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Sophocles
SOPHOCLES

II
SOPHOCLES

WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY
F. STORR, B.A.
FORMERLY SCHOLAR OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

IN TWO VOLUMES

II

AJAX
ELECTRA TRACHINIAE
PHILOCTETES

LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN
NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN CO.
MCMXIII
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AJAX
ARGUMENT

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

ΑΘΗΝΑ
ΟΔΤΣΕΤΕ
ΑΙΑΣ
ΧΟΡΟΣ ΖΑΛΑΜΙΝΙΩΝ ΝΑΤΤΩΝ
ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ
ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ATHENA.

ODYSSEUS, King of Ithaca.

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

TECMESSA, his captive wife, daughter of Teluntas, King of Phrygia.

EURYSACES, their infant son.

TEUCER, son of Telamon by Hesione.

MENELAUS, King of Sparta.

AGAMEMNON, his brother, captain of the host.

MESSENGER, one of Ajax's men.

CHORUS, Mariners of Salamis.

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

'Αει μέν, ὦ παῖ Δαρτίου, δέδορκά σε πειράν τιν' ἐχθρῶν ἀρπάσαι θηρώμενον· καὶ νῦν ἐπὶ σκηναῖς σε ναυτικαῖς ὄρῳ Ἀἰαντος, ἔνθα τάξιν ἐσχάτην ἔχει, πάλαι κυνηγητοῦντα καὶ μετρούμενον ἵχνη τὰ κείνου νεοχάραχθ', ὅπως ἴδης εἰτ' ἐνδον εἰτ' ὄψι ἐνδον. εὐ δὲ σ' ἐκφέρει κυνὸς Δακαίνης ὡς τὸς εὐρυνος βάσις. ἐνδον γὰρ ἀνὴρ ἀρτί τυγχάνει, κάρα στάξουν ἱδρὼτι καὶ χέρας ξιφοκτόνους. καὶ σ' οὐδὲν εἰσω τῆς δια παπταίνειν πύλης ἐτ' ἔργουν ἐστίν, ἐννέπειν δ' ὅτοι χάρων σπουδὴν ἔθουν τὴν', ὡς παρ' εἰδύλλας μάθησ. ΟΔΗΣΕΤΣ

ὁ φθέγμ', Ἀθάνας, φιλτάτης ἐμοὶ θεῶν, ὡς εὐμαθές σου, καὶ ἀποπτετὸς ἡς ὅμως, φῶνημ' ἀκοῦν καὶ ξυναρπάξω φρενί χαλκοτόμου κώδωνος ὡς Τυρσηνικῆς. καὶ νῦν ἐπέγνως εὐ μ' ἐπ' ἄνδρι δυσμενεῖ βάσιν κυκλοῦντ', Αἰαντι τῷ σακεσφόρῳ.
AJAX

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

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

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

υνεκτὸς γὰρ ἡμᾶς τήσδε πρᾶγμας ἄσκοπον ἔχει περάνας, εὑπερ εὑργασταί τάδε·

ισμεν γὰρ οὐδὲν τρανές, ἀλλ' ἀλώμεθα·

καὶ ἂθελοντής τὸ ὑπεξύγην πόνῳ.

ἐφθαρμένας γὰρ ἀρτίως εὐρύσκομεν

λείας ἄπασας καὶ κατημαρισμένας

ἐκ χειρὸς αὐτοῖς ποιμνών ἐπιστάταις.

τήν ὤν ἐκεῖνῳ πᾶς τις αἰτίαν νέμει.

καὶ μοι τις ὑπτήρ αὐτῶν εἰσιδῶν μόνον

πηδῶντα πεδία σὺν νεοράντῳ ξίφει

φράξει τὲ καθήλωσεν· εὐθέως δ' ἐγὼ

κατ' ἰχνος ἀσσῶ, καὶ τὰ μὲν σημαίνομαι,

τὰ δ' ἐκπέπληγμα κοῦκ ἔχω μαθεῖν ὅτουν.

καὶ ροῦν δ' ἐφήκεις· πάντα γὰρ τὰ τ' οὖν πάρος

τὰ τ' εἰσέπειτα σή κυβερνᾶμαι χερὶ.

ἈΘΗΝΑ

ἔγνων, Ὁδυσσεῦ, καὶ πάλαι φύλαξ ἐβην

τὴ σή πρόθυμος εἰς ὅδὸν κυναγία.

ΟΔΤΕΣΕΤΣ

ἡ καὶ, φιλή δέσποινα, πρὸς καιρὸν πονῶ;

ἈΘΗΝΑ

ὡς ἔστων ἀνδρός τούδε τάργα ταῦτά σοι.

ΟΔΤΕΣΕΤΣ

καὶ πρὸς τὶ δυσλόγιστον ὁδ' ἔξει χέρα;

ἈΘΗΝΑ

χόλῳ βαρμύθεις τῶν Ἀχιλλείων ὅπλων.

ΟΔΤΕΣΕΤΣ

τὶ δήτα ποίμναις τήν' ἐπεμπίπτπει βάσιν;

ἈΘΗΝΑ

δοκῶν ἐν ὑμῖν χεῖρα χραίνεσθαι φόνῳ.
AJAX

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

ATHENA

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

ODYSSEUS

Tell me, dear mistress, will my quest succeed?

ATHENA

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

ODYSSEUS

What moved him to this rash, insensate deed?

ATHENA

Resentment touching dead Achilles' arms.

ODYSSEUS

Why did he fall upon the innocent sheep?

ATHENA

He thought his hands were gory with your blood.
ΑΙΑΣ

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

ἡ καὶ τὸ βούλευμ' ὡς ἐπ' Ἀργείους τόδ' ἦν;

ἈΘΗΝΑ

κὰν ἐξεπράξατ', εἰ κατημέλησ' ἔγω.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

ποίαςι τόλμαις ταῖςδε καὶ φρενῶν θώρασεί;

ἈΘΗΝΑ

νῦκτωρ ἐφ' ὑμᾶς δόλως ὀρμᾶται μόνος.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

ἡ καὶ παρέστη κατὶ τέρμ' ἀφίκετο;

ἈΘΗΝΑ

καὶ δὴ 'πὶ δισσαίς ἦν στρατηγίσιν πύλαις.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

καὶ πῶς ἐπέσχε χεῖρα μαιμώσαν φόνου;

ἈΘΗΝΑ

ἐγὼ σφ' ἀπείρων, δυσφόρους ἐπ' ὁμμασὶ

γνώμας βαλοῦσα τῆς ἀνηκέστου χαρᾶς,

καὶ πρὸς τε ποίμνας ἐκτρέπει σύμμεκτα τε

λείας ἀδαστα βουκόλων φρουρήματα·

ἐνθ' εἰσπέσων ἔκειρε πολύκερων φόνων

κύκλῳ ραχίζων· καδόκει μὲν ἔσθ' ὅτε

δισσοῦσ' Ἀτρείδας αὐτὸχειρ κτεῖνειν ἔχων,

ὁτ' ἄλλως ἄλλων ἐμπέτυνων στρατηλατῶν.

ἐγὼ δὲ φοιτῶντ᾽ ἄνδρα μανιάσιν νόσους

ἀπεμασύντοι, εἰσέβαλλον τις ἔρκῃ κακά.

κατεὶτ' ἐπειδῇ τοῦτ' ἐλώφησεν πόνου,

τοὺς ἡπτανός αὐς δεσμοίσας συνήθησας βοῦς

ποίμνας τε πάσας εἰς δόμους κομίζεται,

ὡς ἄνδρας, ὡς ὡς εὐκερῶν ἄγραν ἔχων,

καὶ νῦν κατ' οἷκους συνδέτων αἰκίζεται.

δείξω δὲ καὶ νῦν τὴν ἐπερφανὴ νόσουν,

ὡς πάσιν Ἀργείουσιν εἰσιδῶν θροῆς.
AJAX

ODYSSEUS
What, was this onslaught planned against the Greeks?

ATHENA
Aye, and it had succeeded, but for me.

ODYSSEUS
How could he venture such fool-hardiness?

ATHENA
He schemed a night attack, by stealth, alone.

ODYSSEUS
And did he reach us and arrive his goal?

ATHENA
At the tent door of the two chiefs he stood.

ODYSSEUS
What then arrested him athirst for blood?

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

θαρσών δὲ μὴν μηδὲ συμφοραν δέχους τὸν ἄνδρα· ἐγὼ γὰρ ὀμμάτων ἀποστρόφους αὐγάς ἀπείρῳ σφὶ πρόσοψιν εἰς ἰδέαν. οὗτος, σὲ· τὸν τὰς αἰχμαλωτίδας χερας δεσμοῦς ἀπενθύνοντα προσμολεῖν καλῶ· Αἴαντα φωνῇ· στείχε δωμάτων πάρος.

ΟΔΤΣΕΣΣΕΣ

τί δρᾷς, Ἀθάνα; μηδαμῶς σφ’ ἔξω κάλει.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

οῦ σὺν’ ἀνέξει μηδὲ δειλίαν ἀρεί; ΟΔΤΣΕΣΣΕΣ

μὴ πρὸς θεῶν, ἀλλ’ ἐνδον ἄρκειτω μένων.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

τί μὴ γένηται; πρόσθεν ὦκ ἀνήρ ὅδ’ ἦν;

ΟΔΤΣΕΣΣΕΣ

ἐχθρός γε τῷ δε τῶν ὁ θανόν καὶ ταῦτα ἔτι.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

οὐκούν γέλως ἔδιστος εἰς ἐχθροὺς γελάν;

ΟΔΤΣΕΣΣΕΣ

ἐμοὶ μὲν ἄρκει τοῦτον ἐν δόμοις μένειν.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

μεμηνότ’ ἄνδρα περιφανῶς ὁκνεῖς ἰδεῖν;

ΟΔΤΣΕΣΣΕΣ

φρονοῦντα γάρ νῦν ὦκ ἀν ἐξέστην ὅκνυφ.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ νῦν σε μὴ παρόντ’ ἰδη πέλας.

ΟΔΤΣΕΣΣΕΣ

πῶς, εἴπερ ὀφθαλμοῖς γε τοῖς αὐτοῖς όρᾷ;

ΑΘΗΝΑ

ἐγὼ σκοτῶσω βλέφαρα καὶ δεδορκότα.
AJAX

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

(To AJAX within the tent.)

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

ODYSSEUS

What dost thou, Goddess? Nowise call him forth.

ATHENA

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

ODYSSEUS

Nay, nay; suffice it that he bide within.

ATHENA

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

ODYSSEUS

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

ATHENA

What mockery sweeter than to mock at foes?

ODYSSEUS

Enough for me to hear of him within.

ATHENA

What, fear to see a madman face to face?

ODYSSEUS

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

ATHENA

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

ODYSSEUS

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

ATHENA

I will obscure his vision, howe'er clear.
ΑΙΑΣ

ΟΔΤΣΕΤΣΕ
γένοιτο μένταν πᾶν θεοῦ τεχνωμένου.

ΑΘΗΝΑ
σύγα νυν ἐστῶς καὶ μέν' ὡς κυρεῖς ἔχων.

ΟΔΤΣΕΤΣΕ
μένοιμ' ἂν· ἥθελον δ' ἂν ἐκτὸς ὑπ τυχεῖν.

ΑΘΗΝΑ
ὡς οὗτος, Αῖας, δεύτερόν σε προσκαλῶ.
tί βαιῶν οὕτως ἐντερπεῖ τῆς συμμάχου;

ΑΙΑΣ
ὡς χαῖρ' Ἀθάνα, χαίρε Διογενῆς τέκνον,
ὡς εὖ παρέστης· καὶ σε παγχρύσοις ἔγω
στέψω λαφύροις τήσδε τῆς ἀγρας χάριν.

ΑΘΗΝΑ
καλῶς ἔλεξας· ἄλλ' ἐκεῖνό μοι φράσον,
ἐβαψας ἐγχος εὖ πρὸς Ἀργεῖων στρατῷ;

ΑΙΑΣ
κόμπος πάρεστι κοῦκ ἀπαρνοῦμαι τὸ μή.

ΑΘΗΝΑ
ἡ καὶ πρὸς Ἀτρείδαισιν ἡχμασας χέρα;

ΑΙΑΣ
ὡςτ' οὕτως Αἰανθ' Ὠτ' ἀτιμάσουσ' ἐτί.

ΑΘΗΝΑ
tεθνᾶσιν ἀνδρες, ὡς τὸ σὸν ἡμιήκ' ἐγώ.

ΑΙΑΣ
θανόντες ἦδη τὰμ' ἀφαιρεῖσθων ὅπλα.

