῆρας. οὕτω παῖδας εὖ παιδεύετε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- ἰὼ τέκνον, δυστυχῆ
 σ' ἔτρεφον ἔφερον ὑφ' ἥπατος
 920 πόνους ἐνεγκοῦσ' ἐν ὠδίσι· καὶ
 νῦν τὸν ἐμὸν Ἀίδαο
 ἔχει μόχθον ἀθλίας,
 ἐγὼ δὲ γηροβοσκὸν οὐκ ἔχω, τεκοῦσ'
 ἃ τάλαινα παῖδα.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

- 925 καὶ μὴν τὸν Οἰκλέους γε γενναῖον τόκον
 θεοὶ ζῶντ' ἀφαρπάσαντες ἐς μυχοὺς χθονὸς
 αὐτοῖς τεθρίπποις εὐλογοῦσιν ἐμφανῶς·
 τὸν Οἰδίπου δὲ παῖδα, Πολυνείκην λέγω,
 ἡμεῖς ἐπαινέσαντες οὐ ψευδοίμεθ' ἄν.
 930 ξένος γὰρ ἦν μοι πρὶν λιπῶν Κάδμου πόλιν
 φυγῆ πρὸς Ἄργος διαβαλεῖν αὐθαιρέτω.
 ἀλλ' οἶσθ' ὃ δρᾶσαι βούλομαι τούτων πέρι;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

οὐκ οἶδα πλὴν ἔν, σοῖσι πείθεσθαι λόγοις.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τὸν μὲν Διὸς πληγέντα Καπανέα πυρὶ . . .

917 ἐκπαιδεύετε Markland

921 τὸν ἐμὸν Ἀίδαο Wilamowitz: Ἄιδας τὸν ἐμὸν L

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

babe learns to say and to hear things he does not yet understand. And what a man learns he tends to keep until he is old. Therefore raise your children well!

CHORUS

Alas, my son, it was for misery
that I carried you next to my heart and nourished you,
bearing the pain of childbirth!
And now Hades has taken
the fruits of my labor, wretch that I am,
and I have no one to tend my old age, though I,
unhappy one, have borne a child!

THESEUS

As regards the noble son of Oecles,²⁸ the gods by snatching him away alive, chariot and all, into the depths of the earth openly praise him. As for the son of Oedipus, I mean Polynices, it would be no lie if we were to praise him. He was my guest friend in the days before he left the city of Cadmus and came over to Argos in voluntary exile.

But do you know what I want to do about these men?

ADRASTUS

I know only one thing, obedience to your words.

THESEUS

Capaneus, struck down by the fire of Zeus . . .

²⁸ Amphiaraus: see note on line 158.

⁹²⁶ ἀφαρπάσαντες Paley: ἀν- L: ζῶνθ' ἀρπάσαντες ἐς μ-χ-
θεοὶ Baier

⁹²⁸ δὲ Hermann: τε L

⁹³¹ ἀθαιρέτω Wecklein: -ος L

⁹³² δρᾶν σε Markland

EURIPIDES

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

935 ἢ χωρὶς ἱερὸν ὡς νεκρὸν θάψαι θέλεις;

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ναί· τοὺς δέ γ' ἄλλους πάντας ἐν μιᾷ πυρᾷ.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ποῦ δῆτα θήσεις μνήμα τῷδε χωρίσας;

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

αὐτοῦ παρ' οἴκουσ' αὐτῶδε συμπήξας τάφον.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

οὗτος μὲν ἤδη δμωσὶν ἂν μέλοι πόνοσ'.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

940 ἡμῖν δέ γ' οἶδε· στειχέτω δ' ἄχθη νεκρῶν.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ἴτ', ὦ τάλαιναι μητέρες, τέκνων πέλασ'.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ἦκιστ', Ἄδραστε, τοῦτο πρόσφορον λέγεις.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

πῶσ'· τὰς τεκούσας οὐ χρεὼν ψαῦσαι τέκνων;

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ὄλοιντ' ἰδοῦσαι τούσδ' ἂν ἡλλοιωμένους.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

945 πικρὰ γὰρ ὄψις αἶμα κῶτειλαὶ νεκρῶν.

⁹³⁸ οἴκουσ' Reiske: οἰκτροῦσ' L

⁹³⁹ οὗτος Reiske: αὐτὸς L

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

ADRASTUS

Will you bury him apart from the others, as a corpse sacred to the gods?

THESEUS

Yes: all the others I shall cremate on a single pyre.

ADRASTUS

Where will you put the tomb you are setting apart for him?

THESEUS

I shall build his grave here right beside this temple.

ADRASTUS

Servants will now concern themselves with this task.

THESEUS

And I with these. Let the bodies of the dead be carried forth!

ADRASTUS

Draw near, unhappy mothers, to your sons!

THESEUS

That is not a good idea, Adrastus.

ADRASTUS

Why? Should mothers not touch their sons?

THESEUS

To see them so changed would be their death.

ADRASTUS

Yes, the blood and wounds of the dead are a painful sight.

⁹⁴⁵ πικρὰ γὰρ ὄψις Reiske: πικραὶ γὰρ ὄψεις L
κῶτειλαὶ νεκρῶν Τουρ: καὶ ἅμα τῷ τέλει νεκρῶ L

αἷμα

EURIPIDES

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τί δῆτα λύπην ταῖσδε προσθῆναι θέλεις;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

νικᾶς. μένειν χρῆ τλημόνως· λέγει γὰρ εὖ
 Θεσεύς· ὅταν δὲ τούσδε προσθῶμεν πυρί,
 ὅστ᾽ ἀπροσάξεσθ'. ὦ ταλαίπωροι βροτῶν,
 950 τί κτᾶσθε λόγχας καὶ κατ' ἀλλήλων φόνους
 τίθεσθε; παύσασθ', ἀλλὰ λήξαντες πόνων
 ἄσθη φυλάσσεθ' ἥσυχοι μεθ' ἡσύχων.
 σμικρὸν τὸ χρῆμα τοῦ βίου· τοῦτον δὲ χρῆ
 ὡς ῥᾶστα καὶ μὴ σὺν πόνοις διεκπερᾶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ.

955 οὐκέτ' εὐτεκνος, οὐκέτ' εὐ-
 παῖς, οὐδ' εὐτυχίας μέτε-
 στίν μοι κουροτόκοις ἐν Ἀργείαις·
 οὐδ' Ἄρτεμις λοχία
 προσφθέγγεται ἂν τὰς ἀτέκνους.
 960 δυσαίων δ' ὁ βίος,
 πλαγκτὰ δ' ὡσεί τις νεφέλα
 πνευμάτων ὑπὸ δυσχίμων αἴσσω.

ἀντ.

ἐπτὰ ματέρες ἐπτὰ κού-
 ρους ἐγεινάμεθ' αἱ ταλαί-
 965 πωροι κλεινοτάτους ἐν Ἀργείοις·
 καὶ νῦν ἄπαις ἄτεκνος

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

THESEUS

Why then do you want to add to these women's grief?

ADRASTUS

I yield to you. (*to the Chorus*) You must stay here and endure: Theseus is right. But when we have put the dead on the pyre, you shall take their bones in your embrace. O suffering mortals, why do you get yourselves spears and shed each other's blood? No more! Rest from toil and keep watch over your cities, sitting quietly with your quiet fellow citizens! The sum of our life is but short. We should pass through it as easily and with as little toil as we can.

Exit THESEUS, ADRASTUS, and funeral procession, together with the Sons, by Eisodos A.

CHORUS

No more mother of fair sons, of fair children,
am I, no more do I have a share
of happiness among the Argive women who have borne
boys.

Artemis, goddess of childbirth,
will have no word for the childless.
Ill-starred is my life,
and I move like a wandering cloud
blown by harsh winds.

We seven unlucky mothers
to seven sons gave birth,
the most glorious among the Argives.
And now in utmost misery

γηράσκω δυστανοτάτα,
 οὐτ' <οὔν> ἐν φθιμένοις
 οὐ ζωοῖς ἀριθμουμένα,
 970 χωρὶς δὴ τινα τῶνδ' ἔχουσα μοῖραν.

ἐπῶδ.

ὑπολελειμμένα μοι δάκρυα·
 μέλεα παιδὸς ἐν οἴκοις
 κεῖται μνήματα, πένθιμοι
 κουραὶ κάστέφανοι κόμαι
 λουβαί <τε> νεκύων φθιμένων
 975 αἰοδαί θ' ἄς χρυσοκόμας
 Ἀπόλλων οὐκ ἐνδέχεται
 γόοισι δ' ὀρθρευομένα
 δάκρυσι νοτερὸν αἰεὶ πέπλων
 πρὸς στέρνω πτύχα τέγξω.

980—καὶ μὴν θαλάμας τάσδ' ἔσορῶ δὴ
 Καπανέως ἤδη τύμβον θ' ἱερὸν
 μελάθρων τ' ἐκτὸς
 Θεσέως ἀναθήματα νεκροῖς,
 κλεινὴν τ' ἄλοχον τοῦ καπφθιμένου
 985 τοῦδε κεραυνῶ πέλας Εὐάδην,
 ἣν Ἴφισ ἀναξ παῖδα φυτεύει.

967 δυστανοτάτα Collard: δυστηνότατος L

968 <οὔν> Kirchhoff

969 οὐ ζωοῖς Hermann: οὐτ' ἐν ζωοῖσιν L

974 κάστέφανοι κόμαι Markland: καὶ στέφανοι κόμας L

974b <τε> Hermann, cetera t, om. L

975 θ' ἄς Markland: τὰς L

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

we enter old age childless,
numbered neither among the dead
nor with the living:
my fate is set apart from both.

Tears are all I have left.
Sad memorials of my son
are kept in my house in store, the shorn
hair of mourning, my garlandless head,
the libations made for the dead and gone,
and the songs which golden-haired
Apollo does not welcome.
I shall wake at dawn in weeping
and ever drench with tears the folds
of my robe upon my breast.

Enter EVADNE above the temple.²⁹ She is splendidly dressed, perhaps as a bride.

CHORUS LEADER

Look, I see the resting place and consecrated tomb of Capaneus here and gifts from the temple Theseus has dedicated to the dead. I also see near at hand Evadne, the glorious wife of lightning-slain Capaneus and the daughter

²⁹ The roof of the *skene* is here apparently being used to represent the cliffs that stood directly behind the Temple of Demeter and Kore at Eleusis. Evadne must leap to her death from this spot at the end of the scene. How this was staged we do not know.

EURIPIDES

τί ποτ' αἰθερίαν ἔστηκε πέτραν
ἢ τῶνδε δόμων ὑπερακρίζει,
τήνδ' ἐμβαίνουσα κέλευθον;

ΕΥΑΔΝΗ

στρ.

- 990 τί φέγγος, τίν' αἴγλαν
ἐδίφρευε τόθ' ἄλιος
σελάνα τε κατ' αἰθέρ' ἃ
λαμπάσιν ὠκὺ θοαῖσι νυμφ-
φεῖ' ἵππευε δι' ὄρφνας,
995 ἀνικ' <ἠδυθρούοις> γάμων
τῶν ἐμῶν πόλις Ἄργους
ἁοιδαῖς εὐδαιμονίας
ἐπύργωσε καὶ γαμέτα
χαλκεοτευχέος Καπανέως;
1000 πρὸς <ὄν γ'> ἔβαν <νῦν> δρομὰς ἐξ
οἴκων ἐκβακχευσαμένα
πυρᾶς φῶς τάφον τ' ἐμ-
βατεύουσα τὸν αὐτόν,
ἐς Ἄιδαν καταλύσουσ' ἄμοχθον
1005 βίοτον αἰῶνός τε πόνους·
ἠδιστος γάρ τοι θάνατος

991 ἐδίφρευε τόθ' ἄλιος post Canter (-ετό γ' ἄλιος) Matthiae:
ἐδιφρεύετο τάλας L 992 αἰθέρ' ἃ Grégoire: -ρα L

993 λαμπάσιν Kirchhoff: λαμπάδ' ἴν' L ὠκὺ θοαῖσι
Willink: ὠκυθόαι L

993-4 νυμφεῖ' Murray: νύμφαι L 994 ἵππευε Willink: ἵπ-
πέουσι L ὄρφνας Hermann: ὄρφναίας L

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

of King Iphis. Why does she take this path and stand on the high cliff that towers over this temple?

EVADNE³⁰

What light, what gleam
 did the sun on its chariot shine forth,
 and likewise the moon, astride her steed,
 swiftly accompanying my bridal celebration
 through the dark night with her swift-moving torches?
 On that day with songs <sweet-resounding>
 in honor of my marriage the city of Argos
 raised tower-high my happiness
 and that of my bridegroom,
 Capaneus of the bronze panoply.
 And <now> it is to him I have come, running
 crazed from my house
 to enter upon the same
 pyre blaze and burial,
 to bring my toilsome life and its labors
 to a toilless end in Hades.
 The most pleasurable death, you know,

³⁰ The two stanzas of Evadne's aria are notoriously corrupt, and little confidence is to be felt in the Greek text I translate here.

995 <ἡδυθρόοις> Wilamowitz 996 fort. τὰς ἐμὰς
 997 αἰοδαῖς Musgrave: -δαῖς L
 999 χαλκεοτευχέος post Heath (del. τε) et Bothe (χαλκ-
 οτευχέος) Page: χαλκεοτευχοῦς τε L
 1000 πρὸς <ὄν γ'> ἔβαν Willink: προσέβαν L <νῦν>
 Kovacs 1001 οἴκων Kovacs: ἐμῶν οἴκων L
 1002 πυρᾶς Bothe: πυρὸς L φῶς Hermann: φῶς
 καθέξουσα L 1003 τ' ἐμβατεύουσα Kirchhoff: τε
 βατεύουσα L 1004 ἄμοχθον Hermann: ἔμμοχθον L

EURIPIDES

συνθνήσκειν θνήσκουσι φίλοις,
εἰ δαίμων τάδε κραίνοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

καὶ μὴν ὄρῳ τήνδ' ἧς ἐφέστηκας πέλας
1010 πυράν, Διὸς θησαυρόν, ἔνθ' ἔνεστι σὸς
πόσις, δαμασθεῖς λαμπάσιν κεραυνίοις.

ΕΥΑΔΝΗ

ἀντ.

ὄρῳ δὴ τελευτὰν
ἴν' ἔστακα (τύχα δέ μοι
ξυνάπτει ποδὸς ἀλλαγάς),
1015 εὐκλείας χάριν ἔνθεν ὀρ-
μάσω τᾶσδ' ἀπὸ πέτρας·
πηδήσασα <δὲ> πυρὸς ἔσω
σῶμα τ' αἴθοπι φλογμῶ
1020 πόσει συμμείξασα φίλῳ,
χρῶτα χρῶ πέλας θεμένα,
Φερσεφόνας ἦξω θαλάμους,
σὲ τὸν θανόντ' οὐποτ' ἐμᾶ
προδοῦσα ψυχᾶ κατὰ γᾶς.
1025 ἴτω φῶς γάμοι τ'· <εὐ-
τυχ>οῖθ' αἴτινες εὐναὶ
δικαίων ὑμεναίων ἐν Ἄργει
φανῶσιν τέκνοις, ὅσιος δ'

1009 πέλας Scaliger: πύλας L

1013 ἴν' Reiske: ἦν L

1014 ἀλλαγὰς Stinton: ἀλλὰ τῆς L

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

is to die with one's dearest as he dies,
if fate so ordains.

CHORUS LEADER

You see this pyre, above which you stand, the storehouse
of Zeus, where lies your husband, bested by the blaze of
the thunderbolt.

EVADNE

I see that my journey's end
is here where I stand (for fortune
is stepping along with me),
and it is here that to win glory
I shall launch myself from this cliff.
After leaping into the fire,
joining my body in the glowing flame
with my dear husband,
and laying my flesh near his,
I shall come to the marriage chamber of Persephone!
Never, where my life is concerned,
shall I abandon you lying dead beneath the earth!
Light the bridal torch, begin the marriage! <May good luck
attend you,> all lawful marriages
that may come to my children
in Argos! And may the wedded bridegroom,

1018 <δὲ> Wilamowitz

1020 φίλω Bothe: φίλον L

1021 χρῶ Hartung: χρωτὶ L

1022 Φερσεφόνας Elmsley: -νείας L

1025-6 <εὐτυχ>οἴθ' αἴτινες Stinton: εἴθε τινὲς L

1027 ὄσιος Hermann: ὁ σὸς L

EURIPIDES

- εὐναῖος <ναῖοι> γαμέτας
 συντακεῖς αὔραις ἀδόλοισ
 1030 γενναίας ἀλόχοιο.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

καὶ μὴν ὄδ' αὐτὸς σὸς πατὴρ βαίνει πέλας
 γεραιὸς Ἴφισ ἐς νεωτέρους λόγους,
 οὓς οὐ κατειδὼς πρόσθεν ἀλγήσει κλύων.

ΙΦΙΣ

- ὦ δυστάλαιναι, δυστάλας ἐγὼ γέρων
 1035 ἤκω διπλοῦν πένθημ' ὀμαιμόνων ἔχων,
 τὸν μὲν θανόντα παῖδα Καδμείων δορι
 Ἐτέοκλον ἐς γῆν πατρίδα ναυσθλώσων νεκρὸν
 ζητῶν τ' ἐμὴν παιῖδ', ἣ δόμων ἐξώπιος
 βέβηκε πηδήσασα Καπανέως δάμαρ,
 1040 θανεῖν ἐρώσα σὺν πόσει. χρόνον μὲν οὖν
 τὸν πρόσθ' ἐφρουρεῖτ' ἐν δόμοις· ἐπεὶ δ' ἐγὼ
 φυλακὰς ἀνῆκα τοῖς παρεστῶσιν κακοῖς,
 βέβηκεν. ἀλλὰ τῆδέ νιν δοξάζομεν
 μάλιστ' ἂν εἶναι· φράζετ' εἰ κατείδετε.

ΕΥΑΔΝΗ

- 1045 τί τάσδ' ἐρωτᾶς; ἦδ' ἐγὼ πέτρας ἔπι
 ὄρνις τις ὡσεὶ Καπανέως ὑπὲρ πυρᾶς
 δύστηνον αἰώρημα κουφίζω, πάτερ.

1028 <ναῖοι> Diggle

1029 συντακεῖς Diggle: -τηχθεῖς L

1030 ἀλόχοιο Wilamowitz: ψυχὰς ἀλόχω L

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

as goodness ordains, < dwell >
fused in love to the pure impulse
of his noble wife!

Enter IPHIS by Eisodos B.

CHORUS LEADER

But look, here your father himself, aged Iphis, draws near to receive new and unwelcome tidings, tidings he did not know before and which will grieve him when he hears them.

IPHIS

O unhappy women, unhappy old man that I am I have come with a double burden of grief for my kin: I want to transport my son Eteoclus, killed by the spears of the Cadmeans, back to his native land by ship and to find my daughter, Capaneus' wife, who sprang up and left her house, longing to die with her husband. Previously she was guarded closely in the house. But because of our present misfortunes I relaxed the watch, and she went off. But we think she is most likely to be here. Tell me if you have seen her.

EVADNE

Why do you ask *them*? Here I am upon the cliff like a bird, perched high in my grief, father.

1034 δυστάλαιναι Markland: -α L δυστάλας Kovacs:
δυσ- δ' L: v. del. Haslam
1035 πένθημ' όμαιμόνων Kirchhoff: πένθιμον δαιμόνων L
1037 γήν Hermann: τήν L
1039 λέληθε Wilamowitz

EURIPIDES

ΙΦΙΣ

τέκνον, τίς αὔρα; τίς στόλος; τίνος χάριν
δόμων ὑπεκβάσ' ἦλθες ἐς τήνδε χθόνα;

ΕΥΑΔΝΗ

1050 ὄργην λάβοις ἂν τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων
κλυῶν· ἀκούσαι δ' οὐ σε βούλομαι, πάτερ.

ΙΦΙΣ

τί δ'; οὐ δίκαιον πατέρα τὸν σὸν εἰδέναι;

ΕΥΑΔΝΗ

κριτῆς ἂν εἴης οὐ σοφὸς γνώμης ἐμῆς.

ΙΦΙΣ

σκευῆ δὲ τῆδε τοῦ χάριν κοσμεῖς δέμας;

ΕΥΑΔΝΗ

1055 θέλει τι κλεινὸν οὗτος ὁ στολμός, πάτερ.

ΙΦΙΣ

ὡς οὐκ ἐπ' ἀνδρὶ πένθιμος πρέπεις ὄρᾶν.

ΕΥΑΔΝΗ

ἐς γάρ τι πράγμα νεοχμὸν ἐσκευάσμεθα.

ΙΦΙΣ

κᾶπειτα τύμβῳ καὶ πυρᾷ φαίνη πέλας;

ΕΥΑΔΝΗ

ἐνταῦθα γὰρ δὴ καλλίνικος ἔρχομαι.

¹⁰⁴⁹ ὑπεκβάσ' Kirchhoff: ὑπερβ- L

¹⁰⁵⁰ ὄργην Reiske: ὀρμῆν L

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

IPHIS

My child, what impulse, what errand is this? Why have you stolen from home and come to this land?

EVADNE

To learn my plans would make you angry, father. I do not want you to hear them.

IPHIS

But is it not right for your father to know?

EVADNE

You would be a foolish judge of my intent.

IPHIS

But why have you adorned yourself with this finery?

EVADNE

These clothes have a glorious aim, father.

IPHIS

You do not look like a woman in mourning for her husband.

EVADNE

No: it is for a new purpose that I am decked out.

IPHIS

And yet you show yourself near his pyre and tomb?

EVADNE

Yes: I have come here in glorious victory.

1055 *στολμός* Markland: *στόλος* L

1056 *πένθιμος* Musgrave: *-ίμω* L

EURIPIDES

ΙΦΙΣ

1060 νικῶσα νίκην τίνα; μαθεῖν χρήζω σέθεν.

ΕΥΑΔΝΗ

πάσας γυναῖκας ἄς δέδορκεν ἥλιος.

ΙΦΙΣ

ἔργοις Ἀθάνας ἢ φρενῶν εὐβουλία;

ΕΥΑΔΝΗ

ἀρετῇ· πόσει γὰρ συνθανοῦσα κείσομαι.

ΙΦΙΣ

τί φῆς; τί τοῦτ' αἰνιγμα σημαίνεις σαθρόν;

ΕΥΑΔΝΗ

1065 ἄσσω θανόντος Καπανέως τήνδ' ἐς πυράν.

ΙΦΙΣ

ὦ θύγατερ, οὐ μὴ μῦθον ἐς πολλοὺς ἐρείς;

ΕΥΑΔΝΗ

τοῦτ' αὐτὸ χρήζω, πάντας Ἀργείους μαθεῖν.

ΙΦΙΣ

ἄλλ' οὐδέ τοί σοι πείσομαι δρώσῃ τάδε.

ΕΥΑΔΝΗ

ὅμοιον οὐ γὰρ μὴ κίχης μ' ἐλὼν χερί.

1070 καὶ δὴ παρῆται σῶμα, σοὶ μὲν οὐ φίλον,
ἡμῖν δὲ καὶ τῷ συμπυρομένῳ πόσει.

¹⁰⁶⁴ σημαίνει Markland

¹⁰⁶⁶ ἐς Porson, Hermann: ἐπὶ L

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

IPHIS

What victory? I want to learn from your lips.

EVADNE

Over all women the sun looks on.

IPHIS

In the works of Athena or in prudence of thought?

EVADNE

In goodness: I shall lie next to my husband in death.

IPHIS

What do you mean? What is this diseased riddle you are telling?

EVADNE

I shall leap upon the pyre of dead Capaneus here.

IPHIS

My daughter, hush! Do not say this before the crowd.

EVADNE

But this is the very thing I want, that all the Argives should know it.

IPHIS

But I will not consent to your doing this.

EVADNE

That makes no difference. You will not be able to seize me in your grasp. See, my body is sped: this is unkind to you but kind to me and to the husband with whom I share the pyre.

Exit EVADNE, leaping to a place behind the skene.

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἰώ,
γύναι, δεινὸν ἔργον ἐξεργάσω.

ΙΦΙΣ

ἀπωλόμην δύστηνος, Ἀργείων κόραι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἔξ,
σχέτλια τάδε παθών,

1075 τὸ πάντολμον ἔργον ὄψη τάλας;

ΙΦΙΣ

οὐκ ἄν τιν' εὔροιτ' ἄλλον ἀθλιώτερον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἰὼ τάλας·
μετέλαχες τύχας Οἰδιπόδα, γέρον,
μέρος καὶ σὺ <καὶ> πόλις ἐμὰ τλάμων.

ΙΦΙΣ

1080 οἴμοι· τί δὴ βροτοῖσιν οὐκ ἔστιν τόδε,
νέους δις εἶναι καὶ γέροντας αὖ πάλιν;
ἀλλ' ἐν δόμοις μὲν ἦν τι μὴ καλῶς ἔχη,
γνώμαισιν ὑστέραισιν ἐξορθούμεθα,
αἰῶνα δ' οὐκ ἔξεστιν. εἰ δ' ἦμεν νέοι
1085 δις καὶ γέροντες, εἴ τις ἐξημάρτανεν,
διπλοῦ βίου λαχόντες ἐξορθούμεθ' ἄν.

ἐγὼ γὰρ ἄλλους εἰσορῶν τεκνουμένους
παιδῶν ἐραστής ἦ πόθω τ' ἀπωλλύμην.
εἰ δ' εὖ τόδ' ἤδη κάξεπειράθην †τέκνων†

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

CHORUS

Alas,
woman, it is a dread deed you have accomplished!

IPHIS

My miserable life is at an end, Argive women!

CHORUS

Ah, ah!
Cruel are the griefs you have suffered!
Can you bear, poor man, to look on this deed of utmost
daring?

IPHIS

You will never find another more hapless than me!

CHORUS

Poor man!
You have taken a share, old sir, in the fortunes of Oedipus,
both you <and> my luckless city!

IPHIS

Ah me! Why is it not possible for mortals to be twice young
and twice old? If something is amiss at home, with our
second thoughts we put it to rights, but we cannot do this
with our lives. If we were twice young and old, when any-
one made a mistake we could correct it when we had re-
ceived our life's second portion.

I, for example, saw others begetting children and
longed for them, and this longing was my undoing. If I had
known this and had experienced what a thing it is for a

1079 <καὶ> Bothe 1082 νόμοις Nauck

1089 εὖ τόδ' ἤδη Haupt: ἐς τόδ' ἤλθον L πάρος Elmsley:
σαφῶς Hartung

EURIPIDES

- 1090 οἶον στέρεσθαι πατέρα γίνεται τέκνων,
οὐκ ἄν ποτ' ἐς τόδ' ἦλθον εἰς ὃ νῦν κακόν.
[ὅστις φυτεύσας καὶ νεανίαν τεκῶν
ἄριστον, εἶτα τοῦδε νῦν στερίσκομαι.]
εἶέν· τί δὴ χρὴ τὸν ταλαίπωρόν με δρᾶν;
- 1095 στείχειν πρὸς οἴκους; κἄτ' ἐρημίαν ἴδω
πολλὴν μελάθρων, ἀπορίαν τ' ἐμῶ βίῳ;
ἢ πρὸς μέλαθρα τοῦδε Καπανέως μόλω;
ἦδιστα πρὶν γε δῆθ' ὅτ' ἦν παῖς ἦδε μοι.
ἀλλ' οὐκέτ' ἔστιν, ἢ γ' ἐμὴν γενειάδα
- 1100 προσήγετ' αἰεὶ στόματι καὶ κᾶρα τόδε
κατείχε χερσίν. οὐδὲν ἦδιον πατρὶ
γέροντι θυγατρός· ἀρσένων δὲ μείζονες
ψυχαί, γλυκεῖαι δ' ἦσσον ἐς θωπεύματα.
οὐχ ὡς τάχιστα δῆτά μ' ἄξεν' ἐς δόμους
- 1105 σκότῳ τε δώσεν', ἐνθ' ἀσιτίαις ἐμὸν
δέμας γεραῖον συντακεῖς ἀποφθερῶ;
τί μ' ὠφελήσει παιδὸς ὀστέων θυγείν;
ὦ δυσπάλαιστον γῆρας, ὡς μισῶ σ' ἔχων,
μισῶ δ' ὅσοι χρήζουσιν ἐκτείνειν βίον,
- 1110 βρωτοῖσι καὶ ποτοῖσι καὶ μαγεύμασιν
παρεκτρέποντες ὀχετὸν ὥστε μὴ θανεῖν·
οὐς χρῆν, ἐπειδὴν μηδὲν ὠφελῶσι γῆν,
θανόντας ἔρρειν κᾶκποδῶν εἶναι νέοις.

1091 κακοῦ Τουρ

1092-3 del. Diggle

1096 πολλὴν Reiske: -ὦν L.

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

father to lose his children, I would never have come to my present pitch of misery. [I begot and fathered a brave young man and now I am deprived of him.]

Well, then, what am I to do in my misery? Return home? And then am I to look at the deep desolation of my house and the emptiness of my life? Or should I go to the house of Capaneus here? I loved to do so before when I had my daughter. But she is gone, she who always used to draw my cheek to her lips and hold my head in her hands. Nothing is sweeter to an aged father than a daughter. Sons are more spirited but not as endearing. Servants, take me swiftly home and hide me in the dark! There I shall starve my aged body and end my life! What good will it do me to touch the bones of my son?

Old age, so hard to wrestle with, how I detest you! I detest also those who wish to prolong their lives, using meat and drink and magic potions to turn aside the stream and avoid death. Since they do the earth no good, they should vanish and die and get out of the way of the young!

Exit IPHIS by Eisodos B. Enter THESEUS with retinue and the SONS of the Seven, bearing urns of ashes, by Eisodos A.

1098 δῆθ' ὄτ' Canter: δῆποτ' L

1101 χερσίν Canter: χειρί L οὐδὲν ἥδιον πατρὶ Burney:
πατρὶ δ' οὐδὲν ἥδιον L

1105 τε Markland: δὲ L

1110 ita t: νότοισι καὶ στρώμναισι καὶ μαντεύμασιν L

1112 ὠφελῶσι γῆν t: ὠφέλον πόλιν L

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἰώ·

- 1115 τάδε δὴ παίδων ἤδη φθιμένων
 ὅσῳ φέρεται. λάβετ', ἀμφίπολοι,
 γραιίας ἀμενοῦς (οὐ γὰρ ἔνεστιν
 ῥώμη παίδων ὑπὸ πένθους)
 πολλοῦ τε χρόνου ζώσης μέτρα δὴ
 καταλειβομένης τ' ἄλγεσι πολλοῖς.
 1120 τί γὰρ ἂν μείζον τοῦδ' ἔτι θνητοῖς
 πάθος ἐξεύροις
 ἢ τέκνα θανόντ' ἐσιδέσθαι;

στρ. α

ΠΑΙΔΕΣ

- φέρω φέρω,
 τάλαινα μᾶτερ, ἐκ πυρᾶς πατρὸς μέλη,
 1125 βάρος μὲν οὐκ ἀβριθὲς ἀλγέων ὑπο,
 ἐν δ' ὀλίγῳ τὰμὰ πάντα συνθείς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- ἰὼ ἰώ,
 πᾶ δάκρυα φέρεις φίλα
 ματρὶ τῶν ὀλωλότων
 σποδοῦ τε πλήθος ὀλίγον ἀντὶ σωμαίων
 1130 εὐδοκίμων δὴ ποτ' ἐν Μυκῆναις;
 ἀντ. α

ΠΑΙΔΕΣ

ἄπαις ἄπαις·
 ἐγὼ δ' ἔρημος ἀθλίου πατρὸς τάλας

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

CHORUS LEADER

Look! They are bringing the bones of our dead children!
Attendants, take hold of a weak old woman! Grief for my
son has left me strengthless. I have lived a long space of
years and been melted away with many woes. What grief
greater than seeing one's children slain could you find for
mortals?

SONS

I carry, I carry,
poor mother,³¹ from the pyre my father's body,
a burden grief makes far from light:
all that is dear to me I have gathered in little compass.

CHORUS

Ah, ah,
how can you bring tears to the loving
mother of the slain
and a little dust in exchange for the bodies
of men once glorious in Mycenae?

SONS

Childless, childless
are you! But I, woefully bereft of my dear father,

³¹ Either used loosely for "grandmother," or addressed to them as mothers of the slain.

1114 ἤδη Musgrave: καὶ δὴ L

1118 τε Reiske: δὴ L μέτρα Musgrave: μέτα L

1124 πυρᾶς Markland: πυρὸς L

1125 ὕπο Markland: ὕπερ L

1131 παπαὶ παπαῖ Musgrave

EURIPIDES

ἔρημον οἶκον ὀρφανεύσομαι λαβών,
οὐ πατρὸς ἐν χερσὶ τοῦ τεκόντος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἰὼ ἰὼ·

ποῦ δὲ πόνος ἐμῶν τέκνων;

1135 ποῦ λοχευμάτων χάρις

τροφαί τε ματρὸς ἄυπνά τ' ὀμμάτων τέλη

καὶ φίλαι προσβολαὶ προσώπων;

στρ. β

ΠΑΙΔΕΣ

βεβᾶσιν, οὐκέτ' εἰσίν· οἴμοι πάτερ·

βεβᾶσιν.

<ΧΟΡΟΣ>

αἰθὴρ ἔχει νιν ἤδη,

1140 πυρᾶς τετακότας σποδῶ,

ποτανοὶ δ' ἤνυσαν τὸν Ἄιδαν.

<ΠΑΙΔΕΣ>

πάτερ, σῶν μὲν κλύεις τέκνων γόους;

ἄρ' ἀσπιδουῆχος ἔτι ποτ' ἀντιτείσομαι . . .

<ΧΟΡΟΣ>

. . . σὸν φόνον; εἰ γὰρ γένοιτο, τέκνον.

1134 ἐμός Wilamowitz

1135 ποῦ λοχευμάτων Musgrave: πολυχευμάτων L

1138 εἰσίν· οἴμοι Wilamowitz: εἰσί μοι L

1139n <Χο.> Murray

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

shall take his empty house and grow up as an orphan,
without the embrace of the father who begot me!

CHORUS

Ah me!

Where is the labor I spent on my sons?

Where is the thanks for the pains of childbirth?

Where is a mother's tendance, the sleepless devotion of her
eyes,

the sweet touch of her face?

SONS

Gone, here no more! Alas, my father!

They have gone.

<CHORUS>

They dwell now in the sky above,
dissolved in the pyre's hot ash!

They have taken wing and gone the road to Hades!

<SONS>

Father, do you hear your son's lamenting?

Shall the day ever come when I take up my shield and
avenge . . .

<CHORUS>

. . . your death? O may this be so, my son!

1140 *πυρᾶς* Markland: *πυρὸς* L

1142n <Πα.> Tyrwhitt

1142 *σῶν μὲν* Collard: *σὺ μὲν σῶν* L

1143 *ἀντιρείσομαι* Canter: *-τάσσομαι* L

1144n <Χο.> Grégoire

EURIPIDES

ἀντ. β

< ΠΑΙΔΕΣ >

1145 ἔτ' ἂν θεοῦ θέλοντος ἔλθοι δίκαια
πατρῶος.

< ΧΟΡΟΣ >

οὐπω κακὸν τόδ' εὔδει.
ἄλις γόων (αἰαῖ τύχας)
ἄλις <δ' > ἀλγέων ἐμοὶ πάρεστιν.

< ΠΑΙΔΕΣ >

1150 ἔτ' Ἀσωποῦ με δέξεται γάνος
χαλκείους <ἐν > ὄπλοις Δαναῖδᾶν στρατηλάταν . . .

< ΧΟΡΟΣ >

τοῦ φθιμένου πατρὸς ἐκδικαστάν.

στρ. γ

< ΠΑΙΔΕΣ >

ἔτ' εἰσορᾶν σε, πάτερ, ἐν ὄμμασιν δοκῶ . . .

< ΧΟΡΟΣ >

φίλαν φίλημα παρὰ γένυν τιθέντα σοί.

< ΠΑΙΔΕΣ >

1155 λόγων δὲ παρακείμενον σῶν
ἀέρι φερόμενον οἴχεται.

1145n <Πα.> Musgrave

1145 ἔτ' ἂν Musgrave: ὅταν L

1146n <Χο.> Murray

1147 ἄλις . . . αἰαῖ Willink: αἰαῖ . . . ἄλις L

1148 <δ' > Porson, Hermann

1149n <Πα.> Tyrwhitt

SUPLIANT WOMEN

< SONS >

If heaven wills it, a father's vengeance
shall one day come.

< CHORUS >

This trouble is not yet laid to rest.
I have enough of tears (alas for my lot!),
enough of griefs!

< SONS >

One day the glistening Asopus³²
will welcome me as general of Argives in bronze war
gear . . .

< CHORUS >

. . . avenger of your dead father.

< SONS >

Father, I seem even now to see you before my eyes . . .

< CHORUS >

. . . planting a loving kiss on your cheek.

< SONS >

But the consolation of your words
has vanished, borne away on the air!

³² One of the two principal rivers of Thebes.

1149 ἔτ' Ἀσωποῦ Tyrwhitt (Ἄσωποῦ) et Elmsley: *στάσω ποῦ*
L 1150 <έν> Markland
1151n <Χο.> Grégoire
1152n <Πα.> Hermann
1152 ἐν ὄμμασιν Diggle: ἐπ' ὀμμάτων L
1153 <Χο.> Hermann φίλαν Diggle: -ον L σοί Page:
σόν L 1154n <Πα.> Hermann

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

δυοῖν δ' ἄχῃ, ματρί τ' ἔλιπεν
σέ τ' οὔποτ' ἄλγῃ πατρῶα λείψει.

ἀντ. γ

< ΠΑΙΔΕΣ >

ἔχω τοσόνδε βάρος ὅσον μ' ἀπώλεσεν.

< ΧΟΡΟΣ >

φέρ', ἀμφὶ μαστὸν ὑποβάλω < τέκνων > σποδόν.

ΠΑΙΔΕΣ

1160 ἔκλαυσα τόδε κλυὼν ἔπος
στυγνότεατον· ἔθιγέ μου φρενῶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ τέκνον, ἔβασ· οὐκέτι φίλον
φίλας ἀγαλμ' ὄψομαί σε ματρός.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

1165 Ἄδραστε καὶ γυναῖκες Ἀργεῖαι γένος,
ὁρᾶτε παῖδας τούσδ' ἔχοντας ἐν χεροῖν
πατέρων ἀρίστων σώμαθ' ὧν ἀνειλόμην·
τούτοις ἐγὼ σφε καὶ πόλις δωρούμεθα.
ὑμᾶς δὲ τῶνδε χρὴ χάριν μεμνημένους
1170 σῶζειν, ὁρῶντας ὧν ἐκύρσατ' ἐξ ἔμοῦ,
παισὶν θ' ὑπειπεῖν τοῖσδε τοὺς αὐτοὺς λόγους,
τιμᾶν πόλιν τήνδ', ἐκ τέκνων αἰεὶ τέκνοις
μνήμην παραγγέλλοντας ὧν ἐκύρσατε.
Ζεὺς δὲ ξυνίστωρ οἷ τ' ἐν οὐρανῷ θεοὶ
1175 οἷων ὑφ' ἡμῶν στείχεται ἡξιωμένοι.

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

CHORUS

Both of us grieve: grief he has left his mother—
and pain for your father will never desert you!

< SONS >

I have such a weight of grief as has destroyed me!

< CHORUS >

Come, let me take <my son's> ashes to my breast!

SONS

I weep as I hear you say this word
most hateful: it tears my heart!

CHORUS

My son, you are gone! No more shall I see you,
beloved darling of a mother you loved!

THESEUS

Adrastus and women of Argive birth, you see these boys holding in their arms the bodies of their valiant fathers, bodies I have rescued. The city and I bestow these on them. But you for your part must remember this and keep gratitude for it in your hearts, seeing what you have received at my hands, and you must say the same thing to these children, telling them to honor this city and hand down to their children's children the memory of what you have received. Zeus and the gods in heaven are witnesses that you go home deemed worthy of great benefits by us!

1156 ἔλιπεν Tyrwhitt: -ες L 1158n <Πα.> Musgrave

1159n <Χο.> Hermann 1159 <τέκνων> Fritzsche

1164 φίλας Musgrave: φίλος L 1168 σφε Elmsley: σε L

1171 παισίν θ' ὑπειπεῖν Reiske: πᾶσίν θ' ὑπεῖπον L
τοῖσδε Tyrwhitt: τούσδε L

EURIPIDES

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

Θησεύ, ξύνισμεν πάνθ' ὅσ' Ἀργείαν χθόνα
 δέδρακας ἐσθλὰ δεομένην εὐεργετῶν,
 χάριν τ' ἀγῆρων ἔξομεν· γενναῖα γὰρ
 παθόντες ὑμᾶς ἀντιδρᾶν ὀφείλομεν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

1180 τί δῆτ' ἔθ' ὑμῖν ἄλλ' ὑπουργῆσαί με χρή;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

χαῖρ'· ἄξιος γὰρ καὶ σὺ καὶ πόλις σέθεν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ἔσται τάδ'· ἀλλὰ καὶ σὺ τῶν αὐτῶν τύχοις.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

ἄκουε, Θησεύ, τῆσδ' Ἀθηναίας λόγους,
 ἃ χρή σε δρᾶσαι, δρῶντα δ' ὠφελεῖν τὰ σά.
 1185 μὴ δῶς τάδ' ὅστ' αὖ τοῖσδ' ἐς Ἀργείαν χθόνα
 παισὶν κομίζειν ῥαδίως οὕτω μεθείς,
 ἀλλ' ἀντὶ τῶν σῶν καὶ πόλεως μοχθημάτων
 πρῶτον λάβ' ὄρκον· τόνδε δ' ὀμνύναι χρεῶν
 Ἄδραστον· οὗτος κύριος, τύραννος ὢν,
 1190 πάσης ὑπὲρ γῆς Δαναϊδῶν ὀρκωμοτεῖν.
 ὁ δ' ὄρκος ἔσται μήποτ' Ἀργείους χθόνα
 ἐς τήνδ' ἐποίσειν πολέμιον παντευχίαν
 ἄλλων τ' ἰόντων ἐμποδῶν θήσειν δόρυ.
 ἦν δ' ὄρκον ἐκλιπόντες ἔλθωσιν πόλιν,
 1195 κακῶς ὀλέσθαι πρόστρεπ' Ἀργείων χθόνα.

1180 δῆτ' ἔθ' Elmsley: δῆποθ' L

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

ADRASTUS

Theseus, we are conscious of all the good you have done to the land of Argos when it needed a benefactor, and our gratitude will never grow old. Since we have received such noble treatment, we must treat you nobly in turn.

THESEUS

What further service can I perform for you?

ADRASTUS

Fare well! Faring well is what you and your city deserve!

THESEUS

I shall. And may you also do the same!

Enter ATHENA from above the skene.

ATHENA

Listen, Theseus, to my words, the words of Athena! Here is what you must do and in doing benefit your own interests. Do not give these bones to these children to carry away to the land of Argos, letting them go so lightly, but in return for your labors and those of your city first exact an oath. This man here, Adrastus, must swear: he has the authority to take an oath on behalf of the whole land of Danaus' sons since he is the king. This is the oath: that the Argives will never move a hostile army against this land, and that, if others do so, they will use their own might to stop them. They must pray that the land of Argos may perish miserably if they violate the oath and march against the city.

1183 τῆσδ' Seidler: τοῦσδ' L

1184 τὰ σά Musgrave: τὰδε L

EURIPIDES

- ἐν ᾧ δὲ τέμνειν σφάγια χρή σ', ἄκουέ μου.
 ἔστιν τρίπους σοι χαλκόπους ἔσω δόμων,
 ὃν Ἴλιον ποτ' ἐξαναστήσας βάθρα
 σπουδὴν ἐπ' ἄλλην Ἡρακλῆς ὀρμώμενος
 1200 στήσαι σ' ἐφείτο Πυθικῇ πρὸς ἐσχάρα.
 ἐν τῷδε λαιμοὺς τρεῖς τριῶν μῆλων τεμῶν
 ἔγγραψον ὄρκους τρίποδος ἐν κοίλῳ κύτει,
 κᾶπειτα σῶζειν θεῷ δὸς ᾧ Δελφῶν μέλει,
 μνημεῖά θ' ὄρκων μαρτύρημά θ' Ἑλλάδι.
 1205 ἦ δ' ἂν διοίξῃς σφάγια καὶ τρώσης φόνον
 ὀξύστομον μάχαιραν ἐς γαίας μυχοὺς
 κρύψον παρ' αὐτὰς ἐπτὰ πυρκαϊᾶς νεκρῶν.
 φόβον γὰρ αὐτοῖς, ἦν ποτ' ἔλθωσιν πόλιν,
 δειχθεῖσα θήσει καὶ κακὸν νόστον πάλιν.
 1210 δράσας δὲ ταῦτα πέμπε γῆς ἔξω νεκρούς.
 τεμένη δ', ἴν' αὐτῶν σώμαθ' ἠγνίσθη πυρί,
 μέθες παρ' αὐτὴν τρίοδον Ἴσθμίαν θεῷ.
 σοὶ μὲν τάδ' εἶπον· παισὶ δ' Ἀργείων λέγω·
 πορθήσεθ' ἠβήσαντες Ἴσμηνοῦ πόλιν,
 1215 πατέρων θανόντων ἐκδικάζοντες φόνον,
 σύ τ' ἀντὶ πατρός, Αἰγιαλεῦ, στρατηλάτης
 νέος καταστάς, παῖς τ' ἀπ' Αἰτωλῶν μολῶν
 Τυδέως, ὃν ὠνόμαζε Διομήδη πατῆρ.
 ἀλλ' οὐ φθάνειν χρή συσκιάζοντας γένυν
 1220 καὶ χαλκοπληθῆ Δαναϊδῶν ὀρμᾶν στρατὸν

¹¹⁹⁶ σφάγια χρή Bothe: χ- σ- L

SUPPLIANT WOMEN

Now hear from me with what vessel you are to perform this sacrifice. In your house there is a bronze-footed tripod. When Heracles had destroyed the foundations of Troy, he bade you dedicate it near the Pythian hearth as he set off on another mission. Over this tripod you must cut the throats of three sheep and inscribe the oath on its curved hollow, and then give it for safekeeping to the god who rules Delphi, a memorial of the oath and a witness to it in the eyes of Hellas. The sharp-bladed knife with which you cut the throats and made the bloody wound you must bury in the depths of the earth right near the pyres of the seven dead. For if the Argives ever return to the city, this knife, when displayed, will make them afraid and cause them an evil journey home. When you have done these things, escort the bodies out of the country. The sanctuaries in which the bodies were purified by the fire, near the branching of the road that leads to the Isthmus, dedicate to the god.

Those are my instructions to you. To the children of the Argive champions I say this: when you come to manhood, you will sack the city of the Ismenus and exact vengeance for the blood of your fathers slain. You, Aegialeus,³³ shall be a young general in your father's stead, and Tydeus' son, whom his father called Diomedes, shall come from Aetolia and be general too. No sooner have your beards grown in than you must march the bronze-clad army of Danaus' sons

³³ Son of Adrastus.

¹²⁰⁰ σ' Reiske: γ' L Πυθικῇ . . . ἐσχάρῃ Lenting: -ῆν . . .
 .-άραν L

¹²¹¹ ἡγνίσθη Heath: ἀγνισθῆ L

¹²¹² Ἴσθμίαν θεῶ Tyrwhitt: Ἴσθμίας θεοῦ L

EURIPIDES

ἐπτάστομον πύργωμα Καδμείων ἐπι-
 πικροὶ γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἤξειτ' ἐκτεθραμμένοι
 σκύμνοι λεόντων, πόλεος ἐκπορθήτορες.
 κούκ ἔστιν ἄλλως· Ἐπίγονοι δ' ἄν' Ἑλλάδα
 1225 κληθέντες ᾧδὰς ὑστέροισι θήσετε·
 τοῖον στρατεύμα σὺν θεῶ πορεύσετε.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

δέσποιν' Ἀθάνα, πείσομαι λόγοισι σοῖς·
 σὺ γάρ μ' ἀπορθοῖς ὥστε μὴ ἕξαμαρτάνειν.
 καὶ τόνδ' ἐν ὄρκοις ζεύξομαι· μόνον σύ με
 1230 ἐς ὄρθον ἴστη· σοῦ γὰρ εὐμενοῦς πόλει
 οὔσης τὸ λοιπὸν ἀσφαλῶς οἰκήσομεν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στείχωμεν, Ἄδρασθ', ὄρκια δῶμεν
 τῷδ' ἀνδρὶ πόλει τ'· ἄξια δ' ἡμῖν
 προμεμοχθήκασι σέβεσθαι.

1221 ἐπτάστομον Heath: -στολον L

1224 Ἐπίγονοι Brodaeus: Ἐκγονοι L

1228 ἀπορθοῖς Markland: ἀν- L

SUPLIANT WOMEN

to the seven-gated city of the Cadmeans. Unwelcome will you be to them as you arrive, lion cubs now full-grown, sackers of the city. It cannot be otherwise. Throughout Greece you will be called the Epigoni³⁴ and will make themes for song for generations to come: such, with the help of heaven, will be your expedition!

THESEUS

Lady Athena, I shall obey your commands. You correct me so that I do not go astray. I shall bind this man with an oath. Only hold me upright! If you show goodwill toward the city, we will live in safety for all time to come.

Exit ATHENA.

CHORUS LEADER

Let us go, Adrastus, and take the oath before this man and his city. For their labors on our behalf earn them our honor.

Exit THESEUS with retinue, ADRASTUS, SONS, and CHORUS by Eisodos A.

³⁴ I.e. the Successors in the next generation.

ELECTRA

INTRODUCTION

Euripides and Sophocles each wrote an *Electra*, covering the same portion of Argive myth Aeschylus had treated a generation earlier in his *Libation Bearers*, the second play of his *Oresteia*. One of the hardest of the perennial problems of scholarship is which of the two *Electras* came first. Sophocles' play cannot be dated even approximately, though it is unlikely to be a very early play. Euripides' play was formerly dated with confidence to 413 on the basis of what was thought to be an allusion to the Sicilian expedition in lines 1347-8, but in recent years doubts have arisen whether the allusion is there, and many scholars would now date the play on the basis of its metrical practice to ca. 420. (On meter as evidence for the dates of Euripides' plays, see the general introduction, Volume One, pp. 16-17.) Yet while it would be nice to know whether Euripides first took up the challenge of emulating his great predecessor Aeschylus and Sophocles was stirred by Euripides to a further version, or Sophocles was first and Euripides second, interpretation of our play is not much affected. Aeschylus' play is very much in the background for Euripides, but if he knew Sophocles' *Electra*, his own play shows few if any traces of it.

As noted in the general introduction, part of the biographical tradition regards Euripides as sharply anti-tradi-

EURIPIDES

tional in his artistic aims, and much of nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholarship has followed suit. The strongest case for Euripides as destroyer of tradition could be made on the basis of his *Electra*. It has seemed to many that in this play especially Euripides is bent on killing traditional tragedy and dancing on its grave. Here are the chief points. (1) Euripides goes out of his way to create an atmosphere of untragic realism. He invents the story that Aegisthus and Clytaemestra married Electra off to a poor farmer living in the mountains of the Argolid far from the city. The change of scene makes for homeliness rather than tragic grandeur. (2) He depicts his characters in a decidedly unheroic light. His Electra complains bitterly of her poverty and degradation and engages in what might be called self-martyrdom, wallowing in miseries that could have been partially alleviated. His Orestes is indecisive and cowardly, stealing into the Argolid with an eye always on the exit, not revealing himself to his sister even when he knows that it is safe to do so, needing to have his resolve strengthened by Electra. (3) Apollo's oracle, which had ordered Orestes to take revenge on his father's murderers, is shown to have disastrous results, and even Castor, despite qualms about criticizing Apollo, calls it "unwise." (4) At one point, in the notorious lines 518-44, Euripides goes out of his way to mock Aeschylus. When the old retainer of Agamemnon comes on, the man who will eventually recognize Orestes, he reports that he has seen footprints and a lock of hair at Agamemnon's tomb, thinks they may be those of Orestes, and invites Electra to compare her own hair and footprints with them and to think whether she could recognize her brother by some garment of his that she herself wove. These are the three signs, hair, foot-

ELECTRA

print, and weaving, that help to effect the recognition in Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers*. Electra pours commonsense scorn on all three, and Orestes is finally recognized by a scar he received in childhood. It looks as if Euripides is engaged in making fun of his great predecessor and in the process ruining whatever tragic seriousness his own play still possessed.

It may not be Euripides but that prolific author Anonymous who is responsible for the last of these features. Lines 518-44 are not only destructive in the manner described above but also intrusive in other ways that suggest they are a later addition, and there is a strong case for excision, first made by August Mau in 1877, seconded by Eduard Fraenkel in 1950, and restated by M. L. West in 1980. (I summarize the evidence and add new grounds in my article of 1989.) As for the other items, there is more than one way to look at Euripides' plot innovations and the way he has portrayed his characters, both human and divine.

Euripides' big innovation is Electra's nominal marriage to the Farmer and the consequent shift of the action of the play from the palace of the Atridae to a humble cottage in the hills of the Argolid. Why does he make this change, which so essentially shapes his story? Do the deeds of this story necessarily suffer a diminution in importance or tragic grandeur by being enacted against this backdrop? There is the best of precedents for a drama of return and revenge taking place in such a venue: Homer's *Odyssey*, a large part of which takes place in the hut of the swineherd Eumaeus. When an absent hero returns home to regain his rightful inheritance and punish usurpers, as both Odysseus and Orestes are doing, one way of showing their legitimacy is to contrast the common folk like Eumaeus, who

EURIPIDES

are loyal to their absent lord, with the nobly born but arrogant usurpers. Aeschylus too makes use of this, for one of the homeliest characters in Greek tragedy is surely his Cilissa, who comes out lamenting that all her labor on Orestes—including washing his diapers—has been lost. Neither she nor the Chorus of slaves has acquiesced in the new regime, and they play an important role in the revenge.

In much the same way the common people in Euripides' play are shown to be on Orestes' side: the Farmer whose loyalty to Agamemnon and Orestes leads him to connive in a sham marriage with Electra; the Old Man, Agamemnon's old tutor, who ransacks his cupboards to bring food for Electra's guests and takes a large part in the plot against the usurpers; and even the anonymous attendants of Aegisthus, who welcome Orestes when they learn he is their rightful lord. The mythical shape of the plot is as visible here in the countryside as when the story is enacted before a palace, and new mythical connections become possible as well. The Chorus, for instance, sing of the arrival of the rustic god Pan in Argos, bringing a golden lamb to Atreus as the sign of his rightful kingship. Just a few lines earlier the audience had seen another rustic arrive, and he too was burdened with a lamb offered to a rightful king. Tragedy is most commonly enacted before a palace, as epic most commonly on a battlefield, but either can on occasion adopt a different location without ceasing to be itself.

Orestes has struck some critics of the play as deliberately sub-heroic, especially in his vacillation and indecisiveness, and the conclusion is drawn that he is a caricature of the more traditional Orestes of Aeschylus. One piece of

ELECTRA

evidence is particularly strong: the fact that, although he knows early on who Electra is and learns that the women of the Chorus are friendly and will keep any secrets entrusted to them, he nevertheless does not reveal his identity. It must be noted in general, however, that the essential thing about the Orestes story is that a young man is placed in an untenable position and confronted with an impossible choice. Hesitation and indecisiveness are inextricably bound up in the role, and an Orestes who exhibited a non-sense, take-charge attitude toward the matricide would have been quite untraditional. In Aeschylus, Orestes hesitates and has to have his resolution strengthened by the intervention of Pylades. Euripides means his audience to view the deed of matricide in a rather more tragic light than in Aeschylus, so that it is natural that one at least of the pair should exhibit hesitation. Orestes' hesitation even to reveal himself is harder to judge. No one comments on it one way or another in the play, and it may be that Euripides, who intended the Old Man to have a role not only in the murder plot but also in the recognition, has simply not bothered to motivate Orestes' silence. If we wish to supply motivation for him, we should note Orestes' stated purpose (100-1): "so that I may join with her, gain her as my accomplice in the murder, and learn reliably how matters stand inside the city." We might well imagine that, once he has been apprised of his sister's situation, he sees clearly that he can expect little help from her or her husband or, living as they do cut off from the city, any information from them about the situation in the palace. It may be that Orestes decides he must assess the situation more fully before committing himself, as a revelation would commit him, to action.

EURIPIDES

Euripides' *Electra*, though portrayed differently from either Aeschylus' or Sophocles', should not be judged as harshly as some critics have done. Her marriage to the Farmer really is a kind of social death, and the view that Aegisthus has committed an outrage against her in this is no private sense of grievance peculiar to her—evidence of snobbery or the like—but shared, among others, by the Farmer himself. And her refusal to borrow clothes from the Chorus and her insistence on carrying water for her nominal husband are less plausibly to be seen as psychologically interesting "self-martyrdom" than as refusal to come to terms with and make the best of the new order of things, a refusal also exhibited by Sophocles' *Electra*.

The divine ordering of events is visible throughout the action. Orestes is guided by the oracle to come to Argos in secret, as in other versions of the story. He finds his sister, a recognition is effected, and they plot to kill the usurpers. In Aeschylus, success depends upon a combination of resourcefulness and fortunate circumstance. Orestes gains entry into the palace by bringing news of his own death. By good fortune, Clytaemestra sends her servant Cilissa to tell Aegisthus, asking him to come with his bodyguard. Cilissa, grieving at the news of her charge's death, pours out her grief to the Chorus. They, knowing how important it is that Aegisthus arrive without his bodyguard, alter the message, telling him to come alone.

Euripides' play keeps the same elements of resourcefulness and luck. (Compare the Old Man's formulation in line 610.) But he has given much greater scope to luck. *Electra* lives out in the country, not in the palace, and it is explicitly said by the Old Man that it will be impossible for Orestes even to enter the city. Orestes has a price on his

ELECTRA

head, and the guards are on the lookout for him. But by good fortune Aegisthus is sacrificing to the Nymphs in the countryside. It will be a simple matter, the Old Man says, for Orestes and Pylades to get themselves invited to the feast and there to watch for their chance. In the event, everything goes splendidly. Orestes waits for the moment when no one has a weapon nearby and kills Aegisthus with a sacrificial cleaver. (Some scholars criticize him for this, but captiously: there is no chance for a fair fight, and stealth is the only route to success.) And though the two young men are bravely prepared to fight against a band of slaves, it does not prove necessary to do so. As for Clytaemestra, who cannot be killed at the same time, Electra's resourcefulness assures that she will be on her way to the cottage before she can learn the news of her husband's death.

Euripides follows Aeschylus too in sharply distinguishing between the murder of Aegisthus and that of Clytaemestra. The first brings unmixed joy to the two principals; the second is matricide, and however much Clytaemestra has deserved to die, death of a mother at the hands of her own children cannot be the occasion of rejoicing but only of horror. It is of the essence of the Orestes story that the matricide should be tragic, embodying a conflict between the duty to avenge one's father and the duty to honor one's mother. In both Aeschylus and Euripides the horror of the deed is brought into sharp focus, in Aeschylus by Orestes' incipient madness as he sees the Erinyes, in Euripides by the horror that comes over the agents after their deed. In both plays there will be consequences for Orestes in the pursuit of the Erinyes. In both, these consequences are

EURIPIDES

only temporary, and after a harrowing pursuit and a trial in Athens Orestes wins his freedom and has his fortunes restored.

Much is often made of the criticism of Apollo by Castor at the end of the play. Castor twice (1246, 1302) calls Apollo's command to Orestes unwise. But this is not as untraditional as it looks. The oracular command is unwise in that, as Castor points out, it is the right deed done by the wrong persons, and its consequences for Orestes and Electra are horrible. Apollo in tragedy is more than once portrayed as a god who pays insufficient attention to the realities of the mortal condition. (Compare Volume One, introduction to *Alcestis*.) That is his role in Aeschylus too, for in *Eumenides* Apollo takes the untragic view that there is nothing wrong with matricide since the mother is only the carrier of the father's seed. This view is implicitly repudiated by Athena, who thereby restores the tragic element to the story. Apollo's simplistic view of things is wrong. In similar fashion Euripides by the mouth of Castor criticizes Apollo and reasserts the tragic element of Orestes' action, even if tragedy for Orestes does not, in the great scheme of Zeus, have the last word.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Editions

- J. D. Denniston (Oxford, 1939).
- M. Cropp (Warminster, 1988).
- G. Basta Donzelli (Leipzig, 1995).

ELECTRA

Literary Criticism

- G. Basta Donzelli, *Studio sull' Elettra di Euripide* (Catania, 1978).
- M. Cropp, "Heracles, Electra and the Odyssey," in M. Cropp et al., edd., *Greek Tragedy and Its Legacy: Essays Presented to D. J. Conacher* (Calgary, 1986), pp. 187-99.
- D. Kovacs, "Castor in Euripides' *Electra*," *CQ* 35 (1985), 306-14.
- "Where is Aegisthus' Head?" *CP* 37 (1987), 139-41.
- "Euripides, *Electra* 518-44: Further Doubts about Genuineness," *BICS* 36 (1989), 67-78.
- M. Kubo, "The Norm of Myth: Euripides' *Electra*," *HSCP* 71 (1966), 15-31.
- W. Steidle, *Studien zum antiken Drama* (Munich, 1968), pp. 63-95.
- M. L. West, "Tragica IV," *BICS* 27 (1980), 9-22.