ΑΘΗΝΑ
eλεν, τί γὰρ δὴ παῖς ὁ τοῦ Δαερτίου,
pοῦ σοι τύχης ἔστηκεν; ἦ πέφευγε σε;

ΑΙΑΣ
ἡ τοῦπιτριπττον κύναδος ἐξήρου μ' ὅπου.
AJAX

ODYSSEUS
Well, when a god works, all is possible.

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

ODYSSEUS
So will I—yet had liefer been far hence.

ATHENA (to AJAX)
Ho, Ajax! once again I summon thee.
Say, why this scant regard for thine ally?
Enter AJAX.

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

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

AJAX
A glorious deed that I will not disclaim.

ATHENA
Haply thou has assailed the Atridae too?

AJAX
So that they ne'er will outrage Ajax more.

ATHENA
If I interpret rightly, they are dead.

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

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

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

15
ΑΙΑΣ

ΑΘΗΝΑ

'Εγώγ', 'Οδυσσέα τὸν σὸν ἐνστάτην λέγω.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἡδιστος, ὥ δέσποινα, δεσμώτης ἔσω
θακεῖ· θανεῖν γὰρ αὐτὸν οὐ τί πω θέλω.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

πρὶν ἄν τί δράσῃς ἢ τί κερδάνης πλέον;

ΑΙΑΣ

πρὶν ἄν δεθεῖς πρὸς κίον' ἑρκείου στέγης

ΑΘΗΝΑ

τί δῆτα τὸν δύστηνον ἐργάσει κακόν;

ΑΙΑΣ

μάστυνι πρῶτον νώτα φοινικεῖς θάνη.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

μὴ δῆτα τὸν δύστηνον ὅδε ὑ' αἰκίσῃ.

ΑΙΑΣ

χαίρειν, 'Αθάνα, τάλλ', ἐγώ σ' ἐφίεμαι
κεῖνος δὲ τίσει τήνδε κοῦκ ἄλλην δίκην.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

σὺ δ' οὖν, ἐπειδὴ τέρψεις ἢδε σοι τὸ δράν,
χρῶ χειρί, φείδου μηδὲν ὄντερ ἐννοεῖς.

ΑΙΑΣ

χωρῶ πρὸς ἑργον· σοι δὲ τούτ', ἐφίεμαι,
τοιάνδ' ἀεὶ μοι σύμμαχον παρεστάναι.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

ὁρᾷς, 'Οδυσσεῦ, τὴν θεῶν ἱσχὺν οὔση; 
τούτοι δὲ σὺ τὰνδρὸς ἢ προνούστερος
ἡ δρὰν ἡμείνων ἤρρεθη τὰ καίρια;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν οὖνεν' οἶδ' ἐποιεῖτο ὅτι ὑπὲρ
δύστηνον ἐμπας, καίπερ ὅταν δυσμενή,
AJAX

ATHENA
Of him—Odysseus, thy antagonist.

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

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

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

ATHENA
What vengeance wilt thou wreak on the poor wretch?

AJAX
Flay with my scourge his back before he die.

ATHENA
O torture not the wretch so savagely.

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

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

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

[Exit AJAX.

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

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

όθούνεκ' ἀτη συγκατέξευκται κακή,
οὐδὲν τὸ τούτου μᾶλλον ἢ τοῦμὸν σκοπῶν.
ὁρῶ γὰρ ἡμᾶς οὐδέν ὄντας ἀλλο πλὴν
εἰδὼλ' ὀσοπερ ξώμεν ἢ κούφην σκιάν.

ἈΘΗΝΑ

τοιαύτα τοίνυν εἰσορῶν ὑπέρκοπον
μηδὲν ποτ' εἰτῆς αὐτός εἰς θεούς ἔποσ,
μηδ' ὀγκοῦν ἀργὴ μηδέν', εἰ τινος πλέον
ἡ χειρὶ βρίθεις ἢ μακρὸν πλούτου βάθει.
καὶ ἡμέρα κλίνει τε κάναγει πάλιν
ἀπινυτα τὰ χειρότεροι· τοὺς δὲ σοφρονας
θεοί φιλοῦσι καὶ στυγοῦσι τοὺς κακοὺς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ.

Τελαμώνιε παῖ, τῆς ἀμφιρύτου
Σαλαμίνος ἔχων βάθρον ὠγχιάλου,
σὲ μὲν εὖ πράσσοντ' ἐπιχαίρω.
σὲ δ' ὅταν πληγὴ Διὸς ἡ σομαίης
λόγος ἐκ Δανάων κακόθρους ἔπιθη,
μέγαν ὀχυρὸν ἔχω καὶ πεφόβημαι
πτηνῆς ὡς ὄμμα πελείας.

ὡς καὶ τῆς νῦν φθιμένης νυκτὸς
μεγάλοι θόρυβοι κατέχουσ' ἡμᾶς
ἐπὶ δυσκελία, σὲ τὸν ἵππομαχὴ
λειμῶν' ἐπιβάντ' ὄλεσαι Δανάων
βοτὰ καὶ λείαι,

ἡπερ δορίληπτος ἔτ' ἵνα λοιπῇ,
κτεῖνοντ' αἰθῶνι σιδῆρῳ,
τοιούσι δὲ λόγος ψευδόρους πλάσσων
εἰς ὥτα φέρει πᾶσιν Ὁδυσσεύς,
AJAX

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

ATHENA

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

[Exeunt ATHENA and ODYSSEUS. Enter CHORUS.

CHORUS

Son of Telamon, thou whose isle,
Sea-girt Salamis, doth smile
O'er the surge, thy joys I share
When thy fortunes promise fair;
But if stroke of Zeus assail,
Or the slanderous tongues prevail
Of the Danai, to blast
Thy repute, I cower aghast,
Like a dove with quivering eye.
For of yesternight there fly
Bitter plaints and loud-voiced blame
Crowding on us to our shame—
How thou speddest o'er the meads
Rich in troops of unbacked steeds,
And with flashing sword didst slay
All the yet unparted prey
Of the Greeks, in foray ta'en,
Spoiling all their hard earned gain.
Such the scandal, as we hear,
Odysseus breathes in every ear;
καὶ σφόδρα πείθει· περὶ γὰρ σοῦ νῦν εὕπειστα λέγει, καὶ πᾶς ὁ κλύων
tοῦ λέξαντος χαίρει μᾶλλον
tοῖς σοῖς ἄχεσιν καθυβρίζων.
tῶν γὰρ μεγάλων ψυχῶν ιείς
οὐκ ἀν ἀμάρτοις. κατὰ δὲ ἀν τις ἐμοῦ
tοιαύτα λέγοιν οὐκ ἀν πείθοιν.
πρὸς γὰρ τὸν ἔχονθ' ὁ φθόνος ἐρπεῖ.
καίτοι σμικρὸι μεγάλων χωρίς
σφαλέρων πῦργον ρύμα πέλουται.
μετὰ γὰρ μεγάλων βαῖδος ἀριστ' ἀν
καὶ μέγας ὀρθοῦθ' ὑπὸ μικρότερων.
ἀλλ' ὦ δυνατὸν τοῖς ἀνοήτοις
tούτων γνώμας προδιάσκειν.
ὑπὸ τοιούτων ἀνδρῶν θορυβεῖ
χήμεις οὐδὲν σθένομεν πρὸς ταύτ' ἀπαλέξασθαι σοῦ χωρίς, ἀναξ.
ἀλλ' ὦτε γὰρ δὴ τὸ σοῦ ἅμμ' ἀπέδραν,
παταγοῦσιν ἀπερ πτηνῶν ἀγέλαιι
μέγαν αἰγυπτῶν δ' ὑποδεικνύσε
tάχ' ἀν ἐξαισθηθης, εἰ σοῦ φανεις,
συγῇ πτηξειαν ἀφωνοι.

ἡ ῥὰ σε Ταυροπόλα Δίδυμος Ἀρτεμίς—στρ.
ὡς μεγάλα φάτις, ἡ
μᾶτερ αἰσχύνας ἐμᾶς—
ὁμασε πανδάμους ἐπὶ βοῦς ἀγελαίας,
ἡ ποῦ τινος νῖκας ἀκάρπωτων χάριν,
ἡ ῥὰ κλυτῶν ἐνάρων
ψευσθεῖον, ἄδωρος, ἡ εἰτ ἐλαφαβολάς;

1 Dawes adds δ'.
2 ψευσθεία δάρος MSS., Stephanus corr.
AJAX

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

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

ἡ χαλκοθώραξ μή τιν' ἕνναλιος
μομφᾶν ἐξὼν ἔυνοι τοῖν ἐννυχεῖοις
μαχαναίς ἐτίσατο λώβαν;

.utf.
oύ ποτὲ γὰρ φρενόθεν γ' ἔπ' ἀριστερά,
παῖ Τελαμώνος, ἔβας
τόσσου, ἐν ποίμναις πίτυνον.

ἡκοι γὰρ ἀν θεία νόσος, ἀλλ' ἀπερύκοι
καὶ Ζεύς κακὰ καὶ Φοῖβος Ἄργειόν φάτιν.
eἰ δ' ὑποβαλλόμενοι
κλέπτουσι μῦθοις οἱ μεγάλοι βασιλῆς
ἡ τᾶς ἀσώτου Σισυφήδας γενεάς,
μὴ μὴ, ἀναξ, ἔθ' ὡδ' ἐφάλοις κλοισίας
ὅμι' ἐξὼν κακὰ φάτιν ἄρη.

ἀλλ' ἀνα ἐξ ἐδράνων, ὅπου μακραίωνι
στηρίζει ποτὲ τάδ' ἀγωνίᾳ σχολᾶ
ἀταν οὐρανίαν φλέγων.

ἐχθρῶν δ' ὑβρις ὡδ' ἀτάρβητα
ὀρμᾶται ἐν εὐανέμοις βάσσαις,
πάντων καγχαζέοιν
γλώσσαις βαρνάλγητα·
ἀμοὶ δ' ἄχος ἔστακεν.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

νὰδ' ἄρωγοι τῆς Αἰαντος,
γενεᾶς χθονίων ἀπ' Ἐρεχθειῶν,
ἐχομεν στοναχάς οἱ κηδόμενοι
tοῦ Τελαμώνος τηλόθεν οὐκου.
nῦν γὰρ ὁ δεινός μέγας ὁμοκρατης
Ἀλαθθολεφο
κείται χειμώνι νοσῆσαι.

1 ἦ τιν' MSS., Musgrave corr.
AJAX

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

          (Ant.)

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

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

Enter TECMESSA from the tent.

TECMESSA

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

¹ Odysseus, reputed son of Sisyphus, not Laertes.
ΑΙΑΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ
τι δ' ἐνήλθακται τῆς ἡμερίας
νῦξ ἤδε βάρος;
παί τοῦ Φρυγίου Τελεύταντος,
λέγ', ἐπει σὲ λέχος δουριάλωτον
στέρξας ἀνέχει θούριος Αίας·
ὁστ' οὐκ ἂν ἂιδρις ὑπείποις.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΑ
πῶς δήτα λέγω λόγον ἀρρητον;
θανάτῳ γὰρ ἵσου βάρος ἐκπεύσει.
μανία γὰρ ἀλοὺς ἦμιν ὁ κλεινὸς
νύκτερος Αίας ἀπελωβήθη.
τοιαύτ' ἂν ἰδοίς σκηνῆς ἔινον
χειροδαίκτα σφάγι' αἵμοβαφῆ,
κείνου χρηστήρια τάνδρός.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
οἷάν ἐδήλωσας ἄνέρος 1 αἰθονος
ἀγγελιάν ἀτλατον οὕδε φευκτάν,
τῶν μεγάλων Δαναῶν ὑπὸ κληξομέναν,
τὰν ὁ μέγας μῦθος άέξει.
οἷοι φοβοῦμαι τὸ προσέρπον περίφαντος ἀνὴρ
θανεῖται, παραπλάκτω χερὶ συγκατακτᾶς
κελαίνοις ξίφεσιν βοστὰ καὶ βοτῆρας ἰππονώμας.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΑ
ἀμοί. κείθεν κείθεν ἄρ' ἡμῖν
dεσμωτῖν ἀγων ἠλυθε ποίμνην·
ἂν τὴν μὲν ἔσω σφαίζ' ἐπὶ γαίας,
tὰ δὲ πλευροκοτῶν δι' χ' ἀνερρήγην.
δῶν δ' ἀργίπποδας κριοῦς ἀνελῶν
tοῦ μὲν κεφάλήν καὶ γλώσσαν ἄκραν

1 MSS. ἄνδρος.
AJAX

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

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

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

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

ριπτεῖ θερίσας, τὸν ὅρθον ἄνω
κίονι δήσας
μέγαν ἱπποδέτην ῥυτήρα λαβὼν
παίει λυγρὰ μάςτυν γιπλή,
κακὰ δευνάζων ῥῆμαθ', ἀ δαίμων
κοῦδεῖς ἀνδρῶν ἐδίδαξεν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οῦρα τύν ἦδη τοὐ κράτα καλύμμασι
ἀντ.
κρυψάμενον ποδόιν κλοπὰν ἀρέσθαι
ἡ θὸν εἰρεσίας ζυγὸν ἐξόμενον
ποντοπόρῳ ναὶ μεθεῖναι.

τοῖς ἐρέσσουσιν ἀπειλὰς δικρατεῖς ’Ατρείδαι
καθ’ ἦμῶν’ πεφόβημαι λιθόλευστον ’Ἀρη
ἐξυπαλγεῖν μετὰ τοῦτο τυχεῖς, τὸν αἴσ’
ἀπλατος ἰσχεὶ.

ТЕКМΗΣΧΑ

οὐκέτι λαμπρὰς γὰρ ἀτερ στεροπῆς
ἀξίας ὅξις νότος ὡς λήγει,
καὶ νῦν φρύεμος νέον ἁλγος ἐχει;
τὸ γὰρ ἐσπεύσσειν οἰκεία πάθη,
μηδενὸς ἄλλου παραπράξαντος,
μεγάλας ὀδύνας ὑποτείνεις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἄλλ’ εἰ πέπαυται, κάρτ’ ἀν εὐτυχεῖν δοκῶ.
φρούδου γὰρ ἦδη τοῦ κακοῦ μείων λόγος.

ТЕКМΗΣΧΑ

πότερα ὅ ἄν, εἰ νέμοι τις αἴρεσιν, λάβων,
φίλους ἄνιον αὐτὸς ἤδονας ἔχειν,
ἡ κοινὸς ἐν κοινοίς λυπεῖσθαι ξυνὼν;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τό τοῦ διπλάζον, ὡ γύναι, μεἴζον κακόν.
AJAX

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

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

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

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

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

CHORUS
The twofold sorrow, lady, is the worse.
ΑΙΑΣ

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ήμείς ἀρ’ οὐ νοσούντες ἀτώμεσθα νῦν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πῶς τούτ’ ἐλεξάς; οὐ κάτωδ’ ὅπως λέγεις.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἀνὴρ ἐκεῖνος, ἤμιξ’ ἦν ἐν τῇ νόσῳ,

ἀυτὸς μὲν ἤδεθ’ οἴσιν εἰχετ’ ἐν κακοῖς,

ἡμᾶς δὲ τοὺς φρονούντας ἤμια ξυνῶν

νῦν δ’ ὡς ἐληξε κανέπτυνεσε τῆς νόσου,

κεῖνος τε λύτη πᾶς ἐλήλαται κακῆ

ἡμεῖς θ’ ὁμοίως οὐδέν ἤσσον ἢ πάρος.

ἀρ’ ἔστι ταῦτα δίς τόσ’ ἐξ ἀπλῶν κακά;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ξύμφημι δὴ σοι καὶ δέδοικα μὴ ’κ θεοῦ

πληγή τις ἡκη.1 πῶς γάρ, εἰ πεπαυμένος

μηδέν τι μᾶλλον ἡ νοσῶν εὐφραίνεται;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ὡς ὡδ’ ἐχόντων τῶν ἐπίστασθαι σε χρή.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τίς γάρ ποτ’ ἀρχῆ τοῦ κακοῦ προσέπτατο;

δήλωσον ἡμῖν τόις ξυναλγοῦσιν τύχας.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἀπαν μαθήσει τοῦργον ὡς κοινώνος ὁμ.

κεῖνος γάρ ἀκρας νυκτὸς, ἤμιχ’ ἔσπεροι

λαμπτήρες οὐκέτ’ ἢθον, ἀμφήκες λαβὼν

ἐμαίετ’ ἐγχος ἐξόδους ἔρπετι κενάς.

καγώ ’πιτλήσσω καὶ λέγω τί χρήμα δρᾶς.

Αἰας; τί τήνδ’ ἀκλητος οὐθ’ ὑπ’ ἀγγέλων

κληθεὶς ἀφορμᾶς πέτραν ὀύτε τοῦ κλύων

σάλπυγγος; ἀλλὰ νῦν γε πᾶς εὐδει στρατός.

ὁ δ’ ἐπε σπός με βαι’, ἀεὶ δ’ ὑμνούμενα.

1 ἕκοι MSS., Suidas corr.
AJAX

TECMESSA
Then are we losers now our plague is past.

CHORUS
What meanest thou? it passes my poor wit.

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

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

TECMESSA
His case is as thou sayest, rest assured.

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

TECMESSA
Hear then the story of our common woe.
At dead of night when all the lamps were out,
He took his two-edged sword, as if intent
On some wild expedition. So I chid him,
Saying, "What dost thou, Ajax, why go forth?
No summons, messenger or trumpet blast,
Hath called thee; nay, by now the whole host sleeps."
He answered lightly with an ancient saw,
ΑΙΑΣ
gύναι, γυναιξί ἱκόσμου ἡ συγὴ φέρει.
κἄγῳ μαθοῦσ᾿ ἐληξ’, ὁ δ᾿ ἐσσύθη μόνος.
καὶ τὰς ἐκεῖ μὲν οὐκ ἔχω λέγειν πάθας·
ἐσω δ᾿ ἐσῆλθε συνδέτους ἅγων ὁμοῖοι
tαύρους, κύνας βοτήρας, εὐερόν τ᾿ ἄγραν.
καὶ τοὺς μὲν ἴχνευσι, τοὺς δ᾿ ἄνω τρέπων
ἔσφαξε κάρραξις, τοὺς δὲ δεσμίους
ἡκίζεθ᾿ ὅστε φώτας ἐν πούμναις πίτνων.
τέλος ὦ ὑπάξας διὰ θυρῶν σκιᾶ τινι
λόγους ἀνέστα, τοὺς μὲν Ἀτρείδῶν κάτα,
τοὺς δ᾿ ἀμφ᾿ Ὅδυσσεῖ, συντιθέεις γέλων πολύν,
ὅσην κατ᾿ αὐτῶν ὑβρίν ἐκτίσαι, ἰδὼν
κάπετι ἐπάξας αὐθίς ἐς δόμους πάλιν,
ἐμφρὼν μόλις πως ξύν χρῷο καθισταται,
καὶ πλῆρες ἀτης ὡς δισπτεύει στέγος,
pαῖσας κάρα ἡθοῦξεν ἐν δ᾿ ἐρεπτίος
νεκρῶν ἐρειφθεῖς ἐξετ᾿ ἀρνεῖου φόνου,
κόμην ἀπελεξ ἀνυξεί συλλαβῶν χερί.
καὶ τὸν μὲν ἠστο πλεῖστου ἀφθονγος χρόνων
ἐπετι ἐμοὶ τὰ δεῖν ἐτηπείλησ᾿ ἐπη,
εἰ μὴ φανοῖν πᾶν τὸ συντυχὸν πάθος,
kάνηρετ᾿ ἐν τῷ πράγματος κυριοὶ ποτέ.
κἄγῳ, φίλοι, δείκεςα τοὐξείρασμένον
ἐλεξα πᾶν ὀσονπερ ἐξηπιστάμεν.
ὁ δ᾿ εὐθὺς ἐξώμωξεν οἴμωγας λυγρᾶς,
ἀς οὐποτ᾿ αὐτοῦ πρόσθεν εἰςήκουσ᾿ ἐγὼ·
πρὸς γάρ κακοῦ τε καὶ βαρνυλίχου γόους
tουοῦδ᾿ ἂι ποτ᾿ ἄνδρος ἐξηγεῖτ᾿ ἔχειν
ἀλλ᾿ ἀγρόφητος ὁξέων κακυμάτων
ὑπεστέναξε ταύρος δις βρυχώμενος.
νῦν δ᾿ ἐν τοιαδὲ κεῖμενος κακῇ τύχῃ
1 εὑκερών MSS., Schneidewin corr.
AJAX

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

ἀσιτος ἀνήρ, ἀποτός, ἐν μέσοις βοτοῖς
сидηροκηισίν ἤσυχος θακεὶ πεσὼν
καὶ δὴλος ἐστιν ὡς τι δρασείων κακόν.
τοιάντα γάρ πως καὶ λέγει κώδυρεται.
ἀλλ', ὃ φίλοι, τούτων γάρ οὖνεκ' ἐστάλην,
ἀρήξατ' εἰσελθόντες, εἰ δύνασθε τι
φίλων γάρ οἱ τοιοίδε νικῶνται λόγοις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Τέκμηρσα, δεινά, παί Τελεύταντος, λέγεις
ἡμῖν, τὸν ἄνδρα διαπεφοιβάσθαι κακοῖς.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἰῶ μοι μοι.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΑ

τάχ', ὡς ἐοικε, μᾶλλον· ἡ σοὶ ἤκούσατε
Αίαντος οὗαν τὴνδε θωύσσει βοήν;

ΑΙΑΣ

ἰῶ μοι μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀνὴρ ἐοικεν ἥ νοσείν ἥ τοῖς πάλαι
νοσήμασιν ξυνοῦσι λυπεῖσθαι παρῶν.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἰῶ παῖ παῖ.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΑ

ἀμοὶ τάλαιν'. Εὐρύσακες, ἀμφὶ σοὶ βοᾶ.
τί ποτε μενοινά; ποῦ ποτ' εἰ; τάλαιν' ἐγὼ.

ΑΙΑΣ

Τεῦκρον καλῶ. ποῦ Τεῦκρος; ἡ τὸν εἴσαι
ληπταθῆσει χρόνον, ἐγὼ ὁ ἀπόλλυμαι;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀνὴρ φρονείν ἐοικεν. ἀλλ' ἀνοίγετε.
τάχ' ἂν τιν' αἰδῶ καὶ' ἐμοὶ βλέψας λάβοι.
AJAX

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

CHORUS

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

AJAX

Woe, woe is me!

TECMESSA

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

AJAX

Woe, woe is me!

CHORUS

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

AJAX

My son, my son!

TECMESSA

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

AJAX

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

CHORUS

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

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ιδού, διοίγω, προσβλέπειν δ' ἔξεστι σοι
tὰ τοῦδε πράγη, καύτος ὡσ ἐχὼν κυρεῖ.

ΑΙΑΣ

ιδ' στρ. α'
φίλοι ναυβάται, μόνοι ἐμὸν φίλων,
μόνοι ἔτ' ἐμμένοντες ὅρθῳ νόμῳ,
ἵδεσθε μ' οἶλον ἄρτι κῦμα φοινίας ὑπὸ ξάλης
ἀμφίδρομον κυκλείταi.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οἰμ' ὡς ἔοικας ὅρθὰ καρτυρεῖν ἀγαν.
δηλοὶ δὲ τοῦργον ὡς ἀφροντίστως ἐχει.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἀντ. α'
γένος νατάς ἀρωγὸν τέχνας,
ἀλιον δ' ἐπέβας ἐλίσσων πλάταν,
σὲ τοι σὲ τοι μόνον δέδορκα πημονάν ἐπαρκέσοντι. 360
ἀλλὰ με συνδαίξουν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

εὔφημα φώνει· μὴ κακὸν κακῷ δίδονς
ἀκος, πλέον τὸ πῆμα τῆς ἁτῆς τίθει.

ΑΙΑΣ

στρ. β'
ὁρᾶς τῶν θρασύν, τῶν εὐκάρδιον,
τὸν ἐν δαῖοι ἀτρεστὸν μάχαις,
ἐν ἀφόβοις με θηροὶ δεινὸν χέρας;
ἀμοι γέλωτος, οἶον ὑβρίσθην ἄρα.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

μὴ, δέσποτ' Αἰας, λίσσομαι σ', αὐτά τάδε.

ΑΙΑΣ

οὐκ ἐκτός; οὐκ ἄψορρον ἐκνεμεῖ πόδα;
αἰαὶ αἰαὶ.

34
AJAX

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

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

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

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

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

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

TECMessa
Ajax, my dearest master, speak not so.

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

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ω προς θεῶν ύπεικε καὶ φρόνησον εὖ.