Dramatis Personae

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| ΑΥΤΟΥΡΓΟΣ | FARMER, Electra's nominal husband |
| ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ | ELECTRA, daughter of Agamemnon and Clytaemestra |
| ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ | ORESTES, exiled son of Agamemnon and Clytaemestra |
| ΧΟΡΟΣ | CHORUS of women of the rural Argolid |
| ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ | OLD MAN |
| ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ | Servant of Orestes as MESSENGER |
| ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ | CLYTAEMESTRA, Queen of Argos |
| ΚΑΣΤΩΡ | CASTOR, deified brother of Clytaemestra |
| Nonspeaking roles: | Pylades, Orestes' friend; Polydeuces, Castor's brother |

A Note on Staging

The *skene* represents the rustic home of the Farmer and Electra. Eisodes A leads to the Farmer's nearby fields and to the city of Argos, Eisodes B to Agamemnon's tomb, the Old Man's house, Aegisthus' country estate, and locations abroad. In front of the acting area there is an altar to Apollo with a statue of the god.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΑΥΤΟΥΡΓΟΣ

- ᾠ γῆς Πελασγῶν ἀρδμός, Ἰνάχου ῥοαί,
ὄθεν ποτ' ἄρας ναυσὶ χιλίαις Ἄρη
ἔς γῆν ἔπλευσε Τρωάδ' Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ.
κτείνας δὲ τὸν κρατοῦντ' ἐν Ἰδαία χθονὶ
5 Πρίαμον ἐλών τε Δαρδάνου κλεινὴν πόλιν
ἀφίκετ' ἐς τόδ' Ἄργος, ὑψηλῶν δ' ἐπὶ
ναῶν ἔθηκε σκῦλα πλείστα βαρβάρων.
κάκεϊ μὲν ἠτύχησεν ἐν δὲ δώμασιν
θνήσκει γυναικὸς πρὸς Κλυταιμῆστρας δόλῳ
10 καὶ τοῦ Θυέστου παιδὸς Αἰγίσθου χερί.
χῶ μὲν παλαιὰ σκῆπτρα Ταντάλου λιπῶν
ὄλωλεν, Αἰγίσθος δὲ βασιλεύει χθονός,
ἄλοχον ἐκείνου Τυνδαρίδα κόρην ἔχων.
οὓς δ' ἐν δόμοισιν ἔλιφ' ὅτ' ἐς Τροίαν ἔπλει,
15 ἄρσενά τ' Ὀρέστην θῆλύ τ' Ἥλέκτρας θάλος,
τὸν μὲν πατρὸς γεραιὸς ἐκκλέπτει τροφεὺς
μέλλοντ' Ὀρέστην χερὸς ὑπ' Αἰγίσθου θανεῖν
Στροφίῳ τ' ἔδωκε Φωκέων ἐς γῆν τρέφειν.

¹ Πελασγῶν Semitelos: παλαιὸν L ἀρδμός Herwerden:
ἄργος L: ὄλβος Semitelos

ELECTRA

Enter from the skene, representing a rustic cottage, a FARMER, Electra's supposed husband.

FARMER

Streams of Inachus, that water the land of the Pelasgians! It was from you that King Agamemnon set forth for war with a thousand ships and sailed to the land of Troy. When he had killed Priam, Troy's ruler, and captured the glorious city of Dardanus, he returned here to Argos, and on our lofty temples he hung the rich spoils of the barbarian. In Troy his fortunes were good, but at home he was treacherously slain by his wife Clytaemestra and by the hand of Thyestes' son, Aegisthus.

Now he has relinquished the ancient scepter of Tantalus and is gone, and Aegisthus rules the land, having married Agamemnon's wife, the daughter of Tyndareus. As for the children he left behind when he sailed to Troy, his son Orestes and his daughter Electra, the old servant who raised Agamemnon snatched Orestes away as Aegisthus was about to kill him, sending him to Strophius in Phocis

⁴ Ἰδαία Elmsley: Ἰλιάδι L

¹⁰ del. Klinkenberg

EURIPIDES

- ἢ δ' ἐν δόμοις ἔμεινεν Ἡλέκτρα πατρός,
 20 ταύτην ἐπειδὴ θαλερὸς εἶχ' ἥβης χρόνος,
 μνηστῆρες ἦτουν Ἑλλάδος πρῶτοι χθονός.
 δείσας δὲ μὴ τῷ παῖδ' ἀριστέων τέκοι
 Ἀγαμέμνονος ποινάτορ', εἶχεν ἐν δόμοις
 Αἰγισθος οὐδ' ἤρμοξε νυμφίῳ τινί.
- 25 ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ τοῦτ' ἦν φόβον πολλοῦ πλέων,
 μὴ τῷ λαθραίως τέκνα γενναίῳ τέκοι,
 κτανεῖν σφε βουλεύσαντος ὠμόφρων ὅμως
 μήτηρ νιν ἐξέσωσεν Αἰγίσθου χερός.
 ἐς μὲν γὰρ ἄνδρα σκῆψιν εἶχ' ὀλωλότα,
 30 παίδων δ' ἔδεισε μὴ φθονηθείη φόνῳ.
 ἐκ τῶνδε δὴ τοιόνδ' ἐμηχανήσατο
 Αἰγισθος· ὃς μὲν γῆς ἀπηλλάχθη φυγὰς
 Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖς, χρυσὸν εἶφ' ὃς ἂν κτάνη,
 ἡμῖν δὲ δὴ δίδωσιν Ἡλέκτραν ἔχειν
- 35 δάμαρτα, πατέρων μὲν Μυκηναίων ἄπο
 γεγῶσιν (οὐ δὴ τοῦτό γ' ἐξελέγχομαι·
 λαμπροὶ γὰρ ἐς γένος γε, χρημάτων δὲ δὴ
 πένητες, ἔνθεν ἠγύγεται ἀπόλλυται),
 ὡς ἀσθενεῖ δούς ἀσθενῆ λάβοι φόβον.
- 40 εἰ γὰρ νιν ἔσχευ ἀξίωμ' ἔχων ἀνὴρ,
 εὐδοντ' ἂν ἐξήγειρε τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονος
 φόνου δίκη τ' ἂν ἦλθεν Αἰγίσθῳ τότε.
 ἦν οὐποθ' ἀνὴρ ὅδε (σύννοιδέ μοι Κύπρις)
 ἦσχυν' ἐν εὐνῇ, παρθένος δ' ἔτ' ἐστὶ δὴ.

²² παῖδ' ἀριστέων Porson: παῖδας Ἀργείων L

ELECTRA

to raise. As regards Electra, who still lived in her father's house, when the ripening season of youth came upon her, suitors, the most illustrious men of Greece, sought her hand. But Aegisthus was afraid she might bear to one of the nobility a son who would avenge Agamemnon's death, and so he kept her in the house and would not give her to a husband.

But even this plan involved the great danger that she might bear children to some nobleman in secret, and so Aegisthus determined to kill her. But her mother, cruel-minded though she was, rescued her from Aegisthus' hand. For as regards the husband she slew she had some excuse,¹ but she feared resentment if she killed her children. As a result, Aegisthus formed the following scheme: he announced a reward for whoever should kill the exiled Orestes, and he gave Electra in marriage to me. I come, to be sure, of good Mycenaean² parentage: no one can fault me here, for as regards ancestry I am distinguished, but I am poor, which brings an end to noble standing. This he did so that if he gave her to a weak man, the fear he felt might also be weak. For if a man of standing had married her, he would have awakened from its slumber the murder of Agamemnon, and punishment might have come thereafter to Aegisthus. To her in bed—Aphrodite is my witness—I have never done dishonor, and she is a virgin still: a sense

¹ Agamemnon sacrificed their daughter Iphigenia on his way to Troy in order to propitiate Artemis.

² Mycenae and Mycenaean are used throughout the play interchangeably with Argos and Argive.

²³ *ποινάτορ* Porson: *-τορας* L

⁴² *ποτέ* Reiske

EURIPIDES

- 45 αἰσχύνομαι γὰρ ὀλβίων ἀνδρῶν τέκνα
 λαβῶν ὑβρίζειν, οὐ κατὰξιος γεγώς.
 στένω δὲ τὸν λόγοισι κηδεύοντ' ἔμοι
 ἄθλιον Ὀρέστην, εἴ ποτ' εἰς Ἄργος μολῶν
 γάμους ἀδελφῆς δυστυχεῖς ἐσόψεται.
- 50 ὅστις δέ μ' εἶναί φησι μῶρον, εἰ λαβῶν
 νέαν ἐς οἴκους παρθένον μὴ θιγγάνω,
 γνώμης πονηροῖς κανόσιν ἀναμετρούμενος
 τὸ σῶφρον ἴστω καὐτὸς αὖ τοιοῦτος ὢν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

- ὦ νύξ μέλαινα, χρυσέων ἄστρων τροφέ,
 55 ἐν ἧ τὸδ' ἄγγος τῷδ' ἐφέδρεῦον κάρα
 φέρουσα πηγὰς ποταμίας μετέρχομαι—
 οὐ δὴ τι χρείας ἐς τοσόνδ' ἀφιγμένη,
 ἀλλ' ὡς ὑβριν δείξωμεν Αἰγίσθου θεοῖς—
 γόους τ' ἀφίημ' αἰθέρ' ἐς μέγαν πατρί.
- 60 ἦ γὰρ πανώλης Τυνδαρίς, μήτηρ ἐμή,
 ἐξέβαλέ μ' οἴκων, χάριτα τιθεμένη πόσει·
 τεκοῦσα δ' ἄλλους παῖδας Αἰγίσθῳ πάρα
 πάρεργ' Ὀρέστην καμὲ ποιεῖται δόμων.

ΑΥΤΟΥΡΓΟΣ

- τί γὰρ τὰδ', ὦ δύστην', ἐμὴν μοχθεῖς χάριν
 65 πόνους ἔχουσα, πρόσθεν εὖ τετραμμένη,
 καὶ ταῦτ' ἐμοῦ λέγοντος οὐκ ἀφίστασαι;

56-8 sic distinxit Radermacher

59 ἀφίημ' Reiske: ἀφίην L

66 ψέγοντος Herwerden

ELECTRA

of honor prevents me from taking the daughter of a wealthy man and committing outrage against her since I am not her equal. I groan also at the thought that poor Orestes, my supposed brother-in-law, should ever come to Argos and see the unlucky marriage his sister has made.

If anyone says I am a fool for taking a young virgin into my house and leaving her untouched, he should know that he measures modest behavior by his own mind's false standards and is himself a fool.

Enter from the skene ELECTRA, carrying a water jug on her head.

ELECTRA

O black night, nurse of the golden stars! In you, carrying this vessel poised on my head, I go to fetch water from a stream—I do this not from need but to show the gods Aegisthus' outrage against me—and utter my laments to the wide heaven for my father to hear! My mother, the accursed daughter of Tyndareus, has cast me out of my house to please her husband. Begetting other children by Aegisthus, she treats Orestes and me as the house's illegitimate offspring.

FARMER

Why, unlucky woman, do you do this work on my account, accepting toils though gently raised before? Why, when I have urged you to, do you not stop?

EURIPIDES

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

- ἐγὼ σ' ἴσον θεοῖσιν ἠγοῦμαι φίλον·
 ἐν τοῖς ἐμοῖς γὰρ οὐκ ἐνύβρισας κακοῖς.
 μεγάλη δὲ θνητοῖς μοῖρα συμφορᾶς κακῆς
 70 ἱατρὸν εὐρεῖν, ὡς ἐγὼ σὲ λαμβάνω.
 δεῖ δὴ με κάκελευστον εἰς ὅσον σθένω
 μόχθου ἴπικουφίζουσαν, ὡς ῥᾶον φέρης,
 συνεκκομίζειν σοι πόρους. ἄλις δ' ἔχεις
 τᾶξωθεν ἔργα· τᾶν δόμοις δ' ἡμᾶς χρεῶν
 75 ἐξευτρεπίζειν. εἰσιόντι δ' ἐργάτη
 θύραθεν ἠδὲ τᾶνδον εὐρίσκειν καλῶς.

ΑΥΤΟΥΡΓΟΣ

- εἴ τοι δοκεῖ σοι, στείχε· καὶ γὰρ οὐ πρόσω
 πηγαὶ μελάθρων τῶνδ'. ἐγὼ δ' ἄμ' ἡμέρα
 βούς εἰς ἀρούρας ἐσβαλὼν σπερῶ γύας.
 80 ἀργὸς γὰρ οὐδεὶς θεοὺς ἔχων ἀνὰ στόμα
 βίον δύναται ἂν ξυλλέγειν ἀνευ πόρου.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

- Πυλάδη, σὲ γὰρ δὴ πρῶτον ἀνθρώπων ἐγὼ
 πιστὸν νομίζω καὶ φίλον ξένον τ' ἐμοί·
 μόνος δ' Ὀρέστην τόνδ' ἐθαύμαζες φίλων,
 85 πράσσονθ' ἂ πράσσω δεῖν ὑπ' Αἰγίσθου παθῶν,
 ὅς μου κατέκτα πατέρα χῆ πανώλεθρος
 μήτηρ. ἀφίγμαι δ' ἐκ θεοῦ μυστηρίων
 Ἄργεῖον οὐδας οὐδενὸς ξυνειδότος,

83 πίστιν Camper cl. A. Pe. 443
 μον

καὶ φίλον] fort. σύννο-

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

I regard you as no less a friend to me than the gods. You did not take advantage of my trouble. For mortals it is a great stroke of fortune to find one to heal their bad luck, as I have found you. So even without any urging from you I must with all my strength help you with your work, lightening your toil so that you may bear it more easily. The tasks you have out of doors are enough. I must look after the indoors. When a laborer comes in from outside, it is pleasant for him to find his house in good order.

FARMER

If that is what you have decided, go. In fact the spring of water is not far from this house. At daybreak I shall take the bullocks to the fields and sow my crops. No idle man, just by talking always of the gods, can scrape together a living without work.

Exit ELECTRA and FARMER by Eisodos A. Enter by Eisodos B ORESTES and Pylades accompanied by two slaves.

ORESTES

Pylades, you are the man I consider above all others to be faithful and a friend and host to me. You alone of my friends honored me, Orestes, though my fortunes are as ill as they are and I endure terrible treatment from Aegisthus, who with my murderous mother killed my father. Leaving the god's secret rites³ I have come to Argive soil unbe-

³ Orestes has come from Apollo's oracular shrine at Delphi.

EURIPIDES

- φόνον φονεῦσι πατρὸς ἀλλάξων ἐμοῦ.
 90 νυκτὸς δὲ τῆσδε πρὸς τάφον μολῶν πατρὸς
 δάκρυνά τ' ἔδωκα καὶ κόμης ἀπηρξάμην
 πυρᾷ τ' ἐπέσφαξ' αἷμα μηλείου φόνου,
 λαθῶν τυράννους οἱ κρατοῦσι τῆσδε γῆς.
 καὶ τειχέων μὲν ἐντὸς οὐ βαίνω πόδα,
 95 δυοῖν δ' ἄμιλλαν ξυντιθεῖς ἀφικόμην
 πρὸς τέρμονας γῆς τῆσδ', ἵν' ἐκβάλω πόδα
 ἄλλην ἐπ' αἶαν, εἴ μέ τις γνοίη σκοπῶν,
 ζητῶν τ' ἀδελφῆν (φασὶ γάρ νιν ἐν γάμοις
 ζευχθεῖσαν οἰκεῖν οὐδὲ παρθένον μένειν),
 100 ὡς συγγένωμαι καὶ φόνου συνεργάτιν
 λάβω τά τ' εἴσω τειχέων σαφῶς μάθω.
 ἵνυ ὄν (ἔω γὰρ λευκὸν ὄμμ' ἀναίρεται)
 ἔξω τρίβου τοῦδ' ἴχνος ἀλλαξώμεθα.
 ἢ γάρ τις ἀροτῆρ ἢ τις οἰκέτις γυνῆ
 105 φανήσεται νῶν, ἦντιν' ἱστορήσομεν
 εἰ τοῦσδε ναίει σύγγονος τόπους ἐμή.
 ἀλλ' εἰσορῶ γὰρ τήνδε πρόσπολόν τινα
 πηγαῖον ἄχθος ἐν κεκαρμένῳ κάρᾳ
 φέρουσαν, ἐζώμεσθα κάκπυθώμεθα
 110 δούλης γυναικός, ἦν τι δεξώμεσθ' ἔπος
 ἐφ' οἴσι, Πυλάδῃ, τήνδ' ἀφίγμεθα χθόνα.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

στρ. α

σύντειν' ὦδᾳ ποδὸς ὀρμάν' ὦ,

⁹⁶ πόδα Dobree: ποδὶ L

ELECTRA

knownst to any, to pay back my father's murderers with murder. This night, escaping the notice of those who rule this land, I have been to my father's tomb and given him tears and an offering of my hair, and upon his grave I shed the blood of a sheep. I do not set foot inside the city but have come to the border of this land, blending two competing aims: to make my escape to another country if one of the guards should recognize me,⁴ and also to find my sister (for they say that she is married and no longer a virgin), so that I may join with her, gain her as my accomplice in the murder, and learn reliably how things stand inside the city.

So now, since the gleaming face of dawn is rising, let us step aside from this path. Some farmer or slave woman will come by here, and we will ask whether my sister lives in these parts.

Orestes and Pylades and their slaves conceal themselves behind the altar of Apollo. Enter ELECTRA by Eisodos A.

Look! I see a slave woman here carrying her burden of water on her close-cropped head. Let us crouch down, Pylades, and listen to her on the chance that we might catch some word to further the purpose that brought us to this land.

ELECTRA

Hasten the tread of your steps with song,

⁴ Or "if someone should know me by sight." In either case Orestes is aware that a reward has been offered for his death.

101 λάβω τά τ' Denniston: λαβὼν τά γ' L

112, 127 ᾠδῆ Willink: ᾠρα L

ἔμβα ἔμβα κατακλαίουσα.
 ἰώ μοί μοι.

115 ἐγενόμαν Ἀγαμέμνονος
 καί μ' ἔτικτε Κλυταιμῆστρα
 στυγνὰ Τυνδάρεω κόρα,
 κικλήσκουσι δέ μ' ἀθλίαν
 Ἥλέκτραν πολιῆται.

120 φεῦ φεῦ σχετλίων πόνων
 καὶ στυγεράς ζόας.
 ὦ πάτερ, σὺ δ' ἐν Ἀΐδα
 κείσαι σᾶς ἀλόχου σφαγαῖς
 Αἰγίσθου τ', Ἀγάμεμνον.

μεσφδ. α

125 ἴθι τὸν αὐτὸν ἔγειρε γόον,
 ἄναγε πολῦδακρυν ἄδονάν.

ἀντ. α

σύντειν' ὦδᾶ ποδὸς ὄρμάν ὦ,
 ἔμβα ἔμβας κατακλαίουσα.
 ἰώ μοί μοι.

130 τίνα πόλιν, τίνα δ' οἶκον, ὦ
 τλάμον σύγγον', ἀλατεύεις
 οἰκτρὰν ἐν θαλάμοις λιπῶν
 πατρώοις ἐπὶ συμφοραῖς
 ἀλγίσταισιν ἀδελφάν;

135 ἔλλθοις δὲ πόνων ἐμοὶ
 τᾶ μελέα λυτήρ,

113, 128 fort. ἔμβα κατακλαίουσ', ἔμβα

ELECTRA

O march on, march on in tears!

Ah me!

By birth I am Agamemnon's child,
and my mother is Clytaemestra,
hateful daughter of Tyndareus,
and the citizens call me
Electra the unfortunate.

Alas for my cruel toil,
alas for my hateful life!

Father Agamemnon, you lie in the Underworld
slain by your wife
and by Aegisthus!

Come, raise the same lament once more,
stir up the delight that comes of much weeping!

Hasten the tread of your steps with song,
O march on, march on in tears!

Ah me!

In what city, what house,
unhappy brother, are you a wandering exile,
leaving your pitiable sister
in her father's halls
amidst grievous misfortune?

Come to free
me the unfortunate from trouble

115 Ἀγαμέμνονος Seidler: Ἄγ-κούρα L

123 σφαγαίς Porson: σφαγείς L

131 σύγγον' ἀλατεύεις Hartung: σύγγονε λατρεύεις L

135 δὲ Hermann: τῶνδε L: τῶνδ' ἔλθε Willink

EURIPIDES

ὦ Ζεῦ Ζεῦ, πατρί θ' αἱμάτων
 αἰσχίστων ἐπίκουρος, Ἄρ-
 γει κέλσας πόδ' ἀλάταν.

μεσφδ. β

140 θές τόδε τεῦχος ἐμᾶς ἀπὸ κρατὸς ἐ-
 λουῖσ', ἵνα πατρὶ γόους νυχίους
 ὑπ' ὄρθρον βοάσω·

στρ. β

<ἰὼ μοί μοι>
 ἰαχοῦσ' Ἄϊδα μέλος
 σοί, πάτερ,
 κάτω γὰς ἐνέπω †γόους†
 145 οἷς αἰεὶ τὸ κατ' ἡμαρ
 διέπομαι, κατὰ μὲν φίλαν
 ὄνυχι τεμνομένα δέραν
 χέρα τε κρᾶτ' ἐπὶ κούριμον
 τιθεμένα θανάτῳ σῶ.

μεσφδ. γ

150 ἔ ἔ· δρῦπτε κάρα·
 οἶα δέ τις κύκνος ἀχέτας
 ποταμίους παρὰ χεύμασιν
 πατέρα φίλτατον <ἀγ>καλεῖ,

138 αἰσχίστων Seidler: ἐχθίστων L 142 ὑπ' ὄρθρον βοά-
 σω Willink: ἐπορθ*βοάσω L <ἰὼ μοί μοι> Willink

143 ἰαχοῦσ' Diggle: ἰαχάν L Ἄϊδα μέλος Reiske: αἰοιδὰν
 μέλος Ἄϊδα L σοί, πάτερ Hartung: π- σ- L

144 κάτω Seidler: κατὰ L γόκων θρήνους Willink

146 λείβομαι Wecklein, Herwerden

ELECTRA

(O Zeus, Zeus!) and avenge your father
for his shameful murder,
setting your exiled foot on Argive soil!

A female slave enters to take the water jar indoors.

Take this vessel from my head and set it down
so that I may raise my night cry
before the dawn to my father!

<Ah, me, ah, me!>

Shouting a tune of death
to you, father,
beneath the earth I sing the laments
to which ceaselessly day by day
I devote myself, tearing my own throat
with my nails
and striking my shorn head with my hand
in grief at your murder!

Ah, ah, strike the head!
As the singing swan⁵
upon the riverbank
calls upon its dear father

⁵ The usual conceit, that the swan sings at the approach of his own death (Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1444–5, Euripides, *Heracles* 110–1), is here altered, perhaps in imitation of the familiar idea (e.g. Sophocles, *Electra* 107, 147–9) that the song of the nightingale is Procne lamenting her dead children.

148 ἐπὶ κούριμον Barnes: ἀποκούριμον L

153 <ἀγ>καλεῖ Hermann

- ὀλόμενον δολίοις βρόχων
 155 ἔρκεσιν, ὡς σὲ τὸν ἄθλιον,
 πᾶτερ, ἐγὼ κατακλαίομαι,
 λουτρὰ πανύσταθ' ὑδρανάμενον χροῖ
 κοίτῃ ἐν οἰκτροτάτῃ θανάτου.

ἀντ. β

- ἰὼ μοί μοι
 160 πικρᾶς μὲν πελέκεως τομᾶς
 σᾶς, πᾶτερ,
 πικρᾶς δ' ἐκ Τροίας ὁδοῦ βουλᾶς·
 οὐ μίτραις σε γυνὰ <σὰ>
 δέξατ' οὐδ' ἐπὶ στεφάνοις,
 ξίφεσι δ' ἀμφιτόμοις λυγρὰν
 165 Αἰγίσθῳ λῶβαν θεμένα
 δόλιον ἔσχευ ἀκοίταν.

στρ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- Ἄγαμέμνονος ᾧ κόρα, ἦλυθον, Ἥλέκτρα,
 ποτὶ σὰν ἀγρότειραν αὐλάν.
 ἔμολέ τις ἔμολεν γαλακτοπότας ἀνῆρ
 170 Μυκηναῖος οὐριβάτας,
 ἀγγέλλει δ' ὅτι νῦν τριταί-
 αν καρύσσουσιν θυσίαν
 Ἀργεῖοι, πᾶσαι δὲ παρ' Ἥ-
 ραν μέλλουσιν παρθενικαὶ στείχειν.

¹⁶¹ βουλᾶς] πανλᾶς Willink

ELECTRA

slain in the guileful snare of meshes,
so I mourn for you,
my unhappy father.
You bathed yourself for the last time
in the pitiable place where you lay down in death.

Ah, me, ah, me,
how cruel the cut of the axe
that slew you, father,
how cruel the plot after your journey from Troy!
It was not with a crown that your wife
greeted you or with the garlands of victory:
with the two-edged sword she worked
for Aegisthus' sake grim outrage
and won as her mate that man of guile.

Enter a group of Argive women as CHORUS by Eisodes B.

CHORUS

Electra, daughter of Agamemnon,
I have come to your rustic abode.
There came, there came a drinker of milk,
a man of Mycenae, dweller in the mountains,
and he brought the news that for two days hence
the Argives are now proclaiming
a feast, and all the unmarried girls
will go to the temple of Hera.

162 <σὰ> Seidler

165 Αἰγίσθῳ Bothe: -ov L

EURIPIDES

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

- 175 οὐκ ἐπ' ἀγλαΐαις, φίλαι,
 θυμὸν οὐδ' ἐπὶ χρυσέοις
 ὄρμοις ἐκπεπόταμαι
 τάλαιν', οὐδ' ἐνστάσα χοροῖς
 Ἀργείαις ἅμα νύμφαις
- 180 εἰλικτὸν κρούσω πόδ' ἐμόν.
 δάκρυσι νυχεύω, δακρύων δέ μοι μέλει
 δειλαία τὸ κατ' ἡμαρ.
 σκέψαι μου πιναρὰν κόμαν
- 185 καὶ τρύχη τάδ' ἐμῶν πέπλων,
 εἰ πρέποντ' Ἀγαμέμνονος
 κούρα τῆ βασιλείᾳ
 τῆ Τροίᾳ θ', ἃ' μοῦ πατέρος
 μέμναταί ποθ' ἀλοῦσα.

ἀντ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- 190 μεγάλη θεός· ἀλλ' ἴθι καὶ παρ' ἐμοῦ χρῆσαι
 πολύπηνα φάρεα δύναι
 χρύσεά τε χάρισιν προσθήματ' ἀγλαΐας.
 δοκέῖς τοῖσι σοῖς δακρύοις
 μὴ τιμῶσα θεοὺς κρατή-
- 195 σειν ἐχθρῶν; οὗτοι στοναχαῖς
 ἀλλ' εὐχαῖσι θεοὺς σεβί-
 ζουσ' ἔξεις εὐαμερίαν, ᾧ παῖ.

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

My heart is not aflutter, my friends,
at feasts or gold necklaces,
unhappy woman that I am,
nor shall I take my stand in a chorus
together with the wives of Argos
to whirl my feet about and strike the ground.
In tears my nights are spent, and tears
for me in my wretched state are the burden of my days.
Look at my filthy hair
and these tatters that are my clothes,
see if these befit a princess,
Agamemnon's daughter,
and Troy, which remembers
that my father once captured her!

CHORUS

Great is the goddess. Come, then, and borrow from me
robes of thick weave to put on
and gold to add to the pleasures of the feast.
Do you think that by your tears alone,
giving no honor to the gods,
you can best your enemies? If you worship the gods
not with groans but with prayers
you will have prosperity, my child.

178 οὐδ' ἐνστάσα Diggle: οὐδὲ στάσα L χοροῖς Seidler:
χοροῦς L

186 εἰ πρέποντ' Reiske: εἴ πέρ ποτ' L

187 κούρα τᾶ Reiske: κούρας τὰ L

191 φάρε' αὐ πολύπηνα vel πολύπηνα φάρεα <τε> Willink

192 χάρισω Musgrave: χάρισαι L

EURIPIDES

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

- οὐδείς θεῶν ἐνοπᾶς κλύει
 τᾶς δυσδαίμονος, οὐ παλαι-
 200 ὦν πατρὸς σφαγιασμῶν.
 οἴμοι τοῦ καταφθιμένου
 τοῦ τε ζῶντος ἀλάτα,
 ὅς που γὰν ἄλλαν κατέχει,
 205 μέλεος ἀλαίνων ποτὶ θῆσσαν ἐστίαν,
 τοῦ κλεινοῦ πατρὸς ἐκφύς.
 αὐτὰ δ' ἐν χερνήσι δόμοις
 ναίω ψυχὰν τακομένα
 δωμάτων φυγὰς πατρίων
 210 οὐρείας ἀν' ἐρίπνας.
 μάτηρ δ' ἐν λέκτροις φονίους
 ἄλλω σύγγαμος οἰκεῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πολλῶν κακῶν Ἑλλησιν αἰτίαν ἔχει
 σῆς μητρὸς Ἑλένη σύγγονος δόμοις τε σοῖς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

- 215 οἴμοι, γυναῖκες, ἐξέβην θρηνημάτων.
 ξένοι τινὲς παρ' οἶκον οἶδ' ἐφεστίους
 εὐνὰς ἔχοντες ἐξανίστανται λόχον·
 φυγῇ σὺ μὲν κατ' οἶμον, ἐς δόμους δ' ἐγὼ
 φῶτας κακούργους ἐξαλύξωμεν ποδί.

209 φυγὰς π- Seidler: π- φυγὰς L

210 ἀν' Musgrave: ναίουσ' L

215 θρηνήμασιν Willink

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

None of the gods pays heed
to this luckless woman's prayer
or to my father's murder long ago.
Alas for him who is slain
and for him who lives as an exile!
He dwells, I am sure, in another land,
a wretched wanderer to the hearths of laborers,
though he is the son of his glorious father.
And I myself in a toiler's cottage
dwell heart-worn,
exiled from my father's house,
on a mountain plot of ground,
while my mother lying in a blood-stained bed
lives as wife to another.

CHORUS LEADER

Greece and your house can blame your mother's sister
Helen for many woes.

Orestes and Pylades appear from hiding.

ELECTRA

Ah, women! I have left off lamenting! Strangers lying in
wait at the altar near my house are emerging from ambush!
Let's flee these criminals, you along the path and I into the
house!

Orestes grasps Electra by the wrist.

EURIPIDES

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

220 μέν', ὦ τάλαινα· μὴ τρέσῃς ἐμὴν χέρα.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ Φοῖβ' Ἄπολλον, προσπίτνω σε μὴ θανεῖν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἄλλους κτάνοιμι μάλλον ἐχθίους σέθεν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἄπελθε, μὴ ψαῦ' ὦν σε μὴ ψαύειν χρεών.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅτου θίγοιμ' ἂν ἐνδικώτερον.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

225 καὶ πῶς ξιφήρης πρὸς δόμοις λοχᾶς ἐμοῖς;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

μείνας' ἄκουσον, καὶ τάχ' οὐκ ἄλλως ἐρεῖς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἔστηκα· πάντως δ' εἰμὶ σή· κρείσσω γὰρ εἶ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἤκω φέρων σοι σοῦ κασιγνήτου λόγους.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ φίλτατ', ἄρα ζῶντος ἢ τεθνηκότος;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

230 ζῆ· πρῶτα γάρ σοι τὰγάθ' ἀγγέλλειν θέλω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

εὐδαιμονοίης μισθὸν ἠδίστων λόγων.

ELECTRA

ORESTES

Stay, unhappy woman! Do not fear my touch!

ELECTRA

O Phoebus Apollo, I pray I may not be killed!

ORESTES

May I kill others, much more my enemies than you are!

ELECTRA

Be gone! Do not touch what is not right for you to touch!

ORESTES

There is no one I may touch with greater right.

ELECTRA

Why then, sword in hand, do you wait near my house?

ORESTES

Stay and listen to me, and you will soon agree with me.

ELECTRA

I stay. I am yours in any case, for you are stronger.

ORESTES

I have come with word of your brother.

ELECTRA

O dearest of messengers, is he alive or dead?

ORESTES

Alive: it is the good news I wish to give you first.

ELECTRA

Good luck be yours in payment for your most welcome words!

EURIPIDES

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

κοινή δίδωμι τοῦτο νῶν ἀμφοῖν ἔχειν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ποῦ γῆς ὁ τλήμων τλήμονας φυγὰς ἔχων;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐχ ἓνα νομίζων φθείρεται πόλεως νόμον.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

235 οὐ που σπανίζων τοῦ καθ' ἡμέραν βίου;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἔχει μέν, ἀσθενῆς δὲ δὴ φεύγων ἀνὴρ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

λόγον δὲ δὴ τίν' ἦλθες ἐκ κείνου φέρων;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

εἰ ζῆς, ὅπως τε ζῶσα συμφορᾶς ἔχεις.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐκουν ὄρᾶς μου πρῶτον ὡς ξηρὸν δέμας;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

240 λύπαις γε συντετηκός, ὥστε με στένειν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

καὶ κράτα πλόκαμόν τ' ἐσκυθισμένον ξυρῶ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

δάκνει σ' ἀδελφὸς ὃ τε θανὼν ἴσως πατήρ.

237 fort. post h. v. lac. indicanda, e.g. <Ορ. ἐς τήνδε γῆν μ' ἔπεμψ' ἵν' ἐξεύρω σαφῶς . . . Ηλ. τὰ ποῖα; πάντ' ἄν, εἴ τι γιγνώσκω, μάθοις.>

ELECTRA

ORESTES

May your wish hold good for the two of us in common!

ELECTRA

Where on earth is the poor man in his unhappy exile?

ORESTES

He goes about in misery, with no single city as his home.

ELECTRA

Surely he is not in want of daily necessities?

ORESTES

He has enough, but the rub is that an exile is powerless.

ELECTRA

But what message do you bring from him?

ORESTES

Are you alive? he asks. And if living, what are your fortunes?

ELECTRA

Can you not see yourself how withered my body is?

ORESTES

Yes, it is worn down by grief: I weep for you.

ELECTRA

And the hair of my head is cropped close with a sharp blade.

ORESTES

No doubt you grieve for your brother and your dead father.

238 ὅπως Elmsley: ὅπου L

240 γε Heath: τε L

EURIPIDES

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οἶμοι τί γάρ μοι τῶνδέ γ' ἐστὶ φίλτερον;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

φεῦ φεῦ· τί δ' αὖ σοῦ σῶ κασιγνήτῳ δοκεῖς;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

245 ἀπὸν ἐκείνος, οὐ παρών, ἡμῖν φίλος.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἐκ τοῦ δὲ ναίεις ἐνθάδ' ἄστεως ἐκάς;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐγῆμάμεσθ', ὦ ξεῖνε, θανάσιμον γάμον.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ᾧμωξ' ἀδελφὸν σόν. Μυκηναίων τίνι;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐχ ὧ πατήρ μ' ἤλπιζεν ἐκδώσειν ποτέ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

250 εἶφ', ὡς ἀκούσας σῶ κασιγνήτῳ λέγω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐν τοῖσδ' ἐκείνου τηλορὸς ναίω δόμοις.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

σκαφεύς τις ἢ βουφορβὸς ἄξιος δόμων.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πένης ἀνὴρ γενναῖος ἔς τ' ἔμ' εὖσεβής.

244 δ' αὖ σοῦ Seidler: δαὶ σὺ L

251 ἐκείνος . . . ναίει Broadhead

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

Ah me! What is dearer to me than they are?

ORESTES

Ah yes! And what is dearer to your brother, do you think, than you are?

ELECTRA

To me he is an absent, not a present, friend.

ORESTES

Why do you live here, so far from the city?

ELECTRA

I have made a marriage, stranger, a marriage that is like death.

ORESTES

Ah! I groan for your brother. What man of Mycenae is it?

ELECTRA

Not the man to whom my father expected to marry me.

ORESTES

Tell me, so that I may hear and report it to your brother.

ELECTRA

I dwell far apart here in this man's house.

ORESTES

A ditchdigger or a cowherd would be a worthy tenant of this dwelling.

ELECTRA

The man is poor but noble and acts piously toward me.

EURIPIDES

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἢ δ' εὐσέβεια τίς πρόσεστι σῶ πόσει;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

255 οὐπόποτ' εὐνήσ τῆς ἐμῆς ἔτλη θιγαῖν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἄγνευμ' ἔχων τι θέιον ἢ σ' ἀπαξιῶν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

γονέας ὑβρίζειν τοὺς ἐμοὺς οὐκ ἤξιον.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

καὶ πῶς γάμον τοιοῦτον οὐχ ἦσθη λαβῶν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐ κύριον τὸν δόντα μ' ἠγείται, ξένε.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

260 ξυνῆκ'. Ὀρέστη μή ποτ' ἐκτίεση δίκην.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τοῦτ' αὐτὸ ταρβῶν πρὸς δὲ καὶ σῶφρων ἔφν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

φεῦ·

γενναῖον ἄνδρ' ἔλεξας, εὖ τε δραστήον.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

εἰ δὴ ποθ' ἤξει γ' ἐς δόμους ὁ νῦν ἀπών.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

μήτηρ δέ σ' ἠ τεκοῦσα ταῦτ' ἠνέσχετο;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

265 γυναικες ἀνδρῶν, ᾧ ξέν', οὐ παίδων φίλαι.

ELECTRA

ORESTES

This piety your husband has, what is it?

ELECTRA

Never yet has he brought himself to come to my bed.

ORESTES

Keeping some vow of purity, or thinking you unfit?

ELECTRA

He did not think it fit to commit an outrage against my parents.

ORESTES

But how is it he was not glad to make such a marriage?

ELECTRA

He thinks the man who gave me to him had no authority.

ORESTES

I see: he is afraid Orestes may punish him.

ELECTRA

Yes, he is afraid of that. But he is also naturally self-controlled.

ORESTES

Ah, what a noble man you describe! We must treat him well.

ELECTRA

Yes, if my absent brother returns home.

ORESTES

But did your own mother permit this to happen?

ELECTRA

Women, stranger, love their husbands, not their children.

EURIPIDES

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τίνος δέ σ' οὔνεχ' ὕβρισ' Αἴγισθος τάδε;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τεκείν μ' ἐβούλετ' ἀσθενῆ, τοιῶδε δούς.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὡς δῆθε παῖδας μὴ τέκους ποινάτορας;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τοιαῦτ' ἐβούλευσ' ὦν ἐμοὶ δοίη δίκην.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

270 οἶδεν δέ σ' οὔσαν παρθένον μητρὸς πόσις;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐκ οἶδε· σιγῇ τοῦθ' ὑφαιρούμεσθά νιν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

αἶδ' οὔν φίλαι σοι τούσδ' ἀκούουσιν λόγους;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ᾧστε στέγειν γε τὰμὰ καὶ σ' ἔπη καλῶς.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τί δῆτ' Ὀρέστης πρὸς τάδ', Ἄργος ἦν μόλη;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

275 ἤρου τόδ'; αἰσχρόν γ' εἶπας· οὐ γὰρ νῦν ἀκμή;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἐλθὼν δέ δῆ πῶς φονέας ἂν κτάνοι πατρός;

274 τάδ' Camper: τόδ' L ἂν μόλοι Winnington-Ingram:
sed fort. post h. v. lac. indicanda

ELECTRA

ORESTES

But why did Aegisthus abuse you so?

ELECTRA

He wanted me to bear powerless children and so gave me to a powerless husband.

ORESTES

So that you might not bear sons to avenge you?

ELECTRA

That was his plan. May I be able to pay him back for it!

ORESTES

Does your mother's husband know that you are a virgin?

ELECTRA

No: we have kept this knowledge from him.

ORESTES

Then these women⁶ who are listening here are friends?

ELECTRA

Yes, and they will keep your words and mine a firm secret.

ORESTES

What will Orestes do about this if he comes to Argos?

ELECTRA

Can you ask this? Shame! Is it not high time?

ORESTES

But if he does come, how could he kill his father's murderers?

⁶ The Chorus.

EURIPIDES

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τολμῶν ὑπ' ἐχθρῶν οἷ' ἔτολμήθη ποτέ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἦ καὶ μετ' αὐτοῦ μητέρ' ἂν τλαίης κτανεῖν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ταὐτῷ γε πελέκει τῷ πατήρ ἀπόλετο.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

280 λέγω τάδ' αὐτῷ, καὶ βέβαια τὰπὸ σοῦ;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

θάνοιμι μητρὸς αἰμ' ἐπισφάξασ' ἐμῆς.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

φεῦ·

εἴθ' ἦν Ὀρέστης πλησίον κλύων τάδε.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἄλλ', ὦ ξέν', οὐ γνοίην ἂν εἰσιδοῦσά νιν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

νέα γάρ, οὐδὲν θαῦμ', ἀπεζεύχθης νέου.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

285 εἰς ἂν μόνος νιν τῶν ἐμῶν γνοίη φίλων.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἄρ' ὄν λέγουσιν αὐτὸν ἐκκλέψαι φόνου;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πατρός γε παιδαγωγὸς ἀρχαῖος γέρων.

277 ποτέ Nauck: πατήρ L . 282 κλύειν Camper

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

By showing the same boldness his enemies once showed.

ORESTES

Would you also have the hardihood to kill your mother with his help?

ELECTRA

Yes, with the same ax with which my father met his death!

ORESTES

Shall I tell him this, and that he can rely on you?

ELECTRA

When I have shed my mother's blood, then let me die!

ORESTES

Ah me! If only Orestes were nearby to hear this!

ELECTRA

Well, I would not recognize him by sight, stranger.

ORESTES

No wonder: you and he were young when you were separated.

ELECTRA

Only one of my friends would know him.

ORESTES

Is this the man they say snatched him from death?

ELECTRA

Yes: he was my father's tutor and is now an old man.

EURIPIDES

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὁ κατθανῶν δὲ σὸς πατήρ τύμβου κυρεῖ;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἔκυρσεν ὡς ἔκυρσεν, ἐκβληθεὶς δόμων.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

- 290 οἴμοι, τόδ' οἶον εἶπας· αἴσθησις γὰρ οὖν
 291 καὶ τῶν θυραίων πημάτων δάκνει βροτούς.
 294 ἔνεστι δ' οἶκτος ἀμαθία μὲν οὐδαμού,
 295 σοφοῖσι δ' ἀνδρῶν· καὶ γὰρ οὐδ' ἀζήμιον
 296 γνώμην ἐνεῖναι τοῖς σοφοῖς λίαν σοφῆν.
 292 λέξον δ', ἔν' εἰδὼς σῶ κασιγνήτῳ φέρω
 293 λόγους ἀτερπεῖς ἀλλ' ἀναγκαίους κλυεῖν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- 297 καγὼ τὸν αὐτὸν τῶδ' ἔρον ψυχῆς ἔχω.
 πρόσω γὰρ ἄστεως οὔσα τὰν πόλει κακὰ
 οὐκ οἶδα, νῦν δὲ βούλομαι καγὼ μαθεῖν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

- 300 λέγοιμ' ἄν, εἰ χρή (χρῆ δὲ πρὸς φίλον λέγειν),
 τύχας βαρείας τὰς ἐμὰς κάμου πατρός.
 ἐπεὶ δὲ κινεῖς μῦθον, ἱκετεύω, ξένε,
 ἄγγελλ' Ὀρέστη τὰμὰ κακέινον κακά,
 πρῶτον μὲν οἴοις ἐν πέπλοις ἀνλίζομαι,
 305 πίνω θ' ὄσῳ βέβριθ', ὑπὸ στέγαισί τε
 οἶαισι ναίω βασιλικῶν ἐκ δωμάτων,
 αὐτῇ μὲν ἐκμοχθοῦσα κερκίσιν πέπλους,

291 καὶ Dobree κακ L

ELECTRA

ORESTES

Has your dead father received a tomb?

ELECTRA

Yes, such as it is: he was cast forth from the house.⁷

ORESTES

Ah, what a terrible thing you tell me! For mortals feel a sting when they learn of misfortune, even when it is not their own. Pity is found not in ill-bred ignorance but only in the wise. And in fact when the wise possess minds that are too wise, there is a price to be paid.

But tell me, so that I may learn and carry to your brother words that give no pleasure but which one must hear.

CHORUS LEADER

My heart feels the same desire as his. Since I live far off from the city and know nothing of the troubles there, I too would like to know.

ELECTRA

I shall tell, if I must (and to a friend I must), the heavy woes that are mine and my father's. But since you stir me to talk of them, I beg you, stranger, tell Orestes of my troubles and his. Tell him first in what clothing I am dressed, with what dirt I am encrusted, in what kind of a house I dwell after life in a royal palace, myself toiling at the loom to

⁷ I.e. he was not buried near the palace but off in an isolated spot.

²⁹⁴⁻⁶ post 291 trai. Bothe: del. Steinberg

EURIPIDES

- [ἢ γυμνὸν ἔξω σῶμα καὶ στερήσομαι,]
 αὐτὴ δὲ πηγὰς ποταμίους φορουμένη,
 310 ἀνέορτος ἱερῶν καὶ χορῶν τητωμένη.
 ἀναίνομαι δὲ γυμνὰς οὐσα παρθένους,
 ἀναίνομαι δὲ Κάστορ', ὦ πρὶν ἐς θεοὺς
 ἐλθεῖν ἔμ' ἐμνήστευον, οὐσαν ἐγγενῆ.
 μήτηρ δ' ἐμὴ Φρυγίοισιν ἐν σκυλεύμασιν
 315 θρόνῳ κάθηται, πρὸς δ' ἔδραισιν Ἀσίδες
 δμῶαὶ στατίζουσ', ἃς ἔπερσ' ἐμὸς πατήρ,
 Ἴδαία φάρη χρυσέαις ἐζευγμέναι
 πόρπαισιν. αἶμα δ' ἔτι πατρὸς κατὰ στέγας
 μέλαν σέσηπεν, ὃς δ' ἐκείνον ἔκτανεν
 320 ἐς ταῦτ' αἰώνων ἄρματ' ἐκφοιτᾷ πατρί,
 καὶ σκῆπτρ' ἐν οἷς Ἑλλήσιν ἐστρατηλάτει
 μαιφόνουσι χερσὶ γανροῦται λαβῶν.
 Ἀγαμέμνωνος δὲ τύμβος ἠτιμασμένος
 οὐπω χοάς ποτ' οὐδὲ κλῶνα μυρσίνης
 325 ἔλαβε, πυρὰ δὲ χέρσος ἀγλαῖσμάτων.
 μέθη δὲ βρεχθεὶς τῆς ἐμῆς μητρὸς πόσις
 ὁ καινός, ὡς λέγουσιν, ἐνθρώσκει τάφῳ
 πέτροις τε λεύει μνήμα λάινου πατρός,
 καὶ τοῦτο τολμᾷ τοῦπος εἰς ἡμᾶς λέγειν·
 330 Ποῦ παῖς Ὀρέστης; ἄρά σοι τύμβῳ καλῶς
 παρῶν ἀμύνει; ταῦτ' ἀπὼν ὑβρίζεται.

308 del. Camper

311 δὲ γυμνὰς L: δὲ γυμναῖκας Tr², unde [δὲ] γυμναῖκας Barnes
 παρθένους Kirchhoff: -os L

ELECTRA

make my garments, [or I shall be naked and go without,] myself carrying water from the river, bereft of festivals and deprived of dances. For since I have no clothes I shun the maidens, shun likewise Castor and Polydeuces,⁸ who before they went up to heaven were suitors for my hand since I was their kinswoman.

My mother sits on a throne in the midst of the spoils of Troy, and near her place Asian slaves, whom my father took as booty, stand with their Trojan garments pinned with gold brooches. The black blood of my father still lies rotting in the house, and the man who killed him mounts and rides out on the same chariot my father drove and assumes a haughty air as he takes in his murderous hands the scepter with which my father used to command the Greek host.

Agamemnon's tomb lies neglected and to this day has received no libation or spray of myrtle, and the altar at his tomb is empty of offerings. They tell me that my mother's new husband, when he is steeped in drink, leaps upon the grave and throws stones at my father's monument and has the gall to say against us, "Where is your son Orestes? A fine job he does of standing by your tomb and defending it!" Such is the outrage Orestes endures in his absence.

⁸ I.e. their worship and festivals.

³¹² Κάστωρ' (i.e. Κάστορε) ὦ Scaliger: Κάστωρ' ὦ L: Κάστωρ' ὄς (et ³¹³ ἐμνήστευεν) Nauck: vide *CQ* 35 (1985), 306–10

³¹⁴ fort. μήτηρ δὲ Φρυγίους <γαῦρος>

³¹⁵ ἔδραισιν Ἀσίδες Hermann: ἔδρας Ἀσιήτιδες L

³²⁴ οὐπω χόας ποτ' Porson: οὐπάποτ' οὐ χόας L

³²⁷ καινός Kirchhoff: κλεινός L

EURIPIDES

ἀλλ', ὦ ξέν', ἱκετεύω σ', ἀπάγγειλον τάδε.
 πολλοὶ δ' ἐπιστέλλουσιν, ἑρμηνεὺς δ' ἐγώ,
 αἱ χεῖρες ἢ γλώσσ' ἢ ταλαίπωρός τε φρῆν
 335 κάρα τ' ἐμὸν ξυρῆκες ὃ τ' ἐκείνον τεκῶν.
 αἰσχροὺν γάρ, εἰ πατήρ μὲν ἐξείλεν Φρύγας,
 ὃ δ' ἄνδρ' ἔν' εἷς ὧν οὐ δυνήσεται κτανεῖν,
 νέος πεφυκῶς καὶ ἀμείνους πατρός.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

καὶ μὴν δέδορκα τόνδε, σὸν λέγω πόσιν,
 340 λήξαντα μόχθου πρὸς δόμους ὀρμώμενον.

ΑΥΤΟΥΡΓΟΣ

ἔα· τίνας τούσδ' ἐν πύλαις ὀρῶ ξένους;
 τίνος δ' ἔκατι τάσδ' ἐπ' ἀγραύλους πύλας
 προσῆλθον; ἢ 'μοῦ δεόμενοι; γυναικί τοι
 αἰσχροὺν μετ' ἀνδρῶν ἐστάναι νεανιῶν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

345 ὦ φίλτατ', εἰς ὑποπτα μὴ μόλῃς ἐμοί·
 τὸν ὄντα δ' εἴση μῦθον· οἶδε γὰρ ξένοι
 ἤκουσ' Ὀρέστου πρὸς ἐμὲ κήρυκες λόγων.
 ἀλλ', ὦ ξένοι, σύγγνωτε τοῖς εἰρημένοις.

ΑΥΤΟΥΡΓΟΣ

τί φασίν; ἀνὴρ ἔστι καὶ λεύσσει φάος;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

350 ἔστιν λόγῳ γοῦν, φασὶ δ' οὐκ ἄπιστ' ἐμοί.

340 ὀρμώμενον Paley: ὀρμημένον L

ELECTRA

So I beg you, stranger, take this message back. Its senders are many, and I am their interpreter: my hands, my tongue, my suffering heart, my close-cropped head, and the father who begot him. It is a disgrace if his father destroyed the Trojans but he himself cannot kill his man, one against one, though he is young and born of a nobler father.

Enter FARMER by Eisodos A.

CHORUS LEADER

But look, I see him coming home, your husband, I mean, having finished his work.

FARMER

What is this? Who are these strangers I see at my door? Why have they come to my house so far from the city? Do they want something from me? It is quite shameful for a woman to stand about with young men.

ELECTRA

Dearest husband, do not be suspicious of me, for you shall hear the truth: these strangers have come to me bearing a message from Orestes. Strangers, please excuse these words.

FARMER

What do they say? Does the man live and look upon the light?

ELECTRA

In their report, at least, he lives, and what they say seems credible.

EURIPIDES

ΑΥΤΟΥΡΓΟΣ

ἦ καί τι πατρὸς σῶν τε μέμνηται κακῶν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐν ἐλπίσιν ταῦτ'· ἀσθενῆς φεύγων ἀνὴρ.

ΑΥΤΟΥΡΓΟΣ

ἦλθον δ' Ὀρέστου τίνα πορεύοντες λόγον;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

σκοποὺς ἔπεμψε τούσδε τῶν ἐμῶν κακῶν.

ΑΥΤΟΥΡΓΟΣ

355 οὐκουν τὰ μὲν λεύσσουσι, τὰ δὲ σύ που λέγεις;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἴσασι, οὐδὲν τῶνδ' ἔχουσιν ἐνδεές.

ΑΥΤΟΥΡΓΟΣ

οὐκουν πάλαι χρῆν τοῖσδ' ἀνεπτύχθαι πύλας;

χωρεῖτ' ἐς οἴκους· ἀντὶ γὰρ χρηστῶν λόγων
ξενίων κυρήσεθ', οἷ' ἐμὸς κεύθει δόμος.

360 [αἴρεσθ', ὀπαδοί, τῶνδ' ἔσω τεύχη δόμων.]

καὶ μηδὲν ἀντείπητε, παρὰ φίλου φίλοι
μολόντες ἀνδρός· καὶ γὰρ εἰ πένης ἔφυν,
οὔτοι τό γ' ἦθος δυσγενὲς παρέξομαι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

πρὸς θεῶν, ὄδ' ἀνὴρ ὃς συνεκκλέπτει γάμους

365 τοὺς σοὺς, Ὀρέστην οὐ καταισχύνει θέλων;

³⁵³ τίνα πορεύοντες Reiske: τίν' ἀγορεύοντες L

³⁶⁰ del. Barrett

ELECTRA

FARMER

And does he think of his father's troubles and of yours?

ELECTRA

That lies in the realm of hope: an exile is powerless.

FARMER

What message have they brought from Orestes?

ELECTRA

He sent them to spy out my misery.

FARMER

Do they not see some of it, while you doubtless are telling them the rest?

ELECTRA

They know, they have the story in full.

FARMER

Then should not our door have long ago been opened to them?

(*to Orestes and Pylades*) Go into the house. In return for your noble words you will get such hospitality as my house affords. [Take the gear, attendants, into this house.] And do not refuse since you are friends come from a friend. Though I am poor, I shall not show my nature to be ignoble.

ORESTES

By the gods, is this the man who joins in your pretense of marriage, not wishing to dishonor Orestes?

EURIPIDES

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὗτος κέκληται πόσις ἐμὸς τῆς ἀθλίας.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

φεῦ·

- οὐκ ἔστ' ἀκριβὲς οὐδὲν εἰς εὐανδρίαν
 [ἔχουσι γὰρ ταραγμὸν αἱ φύσεις βροτῶν.
 ἤδη γὰρ εἶδον ἄνδρα γενναίου πατρὸς
 370 τὸ μηδὲν ὄντα, χρηστά τ' ἐκ κακῶν τέκνα,
 λιμόν τ' ἐν ἀνδρὸς πλουσίου φρονήματι,
 γνώμην δὲ μεγάλην ἐν πένητι σώματι.
 πῶς οὖν τις αὐτὰ διαλαβὼν ὀρθῶς κρινεῖ;
 πλούτῳ; πονηρῶ τᾶρα χρήσεται κριτῆι.
 375 ἢ τοῖς ἔχουσι μηδέν; ἀλλ' ἔχει νόσον
 πειρία, διδάσκει δ' ἄνδρα τῆ χρεῖα κακόν.
 ἀλλ' εἰς ὄπλ' ἐλθῶν; τίς δὲ πρὸς λόγχην βλέπων
 μάρτυς γένοιτ' ἂν ὅστις ἐστὶν ἀγαθός;
 κράτιστον εἰκῆ ταῦτ' ἔαν ἀφειμένα.]
 380 οὗτος γὰρ ἀνὴρ οὐτ' ἐν Ἀργείοις μέγας
 οὐτ' αὖ δοκῆσει δωμάτων ὠγκωμένος,
 ἐν τοῖς δὲ πολλοῖς ὢν, ἄριστος ἠῦρέθη.
 οὐ μὴ ἀφρονήσῃθ', οἱ κενῶν δοξασμάτων
 πλήρεις πλανᾶσθε, τῆ δ' ὀμιλία βροτῶν
 385 κρινεῖτε καὶ τοῖς ἦθεσιν τοὺς εὐγενεῖς;
 [οἱ γὰρ τοιοῦτοι τὰς πόλεις οἰκοῦσιν εὖ
 καὶ δώμαθ'. αἱ δὲ σάρκες αἱ κεναὶ φρενῶν
 ἀγάματ' ἀγορᾶς εἰσιν. οὐδὲ γὰρ δόρυ
 μᾶλλον βραχίων σθεναρὸς ἀσθενοῦς μένει·

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

This is the man they call the husband of unhappy Electra.

ORESTES

Oh my! There is no reliable way to predict nobility. [The natural endowments of mortals suffer confusion. I have seen a man born of a noble father but himself a nullity, and noble children sprung from those of low estate; I have seen resourcelessness in a rich man's pride and greatness in the body of a poor one. How then shall a man distinguish and judge these things aright? By wealth? It is a sorry judge he will be making use of. By poverty? But poverty is unhealthy and teaches a man to be base from need. By considering his conduct in war? Yet who, as he stands facing a spear point, can bear testimony to the bravery of others? It is best to let this subject go as it will.] For this man, not one of the great among the Argives, nor yet impressive because of his family's reputation, a man of the people, has been shown to be noble. All you who wander about full of vain notions, come to your senses and judge the nobility of mortals by their way of life and their character! [Men of this kind are good at administering cities and households, while physiques lacking in brains are good only at adorning the marketplace. For a strong arm is not even better at withstanding the spear in battle than a weak one, but this is purely a

368-72 del. Reeve 373-9 del. Wilamowitz

377 *ἐλθών* Heath: *ἐλθω* L

383-5 *suspectos habuit* Murray

383 *ἀφρονήσεθ'* Badham: *φρονήσεθ'* L

384 *βροτῶν* Keene: *-οὺς* L

386-90 del. Wilamowitz

EURIPIDES

- 390 ἐν τῇ φύσει δὲ τοῦτο κὰν εὐψυχία.]
 ἀλλ' ἄξιος γὰρ ὁ τε παρῶν ὁ τ' οὐ παρῶν
 Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖς, οὐπὲρ οὐνεχ' ἤκομεν,
 δεξώμεθ' οἴκων καταλύσεις. χωρεῖν χρεῶν,
 δμῶες, δόμων τῶνδ' ἐντός. ὡς ἐμοὶ πένης
 395 εἶη πρόθυμος πλουσίου μᾶλλον ξένος.
 αἰνῶ μὲν οὖν τοῦδ' ἀνδρὸς ἐσδοχὰς δόμων,
 ἐβουλόμην δ' ἂν εἰ κασίγνητός με σὸς
 ἐς εὐτυχοῦντας ἦγεν εὐτυχῶν δόμους.
 ἴσως δ' ἂν ἔλθοι. Λοξίου γὰρ ἔμπεδοι
 400 χρησμοί, βροτῶν δὲ μαντικὴν χαίρειν ἐῶ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

νῦν ἢ πάροιθε μᾶλλον, Ἡλέκτρα, χαρᾶ
 θερμαινόμεσθα καρδίαν ἴσως γὰρ ἂν
 μόλις προβαίνουσ' ἢ τύχη σταίη καλῶς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

- ὦ τλήμον, εἰδὼς δωμάτων χρεῖαν σέθεν
 405 τί τούσδ' ἐδέξω μείζονας σαντοῦ ξένους;

ΑΥΤΟΥΡΓΟΣ

τί δ'; εἴπερ εἰσὶν ὡς δοκοῦσιν εὐγενεῖς,
 οὐκ ἔν τε μικροῖς ἔν τε μὴ στέρξουσ' ὁμῶς;

391 fort. ἄξενος (sine hospite) vel ἄστεγος

396-400 del. Reeve

400 μᾶλλον ἢ πάροιθεν Diggle

ELECTRA

matter of character and courage.]

Well, since your present guest and the absent son of Agamemnon, for whose sake we have come,⁹ are his worthy guests, let us accept the lodging this house affords. Go into the house, servants! Rather than a rich host, may I have a poor one who is well disposed! I gratefully accept the hospitality of this man. But I wish your brother, returned to prosperity, were leading me into his prosperous house. Perhaps he will come. The oracles of Loxias are unfailing, though I dismiss the divination of mortal men.

Exit ORESTES, Pylades, and slaves into the house.

CHORUS LEADER

Now more than before, Electra, my heart is warmed with joy. Perhaps our fate, after marching forward with difficulty, will now stand on fair ground.

ELECTRA

Heedless man, why have you received guests of higher standing than yourself, although you are aware your house is poor?

FARMER

Why not? If they are as noble as they appear to be, will they not be content equally in modest and in grand circumstances?

⁹ Orestes wants to be understood as speaking of two people, the man who is here (himself as Orestes' envoy) and the absent son of Agamemnon, but the secret sense of his words is "the son of Agamemnon who is both absent (since here in concealment) and present (in reality)."

EURIPIDES

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

- ἐπεὶ νυν ἐξήμαρτες ἐν σμικροῖσιν ὦν,
 ἔλθ' ὡς παλαιὸν τροφέα μοι φίλου πατρός,
 410 ὃς ἀμφὶ ποταμὸν Τάναον Ἀργείας ὄρους
 τέμνοντα γαίας Σπαρτιάτιδός τε γῆς
 ποίμναις ὀμαρτεῖ πόλεος ἐκβεβλημένος·
 κέλευε δ' αὐτὸν ἐς δόμους ἀφιγμένος
 ἐλθεῖν ξενία τ' ἐς δαῖτα ποροσῦναι τινα.
- 415 ἡσθήσεται τοι καὶ προσεύξεται θεοῖς,
 ζῶντ' εἰσακούσας παιῖδ' ὃν ἐκσώζει ποτέ.
 οὐ γὰρ πατρώων ἐκ δόμων μητρὸς πάρα
 λάβοιμεν ἄν τι πικρὰ δ' ἀγγείλαιμεν ἄν,
 εἰ ζῶντ' Ὀρέστην ἢ τάλαιν' αἴσθοιτ' ἔτι.