ΑΙΑΣ
ω δύσμορος, ως χερὶ μὲν
μεθήκα τοὺς ἀλάστορας, ἐν δὲ ἐλίκεσσι
βουοὶ καὶ κλυτοὶς πεσόναι αἰπολοὶς
ἐρεμυνὸν αἱμ’ ἐδευσα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
τί δῆτ’ ἄν ἀλγοῖς ἐπ’ ἐξειργασμένοις;
οὐ γὰρ γένοιτ’ ἄν ταῦθ’ ὅπως οὐχ ὡδ’ ἔχειν.

ΑΙΑΣ
ἰὼ πάνθ’ ὡρῶν ἀπάντων τ’ ἄει
κακῶν ὄργανοι, τέκνου Λαρτίου,
κακοπινέστατον τ’ ἁλήμα στρατοῦ,
ἡ που πολὺν γέλωθ’ ὕφ’ ἥδονῆς ἀγείς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ξύν τοι θεῷ πᾶς καὶ γελά κώδυρεται.

ΑΙΑΣ
ιδοιμι μὴν1 νιν, καίπερ ὡδ’ ἀτώμενος.
ἰὼ μοι μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
μηδὲν μὲγ’ εἴπης: οὐχ ὀρᾶς ἵν’ εἰ κακοῦ;

ΑΙΑΣ
ω Ζεὺ, προγόνων προπάτωρ,
πῶς ἄν τὸν αἰμυλώτατον, ἔξθρον ἂλημα,
τοὺς τε δισσάρχας ὀλέσσας βασιλῆς
τέλος θάνοιμι καυτός;

ΤΕΚΜΗΡΙΟΝ
ὅταν κατεύχῃ ταῦθ’, ὁμοῦ κἀμοὶ θανεῖν
εὐχοῦ: τί γὰρ δεῖ ξῆν με σοῦ τεθνηκότος;

1 Dindorf adds μὴν.
AJAX

CHORUS
O listen, I adjure thee, and be ruled.

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

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

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

CHORUS
Laughter or mourning comes as God ordains.

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

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

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

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

ιῶ

σκότος, ἐμὸν φάος,
ἐρεβος ὁ φαεννότατον, ὡς ἐμοί,
ἐλεοθ' ἐλεοθέ μ' οἰκήτωρα,
ἐλεοθέ μ'. οὔτε γὰρ θεῶν γένος οὐθ' ἀμερίων
ἐτ' ἄξιος βλέπειν τιν' εἰς ὑνασίν ἀνθρώπων.
ἀλλὰ μ' ἀ Δίος
ἀλκίμα θεὸς
ἀλέθρι' αἰκίζει.
ποῖ τις οὖν φύγῃ;
ποῖ μολὼν μενὼ;
εἰ τὰ μὲν φθίνει, φίλοι, τοιοίσδ' ἐνοῦ χάραις
ὅμοι πέλας, μώραις δ' ἁγραίς προσκείμεθα,
πᾶς δὲ στρατὸς δίπαλτος ἀν μὲ
χειρὶ φονεύοι.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ὦ δυστάλαινα, τοιάδ' ἄνδρα χρήσιμον
φωνεῖν, ἄ πρόσθεν οὖτος οὐκ ἐτλη ποτ' ἀν.

ΑΙΑΣ

ιῶ

πόροι ἀλληρροθοὶ .
πάραλα τ' ἄντρα καὶ νέμος ἐπάκτιον,
πολὺν πολὺν μὲ δαρόν τε δῇ
κατείχετ' ἀμφὶ Τροίαν χρόνον· ἀλλ' οὐκέτι μ', οὐκ
ἐτ' ἀμπυνάς ἔχοντα· τούτῳ τις φρούνων ἴστω.
ὦ Σκαμάνδριοι
γείτουνες ῥοαί,
εὐφρονες 'Αργείοις,
οὐκέτ' ἄνδρα μή
tόνδ' ἰδητ', ἔτος

1 τοῖς' MSS., Jebb corr.
AJAX

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

TECMessa

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

AJAX

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

ἐξερῶ μέγ', οἶνον οὕτων
Τροία στρατοῦ δέρχθη χθονὸς μολῶντ' ἀπὸ
'Ελλανίδος· ταύτων δ' ἀτιμὸς
ώδε πρόκειμαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
οὕτοι σ' ἀπείργηειν οὐδ' ὅπως ἐώς λέγειν
ἐχόω, κακοῖς τοιούδε συμπεπτωκότα.

ΑΙΑΣ

αἰαι· τὸς ἂν ποτ' ἤθεθ' ὅδ' ἐπώνυμων
τούμου ξυνοίσειν ὅνομα τοῖς ἔμοις κακοῖς;
νῦν γὰρ πάρεστι καὶ δίς αἰαῖξειν ἐμοὶ
cal τρίς· τοιοῦτοις γὰρ κακοῖς ἑντυγχάνω·
ὀτὸν πατήρ μὲν τῆς ἀπ' Ἰδαίας χθονὸς
tὰ πρῶτα καλλιστεῖν ἀριστεύσας στρατοῦ
ῴδ' ὁ κεῖνον παῖς, τὸν αὐτὸν ἐς τόπον
Τροίας ἐπέλθων οὐκ ἔλάσσον σθένει
οὐδ' ἐργα μείω χειρὸς ἀρκέσας ἐμῆς,
ἀτιμὸς Ἀργείοισιν ὅδ' ἀπόκλυμαι.

καίτοι τοιούτον ἡ ἐξεπίστασθαι δοκῶ·
εἰ ζών Ἀχιλλεὺς τῶν διπλῶν τῶν ὄν πέρι
κρίνειν ἔμελλε κράτος ἀριστείας τινί,
οὐκ ἂν τις αὐτ' ἔμαρφεν ἄλλος ἄντ' ἐμοὶ.

νῦν δ' αὐτ' Ἀτρείδαι φωτὶ παντοφρύν' φρένας
ἐπραξαν, ἀνδρὸς τοῦδ' ἀπώσαντες κράτη.
κεῖ μὴ τὸδ' ὅμμα καὶ φρένες διάστροφοι
γνώμης ἀπῆξαν τῆς ἐμῆς, οὐκ ἂν ποτε
διήνω κατ' ἄλλου φωτὸς ὅδ' ἐψήφισαν.

νῦν δ' ἡ Δίως γοργώτης ἀδάματος θεὰ

430

440

450
AJAX

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

CHORUS

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

AJAX

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

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

ηδη μ’ επ’ αυτοίς χείρ’ ἐπεντύνοντ’ ἐμὴν ἔσφηλεν, ἐμβαλοῦσα λυσσώδη νόσον, ὥστ’ ἐν τοιοίσδε χείρας αἰμάξαι βοτοῖς· κεῖνοι δ’ ἐπεγγελὼσιν ἐκπεφευγότες, ἐμοῦ μὲν οὐχ ἐκόντος· εἰ δὲ τις θεῶν βλάπτοι, φύγοι τὰν χῶ κακὸς τὸν κρείσσονα. καὶ νῦν τι χρῆ δρᾶν; ὡστὶς ἐμφανῶς θεοῖς ἐχθαίρομαι, μοσεῖ δὲ μ’ Ἐλλήνων στρατὸς, ἔχθει δὲ Τρόια πᾶσα καὶ πεδία τάδε. πότερα πρὸς οἶκους, ναυλόχους λυπῶν ἔδρας μόνους τ’ Ἀτρείδας, πέλαγος Αἰγαίον περῶ; καὶ ποίον ὅμμα πατρὶ δηλῶσο φανεῖς Τελαμώνι; πῶς με τλῆσται ποτ’ εἰσιδεῖν γυμνὸν φανέντα τῶν ἀριστείων ἄτερ, ὧν αὐτὸς ἔσχε στέφανον εὐκλείας μέγαν; οὐκ ἔστι τούργου τλητόν. ἀλλὰ δὴτ’ ἰὸν πρὸς ἔρυμα Τρώων, ἔμπεσον μόνος μόνοις καὶ δρῶν τι χρηστόν, εἶτα λοίσθιον θᾶνω; ἀλλ’ ἄδε γ’ Ἀτρείδας ἄν εὐφράναμή ποιν. οὐκ ἔστι ταῦτα. πειρά τις ζητητέα τοιάδ’ ἀφ’ ἃς γέροντι δηλῶσο πατρί μή τοι φύσει γ’ ἀποταλαγχρος ἐκ κείνου γεγώς. αἰσχρὸν γὰρ ἄνδρα τοῦ μακροῦ χρῆσειν βίον, κακοῖσιν ὡστὶς μηδὲν ἐξαλλάσσεται. τὸ γὰρ παρ’ ἡμα μέρεα τέρπειν ἔχει προσθεῖσα κάναθείσα τοῦ γε κατθανεῖν; οὐκ ἂν πριαίμην οὔδενὸς λόγου βροτὸν ὡστὶς κεναίσιν ἐλπίσιν θερμαίνεται· ἀλλ’ ἢ καλῶς ξῆν ἢ καλῶς τεθηκέναι τὸν εὐγενῆ χρῆ. πάντ’ ἀκήκοας λόγον.
AJAX

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

ΧΩΡΟΣ
οὐνέις ἔρει ποθ' ὡς ὑπόβλητον λόγον,
Αἰας, ἔλεξας, ἀλλὰ τῆς σαυτοῦ φρενός·
παῦσαι γε μέντοι καὶ δὸς ἀνδράσιν φίλοις
γνώμης κρατήσαι, τάσδε φροντίδας μεθείς.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΧΑ
ἀ δέσποτ' Αἰας, τῆς ἀναγκαίας τύχης
οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν μείζον ἀνθρώπως κακὸν.
ἐγὼ δ' ἐλευθέρου μὲν ἐξέφυν πατρός,
εἰπὲρ τινὸς σθένοντος ἐν πλούτῳ Φρυγῶν·
νῦν δ' εἰμὶ δούλης θεοῦ γὰρ ὁδ' ἐδοξέε που
καὶ σῇ μάλιστα χειρί. τοιγαροῦν, ἐπεὶ
τὸ σὸν λέχος ξυνῆλθον, εὖ φρονῶ τὰ σά,
καὶ σ' ἀντιάξω πρὸς τ' ἐφεστίον Διὸς
εὐνῆς τε τῆς σῆς, ἢ συνηλλάχθης ἐμοὶ,
μὴ μ' ἀξιώσῃς βάξιν ἀλγεινήν λαβεῖν
τῶν σῶν ύπ' ἐχθρῶν, χειρίαν ἐφεῖς τινι.
ἡ γὰρ θύμης σὺ καὶ τελευτήσας ἀφῆς,
ταύτη νόμιζε κάμε τῇ τοῦ ἡμέρα
βία ξυναρπασθεῖσαν Ἀργεῖων ὑπὸ
ξῦν παίδε τῷ σῷ δουλίαν ἐξειν τροφήν.
καὶ τις πικρὸν πρόσφθεγμα δεσποτῶν ἔρει
λόγοις ἱάπτων' ἱδέτε τὴν ὁμηνεύτην
Ἀξίων, δὲ μέγιστον ἱσχυσέν στρατοῦ,
οίας λατρείας ἀνθ' ὅσον ζήλην τρέφει.
τοιαύτ' ἔρει τις· καὶ μὲν δαίμων ἠλῶ,
σολ δ' αἰσχρὰ τὰτη ταύτα καὶ τῷ σῷ γένει.
ἀλλ' αἰδεσάι μὲν πατέρα τὸν σὸν ἐν λυγρῷ
γήρᾳ προλέϊτων, αἰδεσάι δὲ μητέρα
πολλῶν ἐτῶν κηροῦχον, ἢ σε πολλάκις
θεοὶ ἀρᾶται ζῶντα πρὸς δόμους μολεῖν·
οἴκτιρε δ', ὀναξ, παίδα τὸν σὸν, εἰ μέας
AJAX

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

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

tροφῆς στερηθείς σοῦ διοίσεται μόνος ὑπ' ὀρφανιστῶν μὴ φίλων, ὡσον κακὸν κεῖνο τε κάμοι τοῦθ', ὅταν θάνης, νεμεῖς. ἕμοι γὰρ οὐκέτ' ἔστιν εἰς ὃ τι βλέπω πλὴν σοῦ. σὺ γὰρ μοι πατρίδ' ἔστωσας δόρει, καλ μητέρ' ἀλλη μοῖρα τὸν φύσαντά τε καθείλεν "Αἰδον θανασίμους οἰκήτορας. τίς δὴ τ' ἐμοι γένοιτ' ἀν ἀντὶ σοῦ πατρίς; τίς πλοῦτος; ἐν σοι πᾶσ' ἔγινε σφόξωμα. ἀλλ' ἵσχε κάμοι μνήστιν' ἀνδρὶ τοι χρεῶν μνήμην προσείναι, τερπνὸν εἰ τί ποὺ πάθοι. χάρις χάριν γὰρ ἔστων ἡ τίκτους' ἀεί· στον δ' ἀπορρεῖ μνήςτις εὗ πεπονθότος, οὐκ ἂν γένωι' ἐθ' ὄστος εὐγενῆς ἀνήρ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
Αἶας, ἔχειν σ' ἀν σκίτου ώς κάγῳ φρενὶ θέλομ' ἀν' αἰνοίης γὰρ ἂν τὰ τῆς ἔπη.

ΑΙΑΣ
καὶ κάρτ' ἐπαίνου τεύξεται πρὸς γοῦν ἐμοῦ, ἐὰν μόνον τὸ ταχθὲν εὗ τολμᾷ τελείν.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
ἀλλ' ὁ φίλ' Αἶας, πάντ' ἔγινε πεῖσομαι.

ΑΙΑΣ
κόμιζε νῦν μοι παίδα τὸν ἐμόν, ὡς ἰδω.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
καὶ μὴν φόβοισή γ' αὐτὸν ἐξελυσάμην.  

ΑΙΑΣ
ἐν τοίῳ τοῖς κακοἶσιν; ἢ τί μοι λέγεις;  

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
μὴ σοὶ γέ που δύστηνος ἀντῆςας θάνοι.  

ΑΙΑΣ
πρέπον γέ τὰν ἦν δαίμονος τοῦμοι τῶδε.
AJAX

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

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

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

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

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

TECMESSA
Oh, in alarm I sent him from my charge.

AJAX
When I was stricken? Or what meanest thou?

TECMESSA
Yea, lest the poor child meeting thee should die.

AJAX
That fate indeed had matched my fortunes well.
ΑΙΑΣ

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἀλλ' οὖν ἐγὼ 'φύλαξα τοῦτό γ' ἀρκέσαι.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἐπήνεσ' ἔργου καὶ πρόνοιαν ἤν ἔθου.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

τί δήτ' ἄν ως ἐκ τῶν' ἄν ὠφελοῦμι σε;

ΑΙΑΣ

δός μοι προσεπείν αὐτὸν ἐμφανὴ τ' ἱδεῖν.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

καὶ μὴν πέλας γε προσπόλοις φυλάσσεται.

ΑΙΑΣ

τί δήτα μέλλει μή οὗ παρονσίαν ἔχειν;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ὁ παῖ, πατήρ καλεῖ σε. δεύρῳ προσπόλων

ἀγ' αὐτὸν οὔσσερ χερσῶν εὐθύνων κυρεῖς.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἐρποντι φωνεῖς ἡ λελειμμένῳ λόγων;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

καὶ δὴ κομίζει προσπόλων ὅδ' ἐγγύθεν.

ΑΙΑΣ

αἰρ' αὐτὸν, αἴρε δεύρῳ ταρβήσει γὰρ οὗ

νεοσφαγῆ του τόνδε προσλεύσων φόνον,

εἴπερ δικαίως ἑστ' ἐμὸς τὰ πατρόθεν.

ἀλλ' αὐτίκ' ὕμοις αὐτὸν ἐν νόμοις πατρὸς

δεὶ πωλοδαμνεῖν κάζομοιοῦσθαι φύσιν.

ὁ παῖ, γένοιο πατρός εὐτυχέστερος,

τὰ δ' ἀλλ' ὁμοίος· καὶ γένοι' ἄν οὐ κακὸς.

καῖτοι σε καὶ νῦν τοῦτο γε ζηλοῦν ἔχω,

ὀθούνεκ' οὐδὲν τῶν' ἐπανοήσανες κακῶν'

ἐν τῷ φρονεῖν γὰρ μηδὲν ἡδιστος βίος,
AJAX

TECMESSA
Well, I averted that calamity.

AJAX
Thy forethought and the action I commend.

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

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

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

AJAX
Then wherefore is his coming thus delayed?

TECMESSA
My child, thy father calls thee.
(To the servants)
Bring him hither,

Whoever of you guides his infant steps.

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

TECMESSA
I see one just approaching with the boy.
(EURYSACES is led forward.)

AJAX
Lift him, O lift him to my arms; no dread,
If he be mine, his father's true-born son,
He'll feel in gazing on this fresh spilt blood.
He must be early trained and broken in
To the stern rule of life his father held,
And moulded to the likeness of his sire.
My boy, mayst thou prove happier than thy sire,
But like him in all else, and thou wilt prove
No weakling; nay, e'en now, in this at least
I envy thee: of woes thou wottest naught,
[τὸ μὴ φρονεῖν γὰρ κάρτ’ ἀνώδυνον κακὸν] 1 ἐως τὸ χαίρειν καὶ τὸ λυπεῖσθαι μάθης.
ὅταν δ’ ἵκη πρὸς τοῦτο, δεῖ σ’ ὅπως πατρὸς
dείξεις ἐν ἔχθροις, οἷος ἐξ οἴου ἁράφης.
tὼς δὲ κοὐφος πνεύμασι βόσκου, νέαν
ψυχήν ἀτάλλουν, μητρὶ τῇ δε χαρμονήν.
ούτοι σ’ Ἀχαιῶν, οἶδα, μὴ τις ὑβρίσῃ
στυγναίσι λόβαις, οὔδὲ χωρίς ὄντ’ ἐμοῦ.
tοῖον πυλωρὸν φύλακα Τεῦκρον ἀμφὶ σοι
λείψῃ τροφῆ τ’ ἄοκνον ἔμπα, κεὶ ταῦν
τηλωπὸς οἰχεί, δυσμενῶν θῆραν ἔχων.
ἀλλ’ ἄνδρες ἀσπιστήρες, ἐνάλος λεῶς,
ὑμῖν τε κοινὴν τήδ’ ἐπισκήπτω χάριν,
κεῖνα τ’ ἐμὴν ἀγγείλατ’ ἐντολήν, ὅπως
τὸν παῖδα τόνδε πρὸς δόμους ἐμοὺς ἄγων
Τελαμώδιν δείξει μητρὶ τ’, Ἐριβοία λέγω,
ὡς σφιν γένηται γηροβοσκὸς εἰσαεί,
[μέχρις οὗ μυχοὺς κλιξοῦι τοῦ κάτω θεοῦ], 2
καὶ τὰμὰ τεύχῃ μήτ’ ἀγωνάρχαι τινὲς
θήσουν’ Ἀχαιῶν μῆθ’ ὁ λυμεως ἐμὸς.
ἀλλ’ αὐτὸ μου σῦ, παῖ, λαβὼν ἐπώνυμον,
Εὐρύσακες, ἰσχέ διὰ πυλωράφου στρέφων
πόρπακος, ἐπτάβοιον ἄρρητον σάκος;
tὰ δ’ ἄλλα τεύχῃ κοιν’ ἐμοὶ τεθάγεται.
ἀλλ’ ὡς τάχος τὸν παῖδα τόνδ’ ἤδη δέχον
καὶ δῶμα πάκτου, μηδ’ ἐπισκήπτωσι γόοις
dάκρυε’ κάρτα τοι φιλοικτιστον γυνῆ.
πῦκαζε θάσσον’ ὁ πρὸς ἰατροῦ σοφοῦ
θρηνεῖν ἐπῳδᾶς πρὸς τομῶντι πήματι.

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

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

\(^1\) Eurysaces means 'broad shield.'
ΑΙΑΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ
δέδοικ' ἀκούων τήνδε τὴν προθυμίαν·
οὐ γάρ μ' ἀρέσκει γλῶσσά σου τεθηγμένη.
ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
ὡ δέσποτ' Αἴας, τί ποτε δρασείεις φρενί;
ΑΙΑΣ
μὴ κρίνε, μὴ 'ξέταζε· σωφρονεῖν καλόν.
ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
οἷς ὡς ἀθυμῶ· καὶ σε πρὸς τοῦ σοῦ τέκνου
καὶ θεῶν ἱκνοῦμαι, μὴ προδούς ἡμᾶς γένη.
ΑΙΑΣ
ἀγαν γε λυπέεις· οὐ κάτωσθ' ἐγὼ θεοῖς
ὡς οὐδὲν ἀρκεῖν εἴμ' ὀφειλέτης ἐτί;
ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
eὐφήμα φάνει.
ΑΙΑΣ
tοῖς ἀκούονσιν λέγε.
ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
σὺ δ' οὐχὶ πείσει;
ΑΙΑΣ
πόλλ' ἄγαν ἤδη θροεῖς.
ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
tαρβῶ γάρ, ὄναξ.
ΑΙΑΣ
οὐ ξυνέρξεθ' ὡς τάχος;
ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
πρὸς θεῶν, μαλάσσου.
ΑΙΑΣ
μῶρα μοι δοκεῖς φρονεῖν,
eἰ τούμον ἡθος ἅρτι παιδεύειν νοεῖς.
AJAX

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

TECMessa
O my lord Ajax, what is in thy heart?

AJAX
Question not, ask not; be discreet and wise.

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

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

TECMessa
Oh hush, blaspheme not!

AJAX
Speak to ears that hear.

TECMessa
Wilt thou not heed?

AJAX
I have heard from thee too much.

TECMessa
Fear, my lord, makes me speak.

AJAX
Quick, close the doors.

TECMessa
Yield, I implore thee.

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

[Exit AJAX.]

53
ΑΙΑΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὁ κλεινὰ Σαλαμίς, σὺ μὲν ποὺ ναίεσι ἄλτπλακτος, εὐδαιμών,
πάσιν περίφαντος ἀεὶ:
ἐγὼ δ’ ὁ τλάμων παλαιὸς ἀφ’ οὐ χρόνος
Ἰδαία μίμων λειμών ἐπαυλα μηνῶν
ἀνήριθμος αἰὲν εὐνώμαι ἕκαν ἐλπίδ’ ἐχὼν
ἐτεῖ μὲ ποτ’ ἀνύσεων
tὸν ἀπότροπον ἀίδηλον "Αιδαν.

καὶ μοι δυσθεράπευτος Αἴας
ξύνεστιν ἐφέδροις, ὡμοί μοι,
θεῖα μανία ξύναυλος·
διὶ ἐξεπέμψει πρὶν δὴ ποτὲ θυρίῳ
κρατοῦντ’ ἐν "Ἀρει’, νῦν δ’ αὐ φρενὸς οἰοβώτας
φίλοις μέγα πένθος ηὐρηταί.
τὰ πρὶν δ’ ἔργα χεροῖν
μεγίστας ἀρετὰς
ἀφίλα παρ’ ἀφίλοις
ἔπεσ’ ἔπεσε μελέοις Ἀτρείδαισι.

ἡ ποὺ παλαίῳ μὲν σύντροφος ἅμέρα,
λευκῷ δὲ γῆρα μάτηρ νῦν ὅταν νοσοῦτα
φρενομόρφως ἀκούσῃ,
αἰλινοῦν αἰλινοῦν
οὐδ’ ὀικτρᾶς γόνων ὀρνιθοὸς ἁγδοῦς
ἡσεὶ δύσμορος, ἄλλ’ ὄξυτόνων μὲν φῶδας

1 Ιδαία μίμων | λειμώνια τολαί, μὴλων | ἀνήριθμος αἰὲν εὐνώμαι
L.; Lobeck, Bergk, and Jebb corr.
2 ἕντροφος MSS., Nauck corr.
AJAX

CHORUS

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

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

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

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

θρηνήσει, χερόπλακτοι δ'
ἐν στέρνονσι πεσοῦνται
dοῦτοι καὶ πολιᾷς ἀμνημα χαίτας.

ἀντ. β'
kρείσσων παρ' ἶν "Αίδη κεύθων ὁ νοσῶν μάταν,
δε ἐκ πατρέσας ἥκουν γενεᾶς ἀριστος 1
πολυτόνων Ἀχαϊῶν,
οὐκέτι συντρόφους
ὀργαῖς ἔμπεδος, ἀλλ' ἐκτὸς ὀμιλεῖ.
ὡ τλάμον πάτερ, οἴαν σε μένει πυθέσθαι
παιδῶς δύσφορον ἄταν,
ἀν οὐπω τις ἐθρεψέν

dίων Αἰακιδᾶν ἄτερθε τοῦδε.