ΑΥΤΟΥΡΓΟΣ

- 420 ἀλλ', εἰ δοκεῖ σοι, τούσδ' ἀπαγγελῶ λόγους
 γέροντι· χῶρει δ' ἐς δόμους ὅσον τάχος
 καὶ τᾶνδον ἐξάρτυε· πολλά τοι γυνῆ
 χρήζουσ' ἂν εὖροι δαιτὶ προσφορήματα.
 ἔστιν δὲ δὴ τοσαῦτά γ' ἐν δόμοις ἔτι
- 425 ὥσθ' ἐν γ' ἐπ' ἡμαρ τούσδε πληρῶσαι βορᾶς.
 ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις δ' ἡνίκ' ἂν γνώμη πέσῃ,
 σκοπῶ τὰ χρήμαθ' ὡς ἔχει μέγα σθένος
 ξένοις τε δοῦναι σῶμά τ' ἐς νόσους πεσόν
 δαπάναισι σῶσαι· τῆς δ' ἐφ' ἡμέραν βορᾶς
- 430 ἐς σμικρὸν ἦκει· πᾶς γὰρ ἐμπλησθεὶς ἀνήρ
 ὁ πλούσιός τε χῶ πένης ἴσον φέρει.

⁴⁰⁹ τροφέα μοι Diggle: τροφὸν ἐμὸν L

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

Since you have made a blunder in your modest circumstances, go to my father's beloved old tutor. He has been cast out of the city and pastures sheep near the Tanaus River, which divides the Argolid from Spartan territory. When you get to his house, tell him to come and bring some guest provisions for a feast. He will surely be overjoyed and offer prayers to the gods when he hears that the child he once rescued is alive. We would never get anything out of my ancestral home from my mother. It would be unwelcome news to that cruel woman if she learned that Orestes is still alive.

FARMER

Well, if that is what you think best, I will bring this message to the old man. But go into the house as quickly as you can, and prepare what you find there. Surely a woman who wants to can find something to add to the feast. There is still enough in the house to fill these men with food for a single day.

Exit ELECTRA into the house.

When my thought lights on matters like these, I observe that while money has great power and allows you to give gifts to your guests and to keep your body alive when it has fallen into disease, it makes little difference to daily sustenance. When his belly is full, everyone, rich man and poor alike, holds an equal amount.

⁴¹³ αὐτὸν Scaliger: αὐτὸν τόνδ' L: possis etiam αὐτὸν τόνδ' ἐκεῖσ' ἀφιγμένους Musgrave: -ον L

⁴¹⁴ ξένιά Weil: ξένων L

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α

κλειναὶ νᾶες, αἶ ποτ' ἔβατε Τροίαν
 τοῖς ἀμετρήτοις ἑρετμοῖς
 πέμπουσαι χορεύματα Νηρηίδων,
 435 Ἴν' ὁ φίλαυλος ἔπαλλε δελ-
 φῖς πῶραις κυανεμβόλοις
 <συν>ειλισσόμενος, πορεύ-
 ούσαι τὸν τᾶς Θέτιδος
 κούφον ἄλμα ποδῶν Ἀχιλλῆ
 440 σὺν Ἀγαμέμνονι Τρωίας
 ἐπὶ Σιμωντίδας ἀκτάς.

ἀντ. α

Νηρηῆδες δ' Εὐβοΐδας ἄκρας λιπούσαι
 μόχθους ἀσπιστὰς ἀκμόνων
 Ἑφαίστου χρυσέων ἔφερον τευχέων,
 445 ἀνὰ δὲ Πήλιον ἀνά τ' ἔρυ-
 μνὰς Ὀσσας ἱερᾶς νάπας
 Νυμφαίας σκοπιάς, κόραι
 μάτευσαν ἔνθα πατῆρ
 ἱππότας τρέφειν Ἑλλάδι φῶς
 450 Θέτιδος εἰναλίας γόνου

434 χορεύματα Diggle: χοροὺς μετὰ L

437 <συν>ειλισσόμενος post Musgrave (<ἐν->) Willink

437-8 πορεύουσαι Wecklein: πορεύων L

442 ἄκρας Orelli: ἀκτὰς L

443-4 sic Headlam: Ἑφαίστου χρυσέων ἀκμόνων μόχθους
 ἀσπιστὰς L

ELECTRA

Exit FARMER by Eisodos B.

CHORUS

Glorious ships that once went to Troy,
ships that with those numberless oars
escorted the dances of the Nereids,
dances wherein the dolphin that loves the sound of the
pipe¹⁰
gamboled in company
with the dark-blue prows:
you ferried Thetis' son,
Achilles of the swiftly leaping feet,
with Agamemnon to the banks
of the Simois, Troy's river.

The Nereids, leaving the headlands of Euboea,
carried the warrior produce
of Hephaestus' anvil, a panoply of gold,
and on Mount Pelion and in holy
Ossa's sheer dells,
the lookouts of the nymphs, these maidens
sought him out where his father,
the horseman, was nurturing, as a beacon of light to the
Greeks,
the sea goddess Thetis' son

¹⁰ A tune played on the pipe (*aulos*) was used to set the rowers' beat.

445 δὲ Bothe: τε L ἐρμνὰς Musgrave: πρμνὰς L

447 κόραι Milton: κόρας L 448 μάτευσαν Reiter: μάτευσ' L

450 εἰναλίας Kvíčala: ἐνάλιον L

ταχύπορον πόδ' Ἀτρείδαις.

στρ. β

Ἰλιόθεν δ' ἔκλυόν τινος ἐν λιμέσιν

Ναυπλίους βεβῶτος

τὰς σᾶς, ὦ Θέτιδος παῖ,

455 κλεινᾶς ἀσπίδος ἐν κύκλῳ

τοιιάδε σήματα, δείματα <γα> Φρυγία, τετύχθαι

περιδρόμῳ μὲν ἵπτος ἔδρα

Περσέα λαιμοτόμαν ὑπὲρ ἄλμας

460 ποτανοῖσι πεδίλοις κορυφὰν Γοργόνος ἴσχειν,

Διὸς ἀγγέλῳ σὺν Ἑρμῶ,

τῷ Μαΐας ἀγροτῆρι κούρῳ.

ἀντ. β

ἐν δὲ μέσῳ κατέλαμπε σάκει φαέθων

465 κύκλος ἀλίιο

ἵπποις ἄμ πτεροέσσαις

ἄστρων τ' αἰθέριοι χοροί,

Πλειάδες, Ἰάδες, ὄμμασιν Ἑκτορείς τροπαῖοι

470 ἐπὶ δὲ χρυσοτύπῳ κράνει

Σφίγγες ὄνυξιν αἰοίδιμον ἄγραν

φέρουσαι περιπλεύρῳ δὲ κύτει πύρπνοος ἔσπεν-

δε δρόμῳ λέαινα χαλαῖς

475 Πειρηναῖον ὀρώσα πῶλον.

456-7 <γα> Φρυγία Diggle: Φρύγια L

459 λαιμοτόμαν Seidler: -τόμον L ἄλμας Weil: ἀλὸς L

460 πεδίλοις κορυφὰν Herwerden: πεδίλοισι φνὰν L

468 ὄμμασιν Ἑκτορείς Diggle: Ἑκτορος ὄμμασι L

475 ὀρώσα Bothe: θ' ὀρώσα L

ELECTRA

swift-footed, for the sons of Atreus.

I have heard from a man who came from Troy
and disembarked in the harbor of Nauplia
that on the circle
of your famous shield, Achilles,
figures like these were fashioned to affright the land of

Troy:
on the round rim of the shield
Perseus skimming above the sea,
shod in winged sandals, holds the Gorgon's severed head,
traveling in company with Hermes, Zeus's messenger,
the rustic¹¹ son of Maia.

In the center of the shield glowed the burning
circle of the sun
with his winged steeds,
and the choruses of stars on high,
Pleiades and Hyades, to turn Hector's eyes to flight.
On his helmet of beaten gold,
Sphinxes bear in their talons the prey their song has won.
On the breastplate that encircled his flanks the fire-breath-
ing
lioness¹² hurries away on her paws in swift flight
as she spies Peirene's colt.¹³

¹¹ Hermes is especially worshipped in pastoral Arcadia.

¹² The Chimaera, a mythical monster, lion in front, serpent behind, and she-goat in the middle.

¹³ Pegasus, ridden by Bellerophon, who slew the Chimaera.

ἐπῶδ.

ἄορι δ' ἐν φονίῳ τετραβάμονες ἵπποι ἔπαλλον,
 κελαινὰ δ' ἀμφὶ νῶθ' ἴετο κόνις.

τοιῶνδ' ἄνακτα δοριπόνων

480 ἔκανεν ἀνδρῶν, Τυνδαρί,
 σὰ λέχεια, κακόφρον κόρα.

τοιγάρ σοί ποτ' οὐρανόιδαι
 πέμψουσιν θανάτου δίκαν.

485 ἔτ' ἔτι φόνιον ὑπὸ δέραν
 ὄψομαι αἷμα χυθὲν σιδάρῳ.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

ποῦ ποῦ νεᾶνις πότνι' ἐμῇ δέσποινά τε,
 Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖς, ὅν ποτ' ἐξέθρεψ' ἐγώ;
 ὡς πρόσβασιν τῶνδ' ὀρθίαν οἴκων ἔχει

490 ῥυσῶ γέροντι τῷδε προσβῆναι ποδί.
 ὅμως δὲ πρὸς γε τοὺς φίλους ἐξελεκτέον
 διπλῆν ἄκανθαν καὶ παλίρροπον γόνυ.

ὦ θύγατερ (ἄρτι γάρ σε πρὸς δόμοις ὄρῳ),
 ἤκω φέρων σοι τῶν ἐμῶν βοσκημάτων
 495 ποίμνης νεογνὸν θρέμμ' ὑποσπάσας τόδε
 στεφάνους τε τευχέων τ' ἐξελὼν τυρεύματα,
 πολιόν τε θησαύρισμα Διονύσου τόδε
 ὀσμῇ κατῆρες, σμικρὸν ἀλλ' ἐπεσβαλεῖν
 ἠδὺ σκύφον τοῦδ' ἀσθενεστέρῳ ποτῶ.

⁴⁷⁶ ἄορι δ' ἐν Hartung: ἐν δὲ δορι L

⁴⁸³ σοί Murray: σέ L ⁴⁸⁴ θανάτου δίκαν Murray (δίκαν)

et Diggle: θανάτοισι· κἂν L

ELECTRA

On his deadly sword four-footed horses pranced,
and behind them the black dust was rising.
The lord of warriors like these,
Clytaemestra, woman of evil thoughts,
your adultery has slain.
For this the gods will send upon you
the judgment of death.
One day, one day beneath your neck
I shall see blood spilled upon the ground by the sword.

Enter OLD MAN by Eisodos B carrying a lamb on his shoulders and other provisions in his hands.

OLD MAN

Where, O where is the young princess, my lady, daughter of Agamemnon, the man I once reared up? What an approach she has to her house, so steep for this withered old man to climb on foot! Still, to reach my friends I must drag along my stooping back and tottering legs.

Enter ELECTRA from the house.

My daughter—now I see you near the house—I bring you a young lamb I have pulled away from my flocks and garlands and cheeses taken from the press, and some old and fragrant wine I have treasured, not a great deal of it—but it is a pleasant thing to put a cup of this in a wine

485 δέρας Wecklein 497 πολιόν Scaliger: παλαιόν L

498 ὄσμῃ κατήρες suspectum

499 τοῦδ' Reiske: τῶδ' L

EURIPIDES

- 500 ἴτω φέρων τις τοῖς ξένοις τάδ' ἐς δόμους.
 ἐγὼ δὲ τρύχει τῷδ' ἐμῶν πέπλων κόρας
 δακρυοῖσι τέγξας ἐξομόρξασθαι θέλω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

- τί δ', ὦ γεραιέ, διάβροχον τόδ' ὄμμ' ἔχεις;
 μῶν τὰμὰ διὰ χρόνου σ' ἀνέμνησαν κακὰ
 <τηλουρὸς οἶκος καὶ πέπλων ἐμῶν ῥάκη>;
 505 ἦ τὰς Ὀρέστου τλήμονας φυγὰς στένεις
 καὶ πατέρα τὸν ἐμόν, ὃν ποτ' ἐν χεροῖν ἔχων
 ἀνόνητ' ἔθρειαί σοί τε καὶ τοῖς σοῖς φίλοις;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

- ἀνόνηθ' ὅμως δ' οὖν τοῦτό γ' οὐκ ἠνεσχόμην,
 <ὀρων πατέρα σὸν ἐστερημένον χοῶν>.
 ἦλθον γὰρ αὐτοῦ πρὸς τάφον πάρεργ' ὁδοῦ
 510 καὶ προσπεσὼν ἔκλαυσ' ἐρημίας τυχῶν,
 σπονδάς τε, λύσας ἀσκὸν ὃν φέρω ξένοις,
 ἔσπεια, τύμβω δ' ἀμφέθηκα μυρσίνας.
 πυρᾶς δ' ἐπ' αὐτῆς οἶν μελάγχμιον πόκω
 σφάγιον ἐσεῖδον αἶμά τ' οὐ πάλαι χυθὲν
 515 ξανθῆς τε χαίτης βοστρύχους κεκαρμένους.
 καθαύμασ', ὦ παῖ, τίς ποτ' ἀνθρώπων ἔτλη
 πρὸς τύμβον ἐλθεῖν· οὐ γὰρ Ἀργείων γέ τις.
 [ἀλλ' ἦλθ' ἴσως πού σοι κασίγνητος λάθρα,

504 post h. v. lac. indic. Kovacs

508 post h. v. lac. indic. Schenkl

518-44 del. Mau

ELECTRA

of weaker vintage. Let someone take these things into the house for the guests! Since I have drenched my eyes with weeping, I want to wipe them on these tattered garments of mine.

A servant takes the provisions into the house. The Old Man wipes his eyes.

ELECTRA

Why, old sir, is your face wet with tears? Has <the sight of this lonely dwelling and my ragged clothing> after so long a time reminded you of my troubles? Or do you weep for the wretched exile of Orestes and for my father? You took him in your arms and reared him, yet your labor has proved useless to you and those you hold dear.

OLD MAN

Yes, useless. Yet the thing I could not endure was this, <to see your father deprived of funeral libations>. For as a detour on my journey I went to his tomb, and finding myself alone I fell down and wept for him: I opened the wineskin I was bringing for your guests and poured him a libation and put myrtle branches about his tomb. But on the altar itself I saw a black lamb, its blood recently shed, and shorn locks of blond hair. I wondered, daughter, what mortal had had the courage to visit the tomb. Certainly it was no citizen of Argos.¹⁴ [But perhaps your brother has

¹⁴ The 27 lines that follow have been suspected of being an interpolation since the nineteenth century, and Fraenkel in his *Agamemnon* commentary (vol. 3, pp. 821ff.) argued strongly for deletion. Since then several discussions, for and against deletion, have appeared. For a history of the question and further arguments for excision, see Kovacs 1989.

EURIPIDES

520 μολῶν δ' ἐθαύμασ' ἄθλιον τύμβον πατρός.
 σκέψαι δὲ χαίτην προστιθείσα σῆ κόμη,
 εἰ χρῶμα ταῦτόν κουρίμης ἔσται τριχός·
 φιλεῖ γάρ, αἷμα ταῦτόν οἷς ἂν ἦ πατρός,
 τὰ πόλλ' ὅμοια σώματος πεφυκέναι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

525 οὐκ ἄξι' ἀνδρός, ὧ γέρον, σοφοῦ λέγεις,
 εἰ κρυπτόν ἐς γῆν τήνδ' ἂν Αἰγίσθου φόβῳ
 δοκεῖς ἀδελφὸν τὸν ἐμὸν εὐθαρσῆ μολεῖν.
 ἔπειτα χαίτης πῶς συνοίσεται πλόκος,
 ὁ μὲν παλαιστραῖς ἀνδρὸς εὐγενοῦς τραφεῖς,
 ὁ δὲ κτενισμοῖς θήλυς; ἀλλ' ἀμήχανον.
 530 πολλοῖς δ' ἂν εὖροις βοστρύχους ὁμοπτέρους
 καὶ μὴ γεγῶσιν αἵματος ταύτου, γέρον.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

σὺ δ' εἰς ἵχνος βᾶσ' ἀρβύλης σκέψαι βάσιν
 εἰ σύμμετρος σῶ ποδὶ γενήσεται, τέκνον.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

535 πῶς δ' ἂν γένοιτ' ἂν ἐν κραταιλέῳ πέδῳ
 γαίας ποδῶν ἔκμακτρον; εἰ δ' ἔστιν τόδε,
 δυοῖν ἀδελφοῖν πούς ἂν οὐ γένοιτ' ἴσος
 ἀνδρός τε καὶ γυναικός, ἀλλ' ἄρσην κρατεῖ.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

540 οὐκ ἔστιν, εἰ καὶ γῆν κασίγνητος μόλοι,
 κερκίδος ὄτῳ γνοίης ἂν ἐξύφασμα σῆς,
 ἐν ᾧ ποτ' αὐτὸν ἐξέκλεψα μὴ θανεῖν;

ELECTRA

come in secret and on his arrival honored the wretched tomb of his father. Put the lock up against your hair and see whether the color of the shorn tress is the same. For it commonly happens that those who have the same paternal blood in them show physical similarity in most things.

ELECTRA

What you say, old sir, is unworthy of a wise man if you imagine that my brave brother would come to this land in secret because he feared Aegisthus. Furthermore, how should his hair be like mine since his was grown in the wrestling schools of young noblemen while mine is feminine and combed? It is impossible. You will find that many people possess locks that are similar, old man, who are not of the same blood.

OLD MAN

Step into his footprint and see whether the mark of his boot agrees with your foot, my child.

ELECTRA

But how could a footprint be made on ground well-stoned?¹⁵ And if there is one, the feet of siblings will not be of equal size when one is male and the other female: the male will be larger.

OLD MAN

But if in fact your brother should come to this land, is there not some bit of your weaving by which you could recognize him, weaving in which I spirited him away from death?

¹⁵ The phrase probably comes from the lost opening lines of Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers*.

EURIPIDES

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐκ οἶσθ', Ὀρέστης ἠνίκ' ἐκπίπτει χθονός,
 νέαν μ' ἔτ' οὔσαν; εἰ δὲ κάκρεκον πέπλους,
 πῶς ἂν τότ' ὦν παῖς ταῦτ' αὖν ἔχοι φάρη,
 εἰ μὴ ξυναύξουσθ' οἱ πέπλοι τῷ σώματι;]

< ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ >

545 ἀλλ' ἢ τις αὐτοῦ τάφον ἐποικτίρας ξένος
 σκοποὺς λαθῶν ἐκείρατ' ἢ τῆσδε χθονὸς
 < ἐς ὄρι' ἀδελφοῦ βοστρύχους ἐσήγαγεν >.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

οἱ δὲ ξένοι ποῦ; βούλομαι γὰρ εἰσιδῶν
 αὐτοὺς ἐρέσθαι σοῦ κασιγνήτου πέρι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οἶδ' ἐκ δόμων βαίνουσι λαυσηρῶ ποδί.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

550 ἀλλ' εὐγενεῖς μέν, ἐν δὲ κιβδήλῳ τόδε
 πολλοὶ γὰρ ὄντες εὐγενεῖς εἰσιν κακοί.
 ὅμως δὲ χαίρειν τοὺς ξένους προσεννέπω.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

χαῖρ', ὦ γεραιέ. τοῦ ποτ', Ἥλέκτρα, τόδε
 παλαιὸν ἀνδρὸς λείψανον φίλων κυρεῖ;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

555 οὔτος τὸν ἀμὸν πατέρ' ἔθρεψεν, ὦ ξένε.

545 fort. ξένων 546 σκοποὺς λαθῶν ἐκείρατ' ἢ τῆσδε
 χθονὸς post Victorium (λαθῶν) Elmsley: ἐκείρατ' ἢ τῆσδε
 σκοποὺς λαβῶν χθονός L post h. v. lac. indic. Mau

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

Do you not know that when Orestes went into exile I was still a child? And even if I had been weaving clothes, how could a man who was a child at that time be wearing the same garments unless his clothing were to grow with his body?]

<ELECTRA>

Well, some foreigner either took pity on his tomb and cut his hair, escaping the guards' notice, or <brought my brother's hair offering into the territory> of this land.

OLD MAN

But where are our foreign guests? I want to see them and ask them about your brother.

ORESTES, Pylades, and attendants come out of the house.

ELECTRA

Here they come with nimble step out of the house.

OLD MAN

Well, they are gentlemen, to be sure, but that's a deceptive matter. Many who are well born are worthless characters. Still, my greeting to the strangers!

ORESTES

Greeting to you, old sir. Which one of your friends, Electra, owns this ancient relic of a man?

ELECTRA

This is the man who reared my father, stranger.

EURIPIDES

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τί φῆς; ὄδ' ὄς σὸν ἐξέκλεψε σύγγονον;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὄδ' ἔσθ' ὁ σώσας κείνον, εἴπερ ἔστ' ἔτι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἔα·

τί μ' ἐσδέδορκεν ὥσπερ ἀργύρου σκοπῶν
λαμπρὸν χαρακτῆρ'; ἢ προσεικάζει μέ τω;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

560 ἴσως Ὀρέστου σ' ἤλιχ' ἦδεται βλέπων.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

φίλου γε φωτός. τί δὲ κυκλεῖ πέριξ πόδα;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

καυτὴ τόδ' εἰσορώσα θαυμάζω, ξένε.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

ὦ πότνι', εὔχον, θύγατερ Ἠλέκτρα, θεοῖς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τί τῶν ἀπόντων ἢ τί τῶν ὄντων πέρι;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

565 λαβεῖν φίλον θησαυρόν, ὃν φαίνει θεός.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ιδού· καλῶ θεοῦς. ἢ τί δὴ λέγεις, γέρον;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

βλέψον νυν ἐς τόνδ', ὦ τέκνον, τὸν φίλτατον.

556 ἐξέκλεψε Pierson: ἐξέθρεψε L

ELECTRA

ORESTES

What? The man who spirited your brother away?

ELECTRA

This is the man who saved his life, if life he still has.

ORESTES

What's this? Why is he staring at me as if he were looking at the hallmark on silver? Does he think I look like someone else?

ELECTRA

Perhaps he is happy to see a man Orestes' age.

The Old Man walks around Orestes.

ORESTES

The man we love. But why is he circling around me?

ELECTRA

I see this too and wonder at it, stranger.

OLD MAN

Daughter Electra, my lady, offer prayers to the gods!

ELECTRA

For what? Something I lack or something I have?

OLD MAN

Pray you may grasp the precious treasure the god is showing you!

ELECTRA

All right: I call on the gods. Or did you mean something different, old man?

OLD MAN

Then look, my daughter, at this man you love best.

EURIPIDES

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πάλαι δέδορκα· μὴ σὺ γ' οὐκέτ' εὖ φρονεῖς;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

οὐκ εὖ φρονῶ γὰρ σὸν κασίγνητον βλέπων;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

570 πῶς εἶπας, ᾧ γεραῖ', ἀνέλπιστον λόγον;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

ὄρᾶν Ὀρέστην τόνδε τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονος.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ποιὸν χαρακτήρ' εἰσιδῶν, ᾧ πείσομαι;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

οὐλήν παρ' ὀφρύν, ἣν ποτ' ἐν πατρὸς δόμοις
νεβρὸν διώκων σοῦ μέθ' ἡμάχθη πεσών.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

575 πῶς φῆς; ὄρῳ μὲν πτώματος τεκμήριον.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

ἔπειτα μέλλεις προσπίτνειν τοῖς φιλτάτοις;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ' οὐκέτ', ᾧ γεραῖέ· συμβόλοισι γὰρ
τοῖς σοῖς πέπεισμαι θυμόν. ᾧ χρόνῳ φανείς,
ἔχω σ' ἀέλπτως . . .

569 γὰρ] γὰρ Denniston

568 interrogationis notam add. Diggle

570 πῶς] τίν' Wecklein

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

I have been looking for some time: have you gone mad?

OLD MAN

Am I mad if I see your brother?

ELECTRA

What do you mean, old man, by this extraordinary claim?

OLD MAN

That I see Orestes, Agamemnon's son.

ELECTRA

What mark have you seen that deserves my trust?

OLD MAN

The scar next to his eyebrow: once in your father's house he fell and cut it as you and he chased a fawn.

ELECTRA

What is this you say? I see the evidence of his fall.

OLD MAN

Then can you hesitate to fling yourself into your dear brother's embrace?

ELECTRA

I hesitate no longer, old man. My heart is persuaded by the tally you point out.

Electra and Orestes embrace.

O brother long in coming, I embrace you though I no longer hoped to . . .

EURIPIDES

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

κάξ ἐμοῦ γ' ἔχῃ χρόνῳ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

580 . . . οὐδέποτε δόξασ'.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐδ' ἐγὼ γὰρ ἤλπισα.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐκείνος εἶ σύ;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

σύμμαχός γέ σοι μόνος,
 ἦν δ' ἀνσπάσωμαί γ' ὄν μετέρχομαι βόλον,
 <σωτήρ ἂν εἶην ἐξ ἀμηχάνων κακῶν>.
 πέποιθα δ' ἢ χρῆ μηκέθ' ἠγείσθαι θεούς,
 εἰ τᾶδικ' ἔσται τῆς δίκης ὑπέρτερα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

585 ἔμολες ἔμολες, ὦ, χρόνιος ἀμέρα,
 κατέλαμψας, ἔδειξας ἐμφανῆ
 πόλει πυρσόν, ὃς παλαιᾷ φυγᾷ
 πατρίων ἀπὸ δωμαίων τάλας
 ἀλαίνων ἔβα.

590 θεὸς αὖ θεὸς ἀμετέραν τις ἄγει
 νίκαν, ὦ φίλα.

ἄνεχε χέρας, ἄνεχε λόγον, ἴει
 λιτὰς ἐς θεούς, τύχα σοι τύχα

595 κασίγνητον ἐμβατεῦσαι πόλιν.

582 post h. v. lac. indic. Vitelli

ELECTRA

ORESTES

And at long last I too embrace you!

ELECTRA

. . . and never thought this would happen!

ORESTES

No, for not even I had hope.

ELECTRA

Are you the very man?

ORESTES

Yes, your only ally, and if I succeed in hauling in the catch of fish I have come for, <I will prove your savior from grievous troubles>. I am confident: otherwise we must no longer believe in the gods if injustice is triumphant over justice.

CHORUS

You have arrived, have arrived, O long-awaited day!

You have dawned and shown clearly
to the city the torch that in long exile
went wandering unhappy
far from his father's house.

Some god, some god is bringing us
victory, dear friend!

Lift up hands and voice, utter
prayers to the gods that with good luck, good luck
your brother may tread upon the city's soil!

Orestes releases Electra from his embrace.

EURIPIDES

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

εἶέν· φίλας μὲν ἠδονὰς ἀσπασμάτων
 ἔχω, χρόνῳ δὲ καὶθις αὐτὰ δώσομεν.
 σὺ δ', ὦ γεραῖέ, καίριος γὰρ ἦλυθες,
 λέξον, τί δρῶν ἂν φονέα τεισαίμην πατρός
 600 μητέρα τε <τῆν> κοινωνὸν ἀνοσίων γάμων;
 ἔστιν τί μοι κατ' Ἄργος εὐμενὲς φίλων;
 ἢ πάντ' ἀνεσκευάσμεθ', ὥσπερ αἱ τύχαι;
 τῷ ξυγγένωμαι; νύχιος ἢ καθ' ἡμέραν;
 ποίαν ὁδὸν τραπώμεθ' εἰς ἐχθροὺς ἐμούς;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

605 ὦ τέκνον, οὐδεὶς δυστυχοῦντί σοι φίλος.
 εὖρημα γάρ τοι χρῆμα γίνεται τόδε,
 κοινῇ μετασχεῖν τὰγαθοῦ καὶ τοῦ κακοῦ.
 σὺ δ' (ἐκ βάθρων γὰρ πᾶς ἀνήρησαι φίλοις
 οὐδ' ἐλλέλοιπας ἐλπίδ') ἴσθι μου κλυῶν
 610 ἐν χειρὶ τῇ σῇ πάντ' ἔχεις καὶ τῇ τύχῃ,
 πατρῶον οἶκον καὶ πόλιν λαβεῖν σέθεν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τί δῆτα δρῶντες τοῦδ' ἂν ἐξικοίμεθα;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

κτανῶν Θυέστου παῖδα σὴν τε μητέρα.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἦκω 'πὶ τόνδε στέφανον· ἀλλὰ πῶς λάβω;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

615 τειχέων μὲν ἐλθὼν ἐντὸς οὐδ' ἂν εἰ θέλοις.

ELECTRA

ORESTES

Well, though I enjoy the pleasure of your embrace, still we shall put off such embraces until the future. You, old sir, since your arrival was most timely, tell me: how can I punish the man who slew my father and also my mother who shares an unholy union with him? Do I have at Argos any friends who wish me well? Or am I as bankrupt as are my circumstances? With whom shall I join forces? Shall I meet them by night or by day? What route am I to take against my enemies?

OLD MAN

My son, no one is loyal to you in your troubles. It is a rare piece of fortune, you know, if a friend stands by you in bad luck as well as good. But—since your friends find you utterly undone and you have left them no hope—hear me and know how matters stand: the recovery of your father's house and your city lies in your hands and fortune's.

ORESTES

What must I do to arrive at that goal?

OLD MAN

Kill Aegisthus and your mother.

ORESTES

That is the crown I have come for. But how am I to win it?

OLD MAN

Not by entering the city, even if you wanted to.

600 <τῆν> Canter 603 τῶ] πῶs Porson

606 τοι Seidler: τὸ L

609 ἐλλελοίπασ' A. Schmidt

EURIPIDES

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

φρουραῖς κέκασται δεξιαῖς τε δορυφόρων;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

ἔγνωσ' φοβείται γάρ σε κούχ εὔδει σαφῶς.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

εἶέν· σὺ δὴ τοῦνθένδε βούλευσον, γέρον.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

τάμ' οὖν ἄκουσον· ἄρτι γάρ μ' ἐσήλθέ τι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

620 ἐσθλόν τι μηνύσειας, αἰσθοίμην δ' ἐγώ.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

Αἴγισθον εἶδον, ἠνίχ' εἶρπον ἐνθάδε.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

προσηκάμην τὸ ρηθέν· ἐν ποίοις τόποις;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

ἀγρῶν πέλας τῶνδ' ἵπποφορβίων ἔπι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τί δρῶνθ'; ὀρῶ γὰρ ἐλπίδ' ἐξ ἀμηχάνων.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

625 Νύμφαις ἐπόρσυν' ἔροτιν, ὡς ἔδοξέ μοι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τροφέια παίδων ἢ πρὸ μέλλοντος τόκου;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

οὐκ οἶδα πλὴν ἔν· βουσφαγεῖν ὠπλίζετο.

619 τάμ' οὖν Weil: κάμου γ' L: καὶ μὴν Kirchhoff

ELECTRA

ORESTES

He is protected by watchmen and a bodyguard?

OLD MAN

Exactly: he is afraid of you and does not sleep soundly.

ORESTES

Well then, old sir, please advise me on the next step.

OLD MAN

Listen to what I have to say: I have just had an idea.

ORESTES

May the plan you reveal—and I listen to—be a good one!

OLD MAN

I saw Aegisthus when I was on my way here.

ORESTES

I welcome what you are saying. Where was he?

OLD MAN

In his horse pastures not far from this farm.

ORESTES

What was he doing? I begin to see hope after despair.

OLD MAN

He was preparing a sacrifice for the Nymphs, as it seemed to me.

ORESTES

In payment for nurturing his children
unborn?

OLD MAN

I only know one thing: he had the
bullock.

EURIPIDES

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

πόσων μετ' ἀνδρῶν; ἢ μόνος δμῶων μέτα;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

οὐδεὶς παρῆν Ἀργεῖος, οἰκεία δὲ χεῖρ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

630 οὐ πού τις ὅστις γνωριεῖ μ' ἰδῶν, γέρον;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

δμῶες μὲν εἰσιν οὓς ἐγὼ οὐκ εἶδόν ποτε.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἡμῖν <δ'> ἂν εἶεν, εἰ κρατοῖμεν, εὐμενεῖς;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

δούλων γὰρ ἴδιον τοῦτο, σοὶ δὲ σύμφορον.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

πῶς οὖν ἂν αὐτῷ πλησιασθείην ποτέ;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

635 στείχων ὅθεν σε βουθυτῶν ἐσόψεται.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὁδὸν παρ' αὐτήν, ὡς ἔοικ', ἀγροὺς ἔχει;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

ὅθεν <γ'> ἰδῶν σε δαιτὶ κοινωνὸν καλεῖ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

πικρόν γε συνθoinάτορ', ἦν θεὸς θέλη.

631 fort. δμῶων μὲν εἷς τις (Konacs, cl. 852-3), οἱ δέ σ' οὐκ (Willink): etiam δμῶων μὲν εἰσὶν οἳ γε σ' (aliqui saltem ex servis) Willink 632 <δ'> Victorius 637 <γ'> Barnes

ELECTRA

ORESTES

How many men were with him? Or was he accompanied only by slaves?

OLD MAN

No Argive citizen was present, only his household band.

ORESTES

No one, I suppose, who will recognize me on sight?

OLD MAN

The slaves are ones I have never seen.

ORESTES

But would they take our side if we should be victorious?

OLD MAN

Yes, for that is the nature of slaves and advantageous for you.

ORESTES

How then am I to get near him?

OLD MAN

Walk to a place from which he will see you as he sacrifices.

ORESTES

His fields, it seems, are right next to the road?

OLD MAN

Yes, and from there he will invite you to share in his feast.

ORESTES

And an unwelcome fellow feaster I shall prove, if heaven is willing!

EURIPIDES

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

τοὺνθένδε πρὸς τὸ πίπτον αὐτὸς ἐννόει.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

640 καλῶς ἔλεξας. ἢ τεκοῦσα δ' ἐστὶ πού;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

Ἄργει· παρέσται δ' ἐν σκότῳ θοίνην ἔπι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τί δ' οὐχ ἄμ' ἐξωρμάτ' ἐμὴ μήτηρ πόσει;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

ψόγον τρέμουσα δημοτῶν ἐλείπετο.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ξυνῆχ' ὑποπτος οὔσα γιγνώσκει πόλει.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

645 τοιαῦτα· μισεῖται γὰρ ἀνόσιος γυνή.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

πῶς οὖν ἐκείνον τήνδε τ' ἐν ταυτῷ κτάνω;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐγὼ φόνον γε μητρὸς ἐξαρτύσομαι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

καὶ μὴν ἐκεῖνά γ' ἢ τύχη θήσει καλῶς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὑπηρετείτω μὲν δυοῖν ὄντοι ὄδε.

641 σκότῳ Weil: πόσει L

646 κτάνω Cobet: κτενώ L

648 fort. θείη cl. Alc. 713

649 μὲν] δ' εἰς Weil

ὄδε Tyrwhitt: τόδε L

ELECTRA

OLD MAN

After that you yourself must improvise to suit the dice's fall.

ORESTES

Your advice is good. And where is my mother?

OLD MAN

In Argos. But she will join her husband for the feast when it is dark.

ORESTES

Why did my mother not set out with her husband?

OLD MAN

She stayed behind for fear of criticism from the people.

ORESTES

I understand: she knows the city looks askance at her.

OLD MAN

Right: they hate her as a godless woman.

ORESTES

How then can I kill the two of them at the same time?¹⁶

ELECTRA

I shall manage my mother's death.

ORESTES

Yes, and good luck will further your design.

ELECTRA

To begin with, let this man assist the two of us.

¹⁶ I.e. so that one will not learn of the other's death and be on guard.

EURIPIDES

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

650 ἔσται τάδ'· εὐρίσκεις δὲ μητρὶ πῶς φόνον;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

[λέγ', ᾧ γεραῖέ, τάδε Κλυταιμῆστρα μολών·]
λεχῶ μ' ἀπάγγελλ' οὔσαν ἄρσενος τόκῳ.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

πότερα πάλαι τεκοῦσαν ἢ νεωστὶ δῆ;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

δέχ' ἡλίουσ, ἐν οἷσιν ἀγνεύει λεχῶ.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

655 καὶ δὴ τί τοῦτο μητρὶ προσβάλλει φόνον;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἤξει κλυοῦσα λόχιά μου νοσήματα.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

πόθεν; †τί δ' αὐτῇ† σοῦ μέλειν δοκεῖς, τέκνον;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ναί· καὶ δακρύσει γ' ἀξίωμ' ἐμῶν τόκων.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

ἴσως· πάλιν μοι μῦθον ἐς καμπήν ἄγε.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

660 ἐλθοῦσα μέντοι δῆλον ὡς ἀπόλλυται.

651 del. Matthiae

654 δέχ' Elmsley: λέγ' L

657 σὺ δ' αὐτῇ Weil: τοιαύτη Diggle

659 μοι Diggle: τοι L: δὲ Camper ἄγε Jortin: ἄγω L

ELECTRA

OLD MAN

It shall be so. But how will you find a way to murder your mother?

ELECTRA

[Go to Clytaemestra, old man, and say the following to her.] Tell her that I have just given birth to a boy.

OLD MAN

Some time ago, or very recently?

ELECTRA

Ten days ago, the time a women who has given birth keeps pure.¹⁷

OLD MAN

But how will this lead to your mother's death?

ELECTRA

When she hears of my being in childbed, she will come.

OLD MAN

Why do you think so? Do you imagine that she cares about you, my child?

ELECTRA

Yes, and she will weep for the low standing of my baby.

OLD MAN

Perhaps: bring your tale to its last lap.

ELECTRA

If she comes, she will clearly be killed.

¹⁷ In the Greek view birth, like death, produces a taint (*mi-asma*), and a woman abstains from intercourse with her husband to avoid passing it on. After ten days she is ritually purified by a sacrifice.

EURIPIDES

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

καὶ μὴν ἐς αὐτάς γ' εἰσίτω δόμων πύλας.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὔκουν τραπέσθαι σμικρὸν εἰς Ἄιδου τότε;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

εἰ γὰρ θάνοιμι τοῦτ' ἰδὼν ἐγὼ ποτε.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πρώτιστα μὲν νῦν τῷδ' ὑφήγησαι, γέρον.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

665 Αἴγισθος ἔνθα νῦν θυηπολεῖ θεοῖς;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἔπειτ' ἀπαντῶν μητρὶ τὰπ' ἐμοῦ φράσον.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

ὥστ' αὐτά γ' ἐκ σοῦ στόματος εἰρήσθαι δοκεῖν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

σὸν ἔργον ἤδη· πρόσθεν εἴληχας φόνου.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

στείχοιμ' ἄν, εἴ τις ἡγεμῶν γίγνοιθ' ὁδοῦ.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

670 καὶ μὴν ἐγὼ πέμποιμ' ἄν οὐκ ἀκουσίως.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὦ Ζεῦ Πατρῶε καὶ Τροπαί' ἐχθρῶν ἐμῶν,
οἴκτιρον ἡμᾶς· οἴκτρα γὰρ πεπόνθαμεν.

661 ἐς Fix: ἐπ' L εἰσίτω Musgrave: εἰσίω L 662 τότε
Κνίcala: τόδε L 672 οἴκτιρον Dobree: οἴκτιρεθ' L

ELECTRA

OLD MAN

Well then, suppose she comes into the very gates of your house.

ELECTRA

Is not the journey thence to Hades brief?

OLD MAN

Once I have seen this, then may death come!

ELECTRA

So first, old man, lead Orestes on his way.

OLD MAN

To where Aegisthus is now sacrificing to the gods?

ELECTRA

Then go to see my mother and give her my message.

OLD MAN

I shall, so that it seems to come from your mouth.

ELECTRA

(*to Orestes*) Now it is your turn to work: you have drawn the first murder trial.¹⁸

ORESTES

I will go if someone will show me the way.

OLD MAN

I shall conduct you gladly.

ORESTES

Zeus, my fathers' god and router of my enemies, have pity on us, for our sufferings deserve pity!

¹⁸ The language suggests Athenian legal procedure where prosecutors were assigned their time to appear in court by lot: cf. J. H. Kells, *CQ* 16 (1966), 51-2.

EURIPIDES

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οἴκτιρε δῆτα σοῦ γε φύντας ἐγγόνους.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

Ἦρα τε, βωμῶν ἢ Μυκηναίων κρατεῖς,
675 νίκην δὸς ἡμῖν, εἰ δίκαι' αἰτούμεθα.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

δὸς δῆτα πατρὸς τοῖσδε τιμωρὸν δίκην.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

σύ τ', ὦ κάτω γῆς ἀνοσίως οἰκῶν πάτερ
καὶ Γαῖ' ἀνασσα, χεῖρας ἧ δίδωμ' ἐμάς,
ἄμνν' ἄμννε τοῖσδε φιλτάτοις τέκνοις·
680 νῦν πάντα νεκρὸν ἔλθῃ σύμμαχον λαβῶν
οἴπερ γε σὺν σοὶ Φρύγας ἀνήλωσαν δορὶ
683 χῶσοι στυγοῦσιν ἀνοσίους μιάστορας.
682 ἦκουσας, ὦ δεῖν' ἐξ ἐμῆς μητρὸς παθῶν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πάντ', οἶδ', ἀκούει τάδε πατήρ· στείχειν δ' ἀκμή.
685 καὶ σοι προφωνῶ πρὸς τὰδ' Αἴγισθον κτανεῖν,
ὡς εἰ παλαισθεῖς πτώμα θανάσιμον πεσῆ,
τέθνηκα κἀγὼ μηδέ με ζῶσαν λέγε.
[παίσω κἀρα γὰρ τοῦμόν ἀμφήκει ξίφει·
δόμων ἔσω βᾶσ' εὐτρεπὲς ποιήσομαι.
690 ὡς ἦν μὲν ἔλθῃ πύστις εὐτυχῆς σέθεν,
ὀλολύξεται πᾶν δῶμα· θνήσκοντος δέ σου
τᾶναντί' ἔσται τῶνδε ταῦτά σοι λέγω.]

673 σοῦ Barnes: σοῦς L

678 Γαῖ' Musgrave: γῆ τ' L

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

Yes, pity these descendants of yours!¹⁹

ORESTES

And Hera, ruler of Mycenae's altars, grant us victory if our prayer is just!

ELECTRA

Yes, grant to these children here vengeance for their father!

ORESTES

And you, father, impiously made to dwell under the ground, and Lady Earth, whom I strike with my hands, protect, O protect these beloved children of yours! Come with all the dead as your allies, those who helped you destroy the Trojans with the spear and those who detest unholy defilers! Father, who suffered dreadful things at my mother's hands, do you hear me?

ELECTRA

He hears it all, I am sure. But now it is time to go. Be sure to kill Aegisthus! I tell you this beforehand in light of this: if in your wrestling match you take a deadly fall, I too am dead and you may speak of me as one who lives no more. [For I shall strike my heart with a two-edged sword. I shall go into the house and make it ready. If tidings of your good fortune are brought, the whole house will shout in triumph: if you die, it will be the reverse. I say this to you.]

¹⁹ Zeus was the father of Tantalus, the great-great-grandfather of Orestes and Electra.

683 ante 682 trai. Reiske 685 *κτανεῖν* Seidler: *θανεῖν* L
688-92 del. Kovacs, 689-93 Wilamowitz

EURIPIDES

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

πάντ' οἶδα.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πρὸς τὰδ' ἄνδρα γίγνεσθαί σε χρή.

ὑμεῖς δέ μοι, γυναῖκες, εὖ πυρσεύετε
 695 κραυγὴν ἀγῶνος τοῦδε· φρουρήσω δ' ἐγὼ
 πρόχειρον ἔγχος χειρὶ βαστάζουσ' ἐμῆ.
 οὐ γάρ ποτ' ἐχθροῖς τοῖς ἐμοῖς νικωμένη
 δίκην ὑφέξω, σῶμ' ἐμὸν καθυβρίσαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α

ἀταλὰν ὑπὸ τῆματέρος Ἀργείων†
 700 ὀρέων ποτὲ κληδῶν
 ἐν πολιαῖσι μένει φήμαις
 εὐαρμόστοις ἐν καλάμοις
 Πάνα μούσαν ἠδύθροον
 πνέοντ', ἀγρῶν ταμίαν,
 705 χρυσέαν ἄρνα καλλίποκον
 πορεύσαι. πετρίνοις δ' ἐπι-
 στας κᾶρυξ ἴαχεν βάθροις·
 Ἀγορὰν ἀγοράν, Μυκη-
 ναῖοι, στείχετε μακαρίων
 710 ὀψόμενοι τυράννων
 φάσματα δεινά· χοροὶ δ'
 <αὐτίκ' > Ἀτρειδᾶν ἐγέραιρον οἴκους.

⁶⁹⁹ ἀταλὰν Page: ἀταλᾶς L lac. indic. Willink, e.g.
 <μηκάδος > (Konacs) Ἀργείων, tum 713 χρυσηλάτῳ <ἀγλαῖα >

ELECTRA

ORESTES

I understand you perfectly.

ELECTRA

Therefore you must be brave.

But you, women, must cry out with beacon clarity the result of this contest. I shall be on guard, a sword at the ready in my hand. If I am defeated, I shall not allow my enemies the satisfaction of outraging my body.

Exit ELECTRA into the skene, ORESTES, Pylades, and OLD MAN with retinue by Eisodos B.

CHORUS

Once on a time a tender lamb taken from its mother
in the Argive mountains
(so runs the tale in our age-old legends)
did Pan, warder of the fields,
breathing sweet-voiced music
on well-joined reeds,
bring forth, a lamb with lovely fleece of gold.
And standing on a platform
of stone a herald shouted,
"To assembly, to assembly,
men of Mycenae,
to see the august portent
of your blessed rulers!" And choruses
<straightway> hailed the house of the Atridae.

705 καλλίποκον Heath: καλλιπλόκαμον L

707 ἴαχεν Elmsley: ἰάχει L

711 δεινά Denniston: δείματα L

712 <αὐτίκ'> Denniston

ἀντ. α

θυμέλαι δ' ἐπίτναντο χρυσήλατοι,
σελαγιῆτο δ' ἀν' ἄστρῳ

715 πῦρ ἐπιβώμιον Ἀργείων·
λωτὸς δὲ φθόγγον κελάδει
κάλλιστον, Μουσᾶν θεράπων.

μολπαὶ δ' ἠὔξονθ' ἕτεραι
χρυσέας ἀρνὸς ἀμφὶ λόγοις

720 Θυέστον· κρυφίαις γὰρ εὐ-
ναῖς πείσας ἄλοχον φίλαν
Ἀτρέως, τέρας ἐκκομί-
ζει πρὸς δώματα, νεόμενος δ'
εἰς ἀγόρους αὐτεῖ

725 τὰν κερόεσσαν ἔχειν

στρ. β χρυσεόμαλλον κατὰ δῶμα ποίμναν.

τότε δὴ τότε <τὰς> φαεν-
νὰς ἄστρων μετέβασ' ὁδοὺς
Ζεὺς καὶ φέγγος ἀελίου

730 λευκὸν τε πρόσωπον ἀ-
οῦς, τὰ δ' ἔσπερα νῶτ' ἐλαύ-
νει θερμᾷ φλογὶ θεοπύρφ.
νεφέλαι δ' ἔνυδροι πρὸς ἄρ-
κτον, ξηραὶ τ' Ἀμμωνίδες ἔ-

713 vide 699 719 ἕτεραι Murray: ἐραταὶ L
λόγοις Kovacs: ἐπίλογοι L 727 <τὰς> Willink
728 μετέβασ' Musgrave: μεταβὰς L

ἀμφὶ

ELECTRA

The temples of wrought gold were opened,
and in Argos fire gleamed
on many an altar.

The pipe, servant of the Muses,
gave forth its fair melody.

But other were the songs that swelled in praise
of the golden lamb because of the words
of Thyestes: for with illicit love
he won over the dear wife
of Atreus and removed
this portent to his own house, and then coming
into the assembly he cried out
that he had in his house
the horned lamb with fleece of gold.

Then, then it was
that Zeus changed the bright courses of the stars,
the light of the sun
and the pale visage of the dawn
and made it march to the West's expanse
with its divine and burning heat.²⁰

The clouds heavy with rain went toward the Bear,
and the dwelling place of Ammon wasted away

²⁰ Euripides alludes here, as at *Orestes* 1001-6, to the legend that the sun used to rise in the west and set in the east until Zeus, to show his disapproval of Thyestes' theft, caused it to change to its present course. See M. L. West's edition of *Orestes* ad loc.

EURIPIDES

- 735 δραιο φθίνουσ' ἀπειρόδροσοι,
καλλίστων ὄμβρων Διόθεν στερεῖσαι.
ἀντ. β
- λέγεται <τάδε>, τὰν δὲ πί-
στιν σμικρὰν παρ' ἔμοιγ' ἔχει,
στρέψαι θερμὰν ἀέλιον
- 740 χρυσωπὸν ἔδραν ἀλλά-
ξαντα δυστυχία βροτεί-
ω θνατᾶς ἔνεκεν δίκας.
φοβεροὶ δὲ βροτοῖσι μῦ-
θοι κέρδος πρὸς θεῶν θεραπεί-
- 745 ας. ὧν οὐ μνασθεῖσα πόσιν
κτείνεις, κλεινῶν συγγενέτειρ' ἀδελφῶν.

—ἔα ἔα·

- φίλοι, βοῆς ἠκούσατ', ἢ δοκῶ κενὴ
ὑπήλθέ μ', ὥστε νερτέρας βροντῆς Διός;
ιδού, τάδ' οὐκ ἄσημα πνεύματ' αἴρεται·
- 750 δέσποιν', ἀμειψον δώματ', Ἡλέκτρα, τάδε.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

φίλοι, τί χρῆμα; πῶς ἀγῶνος ἤκομεν;

737 <τάδε> Weil

739 ἀέλιον Canter: -ίου L

740-1 ἀμείψαντα Dindorf

744-5 θεραπείας Matthiae: -είαις L

748 νερτέρας βροντῆς Bothe: -α -ἦ L

ELECTRA

dry and bereft of water,²¹
robbed of the lovely rain that falls from Zeus.

That is the story men tell, but the credit
it receives from me is but slight,
that the gold-visaged sun should turn,
altering its torrid station
to cause mortals grief
for the punishment of their wrongdoing.
But fearful tales benefit mortals,
making them worship the gods,
the gods you forgot, kinswoman of glorious brothers,
when you murdered your husband.

A distant cry is heard offstage.

CHORUS LEADER

Ah! What is this? Friends, did you hear a shout (or was it
a mere fancy passing over me), like the roar of Zeus's thun-
der beneath the earth?

Another cry is heard.

There, that was a breath of air with a message on it! My
lady Electra, come out of the house!

Enter ELECTRA from the house.

ELECTRA

Friends, what has happened? How do we stand in the
battle?

²¹ Ammon lies southward, in Libya; the Bear is in the north.

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐκ οἶδα πλὴν ἔν· φόνοιον οἰμωγῆν κλύω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἤκουσα καὶ γώ, τηλόθεν μὲν ἀλλ' ὅμως.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μακρὰν γὰρ ἔρπει γῆρυς, ἐμφανῆς γε μῆν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

755 Ἀργεῖος ὁ στεναγμός ἢ φίλων ἐμῶν;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐκ οἶδα· πᾶν γὰρ μίγνυται μέλος βοῆς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

σφαγῆν ἀντίεις τήνδε μοι· τί μέλλομεν;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἔπισχε, τρανώς ὡς μάθης τύχας σέθεν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐκ ἔστι· νικώμεσθα· ποῦ γὰρ ἄγγελοι;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

760 ἤξουσιν· οὔτοι βασιλέα φαῦλον κτανεῖν.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ὦ καλλίνικοι παρθένοι Μυκηνίδες,
νικῶντ' Ὀρέστην πᾶσιν ἀγγέλλω φίλοις,
Ἀγαμέμνωνος δὲ φονέα κείμενον πέδῳ
Αἴγισθον· ἀλλὰ θεοῖσιν εὔχεσθαι χρεῶν.

755 στεναγμός· ἢ Willink

757 τῆδέ F. W. Schmidt

ELECTRA

CHORUS LEADER

I know one thing only: I heard a cry of death.

ELECTRA

I heard it too, far off but audible.

CHORUS LEADER

The sound has far to travel, but it is clear.

ELECTRA

Was it the cry of an Argive or of those I love?

CHORUS LEADER

I don't know. The whole tune of the shouting was confused.

ELECTRA

Your words mean slaughter for me: why do I delay?

CHORUS LEADER

But stay, so that you may learn your fate for sure.

ELECTRA

I cannot. We are beaten. For where are our messengers?

CHORUS LEADER

They will come. It is no slight thing, you know, to kill a king.

Enter servant of Orestes as MESSENGER by Eisodos B.

MESSENGER

Maids of Mycenae, glorious in victory, I bring news to all who love him that Orestes is victorious and that Aegisthus, Agamemnon's murderer, has been struck down! So we must offer thanks to the gods.

EURIPIDES

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

765 τίς δ' εἶ σύ; πῶς μοι πιστὰ σημαίνεις τάδε;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

οὐκ οἶσθ' ἀδελφοῦ μ' εἰσορώσα πρόσπολον;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ φίλτατ', ἔκ τοι δείματος δυσγνωσίαν
εἶχον προσώπον· νῦν δὲ γιγνώσκω σε δή.
τί φῆς; τέθνηκε πατὴρ ἐμοῦ στυγνὸς φονεὺς;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

770 τέθνηκε· δῖς σοι ταῦθ', ἃ γοῦν βούλη, λέγω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ θεοί, Δίκη τε πάνθ' ὀρώσ', ἦλθές ποτε.
ποῖω τρόπῳ δὲ καὶ τίνι ρυθμῷ φόνου
κτείνει Θυέστου παῖδα; βούλομαι μαθεῖν.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

775 ἐπεὶ μελάθρων τῶνδ' ἀπήραμεν πόδα,
ἔσβάντες ἦμεν δίκροτον εἰς ἀμαξιτὸν
ἔνθ' ἦν ὁ καινὸς τῶν Μυκηναίων ἀναξ.
κυρεῖ δὲ κήποις ἐν καταρρύτοις βεβώς,
δρέπων τερείνης μυρσίνης κάρα πλόκουσ'
ιδῶν δ' ἀντεῖ· Χαίρειτ', ὦ ξένοι· τίνες
780 πόθεν πορεύεσθ' ἔστε τ' ἐκ ποίας χθονός;
ὁ δ' εἶπ' Ὀρέστης· Θεσσαλοῦ· πρὸς δ' Ἀλφεὸν
θύσοντες ἐρχόμεσθ' Ὀλυμπίῳ Δί.
κλυῶν δὲ ταῦτ' Αἴγισθος ἐννέπει τάδε·

776 καινὸς Κνίθαλα: κλεινὸς L

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

Who are you? How can I trust what you tell me?

MESSENGER

Do you not know me, your brother's servant, by sight?

ELECTRA

Dear man, fear made me slow to recognize your face, but now I see who you are. What is this you say? My father's hateful murderer is dead?

MESSENGER

Yes, dead: I tell you the same welcome news twice.

ELECTRA

O gods and all-seeing Justice, at last you have come! But I want to know how and with what murderous stroke he killed Thyestes' son.

MESSENGER

After we left this house, we entered a broad wagon road and came to where the new king of Mycenae was. He happened to be standing in a well-watered garden, plucking tender myrtle to weave as a garland for his head. He saw us and shouted, "Hail, strangers! Who are you, where have you come from, and what is your native land?" Orestes said, "We are Thessalians, bound for the Alpheus River to make sacrifice to Olympian Zeus."²² When Aegisthus heard this, he said, "Today you must share with me in

²² Orestes represents himself as an athlete headed for the Olympic games.

⁷⁸⁰ πορεύεσθ' ἔσται Musgrave: πορεύεσθέ τ' L

EURIPIDES

- 785 Νῦν μὲν παρ' ἡμῖν χρῆ συνεστίους ἐμοὶ
 θοίνης γενέσθαι τυγχάνω δὲ βουθυτῶν
 Νύμφαις· ἐῷοι δ' ἐξαναστάντες λέχους
 ἐς ταῦτ' ἤξειτ'. ἀλλ' ἴωμεν ἐς δόμους—
 καὶ ταῦθ' ἄμ' ἠγόρευε καὶ χερὸς λαβὼν
 παρῆγεν ἡμᾶς—οὐδ' ἀπαρνείσθαι χρεῶν.
 790 ἐπεὶ δ' ἐν οἴκοις ἦμεν, ἐννέπει τάδε·
 λούτρ' ὡς τάχιστα τοῖς ξένοις τις αἰρέτω,
 ὡς ἀμφὶ βωμὸν στῶσι χερνίβων πέλας.
 ἀλλ' εἰπ' Ὀρέστης· Ἀρτίως ἠγνίσμεθα
 λουτροῖσι καθαροῖς ποταμίων ρείθρων ἄπο.
 795 εἰ δὲ ξένους ἀστοῖσι συνθύειν χρεῶν,
 Αὔγισθ', ἔτοιμοι κοῦκ ἀπαρνούμεσθ', ἀναξ.
 τοῦτον μὲν οὖν μεθεῖσαν ἐκ μέσου λόγον·
 λόγχας δὲ θέντες δεσπότην φρουρήματα
 δμῶες πρὸς ἔργον πάντες ἴεσαν χέρας·
 800 οἱ μὲν σφαγείον ἔφερον, οἱ δ' ἦρον κανᾶ,
 ἄλλοι δὲ πῦρ ἀνήπτον ἀμφὶ τ' ἐσχάραις
 λέβητας ὄρθουν· πᾶσα δ' ἐκτύπει στέγη.
 λαβὼν δὲ προχύτας μητρὸς εὐνέτης σέθεν
 ἔβαλλε βωμούς, τοιάδ' ἐννέπων ἔπη·
 805 Νύμφαι πετραῖαι, πολλάκις με βουθυτεῖν
 καὶ τὴν κατ' οἴκους Τυνδαρίδα δάμαρτ' ἐμὴν
 πράσσουντας ὡς νῦν, τοὺς δ' ἐμοὺς ἐχθροὺς κακῶς—
 λέγων Ὀρέστην καὶ σέ. δεσπότης δ' ἐμὸς

784 παρ' ἡμῖν] μένοντας L. v. Sybel
 grave 785 θοίνης Reiske: θοίνην L

ἐμοὶ] ὁμοῦ Mus-

ELECTRA

the feast at our house. I happen to be sacrificing a bullock to the Nymphs. Tomorrow if you get up at dawn, you will arrive just as quickly at your journey's end. But let us go into the house"—and as he spoke he took us by the hand and began to lead us from the road—"and you must not say no."

When we were inside the house, he said, "Someone quickly bring purifying water for the guests so that they may stand around the altar next to the lustral basins." But Orestes said, "We have but recently been cleansed by a pure bath in the running streams of a river.²³ So if it is right for strangers to help citizens at a sacrifice, Aegisthus, we are ready and do not refuse, my lord."

Thus they spoke standing in their midst, and the slaves laid aside the spears that guarded their master and put forth their hands to their work: some brought a bowl to catch the blood, others brought baskets, still others proceeded to light the fire and set cauldrons upright about the altar. The whole house resounded with activity.

Then your mother's husband took barley grains and cast them at the altar, saying as he did so, "You nymphs of the rock, may I and my wife, Tyndareus' daughter, who is at home, live to offer many such sacrifices while we enjoy our present good fortune, but may my enemies"—he meant you and Orestes—"fare badly." But my master prayed in-

²³ Orestes cleverly avoids accepting hospitality from Aegisthus and thereby becoming his guest, which would have made his murder the killing of a host.