ἈΙΑΣ

ἀπανθ' ὁ μακρός καναρίθμητος χρόνος
φύει τ' ἀδηλα καὶ φαινέντα κρύπτεται
κούκ ἐστ' ἀελπτον οὐδέν, ἀλλ' ἀλίσκεται
χω δεινὸς ὅρκος χαὶ περισσελείς φρένες.
κἀγὼ γάρ, ὃς τὰ δειν' ἐκαρτέρουν τότε,
βάφῃ σίδηρος ὃς ἐθηλύνθην στόμα
πρὸς τῆς τῆς γυναικὸς'. οἰκτίρω δὲ νιν
χήραν παρ' ἑχθροῖς παῖδα τ' ὀρφανῶν λιπεῖν.
ἀλλ' ἐμι πρὸς τὸ λυτρά καὶ παρακτίους
λειμῶνας, ὃς ἀν λύμαθ' ἀγνίσας ἐμὰ
μῆνιν βαρεῖαν ἕξαλυξωμαι θεᾶς,
μολῶν τε χώρον ἐνθ' ἀν ἀστίβῃ κίχω,
κρύφω τὸν ἔχχος τούμον, ἑχθρίσσον Βελῶν,
γαίας ἀρόχας ἐνθα μή τις ὀψεται·
ἀλλ' αὐτὸ νῦζ." Ἀιδῆς τε σφόντων κἀτω.
ἐγὼ γὰρ ἐξ οὗ χειρὶ τοῦτ' ἐδεξάμην

1 ἀριστος added by Triolinius.
AJAX

(No plaintive ditty of the nightingale)
With beating of the breast and rending of white hair.
Better be buried with the dead
Who lives with brain bewildered.
Of all the Greeks toil-worn
Behold the noblest born,
Now from his native temper warped and strange,
Whose thoughts in alien paths distracted range.
O wretched father, what a curse 'tis thine
Upon thy son to hear—curse that on none
E'er fell of all the Aeacidae's great line
Save him alone.

Enter AJAX.

AJAX

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

παρ' "Εκτορός δόρημα δυσμενεστάτου, 
οὕπω τι κεδυόν ἐσχον Ἀργείων πάρα. 
ἀλλ' ἔστ' ἀληθῆς ἡ βροτῶν παρομία, 
ἐχθρῶν ἄδορα δέρα κοῦκ ὀνήσιμα. 
τοιγάρ τὸ λοιπόν εἰσομεσθα μὲν θεῖς 
εἰκεῖν, μαθησόμεσθα δ' Ἀτρέιδας σέβειν. 
ἀρχουτές εἰσιν, ὥσθ' ὑπεικτέον. 
τι μὴν¹; 
καὶ γὰρ τὰ δεινὰ καὶ τὰ καρτερώτατα 
ἐτοιμ' ὑπείκειν τοῦτο μὲν νυφοστιβεῖς 
χειμῶνες ἐκχωροῦσιν εὐκάρπῳ θέρει; 
ἐξίσταται δὲ νυκτὸς αἰανῆς κύκλος 
τῇ λευκοπώλῃ φέγγος ἦμερα φλέγειν. 
δεινῶν τ' ἄμμα πνευμάτων ἐκοίμησε 
στένοντα πόντον. ἐν δ' ὁ παγκρατῆς ὄπνος 
λύει πεδήσας, οὔδ' ἂει λαβὼν ἔχει. 
ἡμεῖς δὲ πῶς οὐ γνωσόμεσθα σωφρονεῖν; 
ἔγωγ² ἐπίσταμαι γὰρ ἀρτίως ὅτι 
ὁ τ' ἐχθρὸς ἡμῖν ἐς τοσόνδ' ἐχθαρτέος, 
ὡς καὶ φιλήσουν αὐθίς, ἐστε τὸν φίλον 
τοσαθ' ὑπούργων ὠφελεῖν βουλήσομαι, 
ὡς αἱ ὅροι μενοῦντα τοῖς πολλοῖσιν γὰρ 
βροτῶν ἀπιστῶς ἐσθ' ἐταιρείας λιμῆν. 
ἀλλ' ἀμφὶ μὲν τούτοις εἰ σχῆσιν ὑπὸ δὲ 
ἐσω θεῖς ἐθδούσα διὰ τάχους, γύναι, 
ἐχθόνος τελείοια τοῦμον ὅν ἱρὰ κέαρ. 
ὕμεις δ', ἔταιροι, ταῦτα τῇδε μοι τάδε 
τιμάτε, Τεῦκρῳ τ', ἦν μόλη, σημῆνατε 
μέλειν μὲν ἡμῶν, εὐνοεῖν δ' ὑμῖν ἁμα. 
ἐγὼ γὰρ εἰμ' ἐκεῖσ' ὁποὶ πορευέσθων.²

¹ τι μὴ MSS., Herwerden corr.
² ἐγὼ δ' ἐπίσταμαι MSS., Blaydes corr.
AJAX

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

ὑμεῖς δ' ἄφραξι δράτε, καὶ τάχ', ἀν μ' ἴσως
ποθοῦσθε, κεῖ νῦν δυστυχὼ, σεσωμένου.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἐφριξ' ἐρωτε, περιχαρῆς δ' ἀνεπτόμαν. 
στρ.

ιῶ ἵω Πάν Πάν,

ὁ Πάν Πάν ἄληπτογκτ, Κυλλανίας χιονοκτύπον
πετράλαιας ἀπὸ δειράδος φάνηθ', ὃ
θεῶν χοροτοί ἄναξ, ὅπως μοι
Νέσσα Κυώσι' ὄρχηματ' αὐτοδαὴ ξυνόν ἱάψης.

νῦν γὰρ ἐμοὶ μέλει χορεύσαι.

'Ικάριων δ' ὑπὲρ πελαγέων μολὼν ἄναξ 'Ἀπόλλων

ὁ Δάλιος εὐγνωστός

ἐμοὶ ξυνείῃ διὰ παντὸς εὐφρών.

ἐλυσεν αἰνὸν ἄχος ἀπ' ὀμμάτων 'Αρης. 

ἀντ.

ἰῶ ἴω, νῦν αὖ,

νῦν, ὃ Ζεῦ, πάρα λευκόν εὐάμερον πελάσαι φάος
θοὰν ὄκυέλων νεῶν, ὁτ' Αλας

λαβίπουσος πάλιν, θεῶν δ' ἄν

πάνθυτα θέσμι' ἐξήνωσ' εὐνομίᾳ σέβων μεγίστα.

πάνθ' ὃ μέγας χρόνος μαραίνει,

κούδεν ἀναύδατον φατίσαιμ' ἄν, εὐτέρ' ἐξ ἀέλπτων

Αἰας μεταεγνώσθη

θυμοῦ τ'1 Ἀτρείδαις μεγάλων τε νεικέων.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἀνδρεῖς φίλοι, τὸ πρώτον ἀγγείλαι θέλω·

Τεύκρος πάρεστιν ἅρτι Μυσίων ἀπὸ

κρημνῶν· μέσον δὲ προσμολῶν στρατήγιον

κυδάζετα τοῖς πάσιν Ἀργείοις ὁμοῖοι.

στείχοντα γὰρ πρόσωβεν αὐτοῖν ἐν κύκλῳ

1 θυμῶν τ' or θυμῶν MSS., Hermann corr.

60
AJAX

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

CHORUS

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

(Ant.)

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

Enter MESSENGER.

MESSENGER

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

μαθόντες ἀμφέστησαν, εἰτ' ὄνειδεσιν ἤρασον ἠθεῖν κἂνθεν οὔτε ἔσθα ὅς οὐ, τὸν τοῦ μανέντος κατ' ὑπερλευτοῦ στρατοῦ ξύναμον ἀποκαλοῦντες, ὡς οὐκ ἀρκέσαι τὸ μῆ ὦ πέτροις πᾶς καταξαυθεῖς θανεῖν ὡστ' εἰς τοσοῦτον ἦλθον ὡστε καὶ χεροῖν κολεῶν ἐρυστὰ διεσπεραώθη ἔξωσι.

λήγει δ᾿ ἔρις δραμοῦσα τοῦ προσωτᾶτω ἀνδρῶν γερόντων ἐν ξυναλλαγῇ λόγου.
ἀλλὰ ἡμῖν Αἰας ποῦ στίν, ὡς φράσῳ τάδε; τοῖς κυρίοις γὰρ πάντα χρή δηλοῦν λόγον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
οὐκ ἐνδον, ἀλλὰ φρούδος ἀρτίως, νέας βουλὰς νέοισιν ἐγκαταζεύξας τρόποις.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἰοῦ ἰώ.
βραδεῖαν ἡμᾶς ἅρ ὁ τήνδε τὴν ὁδὸν πέμπων ἔπεμψεν ἡ ἰἀνὴν ἐγὼ βραδύς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
τί δ᾿ ἐστι χρείας τής ὑπεσπανισμένου;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

τὸν ἀνδρὸν ἀπηύδα Τεύκρος ἐνδοθεν στέγης μὴ ἐξο παρήκειν, πρὶν παρὼν αὐτὸς τύχη.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἀλλὰ οἰχεταί τοῖς, πρὸς τὸ κέρδιστον τραπεῖς γνώμης, θεοῦσιν ὡς καταλλαχῇ χόλον.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ταῦτ᾿ ἐστι τάτη μωρίας πολλῆς πλέα, εἰπερ τι Κάλχας εὐ φρονῶν μαντεύεται.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ποίου; τί δ᾿ εἰδὼς τοῦδε πράγματος πάρει; 1

1 πέρι MSS., Schneidewin corr.
AJAX

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

CHORUS

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

MESSENER

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

CHORUS

What pressing business has been slackly done?

MESSENER

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

CHORUS

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

MESSENER

Folly sheer,

If there be sense in Calchas' prophecy.

CHORUS

What prophecy? what knowest thou thereof?
ΑΙΑΣ

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

tosou'ton oîda kai paron etýghanou, 750
ek gar suvédrou kai tufainikou kûklou
Kalchbas metastas olos' Atréidôn díxa,
eis xeiwr Teúkrrou dexiân filofofrónwos
theis eîte kâpteskefke, pantoia téchnh
êirxai kat' hmera tonuophone to nyn tode
Aíanth' ûpò skhniai mhd' âfent' éan,
ei 'zdânt' ekeínon eisidein thelon pote.
êlâ gar auton tîde thêmera mónh
diâs 'Athánas mînis, âs efê legywn.
tâ gar periosôsa kánonhta swmatâ
pîptewen baireias prôs theôn dúspraxiaiws
êfase' o mántis, òstis ántherwpon fúsin
bálastwv ëpêteita mh kat' ántherwpon pronh.
keînos di' âp' oikovn eûthus èxoromâmenos
ânous kalwos lêgontos hýrèthi pateros.
o mên gar auton énnêtew. tèknon, ðórei
boulo krateiw mèn, sún theô di' âei krateiw.
o d' ùniskómpwos kaphronos ìmeîpsiato-
patêr, theois mèn kâw o mhdein ón ómous
krátopos kataktèsait. ègô ðe kai díxa
keînov ðepeída touï énpsiâseis klesos.
tosônd' èkómpe meûnov, eîta déuteron
770
diâs 'Athánas, ìnìk' òtrünsoua vn
nìdât' ëp' êxhroîs xeiwr phiowin trêpein,
tÔ' antifwnei deinov árheton òt' ètop' anasosa, toîs allouswn 'Argeîon pelas
ìstw, kath' hìmas' ò oûpot' èkhṛxei mîchi.
toûsâdei toî logousin âsteregî theas
êktêsait' orghyn, ou kat' ántherwpon pronwv.
âll' eîper èstis tîde thêmera, tâch' án
AJAX

MESSENGER

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

gενοίμεθ' αὐτοῦ σὺν θεῷ σωτήριοι.
tοσαίθ' ὁ μάντις εἴφ' ὁ δ' εὐθὺς ἐξ ἔδρας
πέμπει με σοι φέροντα τάσος ἐπιστολάς
Τεῦκρος φυλάσσειν. εἰ δ' ἀπεστερήμεθα,
oúde ἐστίν ἀνὴρ κείων, εἰ Κάλλχας σοφὸς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ὁ δαίμ Τέκμησα, δύσμορον γένος,
ὅρᾳ μολοῦσα τόνδ' ὅποι' ἔπη θροεῖ.
ξυρεῖ γὰρ ἐν χρῷ τούτῳ μὴ χαίρειν τινᾶ.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
τί μ' αὖ τάλαιναν, ἀρτίως πεπαυμένην
κακῶν ἀτρύτων, ἐξ ἔδρας ἀνύστατε;

ΧΟΡΟΣ
τούδ' εἰσάκουε τάνδρός, ὡς ἥκει φέρων
Ἄιαντος ἥμῖν πρᾶξιν ἢν ἡληγη' ἐγώ.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
οἶμοι, τί φής, ἄνθρωπε; μῶν ὀλώλαμεν;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
οὐκ οἶδα τὴν σὴν πρᾶξιν, Ἄιαντος δ' ὅτι,
θυραίος εἰπερ ἐστίν, οὐ θαρσῶ πέρι.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
καὶ μὴν θυραίος, ὅστε μ' ἀδίνειν τί φής.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
ἐκείων εἰργεῖν Τεῦκρος ἐξεφίεται
σκηνῆς ὑπαυλοῦ μηδ' ἀφίεναι μόνων.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
ποῦ δ' ἐστὶ Τεῦκρος, κατ' τῷ λέγει τάδε;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
πάρεστ' ἐκείων ἄρτι τὴνδ' ἐξοδον
ὁλεθρίαν Ἄιαντος ἑλπίζει φέρειν.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
οἶμοι τάλαινα, τοῦ ποτ' ἀνθρώπων μαθῶν;
AJAX

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

CHORUS

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

TECMESSA

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

CHORUS

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

TECMESSA

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

MESSENGER

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

TECMESSA

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

MESSENGER

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

TECMESSA

And where is Teucer? Wherefore speaks he thus?