786 fort. *τάχους* 797 *ἐς μέσου* Keene

801 *ἐσχάrais* Wecklein: -as L

EURIPIDES

- τὰναντί' ἠΰχετ', οὐ γεγωνίσκων λόγους,
 810 λαβείν πατρῶα δώματ'. ἐκ κανοῦ δ' ἔλων
 Αἴγισθος ὀρθὴν σφαγίδα, μοσχίαν τρίχα
 τεμῶν ἐφ' ἄγνόν πῦρ ἔθηκε δεξιῶ,
 κάσφαξ' ἐπ' ὤμων μόσχον ὡς ἦραν χεροῖν
 δμῶες, λέγει δὲ σῶ κασιγνήτῳ τάδε·
 815 Ἐν τῶν καλῶν κομποῦσι τοῖσι Θεσσαλοῖς
 εἶναι τόδ', ὅστις ταῦρον ἀρταμεῖ καλῶς
 ἵππους τ' ὀχμάζει· λαβὲ σίδηρον, ᾧ ξένε,
 δεῖξόν τε φήμην ἔτυμον ἀμφὶ Θεσσαλῶν.
 ὁ δ' εὐκρότητον Δωρίδ' ἀρπάσας χεροῖν,
 820 ῥύψας ἀπ' ὤμων εὐπρεπῆ πορπάματα,
 Πυλάδην μὲν εἶλετ' ἐν πόνοις ὑπηρέτην,
 δμῶας δ' ἀπωθεί· καὶ λαβὼν μόσχον πόδα
 λευκὰς ἐγύμνου σάρκας ἐκτείνων χερί·
 θάσσον δὲ βύρσαν ἐξέδειρεν ἢ δρομεὺς
 825 δισσοὺς διαύλους ἱπίους διήνυσ' ἄν,
 κἀνείτο λαγόνας. ἱερά δ' ἐς χεῖρας λαβὼν
 Αἴγισθος ἤθρει. καὶ λοβὸς μὲν οὐ προσῆν
 σπλάγχνοις, πύλαι δὲ καὶ δοχαὶ χολῆς πέλας
 κακὰς ἔφαινον τῷ σκοποῦντι προσβολάς.
 830 χῶ μὲν σκυθράζει, δεσπότης δ' ἀνιστορεῖ·
 Τί χρήμ' ἀθυμεῖς; ᾗ ξέν', ὀρρωδῶ τινα
 δόλον θυραῖον. ἔστι δ' ἔχθιστος βροτῶν
 Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖς πολέμιός τ' ἐμοῖς δόμοις·
 ὁ δ' εἶπε· Φυγάδος δῆτα δειμαίνεις δόλον,

823 χερί Musgrave: χέρα L

ELECTRA

audibly for the opposite, that he should get back his father's house. Aegisthus took from a basket a straight-bladed sacrificial knife, cut off a hair of the calf and put it on the pure fire with his right hand, and then when the servants had lifted the calf onto their shoulders, he cut its throat. Then he said to your brother: "They say that the Thesalians regard it as a fine accomplishment to butcher a bullock or break a horse. Take the knife, stranger, and show the truth of the Thessalians' reputation."

Orestes took the well-wrought Doric blade in his hand and stripped his handsome cloak from his shoulders, and choosing Pylades as his assistant in the work he pushed the slaves back. Then he took the calf's foot and laid bare the white flesh beneath the skin by tugging at it with his hand. And in less time than a runner could have finished both legs of a hippodrome²⁴ he flayed off the hide and loosened the flanks. Aegisthus took the sacred portions into his hands and proceeded to inspect them. In the entrails the lobe of the liver was missing, and the portal vein and gall bladder showed that an attack of trouble for the observer was near at hand.

Aegisthus scowled, and my master asked him, "Why are you downcast?" "Stranger," he said, "I fear deceit from abroad. The son of Agamemnon is my bitterest personal enemy and is a foe to my house." But Orestes said, "Do you really fear the trickery of an exile when you are in

²⁴ Two legs of a hippodrome (twice the length of an ordinary race course) equal about 400 yards.

825 δῆνυσ' ἄν Kovacs cl. *Med.* 1181-2: δῆνυσεν L

EURIPIDES

- 835 πόλεως ἀνάσσω; οὐχ, ὅπως παστήρια
 θοινασόμεσθα, Φθιάδ' ἀντὶ Δωρικῆς
 οἶσει τις ἡμῖν κοπίδ' ἀναρρήξαι χέλυ;·
 λαβὼν δὲ κόπτει. σπλάγχνα δ' Αἰγισθος λαβὼν
 ἦθρει διαιρῶν. τοῦ δὲ νεύοντος κάτω
- 840 ὄνυχας ἐπ' ἄκρους στας κασίγνητος σέθεν
 ἐς σφονδύλους ἔπαισε, νωτιαία δὲ
 ἔρρηξεν ἄρθρα· πᾶν δὲ σῶμ' ἄνω κάτω
 ἦσπαιρεν ἠλέλιζε δυσθνήσκων φόνῳ.
 δμῶες δ' ἰδόντες εὐθὺς ἦξαν ἐς δόρυ,
- 845 πολλοὶ μάχεσθαι πρὸς δύ' ἀνδρείας δ' ὑπο
 ἔστησαν ἀντίπρωρα σείοντες βέλη
 Πυλάδης Ὀρέστης τ'. εἶπε δ'· Οὐχὶ δυσμενῆς
 ἦκω πόλει τῆδ' οὐδ' ἐμοῖς ὀπάοισιν,
 φονέα δὲ πατρὸς ἀντετιμωρησάμην
- 850 τλήμων Ὀρέστης· ἀλλὰ μὴ με καίνετε,
 πατρὸς παλαιοὶ δμῶες. οἱ δ', ἐπεὶ λόγων
 ἦκουσαν, ἔσχον κάμακας· ἐγνώσθη δ' ὑπὸ
 γέροντος ἐν δόμοισιν ἀρχαίου τινός.
 στέφουσι δ' εὐθὺς σοῦ κασιγνήτου κᾶρα
- 855 χαίροντες ἀλαλάζοντες. ἔρχεται δὲ σοὶ
 κᾶρα ἰδιδείξων οὐχὶ Γοργόνης φέρων
 ἀλλ' ὄν στυγεῖς Αἰγισθον· αἷμα δ' αἵματος
 πικρὸς δανεισμὸς ἦλθε τῷ θανόντι νῦν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ.

860 θῆς ἐς χορόν, ᾧ φίλα, ἔχνος, ὡς νεβρὸς οὐράνιον

ELECTRA

command of the city? Someone bring me a Phthian cleaver in place of this Doric knife to break open the breast bone so that we may feast on the innards!" When he had received it, he smashed the breast bone. Aegisthus took the innards and began to divide and inspect them. And as he was bending down, your brother standing on tip-toe struck him in the spine and smashed his vertebrae: his whole body from head to toe convulsed and shook in a bloody death agony.

When the slaves saw this, they rushed to their weapons, a large number for two men to fight against. But Pylades and Orestes courageously stood their ground, brandishing their weapons in front of them. Then Orestes said, "I have not come as the enemy of this city or of my servants. Rather, I, Orestes the unfortunate, have taken vengeance on my father's murderer. Do not kill me, former servants of my father!" The slaves, when they had heard his words, checked their spears, and Orestes was recognized by an old servant in the house.

Immediately with rejoicing and shouts of joy they garlanded your brother's head. He is coming with something to show you, not a Gorgon's head but Aegisthus whom you hate. For the one who has died bloodshed has come as the bitter return for bloodshed.

Exit MESSENGER by Eisodos B.

CHORUS

Lift your feet in dancing, dear friend, leap heaven-high

837 ἀναρρήξαι Wecklein: ἀπορρήξω L

843 ἠλέλιζε Schenkl: ἠλάλαζεν L

850 καίνετε Elmsley: κτείν- L

EURIPIDES

πήδημα κουφίζουσα σὺν ἀγλαΐα.

νικᾶ στεφαναφορίαν

†κρείσσω τοῖς† παρ' Ἀλφειοῦ ρεέθροισι τελέσ-
σας κασίγνητος σέθεν· ἀλλ' ὑπάειδε

865 καλλίνικον ὦδ' ἀν ἐμῷ χορῷ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ φέγγος, ὦ τέθριππον ἡλίου σέλας,

ὦ γαῖα καὶ νύξ ἦν ἐδερκόμην πάρος,

ἴνυ ὄμμα τοῦμόν ἀμπτυχαί τ' ἐλεύθεροι,

ἐπεὶ πατρὸς πέπτωκεν Αἴγισθος φονεύς.

870 φέρ', οἶα δὴ ἔχω καὶ δόμοι κεύθουσί μου

κόμης ἀγάλματ' ἐξενέγκωμεν, φίλαι,

στέψω τ' ἀδελφοῦ κρᾶτα τοῦ νικηφόρου.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀντ.

σὺ μὲν νῦν ἀγάλματ' ἄειρε κρατί· τὸ δ' ἀμέτερον

875 χωρήσεται Μούσαισι χόρευμα φίλον.

ἴνυ οἱ πάρος ἀμετέρας

γαίας τυραννέουσιν φίλοι βασιλῆ-

ες δικαίως, τοὺς ἀδίκους καθελόντες.

ἀλλ' ἴτω ξύναυλος βοᾷ χαρᾶ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

880 ὦ καλλίνικε, πατρὸς ἐκ νικηφόρου

863 οὐ τὰν vel οὐχ ὡς Wecklein olim: οἶαν Dindorf

864 ὑπάειδε Blaydes: ἐπ- L

871 ἐξενέγκωμεν Lenting: -ωμαι L

876 ἀμετέρας Wecklein: -οι L

ELECTRA

like a fawn in your rejoicing!
Your brother has completed, has won a crown of victory
greater than that by the streams of the Alpheus!²⁵
Accompany with your song of triumph
the steps of my dance!

ELECTRA

O light, O chariot-drawn blaze of the sun, O earth and the
night my gaze once looked upon, now I can open my eyes
in freedom since Aegisthus, my father's killer, has fallen!
Come, friends, let us bring out such adornments for his
hair as I possess and my house contains, and let me garland
the head of my victorious brother!

Exit ELECTRA into the house.

CHORUS

You, then, bring the adornments for his head.
But our dancing shall go on, dancing the Muses love.
Now shall our beloved kings of old
rule over our land
in justice since they have destroyed the wicked!
So let the cry of our voices go in concert with our joy!

*Enter ELECTRA with garlands from the house, ORESTES
and Pylades by Eisodes B, accompanied by attendants
bearing the body of Aegisthus, which they set down before
the house.*

ELECTRA

O Orestes, glorious in victory, son of the man who won the

²⁵ I.e. at the Olympic Games.

EURIPIDES

- γεγώς, Ὀρέστα, τῆς ὑπ' Ἰλίῳ μάχης,
 δέξαι κόμης σῆς βοστρύχων ἀνδήματα.
 ἦκεις γὰρ οὐκ ἀχρεῖον ἔκπλεθρον δραμῶν
 ἀγῶν' ἐς οἴκους ἀλλὰ πολέμιον κτανῶν
 885 Αἴγισθον, ὃς σὸν πατέρα κάμῶν ὤλεσεν.
 σύ τ', ὦ παρασπίστ', ἀνδρὸς εὐσεβεστάτου
 παιδεύμα Πυλάδῃ, στέφανον ἐξ ἐμῆς χερὸς
 δέχου· φέρῃ γὰρ καὶ σὺ τῶδ' ἴσον μέρος
 ἀγῶνος· αἰεὶ δ' εὐτυχεῖς φαίνοισθέ μοι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

- 890 θεοὺς μὲν ἡγοῦ πρῶτον, Ἥλέκτρα, τύχης
 ἀρχηγέτας τῆσδ', εἶτα κάμ' ἐπαίνεσον
 τὸν τῶν θεῶν τε τῆς τύχης θ' ὑπηρέτην.
 ἦκω γὰρ οὐ λόγοισιν ἀλλ' ἔργοις κτανῶν
 Αἴγισθον· ἴως δὲ τῶ σάφ' εἰδέναι τάδε
 895 προσθῶμεν†, αὐτὸν τὸν θανόντα σοι φέρω,
 ὃν εἶτε χρήζεις θηρσὶν ἀρπαγὴν πρόθεσ,
 ἢ σκύλον οἰωνοῖσιν, αἰθέρος τέκνοις,
 πῆξασ' ἔρεισον σκόλοπι· σὸς γάρ ἐστι νῦν
 δούλος, πάροιθε δεσπότης κεκλημένος.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

- 900 αἰσχύνομαι μὲν, βούλομαι δ' εἰπεῖν ὅμως.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τί χρήμα; λέξον ὡς φόβου γ' ἔξωθεν εἶ.

< ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

νεκρὸν περ ὄντα τόνδ' ὄνειδίσαι θέλω.

ELECTRA

prize of victory in the war at Troy, accept this garland for the tresses of your hair! You have come home: you have run no futile furlong but have destroyed your enemy Aegisthus, who killed your father and mine! (*She garlands Orestes' head.*) And you, Pylades, his companion in arms, nursling of a man most god-fearing, accept a garland from my hand! For you win from this contest a prize equal to his. Ever may I see you both in prosperity! (*She garlands Pylades' head.*)

ORESTES

Regard the gods first, Electra, as the authors of this turn of fate, and thereafter praise me also, the servant of the gods and of fate. I arrive having killed Aegisthus, not in word but in deed: and in order to add to your clear knowledge of this, I bring you the dead man himself. You may, if you like, expose him as food for the wild beasts or spit him on a crag as spoil for birds, the children of the air. For he is now your slave, though formerly called your master.

ELECTRA

I want to speak, but shame prevents me.

ORESTES

What is it? Speak, since you are out of danger.

<ELECTRA

I want to hurl abuse at this man, although he is dead.

894-5 τῷ . . . προθῶμεν Barnes: ὡς . . . προσθῶμεν delere
malebat Diggle

899 del. Naber

901 post h.v. lac. indic. Kovacs

EURIPIDES

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

καὶ μὴν πάρεστι, τῇ τύχῃ τε χρηστέον.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

καὶ βούλομαι μὲν ταῦτα δρᾶν, δέδοικα δὲ . . .

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τί χρῆμα δρᾶσαι, σύγγον', ἢ παθεῖν φοβῆ;>

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

νεκροὺς ὑβρίζειν, μή μέ τις φθόνος βάλῃ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεὶς ὅστις ἂν μέμφαιτό σε.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

δυσάρεστος ἡμῶν καὶ φιλόσογος πόλις.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

905 λέγ', εἴ τι χρῆζεις, σύγγον'. ἀσπόνδοισι γὰρ
νόμοισιν ἔχθραν τῶδε συμβεβλήκαμεν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

εἶέν τιν' ἀρχὴν πρῶτά σ' ἐξείπω κακῶν,
ποιίας τελευτάς; τίνα μέσον τάξω λόγον;
καὶ μὴν δι' ὄρθρων γ' οὐποτ' ἐξελίμπανον
910 θρυλοῦσ' ἃ γ' εἰπεῖν ἤθελον κατ' ὄμμα σόν,
εἰ δὴ γενοίμην δειμάτων ἐλευθέρα
τῶν πρόσθε. νῦν οὖν ἔσμεν ἀποδώσω δέ σοι
ἐκεῖν' ἃ σε ζῶντ' ἤθελον λέξαι κακά.

902 φθόνος Tyrwhitt: -φ L

ELECTRA

ORESTES

You may: make use of your good fortune.

ELECTRA

I want to, but I am afraid . . .

ORESTES

Of doing or suffering what, sister?>

ELECTRA

. . . to insult the dead lest I be struck by some ill will.

ORESTES

There is no one who will find fault with you.

ELECTRA

Our city is peevish and inclined to criticize.

ORESTES

Speak if you want, sister. For our enmity against this man admits no truce.

ELECTRA

Well then.²⁶ What beginning shall I make of insult, what end? What theme shall I put in the center? Yet in the early morning hours I never ceased from rehearsing what I wanted to say to your face if ever I should be freed from the fears that are now past. Now I am free, and I shall pay out to you the insults that I wanted to pay you while you lived.

²⁶ Several portions of this speech, addressed to the dead Aegisthus, have been suspected of being interpolated, and I have bracketed the likeliest suspects and recorded others in the notes to the Greek. In addition there seems to be a lacuna after line 914 (the join with 915 seems to me impossible), and I have supplied lines that would be appropriate in the speech, restore the grammar, and account for the omission.

EURIPIDES

ἀπώλεσάς με κῶρφανὴν φίλου πατρὸς
 <πικρῶς ἔθηκας· ὄν γ' ἄφαρκτον ἐκ λόχου
 ἔκτεινας, ἔργου δ' ἦν σύνεργός σοι γυνή.
 κοῦκ ἤρκεσεν ταῦτ', ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ μ' ὦρα γάμου
 εἶχ', ἐξέδωκας εὐγενῶν μὲν οὐδενί,
 χέρνητι δ' ἀνδρὶ τῷδε, θανάσιμον γάμον,
 φυγάδα δ' Ὀρέστην ἐξεκήρυξας κτανεῖν,
 τὸν δὲ κτανόντα δυσσεβῶς χρυσὸν πολὺν
 λαβεῖν πατρώων καμὲ τητᾶσθαι δόμων>
 915 καὶ τόνδ' ἔθηκας, οὐδὲν ἠδικημένος.

καῖγῆμας αἰσχροῦς μητέρ' ἀνδρα τ' ἔκτανες
 στρατηλατοῦνθ' Ἑλλησι, οὐκ ἐλθὼν Φρύγας.
 ἐς τοῦτο δ' ἦλθες ἀμαθίας ὥστ' ἠλπισας
 ὡς ἐς σέ μὲν δὴ μητέρ' οὐχ ἔξοις κακῆν
 920 γήμας, ἐμοῦ δὲ πατρὸς ἠδίκηι λέχη.
 [ἴστω δ', ὅταν τις διολέσας δάμαρτά του
 κρυπταῖσιν εὐναῖς εἴτ' ἀναγκασθῆ λαβεῖν,
 δύστηνός ἐστιν, εἰ δοκεῖ τὸ σωφρονεῖν
 ἐκεῖ μὲν αὐτὴν οὐκ ἔχειν, παρ' οἷ δ' ἔχειν.]

925 ἀλγιστα δ' ᾤκεις, οὐ δοκῶν οἰκεῖν κακῶς·
 ἠῖδησθα γὰρ δῆτ' ἀνόσιον γήμας γάμον,
 μήτηρ δὲ σ' ἀνδρα δυσσεβῆ κεκτημένη.
 ἄμφω πονηρῶ δ' ὄντ' ἀνηρείσθον τύχην
 κείνη τε τὴν σὴν καὶ σὺ τοῦκείνης κακόν.
 930 πᾶσιν δ' ἐν Ἀργείοισιν ἤκουες τάδε·
 ὁ τῆς γυναικός, οὐχὶ τάνδρὸς ἢ γυνή.

⁹¹⁴ post h. v. lac. indic. Kovacs, diffidenter suppl.

ELECTRA

You destroyed my life and <cruelly> bereft me of my father, <for you caught him off his guard from an ambush with a woman as your helper. But that was not enough for you: when I came of age you married me to none of the nobility but to this laboring man, a marriage like a death, and the proclamation was made to kill the exiled Orestes and that his impious killer should be richly rewarded. Both me> and him you have caused <to be deprived of our paternal home> though we had done you no wrong.

You shamefully married my mother and killed the man who was general over the Greeks though you had not gone to Troy. And you were so far gone in folly that you imagined that if you married my mother you would find in her no bad wife, though she was unfaithful to the bed of my father. [If a man corrupts another's wife by illicit love and then is compelled to take her as wife, he should know that he is a poor fool if he imagines that in her former marriage she had no chastity but has it in his house.]

The life you lived was miserable, although people did not think you lived badly. You knew that you had made an impious marriage, and my mother knew that in you she possessed a godless husband. Wicked both, the pair of you took on each other's lot, she yours and you her villainy. And among all the Argives this was said of you, "The man belongs to his wife, not she to him." Yet it is a disgrace for the

916-20 suspectos hab. Kovacs 920 ἠδίκηει Canter: -εις L
 921-4 del. Hartung 928 ἀνηρείσθων Walberg: ἀφαιρ- L
 929 fort. τοῦ σοῦ . . . τοῦ κείνης κακοῦ
 930-7 suspectos hab. Kovacs (932-7 Wecklein)

EURIPIDES

- καίτοι τόδ' αἰσχρόν, προστατεῖν γε δωμάτων
 γυναῖκα, μὴ τὸν ἄνδρα· κάκείνους στυγῶ
 τοὺς παῖδας, ὅστις τοῦ μὲν ἄρσενος πατρὸς
 935 οὐκ ὠνόμασται, τῆς δὲ μητρὸς ἐν πόλει.
 ἐπίσημα γὰρ γήμαντι καὶ μείζω λέχη
 τάνδρὸς μὲν οὐδεῖς, τῶν δὲ θηλειῶν λόγος.
 ὁ δ' ἠπάτα σε πλείστον οὐκ ἐγνωκότα,
 ἤνχεις τις εἶναι τοῖσι χρήμασι σθένων·
 940 τὰ δ' οὐδὲν εἰ μὴ βραχὺν ὀμιλῆσαι χρόνον.
 ἢ γὰρ φύσις βέβαιος, οὐ τὰ χρήματα.
 ἢ μὲν γὰρ αἰεὶ παραμένουσ' αἶρει κακά·
 ὁ δ' ὄλβος ἀδίκως καὶ μετὰ σκαιῶν ξυνῶν
 ἐξέπτατ' οἴκων, σμικρὸν ἀνθήσας χρόνον.
 945 ἂ δ' ἐς γυναῖκας (παρθένῳ γὰρ οὐ καλὸν
 λέγειν) σιωπῶ, γνωρίμως δ' αἰνίξομαι·
 ὕβριζες, ὡς δὴ βασιλικοὺς ἔχων δόμους
 κάλλει τ' ἀραρώς. ἀλλ' ἔμοιγ' εἴη πόσις
 μὴ παρθενωπὸς ἀλλὰ τάνδρείου τρόπου.
 950 τὰ γὰρ τέκν' αὐτῶν Ἄρεος ἐκκρεμάννυται,
 τὰ δ' εὐπρεπῆ δὴ κόσμος ἐν χοροῖς μόνον.
 ἔρρ', οὐδὲν εἰδὼς σῶν· ἐφευρεθεὶς χρόνῳ
 δίκην δέδωκας. ὦδέ τις κακοῦργος ὦν
 μή μοι τὸ πρῶτον βῆμ' εἰάν δράμη καλῶς
 955 νικᾶν δοκέιτω τὴν Δίκην, πρὶν ἂν πέρας
 γραμμῆς ἴκηται καὶ τέλος κάμψῃ βίου.

934 πατρὸς] παρὸν Camper

941-4 del. Bruhn

ELECTRA

woman, rather than the man, to be the head of a house. I loathe any child who derives his name in the city not from his father but from his mother. For when a man marries a wife of greater eminence than himself, no account is taken of the man but only of his wife.

But where you were most deceived and mistaken was that you thought you were really someone on the strength of your money. But money does nothing except to stay with us a short while. It is character that is reliable, not money. Character stands beside us always and shoulders our troubles, while wealth lives unjustly with fools and then flies off from their houses, having blossomed for only a short time.

Your conduct toward women (since it ill befits a virgin to describe it) I pass over in silence, but I shall give an intelligible hint. You acted with outrage thinking that you had a king's house and were well provided with good looks. But I would rather have a husband who is not girlish in his looks but of the manly sort. For children of the manly hold fast to valor, while the pretty ones are only good to adorn a chorus.

Be gone, then, man of unsound thoughts: unmasked by Time, you have paid the penalty! Therefore let not the criminal imagine, just because he has run his first steps well, that he is victorious over Justice until he reaches the finish line and runs life's final lap!

952 σῶν Radermacher: ὄν L

955 πέρας Weil: πέλας L: τέλος tt

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἔπραξε δεινά, δεινὰ δ' ἀντέδωκε σοὶ
καὶ τῷδ'· ἔχει γὰρ ἡ Δίκη μέγα σθένος.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

960 εἶέν· κομίζειν τοῦδε σῶμ' ἔσω χρεῶν
σκοτῶ τε δοῦναι, δμῶες, ὡς, ὅταν μόλη
μήτηρ, σφαγῆς πάροιθε μὴ 'σίδη νεκρόν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐπίσχεσ· ἐμβάλωμεν εἰς ἄλλον λόγον.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τί δ'; ἐκ Μυκηνῶν μῶν βοηδρόμους ὄρᾱς;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὔκ, ἀλλὰ τὴν τεκούσαν ἢ μ' ἐγείνατο.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

966 καὶ μὴν ὄχοις γε καὶ στολῇ λαμπρύνεται.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

965 καλῶς ἄρ' ἄρκυν ἐς μέσην πορεύεται.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τί δῆτα δρῶμεν; μητέρ' ἢ φονεύσομεν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

μῶν σ' οἶκτος εἶλε, μητρὸς ὡς εἶδες δέμας;

962 ἐσβάλλωμεν Diggle

963 ὄρᾱς Bothe: ὄρῶ L

965, 966 invicem transposuit Kirchhoff

966 γε Schaefer: τε L

ELECTRA

CHORUS LEADER

Terrible were his deeds, and terrible the recompense he has paid you and Orestes. Justice is mighty indeed.

ORESTES

Well then, servants, now you must take this man's body into the house and consign it to the dark so that when my mother comes she may not see the corpse before she is killed.

The attendants take Aegisthus' body into the house.

ELECTRA

(*looking toward Eisdos A*) Stay! Let us talk of another subject!

ORESTES

What is it? Do you perhaps see soldiers from Mycenae²⁷ come to Aegisthus' aid?

ELECTRA

No: it is the mother who gave me birth.

ORESTES

And see how splendidly she goes in her chariot and finery!

ELECTRA

How grandly, then, she walks into the middle of our trap!

ORESTES

What then shall we do? Shall we kill our mother?

ELECTRA

Surely you are not seized by pity since you caught sight of your mother in person?

²⁷ See note on line 35 above.

EURIPIDES

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

φεύ·

πῶς γὰρ κτάνω νῦν, ἢ μ' ἔθρεψε κᾶτεκεν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

970 ὥσπερ πατέρα σὸν ἦδε κᾶμὸν ὤλεσεν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὦ Φοῖβε, πολλήν γ' ἀμαθίαν ἐθέσπισας . . .

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὅπου δ' Ἀπόλλων σκαιὸς ἦ, τίνες σοφοί;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

. . . ὅστις μ' ἔχρησας μητέρ', ἦν οὐ χρή, κτανεῖν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

βλάβπη δὲ δὴ τί πατρὶ τιμωρῶν σέθεν;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

975 μητροκτόνος νῦν φεύξομαι, τόθ' ἀγνὸς ὢν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

καὶ μή γ' ἀμύνων πατρὶ δυσσεβῆς ἔση.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἐγῶδα· μητρὸς δ' οὐ φόνου δώσω δίκας;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τί δ' ἦν πατρώαν διαμεθῆς τιμωρίαν;

973 χρή Kovacs: χρῆν L

977 ἐγῶδα Musgrave: ἐγὼ δὲ L

δ' οὐ Herwerden: τοῦ L

978 τί δ' ἦν Nauck: τῶ; δαὶ L

ELECTRA

ORESTES

Ah me! How can I kill her, the woman who bore and nurtured me?

ELECTRA

In just the way she killed your father and mine.

ORESTES

Phoebus Apollo, there was much folly in your oracle . . .

ELECTRA

But where Apollo is foolish, who is wise?

ORESTES

. . . seeing that you bade me kill one I should not kill, my mother.

ELECTRA

But what harm will you suffer if you avenge your father?

ORESTES

I shall be exiled as a matricide, though formerly I was free of stain.

ELECTRA

And if you do not avenge your father, you will be guilty of impiety.

ORESTES

I know. But shall I not be punished for my mother's murder?

ELECTRA

But what will happen if you neglect to avenge your father?

EURIPIDES

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἄρ' αὐτ' ἀλάστωρ εἶπ' ἀπεικασθεὶς θεῶ;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

980 ἱερὸν καθίζων τρίποδ'; ἐγὼ μὲν οὐ δοκῶ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐ τὰν πιθοίμην εὖ μεμαντεῦσθαι τάδε.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐ μὴ κακισθεὶς εἰς ἀνανδρίαν πεσῆ,
ἀλλ' εἶ τὸν αὐτὸν τῆδ' ὑποστήσων δόλον
ᾧ καὶ πόσιν καθείλες Αἴγισθον κτανών;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

985 ἔσειμι· δεινοῦ δ' ἄρχομαι προβλήματος
καὶ δεινὰ δράσω. θεοῖσι δ' εἰ δοκεῖ τάδε,
ἔστω· πικρὸν δ', οὐχ ἡδύ, τὰ γώνισμά μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἰὼ <ἰώ>,

βασίλεια γύναι χθονὸς Ἀργείας,
παῖ Τυνδάρεω,

990 καὶ τοῖν ἀγαθοῖν ξύγγονε κούρου
Διός, οἱ φλογερὰν αἰθέρ' ἐν ἄστροις
ναίουσι, βροτῶν ἐν ἀλὸς ῥοθίοις
τιμὰς σωτήρας ἔχοντες·

981 οὐ τὰν Hermann: οὐδ' ἂν L

982 πεσῆ Elmsley: πέσης L

983-4 Electrae contin. Weil: 983 Oresti, 984 Electrae trib. L

983 εἶ . . . ὑποστήσων Weil: εἰς . . . -σω L ⁹⁸⁴ καθείλες

Tr²: -εν L, quo servato Αἰγίσθου μέτα Wilamowitz

ELECTRA

ORESTES

Were these commands spoken by a spirit of destruction disguised as the god?

ELECTRA

Seated on the holy tripod? I scarcely think so.

ORESTES

I cannot believe that such an oracle is good.

ELECTRA

Don't play the coward and be unmanly but go practice the same guile on her as you used to kill Aegisthus, her husband!

ORESTES

I will go inside. Dreadful is the sacrifice I am beginning, and dreadful is the deed I shall do. But if it is the gods' will, so be it. Yet this contest to me is not sweet but bitter.

Exit ORESTES and Pylades into the house. Enter by Eisodos A CLYTAEMESTRA in a chariot, followed by a wagon bearing slaves.

CHORUS LEADER

Hail, queen of Argos, daughter of Tyndareus, sister to the noble sons of Zeus, who dwell in the fiery upper air amid the stars and are worshiped as saviors of mortals amid

985 *προβήματος* Denniston

986 *δράσω. θεοῖσι δ' εἰ* Weil: *δράσω. εἰ θεοῖς* L: *δράσω γ'. εἰ*
θ. Tr¹

987 *δ' οὐχ ἡδὺ* Musgrave: *δὲ καὶ ἡδὺ* L

988 <ἰώ> Wilamowitz

EURIPIDES

- 995 *χαῖρε, σεβίζω σ' ἴσα καὶ μάκαρας
πλούτου μεγάλης τ' εὐδαιμονίας.
τὰς σὰς δὲ τύχας θεραπεύεσθαι
καιρός, <πότνι> ὦ βασιλεία.*

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ

- 1000 *ἔκβητ' ἀπήνης, Τρωάδες, χεῖρὸς δ' ἐμῆς
λάβεσθ', ἔν' ἔξω τοῦδ' ὄχου στήσω πόδα.
σκύλοισι μὲν γὰρ θεῶν κεκόσμηται δόμοι
Φρυνγίοις, ἐγὼ δὲ τάσδε, Τρωάδος χθονὸς
ἔξαιρετ', ἀντὶ παιδὸς ἣν ἀπώλεσα
σμικρὸν γέρας, καλὸν δὲ κέκτημαι δόμοις.*

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

- 1005 *οὐκουν ἐγὼ (δούλη γὰρ ἐκβεβλημένη
δόμων πατρῶν δυστυχεῖς οἰκῶ δόμους),
μῆτερ, λάβωμαι μακαρίας τῆς σῆς χερὸς;*

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ

δοῦλαι πάρεισιν αἶδε· μὴ σύ μοι πόνει.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

- 1010 *τί δ'; αἰχμάλωτόν τοί μ' ἀπόκισας δόμων,
ἡρημένων δὲ δωμάτων ἡρήμεθα,
ὡς αἶδε, πατρὸς ὄρφανοὶ λελειμμένοι.*

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ

τοιαῦτα μέντοι σὸς πατὴρ βουλευματα

997 <πότνι> Diggle

1010 ὄρφανοὶ λελειμμένοι praemonente Seidler Fix: -αὶ -αι L

1011 βουλευματα Victoriüs: -εύεται L

ELECTRA

the waves of the sea! Greeting: I worship you as I do the blessed gods for your great wealth and good fortune! And now, my <lady> queen, is the time for your fortunes to be honored!

CLYTAEMESTRA

Get down from the wagon, Trojan maids, and take my hand in order that I may step from this car! The temples of the gods are adorned with Trojan spoils, and I have acquired for my house these slaves, pick of the land of Troy, a small badge of honor but a fine one, to replace the daughter I lost.²⁸

The attendants get down and help Clytaemestra to descend.

ELECTRA

Since I am a slave, cast out of my father's house, and live in a house of misery, shall not I, mother, take your heaven-blessed hand?

CLYTAEMESTRA

There are slaves here for that. Do not give yourself toil on my account.

ELECTRA

Why not? After all, you have made me live far from my home like a captive: with my house destroyed I am destroyed as well, and like these slaves, left orphaned of my father.

CLYTAEMESTRA

Well, that is the kind of plot your father made against those

²⁸ See note on line 29 above.

- ἐς οὓς ἐχρῆν ἦκιστ' ἐβούλευσεν φίλων.
 λέξω δέ. καίτοι δόξ' ὅταν λάβῃ κακῇ
 γυναιῖκα, γλώσση πικρότης ἔνεστί τις,
 1015 ὡς μὲν παρ' ἡμῖν, οὐ καλῶς· τὸ πρᾶγμα δὲ
 μαθόντας, ἦν μὲν ἀξίως μισεῖν ἔχῃ,
 στυγεῖν δίκαιον· εἰ δὲ μή, τί δεῖ στυγεῖν;
 ἡμᾶς δ' ἔδωκε Τυνδάρεως τῷ σῶ πατρὶ
 οὐχ ὥστε θνήσκειν οὐδ' ἂ γειναίμην ἐγώ.
 1020 κείνος δὲ παῖδα τὴν ἐμὴν Ἀχιλλέως
 λέκτροισι πείσας ὄχετ' ἐκ δόμων ἄγων
 πρυμνοῦχον Ἀῦλιω, ἐνθ' ὑπερτείνας πυρᾶς
 λευκὴν διήμησ' Ἴφιγόνης παρηίδα.
 κεῖ μὲν πόλεως ἄλωσιν ἐξιώμενος
 1025 ἢ δῶμ' ὀνήσων τᾶλλα τ' ἐκσφύζων τέκνα
 ἔκτεινε πολλῶν μίαν ὑπερ, συγγνώστ' ἂν ἦν·
 νῦν δ' οὐνεχ' Ἑλένη μάργος ἦν ὃ τ' αὖ λαβῶν
 ἄλοχον κολάζειν προδότιν οὐκ ἠπίστατο,
 τούτων ἕκατι παῖδ' ἐμὴν διώλεσεν.
 1030 ἐπὶ τοῖσδε τοίνυν καίπερ ἠδίκημένη
 οὐκ ἠγγριώμην οὐδ' ἂν ἔκτανον πόσιν.
 ἀλλ' ἦλθ' ἔχων μοι μαινάδ' ἔνθεον κόρην
 λέκτροις τ' ἐπεισέφρησε, καὶ νύμφα δύο
 ἐν τοῖσιν αὐτοῖς δώμασιν κατεῖχ' ὁμοῦ.
 1035 μῶρον μὲν οὖν γυναῖκες, οὐκ ἄλλως λέγω·
 ὅταν δ', ὑπόντος τοῦδ', ἀμαρτάνῃ πόσις
 τᾶνδον παρώσας λέκτρα, μιμῆσθαι θέλει
 γυνὴ τὸν ἄνδρα χᾶτερον κτᾶσθαι φίλον.

ELECTRA

of his kin he ought least to have plotted against. Still, I shall speak. Yet when evil repute takes a woman as its prey, her words have an unwelcome character to them: most unfairly, in my judgment, for though it is proper to hate when one has learned the facts and hating is justified, when that is not the case, why should one hate?

My father Tyndareus did not give me to your father so that I or the children I bore should be killed. Yet that man, enticing my child with a marriage to Achilles, went off with her to the harbor at Aulis, and there, stretching Iphigenia out above an altar, he slit her pale white throat. If he had killed one child for the sake of many, trying to avert the sack of our city or to benefit our house and save our other children, it would be forgivable. But as it is, he killed her only because Helen was a whore and the man who married her did not know how to chastise the wife who betrayed him.

Well, even though I was wronged, it was not this that made me savage, and not for this would I have killed him. But he came home with the god-possessed seer girl²⁹ and installed her in his bed and meant to keep two women at the same time in the same house. Woman, to be sure, is a thing of folly, I do not deny it. Yet, with this fact as given, when a husband errs by rejecting the woman in his house, the wife desires to imitate her husband and acquire a new

²⁹ The Trojan princess Cassandra, who was given prophetic powers by Apollo.

1016 ἔχῃ Seidler: ἔχῃς L 1025 ἐκσώσων Nauck

1033 εἰσέφρησε Dawes: -κε L

1034 κατεῖχ' ὁμοῦ Dawes: κατείχομεν L

EURIPIDES

- κᾶπειτ' ἐν ἡμῖν ὁ ψόγος λαμπρύνεται,
 1040 οἱ δ' αἴτιοι τῶνδ' οὐ κλύουσ' ἄνδρες κακῶς.
 [εἰ δ' ἐκ δόμων ἤρπαστο Μενέλεως λάθρα,
 κτανεῖν μ' Ὀρέστην χρῆν, κασιγνήτης πόσι
 Μενέλαον ὡς σώσαιμι; σὸς δὲ πῶς πατῆρ
 ἠνέσχετ' ἂν ταυτ'; εἶτα τὸν μὲν οὐ θανεῖν
 1045 κτείνοντα χρῆν τᾶμ', ἐμὲ δὲ πρὸς κείνου παθεῖν;]
 <τάχ' οὖν ἂν εἴποις ὡς σὺν ἀνδρὶ δυσμενεῖ>
 ἔκτειν'. ἐτρέφθην ἤνπερ ἦν πορεύσιμον
 πρὸς τοὺς ἐκείνω πολεμίους. φίλων γὰρ ἂν
 τίς ἂν φόνου σοῦ πατρὸς ἐκοινώνησέ μοι;
 λέγ' εἴ τι χρήζεις κἀντίθες παρρησίᾳ,
 1050 ὅπως τέθνηκε σὸς πατῆρ οὐκ ἐνδίκως.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

δίκαι' ἔλεξας· ἡ δίκη δ' αἰσχρῶς ἔχει.
 γυναιῖκα γὰρ χρῆ πάντα συγχωρεῖν πόσει,
 ἥτις φρενήρης· ἧ δὲ μὴ δοκεῖ τάδε,
 οὐδ' εἰς ἀριθμὸν τῶν ἐμῶν ἦκει λόγων.

<ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ>

- 1055 μέμνησο, μῆτερ, οὐς ἔλεξας ὑστάτους
 λόγους, διδοῦσα πρὸς σέ μοι παρρησίαν.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ

καὶ νῦν γέ φημι κοῦκ ἀπαρνοῦμαι, τέκνον.

1041-5 del. Wilamowitz

1046 ante h. v. lac. indic. Diggle v. distinxit Kovacs

1048 φόνου σοῦ πατρὸς Denniston: π-σ- φόνον L

1051n Xo. Camper: Ηλ. L

ELECTRA

lover. And after this it is we who are loudly blamed, while men, the authors of this situation, hear no criticism!

[If Menelaus had been abducted from his house in secret, would I have been right to kill Orestes in order to preserve Menelaus, my sister's husband? How would your father have put up with that? So can you claim it would have been wrong for him to be killed for killing my child, yet right for me to suffer at his hands?]

<Perhaps you will say that it was with the help of his enemy that> I did the killing, I turned down the only path I could travel, to those who were his foes. For who that loved him would have shared in your father's murder with me?

If you so desire, speak and tell me in perfect liberty how it was unjust that your father was killed.

CHORUS LEADER

You plead justice, but the justice you plead is shameful. A woman, one who is sound in mind, ought to accede in all things to her husband's wishes. Anyone who disagrees with this does not even enter into consideration with me.

<ELECTRA>

Remember, mother, the last words you said, giving me liberty to speak to you.

CLYTAEMESTRA

That is what I say now, and I do not unsay it, my child.

1052 $\chi\rho\eta$ Matthiae: $\chi\rho\eta\nu$ L

1053 η Reiske: $\epsilon\iota$ L

1054 $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omega\nu$] $\phi\acute{\iota}\lambda\omega\nu$ Blaydes

1055_n <Hλ.> Camper

EURIPIDES

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἄρ' ἂν κλυοῦσα, μήτηρ, εἴτ' ἔρξαις κακῶς;

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ

οὐκ ἔστι, τῇ σῆ δ' ἠδὲ προσθέσθαι φρενί.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

- 1060 λέγοιμ' ἄν, εὐχή δ' ἦδε μοι προοίμιον·
εἴθ' εἶχες, ὦ τεκοῦσα, βελτίους φρένας.
τὸ μὲν γὰρ εἶδος αἶνον ἄξιον φέρειν
Ἑλένης τε καὶ σοῦ, δύο δ' ἔφυτε συγγόνω,
ἄμφω ματαίω Κάστορός τ' οὐκ ἀξίω.
- 1065 ἦ μὲν γὰρ ἀρπασθεῖς ἑκοῦς ἀπώλετο,
σὺ δ' ἄνδρ' ἄριστον Ἑλλάδος διώλεσας,
σκήψιν προτείνουσ' ὡς ὑπὲρ τέκνου πόσιν
ἔκτεινας· οὐ γάρ <σ'> ὡς ἔγωγ' ἴσασι νῦν.
ἦτις, θυγατρὸς πρὶν κεκυρῶσθαι σφαγὰς,
- 1070 νέον τ' ἀπ' οἴκων ἀνδρὸς ἐξωρμημένον,
ξανθὸν κατόπτρῳ πλόκαμον ἐξήσκεις κόμης.
γυνῆ δ' ἀπόντος ἀνδρὸς ἦτις ἐκ δόμων
ἐς κάλλος ἀσκέει, διάγραφ' ὡς οὔσαν κακῆν.
οὐδὲν γὰρ αὐτὴν δεῖ θύρασι νῦν εὐπρεπὲς
- 1075 φαίνειν πρόσωπον, ἦν τι μὴ ζητῆ κακόν.
μόνην δὲ πασῶν οἶδ' ἐγὼ σ' Ἑλληνίδων,
εἰ μὲν τὰ Τρώων εὐτυχοῖ, κεχαρμένην,
εἰ δ' ἦσσαν εἴη, συννεφούσαν ὄμματα,
Ἀγαμέμνον' οὐ χρήζουσιν ἐκ Τροίας μολεῖν.

1058 ἄρ' ἂν . . . ἔρξαις Broadhead: ἄρα . . . ἔρξεις L

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

Will you hear me, mother, and then do me harm?

CLYTAEMESTRA

No: it is a pleasure to accommodate myself to your mind.

ELECTRA

I shall speak, and this wish shall be the beginning of my speech: how I wish, mother, that you had better sense! For while your beauty and Helen's deserve praise, the two of you are sisters, both foolish women and unworthy of Castor. She was willingly abducted and went to ruin, while you killed the noblest man in Greece and gave as your excuse that you were killing your husband in recompense for your child. People do not know you as well as I do.

When your husband had just left the house and before the murder of your daughter had been ordered, you began to primp your golden tresses before a mirror. Any woman who preens while her husband is away from home you may scratch off your list as a whore. She has no need to show a lovely face to those outside the house unless she is looking for mischief. I know that you alone of all Greek women rejoiced when the Trojans were enjoying good fortune, but if they were being defeated, you wore a gloomy expression since you did not wish Agamemnon to return from Troy.

1059 προσθέσθαι Weil: -θήσω L

1060 εὐχῆ Vitelli: ἀρχῆ L προοίμιον Weil: -οιμίον L

1062 φέρειν Porson: φέρει L

1068 <σ'> Dobree 1072 post h. v. lac. indic. et suppl. Dig-

gle, e.g. <θύραζε φοιτήσουσα πέπλοισιν δέμας>

1077 τὰ Τρώων εὐτυχῶι Musgrave: πατρῶ' ἦν εὐτυχῆ L

EURIPIDES

- 1080 καίτοι καλῶς γε σωφρονεῖν παρεῖχέ σοι
 ἄνδρ' εἶχες οὐ κακίον' Αἰγίσθου πόσιν,
 ὃν Ἑλλάς αὐτῆς εἴλετο στρατηλάτην
 Ἑλένης δ' ἀδελφῆς τοιάδ' ἐξειργασμένης
 ἐξῆν κλέος σοι μέγα λαβεῖν· τὰ γὰρ κακὰ
 1085 παράδειγμα τοῖς ἐσθλοῖσιν εἴσοψιν τ' ἔχει.
 εἰ δ', ὡς λέγεις, σὴν θυγατέρ' ἔκτεινεν πατήρ,
 ἐγὼ τί σ' ἠδίκησ' ἐμός τε σύγγονος;
 πῶς οὐ πόσιν κτείνασα πατρώους δόμους
 ἡμῖν προσῆψας, ἀλλ' ἐπηνέγκω λέχει
 1090 τὰλλότρια, μισθοῦ τοὺς γάμους ὠνουμένη,
 κοῦτ' ἀντιφεύγει παιδὸς ἀντὶ σοῦ πόσις
 οὔτ' ἀντ' ἐμοῦ τέθνηκε, δις τόσως ἐμέ
 κτείνας ἀδελφῆς ζῶσαν; εἰ δ' ἀμείψεται
 φόνον δικάζων φόνος, ἀποκτενῶ σ' ἐγὼ
 1095 καὶ παῖς Ὀρέστης πατρὶ τιμωρούμενοι.
 εἰ γὰρ δίκαι' ἐκείνα, καὶ τάδ' ἔνδικα.
 [ὅστις δὲ πλοῦτον ἢ εὐγένειαν εἰσιδὼν
 γαμῆι πονηράν, μῶρός ἐστι· μικρὰ γὰρ
 μεγάλων ἀμείνω σῶφρον' ἐν δόμοις λέχει.]

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- 1100 τύχη γυναικῶν ἐς γάμους. τὰ μὲν γὰρ εὖ,
 τὰ δ' οὐ καλῶς πίπτοντα δέρκομαι βροτῶν.]

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ

ὦ παῖ, πέφυκας πατέρα σὸν στέργειν ἀεὶ
 ἔστιν δὲ καὶ τόδ'· οἱ μὲν εἰσιν ἀρσένων,

¹⁰⁸⁹ ἐπηνέγκω λέχει Camper: ἀπ- λέχη L

ELECTRA

And yet you had every inducement to be virtuous: you had a man as your husband who was superior to Aegisthus, a man Hellas chose as its command in chief; and when your sister Helen had behaved so badly, you could have won great glory for yourself. For bad conduct serves to highlight what is good and makes it shine out.

But if, as you say, my father killed your daughter, what wrong did my brother and I do you? Why, when you had killed your husband, did you not give us our ancestral home but instead brought, as dowry to your marriage, property that belongs to someone else, buying a husband for a price? Why is not your husband now in exile in requital for Orestes' exile, why is he not dead in requital for me since he has inflicted on me in life twice the death my sister suffered? But if one deed of murder decrees another in requital, I shall kill you, I and your son Orestes, in vengeance for our father. For if what you have done is just, this too is right. [Whoever marries a bad woman because he looks at wealth or high birth is a fool: for it is better to have in the house a wife of low rank who is chaste than one who is high-born.]

CHORUS

Chance rules over marriage with women. I see that some mortals have good luck, others bad.]

CLYTAEMESTRA

My child, you have always been inclined to love your father. This is a fact of life: some children belong to the male side,

1097-9 del. Hartung

1100-1 del. Nauck

1103-4 del. Kirchhoff

EURIPIDES

- οἱ δ' αὖ φιλοῦσι μητέρας μᾶλλον πατρός.
 1105 συγγνώσομαί σοι· καὶ γὰρ οὐχ οὕτως ἄγαν
 1106 χαίρω τι, τέκνον, τοῖς δεδραμένοις ἐμοί.
 1109 οἷμοι τάλαινα τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων·
 1110 ὡς μᾶλλον ἢ χρῆν ἤλασ' εἰς ὀργὴν πόσει.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὄψέ στενάζεις, ἡνίκ' οὐκ ἔχεις ἄκη.
 πατὴρ μὲν οὖν τέθνηκε· τὸν δ' ἔξω χθονὸς
 πῶς οὐ κομίζῃ παῖδ' ἀλητεύοντα σόν;

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ

- δέδοικα· τοῦμὸν δ', οὐχὶ τοῦκείνου σκοπῶ.
 1115 πατρὸς γάρ, ὡς λέγουσι, θυμοῦται φόνῳ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τί δ' αὖ πόσιν σὸν ἄγριον εἰς ἡμᾶς ἔχεις;

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ

τρόποι τοιοῦτοι· καὶ σὺ δ' αὐθάδης ἔφυσ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλγῶ γάρ· ἀλλὰ παύσομαι θυμουμένη.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ

καὶ μὴν ἐκείνος οὐκέτ' ἔσται σοι βαρύνς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

- 1120 φρονεῖ μέγ'· ἐν γὰρ τοῖς ἐμοῖς ναίει δόμοις.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ

ὀρᾶς; ἀν' αὖ σὺ ζωπυρεῖς νείκη νέα.

1107-8 vide post 1131

ELECTRA

others love their mothers more than their fathers. I shall forgive you: for in fact, my child, I do not feel such great joy at the deeds I have done. Ah, how wretched my plotting has made me! How excessively I raged against my husband!

ELECTRA

Your groaning comes too late: you can do nothing to mend matters. Well, my father is dead. But why do you not bring back your son who is wandering abroad?

CLYTAEMESTRA

I am afraid: I look to my interest, not his. They say he is angry at his father's murder.

ELECTRA

Why then do you keep your husband in a rage against me?

CLYTAEMESTRA

That is just his character. And you too are self-willed.

ELECTRA

Yes, for I am in pain. But I shall stop being angry.

CLYTAEMESTRA

Then he will no longer be resentful toward you.

ELECTRA

He is proud: he dwells in my house.³⁰

CLYTAEMESTRA

See? You rekindle old quarrels again and make them new.

³⁰ There is a *double-entendre* in that Aegisthus' body now dwells in Electra's cottage.

¹¹¹⁰ πόσει Gomperz: πόσω L

¹¹¹⁶ δ' αὖ Nauck: δὰ L

EURIPIDES

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

σιγῶ· δέδοικα γάρ νιν ὡς δέδοικ' ἐγώ.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ

παῦσαι λόγων τῶνδε. ἀλλὰ τί μ' ἐκάλεις, τέκνον;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἤκουσας, οἶμαι, τῶν ἐμῶν λοχευμάτων
 1125 τούτων ὑπερ μοι θύσον (οὐ γὰρ οἶδ' ἐγώ)
 δεκάτην σελήνην παιδὸς ὡς νομίζεται.
 τρίβων γὰρ οὐκ εἶμ', ἄτοκος οὖσ' ἐν τῷ πάρος.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ

ἄλλης τὸδ' ἔργον, ἧ σ' ἔλυσεν ἐκ τόκων.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

αὐτὴ ἴλοχευον κᾶτεκον μόνῃ βρέφος.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ

1130 οὕτως ἀγείτων οἶκος ἴδρυνται φίλων;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

1131 πένητας οὐδεὶς βούλεται κτᾶσθαι φίλους.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ

1107 σὺ δ' ᾧδ' ἄλουτος καὶ δυσείματος χροῖα
 1108 λεχὼ νεογνῶν ἐκ τόκων πεπαυμένη;
 1132 ἀλλ' εἶμι, παιδὸς ἀριθμὸν ὡς τελεσφόρον
 θύσω θεοῖσι· σοὶ δ' ὅταν πράξω χάριν
 τήνδ', εἶμ' ἐπ' ἀγρὸν οὗ πόσις θνηπολεῖ
 1135 Νύμφαισιν. ἀλλὰ τούσδ' ὄχους, ὀπάουες,

1126 δεκάτην σελήνην Musgrave: -η -η L

ELECTRA

ELECTRA

I will be silent. My fear of him is as it is.

CLYTAEMESTRA

Enough of this subject. Why did you summon me, my child?

ELECTRA

You have heard, I suppose, that I have given birth. In thanks for this (since I know not how to do it) perform the sacrifice for the child's tenth night, as custom ordains.³¹ I am inexperienced, for I have never been a mother before.

CLYTAEMESTRA

This is a job for someone else, the woman who delivered your baby.

ELECTRA

I was my own midwife and bore my child alone.

CLYTAEMESTRA

Is your house so lonely and so friendless?

ELECTRA

No one wants to make friends with paupers.

CLYTAEMESTRA

But you—so unwashed and your body so ill-clad when you have just given birth? Well, I shall go in to make sacrifice to the gods in thanks that for the completion of these days. But when I have done you this favor, I will go to the field where my husband is sacrificing to the Nymphs. Slaves,

³¹ See above on line 654

EURIPIDES

φάτναις ἄγοντες πρόσθεθ' ἠνίκ' ἂν δέ με
δοκῆτε θυσίας τῆσδ' ἀπηλλάχθαι θεοῖς,
πάρεστε· δεῖ γὰρ καὶ πόσει δοῦναι χάριν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

- 1140 χῶρει πένητας ἐς δόμους· φρούρει δέ μοι
μή σ' αἰθαλώσῃ πολύκαπνον στέγος πέπλους.
θύσεις γὰρ οἷα χρή σε δαίμοσιν θύη.
καιοῦν δ' ἐνήρκται καὶ τεθηγμένη σφαγίς,
ἥπερ καθεῖλε ταῦρον, οὗ πέλας πεσῆ
πληγείσα· νυμφεύσῃ δὲ κὰν Ἄιδου δόμοις
1145 ᾧπερ ξυνηῦδες ἐν φάει. τοσήνδ' ἐγὼ
δώσω χάριν σοι, σὺ δὲ δίκην ἐμοὶ πατρός.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ.

- ἀμοιβαὶ κακῶν· μετάτροποι πνέου-
σιν αἰραὶ δόμων. τότε μὲν <ἐν> λουτροῖς
ἔπεσεν ἐμὸς ἐμὸς ἀρχέτας,
1150 ἰάχησε δὲ στέγα λάινοί τε θριγκοὶ δόμων,
τάδ' ἐνέποντος· ὦ σχέτλιε, τί με, γύναι, φονεύεις
φίλαν
πατρίδα δεκέτεσι σποραῖ-
σιν ἐλθόντ' ἐμάν;
<
. >.

1146 δὲ δίκην ἐμοὶ Bothe: δ' ἐμοὶ δ- L
1152 σχέτλιε Diggle cl. IT 651: -ία L
-σεις L 1154 post h. v. lac. indic. Tr²

1148 <ἐν> Seidler
φονεύεις Victorius:

ELECTRA

take this carriage and put the horses to feed. When you judge that I am through with this sacrifice to the gods, come back. For I must do a service to my husband as well.

Exit CLYTAEMESTRA into the house, the servants by Eisdos A.

ELECTRA

Go, enter this poor house! But please take care that the sooty chamber not stain your clothes! You shall make such sacrifice as is right to the gods. The sacrificial basket has been prepared and the knife sharpened which killed the bull, and at his side you will fall stricken. In the world below you shall be bride to the man you slept with in life. That will be my favor to you, but you shall give me satisfaction for my father.

Exit ELECTRA into the house.

CHORUS

There is requital for wrong: the winds of this house
are veering round. Once my lord and king
fell slain in his bath,
and the roof and stone cornice of the palace
resounded as he cried, "Why, cruel woman, do you kill me
when I have returned
after ten harvests
to my beloved native land?"
<.....
.....>

EURIPIDES

ἀντ.

- 1155 παλίρρους δὲ τάνδ' ὑπάγεται δίκαι
 διαδρόμου λέχους, μέλεον ἂ πόσι
 χρόνιον ἰκόμενον ἔστῖαν
 Κυκλώπειά τ' οὐράνια τείχε' ὄξυθήκτω βέλει
- 1160 κατέκαν' αὐτόχειρ, πέλεκυν ἐν χεροῖν λαβοῦσ'. ᾧ
 τλάμων
 πόσις, ὃ τι ποτε τὰν τάλαι-
 ναν ἔσχευ κακόν.
 ὀρέϊα τις ὡς λείαν' ὀργάδων
 δρύοχα νεμομένα, τάδε κατήνυσεν.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ

(ἔσωθεν)

- 1165 ᾧ τέκνα, πρὸς θεῶν, μὴ κτάνητε μητέρα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

κλύεις ὑπώροφον βοάν;

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ

ἰώ μοί μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- ᾧμωξα καγὼ πρὸς τέκνων χειρουμένης.
 νέμει τοι δίκαι θεός, ὅταν τύχη·
- 1170 σχέτλια μὲν ἔπαθες, ἀνόσια δ' εἰργάσω,
 τάλαιν', εὐνέταν.

1155 δίκαι Victorius: -αν L

1157 ἔστῖαν Page: εἰς οἴκους L: ἐς δόμους Heimsoeth

1159 βέλει κατέκαν' Seidler: βέλους ἔκανεν L

ELECTRA

Justice, in its backward ebb, indicts her for the faithlessness of her bed:
her poor husband,
returned at long last to his hearth
and the heaven-high walls the Cyclopes built, with sharp
weapon
she killed with her own hand, seizing the ax herself! How
unfortunate
the husband, whatever the bane was
that seized the cruel wife.
Like some lioness of the mountain,
prowling the wooded glens, she wrought this deed.

CLYTAEMESTRA

(*within*) My children, in the gods' name, do not kill your mother!

CHORUS

Do you hear a cry within the house?

CLYTAEMESTRA

Ah me, ah me!

CHORUS

I too utter a cry of pity as she is overcome by her children.
Truly the god dispenses retribution, late or soon.
Miserable was your suffering, but unholy your deeds,
cruel woman, against your husband!

Enter ELECTRA, ORESTES, and Pylades from the house.

1160 λαβούσ'. ⚡ Fix: λαβούσα L

EURIPIDES

- ἀλλ' οἶδε μητρὸς νεοφόνους ἐν αἵμασιν
 πεφυρμένοι βαίνουσιν ἐξ οἴκων πόδα.
 <καὶ μὴν ἐν αὐταῖς δὴ πυλαῖς νεκρὸν ὄρω
 τῶν πρὶν τυράννων, δυσφιλεστάτης μάχης>
 τρόπαια δείγμα τ' ἀθλίων προσφθεγμάτων.
 1175 οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεὶς οἶκος ἀθλιώτερος
 τῶν Ταυταλείων οὐδ' ἔφν ποτ' ἐγόνων.

στρ. α

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

- ἰὼ Γᾶ <τε> καὶ Ζεῦ πανδερκέτα
 βροτῶν, ἴδετε τάδ' ἔργα φόνι-
 α μυσάρᾳ, δίγωνα σώματ' ἐν
 1180 χθονὶ κεχυμένα πλαγᾶ <διπλᾶ>
 χερὸς ὑπ' ἐμᾶς, ἄποιν' ἐμῶν
 πημάτων <

 >.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

δακρύτ' ἄγαν, ὦ σύγγον', αἰτία δ' ἐγώ.
 διὰ πυρὸς ἔμολον ἅ τάλαινα ματρὶ τᾶδ',
 ἃ μ' ἔτικτε κούραν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- 1185 ἰὼ τύχας, σ<τερρ>ᾶς τύχας,

1173 post h. v. lac. indic. Paley

1174 δείγμα τ' Kovacs: δείγματ' L

1177 <τε> Elmsley

1180 κεχυμένα . . . <διπλᾶ> Diggle: κείμενα L

ELECTRA

CHORUS LEADER

But here they are: stained with their mother's newly shed blood, they are coming out of the house!

The bodies of Clytaemestra and Aegisthus are wheeled out on the eccyclema.

<And look, within the doors I see the bodies of those who once ruled, > trophies <of a hateful struggle > and clear proof of what those piteous cries meant. There is not—nor has there ever been—a house more wretched than the offspring of Tantalus.

ORESTES

O Earth and Zeus who sees
all mortal affairs, look upon these deeds of blood
and defilement, two bodies laid out
upon the earth by a <double > blow,
by my hand, in payment
for my woes <

.....
.....>!

ELECTRA

Pitiable indeed, my brother, is this sight, yet I am the one to blame.

For I burned with hatred against the mother who bore me as her daughter!

CHORUS

O what a cruel fate was yours!

1181 post *πημάτων* lac. indic. Seidler

1185 *σ<τερρ>ās* Diggle

EURIPIDES

μάτερ τεκούσ' <ἄλαστα>,
 ἄλαστα μέλεα καὶ πέρα
 παθοῦσα σῶν τέκνων ὑπαί.
 πατρὸς δ' ἔτεισας φόνον δικαίως.

ἀντ. α

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

- 1190 ἰὼ Φοῖβ', <ἄγ>αν ὕμνησας δίκαι'
 ἄφαντα, φανερά δ' ἐξέπρα-
 ξας ἄχρα, φόνια δ' ὤπασας
 λάχε' ἀπὸ γᾶς Ἑλλανίδος.
 τίνα δ' ἐτέραν μὸλω πόλιν;
 1195 τίς ξένος, τίς εὖσεβῆς
 ἐμὸν κᾶρα προσόψεται
 ματέρα κτανόντος;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

- ἰὼ ἰώ μοι. ποῖ δ' ἐγώ, τίν' ἐς χορόν,
 τίνα γάμον εἶμι; τίς πόσις με δέξεται
 1200 νυμφικὰς ἐς εὐνάς;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- πάλιν πάλιν φρόνημα σὸν
 μετεστάθη πρὸς αὔραν·
 φρονεῖς γὰρ ὅσια νῦν, τότε οὐ
 φρονούσα, δεινὰ δ' εἰργάσω,
 1205 φίλα, κασίγνητον οὐ θέλοντα.
 στρ. β

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

κατείδες οἶον ἂ τάλαιν' ἔξω πέπλων

ELECTRA

You bore children none shall forget,
and unforgettable and more
were the sufferings brought on you by your children!
Yet it was right that you paid for their father's murder.

ORESTES

Ah Phoebus, the justice your song spoke of
is all too obscure, but all too plain to see
are the woes you have wrought, and the lot you gave me
was that of murderer banished from Greece!
What other city shall I go to?
What friend, what godly man
shall look upon me
now that I have killed my mother?

ELECTRA

Ah me, ah me! Where shall I go, to what dance
or to what marriage? What husband will receive me
into a bridal bed?

CHORUS

Again, again your mind
veers round with the changing breeze.
Your mind is now god-fearing, though before
it was not so, and you have done a terrible thing,
my friend, to your reluctant brother.

ORESTES

Did you see how the poor woman stripped off her clothing

1186 <ἀλαστα> Grotefend 1190 <ἄγ>αν ὑμνησας Willink:
ἀνύμνησας L δίκαι' Murray: δίκαν L
1193 λάχε' Weil: λέχε' L
1206 ἔξω Seidler: ἐὼν L

EURIPIDES

ἔβαλεν ἔδειξε μαστὸν ἐν φοναῖσιν,
 ἰὼ μοι, πρὸς πέδῳ
 τιθεῖσα γόνιμα μέλεα; τακόμαν δ' ἐγώ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1210 σάφ' οἶδα, δι' ὀδύνας ἔβας,
 ἰήιον κλύων γόον
 ματρὸς ἅ σ' ἔτικτε.

ἀντ. β

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

1215 βοᾶν δ' ἔλασκε τάνδε, πρὸς γένυν ἐμὰν
 τιθεῖσα χεῖρα· Τέκος ἐμόν, λιταίνω.
 παρήδων τ' ἐξ ἐμᾶν
 ἐκρίμναθ', ὥστε χέρας ἐμὰς λιπεῖν βέλος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τάλαινα. πῶς <δ' > ἔτλας φόνον
 δι' ὀμμάτων ἰδεῖν σέθεν

1220 ματρὸς ἐκπνεούσας;

στρ. γ

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἐγὼ μὲν ἐπιβαλὼν φάρη κόραις ἐμαῖς
 φασγάνῳ κατηρξάμαν
 ματέρος ἔσω δέρας μεθείς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

1225 ἐγὼ δέ γ' ἐπεκέλευσά σοι
 ξίφους τ' ἐφηψάμαν ἅμα.
 δεινότατον παθέων ἔρεξα.

ELECTRA

and exposed her breast as we killed her?
Ah, did you see how on the ground
she laid the limbs that gave me birth? It caused me to melt!

CHORUS

I know well: what agony you felt
to hear the piteous wail
of the mother who bore you!

ORESTES

This was the cry she uttered as against my chin
she put her hand: "My child, I beg you!"
From my cheek
she hung, so that my hands let go of the weapon!

CHORUS

Unhappy woman! But how did you have the courage
to look with open eyes on the slaughter
as your mother breathed her last?

ORESTES

As for me, I veiled my eyes with my garments
as I sacrificed my mother, thrusting
my sword through her neck.

ELECTRA

And I, I urged you on
and, as I did so, put my hand to the sword!
It was the most terrible of sufferings that I brought to pass!

1209 *τακόμαν* Seidler: *τὰν κόμαν* L

1218 <δ'> Weil

1226 *Electrae contin.* Seidler: *choro trib. L* *ἔρεξα* Seidler:

-ξας L

EURIPIDES

ἀντ. γ

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

λαβοῦ, κάλυπτε μέλεα ματέρος πέπλοις
 <καὶ> καθάρμοσον σφαγᾶς.
 φονέας ἔτικτες ἄρά σοι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

1230 ἰδού, φίλα τε κοῦ φίλα
 φάρεα τάδ' ἀμφιβάλλομεν,
 τέρμα κακῶν μεγάλων δόμοισιν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' οἶδε δόμων ὑπὲρ ἀκροτάτων
 βαίνουσί τινες δαίμονες ἢ θεῶν
 1235 τῶν οὐρανίων· οὐ γὰρ θνητῶν γ'
 ἦδε κέλευθος. τί ποτ' ἐς φανεράν
 ὄψιν βαίνουσι βροτοῖσιν;

ΚΑΣΤΩΡ

Ἄγαμέμνονος παῖ, κλύθι· δίπτυχοι δέ σε
 καλοῦσι μητρὸς σύγγονοι Διόσκοροι,
 1240 Κάστωρ κασίγνητός τε Πολυδεύκης ὄδε.
 δεινὸν δὲ ναυσὶν ἀρτίως πόντου σάλον
 παύσαντ' ἀφίγμεθ' Ἄργος, ὡς ἐσείδομεν
 σφαγᾶς ἀδελφῆς τῆσδε, μητέρος δὲ σῆς.
 δίκαια μὲν νυν ἦδ' ἔχει, σὺ δ' οὐχὶ δρᾶς.
 1245 Φοῖβος δέ, Φοῖβος—ἀλλ' ἄναξ γάρ ἐστ' ἐμός,

1228 <καὶ> Seidler

1231 τάδ' Kirchhoff: γ' L

ELECTRA

ORESTES

Take hold, and with her robe cover our mother's limbs
and close her wounds.

It was your own murderers, then, that you gave birth to.

Electra covers her mother's body.

ELECTRA

There, upon her who is dear and yet not dear
I put these garments,
the last and greatest of our house's great woes.

*Enter CASTOR and Polydeuces through the air on the
mechane.*

CHORUS LEADER

But see, above the housetops mighty spirits or heavenly
gods are approaching: for that is no place for mortal feet
to tread. Why do they show themselves plainly to mortal
eyes?

CASTOR

Son of Agamemnon, hear us: the twin brothers of your
mother, the Dioscuri, are calling you, I, Castor, and my
brother Polydeuces here. We have just calmed a ship-
threatening tempest and have come to Argos, since we
have seen the slaughter of our sister and your mother. The
treatment she received was just, but the act that you did
was not. And Phoebus, Phoebus—but no, since he is my

¹²³⁴ βαίνουσι Hartung: φαίν-L

¹²⁴¹ νασιῶν Barnes: ναὸς L

EURIPIDES

σιγῶ· σοφὸς δ' ὢν οὐκ ἔχρησέ σοι σοφά.
αἰνεῖν δ' ἀνάγκη ταῦτα, τάντεῦθεν δὲ χρή
πράσσειν ἂ Μοῖρα Ζεὺς τ' ἔκρανε σοῦ πέρι.

Πυλάδῃ μὲν Ἥλέκτραν δὸς ἄλοχον ἐς δόμους,

1250 σὺ δ' Ἄργος ἔκλιπ'· οὐ γὰρ ἔστι σοι πόλιν
τήνδ' ἐμβατεύειν, μητέρα κτείναντα σήν.
δειναὶ δὲ Κῆρές <σ'> αἱ κυνώπιδες θεαὶ
τροχηλατήσουσ' ἐμμανῆ πλανώμενον.

ἐλθὼν δ' Ἀθήνας Παλλάδος σεμνὸν βρέτας

1255 πρόσπτυξον· εἶρξει γάρ νιν ἐπτοημένας
δεινοῖς δράκουσιν ὥστε μὴ ψάυειν σέθεν,
γοργῶφ' ὑπερτείνουσα σῶ κάρᾳ κύκλον.
ἔστιν δ' Ἀρεῶς τις ὄχθος, οὐ πρῶτον θεοὶ
ἔζοντ' ἐπὶ ψήφοισιν αἵματος πέρι,

1260 Ἄλιρρόθιον ὄτ' ἔκταν' ὠμόφρων Ἄρης,
μῆνιν θυγατρὸς ἀνοσίων νυμφευμάτων,
πόντου κρέοντος παῖδ', ἵν' εὐσεβεστάτη
ψήφου βεβαία τ' ἐστὶν ἐκ τούτου θέσις.

ἐνταῦθα καὶ σὲ δεῖ δραμεῖν φόνου πέρι.

1265 ἴσαι δέ σ' ἐκσώσουσι μὴ θανεῖν δίκη
ψήφοι τεθεῖσαι· Λοξίας γὰρ αἰτίαν
ἐς αὐτὸν οἴσει, μητέρος χρήσας φόνου.
καὶ τοῖσι λοιποῖς ὅδε νόμος τεθήσεται,
νικᾶν ἴσαις ψήφοισι τὸν φεύγοντ' αἰί.

1270 δειναὶ μὲν οὖν θεαὶ τῶδ' ἄχει πεπληγμένοι
πάγον παρ' αὐτὸν χάσμα δύσονται χθονός,

1252 <σ'> L. Dindorf

ELECTRA

lord, I hold my peace. Still, wise god though he is, his oracle to you was not wise. Yet you must acquiesce in these things, and for the future you must carry out what fate and Zeus have ordained for you.

Give Electra to Pylades to take home as his wife. You yourself leave Argos behind. It is not possible for you to tread this city's ground since you have killed your mother. The dread Death Spirits, hound-faced goddesses, will send you running pell-mell in a wandering madness.

But go to Athens and embrace the holy statue of Pallas. Though they flutter with serpents, she will prevent these creatures from touching you by holding over your head her Gorgon shield.³² There is a place called Ares' Hill where the gods first sat in judgment in a case of murder, when cruel Ares killed Poseidon's son, Halirrhothius, in anger for his daughter's rape. Here, ever since then, votes are cast in a god-fearing and incorruptible manner.

You too must here run your course on a charge of murder. But votes justly cast in equal numbers shall prevent your being killed. For Apollo, god of prophecy, will take the responsibility on himself since he commanded you to kill your mother. And for all generations to come this law will be established: when the votes are equal the defendant always gains the verdict. And so these dread goddesses, hard-struck by grief at this, will sink into a cleft in the earth

³² Athena is represented as having a shield with a Gorgon's head on it.

1263 ψήφου . . . θέσις Tucker: ψήφος . . . θεοῖς L ἐκ
τούτου Pierson: ἔκ τε τοῦ L

1265 ἐκώσουσι Porson: ἐκώζ- L

EURIPIDES

- σεμνὸν βροτοῖσιν εὐσεβέσι χρηστήριον.
 σὲ δ' Ἀρκάδων χρῆ πόλιν ἐπ' Ἀλφειοῦ ῥοαῖς
 οἰκεῖν Λυκαίου πλησίον σηκώματος·
- 1275 ἐπώνυμος δὲ σοῦ πόλις κεκλήσεται.
 σοὶ μὲν τάδ' εἶπον· τόνδε δ' Αἰγίσθου νέκυν
 Ἄργους πολίται γῆς καλύψουσιν τάφῳ.
 μητέρα δὲ τὴν σὴν ἄρτι Ναυπλίαν παρῶν
 Μενέλαος, ἐξ οὗ Τρωικὴν εἶλε χθόνα,
- 1280 Ἑλένη τε θάψει· Πρωτέως γὰρ ἐκ δόμων
 ἦκει λιποῦσ' Αἴγυπτον οὐδ' ἦλθεν Φρύγας·
 Ζεὺς δ', ὡς ἔρις γένοιτο καὶ φόνος βροτῶν,
 εἶδωλον Ἑλένης ἐξέπεμψ' ἐς Ἴλιον.
 Πυλάδης μὲν οὖν κόρην τε καὶ δάμαρτ' ἔχων
- 1285 Ἀχαιῖδος γῆς οἴκαδ' ἐκπορευέτω,
 καὶ τὸν λόγῳ σὸν πενθερὸν κομιζέτω
 Φωκέων ἐς αἶαν καὶ δότῳ πλούτου βάρος·
 σὺ δ' Ἰσθμίας γῆς αὐχέν' ἐμβαίνων ποδὶ
 χῶρει πρὸς ὄχθον Κεκροπίας εὐδαίμονα.
- 1290 πεπρωμένην γὰρ μοῖραν ἐκπλήσας φόνον
 εὐδαιμονήσεις τῶνδ' ἀπαλλαχθεὶς πόνων.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὦ παῖδε Διός, θέμις ἐς φθογγὰς
 τὰς ὑμετέρας ἡμῖν πελάθειν;

1272 εὐσεβέσι Clarke: -βὲς L: ἀστιβὲς Reiske
 ριον Hartung 1285 ἐκπορευέτω Reiske: εἰσ- L

1287 βάθος Herwerden

1289 ὄχθον Valckenaer: οἶκον L

μυστή-

ELECTRA

near the hill, an oracle revered by god-fearing mortals. But you must found a city in Arcadia by the streams of the Alpheus river near the grove of Zeus Lycaeus: the city will be called by your name.³³

These are my words to you. The body of Aegisthus will be buried in its grave of earth by the citizens of Argos. As for your mother, she will be buried by Menelaus, just arrived at Nauplia after the sack of Troy, and by Helen. For Helen has left Egypt and the house of Proteus behind and come home. She never went to Troy.³⁴ Rather, in order to cause strife and the slaying of mortals, Zeus sent an image of Helen to Troy.

So let Pylades leave the country of Achaëa and go home with Electra, who is both virgin and wife. Let him take your supposed brother-in-law to the land of Phocis and there bestow on him great wealth. But you must tread the Isthmus and go to the blessed hill of Cecropia.³⁵ For when you have fulfilled the fated course that the murder requires, you will be freed from these troubles and find happiness.

ORESTES

Sons of Zeus, is it allowed for us to converse with you?

³³ This gives the etymology of a city in Arcadia called Oresteion.

³⁴ This is the version of the story Euripides later put in his *Helen*, though there were precedents for it in the work of Stesichorus and in Herodotus. Zeus's plan to rid the world of excess population recalls the post-Homeric epic poem *Cypria*.

³⁵ The Acropolis of Athens.

EURIPIDES

ΚΑΣΤΩΡ

θέμις, οὐ μύσαροῖς τοῖσδε σφαγίοις.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

1295 κάμοι μύθου μέτα, Τυνδαρίδαι;

ΚΑΣΤΩΡ

καὶ σοί· Φοίβω τήνδ' ἀναθήσω
πράξιν φονίαν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

πῶς ὄντε θεῶ τήσδέ τ' ἀδελφῶ
τῆς καπφθιμένης
1300 οὐκ ἠρκέσατον Κῆρας μελάθροισ;

ΚΑΣΤΩΡ

μοῖρά τ' ἀνάγκη τ' ἦγ' ἐς τὸ χρεῶν
Φοίβου τ' ἄσοφοι γλώσσης ἐνοπαί.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τίς δ' ἔμ' Ἀπόλλων, ποῖοι χρησμοὶ
φονίαν ἔδοσαν μητρὶ γενέσθαι;

ΚΑΣΤΩΡ

1305 κοινὰ πράξεις, κοινοὶ δὲ πότμοι,
μία δ' ἀμφοτέρους
ἄτη πατέρων διέκναισεν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὦ σύγγονέ μοι, χρονίαν σ' ἐσιδῶν

1301 μοῖρά τ' Bothe: μοίρας L ἀνάγκη τ' Diggle:
ἀνάγκης L ἦγ' ἐς τὸ Tucker: ἠγγεῖτο L

1303 τίς δ' ἔμ' Bothe: τί δαί μ' L

ELECTRA

CASTOR

Yes, for you are not polluted with this murder.³⁶

ELECTRA

May I also address you, sons of Tyndareus?

CASTOR

You also may do so. For I shall ascribe this bloody deed to Apollo.

ORESTES

Why did you, being gods and brothers to the dead woman here, not ward off the Death Spirits from this house?

CASTOR

Fate and Necessity and the unwise words of Phoebus' tongue were directing events toward their destined goal.

ELECTRA

Yet what Apollo and what oracles made me become the murderer of my mother?

CASTOR

Just as your acts were in common, so too were your fates, and it was a single ruin derived from your ancestors³⁷ that has crushed you both.

ORESTES

My sister, I see you now after such a long separation, yet I

³⁶ Apollo is responsible, as Castor makes explicit in 1296-7. Normally the fact of bloodshed, irrespective of circumstance, was thought to carry pollution, but a similarly "moral" view of pollution (i.e. one that takes motive into account) is found at *Orestes* 75-6. ³⁷ Tantalus, Pelops, and Atreus were all great sinners (*Orestes* 1-15), and the descendants' troubles are caused by their ancestors' wrongdoing.

EURIPIDES

1310 τῶν σῶν εὐθύς φίλτρων στέρομαι
καὶ σ' ἀπολείψω σοῦ λειπόμενος.

ΚΑΣΤΩΡ

πόσις ἔστ' αὐτῇ καὶ δόμος· οὐχ ἦδ'
οἰκτρὰ πέπονθεν, πλὴν ὅτι λείπει
πόλιν Ἀργείων.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

1315 καὶ τίνες ἄλλαι στοναχαὶ μείζους
ἢ γῆς πατρίας ὄρον ἐκλείπειν;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἀλλ' ἐγὼ οἴκων ἔξειμι πατρὸς
καὶ ἐπ' ἀλλοτρίαις ψήφοισι φόνου
μητρὸς ὑφέξω.

ΚΑΣΤΩΡ

1320 ὄσιαν, θάρσει, Παλλάδος ἦξεις
πόλιν· ἀλλ' ἀνέχον.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

περὶ μοι στέρνοις στέρνα πρόσαιψον,
σύγγονε φίλτατε·
διὰ γὰρ ζευγνῦσ' ἡμᾶς πατρίων
μελάθρων μητρὸς φόνιοι κατάραι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

1325 βάλε, πρόσπτυξον σῶμα· θανόντος δ'
ὡς ἐπὶ τύμβῳ καταθρήνησον.

ΚΑΣΤΩΡ

φεῦ φεῦ· δεινὸν τόδ' ἐγηρύσω

ELECTRA

am robbed at once of your love and must leave you and be left by you!

CASTOR

She has a husband and a home. She has not suffered things deserving of pity, except that she leaves the city of Argos.

ELECTRA

Yet what greater grief is there than to leave one's native land?

ORESTES

But I must leave my father's house and be tried by the votes of strangers for my mother's murder.

CASTOR

Be of good cheer: you are going to the city of Pallas, a god-fearing city. Bear up!

ELECTRA

Clasp your breast to mine, dearest brother! The curse of our mother's murder is separating us from the house of our fathers!

ORESTES

Come, embrace me! And utter a dirge for me like that over a dead man's tomb!

CASTOR

Ah me! The cry you have uttered is a terrible one even for

1314ⁿ Ηλ. Bothe: Ορ. L

1319 ὁ- θ- Π- ᾗ- Weil: θ- Π- ὁ- ᾗ- L

EURIPIDES

καὶ θεοῖσι κλυεῖν.

1330 ἔνι γὰρ κάμοι τοῖς τ' οὐρανίδαῖς
οἶκτος θνητῶν πολυμόχθων.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐκέτι σ' ὄψομαι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐδ' ἐγὼ ἐς σὸν βλέφαρον πελάσω.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τάδε λοίσθιά μοι προσφθέγματά σου.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ χαῖρε, πόλις·

1335 χαίρετε δ' ὑμεῖς πολλά, πολίτιδες.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὦ πιστοτάτη, στείχεις ἤδη;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

στείχω βλέφαρον τέγγουσ' ἀπαλόν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

1340 Πυλάδη, χαίρων ἴθι, νυμφεύου
δέμας Ἡλέκτρας.

ΚΑΣΤΩΡ

τοῖσδε μελήσει γάμος· ἀλλὰ κύνας
τάσδ' ὑποφεύγων στείχ' ἐπ' Ἀθηνῶν·

1345 δεινὸν γὰρ ἴχνος βάλλουσ' ἐπὶ σοὶ
χειροδράκοντες χρώτα κελαιναί,
δεινῶν ὀδυνῶν καρπὸν ἔχουσαι·
νὼ δ' ἐπὶ πόντον Σικελὸν σπουδῇ

ELECTRA

the gods to hear! For even the gods and I feel pity for struggling mortals.

ORESTES

No more shall I see you!

ELECTRA

Nor shall I draw near your gaze!

ORESTES

This is the last greeting I shall have from you!

ELECTRA

City, farewell! A fond farewell to you, women of my city!

ORESTES

Sister most loyal, are you going already?

ELECTRA

I am going and in the going wet my tender eyes.

ORESTES

Pylades, go in joy and be husband to Electra!

CASTOR

These two shall make marriage their care. But look, the hounds approach: you must flee from them toward Athens. They are pursuing you on their dread feet, these creatures with snakes for arms and black skin, and the yield they bring forth is terrible woe. We shall go in haste to the Sicilian sea in order to rescue the ships that ply the deep.

EURIPIDES

- σώσονται νεῶν πρόρας ἐνάλους.
 διὰ δ' αἰθερίας στείχοντε πλακὸς
 1350 τοῖς μὲν μυσσαροῖς οὐκ ἐπαρήγομεν,
 οἷσιν δ' ὄσιον καὶ τὸ δίκαιον
 φίλον ἐν βιώτῳ, τούτους χαλεπῶν
 ἐκλύοντες μόχθων σφύζομεν.
 οὕτως ἀδικεῖν μηδεὶς θελέτω
 1355 μηδ' ἐπιόρκων μέτα συμπλείτω
 θεὸς ὦν θνητοῖς ἀγορεύω.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

χαίρετε· χαίρειν δ' ὅστις δύναται
 καὶ ξυντυχία μὴ τιμὴ κάμνει
 θνητῶν εὐδαίμονα πράσσει.

¹³⁴⁸ post h. v. (vel post 1347) lac. indic. Denniston

ELECTRA

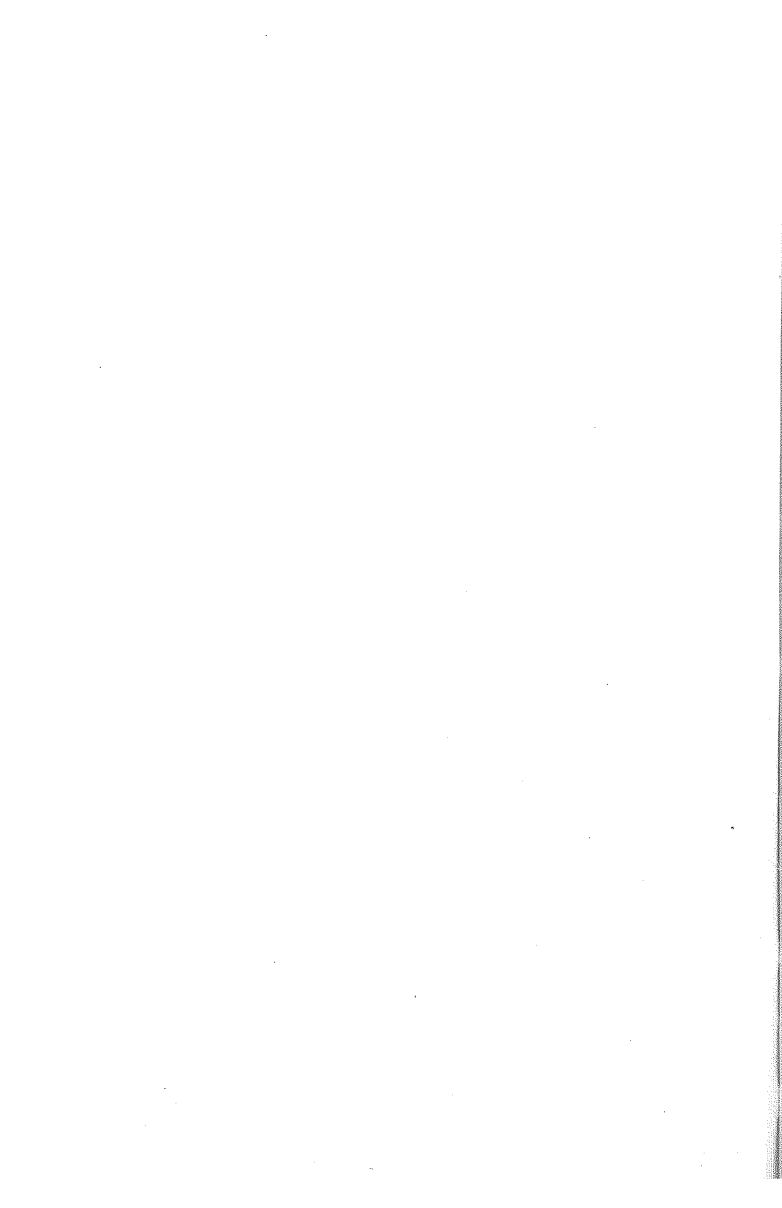
As we pass along the plain of heaven we do not lend aid to those who are defiled, but we rescue from hard toils and save all those who in their lives love piety and justice. So let no one willingly do wrong or sail with those who break their oaths. I am a god, and this is my warning to mortals.

Exit CASTOR and Polydeuces by the mechane.

CHORUS LEADER

Farewell! The mortal man who can fare well and suffers no misfortune is indeed blessed.

Exit by Eisodes B ELECTRA, ORESTES, Pylades, and the CHORUS.



HERACLES

INTRODUCTION

Like several of Euripides' plays, *Heracles*, put on ca. 416 B.C., portrays more than one reversal in the fortunes of its characters. The play has two sequences of action, both resulting in a sudden change, the first from bad to good fortune, the second from good to bad. The suddenness of these reversals and their divine causation make a powerful statement of the archaic Greek theme of the fragility of human happiness and the unforeseeability of the future. Greek myth is full of stories demonstrating that not even the greatest of men (an Achilles, a Heracles) or the most fortunate (a Cadmus, a Peleus) is exempt from the general fragility of the mortal condition. Euripides' play, though adding reflections of other kinds, makes much the same point as the myth on which it is based.

Heracles is the son of Zeus and Alcmene, wife of Amphitryon: Zeus disguised himself as Amphitryon in order to lie with Amphitryon's wife. (Though in actual paternity, Heracles is the son of Zeus, Amphitryon is also spoken of throughout the play as his father.) Just as his father is the mightiest of gods, so Heracles is the mightiest of heroes, but he has a powerful enemy, from whom his name is actually derived, Zeus's wife Hera, who persecutes the hero because he is her husband's bastard son.

In most versions of the Labors of Heracles, the hero

EURIPIDES

murders his wife and children in a fit of madness sent by Hera and must perform the Labors for Eurystheus in expiation. Euripides reverses the order of events, putting the death of Heracles' family after the Labors. This means that the Labors must be given another motivation: Heracles offers to work for Eurystheus so that he and his father, Amphitryon, may return to Argos, from which Amphitryon has been banished. In this way the killing of his family can be left as the final reversal of the hero's good fortune.

The play is set in Thebes, where Heracles has settled. He is married to Megara, the daughter of the king of Thebes, but is away on his Labors, having been sent to the Underworld to fetch Cerberus. In the first half of the play, he is presumed to be dead, and his wife, their children, and his father are being threatened with death by a usurper named Lycus. (This part of the plot may well be Euripides' own invention.) They have taken refuge at the altar of Zeus the Savior, but the threat of being burned alive has persuaded them to abandon their sanctuary and submit to death at the hands of Lycus. Heracles returns in the nick of time, rescues his family, and kills Lycus. The Chorus of old men of Thebes, who are loyal to Heracles but powerless to help him, react to the death of the usurper with a choral ode affirming the justice of the gods and the divine paternity of Heracles.

No sooner have the notes of this ode died out than the minor divinities Iris and Lyssa (Madness) descend on Heracles' house, sent there by Hera. Iris, who is acting as Hera's second-in-command, orders Lyssa to bring a fit of madness on Heracles so that he will kill his own children. Lyssa disappears into the house; cries are heard within; and a messenger comes out to tell how Heracles went mad,

HERACLES

killed his three sons and his wife, and almost killed his father. Amphitryon, to prevent further murder, has tied him to a fallen pillar.

By the use of the *eccyclema*, a wheeled platform for bringing an indoor scene out of doors, Euripides allows the audience to see Heracles, tied to the pillar and lying unconscious. At last he stirs, and the Chorus and Amphitryon bravely prepare to deal with the erstwhile madman. When he awakes, however, his fit has passed. Like Agave in *Bacchae*, he is gradually brought face to face with the enormity of what he did when out of his mind. He determines to kill himself.

Before he can carry out this intention, however, Theseus, king of Athens, arrives. Coming with an army to rescue Thebes from the usurper, he finds Heracles amid the corpses of his family. When Heracles is induced to speak, he explains that his life is now in ruins and that he cannot go on living. But Theseus persuades him to give up his intention to kill himself. As they depart for Athens, Heracles likens himself to a small boat being towed by another boat (1423-4). The very same image, expressed with the same rare word (*epholkis*) had been used at the end of the rescue scene (631), where the children cling to Heracles as their savior. The repeated image emphasizes the completeness of the reversal: where previously Heracles had towed his children along, now he is the one being towed.

The justice of the gods is explicitly and implicitly raised as a serious problem in this play. On the one hand, the gods are explicitly credited with the destruction of the cruel and tyrannical Lycus, and it is suggested that they had a hand in rescuing the family of Heracles at the last moment. (Compare the way in which the death of Ion and Creusa

EURIPIDES

in *Ion* are narrowly averted by divine intervention.) On the other hand, Hera's persecution of Heracles is utterly unjust. It is merely because he is the fruit of her husband's adultery that she hates him, and the most natural interpretation of Iris' words at 841-2 is that failure to ruin Heracles would be proof of Hera's impotence. Greek polytheism, however, was not wedded to the doctrine of divine moral perfection. The Greeks noted the fall of great wrongdoers with satisfaction as showing that the gods rule in heaven and punish the wicked. But this in no way compelled them to see the gods' justice in everything, and when one of the good met with undeserved disaster, they did not feel obliged to say, as a monotheist might, that this was divine beneficence heavily disguised. Instead, the sufferer may be paying for the sins of his ancestors, or, though otherwise decent, may have incurred the wrath of a god and be suffering out of proportion to his guilt. Alternatively, undeserved suffering simply proves the truth of the view (see Achilles' speech to Priam in *Iliad* 24) that mortals are born to trouble and not even the greatest and the best can be exempt. Unmerited suffering is a fact of life. Greeks of the archaic and classical periods, ever realists, did not try to pretend that the gods' dealings are manifestly just.

There is one short passage in *Heracles* where a rather different note seems to be struck, one discordant with the archaic theme of the gods and their dispensing of good and evil. Near the end of the play, Theseus argues that the gods too have to put up with the knowledge of their evil deeds (adultery, putting their fathers in chains), and that for Heracles to kill himself would show that he expects a better lot than theirs. In his reply to this argument, Heracles says (1341-6) that he does not believe in gods who do such

HERACLES

things: no true god commits adultery or is another's master, since a god, if he is truly a god, needs nothing. A similar argument was made more than half a century earlier by the Ionian philosopher Xenophanes of Colophon. Xenophanes reasoned that the anthropomorphic idea of divinity was false, and that the true god was a mind free of human passion. Just how far Euripides himself agreed with the argument he puts in Heracles' mouth cannot be determined. It is tempting to think that he saw the force of it. For the purposes of the play, however, such an idea cannot be the dramatic truth about Heracles' situation. He is the product of the adulterous union of Zeus and Alcmena, and Hera is his jealous persecutor. In the world of the play the gods do feel passions, both erotic and vengeful, and the world is the way it is in part because that is so.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Editions

- U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff², 3 vols. (Berlin, 1895, rpt. Darmstadt, 1959).
G. W. Bond (Oxford, 1981).
K. H. Lee (Leipzig, 1988).
S. A. Barlow (Warminster, 1996).

Literary Criticism

- A. W. H. Adkins, "Basic Greek Values in Euripides' *Hecuba* and *Hercules Furens*," *CQ* 16 (1966), 193-219.
W. Arrowsmith, Introduction to *Heracles* in *The Complete*

EURIPIDES

- Greek Tragedies*, ed. D. Grene and R. Lattimore, *Euripides* vol. 2 (Chicago, 1956).
- A. P. Burnett, *Catastrophe Survived: Euripides' Plays of Mixed Reversal* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 157-82.
- H. H. O. Chalk, "Ἀρετή and βία in Euripides' *Heracles*," *JHS* 82 (1962), 7-18.
- M. Cropp, "Heracles, *Electra* and the *Odyssey*," in M. Cropp, E. Fantham, S. E. Scully, edd., *Greek Tragedy and Its Legacy: Essays Presented to D. J. Conacher* (Calgary, 1986), pp. 187-99.
- G. K. Galinsky, *The Heracles Theme* (Oxford, 1972).
- J. Gregory, "Euripides' *Heracles*," *YCS* 25 (1977), 259-75.
- M. R. Halleran, "Rhetoric, Irony, and the Ending of Euripides' *Heracles*," *CA* 5 (1986), 171-81.
- *The Heracles of Euripides* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988), pp. 71-86.
- K. H. Lee, "The Iris-Lyssa Scene in Euripides' *Heracles*," *Antichthon* 16 (1982), 44-53.
- "Human and Divine in Euripides' *Heracles*," in *Vindex Humanitatis: Essays in Honour of J. H. Bishop* (Armidale, 1980), pp. 34-45.
- J. D. Mikalson, "Zeus the Father and Heracles the Son in Tragedy," *TAPA* 116 (1986), 89-98.

Dramatis Personae

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ | AMPHITRYON, husband of Alcmena. mortal father of Heracles |
| ΜΕΓΑΡΑ | MEGARA. wife of Heracles |
| ΧΟΡΟΣ | CHORUS of old men of Thebes |
| ΛΥΚΟΣ | LYCUS, usurper of the throne of Thebes |
| ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ | HERACLES. son of Zeus |
| ΙΡΙΣ | IRIS. minor divinity serving Hera |
| ΛΥΣΣΑ | LYSSA. goddess of madness |
| ΕΞΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ | MESSENGER from within the house |
| ΘΗΣΕΥΣ | THESEUS. King of Athens |
| Nonspeaking roles: | Heracles' three young sons |

A Note on Staging

The *skene* represents the house of Heracles in Thebes. Eisodos A leads to other places in Thebes, Eisodos B to places outside the city.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

- Τίς τὸν Διὸς σύλλεκτρον οὐκ οἶδεν βροτῶν,
Ἄργεῖον Ἀμφιτρυῶν, ὃν Ἀλκαῖός ποτε
ἔτιχθ' ὁ Περσέως, πατέρα τόνδ' Ἡρακλέους;
ὃς τάσδε Θήβας ἔσχον, ἔνθ' ὁ γηγενῆς
5 Σπαρτῶν στάχυς ἔβλασται, ὧν γένους Ἄρης
ἔσωσ' ἀριθμὸν ὀλίγον, οἱ Κάδμου πόλιν
τεκνοῦσι παίδων παισίν· ἔνθεν ἐξέφν
Κρέων Μειοικέως παῖς, ἄναξ τῆσδε χθονός.
Κρέων δὲ Μεγάρης τῆσδε γίγνεται πατήρ,
10 ἦν πάντες ὑμεναίοισι Καδμείοι ποτε
λατῶ συνηλάξαν ἠνίκ' εἰς ἐμοὺς
δόμους ὁ κλεινὸς Ἡρακλῆς νιν ἤγατο.
λιπὼν δὲ Θήβας, οὗ κατακίσθη ἐγώ,
Μεγάρην τε τῆνδε πενθεροῦς τε παῖς ἐμὸς
15 Ἀργεῖα τεῖχην καὶ Κυκλωπίαν πόλιν

⁴ ἔσχον Naber: -εν L

¹ The teeth of the serpent of Ares, sown in the ground, sprang up as armed men. They fought each other and most were killed.

HERACLES

Before the house of Heracles is the altar of Zeus the Savior, at which AMPHITRYON, MEGARA, and Heracles' three sons sit as suppliants.

AMPHITRYON

What mortal does not know me, Amphitryon of Argos, the man who shared his wife with Zeus? My father was Alcaeus, son of Perseus, and I am the father of Heracles. I took this city of Thebes as my home, the place where the earthborn harvest, the Sown Men, once sprang up.¹ Only a small number of their race were spared by Ares, but they begot in their posterity the city of Cadmus. It was from them that this land's king, Creon, son of Menoeceus, was descended, and Creon was the father of Megara here. All the people of Thebes once sang her wedding song to the music of the pipe on the day when the illustrious Heracles brought her to my house as his bride.

But my son, quitting Thebes, where I had settled, and leaving behind Megara and his family by marriage, yearned to make Argos, the city built by the Cyclopes, his home,

The survivors were the ancestors of the Theban nobility. In the usual version of the story, Cadmus, founder of Thebes, kills the serpent and sows its teeth. In this play (see lines 252-3 below) the sower is Ares.

EURIPIDES

- ὠρέξασ' οἰκεῖν, ἣν ἐγὼ φεύγω κτανῶν
 Ἥλεκτρύωνα. συμφορὰς δὲ τὰς ἐμὰς
 ἐξευμαρίζων καὶ πάτραν οἰκεῖν θέλων
 καθόδου δίδωσι μισθὸν Εὐρυσθεῖ μέγαν,
 20 ἐξημερῶσαι γαῖαν, εἴθ' Ἥρας ὑπο
 κέντροις δαμασθεῖς εἶτε τοῦ χρεῶν μέτα.
 καὶ τοὺς μὲν ἄλλους ἐξεμόχθησεν πόνους,
 τὸ λοίσθιον δὲ Ταινάρων διὰ στόμα
 βέβηκ' ἐς Αἴδου τὸν τρισώματον κύνα
 25 ἐς φῶς ἀνάξων, ἔνθεν οὐχ ἤκει πάλιν.
 γέρων δὲ δὴ τις ἔστι Καδμείων λόγος
 ὡς ἦν πάρος Δίρκης τις εὐνήτωρ Λύκος
 τὴν ἐπτάπυργον τήνδε δεσπόζων πόλιν,
 τῷ λευκοπώλῳ πρὶν τυραννῆσαι χθονὸς
 30 Ἀμφίων' ἠδὲ Ζῆθον, ἐγγόνῳ Διός.
 οὐ ταῦτ' ὄνομα παῖς πατὴρ κεκλημένος,
 Καδμείος οὐκ ὦν ἀλλ' ἀπ' Εὐβοίας μολῶν,
 κτείνει Κρέοντα καὶ κτανῶν ἄρχει χθονός,
 στάσει νοσοῦσαν τήνδ' ἐπεσπεσῶν πόλιν.
 35 ἡμῖν δὲ κῆδος ἐς Κρέοντ' ἀνημμένον
 κακὸν μέγιστον, ὡς εἴοικε, γίγνεται.
 τοῦμοῦ γὰρ ὄντος παιδὸς ἐν μυχοῖς χθονὸς
 ὁ καινὸς οὗτος τῆσδε γῆς ἄρχων Λύκος
 τοὺς Ἡρακλείους παῖδας ἐξελεῖν θέλει
 40 κτανῶν δάμαρτά <θ' >, ὡς φόνῳ σβέσση φόνον,
 κάμ' (εἴ τι δὴ χρὴ κάμ' ἐν ἀνδράσιν λέγειν,
 γέροντ' ἀχρεῖον), μὴ ποθ' οἶδ' ἠνδρωμένοι
 μῆτρῳσιν ἐκπράξωσιν αἵματος δίκην.

HERACLES

the city from which I am exiled for killing Electryon.² He wanted to dwell in our homeland and thereby lighten my troubles, and so—either goaded on by Hera's compulsion or because it was his fate—he offered Eurystheus a huge price for our return, the taming of the earth. After completing all his other labors, he has gone down, as his last labor, through the mouth of Taenarum to Hades in order to bring up to the daylight Cerberus, the dog with three bodies. From there he has not returned.

For a long time now the Thebans have been telling the story that a certain Lycus, husband to Dirce, was once master over this seven-gated city before Zeus's sons Amphion and Zethus, they of the white horses, became the land's rulers. The son of this Lycus, bearing his father's name, no Cadmean but an immigrant from Euboea, killed Creon and having killed him rules the land: he attacked the city when it was suffering from civil discord. Our marriage tie with Creon is proving, it seems, a great curse. For while my son is in the depths of the earth, this Lycus, the land's new king, intends to murder Heracles' sons and wife, wiping away old blood with new, and to kill me as well, if you can count me, a useless graybeard, among men. He is afraid that these sons, grown to manhood, may some day punish him for the death of their mother's kin. And since

² Electryon was the father of Alcmene, Amphitryon's wife. In some versions the killing is accidental, in others deliberate.

¹⁸ <μ' > οἰκεῖν Herwerden ²¹ fort. ἀασθεῖς

³⁸ καινός Elmsley: κλεινός L

⁴⁰ <θ' > Canter

EURIPIDES

- ἐγὼ δέ (λείπει γάρ με τοῖσδ' ἐν δώμασιν
 45 τροφὸν τέκνων οἰκουρόν, ἥνικα χθονὸς
 μέλαιναν ὄρφνην εἰσέβαινε, παῖς ἐμός)
 σὺν μητρὶ τέκνα, μὴ θάνωσ', Ἡρακλέους
 βωμὸν καθίζω τόνδε σωτήηρος Διός,
 ὃν καλλινίκου δορὸς ἄγαλμ' ἰδρύσατο
 50 Μινύας κρατήσας οὐμὸς εὐγενῆς τόκος.
 πάντων δὲ χρεῖοι τάσδ' ἔδρας φυλάσσομεν,
 σίτων ποτῶν ἐσθήητος, ἀστρώτῳ πέδῳ
 πλευρὰς τιθέντες· ἐκ γὰρ ἐσφραγισμένοι
 δόμων καθήμεθ' ἀπορία σωτηρίας.
 55 φίλων δὲ τοὺς μὲν οὐ σαφεῖς ὀρῶ φίλους,
 οἱ δ' ὄντες ὀρθῶς ἀδύνατοι προσωφελεῖν.
 τοιοῦτον ἀνθρώποισιν ἢ δυσπραξία
 ἧς μήποθ' ὅστις καὶ μέσῳ εὖνους ἐμοὶ
 τύχοι, φίλων ἔλεγχον ἀψευδέστατον.

ΜΕΓΑΡΑ

- 60 ὦ πρέσβυ, Ταφίων ὅς ποτ' ἐξείλες πόλιν
 στρατηλατήσας κλεινὰ Καδμείων δορὸς,
 ὡς οὐδὲν ἀνθρώποισι τῶν θείων σαφές.
 ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐτ' ἐς πατέρ' ἀπηλάθην τύχης,
 ὅς οὐνεκ' ὄλβου μέγας ἐκομπάσθη ποτὲ
 65 ἔχων τυραννίδ', ἧς μακρὰι λόγχαι πέρι
 πηδῶσ' ἔρωτι δώματ' εἰς εὐδαίμονα,

48 fort. <ς> τόνδε: sed cf. Ion 1314

63 fort. οὖν . . . ἐπειράθη

HERACLES

my son left me here to tend the home as his children's nurse when he entered the gloomy depths of the earth, to prevent their death I have set Heracles' children and their mother as suppliants at the altar of Zeus the Savior here. This was a monument to his victorious spear set up by my nobly born son after his victory over the Minyans.³

We lack all necessities as we keep our station here: we have no food, drink, or clothing, and we lie upon the bare ground. We have been locked out of the house, and we sit here without any means of saving our lives. Some of our friends, I now see, are not friends in deed, while those who truly are so are powerless to help us. That is what misfortune brings to mortals. May no one of even moderate good will toward me have to endure this, the truest test of friends!

MEGARA

Old sir, who once captured the city of the Taphians,⁴ gloriously leading the army of Thebes, how little of what the gods send can be known by mortal men! Where my father was concerned I was not deprived of good fortune. He was extolled as a man of great blessedness, because he possessed a throne, for whose sake long spears leap in eager desire against the houses of the blessed, and because of his

³ The Minyans of Orchomenus were Thebes' chief rival in Boeotia.

⁴ The Taphians lived in northwest Greece. They killed Alcmena's brothers in a cattle raid, and she demanded that Amphitryon avenge their killing if he was to marry her.

65-6 in suspicionem voc. Diggle, qui etiam 67 τε pro δὲ scribit

66 δώματ' Mekler: σώματ' L

EURIPIDES

- ἔχων δὲ τέκνα· κάμ' ἔδωκε παιδὶ σῶ
 ἐπίσημον εὐνήν, Ἡρακλεῖ συνοικίσας.
 καὶ νῦν ἐκεῖνα μὲν θανόντ' ἀνέπτατο,
 70 ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ σὺ μέλλομεν θνήσκειν, γέρον,
 οἳ θ' Ἡράκλειοι παῖδες, οὓς ὑπὸ πτεροῖς
 σῶζω νεοσσοὺς ὄρνις ὡς ὑφειμένους.
 οἱ δ' εἰς ἔλεγχον ἄλλος ἄλλοθεν πίτνων
 ὦ μῆτερ, αὐδᾶ, ποῖ πατήρ ἄπεστι γῆς;
 75 τί δρᾶ, πόθ' ἤξει; τῷ νέῳ δ' ἐσφαλμένοι
 ζητοῦσι τὸν τεκόντ'. ἐγὼ δὲ διαφέρω
 λόγοισι μυθεύουσα. θαυμάζων δ' ὅταν
 πύλαι ψοφῶσι πᾶς ἀνίστησιν πόδα,
 ὡς πρὸς πατρῶον προσπεσούμενοι γόνυ.
 80 νῦν οὖν τίς ἐλπίδ' ἢ πόρον σωτηρίας
 ἐξευμαρίζῃ, πρέσβυ; πρὸς σέ γὰρ βλέπω.
 ὡς οὔτε γαίας ὄρι' ἂν ἐκβαίμεν λάθρα
 (φυλακαὶ γὰρ ἡμῶν κρείσσονες κατ' ἐξόδους)
 οὔτ' ἐν φίλοισιν ἐλπίδες σωτηρίας
 85 ἔτ' εἰσὶν ἡμῖν. ἦντιν' οὖν γνώμην ἔχεις
 λέγ' ἐς τὸ κοινόν, μὴ θανεῖν ἔτοιμον ἦ,
 χρόνον δὲ μηκύνωμεν ὄντες ἀσθενεῖς.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

ὦ θύγατερ, οὔτοι ράδιον τὰ τοιαῦδε
 φαύλως παραινεῖν, σπουδάσαντ' ἀνευ πόνου.

ΜΕΓΑΡΑ

- 90 λύπης τι προσδεῖς ἢ φιλεῖς οὔτω φάος;

HERACLES

children. And he made a brilliant marriage for me by giving me as a bride to your son Heracles. Now, however, all that good fortune has taken wing and gone, and you and I, sir, will soon be killed, and Heracles' children as well, children I shelter like a bird her brood, nestling under my wings. They fall to questioning me, one from this direction, another from that, saying, "Mother, where in the world has father gone off to, what is he doing, when will he come back?" In their youthful confusion they look for their father. I tell them stories to put them off. Whenever the door creaks, they all in wonder jump up in order to hurl themselves at their father's knees.

So now what hope or what means of survival can you provide, sir? For it is to you that I look. We cannot secretly cross the borders of Thebes (the guards stationed at the gates are too powerful for us), and we have no hope of rescue from friends. Say openly what you think, so that we may not out of weakness, with our death already fixed, be drawing out the time it takes to die.

AMPHITRYON

Daughter, it goes against the grain to give such advice rashly, showing zeal without labor.

MEGARA

Do you need still more pain? Are you so in love with the sun's light?

⁷² ὑφειμένους Kirchhoff: -μένη L

⁷⁷ θαυμάζων Kirchhoff: -ζω L

⁸⁰ πόρον Musgrave: πέδον L

EURIPIDES

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

καὶ τῷδε χαίρω καὶ φιλῶ τὰς ἐλπίδας.

ΜΕΓΑΡΑ

κἀγὼ δοκεῖν δὲ τὰδόκητ' οὐ χρή, γέρον.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

ἐν ταῖς ἀναβολαῖς τῶν κακῶν ἔνεστ' ἄκη.

ΜΕΓΑΡΑ

ὁ δ' ἐν μέσῳ γε λυπρὸς ὢν δάκνει χρόνος.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

- 95 <χρόνω> γένοιτ' ἄν, θύγατερ, οὔριος δρόμος
 ἐκ τῶν παρόντων τῶνδ' ἐμοὶ καὶ σοὶ κακῶν
 ἔλθοι τ' ἔτ' ἄν παῖς οὐμός, εὐνήτωρ δὲ σός.
 ἀλλ' ἠσύχαζε καὶ δακρυρρόους τέκνων
 πηγὰς ἀφαίρει καὶ παρευκῆλει λόγοις,
 100 κλέπτουσα μύθοις ἀθλίουσ κλοπὰς ὄμως.
 κάμνουσι γάρ τοι καὶ βροτῶν αἰ συμφοραί,
 καὶ πνεύματ' ἀνέμων οὐκ αἰὲ ρώμην ἔχει,
 οἳ τ' εὐτυχοῦντες διὰ τέλους οὐκ εὐτυχεῖς
 ἐξίσταται γὰρ πάντ' ἀπ' ἀλλήλων δίχα.
 105 οὔτος δ' ἀνὴρ ἄριστος ὅστις ἐλπίσιν
 πέποιθεν αἰεὶ· τὸ δ' ἀπορεῖν ἀνδρὸς κακοῦ.

⁹⁴ γε Dobree: με L

⁹⁵ <χρόνω> γένοιτ' ἄν, θύγατερ M. Schmidt: γένοιτ' ἄν, ὦ
 θύγατερ L

¹⁰³ om. t, del. Nauck

HERACLES

AMPHITRYON

I enjoy the sunlight, and I hold hope dear.

MEGARA

So do I. Yet one must not hope, sir, for what is beyond hoping.

AMPHITRYON

Yet in postponing disaster there is some healing of it.

MEGARA

Still, the time in between gnaws cruelly.

AMPHITRYON

<In time>, my daughter, there may come a favoring breeze to succeed the troubles that now beset you and me, and my son, your husband, may yet return. So keep calm and with the charm of speech still your sons' tears, and though it is but a pitiful deception, yet deceive them with your stories. Just as the winds do not always keep the same force, so too, you know, the disasters that beset mortals abate, and those who enjoy good fortune are not fortunate to the end. Everything in the world retires and separates from each other. The bravest man is he who always puts his trust in hope. To surrender to helplessness is the mark of a coward.

Enter old men of Thebes as CHORUS by Eisodes A. They have staves in their hands to steady their tottering gait.

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ.

ὑψόροφα μέλαθρα καὶ γεραι-
 ἂ δέμνι' ἀμφὶ βάκτροις
 ἔρεισμα θέμενος ἐστάλην

- 110 ἠηλέμων γέρων ἀοι-
 δὸς ὥστε πολὺς ὄρνις,
 ἔπεα μόνον καὶ δόκημα νυκτερω-
 πὸν ἐννύχων ὀνείρων,
 τρομερὰ μὲν, ἀλλ' ὅμως πρόθυμ',
 115 ᾧ τέκεα τέκεα πατρὸς ἀπάτορ',
 ᾧ γεραιὲ σύ τε τάλαινα μᾶ-
 τερ, ἂ τὸν <έν> Ἄϊδα δόμοις
 πόσιν ἀναστενάζεις.

ἀντ.

- μὴ πόδα πρόκαμνε βαρὺ τε κῶ-
 120 λον ὥστε πρὸς πετραῖον
 λέπας ζυγηφόρος πονῶν
 ἄναντα βάρος <ὄχου> φέρων
 τροχηλάτοιο πῶλος.
 λαβοῦ χερῶν καὶ πέπλων, ὅτου λέλοι-
 125 πε ποδὸς ἀμαυρὸν ἶχνος·
 γέρων γέροντα παρακόμιζ',
 128 ᾧ ξύνοπλα δόρατα νέα νέω

107 ὑψόροφα Musgrave: ὑπόροφα L 110 γέρων Nauck:
 γόνων L, quam lect. def. Renehan, CP 80 (1985), 147-9
 114 μὲν Tyrwhitt: μόνον L 117 <έν> Hermann

HERACLES

CHORUS

For this high-roofed house and the old man's
bed, easing my weight
about my staff, I have set out,
an aged singer of lament
like some bird of white plumage.
Mere words am I now and an insubstantial
vision seen at night,
trembling, but full of eagerness,
children, children, of father bereft,
and you, old man, and you, unhappy mother,
who mourn your husband
in the house of Hades.

Do not let your feet and your heavy legs
grow weary like a burdened horse
laboring up the rocky hill
trying to carry
the weight of the wheel-borne chariot.
Grasp the hands and garments
of anyone whose footstep is unsteady!
Help an old man along, though you yourself are old.
His brother in arms were you

119 πόδα πρόκαμνε Diggle: προκάμητε πόδα L

121-3 sic post Hartung (ζυγηφόρος . . . βάρος φέρων
τροχηλάτιο πώλος, etiam <ῶχου> ante τρ-) et Wecklein (ἄναν-
τες) Willink: ζυγηφόρον πώλον ἀνέντες ὡς βάρος φέρου
τροχηλάτιο πώλου L

124 χερὸς Wilamowitz

127 et 128 inter se trai. Musgrave

EURIPIDES

127 τὸ πάρος ἐν ἡλίκων πόνοι-
σιν ἦν ποτ', εὐκλεεστάτας

130 πατρίδος οὐκ ὀνείδη.

ἐπωδ.

ἴδετε, πατέρος ὡς γορ-
γῶπες αἶδε προσφερεῖς
ὀμμάτων ἀυγαί,

τὸ δὲ κακοτυχῆς οὐ λέλοιπεν ἐκ τέκνων
οὐδ' ἀποίχεται χάρις.

135 Ἑλλὰς ὧ ξυμμάχους
οἴους οἴους ὀλέσασα
τούσδ' ἀποστερήσῃ.

—ἀλλ' εἰσορῶ γὰρ τῆσδε κίρανον χθονὸς
Λύκον περῶντα τῶνδε δωμάτων πέλας.

ΛΥΚΟΣ

140 τὸν Ἡράκλειον πατέρα καὶ ξυνάορον,
εἰ χρή μ', ἐρωτῶ· χρή δ', ἐπεὶ γε δεσπότης
ὑμῶν καθέστηχ', ἱστορεῖν ἂ βούλομαι.

τίν' ἐς χρόνον ζητεῖτε μηκῦναι βίον;
τίν' ἐλπίδ' ἀλκὴν τ' εἰσορᾶτε μὴ θανεῖν;

145 ἦ τὸν παρ' Ἄϊδη πατέρα τῶνδε κείμενον
πιστεύεθ' ἤξειν; ὡς ὑπὲρ τὴν ἀξίαν
τὸ πένθος αἴρεσθ' εἰ θανεῖν ὑμᾶς χρεῶν,
σὺ μὲν καθ' Ἑλλάδ' ἐκβαλὼν κόμπους κενούς
ὡς σύγγαμός σοι Ζεὺς τέκνου τε κοινεῶν,

150 σὺ δ' ὡς ἀρίστου φωτὸς ἐκλήθης δάμαρ.

HERACLES

when you were both young and grasped the spear
in the battles of your youth:
you did not disgrace your glorious country.

See how the fierce glance
in these children's eyes
resembles their father's!
The ill luck that dogged him has not abandoned his sons,
nor yet has his loveliness vanished.
O Greece, what allies,
what allies you will have lost
when these are taken from you!

Enter LYCUS with retinue by Eisodos A.

CHORUS LEADER

But I see the country's ruler, Lycus, approaching this house.

LYCUS

Heracles' father and wife, here is a question for you, if I may ask it—and since I have become your master, I may ask you what I wish: how long are you planning to prolong your life? What hope, what defense against death do you see? Do you believe that the father of these children, who lies dead in Hades, will return? How excessively you grieve that you must die, one of you uttering throughout Greece the foolish boast that Zeus shared your wife with you and was partner in the begetting of your son, the other that you are called the wife of the noblest of heroes!

127-9 *πόνουσω ἦν* Willink: *πόνους ξυνῆν* L

146 *ὡς* Matthiae: *ὄσθ'* L

149 *τέκνου τε κοινεῶν* Heath: *τέκοι νέον* L

EURIPIDES

- τί δὴ τὸ σεμνὸν σῶ κατείργασται πόσει,
 ὕδραν ἔλειον εἰ διώλεσε κτανὼν
 ἢ τὸν Νέμειον θῆρ', ὃν ἐν βρόχοις ἐλὼν
 βραχιόνος φησ' ἀγχόναισιν ἐξελεῖν;
 155 τοῖσδ' ἐξαγωνίζεσθε; τῶνδ' ἄρ' οὐνεκα
 τοὺς Ἡρακλείους παῖδας οὐ θνήσκειν χρεῶν;
 ὁ δ' ἔσχε δόξαν οὐδὲν ὦν εὐψυχίας
 θηρῶν ἐν αἰχμῇ, τᾶλλα δ' οὐδὲν ἄλκιμος,
 ὃς οὐποτ' ἀσπίδ' ἔσχε πρὸς λαιᾶ χερὶ
 160 οὐδ' ἦλθε λόγχης ἐγγὺς ἀλλὰ τόξ' ἔχων,
 κάκιστον ὄπλων, τῇ φυγῇ πρόχειρος ἦν.
 ἀνδρὸς δ' ἔλεγχος οὐχὶ τόξ' εὐψυχίας
 ἀλλ' ὃς μένων βλέπει τε κἀντιδέρκεται
 δορὸς ταχεῖαν ἄλοκα τάξιν ἐμβεβῶς.
 165 ἔχει δὲ τοῦμὸν οὐκ ἀναΐδειαν, γέρον,
 ἀλλ' εὐλάβειαν· οἶδα γὰρ κατακτανῶν
 Κρέοντα πατέρα τῆσδε καὶ θρόνους ἔχων.
 οὐκ οὐν τραφέντων τῶνδε τιμωροὺς ἐμοὶ
 χρήζω λιπέσθαι, τῶν δεδραμένων δίκην.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

- 170 τῶ τοῦ Διὸς μὲν Ζεὺς ἀμυνέτω μέρει
 παιδός· τὸ δ' εἰς ἔμ', Ἡράκλεις, ἐμοὶ μέλει
 λόγοισι τὴν τοῦδ' ἀμαθίαν ὑπὲρ σέθεν
 δεῖξαι· κακῶς γάρ σ' οὐκ ἑατέον κλύειν.
 πρῶτον μὲν οὐν τάρρητ' (ἐν ἀρρήτοισι γὰρ
 175 τὴν σὴν νομίζω δειλίαν, Ἡράκλεες)
 σὺν μάρτυσιν θεοῖς δεῖ μ' ἀπαλλάξαι σέθεν.

HERACLES

What impressive deed was it that your husband performed in killing a marsh snake or that Nemean creature? He caught it in a snare and claimed he killed it bare-handed! On claims like these will you struggle to the end? Is it because of these deeds that Heracles' children ought not to be put to death?

Heracles, though worthless, has acquired a reputation for courage by fighting with beasts, though in other things he is not brave at all. He has never strapped a shield on his left arm, never faced the spear point. He had a bow, basest of weapons, in his hand and was ready to run away! A bow does not show a man's courage: that is done by standing your ground, looking straight at the swift swathe cut by enemy spears, and holding ranks.

What I am doing, old man, is not ruthlessness but prudent caution. I know that it is because I killed Creon, this woman's father, that I have the throne. So I do not wish to raise these children to manhood and leave for myself avengers to punish me for my deeds.

AMPHITRYON

As regards Zeus's part in his son, let Zeus himself defend it. As for my own part, Heracles, my care is to show by argument how senseless this man is where you are concerned: I cannot allow you to be reviled.

First I must free you from an unspeakable slander (for I regard cowardice in you, Heracles, as an unspeakable idea) with the gods as my witnesses. I call on the thunder-

157 ὁ δ' Wilamowitz: ὅς L

161 ὄπλων Elmsley: -ον L

167 καὶ] τοὺς Luppe

168 ἐμοὶ II sicut coni. Camper: ἐμὸς L

EURIPIDES

- Διὸς κεραυνὸν ἠρόμην τέθριππά τε
 ἐν οἷς βεβηκῶς τοῖσι γῆς βλαστήμασιν
 Γίγασι πλευροῖς πτήν' ἐναρμόσας βέλη
 180 τὸν καλλίνικον μετὰ θεῶν ἐκώμασεν
 τετρασκελές θ' ὕβρισμα, Κενταύρων γένος,
 Φολόην ἐπελθών, ᾧ κάκιστε βασιλέων,
 ἐροῦ τίν' ἄνδρ' ἄριστον ἐκκρίνειαν ἄν
 ἢ οὐ παῖδα τὸν ἐμόν, ὃν σὺ φῆς εἰκῆ δοκεῖν;
 185 Δίρφυν τ' ἐρωτῶν ἢ σ' ἔθρεψ' Ἀβαντίδα—
 οὐκ ἄν σέ γ' αἰνέσειεν· οὐ γὰρ ἔσθ' ὅπου
 ἐσθλόν τι δράσας μάρτυρ' ἂν λάβοις πάτραν.
 τὸ πάνσοφον δ' εὔρημα, τοξήρη σαγῆν,
 μέμφη· κλυὼν νυν τὰπ' ἐμοῦ σοφὸς γενοῦ.
 190 ἀνὴρ ὀπλίτης δούλός ἐστι τῶν ὄπλων
 193 θραύσας τε λόγχην οὐκ ἔχει τῷ σώματι
 194 θάνατον ἀμῦναι, μίαν ἔχων ἀλκὴν μόνον·
 191 καὶ τοῖσι συνταχθείσιν οὔσι μὴ ἀγαθοῖς
 192 αὐτὸς τέθνηκε, δειλία τῇ τῶν πέλας.
 195 ὅσοι δὲ τόξοις χεῖρ' ἔχουσιν εὔστοχον,
 ἐν μὲν τὸ λῶστον, μυρίους οἰστοὺς ἀφεῖς
 ἄλλοις τὸ σῶμα ρύεται μὴ κατθανεῖν,
 ἐκὰς δ' ἀφесτῶς πολεμίους ἀμύνεται
 τυφλοῖς ὀρώντας οὐτάσας τοξεύμασιν
 200 τὸ σῶμά τ' οὐ δίδωσι τοῖς ἐναντίοις,

177 κεραυνὸν Wilamowitz: -ὸν δ' L

183 ἐκκρίνειαν Dobree: cf. *S. Phil.* 1425: ἐγκρίν- L

184 εἰκῆ Reiske: εἶναι L: εἶναι κακόν Wilamowitz

185 ἐρωτῶνθ' A. S. Henry

HERACLES

bolt of Zeus, I call on the chariot in which he stood when he shot his winged arrows into the flanks of the earthborn Giants⁵ and then celebrated his victory in the company of the gods! Go to Pholoë, you most cowardly of rulers, and ask the Centaurs,⁶ those violent four-legged creatures, what man they would consider to be the bravest. Is it not my son, who you say is falsely reputed brave? And if you asked Mt. Dirphys in Abantid Euboea, which raised you up, it is not you it would praise. Never did you do any brave deed that your homeland could attest to!