MESSENGER

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

TECMESSA

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

F 2
ΑΙΑΣ

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
τοῦ Θεσπορέου μάντεως, καθ’ ἡμέραν
tὴν νῦν, ὃτ’ αυτῷ θάνατον ἦ βίον φέρει.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΑ
οἱ ’γας, φίλοι, πρόστητ’ ἀναγκαίας τύχης,
kai σπεύσαθ’, οἱ μὲν Τεῦκρον ἐν τάχει μολεῖν,
oi δ’ ἐσπέρους ἀγκώνας, οἱ δ’ ἀντήλιους
ζητεῖτ’ ἑντε τάνδρος ἔξοδον κακῆν.
ἐγνωκα γὰρ δὴ φωτὸς ἡπατημένη
καὶ τῆς παλαιᾶς χάριτος ἐκβεβλημένη.
oῖμοι, τι δράσω, τέκνου; οὐχ ἰδρυτέον·
ἄλλ’ εἰμι κἀγὼ κεῖσ’ ὁποίηρ ἀν σθένω.
χωρώμεν, ἐγκονώμεν, οὐχ ἔδρας ἀκμῇ
σφίζειν θέλοντας ἄνδρα γ’ ὅς σπεύδῃ θανεῖν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
χωρεῖν ἑτοιμος, κοῦ λόγῳ δεῖξω μόνον,
tάχος γὰρ ἐργον καὶ ποδῶν ἀμ’ ἐψεται,

ΑΙΑΣ
ο μὲν σφαγεὺς ἐστηκεν ἦ τομώτατοσ
γένοιτ’ ἄν, εἰ τ’ καὶ λογίζεσθαι σχολή·
δὰ ρον μὲν ἄνδρος Ἠκτορος ξένων ἐμοὶ
μάλιστα μισηθέντος ἐχθίστου θ’ ὀρᾶν·
pέπηγε δ’ ἐν γῇ πολεμία τῇ Τρῳάδι,
σιδηροβρώτι θηγάνη νεκκονής·
ἐπηξα δ’ αὐτόν εὗ περιστείλας ἕγω,
eυνούστατον τῶν ἄνδρ’ διὰ τάχους θανεῖν.
οὔτω μὲν εὐσκενοῦμεν’ εκ δὲ τῶν δὲ μοι
σὺ πρῶτος, ὦ Ζεύ, καὶ γὰρ εἰκός, ἀρκεσον.
αἰτήσομαι δὲ σ’ οὗ μακρὸν γέρας λαχείν.
pέμψων τιν’ ἡμῖν ἄγγελον, κακήν φάτων
AJAX

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

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

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

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

Τεύκρω φέροντα, πρώτος όσ με βαστάσῃ, πεπτώσα τρέχει περὶ νεορράντω ξίφει, καὶ μὴ πρὸς ἑξήρων τοῦ κατοπτευέτες πάρος ρυθῶν κύσιν προβλήτος οὐνοίς θ᾽ ἔλορ, τοσαύτα σ᾽, ὦ Ζεῦ, προστρέψω, καλῶ δ᾽ ἀμα πομπαίον Ἕρμην χθόνιον εὐ με κοιμίσαι, ἐὰν ἀσφαδάστω καὶ ταχέωμετα πλευρὰν διαρρήξαντα τρέχει φασγάνω. καλῶ δ᾽ ἀρωγοὺς τὰς ἀεὶ τε παρθένοις ἀεὶ θ᾽ ὀρώσας πάντα τὰν βροτοῖς πάθη, σὲμνὰς Ἕρμηνς τανύποδας, μαθεῖν ἔμε πρὸς τῶν Ἀτρείδῶν ὡς διόλυμαι τάλας, καὶ σφας κακοὺς κάκιστα καὶ πανολέθρους ξυναρπάσειαν, ὅσπερ εἰσορῶσ᾽ ἔμε [αὐτοσφαιρὴ πίπτοντα, τὸς αὐτοσφαιρεῖς πρὸς τῶν φιλόστων ἐκγόνων ὁλοιατο].

iat, ὥ ταχείαν ποινμοὶ τ᾽ Ἕρμηνες, γενέσθε, μὴ φείδεσθε πανδήμου στρατοῦ σὺ δ’, ὦ τὸν αἰτίνην οὐρανὸν διρρηλῶν Ἡλιε, πατρών τὴν ἐμὴν ὅταν χθόνα ἰδῆς, ἕπισχών χρυσῶντων ἡμᾶς ἀγγειῶν ἀτας ἐμᾶς μόρου τ᾽ ἔμων γέροντι πατρὶ τῇ τε δυστήμῳ τροφῷ. ἦ πον τάλαινα, τήμω ὅταν κλύη φάτιυ, ἦσει μέγαν κωκτοῖν ἐν πάσῃ πόλει. ἄλλω οὐδὲν ἐργὸν ταῦτα θρηνείσθαι μάτην, ἄλλω ἀρκτέον τὸ πράγμα σὺν τάχει τινί. ὦ Θάνατε θάνατε, νῦν μ᾽ ἐπίσκεψαι μολῶν. καίτοι μὲν κάκει προσαυξήσω ξυνῶν. σὲ δ', ὥ φαεύνης ἡμέρας τὸ νῦν σέλας, καὶ τὸν διφρευτὴν Ἡλιον προσενεπτὼ,

1 Rejected by Hermann, etc.
AJAX

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

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

πανύστατον δὴ κούπτοτ' αὖθις ὑπερον. ω̣ φέγγος, ω̣ γῆς ίερὸν οἰκείας πέδων Σαλαμῖνος, δὲ πατρὸν ἐστίας βάθρον κλειναὶ τ' Ἀθήναι καὶ τὸ σύντροφον γένος κρήναι τε ποταμοὶ θ' οἶδε, καὶ τὰ Τρωϊκά πεδία προσανδῶ, χαίρετ', δὲ τροφῆς ἐμοί. τοῦθ' ύμῶν Αἰας τοῦτος ὑστατον θροεῖ, τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἐν ὁ̣ Αἰδον τοῖς κάτω μυθήσομαι.

HMIXORION a'

πόνος πόνῳ πόνον φέρει. πᾶ πᾶ
πᾶ γὰρ οὐκ ἔβαν ἐγώ;
κούδεις ἐπίσταται με συμμαθεῖν 1 τόπος.
ιδοῦ.
δούπον αὖ κλών τινά.

HMIXORION b'

ἡμῶν γε νὰδς κοινόπλουν ὀμιλίαν.

HMIXORION a'

τὶ οὖν δῆ;

HMIXORION b'

πάν ἐστί βηται πλευρῶν ἐσπερον νεῶν

HMIXORION a'

ἐχεῖς οὖν;

HMIXORION b'

πόνου γε πλήθος, κούδὲν εἰς ὅψιν πλέουν.

HMIXORION a'

ἄλλ' οὐδὲ μὲν δὴ τὴν ἀφ' ἥλιον βολῶν κέλευθον ἄνηρ οὐδαμοῦ δηλοὶ φανεῖς.

1 The Greek is obscure and probably corrupt. Jehh suggests, but does not print σφε συνναίειν.
AJAX

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

[He falls upon his sword.

Re-enter Chorus.

semi-chorus 1

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

semi-chorus 2

'Tis we, thy mates.

semi-chorus 1

What cheer, mates?

semi-chorus 2

All westward of the fleet we've ranged and found

semi-chorus 1

Found, say you!

semi-chorus 2

Of moil enow, of what we sought no trace.

semi-chorus 1

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

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

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τίς ἂν δήτα μοι, τίς ἂν φιλοπόνων
ἀλιαδὰν ἔχων ἀὕτως ἀγρας,
ἡ τίς Ὀλυμπιάδων θεᾶν ἢ ῥυτῶν
Βοσπορίων ποταμῶν, τὸν ὁμόθυμον
εἰ ποθεὶ πλαξόμενον λεύσσων
ἀπόνι; σχέτλων γὰρ
ἐμὲ γε τὸν μακρὸν ἀλάταν πόνων
σῦρίφ μὴ πελάσαι δρόμῳ,
ἀλλὰ ἀμεμηνὸν ἄνδρα μὴ λεύσσειν ὅπου.

ΣΤΡ. 880

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἰῶ μοὶ μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τίνος βοὴ πάραυνος ἐξέβη νάπους;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἰῶ τλῆμον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τὴν δουρήληπτον δύσμορον νύμφην ὅρῳ
Τέκμησςαν, οἴκτῳ, τῷ δὲ συγκεκραμένην.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

φῶςω', ὀλωλα, διαπέπορθημα, φίλοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί δ' ἔστιν;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

Αἰας δ' ἢ μὴν ἄρτως νεοσφαγῆ
κεῖται, κρυφαῖρ φασγάνῳ περιπτυχῆς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀμοι ἐμῶν νόςτων'
ἀμοι, κατέπεφνες, ἄναξ,
τὸνδε συνναύταν, τάλας
ὡς ταλαιφρῶν γύναι.
AJAX

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

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

TECMESSA

Woe, woe is me!

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

TECMESSA

Me miserable!

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

TECMESSA

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

CHORUS

What aileth thee?

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

CHORUS

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

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

wód οúde τούδ ἔχοντος αἰάζειν πάρα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

tínos pot' ἄρ' ἔπραξε χειρὶ δύσμορος;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

αὐτὸς πρὸς αὐτοῦ, δῆλον· ἐν γάρ οἱ χθονὶ

πηκτὸν τόδ' ἔγχος περιπετεῖς κατηγορεῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὁμοί ἐμᾶς ἄτας, ὁλος ἄρ' αἰμάχθης, ἀφαρκτὸς

φίλων·

ἐγὼ δ' ὁ πάντα καφός, ὁ πάντ' ἀϊδρις, κατ-

ημέλησα. πᾶ πᾶ

κεῖται ὁ δυστράπελος, δυσόνυμος Αἰας;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

οὕτωι θεατός· ἄλλα ὑπν περιπτυχεῖ

φάρει καλύψω τόδε παμπήδην, ἐπεὶ

οὔδείς ἄν, ὡστις καὶ φίλος, πλαίη βλέπειν

φυσῶντ' ἀνω πρὸς βίνας ἐκ τε φοινίας

πληγῆς μελανθὲν αἰμ' ἀπ' οἰκείας σφαγῆς.

ὁμοί, τὶ δράσω; τὶς σὲ βαστάσει φίλων;

ποῦ Τεύκρος; ὡς ἀκμαί ἀν, εἰ βαίη, μόλοι,

πεπτῶτ' ἀδελφὸν τόνδε συγκαθαρμόσαι.

ὁ δύσμορ' Αἰας, οἶος ὅν οἶος ἔχεις,

ὡς καὶ παρ' ἐχθροῖς ἄξιος θρήνων τυχεῖν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἐμελλεῖς, τάλας, ἐμελλεῖς χρόνῳ

ἄντ.

στερεόφρων ἄρ' ἔξανυσσειν κακὰν

μοῖραν ἀπειρείσων πόνων. τοῖὰ μοι

πάννυχα καὶ φαέθοντ' ἀνεστέναξε

ὁμόφρων ἐχθρόδοπ' Ἀτρείδαις.
AJAX

TECMESSA
Thus lies he overthrown; 'tis ours to wail.

CHORUS
By whose hand did he thus procure his death?

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

CHORUS
Out on my blindness! All alone
Unwatched of friends he bled to death!
And I saw naught, heard naught, recked naught of
thee!
Where lies he, Ajax, the self-willed,
The unbending, luckless as his name?