You find fault with that cleverest of inventions, the bow. Hear then what I have to say and learn wisdom! The infantryman is the slave of his arms, and if he breaks his spear, he cannot ward off death from himself since that is his only defense. And because the men who are with him in the ranks are not brave, he is killed, and the cause is the cowardice of his neighbors. But the man who is skilled with the bow has this one great advantage: when he has shot countless arrows, he still has others to defend himself from death. He stands far off and avenges himself on his enemies by wounding them with arrows they cannot see even though their eyes are open. He does not expose his body

⁵ Heracles helped Zeus and the Olympians to defeat an attack by the Giants, offspring of Earth. See Pindar, *Nemean* 1.67-9 and M. L. West's commentary on Hesiod, *Theogony* 954.

⁶ On Heracles' fight with the Centaurs see lines 364-74 below. Pholoë is in Arcadia.

186 σέ γ' αἰνέσειεν Wilamowitz: ἐπαινέσειεν L

187 δράσαι Musgrave

191-2 post 194 trai. Wilamowitz

EURIPIDES

ἐν εὐφυλάκτῳ δ' ἐστί. τοῦτο δ' ἐν μάχῃ
σοφὸν μάλιστα, δρῶντα πολεμίους κακῶς
σώζειν τὸ σῶμα, μὴ ἔκ τύχης ὠρμισμένον.

- λόγοι μὲν οἶδε τοῖσι σοῖς ἐναντίαν
205 γνώμην ἔχουσι τῶν καθεστῶτων πέρι.
παῖδας δὲ δὴ τί τοῦσδ' ἀποκτείνει θέλεις;
τί σ' οἶδ' ἔδρασαν; ἐν τί σ' ἠγοῦμαι σοφόν,
εἰ τῶν ἀρίστων τᾶκγον' αὐτὸς ὦν κακὸς
δέδοικας. ἀλλὰ τοῦθ' ὁμῶς ἡμῖν βαρῦ,
210 εἰ δειλίας σῆς κατανούμεθ' οὔνεκα,
ὃ χρῆν σ' ὑφ' ἡμῶν τῶν ἀμεινόνων παθεῖν,
εἰ Ζεὺς δικαίας εἶχεν εἰς ἡμᾶς φρένας.
εἰ δ' οὖν ἔχειν γῆς σκῆπτρα τῆσδ' αὐτὸς θέλεις,
ἔασον ἡμᾶς φυγάδας ἐξελθεῖν χθονός·
215 βία δὲ δράσης μηδὲν ἢ πείση βίαν
ὅταν θεοῦ σοι πνεῦμα μεταβαλὸν τύχη.

φεῦ·

- ὦ γαῖα Κάδμου (καὶ γὰρ ἐς σ' ἀφίξομαι
λόγους ὀνειδιστῆρας ἐνδατούμενος),
τοιαῦτ' ἀμύνεθ' Ἡρακλεῖ τέκνοισί τε,
220 Μινύαις ὃς εἰς ἅπασι διὰ μάχης μολῶν
Θήβας ἔθηκεν ὄμμ' ἐλεύθερον βλέπειν;
οὐδ' Ἑλλάδ' ἦρεσ' (οὐδ' ἀνέξομαί ποτε
σιγῶν) κακίστην λαμβάνων ἐς παῖδ' ἐμόν,
ἣν χρῆν νεοσσοῖς τοῖσδε πῦρ λόγχασι ὅπλα
225 φέρουσαν ἐλθεῖν, ποντίων καθαρμάτων
χέρσου τ' ἀμοιβὰς ὦν ἐμόχθησεν χερί.
τὰ δ', ὦ τέκν', ὑμῖν οὔτε Θηβαίων πόλις

HERACLES

to the enemy but keeps it well protected. This is the shrewdest thing in battle, to hurt the enemy and save your own life, being independent of fortune.

These words of mine give the opposite view to yours on a subject of conventional opinion. But tell me, why do you want to kill these children? What have they done to you? It is only on one point, I think, that you are wise: being a coward yourself you are scared of the sons of heroes. Still, being put to death because of your cowardice is hard for us to take. This is what should have been done to you by us, who are your betters, if Zeus were just toward us. Well then, if you want to keep the scepter of this land yourself, let us depart as exiles. But do not act with violence, or violence is what you will suffer when the winds sent by Heaven change.

Ah me! Land of Cadmus (for I shall come to you too as I distribute my words of reproach), is this the help you offer Heracles and his children, the man who battled all the Minyans single-handed and caused Thebes to look once more with freedom in her glance? I have no word of praise for Greece either (I shall never keep silent on this point), since I have found her disloyal toward my son. She should have come bringing fire, spears, and shields to these children in payment for the cleansing of land and sea wrought by his hand. This protection, children, neither

203 ὄρμισμένον Reiske: -μένους L 205 παρεστῶτων
 Wilamowitz cl. Pho. 1309 215 βία . . . βίαν Reiske: βίαν
 . . . λίαν L 220 Μινύαις ὃς εἰς ἅπασιν Elmsley: ὃς εἰς
 Μινύαισι πᾶσι L 221 Θήβας Heiland: -αις L
 226 ἐμόχθησεν χερί Diggle: -σας χάρην L

EURIPIDES

- οὐθ' Ἑλλὰς ἀρκεῖ πρὸς δ' ἔμ' ἀσθενῆ φίλον
 δεδόρκατ', οὐδέν ὄντα πλὴν γλώσσης ψόφον.
 230 ῥώμη γὰρ ἐκκλέλοιπεν ἦν πρὶν εἶχομεν,
 γήρα δὲ τρομερὰ γυῖα κάμαυρον σθένος.
 εἰ δ' ἦ νέος τε κάτι σώματος κρατῶν,
 λαβὼν ἂν ἔγχος τοῦδε τοὺς ξανθοὺς πλόκους
 καθημάτωσ' ἂν, ὥστ' Ἀτλαντικῶν πέραν
 235 φεύγειν ὄρων ἂν δειλία τοῦμόν δόρυ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἄρ' οὐκ ἀφορμὰς τοῖς λόγοισιν ἀγαθοὶ
 θνητῶν ἔχουσι, κἂν βραδύς τις ἦ λέγειν;

ΛΥΚΟΣ

- σὺ μὲν λέγ' ἡμᾶς οἷς πεπύργωσαι λόγοις,
 ἐγὼ δὲ δράσω σ' ἀντὶ τῶν λόγων κακῶς.
 240 ἄγ', οἱ μὲν Ἑλικῶν', οἱ δὲ Παρνασοῦ πτυχὰς
 τέμνειν ἄνωχθ' ἐλθόντες ὑλουργοὺς δρυὸς
 κορμούς· ἐπειδὴν δ' ἐσκομισθῶσιν πόλει,
 βωμόν πέριξ νήσαντες ἀμφήρη ξύλα
 ἐμπίμπρατ' αὐτῶν κάκπυροῦτε σώματα
 245 πάντων, ἵν' εἰδῶσ' οὐνεκ' οὐχ ὁ καθθανὼν
 κρατεῖ χθονὸς τῆσδ' ἀλλ' ἐγὼ τὰ νῦν τάδε.
 ὑμεῖς δέ, πρέσβεις, ταῖς ἐμαῖς ἐναντίοι
 γνώμαιοισιν ὄντες, οὐ μόνον στεναῖζετε
 τοὺς Ἡρακλείους παῖδας ἀλλὰ καὶ δόμου
 250 τύχας, ὅταν πάσχη τι, μεμνήσεσθε δὲ
 δοῦλοι γεγῶτες τῆς ἐμῆς τυραννίδος.

HERACLES

Thebes nor Greece is offering you. You must look to me, a friend who is weak, nothing but a noise of the tongue. The vigor I once had has left me, my limbs tremble with age, and my strength is faint. If I were a young man and still had power over my body, I would have taken a spear and bloodied those golden locks of his, so that he would run away in cowardice beyond the pillars of Atlas.

CHORUS LEADER

Do not brave men, even when they lack a ready tongue, find good things to say?

LYCUS

Go on reviling me with the words you are so proud of! I shall pay you back for words with deeds!

Come, some of you go to Helicon, others to the glens of Parnassus, and order the woodsmen to cut logs of oak! When these have been brought into the city, pile the wood close about the altar and set alight and burn the bodies of them all! Then they will know that it is not the dead man but I who now rule this land!

Two of Lycus' retainers depart by Eisosdos B.

And you, old men, who oppose my decisions, you will weep not only for the sons of Heracles but for the misfortunes of your own houses when they suffer disaster: you will remember that you are slaves subject to my rule!

235 ἀν] νιν Elmsley

241 ἐλθόντες Dobree: -τας L

244 κάκπυροῦτε Wecklein: καὶ πυρ- L

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- ᾧ γῆς λοχεύμαθ', οὓς Ἄρης σπείρει ποτὲ
 λάβρον δράκοντος ἔξερημώσας γένυν,
 οὐ σκῆπτρα, χειρὸς δεξιᾶς ἐρείσματα,
 255 ἀρείτε καὶ τοῦδ' ἀνδρὸς ἀνόσιον κᾶρα
 καθαιματώσεθ', ὅστις οὐ Καδμείος ὢν
 ἄρχει κάκιστα τῶν ἐτῶν ἔπηλυσ ὢν;
 ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐμοῦ γε δεσπόσεις χαίρων ποτὲ
 οὐδ' ἀπόνησα πόλλ' ἐγὼ καμῶν χειρὶ
 260 ἔξεις. ἀπέρρων δ' ἔνθεν ἦλθες ἐνθάδε
 ὕβριζ'. ἐμοῦ γὰρ ζῶντος οὐ κτενεῖς ποτε
 τοὺς Ἡρακλείους παῖδας. οὐ τοσόνδε γῆς
 263 ἔνερθ' ἐκείνος κρύπτεται λιπῶν τέκνα.
 264 ᾧ δεξιὰ χεῖρ, ὡς ποθεῖς λαβεῖν δόρυ,
 ἐν δ' ἀσθενείᾳ τὸν πόθον διώλεσας·
 270 ἐπεὶ σ' ἔπαυσ' ἂν δούλον ἐννέποντά με
 καὶ τάσδε Θήβας εὐκλεῶς ὠνήσαμεν,
 ἐν αἷς σὺ χαίρεις· οὐ γὰρ εὖ φρονεῖ πόλις
 στάσει νοσοῦσα καὶ κακοῖς βουλευμασιν.
 274 οὐ γάρ ποτ' ἂν σὲ δεσπότην ἐκτήσατο·
 264 ἐπεὶ σὺ μὲν γῆν τήνδε διολέσας ἔχεις,
 265 ὁ δ' ὠφελήσας ἀξίωιν οὐ τυγχάνει.
 266 κᾶπειτα πρᾶσσω πόλλ' ἐγὼ, φίλους ἐμοῦς
 267 θανόντας εὖ δρῶν, οὐ φίλων μάλιστα δεῖ;

254 ἐρείσματα Stephanus: ὀρίσματα L

257 κάκιστα Kovacs: -ος L ἐτῶν Reiske: νέων L

264-7 vide post 274

HERACLES

CHORUS LEADER

Offspring of earth that Ares once sowed when he had despoiled the fierce jaw of the dragon,⁷ will you not take up the staves that prop your right hands and bloody this man's godless head? He is no true Theban, and rules most wrongfully over the citizens since he is an immigrant. But you will never get away with lording it over me, nor take from me what I have worked so hard to get. Go back to where you came from and be high-handed there! While I live you will never kill the children of Heracles: not so deep as that is he buried in the ground, leaving his children behind!

O right arm of mine, how you long to take up the spear! Yet because of your weakness your longing has come to naught. Otherwise I would have put a stop to your calling me "slave" and would have done a glorious service to Thebes, in which you are now reveling. Thebes is not in its right mind, it suffers from civil strife and bad counsel. Otherwise it would never have taken you for a master. You have destroyed this country and you now rule it, but Heracles, who did it great service, does not get his due reward. Am I a meddler, then, if I do good to my friends when they are dead, the time when friends are most needed?

⁷ See note on line 5 above.

269 τὸν πόθον] fort. τοῦτονον

271 ὠνήσαμεν Hermann: ὠκήσ- L

264-7 post 274 trai. West

EURIPIDES

ΜΕΓΑΡΑ

- 275 γέροντες, αἰνῶ· τῶν φίλων γὰρ οὐνεκα
 ὀργὰς δικαίας τοὺς φίλους ἔχειν χρεῶν.
 ἡμῶν δ' ἕκατι δεσπότηαι θυμούμενοι
 πάθητε μηδέν. τῆς δ' ἐμῆς, Ἀμφιτρύων,
 γνώμης ἄκουσον, ἣν τί σοι δοκῶ λέγειν.
- 280 ἐγὼ φιλῶ μὲν τέκνα· πῶς γὰρ οὐ φιλῶ
 ἄτικτον, ἀμόχθησα; καὶ τὸ κατθανεῖν
 δεινὸν νομίζω· τῷ δ' ἀναγκαίῳ τρόπῳ
 ὃς ἀντιτείνει σκαιὸν ἠγοῦμαι βροτῶν.
 ἡμᾶς δ', ἐπειδὴ δεῖ θανεῖν, θνήσκειν χρεῶν
- 285 μὴ πυρὶ καταξανθέντας, ἐχθροῖσιν γέλων
 διδόντας, οὐμοὶ τοῦ θανεῖν μείζον κακόν.
 ὀφείλομεν γὰρ πολλὰ δώμασιν καλά·
 σὲ μὲν δόκησις ἔλαβεν εὐκλεῆς δορός,
 ὥστ' οὐκ ἀνεκτὸν δειλίας θανεῖν σ' ὕπο·
- 290 οὐμὸς δ' ἀμαρτύρητος εὐκλεῆς πόσις;
 ὃς τούσδε παῖδας οὐκ ἂν ἐκσῶσαι θέλοι
 δόξαν κακὴν λαβόντας· οἱ γὰρ εὐγενεῖς
 κάμνουσι τοῖς αἰσχροῖσι τῶν τέκνων ὑπερ·
 ἐμοὶ τε μίμημ' ἀνδρὸς οὐκ ἀπωστέον.
- 295 σκέψαι δὲ τὴν σὴν ἐλπίδ' ἧ λογίζομαι
 ἤξειν νομίζεις παῖδα σὸν γαίας ὕπο;
 καὶ τίς θανόντων ἦλθεν ἐξ Ἄιδου πάλιν;
 ἀλλ' ὡς λόγοισι τόνδε μαλθάξαιμεν ἄν;
 ἦκιστα· φεύγειν σκαιὸν ἄνδρ' ἐχθρὸν χρεῶν,
- 300 σοφοῖσι δ' εἴκειν καὶ τεθραμμένους καλῶς·
 ῥᾶον γὰρ αἰδοῖ σ' ὑποβαλὼν φίλ' ἂν τέμοις.

HERACLES

MEGARA

Old sirs, I thank you. It is good that friends should make a just display of anger on behalf of their friends. Yet please do not come to grief because you are angry with your master in our cause. Amphitryon, listen to me and see if you think what I say makes sense. I love my children: how can I not love the ones I bore and labored over? And I think it a terrible thing to be put to death. But any man, I believe, who struggles against the course of fate is a fool. Since we must die, it is wrong for us to die by the torture of the fire, allowing our enemies to laugh at us: this, in my eyes, is a greater calamity than death. We must act nobly—this house deserves no less of us. You have great fame as a warrior, and therefore it is intolerable for you to be killed in coward's fashion. And is my glorious husband without witnesses to his valor? He would not wish to save these children's lives if it meant they would be thought cowards. Noble parents are troubled by disgrace in their children. And I must not reject my husband's example.

Consider how I view this hope of yours. Do you think your son will return from beneath the earth? Which of the dead ever came back from Hades? Well, then, will you claim that we can soften this man with our words? Impossible. If someone who has no sense is your enemy, you should stay away from him, and make concessions only to those who are wise and have had a good upbringing: you will more easily be able to cast yourself on their sense of

²⁸³ βροτῶν Porson: -όν L

²⁹³ αἰσχροῖσι Stephanus: ἐχθρ- L ³⁰¹ αἰδοῖ σ' ὑπο-
βαλῶν Brunck (ὑποβαλῶν) et Cropp: αἰδοῦς ὑπολαβῶν L

EURIPIDES

- ἤδη δ' ἐσηλθέ μ' εἰ παραιτησαίμεθα
 φυγὰς τέκνων τῶνδ'· ἀλλὰ καὶ τόδ' ἄθλιον,
 πενία σὺν οἰκτρᾷ περιβαλεῖν σωτηρίαν·
 305 ὡς τὰ ξένων πρόσωπα φεύγουσιν φίλοις
 ἐν ἡμαρ ἠδὺν βλέμμ' ἔχειν φασὶν μόνον.
 τόλμα μεθ' ἡμῶν θάνατον, ὃς μένει σ' ὄμως·
 προκαλούμεθ' εὐγένειαν, ᾧ γέρον, σέθεν.
 τὰς τῶν θεῶν γὰρ ὅστις ἐκμοχθεῖ τύχας,
 310 πρόθυμός ἐστιν, ἢ προθυμία δ' ἄφρων.
 ὃ χρῆ γὰρ οὐδεὶς μὴ χρεῶν θήσει ποτέ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- εἰ μὲν σθενόντων τῶν ἐμῶν βραχιόνων
 ἦν τις σ' ὑβρίζων, ῥαδίως ἔπαυσά τ' ἄν·
 νῦν δ' οὐδέν ἐσμεν. σὸν δὲ τοῦντεῦθεν σκοπεῖν
 315 ὅπως διώσῃ τὰς τύχας, Ἀμφιτρύων.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

- οὔτοι τὸ δειλὸν οὐδὲ τοῦ βίου πόθος
 θανεῖν ἐρύκει μ', ἀλλὰ παιδὶ βούλομαι
 σῶσαι τέκν'· ἄλλως δ' ἀδυνάτων ἔοικ' ἐρᾶν.
 ἰδοῦ, πάρεστιν ἠδε φασγάνῳ δέρη,
 <πάρεστι μήτηρ σὺν τέκνοισιν ἀθλία>
 320 κεντεῖν φονεύειν ἰέναι πέτρας ἄπο.
 μίαν δὲ νῶν δὸς χάριν, ἄναξ, ἰκνούμεθα·
 κτείνόν με καὶ τήνδ' ἀθλίαν παίδων πάρος,
 ὡς μὴ τέκν' εἰσίδωμεν, ἀνόσιον θέαν,

³⁰⁵ φίλοις Matthiae: -οι L

³¹¹ χρεῶν Porson: θεῶν L

HERACLES

decency and reach an understanding. I have thought of asking for exile for the children. But this too is a wretched fate, to save their lives at the cost of a miserable poverty: hosts' faces, they say, smile only for a single day upon exiled friends.

Join me in enduring bravely the death that awaits you in any case: I appeal to your noble blood, old sir. Whoever struggles against what the gods ordain shows, to be sure, an ardor, but an ardor that is foolish. No one can ever make unfated what fate has ordained.

CHORUS LEADER

If someone were committing violence against you while my arm had its strength, I would easily have stopped him. As it is, I am of no account. From now on it is up to you, Amphitryon, to consider how you will thrust a way through your fate.

AMPHITRYON

It is not cowardice or a clinging to life that prevents me from dying, but the desire to save the lives of my son's children. Yet it seems I am foolishly in love with the impossible.

Amphitryon comes down from the altar.

See, my neck stands ready for your sword, <and here is the unlucky mother with her children, ready> to be stabbed, murdered, thrown from a cliff! But, my lord, grant us this one favor, we beg of you: kill the poor woman and me before you kill the children so that we may not see the

³¹⁹ post h. v. lac. indic. et suppl. Wilamowitz

EURIPIDES

- ψυχορραγούντα καὶ καλοῦντα μητέρα
 325 πατρός τε πατέρα. τᾶλλα δ' ἦ πρόθυμος εἶ
 πράσσο· οὐ γὰρ ἀλκὴν ἔχομεν ὥστε μὴ θανεῖν.

ΜΕΓΑΡΑ

- καγὼ σ' ἰκνοῦμαι χάριτι προσθεῖναι χάριν,
 ἡμῖν ἴν' ἀμφοῖν εἰς ὑπουργήσεως διπλᾶ·
 κόσμον πάρες μοι παισὶ προσθεῖναι νεκρῶν,
 330 δόμους ἀνοίξας (νῦν γὰρ ἐκκεκλήμεθα),
 ὡς ἀλλὰ ταυτὰ γ' ἀπολάχωσ' οἴκων πατρός.

ΛΥΚΟΣ

- ἔσται τάδ'· οἴγειν κληῖθρα προσπόλοις λέγω.
 κοσμεῖσθ' ἔσω μολόντες· οὐ φθονῶ πέπλων.
 ὅταν δὲ κόσμον περιβάλησθε σώμασιν
 335 ἤξω πρὸς ὑμᾶς νερτέρᾳ δώσων χθονί.

ΜΕΓΑΡΑ

ὦ τέκν', ὁμαρτεῖτ' ἀθλίῳ μητρὸς ποδὶ
 πατρῶον ἐς μέλαθρον, οὐ τῆς οὐσίας
 ἄλλοι κρατοῦσι, τὸ δ' ὄνομ' ἔσθ' ἡμῶν ἔτι.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

- ὦ Ζεῦ, μάτην ἄρ' ὁμόγαμόν σ' ἐκτησάμην,
 340 μάτην δὲ παιδὸς κοινεῶν' ἐκλήζομεν·
 σὺ δ' ἦσθ' ἄρ' ἦσσον ἧ' δόκεις εἶναι φίλος.
 ἀρετῇ σε νικῶ θνητὸς ὢν θεὸν μέγαν·
 παῖδας γὰρ οὐ προὔδωκα τοὺς Ἡρακλέους.

325 ἦ Elmsley: εἰ L 340 κοινεῶν' post Scaliger (κοινεῶν
 ἐκκληζόμεν) Murray: τὸν νεῶν L

HERACLES

ghastly sight of children gasping out their lives and calling out to their mother and grandfather. The rest do as you desire. We have no way to defend ourselves against death.

MEGARA

And I beg you to add a second favor to the first, so that you, who are but one man, may do us two a double service: open the house (we are locked out) and let me put funeral adornments on the children, so that they may receive this at least as patrimony from their father's house.

LYCUS

It shall be so. Servants, unlock the doors!

Lycus' servants open the doors.

Go inside and put on your adornment! I do not begrudge you the clothes. But when you have put on the finery, I shall return to send you to the world below.

Exit LYCUS and retinue by Eisodos A.

MEGARA

Children, follow your unhappy mother as she goes into your father's house! The house is ours in name, but the substance is in the hands of others.

Exit MEGARA and the children into the house.

AMPHITRYON

Zeus, it does no good that you were my wife's lover, no good that I have called you sharer in my son's begetting. You were, it now appears, not as near a friend as I thought. In goodness I, though mortal, surpass you, a mighty god. I have not abandoned the children of Heracles. But you,

EURIPIDES

σὺ δ' ἐς μὲν εὐνάς κρύφιος ἠπίστω μολεῖν,
 345 τὰλλότρια λέκτρα δόντος οὐδενὸς λαβών,
 σφάζειν δὲ τοὺς σοὺς οὐκ ἐπίστασαι φίλους.
 ἀμαθῆς τις εἶ θεὸς ἢ δίκαιος οὐκ ἔφυς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α

αἴλινον μὲν ἐπ' εὐτυχεῖ
 μολπᾶ Φοῖβος ἰαχεῖ
 350 τὸν καλλίφθογγον κιθάραν
 ἐλαύνων πλήκτρῳ χρυσέῳ·
 ἐγὼ δὲ τὸν γᾶς ἐνέρων τ' ἐς ὄρφναν
 μολόντα παῖδ', εἴτε Διὸς νιν εἶπω
 εἴτ' Ἀμφιτρώωνος ἱνν,
 355 ὑμνῆσαι στεφάνωμα μό-
 χθων δι' εὐλογίας θέλω.
 γενναίων δ' ἀρεταὶ πόνων
 τοῖς θανούσιν ἄγαλμα.

μεσφδ. α

πρῶτον μὲν Διὸς ἄλσος
 360 ἠρήμωσε λέοντος,
 πυρσῶ δ' ἀμφεκαλύφθη

350 καλλίφθογγον Stephanus: -φθιτον L

⁸ The rest of this ode is a catalogue, in highly decorative style, of twelve of the Labors of Heracles. (The number was to become canonical, though there is considerable variation in the list.) The usual names for those in Euripides' catalogue are: the Nemean

HERACLES

though you know well enough how to slip secretly into bed and take other men's wives when no one has given you permission, do not know how to save the lives of your nearest and dearest. Either you are a fool of a god or there is no justice in your nature.

Exit AMPHITRYON into the house.

CHORUS

"Chant sorrow, sorrow," Phoebus sings
after a song of good fortune
as he plies his sweet-voiced lyre
with a plectrum of gold.

In like fashion the man gone into the dark of earth, the
realm of the dead

(son of Zeus shall I call him,
or of Amphitryon?)

I wish to praise
as a coronal to his labors.

For high deeds of noble toil
are a glory to those who have perished.⁸

First Zeus's grove
he cleared of the lion
and covered his blond head

lion (359-63), the Centauromachy (364-74), the hind of Artemis (375-9), the Thracian mares of Diomedes (380-8; cf. *Alcestis* 481-506), Cycnus (389-93), the apples of the Hesperides (394-400), the clearing of the sea (400-2), Atlas (403-7), the girdle of Hippolyta, queen of the Amazons (408-18), the Lernaean hydra (419-22), the cattle of Geryon (423-4), and the fetching of Cerberus (425-9).

EURIPIDES

ξανθὸν κράτ' ἐπινωτίσας
δεινῶ χάσματι θηρός.

ἀντ. α

τάν τ' ὀρεινόμον ἀγρίων
365 Κενταύρων ποτὲ γένναν
ἔστρωσεν τόξοις φονίοις,
ἐναίρων πτανοῖς βέλεσιν.
ξύνοιδε Πηνεῖος ὁ καλλιδίνας
μακραί τ' ἄρourke πεδίων ἄκαρποι
370 καὶ Πηλιάδες θεράπναι
σύγχορτοί θ' Ὀμόλας ἔναυ-
λοι, πεύκαισιν ὄθεν χέρας
πληροῦντες χθόνα Θεσσαλῶν
ἰππέαις ἐδάμαζον.

ἐπφδ. α

375 τάν τε χρυσοκάρανον
δόρκα ποικιλόνωτον
συλήτειραν ἀγρωστᾶν
κτείνας θηροφόνον θεᾶν
Οἰνωᾶτιν ἀγάλλει.

στρ. β

380 τεθρίππων τ' ἐπέβα
καὶ ψαλίους ἐδάμασσε πώλους
Διομήδεος, αἱ φονίαισι φάτναις
ἀχάλιν' ἐθόαζον
κάθαιμα σῖτα γέννσι, χαρ-
385 μοναῖσιν ἀνδροβρῶσι δυστράπεζοι
πέραν δ' ἀργυρορρύταν

HERACLES

with the tawny thing, drawing it over his back,
the beast's dread gaping jaws.

Then the mountain-dwelling tribe
of fierce Centaurs
with his deadly arrows he laid low,
killing them with his winged shafts.
The Peneus river with its lovely eddies is witness,
and the far-flung lands of its plain made barren,
the steadings of Mount Pelion
and the settlements that neighbor Mount Homole,
from which the Centaurs filled
their hands with pine-tree trunks and lorded it
over Thessaly with their horsemanship.

The golden-headed hind
with dappled back,
who plundered the farmers,
he killed and gave joy
to the huntress goddess of Oenoë.⁹

The chariot and four he mounted as well
and broke to the bit the horses
of Diomedes. These from troughs soaked in blood
moved nimbly with unbridled zest
their bloody food to their jaws,
unseemly diners rejoicing
in the flesh of men. He crossed

⁹ Artemis.

Ἐβρον διεπέρασε, μό-
χθον Μυκηναίω πονῶν τυράννω.

μεσφδ. β

ἄν τε Πηλιάδ' ἀκτὰν
390 Ἄναύρον παρὰ παγὰς
Κύκνον ξεινοδαίκταν
τόξοις ὤλεσεν, Ἀμφαναί-
ας οἰκῆτορ' ἄμεικτον.

ἀντ. β

ὑμνωδούς τε κόρας
395 ἦλυθεν ἐσπέριον <τ'> ἐς αὐτὰν
χρύσειον πετάλων ἀπὸ μηλοφόρων
χερὶ καρπὸν ἀμέρξων,
δράκοντα πυρσόνωτον, ὅς <σφ'>
ἄπλατον ἀμφελικτὸς ἔλικ' ἐφρούρει,
400 κτανῶν· ποντίας θ' ἀλὸς
μυχοῦς εἰσέβαινε, θνα-
τοῖς γαλανείας τιθεὶς ἐρετμοῖς.

ἐπωδ. β

οὐρανοῦ θ' ὑπὸ μέσσαν
ἐλαύνει χέρας ἔδραν,
405 Ἄτλαντος δόμον ἐλθῶν,
ἄστροπούς τε κατέσχευ οἶ-

387-8 διεπέρασε, μόχθον Musgrave: διεπέρασ' ὄχθον L

389 ἄν Musgrave: τάν L Μηλιάδ' Hermann

391 ξεινοδαίκταν Pflugk: δὲ ξεινοδαίκταν L

394 ὑμνωδῶν τε κορᾶν Nauck (omisso τ' 395)

395 <τ'> Fix

HERACLES

over the silver-flowing Hebrus, performing
his task for the king of Mycenae.

On the shore hard by Mount Pelion,
near the waters of the Anaurus,
Cynus, the cleaver of travelers,¹⁰
he slew with his arrows, the unsociable settler
in the land of Amphanae.

The maiden singers he visited
and their dwelling in the West¹¹
to pluck the golden fruit
from the leaves that bore them,
slaying the dragon with tawny back
who guarded it with his fearsome
coils twisted about it. He entered thereby
the far recesses of the sea
and made calm sailing for the ships of mortal men.

He went to the house of Atlas
and thrust his hands beneath the middle
of the heavens' resting place,
holding aloft by his manstrength

¹⁰ Cynus cut off the heads of visitors (to Delphi in most versions, here near Pelion) to build a temple of their skulls.

¹¹ The Hesperides were divine singers in whose garden grew golden apples guarded by a dragon.

³⁹⁶ χρύσειον Wakefield: -έων L

³⁹⁸ <σφ'> Hermann

κους εὐανορία θεῶν.

στρ. γ

τὸν ἵππευτάν τ' Ἀμαζόνων στρατὸν
 Μαιῶτιν ἀμφὶ πολυπόταμον
 410 ἔβα δι' ἄξεινον οἶδμα λίμνας,
 τίν' οὐκ ἀφ' Ἑλλανίας
 ἄγορον ἀλίσας φίλων,
 κόρας Ἀρείας πλέων
 χρυσεοστόλου φάρους
 415 ζωστῆρος ὀλεθρίους ἄγρας·
 τὰ κλεινὰ δ' Ἑλλὰς ἔλαβε βαρβάρου κόρας
 λάφυρα καὶ σῶζεται Μυκῆναις.

μεσφδ. γ

τάν τε μυριόκρανον
 420 πολύφονον κύνα Λέρνας
 ὕδραν ἐξεπύρωσεν,
 βέλεσί τ' ἀμφέβαλ' <ιόν>,
 τὸν τρισώματον οἴσιν ἔ-
 κτα βοτῆρ' Ἐρυθείας.

ἀντ. γ

425 δρόμων τ' ἄλλων ἀγάλματ' εὐτυχῆ
 διῆλθε τόν <τε> πολυδάκρνον
 ἔπλευσ' ἔς Ἄιδαν, πόνων τελευτάν,

410 ἄξεινον Markland: εὔξεινον L

413 πλέων Murray: πέπλων L

414 χρυσεοστόλου φάρους Schenkl: -όστολον φάρος L

422 <ιόν> Wilamowitz

426 <τε> πολυδάκρνον Wakefield: πολυδάκρνον L

HERACLES

the starry homes of the gods.¹²

Sailing against the mounted throng of the Amazons,
in Maiotis of the many rivers,
he went through the swell of the Sea Inhospitable¹³
taking from all of Greece
assemblies of his friends,
sailing to fetch the cinch that girded
the warrior maiden's gold-bedecked
garments, a deadly quest.
Greece took the famous spoils from the barbarian maid
and they are kept safe in Mycenae.

The myriad-headed
murderous hound of Lerna,
the hydra, he destroyed by fire
and smeared its poison on his arrows.
With these the beast of three bodies
he slew, the herdsman of Erytheia.¹⁴

The glorious successes of his other quests
he completed and also sailed to the land of lamentation,
to Hades, the last of his labors.

¹² In most versions Heracles takes Atlas' place so that Atlas can bring him the apples of the Hesperides. Here it seems to be a separate exploit.

¹³ The Black Sea was called *Euxeinos*, "hospitable," either ironically or in an attempt to placate its actual inhospitableness. Here it is called *Axeinos*, "inhospitable."

¹⁴ Geryon, three-bodied monster whose cattle Heracles had to take from him.

EURIPIDES

ἴν' ἐκπεραίνει τάλας
βίοτον οὐδ' ἔβα πάλιν.

- 430 στέγαι δ' ἔρημοι φίλων,
τὰν δ' ἀνόστιμον τέκνων
Χάρωνος ἐπιμένει πλάτα
βίου κέλευθον ἄθεον ἄδικον· ἐς δὲ σὰς
- 435 χέρας βλέπει δώματ' οὐ παρόντος.

ἐπωδ. γ

- εἰ δ' ἐγὼ σθένος ἦβων
δόρυ τ' ἔπαλλον ἐν αἰχμᾷ
Καδμείων τε σύνηβοι,
τέκεσιν ἂν προπαρέσταν
- 440 ἄλκαρ· νῦν δ' ἀπολείπομαι
τᾶς εὐδαίμονος ἦβας.

- ἀλλ' ἐσορῶ γὰρ τούσδε φθιμένων
ἔνδυντ' ἔχοντας,
τοὺς τοῦ μεγάλου δὴ ποτε παῖδας
- 445 τὸ πρὶν Ἡρακλέους, ἄλοχόν τε φίλην
ὑπὸ σειραίοις ποσὶν ἔλκουσαν
τέκνα καὶ γεραιὸν πατέρ' Ἡρακλέους.
δύστηνος ἐγώ,
δακρύων ὡς οὐ δύναμαι κατέχειν
- 450 γραίας ὅσων ἔτι πηγᾶς.

ΜΕΓΑΡΑ

εἶέν· τίς ἱερεύς, τίς σφαγεὺς τῶν δυσπότημων;

435 δώματ' οὐ Musgrave: σῶμα τοῦ L

HERACLES

There the luckless man reached
the end of his life and did not return.
His house is bereft of friends,
and the oar of the boatman Charon lies in prospect
for the path the children's lives take, a path that has no re-
turn
and is forsaken of the gods and of justice. To your
strong arm, Heracles, the house looks, though you are not
with us.

If I were young in strength
and able to brandish my spear in battle
and my agemates in Thebes with me,
I would have stood before the children
as shield. But now I have lost
the blessed vigor of youth.

Enter from the house MEGARA, AMPHITRYON, and the children, dressed for burial in ankle-length white robes.

CHORUS LEADER

But look, I see the children here with the finery of the dead
upon them, children of Heracles once mighty, I see his
dear wife moving the children forward, as they cling to her
legs that draw them like a trace horse, and the old father
of Heracles. Ah unhappy me, I cannot check the tears
flowing from my old eyes!

MEGARA

Come, where is the priest, the sacrificer, to slay the unfor-

440 ἄλλαρ Nauck: ἀλλᾶ L

EURIPIDES

[ἢ τῆς ταλαίνης τῆς ἐμῆς ψυχῆς φονεύς;]
 ἔτοιμ' ἄγειν τὰ θύματ' εἰς Ἄιδου τάδε.

ὦ τέκν', ἀγόμεθα ζεύγος οὐ καλὸν νεκρῶν,
 455 ὁμοῦ γέροντες καὶ νέοι καὶ μητέρες.
 ὦ μοῖρα δυστάλαιν' ἐμή τε καὶ τέκνων
 τῶνδ', οὓς πανύστατ' ὄμμασιν προσδέρκομαι.
 ἐτέκομεν ὑμᾶς, πολεμίους δ' ἐθρεψάμην
 ὕβρισμα κἀπίχαρμα καὶ διαφθοράν.
 φεῦ·

460 ἦ πολὺ γε δόξης ἐξέπεσον εὐέλπιδος,
 ἦν πατὴρ ὑμῶν ἐκ λόγων ποτ' ἤλπισα.
 σοὶ μὲν γὰρ Ἄργος ἔνεμ' ὁ κατθανὼν πατήρ,
 Εὐρυσθέως δ' ἔμελλες οἰκήσειν δόμους
 τῆς καλλικάρπου κράτος ἔχων Πελασγίας,
 465 στολήν τε θηρὸς ἀμφέβαλλε σῶ κἀρα
 λέοντος, ἦπερ αὐτὸς ἐξωπλίζετο.
 σὺ δ' ἦσθα Θηβῶν τῶν φιλαρμάτων ἀναξ,
 ἔγκληρα πεδία τὰμὰ γῆς κεκτημένος,
 ὡς ἐξέπειθες τὸν κατασπείραντά σε,
 470 ἐς δεξιάν τε σὴν ἀλεξητήριον
 ξύλον καθίει δαίδαλον, ψευδῆ δόσιν.
 σοὶ δ' ἦν ἔπερσε τοῖς ἐκηβόλοις ποτὲ
 τόξοισι δώσειν Οἰχαλίαν ὑπέσχετο.
 τρεῖς δ' ὄντας <ὑμᾶς> τριπτύχοις τυραννίσιν
 475 πατήρ ἐπύργου, μέγα φρονῶν εὐανδρία.
 ἐγὼ δὲ νύμφας ἠκροθινιαζόμεν
 κήδη συνάψουσ' ἔκ τ' Ἀθηναίων χθονὸς
 Σπάρτης τε Θηβῶν θ', ὡς ἀνημμένοι κάλως

HERACLES

tunate? [Where is the murderer of my poor life?] These victims are ready to be taken to the Underworld!

Children, we are led away as an inglorious yoked team of corpses, old men and children and mothers all together! O luckless fate, mine and my children's here! My eyes look on you now for the last time! I gave you birth, but in raising you I raised only something for my enemies to insult, treat with malicious glee, and kill.

Ah me, how far I have been cast down from the sanguine hopes your father's words once raised in me! To you, my son, your dead father used to assign Argos, and you were going to dwell in the palace of Eurystheus and hold sway over fertile Pelasgia. He used to put about your head the lion skin which was his armor. And you, child, were the ruler of Thebes that delights in chariots, and you took the plains of my country for your inheritance—such was the persuasion you worked upon your father—and he lowered into your hand the finely wrought club that warded off danger, a gift in pretense only. And to you, my son, he promised to give Oechalia, which he once sacked with his far-flying arrows. The three <of you> your father fortified with three thrones, proud of his martial valor. And I was choosing the finest of brides for you and was making marriage alliances with Athens, Sparta, and Thebes so that

452 del. Paley

456 ἐμή Kirchhoff: ἐμῶν L

458 ἐτέκομεν Wilamowitz: ἔτεκον μὲν L

460 γε . . . ἐξέπεισον ἐύελπιδος Hirzel: με . . . ἐξέπεισαν ἐλπίδες L

469 ἐξέπειθε Hermann: -θε L

470 τε Musgrave: δὲ L 474 <ύμᾶς> Canter

EURIPIDES

- πρυμνησίοισι βίον ἔχουτ' εὐδαίμονα.
 480 καὶ ταῦτα φροῦδα· μεταβαλοῦσα δ' ἡ τύχη
 νύμφας μὲν ὑμῖν Κῆρας ἀντέδωκ' ἔχειν,
 ἐμοὶ δὲ δάκρυα λουτρὰ δυστήνῳ φέρειν.
 πατὴρ δὲ πατρός ἐστιᾶ γάμους ὄδε,
 "Αἰδην νομίζων πενθερόν, κῆδος πικρόν.
 485 ὦμοι, τίν' ὑμῶν πρῶτον ἢ τίν' ὕστατον
 πρὸς στέρνα θῶμαι; τῷ προσαρμόσω στόμα;
 τίνος λάβωμαι; πῶς ἂν ὡς ξουθόπτερος
 μέλισσα συνενέγκαιμ' ἂν ἐκ πάντων γόους,
 ἐς ἔν δ' ἐνεγκοῦσ' ἀθρόον ἀποδοίην δάκρυ;
 490 ὦ φίλτατ', εἴ τις φθόγγος εἰσακούεται
 θνητῶν παρ' Ἀιδῆ, σοὶ τάδ', Ἡράκλεις, λέγω·
 θνήσκει πατὴρ σὸς καὶ τέκν', ὄλλυμαι δ' ἐγώ,
 ἢ πρὶν μακαρία διὰ σ' ἐκκληζόμενην βροτοῖς.
 ἄρηξον, ἐλθέ· καὶ σκιὰ φάνηθί μοι·
 495 ἄλις γὰρ ἐλθὼν κἂν ὄναρ γένοιο σύ·
 κακοὶ γὰρ εἰσιν οἳ τέκνα κτείνουσι σά.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

- σὺ μὲν τὰ νέρθεν εὐτρεπῆ ποιοῦ, γύναι·
 ἐγὼ δὲ σ', ὦ Ζεῦ, χεῖρ' ἐς οὐρανὸν δικῶν
 αὐδῶ, τέκνοισιν εἴ τι τοισίδ' ὠφελεῖν
 500 μέλλεις, ἀμύνειν, ὡς τάχ' οὐδὲν ἀρκέσεις.
 καίτοι κέκλησαι πολλάκις· μάτην πονῶ·

482 δυστήνῳ Fix: -ος L φέρειν Bothe: φρενῶν L

484 πικρόν Reiske: πατρός L

490 φθόγγος εἰσακούεται Nauck: φθόγγον εἰσακούσεται L

HERACLES

with your stern cables fastened to firm anchorage you might have a happy life. These hopes are all gone: your fortune changed and instead gave to you as your brides death spirits, and to unlucky me as the bath I should have brought you she gave tears.¹⁵ Your grandfather is the host for the wedding banquet, and he acknowledges Hades as the father-in-law, a marriage tie most unwelcome. Ah me, which of you shall I clasp first to my breast, which last? On whose cheek shall I plant my kisses? Whom shall I cling to? How I wish that like a bee with tawny wings I might gather your lamentations from you all and then combining them give them all back as a single tear!

Dearest Heracles, if any mortal words are heard in the house of Hades, I say this to you: your father and children are being killed and I as well, I whom mortals once called happy because of you! Come rescue us! Appear to me even as a ghost! Even if you came as a dream vision it would suffice! For the men who are killing your children are cowards.

AMPHITRYON

You, dear woman, continue trying to win over the realm below. For my part, Zeus, I address you and cast my hands heavenward: if you mean to lend any aid to these children, defend them, since soon aid from you will be in vain. And yet you have been called upon many times. My labor is

¹⁵ Before the wedding both bride and groom were given a ritual bath, which it was the mother's job to provide: see *Iphigenia among the Taurians* 818 and *Phoenician Women* 344-9.

495 *κᾶν ὄναρ* Wilamowitz: *ἰκάνον ἄν* L

EURIPIDES

θανεῖν γάρ, ὡς ἔοικ', ἀναγκαίως ἔχει.

- ἀλλ', ὦ γέροντες, σμικρὰ μὲν τὰ τοῦ βίου,
 τοῦτον δ' ὅπως ἤδιστα διαπεράσατε
 505 ἐξ ἡμέρας ἐς νύκτα μὴ λυπούμενοι.
 ὡς ἐλπίδας μὲν ὁ χρόνος οὐκ ἐπίσταται
 σώζειν, τὸ δ' αὐτοῦ σπουδάσας διέπτατο.
 ὁράτ' ἔμ' ὅσπερ ἡ περίβλεπτος βροτοῖς
 ὀνομαστὰ πράσσω, καί μ' ἀφείλεθ' ἡ τύχη
 510 ὅσπερ πτερόν πρὸς αἰθέρ' ἡμέρα μιᾶ.
 ὁ δ' ὄλβος ὁ μέγας ἢ τε δόξ' οὐκ οἶδ' ὅτω
 βέβαιός ἐστι. χαίρετ'. ἄνδρα γὰρ φίλον
 πανύστατον νῦν, ἤλικες, δεδόρκατε.

ΜΕΓΑΡΑ

ἔα.

ὦ πρέσβυ, λεύσσω τὰμὰ φίλτατ', ἢ τί φῶ;

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

- 515 οὐκ οἶδα, θύγατερ· ἀφασία δὲ κάμ' ἔχει.

ΜΕΓΑΡΑ

- ὄδ' ἐστὶν ὄν γῆς νέρθεν εἰσηκούομεν,
 εἰ μὴ γ' ὄνειρον ἐν φάει τι λεύσσομεν.
 τί φημί, ποῖ ὄνειρα κηραίνουσ' ὀράν;
 οὐκ ἔσθ' ὄδ' ἄλλος ἀντὶ σοῦ παιδός, γέρον.
 520 δεῦρ', ὦ τέκν', ἐκκρίμνασθε πατρώων πέπλων,
 ἵτ' ἐγκονεῖτε, μὴ μεθῆτ', ἐπεὶ Διὸς
 σωτήρος ὑμῖν οὐδέν ἐσθ' ὄδ' ὕστερος.

518 ὀράν Musgrave: ὀρῶ L

HERACLES

fruitless: our death, it seems, is fated.

Well then, old sirs, our life is but a trifle: pass through it as pleasantly as you can, feeling no distress as day gives way to night. Time does not know how to preserve our hopes intact but worries about its own affairs and flies on. Look at me, who once did glorious deeds and was the object of mortal gaze! And now fortune has robbed me of all this, like a feather is carried off into the air, in a single day! I do not know any mortal who has great wealth and reputation as his secure possession. Farewell! My age-mates, you are now looking for the last time on your friend!

Enter HERACLES by Eisodos B.

MEGARA

But what is this sight, sir? Do I see the one I love best, or what am I to say?

AMPHITRYON

I do not know, my child. I too am struck speechless.

MEGARA

This is the man we heard was in the Underworld, unless it is a dream by daylight that we are looking at! What shall I say I see, what delirious visions? This man is none other than your son, old sir!

Come, children, cling to your father's clothing, go, hurry, do not let him go, since he is no less your rescuer than Zeus the Savior is!¹⁶

¹⁶ At whose altar they sit as suppliants. The action "freezes" for a few seconds (Megara's order is probably carried out at 530) to allow Heracles to react separately.

EURIPIDES

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὦ χαίρε, μέλαθρον πρόπυλά θ' ἐστίας ἐμῆς,
ὡς ἄσμενός σ' ἐσεΐδον ἐς φάος μολών.

- 525 ἔα· τί χρῆμα; τέκν' ὀρώ πρὸ δωμαίων
στολμοῖσι νεκρῶν κράτας ἐξεστεμμένα
ὄχλω τ' ἐν ἀνδρῶν τὴν ἐμὴν ξυνάορον
πατέρα τε δακρύνοντα· συμφορὰς τίνας;
φέρ' ἐκπύθωμαι τῶνδε, πλησίον σταθείς,
530 τί καινὸν <ἡμῖν> ἦλθε δώμασιν χρέος.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

ὦ φίλτατ' ἀνδρῶν, ὦ φάος μολῶν πατρί,
ἦκεις, ἐσώθης εἰς ἀκμὴν ἐλθὼν φίλοις;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

τί φῆς; τίν' ἐς ταραγμὸν ἦκομεν, πάτερ;

ΜΕΓΑΡΑ

- 535 διωλλύμεσθα· σὺ δέ, γέρον, σύγγνωθί μοι,
εἰ πρόσθεν ἤρπασ' ἅ σέ λέγειν πρὸς τόνδ' ἐχρήν·
τὸ θῆλυ γάρ πως μᾶλλον οἰκτρὸν ἀρσένων,
καὶ τὰμ' ἔθνησκε τέκν', ἀπωλλύμην δ' ἐγώ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Ἄπολλον, οἷοις φροίμοις ἄρχῃ λόγου.

ΜΕΓΑΡΑ

τεθνήασ' ἀδελφοὶ καὶ πατὴρ οὐμὸς γέρον.

530 τί Elmsley: γύναι τι L <ἡμῖν> Wilamowitz (ἦλθε
<τοῖσδε> Elmsley)

531n Αμ. Elmsley: Με. L:

HERACLES

HERACLES

House, doors, and hearth, I bid you greeting! How glad I am to return to the light and see you!

But what is this? I see my children in front of the house, their heads covered with the clothing of the dead, my wife standing amid a crowd of men, and my father weeping; at what woes? Come, let me draw nearer and ask them what new mischance has come upon my house.

He approaches the house. The children run to him.

AMPHITRYON

Dearest of men, light of rescue shining on your father, have you really come, have you safely reached your family in their hour of utmost danger?

HERACLES

What do you mean? What is the trouble we are in, father?

MEGARA

We were being killed. Forgive me, old sir, for snatching from you the words that were your right to speak to him. For women are somehow more full of pity than men, and it was my children who were being killed, and I with them.

HERACLES

Apollo! What a beginning this is for your story!

MEGARA

My brothers and my old father are dead.

EURIPIDES

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

540 πῶς φῆς; τί δράσας ἢ μόρου ποίου τυχών;

ΜΕΓΑΡΑ

Λύκος σφ' ὁ καινὸς γῆς ἀναξ διώλεσεν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὄπλοις ἀπαντῶν ἢ νοσησάσης χθονός;

ΜΕΓΑΡΑ

στάσει τὸ Κάδμου δ' ἐπτάπυλον ἔχει κράτος.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

τί δῆτα πρὸς σέ καὶ γέροντ' ἦλθεν φόβος;

ΜΕΓΑΡΑ

545 κτείνειν ἔμελλε πατέρα καμὲ καὶ τέκνα.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

τί φῆς; τί ταρβῶν ὀρφάνεμ' ἐμῶν τέκνων;

ΜΕΓΑΡΑ

μή ποτε Κρέοντος θάνατον ἐκτεισαίατο.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

κόσμος δὲ παίδων τίς ὄδε νερτέροις πρέπων;

ΜΕΓΑΡΑ

θανάτου τὰδ' ἤδη περιβόλαι' ἐνήμεθα.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

550 καὶ πρὸς βίαν ἐθνήσκειτ'; ὦ πλήμων ἐγώ.

⁵⁴⁰ μόρου Purgold cl. Hec. 773: doros L⁵⁴¹ καινὸς Elmsley: κλεινὸς L

HERACLES

HERACLES

What is this? What did he do or what was the fate he met?

MEGARA

Lycus, the new ruler of the land, killed him.

HERACLES

Did he meet them in battle? Or was it because of faction in the city?

MEGARA

It was faction. He now rules over seven-gated Thebes.

HERACLES

Why then did danger come to you and my old father?

MEGARA

He was about to kill your father, me, and the children.

HERACLES

What do you mean? Why was he afraid of my orphaned children?

MEGARA

He feared they might make him pay for Creon's death.

HERACLES

What is the meaning of the children's being dressed as befits the dead?

MEGARA

Death's garments—we have already put them on.

HERACLES

Were you really being violently put to death? O what woe is mine!

EURIPIDES

ΜΕΓΑΡΑ

φίλων <γ> ἔρημοι· σὲ δὲ θανόντ' ἠκούομεν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

πόθεν δ' ἐς ὑμᾶς ἦδ' ἐσῆλθ' ἀθυμία;

ΜΕΓΑΡΑ

Εὐρυσθέως κήρυκες ἤγγελλον τάδε.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

τί δ' ἐξελείπετ' οἶκον ἐστίαν τ' ἐμήν;

ΜΕΓΑΡΑ

555 βία, πατήρ μὲν ἐκπεσὼν στρωτοῦ λέχους . . .

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

κοῦκ ἔσχεν αἰδῶς τὸν γέροντ' ἀτιμάσαι;

ΜΕΓΑΡΑ

αἰδῶς; ἀποικεῖ τῆσδε τῆς θεοῦ πρόσω.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὕτω δ' ἀπόντες ἐσπανίζομεν φίλων;

ΜΕΓΑΡΑ

φίλοι γάρ εἰσιν ἀνδρὶ δυστυχεῖ τίνες;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

560 μάχας δὲ Μινυῶν ἄς ἔτλην ἀπέπτυσαν;

ΜΕΓΑΡΑ

ἄφιλον, ἴν' αὐθίς σοι λέγω, τὸ δυστυχές.

551 <γ> Hermann

556 αἰδῶς Pearson: αἰδῶ L

557 αἰδῶς; Badham: αἰδῶς γ' L

HERACLES

MEGARA

Yes: we were bereft of friends. And we were told that you had died.

HERACLES

How did this discouragement come into your hearts?

MEGARA

It was Eurystheus' heralds who brought this news.

HERACLES

But why did you leave my house and hearth?

MEGARA

Under compulsion: your father was thrown from his bed . . .

HERACLES

Did decency not prevent him from doing dishonor to an old man?

MEGARA

Decency? Lycus lives far off from *that* goddess.

HERACLES

Was I so lacking in friends when I was absent?

MEGARA

What friends does a man in misfortune have?

HERACLES

Did they think so little of the battles I fought with the Minyans?

MEGARA

Once more I say: misfortune has no friends.

EURIPIDES

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

- οὐ ρύψεθ' Ἄιδου τάσδε περιβολὰς κόμης
καὶ φῶς ἀναβλέψεσθε, τοῦ κάτω σκότου
φίλας ἀμοιβὰς ὄμμασιν δεδορκότες;
565 ἐγὼ δέ—νῦν γὰρ τῆς ἐμῆς ἔργον χερός—
πρῶτον μὲν εἶμι καὶ κατασκάψω δόμους
καινῶν τυράννων, κράτα δ' ἀνόσιον τεμῶν
ρύψω κυνῶν ἔλκημα· Καδμείων δ' ὄσους
κακοὺς ἐφηῦρον εὖ παθόντας ἐξ ἐμοῦ
570 τῷ καλλινίκῳ τῷδ' ὄπλῳ χειρώσομαι,
τοὺς δὲ περωτοῖς διαφορῶν τοξεύμασιν
νεκρῶν ἅπανθ' Ἴσμηνὸν ἐμπλήσω φόνου,
Δίρκης τε νᾶμα λευκὸν αἵμαχθήσεται.
τῷ γάρ μ' ἀμύνειν μᾶλλον ἢ δάμαρτι χρῆ
575 καὶ παισὶ καὶ γέροντι; χαιρόντων πόνοι
μάτην γὰρ αὐτοὺς τῶνδε μᾶλλον ἦνυσα.
καὶ δεῖ μ' ὑπὲρ τῶνδ', εἶπερ οἶδ' ὑπὲρ πατρός,
θνήσκειν ἀμύνοντ' ἢ τί φήσομεν καλὸν
ὔδρα μὲν ἐλθεῖν ἐς μάχην λέοντί τε
580 Εὐρυσθέως πομπαῖσι, τῶν δ' ἐμῶν τέκνων
οὐκ ἐκπονήσω θάνατον; οὐκ ἄρ' Ἡρακλῆς
ὁ καλλίνικος ὡς πάροιθε λέξομαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

δίκαιά τοι τεκόντα σ' ὠφελεῖν τέκνα
πατέρα τε πρέσβυν τήν τε κοινωνὸν γάμων.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

- 585 πρὸς σοῦ μέν, ὦ παῖ, τοῖς φίλοις <τ' > εἶναι φίλον

HERACLES

HERACLES

Tear these trappings of death from your hair! Look at the light once more, gaze on this sweet exchange for the darkness below! But now there is work for my arm to do. First I shall go and raze to the ground the house of this new king, cut off his godless head and throw it to the dogs to tear at. And all the Thebans I find ungrateful for my good treatment of them I shall vanquish with this victorious club of mine. Others I shall shoot with my feathered arrows, fill the whole of the Ismenus River with the gore of dead bodies, and redden the clear spring of Dirce with blood. Whom shall I defend rather than my wife and my children and my old father? Farewell to my labors! It was to no purpose that I accomplished them rather than the tasks to be done here. Since these children were being put to death for their father, I must risk death in their defense. What fine deed shall we call it to do battle with a hydra and a lion at Eurystheus' behest if I do not prevent the death of my children? In that case, I shall not be called, as I once was, Heracles glorious in victory.

CHORUS LEADER

It is right for you, their father, to help the children and also your aged father and your wife.

AMPHITRYON

It is in your nature, my son, to be loving to your friends

583 *δίκαιά τοι τεκόντα σ'* Herwerden: *δίκαια τοὺς τεκόντας*
L

585 <τ' > Pflugk

EURIPIDES

τά τ' ἐχθρὰ μισεῖν· ἀλλὰ μὴ 'πέιγόν λίαν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

τί δ' ἐστὶ τῶνδε θάσσον ἢ χρεῶν, πάτερ;

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

[πολλοὺς πένητας, ὀλβίους δὲ τῷ λόγῳ
δοκοῦντας εἶναι, συμμάχους ἀναξ ἔχει,
590 οἱ στάσιν ἔθηκαν καὶ διώλεσαν πόλιν
ἐφ' ἀρπαγαῖσι τῶν πέλας, τὰ δ' ἐν δόμοις
δαπάναισι φροῦδα διαφυγόνθ' ὑπ' ἀργίας.]
ῶφθης ἐσελθὼν πόλιν· ἐπεὶ δ' ῶφθης, ὄρα
ἐχθροὺς ἀθροίσας μὴ παρὰ γνώμην πέσσης.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

595 μέλει μὲν οὐδὲν εἴ με πᾶσ' εἶδεν πόλις·
ὄρνιν δ' ἰδὼν τιν' οὐκ ἐν αἰσίοις ἔδραις
ἔγνων πόνον τιν' ἐς δόμους πεπτωκότα,
ὥστ' ἐκ προνοίας κρύφιος εἰσῆλθον χθόνα.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

καλῶς παρελθὼν νυν πρόσσειπέ θ' Ἐστίαν
600 καὶ δὸς πατρώοις δώμασιν σὸν ὄμμ' ἰδεῖν.
ἦξει γὰρ αὐτὸς σὴν δάμαρτα καὶ τέκνα
ἔλξων φονεύσων κᾶμ' ἐπισφάξων ἀναξ.
μένοντι δ' αὐτοῦ πάντα σοι γενήσεται
τῇ τ' ἀσφαλείᾳ κερδανεῖς· πόλιν δὲ σὴν
605 μὴ πρὶν ταραξῆς πρὶν τόδ' εὖ θέσθαι, τέκνον.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

δράσω τάδ', εὖ γὰρ εἶπας· εἰμ' ἔσω δόμων.

HERACLES

and to hate your enemies. But do not be too hasty.

HERACLES

Which of my actions is hastier than is right, father?

AMPHITRYON

[The king has as allies many men, poor but reputed to be rich, who have formed a faction and destroyed the city in order to plunder their neighbors' possessions since through extravagance and laziness their own property is dissipated.] You were seen entering the city. And since you were seen, take care that you do not cause your enemies to unite and yourself take an unexpected fall.

HERACLES

I care not if the whole city has seen me. But I saw a bird sitting in a perch of bad omen, and I realized that some trouble had fallen on my house, and therefore as a precaution I came into the country secretly.

AMPHITRYON

Good. Go inside then and greet the hearth goddess and show your face to your ancestral home. The king will come himself to drag off and slaughter your wife and children and to cut my throat over them. If you stay here everything you want will be yours, and you profit by the safety of this plan. Do not throw the city into confusion until you have set things here to rights, my son.

HERACLES

Your advice is good, and I shall take it: I shall go into the

588-92 del. Wilamowitz 593 ἐσελθὼν Kirchhoff: ἐπ- L

599 παρελθὼν Wecklein: προσ- L

EURIPIDES

χρόνω δ' ἀνελθὼν ἐξ ἀνηλίω^ν μυχῶν
 Ἄιδου Κόρης <τ' > ἔνερθεν οὐκ ἀτιμάσω
 θεοὺς προσειπεῖν πρῶτα τοὺς κατὰ στέγας.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

610 ἦλθες γὰρ οὕτως δῶματ' εἰς Ἄιδου, τέκνον;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

καὶ θῆρά γ' ἐς φῶς τὸν τρίκρανον ἤγαγον.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

μάχη κρατήσας ἢ θεᾶς δωρήμασιν;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

μάχη· τὰ μυστῶν δ' ὄργι' ἠτύχησ' ἰδών.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

ἦ καὶ κατ' οἴκους ἐστὶν Εὐρυσθέως ὁ θῆρ;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

615 Χθονίας νιν ἄλσος Ἑρμιῶν τ' ἔχει πόλις.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

οὐδ' οἶδεν Εὐρυσθεύς σε γῆς ἤκουτ' ἄνω;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐκ οἶδ', ἵν' ἐλθὼν τάνθάδ' εἰδείην πάρος.

608 <τ' > Reiske

617 οἶδ', ἵν' Matthiae: οἶδεν L

17 According to mythographical sources possibly reflecting a lost poem of the sixth century, Heracles prepared for his Under-

HERACLES

house. Since I have come up at long last from the sunless realms of Hades and Persephone, I shall not refuse to give my first greeting to the gods within the house.

AMPHITRYON

Did you really go down to the house of Hades, my son?

HERACLES

Yes, and I brought the three-headed beast up to the light.

AMPHITRYON

Did you master him in a fight, or did the goddess give him to you?

HERACLES

In a fight: my luck was good since I had seen the Mysteries.¹⁷

AMPHITRYON

Is the creature in the house of Eurystheus?

HERACLES

The grove of the Underworld Goddess and the city of Hermion¹⁸ are keeping him.

AMPHITRYON

And does Eurystheus not know that you have returned to the upper world?

HERACLES

No: I came here first to learn how things stand.

world journey by initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries. Those so initiated were thought to enjoy special favor from the gods.

¹⁸ Hermion or Hermione was a city in the Peloponnesus near Trozen. According to Pausanias 2.35.7, there was a ravine here thought to be Heracles' route from the Underworld.

EURIPIDES

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

χρόνον δὲ πῶς τοσοῦτον ἦσθ' ὑπὸ χθονί;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Θησέα κομίζων ἐχρόνισ' ἐξ Ἄιδου, πάτερ.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

620 καὶ ποῦ ἔστιν; ἦ γῆς πατρίδος οἴχεται πέδον;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

βέβηκ' Ἀθήνας νέρθεν ἄσμενος φυγών.

ἀλλ' εἶ' ὀμαρτεῖτ', ᾧ τέκν', ἐς δόμους πατρί-
καλλιονές τ' ἄρ' εἴσοδοι τῶν ἐξόδων

πάρεισιν ὑμῖν. ἀλλὰ θάρσος ἴσχετε

625 καὶ νάματ' ὄσσων μηκέτ' ἐξανίετε,
σύ τ', ᾧ γύναι μοι, σύλλογον ψυχῆς λαβέ
τρόμον τε παῦσαι, καὶ μέθεσθ' ἐμῶν πέπλων·
οὐ γὰρ πτερωτὸς οὐδὲ φευξείω φίλους.

ᾧ,

οἶδ' οὐκ ἀφιασ' ἀλλ' ἀνάπτονται πέπλων

630 τοσῶδε μάλλον ᾧδ' ἔβητ' ἐπὶ ξυροῦ;
ἄξω λαβῶν γε τούσδ' ἐφολκίδας χεροῖν,
ναῦς δ' ὡς ἐφέλξω· καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἀναίνομαι
θεράπευμα τέκνων. πάντα τὰνθρώπων ἴσα·
φιλοῦσι παῖδας οἳ τ' ἀμείνονες βροτῶν

635 οἳ τ' οὐδὲν ὄντες· χρήμασιν δὲ διάφοροι·
ἐχουσιν, οἳ δ' οὐ· πᾶν δὲ φιλότεκνον γένος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α

ἄ νεότας μοι φίλον ἄ-

HERACLES

AMPHITRYON

Why were you so long beneath the earth?

HERACLES

I brought Theseus back from Hades, father: hence my delay.

AMPHITRYON

Where is he? Has he gone off to his native land?

HERACLES

He has gone back to Athens, glad to have escaped from the Underworld.

But come, children, accompany your father into the house. It seems your going in will be better than your coming out. Take courage and dry your tears! And you, wife, pull your spirit together and stop trembling! Let go of my clothing, all of you! I have no wings and will not run from my family! Ah me, these children do not let me go but grasp my garments all the harder! Were you in such great danger as that? Well, I will take these tow boats in by the hand and like a ship drag them after me. I do not refuse to tend my children. Men's lot is everywhere the same. High and low alike love their children; they differ in wealth, and some are rich, others poor, but the whole human race is fond of its young.

Exit HERACLES, MEGARA, AMPHITRYON, and children into the house.

CHORUS

Youth is the thing I love.

- χθος δὲ τὸ γῆρας αἰεὶ
 βαρύτερον Αἴτνας σκοπέλων
 640 ἐπὶ κρατὶ κείται, βλεφάρῳ
 σκοτεινὸν φάρος ἐπικαλύψαν.
 μή μοι μήτ' Ἀσιήτιδος
 τυραννίδος ὄλβος εἴη,
 645 μὴ χρυσοῦ δώματα πλήρη
 τᾶς ἡβας ἀντιλαβεῖν,
 ἂ καλλίστα μὲν ἐν ὄλβῳ,
 καλλίστα δ' ἐν πενίᾳ.
 τὸ δὲ λυγρὸν φόνιόν τε γῆ-
 650 ρας μισῶ· κατὰ κυμάτων δ'
 ἔρροι· μηδέποτ' ὄφελεν
 θνατῶν δώματα καὶ πόλεις
 ἐλθεῖν, ἀλλὰ κατ' αἰθέρ' αἰ-
 εὶ πτεροῖσι φορεῖσθαι.

ἀντ. α

- 655 εἰ δὲ θεοῖς ἦν ξύνεσις
 καὶ σοφία κατ' ἄνδρας,
 δίδυμον ἂν ἡβαν ἔφερον,
 φανερόν χαρακτῆρ' ἀρετᾶς
 660 ὅσοισιν μέτα, καὶ θανόντες
 εἰς αὐγὰς πάλιν ἀλίου
 δισσοὺς ἂν ἔβαν διαύλους
 ἂ δυσγένεια δ' ἀπλοῦν ἂν

638 δὲ τὸ Musgrave: τὸ δὲ L

640 βλεφάρῳ Reiske: -ων L

HERACLES

But age is a burden that always
lies heavier than the crags of Aetna
upon the head, and over my eye
it casts a veil of darkness.
May I not have the wealth
of Asian potentates,
nor houses filled with gold
to take in the place of youth!
Youth is the fairest thing in the midst of riches,
fairest too in poverty.
But grim and deadly
old age I hate. Beneath the waves
may it vanish! Would that it had never
come to visit the houses and cities of mortal men
but were always being
whirled along on the upper air!

If the gods had understanding
and wisdom where men are concerned,
a double youth would they win
as a clear mark of goodness,
they who were good, and when they died,
they would run back to the light of the sun
on the return leg of the course.
But the ignoble would have

643 fort. ὄλβον

649 φθονερόν Wilamowitz

650 κυμάτων δ'] κυμάτων Willink

654 φορέισθαι Musgrave: -είσθω L

660 καὶ θανόντες Reiske: καὶ θνατοὶ L

- εἶχε ζόας βίοτον,
 665 καὶ τῶδ' ἂν τοὺς τε κακοὺς ἦν
 γνῶναι καὶ τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς,
 ἴσον ἅτ' ἐν νεφέλαισιν ἄ-
 στρων ναύταις ἀριθμὸς πέλει.
 νῦν δ' οὐδεὶς ὄρος ἐκ θεῶν
 670 χρηστοῖς οὐδὲ κακοῖς σαφῆς,
 ἀλλ' εἰλισσόμενός τις αἰ-
 ῶν πλοῦτον μόνον αὔξει.

στρ. β

- οὐ παύσομαι τὰς Χάριτας
 ταῖς Μούσαισιν συγκαταμει-
 675 γνύς, ἠδίσταν συζυγίαν.
 μὴ ζῶην μετ' ἀμουσίας,
 αἰεὶ δ' ἐν στεφάνοισιν εἶην·
 ἔτι τοι γέρων ἀοιδὸς
 κελαδῶ Μναμοσύναν,
 680 ἔτι τὰν Ἡρακλέους
 καλλίνικον αἰίδω
 παρά τε Βρόμιον οἰνοδόταν
 παρά τε χέλυος ἐπτατόνου
 μολπὰν καὶ Λίβυν αὐλόν.
 685 οὐπω καταπαύσομεν
 Μούσας αἶ μ' ἐχόρευσαν.

664 βίοτον Kirchhoff: βιοτάν L: στάδιον Reiske

665 τῶδ' ἂν . . . ἦν Hermann: τῶδε . . . ἂν L

HERACLES

but a single life's course to run,
and by this means one could tell
the bad from the good,
just as through the clouds
the sailor sees the throng of stars.
But as things stand, there is no reliable fixed mark
from the gods to judge the good and the bad,
but the course of a man's life as it whirls along
serves only to glorify his wealth.

I shall not cease mingling
the Graces and the Muses,
a union most sweet.
May I never live a Muse-less life!
Ever may I go garlanded!
Old singer that I am I still
sing the praise of Mnemosyne,¹⁹
still hymn Heracles'
glorious victory
in company with Bacchus giver of wine,
in company with the song
of the seven-stringed tortoise shell and the Libyan pipe.
Never shall I check
the Muses who have made me dance!

¹⁹ Mother of the Muses.

679 *κελαδῶ* Stephanus: *-εῖ* L

681 *ἀείδω* Elmsley: *ἀείσω* L

ἀντ. β

- παιᾶνα μὲν Δηλιάδες
 <ναῶν> ὕμνουσ' ἀμφὶ πύλας
 τὸν Λατοῦς εὐπαιδα γόνον,
 690 εἰλίσσουσαι καλλίχοροι
 παιᾶνας δ' ἐπὶ σοῖς μελάθροις
 κύκνος ὡς γέρων ἀοιδὸς
 πολιᾶν ἐκ γενύων
 κελαδήσω· τὸ γὰρ εὖ
 695 τοῖς ὕμνοισιν ὑπάρχει.
 Διὸς ὁ παῖς· τὰς δ' εὐγενίας
 πλέον ὑπερβάλλων <ἀρετᾶ>
 μοχθήσας τὸν ἄκυμον
 θήκεν βίον βροτοῖς
 700 πέρσας δείματα θηρῶν.

ΛΥΚΟΣ

- ἐς καιρὸν οἴκων Ἀμφιτρύων ἔξω περᾶς·
 χρόνος γὰρ ἤδη δαρὸς ἐξ ὅτου πέπλοις
 κοσμεῖσθε σῶμα καὶ νεκρῶν ἀγάμασιν.
 ἀλλ' εἶα, παῖδας καὶ δάμαρθ' Ἡρακλέους
 705 ἔξω κέλευε τῶνδε φαίνεσθαι δόμων,
 ἐφ' οἷς ὑπέστητ' αὐτεπάγγελτοι θανεῖν.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

ἄναξ, διώκεις μ' ἀθλίως πεπραγότα
 ὕβριν θ' ὑβρίζεις ἐπὶ θανούσι τοῖς ἐμοῖς·

688 <ναῶν> Diggle

690 καλλίχοροι Hermann: -ον L

691 παιᾶν' αὐτ' West

697 <ἀρετᾶ> Nauck

HERACLES

A paeon about their temple gates
the maidens of Delos sing
to the fair son of Leto,
weaving their lovely dance steps.
And paeans about your house
I, an aged singer, swan-like²⁰
from my hoary throat
shall pour forth. For the power of right
is in my hymns.

He is the son of Zeus. But surpassing even this high birth
with his deeds of valor,
he has made peaceful by his struggles
the life of mortals
and overcome dread monsters.

Enter AMPHITRYON from the house and LYCUS with attendants by Eisodos A.

LYCUS

It is high time, Amphitryon, for you to be coming out of the house. You have spent a long time adorning yourselves with the finery of death.

But come, bid the children and wife of Heracles show themselves outside the house in accordance with your promise to die voluntarily.

AMPHITRYON

My lord, you press me hard in my distress and commit outrage upon me in my bereavement. You should temper

²⁰ Swans were thought to sing when about to die: cf. Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1444-5.

EURIPIDES

710 ἂ χρῆν σε μετρίως, κεί κρατεῖς, σπουδῆν ἔχειν.
 ἐπεὶ δ' ἀνάγκην προστίθης ἡμῖν θανεῖν,
 στέργειν ἀνάγκη, δραστέον θ' ἄ σοι δοκεῖ.

ΛΥΚΟΣ

ποῦ δῆτα Μεγάρα; ποῦ τέκν' Ἀλκμήνης γόνου;

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

δοκῶ μὲν αὐτήν, ὡς θύραθεν εἰκάσαι . . .

ΛΥΚΟΣ

τί χρῆμα; δόξης τίνος ἔχεις τεκμήριον;

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

715 . . . ἰκέτιν πρὸς ἀγνοῖς Ἑστίας θάσσειν
 βάθροισ . . .

ΛΥΚΟΣ

ἀνόνητά γ' ἰκετεύουσιν ἐκσῶσαι βίον.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

. . . καὶ τὸν θανόντα γ' ἀνακαλεῖν μάτην πόσιν.

ΛΥΚΟΣ

ὁ δ' οὐ πάρεστιν οὐδὲ μὴ μόλη ποτέ.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

οὐκ, εἴ γε μὴ τις θεῶν ἀναστήσειέ νιν.

ΛΥΚΟΣ

720 χῶρει πρὸς αὐτήν κάκκομιζε δωμαίων.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

μέτοχος ἂν εἶην τοῦ φόνου δράσας τότε.

HERACLES

your zeal, even if you are the ruler. But since you force us to die, we must put up with it and do as you decree.

LYCUS

Where is Megara? Where are the children of Alcmena's son?

AMPHITRYON

I suppose, as far as I can guess from out here . . .

LYCUS

What is it? To what conclusion does your evidence point?

AMPHITRYON

. . . that she is sitting as a suppliant at the holy altar of Hestia . . .

LYCUS

Yes, making a useless supplication to save her life.

AMPHITRYON

. . . and fruitlessly trying to summon her dead husband.

LYCUS

He is not here and will never return.

AMPHITRYON

No, unless some god raises him from the dead.

LYCUS

Go to her and bring her out of the house.

AMPHITRYON

But that would make me party to her murder.

711 θ² Nauck: δ² L 714 τίνος Boissonade: τῆσδ² L

717 ἀνακαλεῖν Hermann: -εἶ L

720 κακκόμιζε Elmsley: καὶ κόμ- L

EURIPIDES

ΛΥΚΟΣ

ἡμεῖς <δ>, ἐπειδὴ σοὶ τόδ' ἔστ' ἐνθύμιον,
οἱ δειμάτων ἕξωθεν ἐμπορεύσομεν
σὺν μητρὶ παῖδας. δεῦρ' ἔπεσθε, πρόσπολοι,
725 ὡς ἂν σχολὴν λεύσσωμεν ἄσμενοι πόνων.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

σὺ δ' οὖν ἴθ', ἔρχη δ' οἱ χρεῶν· τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἴσως
ἄλλω μελήσει. προσδόκα δὲ δρῶν κακῶς
κακόν τι πράξειν. ὦ γέροντες, ἐς καλὸν
στείχει, βρόχοισι δ' ἀρκύων κεκλήσεται
730 ξιφηφόροισι, τοὺς πέλας δοκῶν κτενεῖν
ὁ παγκάκιστος. εἴμι δ', ὡς ἴδω νεκρὸν
πίπτοντ'· ἔχει γὰρ ἡδονὰς θνήσκων ἀνῆρ
ἐχθρὸς τίνων τε τῶν δεδραμένων δίκην.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α

735—μεταβολὰ κακῶν· μέγας ὁ πρόσθ' ἀναξ
πάλιν ὑποστρέφει βίοτον ἐξ Ἄιδα.
ἰὼ δίκαια καὶ θεῶν
παλίρρους πότμος.

740—ἦλθες χρόνω μὲν οὖν δίκην δώσεις θανῶν,
ὑβρεις ὑβρίζων εἰς ἀμείνονας σέθεν.
—χαρμοναὶ δακρύων
ἔδοσαν ἐκβολάς·

722 <δ> Bothe 723 οἰκημάτων vel τῶν δωμάτων F. W.
Schmidt 729 κεκλήσεται Elmsley: γενήσεται L
736 ἐξ Ἄιδα Wilamowitz: ἐς Ἄιδαν L 738 ἴτω Diggle

HERACLES

LYCUS

Since you feel this scruple, I, who stand outside fear, shall bring mother and children out. Come with me, attendants, so that we may win a welcome rest from our labors.

Exit LYCUS with retinue into the house.

AMPHITRYON

Go, then! You are going where destiny leads! Someone else, no doubt, will concern himself with the rest. You are doing ill, and you must expect to fare ill. Old friends, his going is most opportune, and he will be caught fast in the trap, a trap of cold steel, the knave who thought he would kill others. I shall go in to see him being killed. There is pleasure when an enemy is killed and pays the penalty for his misdeeds.

Exit AMPHITRYON into the house.

CHORUS

Our woes depart! Mighty is our former lord
as he returns alive from Hades!...
Hail, justice and the tide-turning
fate of the gods!

CHORUS LEADER

You have come at long last to the place where you will pay with your life for the outrages you commit against better men than yourself.

CHORUS

Joy brings the tear
from my eye.

EURIPIDES

- 745 *πάλιν ἔμολεν <ἔμολεν>, ἃ πάρος οὔποτε δι-
 ἂ φρενὸς ἤλπισ' <ἂν> παθεῖν, γᾶς ἄναξ.
 —ἀλλ', ὦ γεραιοί, καὶ τὰ δωμάτων ἔσω
 σκοποῦμεν, εἰ πράσσει τις ὡς ἐγὼ θέλω.*

ΛΥΚΟΣ

(ἔσωθεν)
 ἰὼ μοί μοι.

ἀντ. α

- 750—*τόδε κατάρχεται μέλος ἐμοὶ κλύειν
 φίλιον ἐν δόμοις· θάνατος οὐ πόρσω.
 βοᾷ φόνου φροῖμιον
 στενάζων ἄναξ.*

ΛΥΚΟΣ

(ἔσωθεν)
 ὦ πάσα Κάδμου γαῖ', ἀπόλλυμαι δόλω.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- 755—*καὶ γὰρ διώλλυς· ἀντίποινα δ' ἐκτίνων
 τόλμα, διδούς γε τῶν δεδραμένων δίκην.
 —τίς ὁ θεοὺς ἀνομία
 χραίνων, θνατὸς ὦν,
 οὐρανίων <ὄς> ἄφρονα μακάρων κατέβα-
 λε λόγον ὡς ἄρ' οὐ σθένουσιν θεοί;
 760—*γέροντες, οὐκέτ' ἔστι δυσσεβῆς ἀνήρ.
 σιγᾷ μέλαθρα· πρὸς χοροὺς τραπώμεθα.**

744 <ἔμολεν> Diggle 746 <ἂν> Pflugk

747 γεραιοί Kirchhoff: -αιέ L

HERACLES

He has returned, <returned,> this country's king,
a thing I never thought would befall me!

CHORUS LEADER

Well, old friends, let us see how things stand indoors,
whether a certain person is faring as I would like.

LYCUS

(*within*) O misery!

CHORUS

In the house begins the song
I love to hear! His death is not far off!
They prelude his murder,
the king's shouts and groans!

LYCUS

You citizens of Thebes, I am being treacherously slain!

CHORUS LEADER

Yes, for treacherously you slew! You must steel yourself to
pay in full for your misdeeds.

CHORUS

Who was it, mortal though he was,
that tainted the gods with lawlessness
and put forth the senseless tale about the blessed powers
above
that they have no strength?

CHORUS LEADER

Old friends, the godless man is no more: the house is silent.
Let us turn ourselves to dancing. [For my friends, as I

⁷⁵⁷ θεοὺς] fort. νόμους ⁷⁵⁸⁻⁹ sic post Diggle (<ὄς>
Willink: ἀφρονα λόγον οὐρανίων μακάρων κατέβαλ' L

EURIPIDES

[φίλοι γὰρ εὐτυχοῦσιν οὓς ἐγὼ θέλω.]

στρ. β

χοροὶ χοροὶ καὶ θαλῖαι
μέλουσι Θήβας ἱερὸν κατ' ἄστυ.

765 μεταλλαγαὶ γὰρ δακρῦνων,
μεταλλαγαὶ συντυχίας
ἔτεκον <ἔτεκον> αἰοιδάς.

770 βέβακ' ἀναξ ὁ καινός, ὁ δὲ παλαιότερος
κρατεῖ, λιμένα λιπῶν γε τὸν Ἀχερόντιον.
δοκημάτων ἐκτὸς ἦλθεν ἐλπίς.

ἀντ. β

θεοὶ θεοὶ τῶν ἀδίκων
μέλουσι καὶ τῶν ὀσίων ἐπάειν.

ὁ χρυσὸς ἅ τ' εὐτυχία
775 φρενῶν βροτοὺς ἐξάγεται
δύνασιν ἄδικον ἐφέλκων.

Χρόνου γὰρ οὔτις τὸ πάλιν εἰσορᾶν ἔτλα,
νόμον παρέμενος, ἀνομία χάριν διδούς·
780 ἔθραυσεν ὄλβου κελαινὸν ἄρμα.

στρ. γ

Ἴσμήν' ὦ στεφαναφόρει
ξεσταί θ' ἐπταπύλον πόλεως
ἀναχορεύσατ' ἀγνιαὶ
Δίρκα θ' ἅ καλλιρρέεθρος,

785 σὺν τ' Ἀσωπιάδες κόραι

762 del. Nauck 767 <ἔτεκον> Bothe

768 καινός Pierson: κλεινός L

HERACLES

hoped, are successful.]

CHORUS

Dance, dance and feasting,
shall fill our thoughts in the holy city of Thebes!
The changing of our tears to joy,
the changing of our fortunes,
have brought forth new song!
The usurper has gone, and the old king
reigns: he has left behind the harbor of Acheron.
Beyond all expectation my hope has come!

The gods, the gods take care
to mark the wicked and the righteous.
Golden good fortune
tempts mortal men from their senses
as it brings in its train unjust power.
For no one can bring himself to consider Time's future
course
as he transgresses law and gratifies his lawlessness.
Thus he wrecks wealth's dark chariot.

Go gaily in garlands, River Ismenus,
and O ye smooth-worn streets
of the city of seven gates, strike up the dance,
and Dirce too with your lovely streams!
Come as well, daughters of Asopus,

775 φρενῶν L. Dindorf: φρονεῖν L

777 τὸ πάλιν εἰσορᾶν ἔτλα Hermann: ἔτλα τ. π. εἰσορᾶν L

781 στεφαναφόρει Tyrwhitt: στεφαναφορία L

πατρὸς ὕδωρ βᾶτε λιποῦ-
 σαί <μοι> συναοιδοὶ
 Νύμφαι τὸν Ἡρακλέους
 καλλίνικον ἀγῶνα.

- 790 Πυθίου δενδρῶτι πέτρα
 Μουσᾶν θ' Ἐλικωνίδων
 δώματ', <ῶ>
 αὔξειτ' εὐγαθειῖ κελάδω
 ἐμὰν πόλιν, ἐμὰ τείχη,
 Σπαρτῶν ἵνα γένος ἔφανθη,
 795 χαλκασπίδων λόχος, ὃς γὰν
 τέκνων τέκνοις μεταμείβει,
 Θήβαις ἱερὸν φῶς.

ἀντ. γ

- ὦ λέκτρων δύο συγγενεῖς
 εὐναί, θνατογενοῦς τε καὶ
 800 Διός, ὃς ἦλθεν ἐς εὐνὰν
 νύμφας τὰς Περσηίδος· ὡς
 πιστόν μοι τὸ παλαιὸν ἤ-
 δη λέχος, ὦ Ζεῦ, τὸ σὸν οὐκ
 εὐέλπιδι φάνθη
 805 λαμπρὰν δ' ἔδειξ' ὁ χρόνος
 σάν, Ἡράκλεες, ἀλκάν,

787 <μοι> Hermann 788 Νύμφαι] ὑμνεῖν Bond

789 ἀγῶνα Wilamowitz: ἀγῶν' ὦ L

791 <ῶ> Verrall 792 αὔξειτ' Fix: ἤξειτ' L

794 ἐφάνθη Pflugk: ἔφανε L

800 εὐνὰν Wecklein: -ὰς L

HERACLES

leave your father's waters
and join me in singing,
Nymphs, of Heracles'
glorious victory!
O tree-clad cliff of Apollo,²¹
and the home of the Muses
of Helicon, O
glorify with your glad shout
my city and its walls,
where the Sown Men appeared,
the company clad in brazen shields. These
as they pass the land in turn to their children's children
are a holy light shining upon Thebes.

O double marriage
of one woman with a mortal
and with Zeus, who came to the bed
of Perseus' granddaughter!²² How
the truth of this ancient
siring by you, Zeus,
shone forth to me when my hopes were gone!
Time has revealed as glorious
your strength, Heracles:

21 Presumably the double peak of Parnassus.

22 Alcmena's father, Electryon, was the son of Perseus and Andromeda.

801 ὡς Musgrave: καὶ L

804 ἐν ἐλπίδι Bond: ἐπ' ἐλπίδι L

806 σάν, Ἡράκλεες Willink: τὰν Ἡρακλέος L

ὄς γὰς ἐξέβας θαλάμων
Πλούτωνος δῶμα λιπῶν
νέρτερον.

- κρείσσω μοι τύραννος ἔφυς
810 ἢ δυσγένει' ἀνάκτων,
ἂ νῦν ἐσορῶντι φαίνει
ξιφηφόρων ἐς ἀγώνων
ἄμιλλαν εἰ τὸ δίκαιον
θεοῖς ἔτ' ἀρέσκει.

815—ἐα ἔα·

- ἄρ' ἐς τὸν αὐτὸν πίτυλον ἤκομεν φόβου,
γέροντες, οἶον φάσμι' ὑπὲρ δόμων ὄρῳ;
—φυγῆ φυγῆ
νωθὲς πέδαιρε κῶλον, ἐκποδῶν ἔλα.
820 ὦναξ Παιάν,
ἀπότροπος γένοιό μοι πημάτων.

ΙΡΙΣ

- θαρσεῖτε Νυκτὸς τήνδ' ὀρῶντες ἔκγονον
Λύσσαν, γέροντες, καμὲ τὴν θεῶν λάτριν
Ἴριω· πόλει γὰρ οὐδὲν ἤκομεν βλάβος,
825 ἐνὸς δ' ἐπ' ἀνδρὸς δώματα στρατεύομεν,
ὄν φασιν εἶναι Ζηνὸς Ἀλκμήνης τ' ἄπο.
πρὶν μὲν γὰρ ἄθλους ἐκτελευτήσαι πικρούς,

807 ἐξέβας Diggle: -έβα L

811 ἐσορῶντι Wecklein olim: -ορᾶν L

23 A title of Apollo as healer god.

HERACLES

you came forth from the recesses of earth
and left behind Pluto's
home below.

You are more kingly in my eyes
than the ignoble tyrant.

His fate makes plain, to anyone who looks
at this sword-bearing
contest of arms, whether the gods
still take pleasure in righteous conduct.

On the mechane two goddesses, LYSSA, snaky-haired goddess of madness, and IRIS, messenger of the gods, fly through the air and alight on the roof of the palace.

CHORUS LEADER

But what is this? Has the old fluttering of fear returned,
my friends, with such an apparition visible above the
house?

CHORUS

Take flight, take flight!

Lift your sluggish limbs, get away from here!

O lord Paean,²³

avert this woe from me!

The Chorus begin to flee but stop when addressed by Iris.

IRIS

Old sirs, take heart! You are looking at Lyssa, daughter of
Night, and me, Iris, the gods' servant. We have not come
to hurt the city: our expedition is aimed at a single man's
house, the man reported to be the son of Zeus and Alc-
mene. Before he finished his difficult labors, Fate pre-

EURIPIDES

- τὸ χρῆ νιν ἐξέσφωζεν οὐδ' εἶα πατῆρ
 Ζεὺς νιν κακῶς δρᾶν οὔτ' ἐμ' οὔθ' Ἦραν ποτέ·
 830 ἐπεὶ δὲ μόχθους διεπέρασ' Εὐρυσθέως,
 Ἦρα προσάψαι κοινὸν αἶμ' αὐτῷ θέλει
 παῖδας κατακτείναντι, συνθέλω δ' ἐγώ.
 ἀλλ' εἴ' ἄτεγκτον συλλαβοῦσα καρδίαν,
 Νυκτὸς κελαινῆς ἀνυμέναιε παρθένε,
 835 μανίας τ' ἐπ' ἀνδρὶ τῷδε καὶ παιδοκτόνους
 φρενῶν ταραγμοὺς καὶ ποδῶν σκιρτήματα
 ἔλαυνε κίνει, φόνιον ἐξίει κάλων,
 ὡς ἂν πορεύσας δι' Ἀχερούσιον πόρον
 τὸν καλλίπαιδα στέφανον αὐθέντη φόνω
 840 γνῶ μὲν τὸν Ἦρας οἶός ἐστ' αὐτῷ χόλος,
 μάθη δὲ τὸν ἐμόν· ἢ θεοὶ μὲν οὐδαμοῦ,
 τὰ θνητὰ δ' ἔσται μεγάλα, μὴ δόντος δίκην.

ΛΥΣΣΑ

- ἐξ εὐγενούς μὲν πατρὸς ἔκ τε μητέρος
 πέφυκα, Νυκτὸς Οὐρανοῦ τ' ἀφ' αἵματος,
 845 ἴτιμάς τ' ἔχω τάσδ' οὐκ ἀγασθῆναι φίλοις†
 οὐδ' ἠδομαι φοιτῶσ' ἐπ' ἀνθρώπων φίλους.
 παραινέσαι δέ, πρὶν σφαλεῖσαν εἰσιδεῖν,
 Ἦρα θέλω σοί τ', ἦν πίθησθ' ἐμοῖς λόγοις.
 ἀνῆρ ὄδ' οὐκ ἄσημος οὔτ' ἐπὶ χθονὶ
 850 οὔτ' ἐν θεοῖσιν, οὐδ' σὺ μ' ἐσπέμπεις δόμους·
 ἄβατον δὲ χώραν καὶ θάλασσαν ἀγρίαν

831 κοινὸν Wakefield: καινὸν L

845 v. conclamatus: post τάσδ' aliquid excidisse suspicatus est

HERACLES

served his life, and Zeus his father forbade Hera and me to harm him at any time. But now that he has finished Eurystheus' tasks, Hera wishes to stain him with kindred bloodshed, the blood of his own children, and that is my will too.

But come now, maiden daughter of black Night, pull together your implacable heart and send upon this man madness and child-killing derangement of mind, cause his feet to dance, go against him in deadly full sail so that when he has by his own murderous hand sent his sons, fair glory of his life, across the strait of Acheron, he may know the nature of Hera's wrath against him and may know mine. Else—if he be not punished—the gods will be of no account and it is mortals who will be great.

LYSSA

It is from a noble father and mother that I was begotten, from the lineage of Night and Heaven,²⁴ and from them I possess this office of mine, and I am not accustomed to feel ill will²⁵ nor do I take pleasure in visiting those mortals I hold dear. I wish to give advice to Hera, before I see her trip up, and to you, if you will take it. The man into whose house you are sending me is of great renown both on earth and in heaven. He tamed the pathless wilderness and the

²⁴ In Hesiod's *Theogony* Lyssa, like the Erinyes, is the offspring of Night.

²⁵ Text uncertain.

Murray, e.g. <ἐχθροδαίμονας κακοῦν. / τοῖς δ' εὐσεβοῦσιν>
οὐκ ἀγασθῆναι φιλῶ (φιλῶ Murray)

846 δόμους Baumann: φρένας Kayser

850 σὺ Hartung: γε L

EURIPIDES

ἔξημερώσας θεῶν ἀνέστησεν μόνος
 τιμὰς πιτνούσας ἀνοσίων ἀνδρῶν ὕπο·
 <οὔτ' οὖν ἐς αὐτὸν ἔχθρ' ἐμοὶ ποιεῖν φίλον>
 σοί τ' οὐ παραινῶ μεγάλα βουλευσαί κακά.

ΙΡΙΣ

855 μὴ σὺ νουθέτει τά θ' Ἥρας καμὰ μηχανήματα.

ΛΥΣΣΑ

ἐς τὸ λῶον ἐμβιβάζω σ' ἵχνος ἀντὶ τοῦ κακοῦ.

ΙΡΙΣ

οὐχὶ σωφρονεῖν γ' ἔπεμψε δευρό σ' ἡ Διὸς δάμαρ.

ΛΥΣΣΑ

Ἥλιον μαρτυρόμεσθα δρῶσ' ἃ δρᾶν οὐ βούλομαι.
 εἰ δὲ δὴ μ' Ἥρα θ' ὑπουργεῖν σοί τ' ἀναγκαίως ἔχει
 860 τάχος ἐπιρροΐβδην θ' ὀμαρτεῖν ὡς κνηγέτη κύνας,
 εἰμί γ' οὔτε πόντος οὔτω κύμασι στένων λάβρος
 οὔτε γῆς σεισμὸς κεραυνοῦ τ' οἰστρος ὠδίνας πνέων,
 οἷ' ἐγὼ στάδια δραμοῦμαι στέρνον εἰς Ἡρακλέους·
 καὶ καταρρήξω μέλαθρα καὶ δόμους ἐπεμβαλῶ,
 865 τέκν' ἀποκτείνασα πρῶτον· ὁ δὲ κανὼν οὐκ εἴσεται
 παῖδας οὓς ἔτικτεν ἐναρών, πρὶν ἂν ἐμὰς λύσσας
 ἀφῆ.

ἦν ἰδού· καὶ δὴ τινάσσει κράτα βαλβίδων ἀπο
 καὶ διαστρόφους ἐλίσσει σίγα γοργωποὺς κόρας,
 ἀμπνοὰς δ' οὐ σωφρονίζει, ταῦρος ὡς ἐς ἐμβολήν,

853 post h.v. lac. ind. Wilamowitz

854 βουλευσαί Camper: βούλεσθαι L

HERACLES

sea's wild waves, and he alone has restored the worship of the gods when it was being cast into oblivion by godless men. <And so, just as I am loath to attack him,> so I advise you not to plot great mischief against him.

IRIS

Don't try to correct Hera's plans and mine.

LYSSA

I am trying to set you on the better path, not the worse.

IRIS

Zeus's wife did not send you here to show good sense.

LYSSA

I call the Sun to witness that what I am doing I do against my will! But if I must perform this service for Hera and am obliged to follow on your heels with all speed like a huntsman's pack of dogs, I shall go. The sea with its roaring waves is not so violent, not so violent the earthquake or the sting of the lightning bolt that fills the air with pain, as will be my dash into the breast of Heracles. I shall break down his roof and cast his house upon his head, but first I'll kill his children. And their slayer will not know that he has killed the sons he begot until he gets clear of my madness.

See! He has left the starting gate. He shakes his head about, saying not a word but rolling his fierce eyes out of their sockets; his breathing is disquieted, like a bull about to charge, and he bellows frightfully, calling forth the death

855 *κάμᾶ* Reiske: *κακὰ* L 860 fort. *κύνα* (noluit Jackson)

862 *οἰστὸς* Wakefield

866 *ἔτικτεν ἐναρών* Wilamowitz: *ἔτικτ' ἐναίρων* L^{7p}

869 *οὐ σωφρονίζει* fort. corrupta

EURIPIDES

- 870 δεινὰ μυκάται δὲ Κήρας ἀνακαλῶν τὰς Ταρτάρου.
 τάχα σ' ἐγὼ μᾶλλον χορεύσω καὶ καταυλήσω
 φόβῳ.
 στείχ' ἐς Οὐλύμπου πεδαίρουσ', Ἴρι, γενναῖον πόδα·
 ἐς δόμους δ' ἡμεῖς ἄφαντοι δυσόμεσθ' Ἡρακλέους.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- 875 ὄτοτοτοῖ, στέναξον· ἀποκίρεται
 σὸν ἄνθος πόλεος, ὁ Διὸς ἔκγονος·
 μέλεος Ἑλλάς, ἃ τὸν εὐεργέταν
 ἀποβαλεῖς ὀλεῖς μανιάσιν λύσσαις
 χορευθέντ' ἐναύλοις.
 880 βέβακεν ἐν δίφροισιν ἃ πολύστονος,
 ἄρμασι δ' ἐνδίδωσι
 κέντρον ὡς ἐπὶ λῶβα
 Νυκτὸς Γοργῶν ἑκατογκεφάλοις
 ὄφρων ἰαχήμασι Λύσσα μαρμαρωπός.
 ταχὺ τὸν εὐτυχῆ μετέβαλεν δαίμων,
 885 ταχὺ δὲ πρὸς πατρὸς τέκν' ἐκπνεύσεται.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

(ἔσωθεν)

ἰὼ μοι μέλεος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἰὼ Ζεῦ, σὸν ἄγονον αὐτίκα γένος

⁸⁸² post h.v. forsitan exciderit aliquid, e.g. <κακὰ δ' ὡς
 ῥέξουσ' εἴσω φρούδα>

⁸⁸⁶ σὸν ἄγονον αὐτίκα γένος Diggle: τὸ σὸν γ. ἄ. αὐτ. L

HERACLES

spirits from Tartarus. Soon I shall make you dance still more and charm your ears with the pipe of panic! Lift your noble feet, Iris, and make your way up to Olympus! I shall go down invisible into the house of Heracles.

Exit IRIS by the mechane, LYSSA by a stairway into the skene.

CHORUS

Ah! Ah! Groan aloud! Cut off
is the fair flower of the city, Zeus's son!
Desolate are you, Hellas, your great benefactor
you shall let slip, shall lose, who with the shrill pipe
of madness in his ears is made to dance!
She of the many groans is mounted on her chariot,
and lays the lash hard
on the horses to hurt them,²⁶
Night's Gorgon daughter, Lyssa,
whose head gleams with the open mouths of a hundred
snakes.
Swiftly fate has overthrown the fortunate,
and swiftly the children will be destroyed by their father's
hand!

AMPHITRYON

(*within*) Ah, woe is me!

CHORUS

Ah, Zeus! Your son will be laid out in ruin,

²⁶ If this refers to Lyssa, the chariot is metaphorical, for she does not leave by the *mechane*. It is possible, however, that Iris is meant and that a line has dropped out, e.g. "< But the other is gone within to do harm, > Night's Gorgon daughter, Lyssa."

EURIPIDES

λυσσαδες ὠμοβρώτες ἄδικοι Ποιναι
κακοῖσιν ἐκπετάσουσιν.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

ἰὼ στέγαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

κατάρχεται χορεύματ' ἄτερ τυπάνων
890 Βρομίον κεχαρισμένων θύρσῳ . . .

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

ἰὼ δόμοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πρὸς αἵματ', οὐχὶ τᾶς Διονυσιάδος
βοτρυῶν ἐπὶ χεύμασιν λοιβᾶς.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

φυγῆ, τέκν', ἐξορμάτε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

δαίον τόδε

895 δαίον μέλος ἐπαυλεῖται.
κυναγετεῖ τέκνων διωγμόν· οὔποτ' ἄκραντα δόμοισι
Λύσσα βακχεύσει.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

αἰαὶ κακῶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

900 αἰαὶ δῆτα· τὸν γεραῖον ὡς στένω

⁸⁸⁷ ὠμοβρώτες Wakefield: ὠμόβροτος L
ναὶ Wilamowitz: ἀποιόδικοι δίκαι L

ἄδικοι Ποι-

HERACLES

his sons gone, by spirits of madness,
bloodthirsty and unjust spirits of punishment!

AMPHITRYON

Alas for the house!

CHORUS

The dance begins, a dance without the drums
that add pleasure to the thyrsus of Dionysus . . .

AMPHITRYON

Alas for my home!

CHORUS

. . . a dance that ends in death, not in the pressing out
of Dionysus' grapes!

AMPHITRYON

Run, children, run!

CHORUS

This is a murderous,
murderous song that is piped!
He hunts down his children, pursues them! Lyssa's bac-
chant frenzy
in the house shall not be in vain!

AMPHITRYON

Alas for the ruin!

CHORUS

Yes, alas! How I groan for his aged father

⁸⁸⁹ χορεύματ' ἄτερ τυπάνων Hermann: χόρευμα τυμπάνων
ἄτερ L ⁸⁹⁰ Βρομίου κεχαρισμένων post Hartung (Βρο-
μίου) Willink: οὐ Βρομίῳ κεχαρισμένα L

EURIPIDES

πατέρα τάν τε παιδοτρόφον, <ᾗ> μάταν
τέκεα γεννᾶται.

ἰδοῦ ἰδοῦ,

905 θύελλα σείει δῶμα, συμπίπτει στέγη.

ἦ ἦ·

τί δρᾶς, ὦ Διὸς παῖ, μελάθρῳ;

τάραγμα ταρτάρειον, ὡς ἐπ' Ἐγκελάδῳ ποτὲ

Παλλάς,

ἐς δόμους πέμπεις.

ΕΞΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

910 ὦ λευκὰ γήρα σώματ' . . .

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀνακαλείς με τίνα

βοάν;

ΕΞΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

. . . ἄλαστα τάν δόμοισι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μάντιν οὐχ

ἕτερον ἄξομαι.

ΕΞΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

τεθνήασι παῖδες.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

αἰαῖ.

ΕΞΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

στενάζεθ' ὡς στενακτά.

901 <ᾗ> Musgrave

HERACLES

and for her who raised his children,
children she bore in vain!

Look, look!

A mighty wind is shaking the house, the roof is falling in!

Ah, ah!

Son of Zeus, what are you doing in the house?

It is hellish confusion you send against it,
as of old Athena did to Enceladus!²⁷

A servant comes out of the skene as MESSENGER.

MESSENGER

Aged and white-haired sirs . . .

CHORUS

What is this shout

you make to me?

MESSENGER

. . . dreadful is all within!

CHORUS

No prophet

do I need to tell me this!

MESSENGER

The children are dead.

CHORUS

Alas!

MESSENGER

Groan aloud, for groans this well deserves.

²⁷ Enceladus was a Giant, defeated by Athena in the Gigantomachy.

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

δαίοι φόνοι,

915 δαίοι δὲ τοκέων χέρες.

ΕΞΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

οὐκ ἄν τις εἴποι μᾶλλον ἢ πεπόνθαμεν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πῶς πᾶσι στενακτὸν ἄταν ἄταν

πατέρος ἀμφαίνεις;

920 λέγε τίνα τρόπον ἔστυο θεόθεν ἐπὶ μέλα-
θρα τάδε τλάμονάς τε παίδων ψυχάς.

ΕΞΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ιερά μὲν ἦν πάροιθεν ἐσχάρας Διὸς
καθάρσι' οἴκων, γῆς ἄνακτ' ἐπεὶ κτανῶν
ἐξέβαλε τῶνδε δωμαίων Ἡρακλῆς·

925 χορὸς δὲ καλλίμορφος εἰστήκει τέκνων
πατὴρ τε Μεγάρα τ', ἐν κύκλῳ δ' ἤδη καιοῦν
εἴλικτο βωμοῦ, φθέγμα δ' ὄσιον εἶχομεν·
μέλλων δὲ δαλὸν χειρὶ δεξιᾷ φέρειν,
ἐς χέρνιβ' ὡς βάψειεν, Ἀλκμήνης τόκος

930 ἔστη σιωπῇ· καὶ χρονίζοντος πατρὸς
παῖδες προσέσχον ὄμμ'. ὁ δ' οὐκέθ' αὐτὸς ἦν,
ἀλλ' ἐν στροφαῖσιν ὀμμάτων ἐφθαρμένος
ρίζας τ' ἐν ὄσσοις αἱματώπας ἐκβαλὼν
ἀφρὸν κατέσταζ' εὐτριχος γενειάδος.

935 ἔλεξε δ' ἅμα γέλῳτι παραπεπληγμένῳ·
Πάτερ, τί θύω πρὶν κτανεῖν Εὐρυσθέα
καθάρσιον πῦρ καὶ πόνοὺς διπλοῦς ἔχω;

HERACLES

CHORUS

Murderous was the slaughter,
murderous the father's hands!

MESSENGER

No words can describe our misfortune.

CHORUS

How can you make clear to us the father's ruin,
a ruin to make all groan aloud?
Say how it was that from high heaven
it rushed upon this house and the poor lives of his children.

MESSENGER

Sacrificial victims were standing before Zeus's altar to purify the house, since Heracles had killed the land's ruler and flung him out of doors. His children stood by as a lovely chorus, and his father and Megara too, and the sacred basket had made its circular course about the altar: we were all keeping a reverent silence. When he was about to bring a torch in his right hand to dip in the holy water, Alcmene's son stood stock still in silence. The children turned their faces toward him in wonder at their father's tarrying. His looks were utterly changed: his face was distorted with the agitation of his eyes, and in these blood-red streaks appeared, while foam dripped onto his handsome beard. With a maniacal laugh he said, "Father, why am I kindling the flame for purification before killing Eurys-

916 fort. lac. post h. v. indicanda, e.g. <ἀπροσδόκητα καὶ στενακτὰ πῆματα>

917 πᾶσι στενακτὸν Willink: παισὶ στενακτὰν L

921 τὰδε Willink: κακὰ τ- L ψυχᾶς Wilamowitz: τύχας

EURIPIDES

- ἔργον μιᾶς μοι χειρὸς εὖ θέσθαι τάδε.
 ὅταν δ' ἐνέγκω δεῦρο κρατ' Εὐρυσθέως,
 940 ἐπὶ τοῖσι νῦν θανοῦσιν ἀγνῶ χέρας.
 ἐκχεῖτε πηγᾶς, ῥίπτειτ' ἐκ χειρῶν κανᾶ.
 τίς μοι δίδωσι τόξα; τίς δ' ὄπλον χερός;
 πρὸς τὰς Μυκήνας εἶμι· λάζυσθαι χρεῶν
 μοχλοὺς δικέλλας θ' ὥστε Κυκλώπων βάθρα
 945 φοίνικι κανόνι καὶ τύκοις ἡρμοσμένα
 στρεπτῶ σιδήρῳ συντριαινῶσαι πάλιν.
 κακὰ τοῦδε βαίνων ἄρματ' οὐκ ἔχων ἔχειν
 ἔφασκε δίφρον τ' εἰσέβαινεν ἄντυγα
 κᾶθεινε, κέντρῳ δῆθεν ὡς θείνων, χερί.
 950 διπλοῦς δ' ὀπαδοῖς ἦν γέλωσ φόβος θ' ὁμοῦ,
 καὶ τις τόδ' εἶπεν, ἄλλος εἰς ἄλλον δρακῶν·
 Παίζει πρὸς ἡμᾶς δεσπότης ἢ μαίνεται;
 ὁ δ' εἶρπ' ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω κατὰ στέγας,
 μέσον δ' ἐς ἀνδρῶν' ἐσπεσὼν Νίσου πόλιν
 955 ἦκειν ἔφασκε, δωμάτων τ' ἔσω βεβῶσ
 κλιθεὶς ἐς οὐδας, ὡς ἔχει, σκενάζεται
 θοίνην. διελθὼν δ' ἐπὶ βραχὺν χρόνον †μονῆστ'
 Ἴσθμοῦ ναπαίας ἔλεγε προσβαίνειν πλάκας.
 κἀνταῦθα γυμνὸν σῶμα θεὸς πορπαμάτων
 960 πρὸς οὐδέν' ἡμιλλᾶτο κάκηρύσσετο
 αὐτὸς πρὸς αὐτοῦ καλλίνικος, οὐδενὸς
 ἀκοῆν ὑπειπών. δεινὰ δ' Εὐρυσθεὶ βρέμων

938 ἔργον. Matthiae: ἐξὸν L

947 κακ Diggle: ἐκ L

HERACLES

theus? I am making twice the labor for myself! I can put this right single-handedly. When I bring back Eurystheus' head to Thebes, then I shall purify my hands for those just killed. Pour out the lustral water, drop the baskets from your hands! Who will give me my bow, who my club? I am off to Mycenae! I must take crowbars and pickaxes to pry up with the twisted iron the Cyclopean foundations fitted snug with red plumbline and mason's hammer!" At this he strode off saying he had a chariot, though he had none, and made as if to step behind a chariot rail and struck with his hand as though striking his horses with a goad.

The servants' feelings were torn between mirth and fear, and one of them, looking at his fellows, would say, "Is our master playing a game with us, or is he insane?" Heracles moved back and forth through the house, and charging into the middle of the men's quarters he said he had come to the city of Nisus.²⁸ Then, coming to a halt in the bedchamber, he reclined upon the floor, just as he was, and prepared his dinner. Then, having marched for a short time through the house he said that he was approaching the wooded plains of the Isthmus. Here he stripped himself of his garments, wrestled without an opponent, had himself proclaimed victor with himself as herald, and called for silence from a nonexistent throng.²⁹ Then uttering fierce

²⁸ Megara, just north of the Isthmus of Corinth.

²⁹ Heracles imagines he is taking part in the Isthmian Games.

⁹⁵⁵⁻⁶ δωμάτων τ' . . . κλιθεῖς Wilamowitz: δωμάτων . . . κλιθεῖς δ' L
⁹⁵⁷ ἐπὶ Kovacs cl. *Med.* 355, *El.* 425: εἰς L μονῆς] fort.
 στέγη: ἐν μονῇ βραχὺν χρόνον Wilamowitz

EURIPIDES

- ἦν ἐν Μυκῆναις τῷ λόγῳ. πατῆρ δέ νιν
 θιγῶν κραταιᾶς χειρὸς ἐννέπει τάδε·
- 965 ὦ παῖ, τί πάσχεις; τίς ὁ τρόπος ξενώσεως
 τῆσδ'; οὐ τί που φόνος σ' ἐβάκχευσε νεκρῶν
 οὐς ἄρτι καίνεις; ὁ δέ νιν Εὐρυσθέως δοκῶν
 πατέρα προταρβούνθ' ἰκέσιον ψαύειν χερὸς
 ὠθεῖ, φαρέτραν δ' εὐτρεπῆ σκευάζεται
- 970 καὶ τόξ' ἑαυτοῦ παισί, τοὺς Εὐρυσθέως
 δοκῶν φονεύειν. οἱ δὲ ταρβούντες φόβῳ
 ὤρουον ἄλλος ἄλλοσ', ἐς πέπλους ὁ μὲν
 μητρὸς ταλαίνης, ὁ δ' ὑπὸ κίονος σκιάν,
 ἄλλος δὲ βωμὸν ὄρνις ὡς ἔπτηξ' ὑπο.
- 975 βοᾷ δὲ μήτηρ· ὦ τεκῶν, τί δρᾶς; τέκνα
 κτείνεις; βοᾷ δὲ πρέσβυς οἰκετῶν τ' ὄχλος.
 ὁ δ' ἐξελίσσων κίονος κύκλω πόδα
 τόρνευμα δεινὸν παιδ' ἐναντίον σταθεῖς
 βάλλει πρὸς ἤπαρ· ὑπτιος δὲ λαίνοισι
- 980 ὀρθοστάτας ἔδευσε ἐκπνέων βίον.
 ὁ δ' ἠλάλαξε κάπεκόμπασεν τάδε·
 εἷς μὲν νεοσσὸς ὅδε θανῶν Εὐρυσθέως
 ἔχθραν πατρώαν ἐκτίνων πέπτωκέ μοι.
 ἄλλῳ δ' ἐπέιχε τόξ', ὃς ἀμφὶ βωμίαν
- 985 ἔπτηξε κρηπίδ' ὡς λεληθέναι δοκῶν.
 φθάνει δ' ὁ τλήμων γόνασι προσπεσῶν πατρὸς
 καὶ πρὸς γένειον χεῖρα καὶ δέρην βαλὼν
 ὦ φίλτατ', αὐδᾶ, μὴ μ' ἀποκτείνης, πάτερ·
 σὸς εἰμι· σὸν παιδ', οὐ τὸν Εὐρυσθέως, ὀλεῖς.

HERACLES

threats against Eurystheus he was, by his own account, in Mycenae. But his father, grasping him by his mighty hand, said, "My son, what has come over you? What is this change you have undergone? Surely it was not the blood of the men you just killed that has made you mad?" But thinking that Eurystheus' father was grasping his hand in fear as a suppliant, Heracles pushed him away and prepared arrows and bow against his own children, believing that he was killing Eurystheus' children. These in fear rushed in different directions, one to his poor mother's skirts, another to the shelter of a column, another cowering like a bird under the protection of the altar. Their mother cried out, "Ah, what are you doing? You are their father: will you kill the children?" Old Amphitryon and the throng of servants shouted too.

But he, circling a grim turn around the column, stood facing the boy and shot him through the heart. The boy fell on his back, and as he breathed out his life he drenched the stone pillars with his blood. Heracles shouted in triumph and uttered this boast: "Here's one fledgling of Eurystheus dead: his death is payment to me for his father's hostility!" He aimed his bow at a second, who was cowering near the base of the altar, thinking he escaped notice. But before Heracles could shoot, the poor boy fell at his father's knees and thrust his hand at his chin and his neck; "Dearest father," he said, "do not kill me. I am yours! It is *your* son, not Eurystheus' child, you are going to slay!"

975 ^εΩ τί δρᾶς; τεκῶν τέκνα West

977-8 κίονος κύκλω πόδα / τόρνευμα δεινόν, παῖδ' Dobree:
παῖδα κίονος κύκλω / τόρνευμα δεινὸν ποδός L

989 σὸν παῖδ Elmsley: σὸς παῖς L

EURIPIDES

- 990 ὁ δ' ἀγριωπὸν ὄμμα Γοργόνοσ στρέφων,
ὡσ ἐντὸσ ἔσση παῖσ λυγροῦ τοξέυματοσ
μυδροκτύπον μίμημ' ὑπὲρ κάρα βαλὼν
ξύλον καθῆκε παιδὸσ ἐσ ξανθὸν κάρα
ἔρρηξε δ' ὀστώ. δεῦτερον δὲ παῖδ' ἐλὼν
- 995 χωρεῖ τρίτον θῦμ' ὡσ ἐπισφάξων δυοῖν.
ἀλλὰ φθάνει νιν ἠ τάλαιν' ἔσω δόμων
μήτηρ ὑπεκλαβοῦσα καὶ κλήει πύλασ.
ὁ δ' ὡσ ἐπ' αὐτοῖσ δὴ Κυκλωπίοισιν ὦν
σκάπτει μοχλεῦει θύρετρα κάκβαλὼν σταθμὰ
- 1000 δάμαρτα καὶ παῖδ' ἐνὶ κατέστρωσεν βέλει.
κἀνθένδε πρὸσ γέροντοσ ἱππεῦει φόνον·
ἀλλ' ἦλθεν, εἰκὼν <δ' > ὡσ ὀρᾶν ἐφαίνετο,
Παλλάσ, κραδαίνουσ' ἔγχοσ ἐπίλογχον χερί,
κᾶρρυψε πέτρον στέρνον εἰσ Ἡρακλέοσ,
- 1005 ὅσ νιν πόνοσ μαργῶντοσ ἔσχε καὶ ὕπνοσ
καθῆκε· πίτνει δ' ἐσ πέδοσ, πρὸσ κίονα
νῶτον πατάξασ, ὄσ πεσήμασι στέγησ
διχορραγῆσ ἔκειτο κρηπίδων ἔπι.
- 1010 ἡμεῖσ δ' ἐλευθεροῦντεσ ἐκ δρασμῶν πόδα
- 1009 σὺν τῷ γέροντι δεσμὰ σειραίων βρόχοσ
ἀνήπτομεν πρὸσ κίον', ὡσ λήξασ ὕπνοσ
μηδὲν προσεργάσαιο τοῖσ δεδραμένοισ.
εὔδει δ' ὁ τλήμων ὕπνοσ οὐκ εὔδαίμονα
παῖδασ φονεύσασ καὶ δάμαρτ'. ἐγὼ μὲν οὔν
- 1015 οὐκ οἶδα θνητῶν ὅστισ ἀθλιώτεροσ.

1002 <δ' > Robertson

HERACLES

But he merely turned his fierce Gorgon gaze upon him and, since the boy stood too close for the deadly bow shot, lifted his club above his head and—just like a smith forging iron—brought it down on the boy's blond head and smashed his skull. Having killed his second son, he went off to sacrifice a third victim on top of the other two. But before he could do so the boy's mother snatched him up, took him inside the chamber, and barred the door. Heracles, just as if he were besieging Mycenae, dug under the door, pried it up, pulled out the doorposts, and with a single arrow felled both wife and child.

Then he raced off to murder his old father. But now there came into the house—and she was like a statue to look upon—Pallas Athena, brandishing her sharp-pointed spear in her hand. She hurled a stone at the chest of Heracles, which checked him from his mad labor and cast him into a sleep. He fell to the ground, striking his back against a pillar that in the collapse of the house lay broken in two upon the foundations.

Freeing ourselves from our panic flight, we helped the old man bind Heracles to the pillar with a bond of twisted rope to prevent him when he woke up from doing still more harm. The poor man sleeps an unenviable sleep, having murdered his children and his wife. I know of no mortal more unfortunate than he.

Exit MESSENGER into the house.

1003 ἐπίλογγον χερί Canter: ἐπὶ λόφω κέαρ L

1005 πόνου Willink: φόνου L. 1007 μαλάξας West

1009 et 1010 inter se trai. Pierson

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- ὁ φόνος ἦν ὃν Ἀργολίς ἔχει πέτρα
 τότε μὲν περισαμότατος καὶ ἄπιστος
 Ἑλλάδι τῶν Δαναοῦ παίδων·
 τάδε δὲ παρέδραμεν τὰ τότε κακὰ τάλανι
 1020 διογενεῖ κόρφῳ.
 μονότεκνον Πρόκνας φόνον ἔχω λέξαι
 †θνύμενον† Μούσαις·
 σὺ δὲ τέκνα τρίγωνα τεκόμενος,
 ὦ δαίε, λυσσάδι συγκατειργάσω μοίρα.
 1025 αἰαῖ, τίνα στεναγμὸν
 ἦ γόον ἢ φθιτῶν ὦδαν ἢ τίν' Ἄι-
 दा χορὸν ἀχῆσω;
 φεῦ φεῦ·
 ἴδεσθε, διάνδιχα κληῆθρα
 1030 κλίνεται ὑψιπύλων δόμων.
 ἰώ μοι·
 ἴδεσθε δὲ τέκνα πρὸ πατρὸς
 ἄθλια κείμενα δυστάνου,
 εὔδοντος ὕπνου δεινὸν ἐκ παίδων φόνου,
 1035 περὶ δὲ δεσμὰ καὶ πολύβροχ' ἀμμάτων
- 1017 ἄπιστος Reiske: ἄριστος L
 1019 τάδε δὲ Wunder: τὰδ' L παρέδραμεν Bothe: ὑπερ-
 έβαλεν π- L
 1022 θρεόμενον Heath: κλεόμενον Willink
 1025 αἰαῖ Hartung: ές L
 1032 δὲ Elmsley: τάδε L
 1034 ἐκ παίδων Burges: ἐκποδῶν L

HERACLES

CHORUS

The murder done by Danaus' daughters,
murder remembered by rocky Argos,³⁰
was renowned in its day and found disbelief in Greece.
But those deeds are surpassed by these terrible events
afflicting the son of Zeus.

I can tell of Procne's murder of her only child,³¹
a theme of song for the Muses.

But you sired three children,
murderous man, and killed them by the mad fate that was
yours!

Alas, what groan,
what wail, what song for the dead,
what chorus of Hades shall I raise?

*The doors of the skene open and HERACLES is wheeled out
on the eccyclema, tied to a pillar and with his slaughtered
sons and wife around him.*

Ah, ah!

See, they part, the doors
of the high-gated palace!

Woe is me!

See the poor children lying
before their unhappy father,
who after his children's murder sleeps a dreadful sleep!
Around him is the binding, the prop of many ropes

³⁰ The fifty daughters of Danaus were compelled to marry their fifty cousins, the sons of Aegyptus. They conspired to murder their bridegrooms on the wedding night.

³¹ Procne, wife of Tereus, killed her son Itys to punish her husband's infidelity. She was transformed into a nightingale.

EURIPIDES

ἔρείσμαθ' Ἡράκλειον
 ἀμφὶ δέμας τάδε λαΐνοις
 ἀνημμένα κίοσιν ἀμφ' οἴκων.

—ὁ δ' ὡς τις ὄρνις ἄπτερον καταστένων
 1040 ὠδίνα τέκνων πρέσβυς ὑστέρω ποδὶ
 πικρὰν διώκων ἤλυσιν πάρεσθ' ὄδε.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

Καδμείοι γέροντες, οὐ σίγα σί-
 γα τὸν ὑπνω παρειμένον ἐάσεται ἔκ-
 λαθέσθαι κακῶν;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1045 κατὰ σε δακρύοις στένω, πρέσβυ, καὶ
 τέκεα καὶ τὸ καλλίνικον κάρα.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

ἐκαστέρω πρόβατε, μὴ
 κτυπέιτε, μὴ βοᾶτε, μὴ
 1050 τὸν εὐδία τ' ἄγονθ' ὑπνώδεά τ' ἐγεί-
 ρετ' εὐνᾶς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οἴμοι. φόνος ὅσος ὄδ' . . .

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

ᾶ ᾶ,

διὰ μ' ὀλεῖτε.

1038 κίοσιν ἀμφ' Willink: ἀμφὶ κίοσιν L

1049 εὐδία τ' ἄγονθ' Willink: εὐ διαύοντα L

HERACLES

wound about the body
of Heracles, bound to the marble
pillars of his house.

Enter AMPHITRYON from the skene.

CHORUS LEADER

And here, like a bird in mourning for the unfledged young
it has given birth to, comes old Amphitryon on a joyless
journey.

AMPHITRYON

Old men of Thebes, won't you in silence, silence,
allow the man relaxed in sleep
to forget his woes?

CHORUS

I weep for you, old sir,
and the children, and the man once glorious in victory.

AMPHITRYON

Come further away, make
no sound, do not shout, do not
awaken from his bed
one in the peace of sleep!

CHORUS

Alas! What pools of blood . . .

AMPHITRYON

you will destroy me!

Stop!

1050-1 ἐγείρετ' εὐνάς Conradt: εὖ- ἐγ- L

EURIPIDES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

. . . κεχυμένος ἐπαντέλλει.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

οὐκ ἀτρεμαῖα θρήνον αἰ-

άζετ', ὦ γέροντες;

1055 ἢ δέσμ' ἀνεγειρόμενος χαλάσας ἀπολεί πόλιν,
ἀπὸ δὲ πατέρα, μέλαθρά τε καταρρήξει.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀδύνατ' ἀδύνατ' οἴμοι.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

1060 σίγα, πνοὰς μάθω· φέρε πρὸς οὓς βάλω.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

εὔδεις;

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

ναί, εὔδεις,

†ὔπνον ὔπνον† ὀλόμενον ὃς ἔκανε ἀλο-
χον, ἔκανε δὲ τέκεα τοξήρει ψαλμῶ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στέναζέ νυν . . .

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

στενάζω.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1065 . . . τέκνων ὄλεθρον . . .

1058 οἴμοι Diggle: μοι L

1062 πόνον ἀπόπονον vel ὀλόμενον e.g. Willink

HERACLES

CHORUS

. . . spilt upon the ground rise up to meet me!

AMPHITRYON

Make your lament
softly, old sirs!

Or he will waken, slip his bonds, and destroy the city,
destroy his father, smash the whole house in pieces!

CHORUS

I cannot do it, cannot, alas!

AMPHITRYON

Hush! Let me hear his breathing! Come, let me put my ear
to him!

CHORUS

Is he sleeping?

AMPHITRYON

Yes, he is sleeping,
a sleep of wretchedness, this man who killed his wife,
killed his children with his bow's whirring tune.

CHORUS

Lament then . . .

AMPHITRYON

I lament.

CHORUS

. . . the children's destruction . . .

1063 ψαλμῶ Madvig: ψ- τοξέουσας L

EURIPIDES

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

ᾠμοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

. . . σέθεν τε παιδός.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

αἰαί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ πρέσβυ . . .

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

σίγα σίγα· παλίντροπος ἔξει-
γειρόμενος στρέφεται

1070 φέρ', ἀπόκρυφα δέμας ὑπὸ μέλαθρον κρύψω.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

θάρσει· νύξ ἔχει βλέφαρα παιδὶ σῶ.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

ὄρᾶθ' ὄρατε. τὸ φάος ἐκ-
λιπεῖν μὲν ἐπὶ κακοῖσιν οὐ
1075 φεύγω τάλας, ἀλλ' εἴ με κανεῖ πατέρ' ὄντα,
πρὸς δὲ κακοῖς κακὰ μήσε-
ται πρὸς Ἐρινύσι θ' αἶμα
σύγγονον ἔξει.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τότε θανεῖν σ' ἐχρήν ὅτε δάμαρτι σαῶ
φόνον ὁμοσπόρων ἔμολες ἐκπράξας,

1070 ἀπόκρυφα Willink: -φον L

HERACLES

AMPHITRYON

Ah me!

CHORUS

. . . and that of your son.

AMPHITRYON

Alas!

CHORUS

Old sir . . .

AMPHITRYON

Hush, hush! He turns about
and stirs to wakefulness!

Come, let me conceal myself in the shelter of the house!

CHORUS

Have no fear! Night still shrouds your son's eyes.

AMPHITRYON

Look out, look out! It is not from death
in my misery that I shrink,
but I fear he will kill me, his father,
and commit woe on woe,
adding to the Furies' curse
the stain of kindred blood!

CHORUS

You should have died on the day when for your wife
you returned from avenging her brothers' death

1073-4 τὸ φάος ἐκλιπεῖν μὲν Wilamowitz: τὸ μὲν φ- ἐ- L

1079 ἔμολες Bothe: ἔμελλες L ἐκπράξας Hartung:
ἐκπράξειν L

EURIPIDES

1080 Ταφίων περίκλυστον ἄστν πέρσας.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

φυγὰν φυγάν, γέροντες, ἀποπρὸ δωμαίων
διώκετε· φεύγετε μάργον ἄνδρ' ἐπεγειρόμενον.

1085 <ἦ> τάχα φόνον ἕτερον ἐπὶ φόνῳ βαλὼν
ἀν' αὐτὸν βακχεύσει Καδμείων πόλιν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ Ζεῦ, τί παιδ' ἤχθηρας ὦδ' ὑπερκότως
τὸν σόν, κακῶν δὲ πέλαγος ἐς τόδ' ἤγαγες;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἔα·

ἔμπνους μὲν εἶμι καὶ δέδορχ' ἄπερ με δεῖ,
1090 αἰθέρα τε καὶ γῆν τόξα θ' Ἥλιον τάδε.
ὡς <δ'> ἐν κλύδωνι καὶ φρενῶν ταραγμάτι
πέπτωκα δεινῶ καὶ πνοᾶς θερμᾶς πνέω
μετάρσι, οὐ βέβαια πλευμόνων ἄπο.

ἰδοῦ, τί δεσμοῖς ναῦς ὅπως ὠρμισμένος
1095 νεανίαν θώρακα καὶ βραχίονα
πρὸς ἡμιθραύστῳ λαῖνῳ τυκίσματι
ἡμῖν, νεκροῖσι γείτονας θάκουσ ἔχων;

1085 <ἦ> Wilamowitz

1086 ἀν' αὐτὸν βακχεύει Nauck: ἀναβ- L

1089 ἔννονος Wecklein cl. Ba. 1270

1091 <δ'> Reiske: sed fort. lac. ante h. v. indicanda, e.g. <ἐπησ-

θόμην δὲ πῦρ ἔχων ἐν δεξιᾷ>

1096 τυκίσματι Fix: τειχ- L

1097 ἡμῖν . . . ἔχων Musgrave: ἦ μὲν . . . ἔχω L

HERACLES

by sacking the Taphians' seagirt city.³²

AMPHITRYON

Run from the house, run, old sirs!
Flee from the madman awakened!
Or soon adding new murders on top of old
he will throw the whole city of Thebes into confusion!

CHORUS LEADER

Zeus, why do you so hate your own son? Why have you
brought him into this sea of woes?

HERACLES

(*Stirring to wakefulness*) Ah, what does this mean? I am
alive, and I see what I ought to see, the bright air, the earth,
the shafts of sunlight.³³ <But> I am fallen as if into a wave
and into dread confusion of mind, and my breath comes
hot and in shallow panting, not steadily from my lungs.

Look, why am I sitting here, my vigorous chest and
arms moored like a ship to this half-defaced stonework,
with corpses for neighbors? Scattered on the ground are

³² See note on line 60 above.

³³ It is possible that Heracles first observes not that he is alive (*ἔμπροσθεν*), but that he is now in his right mind (Wecklein's *ἐν-νοους*): see *Bacchae* 1264-70, where Agave's ability to see the brightness of the heaven is evidence that her madness has passed and that she is once more sane. In that case instead of supplying a connective in 1091, we could mark a lacuna before it with a verb of noticing in a past tense. This would give easier employment for *ὡς* and make both *πέπτωκα* (I am fallen) and *πνέω* (I breathe) refer to past time, as, e.g., at 1167-8.

EURIPIDES

- πτερωτὰ δ' ἔγχη τόξα τ' ἔσπαρται πέδῳ,
 ἂ πρὶν παρασπίζοντ' ἑμοῖς βραχίσιω
 1100 ἔσφζε πλευρὰς ἐξ ἑμοῦ τ' ἔσφζετο.
 οὐ πον κατήλθον αὐθις εἰς Ἄιδου πάλιν,
 Εὐρυσθέως διάυλον ἐξ Ἄιδου μολών;
 ἀλλ' οὔτε Σισύφειον εἴσορῶ πέτρον
 Πλούτωνά τ' οὐδὲ σκῆπτρα Δήμητρος κόρης.
 1105 ἔκ τοι πέπληγμαί ποῦ ποτ' ὦν ἀμηχανῶ;
 ὦή, τίς ἐγγυὺς ἢ πρόσω φίλων ἑμῶν,
 δύσγνοιαν ὅστις τὴν ἐμὴν ἰάσεται;
 σαφῶς γὰρ οὐδὲν οἶδα τῶν εἰωθότων.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

γέροντες, ἔλθω τῶν ἑμῶν κακῶν πέλας;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- 1110 κἀγὼ γε σὺν σοί, μὴ προδῶ σὰς συμφοράς.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

πάτερ, τί κλαίεις καὶ συναμπίσχη κόρας,
 τοῦ φιλτάτου σοι τηλόθεν παιδὸς βεβώς;

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

ὦ τέκνον· εἶ γὰρ καὶ κακῶς πράσσω ἐμός.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

πράσσω δ' ἐγὼ τί λυπρὸν οὐ δακρυρροεῖς;

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

- 1115 ἂ κὰν θεῶν τις, εἰ μάθοι, καταστένοι.

1098 δ' Hermann: τ' L

HERACLES

my bow and feathered arrows, stout allies ere now to these arms of mine, allies who saved my skin while I took care of them. Surely I have not gone down to Hades again after coming back from there on the return leg of Eurystheus' errand? No, I do not see Sisyphus' rock nor Pluto nor yet the scepter of Persephone. I am utterly astonished. Where can I be that I am so perplexed?

Ho there! Who of my friends, nearby or at a distance, can cure my ignorance? For I do not recognize clearly any of my usual circumstances.

AMPHITRYON

Sirs, shall I approach my own calamity?

CHORUS LEADER

Yes, and I will go with you so as not to abandon you in misfortune.

HERACLES

Father, why do you weep and veil your eyes, standing far off from the son you love?

AMPHITRYON

My son: for even in misfortune you are mine!

HERACLES

What misfortune is mine, misfortune to make you weep?

AMPHITRYON

Things even a god, if he learned of them, would weep at.

1102 ἐξ Bothe: εἰς L

1104 Πλούτωνά τ'] οὐ δώματ' Wilamowitz

1110 προδῶ σὰς Lenting: προδῶς τὰς L

1115 εἰ μάθοι Paley: εἴπαθ οἱ L: εἰ πάθοι Scaliger

EURIPIDES

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

μέγας γ' ὁ κόμπος, τὴν τύχην δ' οὐπω λέγεις.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

1117 ὀρᾶς γὰρ αὐτός, εἰ φρονῶν ἤδη κυρεῖς.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1120 παπαῖ, τόδ' ὡς ὑποπτον ἤνιξω πάλιν.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

1121 καί σ' εἰ βεβαίως εὖ φρονεῖς ἤδη σκοπῶ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1118 εἴπ' εἴ τι καινὸν ὑπογράφη τῶμῳ βίῳ.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

1119 εἰ μηκέθ' Ἄιδου βάκχος εἶ, φράσαιμεν ἄν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1122 οὐ γάρ τι βακχεύσας γε μέμνημαι φρένας.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

λύσω, γέροντες, δεσμὰ παιδός; ἢ τί δρῶ;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

καὶ τόν γε δήσαντ' εἴπ'· ἀναινόμεσθα γάρ.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

1125 τοσοῦτον ἴσθι σῶν κακῶν, τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἔα.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἄρκει σιωπὴ γὰρ μαθεῖν ὃ βούλομαι;

1118-9 post 1121 trai. Nauck 1121 fort. βεβαίως <γ'>

1125 σῶν Diggle: τῶν L 1126 ὃ Heath: οὐ L

HERACLES

HERACLES

These are big words: but you have not yet said what is wrong.

AMPHITRYON

No, for you yourself see it, if you are now in your right mind.

HERACLES

Ah me! Yet another riddling response!

AMPHITRYON

I am examining you to see if you are now quite sane.

HERACLES

Tell me if you are hinting at some disastrous change in my life.

AMPHITRYON

I will tell you if you are no longer an infernal Bacchant.

HERACLES

I have no memory that my mind was crazed.

AMPHITRYON

Sirs, shall I loose my son's bonds? What shall I do?

HERACLES

Yes, and tell me who put them on me: I feel disgust at them.

AMPHITRYON

This much of your misfortunes should you know. The rest let be.

HERACLES

What? Is silence good enough to tell me what I would learn?

EURIPIDES

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

ὦ Ζεῦ, παρ' Ἥρας ἄρ' ὀρᾶς θρόνων τάδε;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἀλλ' ἦ τι κεῖθεν πολέμιον πεπόνθαμεν;

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

τὴν θεὸν ἔασας τὰ σὰ περιστέλλον κακά.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1130 ἀπωλόμεσθα· συμφορὰν λέξεις τινά.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

ιδού, θέασαι τάδε τέκνων πεσήματα.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οἴμοι· τίν' ὄψιν τήνδε δέρκομαι τάλας;

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

ἀπόλεμον, ὦ παῖ, πόλεμον ἔσπευσας τέκνοις.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

τί πόλεμον εἶπας; τούσδε τίς διώλεσεν;

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

1135 σὺ καὶ σὰ τόξα καὶ θεῶν ὃς αἴτιος.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

τί φῆς; τί δράσας; ὦ κάκ' ἀγγέλλων πάτερ.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

μανεῖς· ἐρωτᾶς δ' ἄθλι' ἐρμηνεύματα.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἦ καὶ δάμαρτός εἰμ' ἐγὼ φονεὺς ἐμῆς;

1130 λέξεις Brodaeus: ἔξεις L

HERACLES

AMPHITRYON

O Zeus, seated by the throne of Hera, do you see this?

HERACLES

Is it from that quarter then that I have been attacked?

AMPHITRYON

Let the goddess be and see to your own misfortune.

HERACLES

My life is over! It is some disaster you are going to tell me of!

AMPHITRYON

Look there and see the bodies of these children.

HERACLES

Alas! What is this sight that greets my unhappy eyes?

AMPHITRYON

A war that is no war have you waged against your children.

HERACLES

What do you mean "war"? Who killed them?

AMPHITRYON

You and your arrows and whatever god is responsible.

HERACLES

What do you mean? How? These are dread tidings you bring, father!

AMPHITRYON

In a fit of madness: the answers to your questions are full of woe.

HERACLES

Am I also the murderer of my wife?

EURIPIDES

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

μῆς ἅπαντα χειρὸς ἔργα σῆς τάδε.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1140 αἰαί· στεναγμῶν γάρ με περιβάλλει νέφος.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

1141 τούτων ἕκατι σὰς καταστένω τύχας.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1144 ποῦ δ' οἴστρος ἡμᾶς ἔλαβε; ποῦ διώλεσεν;

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

1145 ὅτ' ἀμφὶ βωμὸν χεῖρας ἠγνίζου πυρί.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1142 ἦ γὰρ συνήραξ' οἶκον ἀβάκχευς' ἐμόν;

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

1143 οὐκ οἶδα πλὴν ἔν· πάντα δυστυχεῖ τὰ σά.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1146 οἴμοι· τί δῆτα φείδομαι ψυχῆς ἐμῆς
τῶν φιλτάτων μοι γενόμενος παίδων φονεύς;
οὐκ εἶμι πέτρας λισσάδος πρὸς ἄλματα
ἢ φάσγανον πρὸς ἦπαρ ἐξακοντίσας

1150 τέκνοις δικαστῆς αἵματος γενήσομαι,
ἢ σάρκα τὴν πατρῶον ἐμπρήσας πυρὶ
δύσκειαν ἢ μένει μ' ἀπόσομαι βίου;
ἀλλ' ἐμποδῶν μοι θανασίμων βουλευμάτων

1144-5 ante 1142 trai. Wilamowitz

1142 ἀβάκχευς' Bond: ἢ βάκχευς' L

1148 οὐκ Elmsley: κοῦκ L 1151 πατρῶον Allen: ἐμὴν L

HERACLES

AMPHITRYON

All this is the work of your single hand.

HERACLES

Ah, ah! What a cloud of lamentation now surrounds me!

AMPHITRYON

It is for this reason that I lament your fate.

HERACLES

When did madness' sting attack me? When did it destroy my life?

AMPHITRYON

When you were next to the altar purifying your hands with the fire.

HERACLES

And did my Bacchic insanity destroy my house?

AMPHITRYON

I know only one thing: all your fortunes are in ruins.

HERACLES

Woe is me! Why then do I spare my life when I have become the murderer of my dear children? Shall I not go and leap from a sheer cliff or stab myself with my sword and thus give my children justice for their murder? Shall I not burn their father's flesh with fire and thrust from myself the ignominy that awaits me in my life?

Enter THESEUS by Eisodos B.

But here's an impediment to my plan of death, the

EURIPIDES

- Θησεὺς ὄδ' ἔρπει συγγενῆς φίλος τ' ἐμός·
 1155 ὀφθησόμεσθα, καὶ τεκνοκτόνον μύσος
 ἐς ὄμμαθ' ἤξει φιλάτω ξένων ἐμῶν.
 οἴμοι, τί δράσω; ποῖ κακῶν ἐρημίαν
 εὔρω, πτερωτὸς ἢ κατὰ χθονὸς μολῶν;
 φέρ', ἀμφὶ κρατὶ περιβάλω <πέπλων> σκότον.
 1160 αἰσχύνομαι γὰρ τοῖς δεδραμένοις κακοῖς,
 καὶ τῷδε προστρόπαιον αἷμα προσβαλὼν
 οὐδὲν κακῶσαι τοὺς ἀναιτίους θέλω.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

- ἦκω σὺν ἄλλοις, οἳ παρ' Ἄσωποῦ ροὰς
 μένουσιν, ἔνοπλοι γῆς Ἀθηναίων κόροι,
 1165 σῶ παιδί, πρέσβυ, σύμμαχον φέρων δόρυ.
 κληδὼν γὰρ ἦλθεν εἰς Ἐρεχθεῖδων πόλιν
 ὡς σκῆπτρα χώρας τῆσδ' ἀναρπάσας Λύκος
 ἐς πόλεμον ὑμῖν καὶ μάχην καθίσταται.
 τίνων δ' ἀμοιβὰς ὦν ὑπῆρξεν Ἡρακλῆς
 1170 σώσας με νέρθεν ἦλθον, εἴ τι δεῖ, γέρον,
 ἢ χειρὸς ὑμᾶς τῆς ἐμῆς ἢ συμμάχων.
 ἔα· τί νεκρῶν τῶνδε πληθῦει πέδον;
 οὗ που λέλειμμαί καὶ νεωτέρων κακῶν
 ὕστερος ἀφίγμαι; τίς τάδ' ἔκτεινεν τέκνα;
 1175 τίνος γεγῶσαν τήνδ' ὀρῶ ξυνάορον;
 οὐ γὰρ δορός γε παῖδες ἴστανται πέλας,
 ἀλλ' ἄλλο πού τι καινὸν εὐρίσκω κακόν.

1156 φιλάτῳ Reiske: -των L

HERACLES

arrival of Theseus, my friend and kinsman. He will see me, and the pollution for children murdered will taint the eyes of my dearest friend!³⁴ Ah, what am I to do? Where must I go to escape misfortune? Soar to high heaven or sink beneath the earth? Come, let me cast about my head the darkness <of my garments>! For I feel shame at the harm I have done, and I do not want to wrong an innocent man by putting on him the stain of bloodshed!

Heracles veils his head in his garments.

THESEUS

I have come to bring military might to help your son, old sir: my companions, young men of Athens under arms, are waiting by the banks of the Asopus. A report came to the city of the Erechtheids that Lycus has seized power in this city and was making war against you. I have come here to repay the good deed Heracles did to me when he rescued me from the Underworld, in case he has any need of my right hand or of allies.

But what is this? Why is the ground strewed with these corpses? Can it be that I have been outstripped and have come too late to prevent fresh disasters? Who killed these children? Whose wife is this I see here? Children do not stand in the line of battle. Rather it is some other new trouble I find here.

³⁴ It was thought that someone guilty of murder communicated a taint (*miasma*) to others who had contact with him.

1159 ἀμφὶ Faust: ἄν τι L <πέπλων> σκότον post Pflugk
(σκότον <πέπλων>) Diggle 1175 σφαγείσαν Broadhead
1177 πού τι Wilamowitz: τι που L

EURIPIDES

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

ὦ τὸν ἐλαιοφόρον ὄχθον ἔχων <ἄναξ> . . .

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τί χρῆμά μ' οἰκτροῖς ἐκάλεσας προοιμίους;

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

1180 . . . ἐπάθομεν πάθεα μέλεα πρὸς θεῶν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

οἱ παῖδες οἶδε τίνος ἐφ' οἷς δακρυρροεῖς;

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

1182 ἔτεκε μὲν <νιν> οὐμὸς ἱνις τάλας,

1184 τεκόμενος δ' ἔκανε, φόνιον αἷμα τλάς.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

1187 τί φῆς; τί δράσας;

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

μαιομένῳ πιτύλῳ πλαγχθεῖς

1188 ἑκατογκεφάλου βαφαῖς ὕδρας.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

1185 εὐφήμα φώνει.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

βουλομένοισιν ἐπαγγέλλη.

1178 <ἄναξ> Hermann

1181 τίνος Wecklein: τίνες L

1182 <νιν> Elmsley

1187-8 post 1184 trai. Dobree

HERACLES

AMPHITRYON³⁵

O <lord> of the hill that bears the olive . . .

THESEUS

Why do you address me in pitiable accents?

AMPHITRYON

. . . terrible are our sufferings at the hands of the gods!

THESEUS

Whose children are these for whom you weep?

AMPHITRYON

Their begetter was my ill-fated son,
and when he had begotten them he killed them and suffered the taint of their blood.

THESEUS

What are you saying? How?

AMPHITRYON

In his madness,
with arrows dipped in the hundred-headed hydra's blood.

THESEUS

Hush, say not such words of evil omen!

AMPHITRYON

How I wish I could
do what you ask!

³⁵ From here until line 1213 Amphitryon's words are sung.

EURIPIDES

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

1186 ὦ δεινὰ λέξας.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

οἰχόμεθ' οἰχόμεθα πτανοί.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

1189 Ἦρας ὄδ' ἀγών· τίς δ' ὄδ' οὖν νεκροῖς, γέρον;

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

1190 ἐμὸς ἐμὸς ὄδε γόνος ὁ πολύπονος, ὃς ἐπὶ
δόρυ γιγαντοφόνου ἦλθεν σὺν θεοῖ-
σι Φλεγραίου ἐς πεδίου ἀσπιστάς.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

1195 φεῦ φεῦ· τίς ἀνδρῶν ὧδε δυσδαίμων ἔφν;

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

οὐκ ἂν εἰδείης ἕτερον
πολυμοχθότερον πολυπλαγκτότερόν τε θνατῶν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τί γὰρ πέπλοισιν ἄθλιον κρύπτει κára;

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

1200 αἰδόμενος τὸ σὸν ὄμμα καὶ φιλίαν ὁμόφυλον
αἰμά τε παιδοφόνου.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ἄλλ' εἰ συναλγῶν γ' ἦλθον; ἐκκάλυπτέ νιν.

1189 δ' ὄδ' οὖν Reiske: δόλου L

1202 εἰ συναλγῶν γ' Wakefield (ὡς συναλγῶν γ') et Seidler:
εἰς συναλγοῦντ' L

HERACLES

THESEUS

What dreadful things you have said!

AMPHITRYON

We are lost and gone
our happiness has taken wing!

THESEUS

This is Hera's work. But who is this lying among the
corpses?

AMPHITRYON

This is my son, the man of many woes, who came
with the gods as a warrior to fight in the plain
of Phlegra where the Giants were killed.

THESEUS

Ah me! Who of mortal men was ever born to such wretch-
edness?

AMPHITRYON

You will never learn of another
among mortals more labored and driven than he.

THESEUS

But why does he cover his poor head with his garments?

AMPHITRYON

In shame before your face and the kinship he has to you
and the blood of his children slain.

THESEUS

But what if I have come to share his grief? Uncover his
head!

EURIPIDES

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

ὦ τέκνον,

πάρες ἀπ' ὀμμάτων πέπλον, ἀπόδικε, ῥέθος
αελίῳ δείξον.

1205 βάρος ἀντίπαλον δακρύοις συναμιλλᾶται
ἵκετεύομεν ἀμφὶ γενειάδα καὶ

γόνυ καὶ χέρα σὰν προπίτνων, πολίων

1210 δάκρνον ἐκβάλλων· ἰὼ παῖ, κατά-

σχεθε λέοντος ἀγρίου θυμόν, ᾧ

δρόμον ἐπὶ φόνιον ἀνόσιον ἐξάγη

κακὰ θέλων κακοῖς συνάψαι, τέκνον.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

εἶέν· σέ τὸν θάσσουντα δυστήνους ἔδρας

1215 αὐδῶ φίλοισιν ὄμμα δεικνύναι τὸ σόν.

οὐδεὶς σκότος γὰρ ᾧδ' ἔχει μέλαν νέφος
ὅστις κακῶν σῶν συμφορὰν κρύψειεν ἄν.

τί μοι προσείων χεῖρα σημαίνεις φόβον;

ὡς μὴ μύσος με σῶν βάλῃ προσφθεγμάτων;

1220 οὐδὲν μέλει μοι σὺν γε σοὶ πράσσειν κακῶς·

κεὶ γάρ ποτ' ἠτύχησ', ἐκεῖσ' ἀνοιστέον

ὅτ' ἐξέσωσάς μ' ἐς φάος νεκρῶν πάρα.

χάριν δὲ γηράσκουσαν ἐχθαίρω φίλων

1207-8 γενειάδα . . . χέρα σὰν Wilamowitz: σὰν γ- . . . χ- L

1209 πολίων Hartung: πολίων τε L

1210 ἐκβάλλων Wilamowitz: -βαλών L

1210-1 κατάσχεθε Elmsley: κάτασχε L

1211 ᾧ Schenkl: ὅπως L

1212 δρόμον Reiske: βρόμον L

HERACLES

AMPHITRYON

My son,
cast from your eyes your garment, throw it off, show
your face to the sun!

Amphitryon kneels before Heracles as a suppliant.

The weight of my body joins with my tears in contention:
I fall about your chin,
your knees, your hands, weeping dark
tears and entreating you: my son,
check the wild lion's proud spirit in your breast, the spirit
by which
you are carried on a course of bloodshed and impiety,
wishing to add new griefs to old.

Heracles keeps an obdurate silence.

THESEUS

Well, then. You, sitting in the seat of wretchedness, I bid
you show your face to your friends! No night can envelop
you in darkness so black that it could hide the blow of this
disaster. (*Heracles makes a sign for him to depart.*) Why do
you wave your hand at me to signify danger? For fear that
I may be tainted by words from your lips? It does not
matter to me if I join you in misfortune. For any good
fortune I have enjoyed must be traced back to the day
when you brought me up from the Underworld into the
light. I hate it when the gratitude owed to a friend grows

¹²¹⁸ φόβον Blomfield: φόνον L

¹²²¹ κεί Kirchhoff: καὶ L

EURIPIDES

- καὶ τῶν καλῶν μὲν ὅστις ἀπολαύειν θέλει,
 1225 συμπλεῖν δὲ τοῖς φίλοισι δυστυχοῦσιν οὐ.
 ἀνίστασ', ἐκκάλυψον ἄθλιον κἀρα,
 βλέψον πρὸς ἡμᾶς. ὅστις εὐγενῆς βροτῶν,
 φέρει †τὰ τῶν θεῶν γε† πτώματ' οὐδ' ἀναίνεται.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Θησεῦ, δέδορκας τόνδ' ἀγῶν' ἐμῶν τέκνων;

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

- 1230 ἤκουσα, καὶ βλέποντι σημαίνεις κακά.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

τί δήτά μου κρατ' ἀνεκάλυψας ἡλίω;

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τί δ'; οὐ μαιίνεις θνητὸς ὦν τὰ τῶν θεῶν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

φεῦγ', ὦ ταλαίπωρ', ἀνόσιον μίασμ' ἐμόν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

οὐδεὶς ἀλάστωρ τοῖς φίλοις ἐκ τῶν φίλων.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

- 1235 ἐπήνεσ'· εὖ δράσας δέ σ' οὐκ ἀναίνομαι.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ἐγὼ δὲ πάσχω εὖ τότ' οἰκτίρω σε νῦν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οἰκτρὸς γάρ εἰμι τᾶμ' ἀποκτείνας τέκνα;

¹²²⁸ τὰ γ' ἐκ θεῶν Headlam: e contextu autem vv. 1220-6 φίλων γε vel συνηθέων expectāres: τὰ θνητῶν West

HERACLES

old and weak, hate it when a man is willing to share in happy moments but not to voyage with friends in misfortune. Stand up, uncover your luckless head, look at me! Any mortal who is noble bears his friends' misfortunes and does not reject them.

Heracles unveils his face.

HERACLES

Theseus, do you see the struggle my children have undergone?

THESEUS

I have heard the report, and now you reveal the disaster to my eyes.

HERACLES

Why then did you unveil my head to the sun?

THESEUS

Why? You, a mortal, cannot pollute the divine realm.

HERACLES

Flee, poor man, from this unholy taint of mine!

THESEUS

No spirit of divine vengeance attacks a friend because of those he befriends.

HERACLES

I thank you: since I am your benefactor I do not refuse your aid.

THESEUS

And I give you my pity now, I whom you once helped.

HERACLES

Is it pity I deserve for killing my sons?

EURIPIDES

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

κλαίω χάριν σὴν ἐφ' ἑτέροισι συμφοραῖς.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἡῦρες δέ γ' ἄλλους ἐν κακοῖσι μείζουσιν;

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

1240 ἄπτη κάτωθεν οὐρανοῦ δυσπραξία.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

τοιγὰρ παρεσκευάσμεθ' ὥστε καταθανεῖν.

<ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τί δῆτ' ἔχouis ἄν, εἰ τόδ' ἔρξειας, πλέον;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

τοῖς θεῶν ἀθίκοις ἐμβάλῳ βωμοῖς μύσος.>

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

δοκεῖς ἀπειλῶν σῶν μέλειν τι δαίμοσιν;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

αὐθαδες ὁ θεός, πρὸς δὲ τοὺς θεοὺς ἐγώ.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ἴσχε στόμ', ὡς μὴ μέγα λέγων μείζον πάθης.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1245 γέμω κακῶν δὴ κούκέτ' ἔσθ' ὄπη τεθῆ.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

δράσεις δὲ δὴ τί; ποῖ φέρῃ θυμούμενος;

¹²⁴¹ lac. post h. v. indic. W. Schmid: nulla lac. indicata καὶ
θενεῖν pro καταθανεῖν Harry

HERACLES

THESEUS

I weep that your goodness is so ill repaid.

HERACLES

Have you seen others in greater misfortune than mine?

THESEUS

In your misfortune you reach from earth all the way to heaven.

HERACLES

And therefore I have prepared myself to die.

<THESEUS

What advantage will you get if you do that?

HERACLES

I will defile with my blood the hallowed altars of the gods.>³⁶

THESEUS

Do you think the powers above care for your threats?

HERACLES

Heaven pleases itself: in the teeth of heaven I do the same.

THESEUS

Hush! Your proud words could bring you worse disaster!

HERACLES

With disaster I am freighted full: there is no place to put more.

THESEUS

But what do you mean to do? Where will your wrath carry you?

³⁶ If there is a lacuna here, only some such threat would explain Theseus' next line.

EURIPIDES

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

θανών, ὅθενπερ ἦλθον, εἶμι γῆς ὕπο.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

εἴρηκας ἐπιτυχόντος ἀνθρώπου λόγους.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

σὺ δ' ἐκτὸς ὦν γε συμφορᾶς με νουθετεῖς.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

1250 ὁ πολλὰ δὴ τλᾶς Ἡρακλῆς λέγει τάδε;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὔκουν τοσαῦτά γ' ἐν μέτρῳ μοχθητέον.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

εὐεργέτης βροτοῖσι καὶ μέγας φίλος;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οἱ δ' οὐδὲν ὠφελουσί μ', ἀλλ' Ἥρα κρατεῖ.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

οὐκ ἂν σ' ἀνάσχοιθ' Ἑλλὰς ἀμαθία θανεῖν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1255 ἄκουε δὴ νυν, ὡς ἀμιλληθῶ λόγοις
πρὸς νουθετήσεις σάς· ἀναπτύξω δέ σοι
ἀβίωτον ἡμῖν νῦν τε καὶ πάροιθεν ὄν.

πρῶτον μὲν ἐκ τοῦδ' ἐγενόμην, ὅστις κτανὼν
μητρὸς γεραῖον πατέρα προστρόπαιος ὦν

1260 ἔγγημε τὴν τεκοῦσαν Ἀλκμήνην ἐμέ.
ὅταν δὲ κρηπίς μὴ καταβληθῆ γένους

¹²⁵¹ ἐν Hermann: εἰ L

HERACLES

HERACLES

I mean to die and to return to the Underworld from which I have just come.

THESEUS

This is spoken like some ordinary person.

HERACLES

You give me advice, untouched by grief yourself.

THESEUS

Is this Heracles the all-enduring who speaks?

HERACLES

This much I have *not* endured: there must be a limit to suffering.

THESEUS

Is this humanity's great benefactor and friend?

HERACLES

Humanity can do nothing for me: Hera is in control.

THESEUS

Greece will not put up with your dying in folly.

HERACLES

Listen then so that I may reply to your admonitions. I shall demonstrate to you that my life, both now and of old, is not worth living.

First my origins: my father had killed the old father of my mother, Alcmena, and was guilty of bloodshed at the time he married her. When the foundation of a family is

1256 *νουθηήσεις* Pierson: *νουθεσίας* L

EURIPIDES

- ὀρθῶς, ἀνάγκη δυστυχεῖν τοὺς ἐγγόνους.
 Ζεὺς δ', ὅστις ὁ Ζεὺς, πολέμιόν μ' ἐγείνατο
 Ἥρα (σὺ μέντοι μηδὲν ἀχθεσθῆς, γέρον·
 1265 πατέρα γὰρ ἀντὶ Ζηνὸς ἠγοῦμαι σ' ἐγώ),
 ἔτ' ἐν γάλακτί τ' ὄντι γοργωποὺς ὄφεις
 ἐπεισέφρησε σπαργάνοισι τοῖς ἐμοῖς
 ἢ τοῦ Διὸς σύλλεκτρος, ὡς ὀλοίμεθα.
 ἐπεὶ δὲ σαρκὸς περιβόλαι' ἐκτησάμην
 1270 ἠβῶντα, μόχθους οὓς ἔτλην τί δεῖ λέγειν;
 ποίους ποτ' ἢ λέοντας ἢ τρισωμάτους
 Τυφῶνας ἢ Γίγαντας ἢ τετρασκελή
 κενταυροπληθῆ πόλεμον οὐκ ἐξήνυσσα;
 τήν τ' ἀμφίκρανον καὶ παλιμβλαστῆ κύνα
 1275 ὕδραν φονεύσας μυρίων τ' ἄλλων πόνων
 διήλθον ἀγέλας κὰς νεκροὺς ἀφικόμην,
 Ἄιδου πυλωρὸν κύνα τρίκρανον ἐς φάος
 ὅπως πορεύσασιν ἐντολαῖς Εὐρυσθέως.
 τὸν λοίσθιον δὲ τόνδ' ἔτλην τάλας πόνον,
 1280 παιδοκτονήσας δῶμα θριγκῶσαι κακοῖς.
 ἤκω δ' ἀνάγκης ἐς τόδ'· οὐτ' ἐμαῖς φίλαις
 Θήβαις ἐνοικεῖν ὄσιον ἦν δὲ καὶ μένω,
 ἐς ποῖον ἱερὸν ἢ πανήγυριν φίλων
 εἶμ'; οὐ γὰρ ἄτας εὐπροσηγόρους ἔχω.
 1285 ἀλλ' Ἄργος ἔλθω; πῶς, ἐπεὶ φεύγω πάτραν;
 φέρ' ἀλλ' ἐς ἄλλην δὴ τιν' ὀρμήσω πόλιν,
 κᾶπειθ' ὑποβλεπώμεθ' ὡς ἐγνωσμένοι,
 γλώσσης πικροῖς κέντροισι †κληδουχοῦμενοι†;
 Οὐχ οὗτος ὁ Διός, ὃς τέκν' ἐκτεινέν ποτε

HERACLES

not laid straight, the descendants are fated to suffer ill fortune. Then Zeus—whoever Zeus is—begot me as an object of Hera's hatred (no, old sir, do not take offense: I regard you, not Zeus, as my father), and while I was still a suckling babe in swaddling clothes Zeus's wife sent fierce serpents to destroy me. But what need to mention all the labors I endured once the firm muscles of youth had clothed my young body? What lions, what three-bodied Typhons, what Giants did I not slay, what throngs of four-legged Centaurs did I not make war against? I killed the beast whose many heads on all sides grow back again, the hydra, and when I had undergone throngs of countless other labors I went down to the dead to fetch Hades' gatekeeper, the three-headed dog, up to the light in obedience to the commands of Eurystheus.

But the last labor I endured was this, to kill my children and put the capstone of disaster upon my house. This is the hard compulsion into which I have come: I cannot live in my beloved Thebes without committing impiety; and if I do stay, what temple can I enter, what gathering of friends may I join? For the ruin I have about me is one with no lovely name. Shall I then go to Argos? It cannot be: I am in exile from my country. But shall I then set off for some other city? And after this shall I be looked at askance as infamous, kept in check by the painful barbs of people's tongues? "Is this not the son of Zeus, who once killed his

1272 *τετρασκελή* Reiske: *-είς* L

1279 *πόνον* Reiske: *φόνον* L

1283 *φίλων*] *θεῶν* F. W. Schmidt

1287 *κεχρωσμένοι* Herwerden

1288 *κηλιδούμενοι* Hermann: v. *delere paene malit* West

EURIPIDES

- 1290 δάμαρτά τ'; οὐ γῆς τῆσδ' ἀποφθαρῆσεται;
 [κεκλημένῳ δὲ φωτὶ μακαρίῳ ποτὲ
 αἱ μεταβολαὶ λυπηρόν· ᾧ δ' αἰεὶ κακῶς
 ἔστ', οὐδὲν ἀλγεῖ συγγενῶς δύστηνος ὢν.]
 ἐς τοῦτο δ' ἤξειν συμφορᾶς οἰμαί ποτε·
- 1295 φωνὴν γὰρ ἤσει χθὼν ἀπεννέπουσά με
 μὴ θιγγάνειν γῆς καὶ θάλασσα μὴ περᾶν
 πηγαί τε ποταμῶν, καὶ τὸν ἄρματήλατον
 Ἰξίον' ἐν δεσμοῖσιν ἐκμιμήσομαι.
 [καὶ ταῦτ' ἄριστα, μηδέν' Ἑλλήνων μ' ὄραν,
 1300 ἐν οἷσιν εὐτυχοῦντες ἡμεῖν ὄλβιοι.]
 τί δητά με ζῆν δεῖ; τί κέρδος ἔξομεν
 βίον γ' ἀχρεῖον ἀνόσιον κεκτημένοι;
 χορευέτω δὴ Ζηνὸς ἢ κλεινὴ δάμαρ
 κρούουσ' Ὀλύμπου δῖον ἀρβύλη πέδον.
- 1305 ἔπραξε γὰρ βούλησιν ἦν ἐβούλετο
 ἄνδρ' Ἑλλάδος τὸν πρῶτον αὐτοῖσιν βάθροισι
 ἄνω κάτω στρέψασα. τοιαύτη θεῶ
 τίς ἂν προσεύχοιθ'; ἢ γυναικὸς οὐνεκα
 λέκτρων φθονοῦσα Ζηνὶ τοὺς εὐεργέτας
- 1310 Ἑλλάδος ἀπώλεσ' οὐδὲν ὄντας αἰτίους.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλου δαιμόνων ἀγῶν ὅδε
 ἢ τῆς Διὸς δάμαρτος· εὖ τόδ' αἰσθάνη.
 <ἀλλ' εἰ θανεῖν δεῖ τῶνδ' ἕκατι χρῆ σκοπεῖν·

1291-3 del. Wilamowitz

1299-1300 del. Wilamowitz

HERACLES

wife and his children? Will he not clear off from this country?" [For a man who has once borne the name of fortunate, change is painful. The man whose life has been always bad feels no pain since he is innately wretched.]

I think that one day my misfortunes will reach this point: the earth will break into speech forbidding me to touch the ground, and the sea and the streams of rivers will forbid me to cross them, and I shall be like Ixion in chains, turned upon his wheel.³⁷ [It is best that none of the Greeks see me where I once enjoyed good fortune.] Why then should I live? What advantage shall I have if I possess an accursed and useless life? So let Zeus's glorious wife dance for joy, striking the bright floor of Olympus with her slipper! She has brought to fulfilment the desire she conceived and has utterly overturned, foundations and all, the best man in Greece! To such a goddess what man would offer prayer? Because she felt grudging ill will toward Zeus for his love of a mortal woman, she destroyed a man who had benefited Greece, though he was guiltless.

THESEUS

The contest we see here was with no other power than Hera, Zeus's wife. You have marked this well. <But you should consider whether you must die on this account.

³⁷ Ixion was the first to shed kindred blood and also attempted to rape Hera. His punishment in the Underworld is to be bound upon a wheel.

1304 Ὀλύμπου Heath: Ὀλυμπίου L δῖον Nauck: Ζηνὸς
L πέδον Brodaeus: πόδα L
1313 ante h. v. lac. indic. Victorius

EURIPIDES

- ἀκήρατον γὰρ εἰ βροτοῖς ἄγειν βίον
 θεοὶ διδοῖεν, σοὶ μόνῳ δ' ἐφθαρμένον,
 διεργάσασθαι σαυτὸν οὐκ ἐς ἀμβολὰς >
 παραινέσαιμ' ἂν μᾶλλον ἢ πάσχειν κακῶς.
 οὐδεῖς δὲ θνητῶν ταῖς τύχαις ἀκήρατος,
 1315 οὐ θεῶν, αἰοιδῶν εἶπερ οὐ ψευδεῖς λόγοι.
 οὐ λέκτρ' ἐν ἀλλήλοισιν, ὧν οὐδεῖς νόμος,
 συνῆψαν; οὐ δεσμοῖσι διὰ τυραννίδα
 πατέρας ἐκηλίδωσαν; ἀλλ' οἰκοῦσ' ὅμως
 Ὕλυμπον ἠνέσχοντό θ' ἡμαρτηκότες.
 1320 καίτοι τί φήσεις, εἰ σὺ μὲν θνητὸς γεγῶς
 φέρεις ὑπέρφεν τὰς τύχας, θεοὶ δὲ μή;
 Θήβας μὲν οὖν ἔκλειπε τοῦ νόμου χάριν,
 ἔπου δ' ἄμ' ἡμῖν πρὸς πόλισμα Παλλάδος.
 ἐκεῖ χέρας σὰς ἀγνίστας μιάσματος
 1325 δόμους τε δώσω χρημάτων τ' ἐμῶν μέρος.
 ἂ δ' ἐκ πολιτῶν δῶρ' ἔχω σώσας κόρους
 δις ἐπτά, ταῦρον Κνώσιον κατακτανῶν,
 σοὶ ταῦτα δώσω. πανταχοῦ δέ μοι χθονὸς
 τεμένη δέδασται· ταῦτ' ἐπωνομασμένα
 1330 σέθεν τὸ λοιπὸν ἐκ βροτῶν κεκλήσεται
 ζῶντος· θανόντα δ', εὖτ' ἂν εἰς Ἄιδου μόλῃς,
 θυσίαισι λαίνοισί τ' ἐξογκώμασιν
 τίμιον ἀνάξει πᾶσ' Ἀθηναίων πόλις.
 καλὸς γὰρ ἀστοῖς στέφανος Ἑλληνῶν ὑπο
 1316 λέκτρ' ἐν Lobeck: λέκτρα τ' L 1317 τυραννίδα Do-
 bree: -ίδας L 1321 στέρεις Musgrave: fort. ψέγεις
 1331 θανόντα Dobree: -τος L

HERACLES

Now if the gods allowed mortals to live lives untouched and to you alone they gave a tainted existence, > I would advise you <to die at once> rather than to suffer ill treatment. But no mortal is untainted by fortune, and no god either, if the poets' stories are true. Have they not lain with each other in unlawful unions?³⁸ Have they not dishonored their fathers with chains in order to become king?³⁹ But for all that they continue to live on Olympus and endure their sinful state. But what will your defense be if you, a mortal, find fault so excessively with your fortune while the gods do not?

For the law's sake, then, leave Thebes and come with me to the citadel of Pallas Athena. There I shall cleanse your hands from this taint and give you a home and a portion of my wealth. I shall give you the gifts I received from my fellow citizens for killing the bull of Knossos and saving the lives of the fourteen children.⁴⁰ All about the country allotments of land have been given to me. Mortals will henceforth call these yours for as long as you live. And when you die and go to the Underworld, the whole city of Athens will honor you with sacrifices and with massive temples of stone. For it will be a glorious achievement for

³⁸ Most divine amours involve mortals, and in these the gods do not commit adultery "with each other." But Theseus may have in mind Ares' adultery with Aphrodite (*Odyssey* 8.266-366).

³⁹ Kronos, Zeus's father, was dethroned by him and put in chains.

⁴⁰ Minos had demanded a yearly tribute of seven boys and seven girls to be given to the Minotaur. One of Theseus' first exploits was to volunteer to be one of the seven boys in order to kill the monster.

EURIPIDES

- 1335 ἄνδρ' ἐσθλὸν ὠφελούντας εὐκλείας τυχεῖν.
 κὰγὼ χάριν σοι τῆς ἐμῆς σωτηρίας
 τήνδ' ἀντιδώσω· νῦν γὰρ εἶ χρεῖος φίλων.
 [θεοὶ δ' ὅταν τιμῶσιν, οὐδὲν δεῖ φίλων·
 ἄλλισ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ὠφελῶν, ὅταν θέλῃ.]

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

- 1340 οἴμοι· πάρεργα <μὲν> τάδ' ἔστ' ἐμῶν κακῶν,
 ἐγὼ δὲ τοὺς θεοὺς οὔτε λέκτρ' ἂ μὴ θέμις
 στέργειν νομίζω δεσμά τ' ἐξάπτειν χεροῖν
 οὔτ' ἠξιώσα πώποτ' οὔτε πείσομαι
 οὐδ' ἄλλον ἄλλου δεσπότην πεφυκέναι.
- 1345 δεῖται γὰρ ὁ θεός, εἶπερ ἔστ' ὀρθῶς θεός,
 οὐδενός· αἰοιδῶν οἶδε δύστηνοι λόγοι.
 ἔσκεψάμην δὲ καίπερ ἐν κακοῖσιν ὦν,
 μὴ δειλίαν ὄφλω τιν' ἐκλιπῶν φάος·
 ταῖς συμφοραῖς γὰρ ὅστις οὐχ ὑφίσταται
- 1350 οὐδ' ἀνδρὸς ἂν δύναιθ' ὑποστῆναι βέλος
 ἐγκαρτερήσας θάνατον· εἶμι δ' ἐς πόλιν
 τὴν σὴν, χάριν τε μυρίαν δῶρων ἔχω.
 ἀτὰρ πόνων δὴ μυρίων ἐγευσάμην,
 ὦν οὔτ' ἀπέειπον οὐδέν' οὔτ' ἀπ' ὀμμάτων
- 1355 ἔσταξα πηγᾶς, οὐδ' ἂν ὀμόμην ποτὲ
 ἐς τοῦθ' ἰκέσθαι, δάκρυ' ἀπ' ὀμμάτων βαλεῖν.
 νῦν δ', ὡς ἔοικε, τῇ τύχῃ δουλευτέον.

1338-9 del. Nauck 1340 <μὲν> ed. Brubach.

1346 δυστήνων Naber

1351 ἐγκαρτερήσας Kirchhoff: -ήσω L, quo accepto βίοντον
 pro θάνατον Wecklein, πότμον Heimsoeth

1352 μυρίαν Wakefield: μυρίων L

HERACLES

the citizens in the eyes of Greece to win fair renown by doing good service to a noble hero. And this will also be my repayment to you for saving my life: for at present you stand in need of friends. [When the gods honor us, we do not need friends. The help of a god, when he wants to give it, is enough.]

HERACLES

Ah me! This is, to be sure, a diversion from my misfortunes, but I do not think, have never believed, and will never be convinced that the gods have illicit love affairs or bind each other with chains or that one is master of another. A god, if he is truly a god, needs nothing. These are the wretched tales of the poets.⁴¹

But in my misfortune I have taken thought that I may not deserve the name of coward by dying. The man who does not withstand misfortune could not withstand the weapon of a human foe, braving death. I will go to your city, and I feel immense gratitude for your gifts. Yet countless were the labors I have had. Not a single one have I shirked, nor did my eyes weep. I did not think it would ever come to this, that I should shed tears. But now, it seems, I must be the slave of circumstance.

⁴¹ Heracles' words seem to echo the radical critique of Olympian polytheism made by the Ionian philosopher Xenophanes, who criticized the anthropomorphic conception of the gods and recommended a purely spiritual one. Such a view, however, contradicts the premises of the play, for it is Hera's jealousy that destroys Heracles. Indeed Heracles reverts to the mythical view of his fate at the end of the speech (1392-3; cf. 1263-8, 1303-10).

EURIPIDES

- εἶέν· γεραιέ, τὰς ἐμὰς φυγὰς ὄρᾱς,
 ὄρᾱς δὲ παίδων ὄντα μ' αὐθέντην ἐμῶν·
 1360 δὸς τούσδε τύμβῳ καὶ περίστειλον νεκροὺς
 δακρύνουσι τιμῶν (ἐμὲ γὰρ οὐκ ἔᾱ νόμος)
 πρὸς στέρν' ἐρείσας μητρὶ δούς τ' ἐς ἀγκάλας,
 κοινωνίαν δύστηνον, ἣν ἐγὼ τάλας
 διώλεσ' ἄκων. γῆ δ' ἐπὴν κρύψῃς νεκρούς,
 1365 οἴκει πόλιν τήνδ' ἀθλίως μὲν ἀλλ' ὅμως
 [ψυχὴν βιάζου τὰμὰ συμφέρειν κακά].
 ὦ τέκν', ὁ φύσας καὶ τεκῶν ὑμᾶς πατῆρ
 ἀπώλεσ', οὐδ' ὄνασθε τῶν ἐμῶν καλῶν,
 ἀγὼ παρεσκευάζον ἐκμοχθῶν βίου
 1370 εὐκλειαν ὑμῖν, πατὴρ ἀπόλαυσιν καλήν.
 σέ τ' οὐχ ὁμοίως, ὦ τάλαιν', ἀπώλεσα
 ὥσπερ σὺ τὰμὰ λέκτρ' ἔσφζες ἀσφαλῶς,
 μακρὰς διαντλοῦσ' ἐν δόμοις οἰκουρίας.
 οἴμοι δάμαρτος καὶ τέκνων, οἴμοι δ' ἐμοῦ,
 1375 ὡς ἀθλίως πέπραγα κάποζεύγνυμαι
 τέκνων γυναικός τ'· ὦ λυγραὶ φιλημάτων
 τέρψεις, λυγραὶ δὲ τῶνδ' ὄπλων κοινωνίαι.
 ἀμηχανῶ γὰρ πότερ' ἔχω τάδ' ἢ μεθῶ,
 ἂ πλεურὰ τὰμὰ προσπίτνοντ' ἐρεῖ τάδε·
 1380 Ἐμῖν τέκν' εἶλες καὶ δάμαρθ'· ἡμᾶς ἔχεις
 παιδοκτόνους σούς. εἴτ' ἐγὼ τάδ' ὠλέναις
 οἴσω; τί φάσκων; ἀλλὰ γυμνωθεὶς ὄπλων
 ξὺν οἷς τὰ κάλλιστ' ἐξέπραξ' ἐν Ἑλλάδι

HERACLES

So. Old father, you see that I am in exile, and that I am my own children's murderer. Give them a burial and the proper clothes, honor them with your tears (for by law I may not do so) and put them in their mother's embrace against her breast in a fellowship of misfortune, the mother I killed, unhappy man that I am, unwittingly. When you have buried them, continue to live in this city: it will be unhappy for you but do it still. [Force your soul to bear my misfortunes.]

My children, the father who begot you has killed you. You did not reap the benefit—a lovely reaping it would have been from a father—of my glorious deeds, deeds meant to work a life of glory for you. And you, dear wife, how different was my destruction of you from your faithful keeping of my marriage bed as you watched over the house in my long absence!

Alas for my wife and my children, but alas for myself, for my unhappy state, my wretched separation from my children and my wife! How painful the pleasure of kissing you, how painful that I still have about me these weapons! I do not know whether I should keep them or let them go, since they will hang at my flanks and say to me, "By means of us you killed your children and your wife: us, the slayers of your children, you still keep." Shall I then carry them on my arm? What will be my plea? Or shall I strip myself of the weapons with whose aid I performed my glorious exploits in Greece, put myself at the mercy of my enemies,

1363 fort. οὖς 1366 del. Nauck

1367 καὶ Nauck: χῶ L

1369 βίου Dobree: βία L

EURIPIDES

1385 ἐχθροῖς ἔμαντὸν ὑποβαλὼν αἰσχυρῶς θάνω;
οὐ λειπτέον τάδ', ἀθλίως δὲ σωστέον.

ἔν μοί τι, Θησεῦ, σύγκαμ' ἀγρίου κυνὸς
κόμιστρ' ἐς Ἄργος συγκατάσθησον μολῶν,
λύπη τι παίδων μὴ πάθω μονούμενος.

1390 ὦ γαῖα Κάδμου πᾶς τε Θηβαῖος λεώς,
κείρασθε, συμπενήθησατ', ἔλθετ' ἐς τάφον
παίδων· ἅπαντας δ' ἐνὶ λόγῳ πενήθησετε
νεκρούς τε κἀμέ· πάντες ἐξολώλαμεν
Ἥρας μιᾷ πληγέντες ἄθλιοι τύχη.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ἀνίστασ', ὦ δύστηνε· δακρύων ἄλις.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1395 οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην· ἄρθρα γὰρ πέπηγέ μου.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

καὶ τοὺς σθένοντας γὰρ καθαιροῦσιν τύχαι.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

φεῦ·

αὐτοῦ γενοίμην πέτρος ἀμνήμων κακῶν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

παῦσαι· δίδου δὲ χεῖρ' ὑπηρέτη φίλῳ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἄλλ' αἶμα μὴ σοῖς ἐξομόρξωμαι πέπλοις.

1386 ἀγρίου Wakefield: ἀθλίου L

1391 ἅπαντας Hermann: -ες L πενήθησετε Murray: -
σατε L

HERACLES

and thus meet a disgraceful death? I must not let them go but must in misery keep them.

Do me one service, Theseus: come and help me to bring the savage dog back to Argos so that I may not, in grief for the children, suffer some misfortune in my loneliness.

O land of Cadmus and all you people of Thebes, cut your hair in mourning with me, attend the burial of my children! For all of us at once will you mourn, for the dead and for me! We have all been miserably destroyed struck down by a single blow from Hera.

THESEUS

Get up, unhappy man: enough of weeping!

HERACLES

I cannot: my joints are frozen fast.

THESEUS

Yes, for even the mighty are brought low by misfortune.

HERACLES

Ah! How I wish I might here and now become a rock, insensible of calamity!

THESEUS

No more! Give your hand to your friend who would serve you.

HERACLES

But let me not wipe blood off upon your garments.

1393 ἄθλιοι Nauck: ἀθλίω L

1394 δακρύων Nauck: δ- δ' L

EURIPIDES

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

1400 ἔκμασσε, φείδου μηδέν· οὐκ ἀναίνομαι.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

παίδων στερηθεῖς παῖδ' ὅπως ἔχω σ' ἐμόν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

δίδου δέρη σὴν χεῖρ', ὀδηγήσω δ' ἐγώ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ζεύγός γε φίλιον· ἄτερος δὲ δυστυχής.
ὦ πρέσβυ, τοιόνδ' ἄνδρα χρῆ κτᾶσθαι φίλον.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

1405 ἦ γὰρ τεκοῦσα τόνδε πατρὶς εὐτεκνος.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Θησεῦ, πάλιν με στρέψου ὡς ἴδω τέκνα.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ὡς δὴ τί; φίλτρον τοῦτ' ἔχων ῥάων ἔση;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ποθῶ, πατρός τε στέρνα προσθέσθαι θέλω.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

ἴδου τάδ', ὦ παῖ· τὰμὰ γὰρ σπεύδεις φίλα.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

1410 οὕτω πόνων σῶν οὐκέτι μνήμην ἔχεις;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἅπαντ' ἐλάσσω κείνα τῶνδ' ἔτλην κακά.

¹⁴⁰³ post h. v. lac. unius v. indic. Wilamowitz

HERACLES

THESEUS

Wipe it off, do not spare me! I feel no disgust.

HERACLES

Having lost my sons, I regard you as my son.

THESEUS

Put your arm about my neck and I shall lead the way.

HERACLES

Two friends in harness, one of them in ruin. Old father, such is the friend one ought to make.

AMPHITRYON

Yes: the land that bore him breeds good offspring.

HERACLES

Turn me about again, Theseus, so that I may see my children.

THESEUS

What for? Will having this token of love make you easier?

HERACLES

That is what I long for. I also want to embrace my father.

AMPHITRYON

(embracing him) Here is what you ask for. What you wish I wish too.

THESEUS

Are you so forgetful of your labors?

HERACLES

All their misery is less than my present woe.

¹⁴⁰⁸ τε Musgrave: γε L

¹⁴¹⁰⁻⁷ suspectos habet Diggle, post 1253 trai. Bond

EURIPIDES

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

εἴ σ' ὄψεται τις θῆλυν ὄντ' οὐκ αἰνέσει.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ζῶ σοι ταπεινός; ἀλλὰ πρόσθεν οὐ δοκῶ.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ἄγαν γ' ὁ κλεινὸς Ἡρακλῆς οὐκ εἶ νοσῶν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1415 σὺ ποῖος ἦσθα νέρθεν ἐν κακοῖσιν ὦν;

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ὡς ἐς τὸ λῆμα παντὸς ἦν ἥσσω ἀνῆρ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

πῶς οὖν ἔτ' εἴπης† ὅτι συνέσταλμαι κακοῖς;

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

πρόβαινε.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

χαῖρ', ὦ πρέσβυ.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

καὶ σύ μοι, τέκνον.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

θάφθ' ὡσπερ εἶπον παῖδας.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

ἐμὲ δὲ τίς, τέκνον;

¹⁴¹³ πρόσθεν οὐ Jacobs: προσθεῖναι L

¹⁴¹⁴ οὐκ εἶ νοσῶν Wilamowitz: ποῦ κείνος ὦν L

HERACLES

THESEUS

If someone sees you being womanish, he will disapprove.

HERACLES

Is my life a lowly one in your eyes? It was not so before, I think.

THESEUS

Lowly indeed. In your trouble you are not the famous Heracles.

HERACLES

And what was your behavior when you were in trouble in the Underworld?

THESEUS

In pride I was every man's inferior.

HERACLES

How then can you say that I am humbled by misfortune?

THESEUS

March on!

HERACLES

Farewell, old father!

AMPHITRYON

Farewell to you, my son!

HERACLES

Bury my children, as I asked you.

AMPHITRYON

But who will bury me?

EURIPIDES

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1420 ἐγώ.

ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

πότ' ἐλθών;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἤνικ' ἂν θάνης, πάτερ.

[ΑΜΦΙΤΡΥΩΝ

πῶς;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

εἰς Ἀθήνας πέμφομαι Θηβῶν ἄπο.]

ἀλλ' ἐσκόμιζε τέκνα δυσκόμιστ' ἄχη

ἡμεῖς δ' ἀναλώσαντες αἰσχύναις δόμον

Θησεῖ πανώλεις ἐψόμεσθ' ἐφολκίδες.

1425 ὅστις δὲ πλοῦτον ἢ σθένος μᾶλλον φίλων
ἀγαθῶν πεπᾶσθαι βούλεται, κακῶς φρονεῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στείχομεν οἰκτροὶ καὶ πολύκλαυτοι,

τὰ μέγιστα φίλων ὀλέσαντες.

1420 θάνης, πάτερ Bond (θάνης) et Diggle: θάψης τέκνα L

1421 del. Diggle (1419-21 iam del. Conradt, fort. recte)

1422 δυσκόμιστ' ἄχη Wilamowitz: δυσκόμιστα γῆ L

HERACLES

HERACLES

I will.

AMPHITRYON

When will you return?

HERACLES

After your death.

[AMPHITRYON

How?

HERACLES

I shall have your remains brought from Thebes to Athens.]
Convey the children indoors, then, though they are a grief
hard to convey. I, who have destroyed my house in shame,
will in my utter misery follow Theseus like a boat under
tow. Whoever desires to get wealth or strength rather than
good friends is a fool.

The eccyclema wheels the bodies of Megara and the children back into the house. Exit HERACLES and THESEUS by Eisodos B and AMPHITRYON into the house.

CHORUS LEADER

We go now with pity and in tears: we have lost our greatest friend.

Exit CHORUS by Eisodos A.