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

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

οὐλὶς σὺν πάθει.
μέγας ἂρ’ ἢν ἐκεῖνος ἀρχὼν χρόνον
πημάτων, ἥμοις ἀριστοχείρ
— ὅπλων ἐκεῖτ’ ἀγὼν πέρι.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΧΑ

ιώ μοι μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

χωρεῖ πρὸς ἕπαρ, οἶδα, γενναία δύη.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΧΑ

ιώ μοι μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐδέν σ’ ἀπιστώ καὶ δὶς οἰμῶξαι, γυναῖ,
tοιούθ’ ἀποβλαφθείσαιν ἀρτίως φίλου.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΧΑ

σοὶ μὲν δοκεῖν ταῦτ’ ἔστ’, ἐμοὶ δ’ ἄγαν φρονεῖν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ξυναυδό.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΧΑ

οἷμοι, τέκνου, πρὸς οἷα δουλείας ξυγὰ
χωροῦμεν, οἱοὶ νῦν ἐφεστάσιν σκοποῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὁμοὶ, ἀναλγήτων
δισσῶν ἐθρόησασ ἄναυδ
ἔργ’ Ἀτρειδᾶν τῶν ἄχει.
ἀλλ’ ἀπείρῳ θεός.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΧΑ

οὐκ ἂν τάδ’ ἔστῃ τῆς μὴ θεῶν μέτα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἄγαν ὑπερβριθῆς γὰρ ἄχθος ἦνναυ.

1 ἄναυδον ἔργου MSS., Hermann corr.
2 Elmsley adds γὰρ.
AJAX

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

TECMessa

Woe, woe is me!

CHORUS

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

TECMessa

Woe, woe is me!

CHORUS

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

TECMessa

The woe I feel thou canst in part conceive.

CHORUS

'Tis true.

TECMessa

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

CHORUS

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

TECMessa

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

CHORUS

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

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
τοιόνδε μέντοι Ζηνὸς ἡ δεινὴ θεός
Παλλάς φυτεύει τῇ Ὄδυσσεώς χάριν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἡ ρά κελαινώπαν θυμὸν ἐφυβρίζει πολύτλας ἀνήρ,
γελᾶ δὲ τούσδε μαίνομένοις ἄχεσιν πολὺν γέλατα,
φεύ φεύ,
ξύν τε διπλοὶ βασιλῆς κλύοντες Ἀτρείδαι.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
οἱ δ’ οὖν γελώντων κάπισιαροῦτων κακοῖς
τοῖς τοῦδ’ ἱσως τοι, κεὶ βλέποιτα μὴ ’πόθουν,
θανόντα’ ἀν οἰμώξειαν ἐν χρεία δορὸς.
οἱ γὰρ κακοὶ γρώμαισι τῶν ἀθυρὸν χεροῖν
ἐχοντες οὖν ἵσασι, πρῖν τις ἐκβάλη.
ἐμοὶ πικρός τέθυηκεν ἡ κείνοις γλυκύς,
αὐτῷ δὲ τερπνός· ὅν γὰρ ἡράσθη τυχεῖν
ἐκτήσαθ’ αὐτῷ, θάνατον οὐπερ ἠθελεν.
τί δὴ τοῦδ’ ἐπεγιήλοκεν ἀν κάτα;
θεοῖς τέθυηκεν οὗτος, οὐ κείνοισιν, οὐ.
πρὸς ταύτ’ Ὅδυσσεως ἐν κενοῖς ὑβριζέτω.
Αἰας γὰρ αὐτοῖς οὐκέτ’ εστίν, ἀλλ’ ἐμοὶ
λιπῶν ἀνίας καὶ γόνως διοίχεται.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ
ἰῶ μοί μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
σίγησον· αὐθήν γὰρ δοκῶ Τεῦκρου κλύειν
βοῶντος ἀτης τήσδ’ ἐπίσκοπον μέλος.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ
ὁ φίλτατ’ Αἰας, ὁ ξύναιμον ὅμμ’ ἐμοί,
ἀρ’ ἥμποληκας, ὥσπερ ἡ φάτις κρατεῖ;
AJAX

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

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

TECMESSA
Well, let them laugh and mock at Ajax fall'n.
It may be, though they missed him not in life,
When comes the stress of war they'll mourn him dead.
Men of mean judgment know not the good thing
They have and hold till they have squandered it.
He by his death more sorrow gave to me
Than joy to them; to himself 'twas pure content,
For all he yearned to attain he won himself—
Death that he chose. Then wherefore scoff at him?
The gods were authors of his death, not they.
So let Odysseus, if it please him, vent
Vain taunts; for them there is no Ajax more,
And dying he has left me naught but woe.

TEUCER
Woe, woe is me!

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

Enter TEUCER.

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

ΧΟΡΟΣ
όλωλεν ἀνήρ, Τεύκρε, τοῦτ᾽ ἐπίστασο.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ
όμοι βαρείας ἄρα τῆς ἐμῆς τύχης.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ὡς ὡδ᾽ ἐχόντων

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ
ὁ τάλας ἔγω, τάλας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
πάρα στενάξειν.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ
ὁ περισσερχὲς πάθος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἀγαν γε, Τεύκρε.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ
φεῦ τάλας· τί γὰρ τέκνον
tὸ τοῦτο, ποῦ μοι γῆς κυρεῖ τῆς Τρφάδος;

ΧΟΡΟΣ
μόνος παρὰ σκηναίσιν.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ
οὐχ ὅσον τάχος
dῆτ᾽ αὐτὸν ἄξεις δεύρο, μὴ τις ὡς κενής
σκύμνων λεάνης δυσμενῶν ἀναρπάσῃ;

Ἰθ᾽, ἑγκόνει, σύγκαμνε· τοῖς θανοῦσι τοι

φιλοῦσι πάντες κειμένοις ἐπεγγελάν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
καὶ μὴν ἔτι ζῶν, Τεύκρε, τοῦτο σοι μέλειν

ἐφίεθ᾽ ἀνήρ κεῖνος, ὡσπερ οὖν μέλει.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ
ὁ τῶν ἀπάντων δὴ θεαμάτων ἐμοὶ

ἀλγιστῶν ὃν προσεῖδον ὀφθαλμοῖς ἐγὼ,
AJAX

CHORUS
He hath perished, Teucer, and report spake true.

TEUCER
Then woe is me for my most grievous loss.

CHORUS
And since ’tis thus—

TEUCER
Alas for me, alas!

CHORUS
The hour for mourning—

TEUCER
O sharp pang of pain!

CHORUS
Is come, O Teucer, as thou say’st.

TEUCER
Ay me!

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

CHORUS
Alone beside the tent.

TEUCER
Then bring him quickly,

Lest of our foemen one should snatch him up,

As from a lioness forlorn her cub.

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

To flout and triumph o’er the prostrate dead.

[Exit TECMESSA.

CHORUS
Yea, while he yet lived Ajax left to thee,

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

TEUCER
O saddest sight of all I ever saw,

O bitterest of all paths I ever trod,
ΑΙΑΣ

οδός θ' οδῶν πασῶν ἀνιάσασα δὴ
μάλιστα τούμων σπλάγχνον, ἢν δὴ νῦν ἐβην.
ὁ φίλτατ' Αἴας, τὸν σῶν ὡς ἐπησθὸμην
μόρον διόκων κάξιχνοσκοπούμενος.
ὁξεία γὰρ σου βάξις ὡς θεοῦ τίνος
dῆλθό τ' Ἀχαιοὶς πάντας ὡς οἴχει θανῶν,
ἀγώ κλύων δύστησον ἐκποδῶν μὲν ὄν
ὑπεστεναζοῦν, νῦν δ' ὀρῶν ἀπόλλυμαι.
οἴμοι.

1000

ἵθ', ἐκκάλυψαι, ὡς ἵδω τὸ πᾶν κακὸν.
ὁ δυσθέατον ὁμμα καὶ τόλμης πικρᾶς,
ὁσας ἁνίας μοι καταστείρας φύνεις.
ποὶ γὰρ μολέιν μοι δυνατόν, εἰς ποίους βροτούς,
τοὺς σοῖς ἀρήξαντ' ἐν πόνοισι μηδαμοῦ;
ἡ ποῦ με 1 Τελαμών, σὸς πατήρ ἐμὸς θ' ἀμα,
δέξατ' ἂν εὐπρόσωποι ἰλεώς τ' ἱσως
χωροῦντ' ἀνευ σοῦ. πῶς γὰρ ὄχι; ὅτω πάρα
μηδ' εὐτυχοῖτι μηδὲν ἡδίου γελᾶν.
οὕτως τί κρύψει; ποῖον οὐκ ἐρεῖ κακὸν
τὸν ἐκ δορὸς γεγώτα πολεμίου νόθον,
τὸν δειλὰ προδόντα καὶ κακανδρία
σὲ, φίλτατ' Αἴας, ἢ· δόλοισιν, ὡς τὰ σὰ
κράτη θανόντος καὶ δόμους νέμοισι σοῦς.
τοιαῦτ' ἀνήρ δύσοργος, ἐν γῆρα βαρύς,
ἐρεῖ, πρὸς οὐδὲν εἰς ἔρεων θυμοῦμενος.
τέλος δ' ἀπωστός γῆς ἀπορριφθῆσομαι,
δούλος λόγοισιν ἀντ' ἐλευθέρου φανεῖς.
τοιαῦτα μὲν κατ' οίκον. ἐν Τροίᾳ δὲ μοι
πολλοὶ μὲν ἔχθροι, παῦρα δ' ὀφελήσιμα.
καὶ ταῦτα πάντα σοῦ θανόντος ἡρόμην.
οἴμοι, τὶ δράσω; πῶς στ' ἀποσπάσω πικρόν

1010

1020

1 MSS. omit με, added by Kuster.
AJAX

The path that led me hither, Ajax loved,
My best-loved Ajax! when I learnt thy fate,
E'en as I tracked in desperate haste thy steps;
For a swift rumour, like a voice from heaven,
Ran through the host that thou wert dead and gone.
I heard it and I moaned in spirit afar,
But now the sight strikes death into my soul.
O woe!
Come, lift the sarcophagus; let me see the worst.
O bleeding form, O agonising sight!
How brave, how rash, how cruel in thy death;
Thy death, what seed of misery for me!
Where can I turn, what race of men will house me,
The wretch who failed to help thee in thy woes?
How Telamon, thy sire and mine withal,
Will beam upon me (can'st not picture him?)
When I return without thee! Telamon
Who in his hours of fortune never smiles!
Will he refrain? Will he not curse and ban
The bastard of his spear-won concubine,
The wretch who like a coward and poltroon
Forsook thee, dearest Ajax, or conspired
To hold thy realm and halls when thou wert dead?
Thus will he rave, the choleric, soured old man,
Ready to pick a quarrel for a straw.
And in the end I shall be banned, defamed,
Rejected, branded—*No free man, a slave.*
Such cheer at home awaits me, and at Troy
My foes are many and my friends to seek.
Thus by thy death I've profited! Ah me!
How tear thee from this cruel glittering blade,
ΑΙΑΣ

tούδ' αἰώλου κνώδοντος, ὦ τάλας, ὦ φ' οὐ
φονέως ἄρ' ἐξέπνευσα; εἴδες ὡς χρόνῳ
ἐμελλέ σ' "Εκτωρ καὶ θανῶν ἀποφθίσειν;
σκέψασθε, πρὸς θεῶν, τὴν τύχην δυοῖν βροτῶν.
"Εκτωρ μὲν, τί δὲ τούδ' ἐδωρήθη πάρα,
ζωστήρι πρισθεὶς ἱππικῶν ἐξ ἀντύγων
ἐκνάπττει αἶέν, ἔστ' ἀπέψυξεν βίων
οὔτος δ' ἐκεῖνον τήνδε δωρεὰν ἔχουν
πρὸς τούδ' ὀλωλε θανάσιμῳ πεσόματι.
ἀρ' οὐκ Ἕρων ἀυτ' ἑξάλκευσεν ξίφος
κάκεινον "Αἰδής, δημοουργὸς ἄγριος;
ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν καὶ ταῦτα καὶ τὰ πάντ' ἄει
φάσκομι' ἀν ἀνθρώποις μηχανάν θεοὺς;
οὔτ' δὲ μὴ τάδ' ἐστίν ἐν γνώμῃ φίλα,
κεῖνός τ' ἐκεῖνα στεργέτω κἀγὼ τάδε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μὴ τείνε μακράν, ἀλλ' ὅπως κρύψεις τάφῳ
φράξου τὸν ἄνδρα χῶ τι μυθήσει τάχα.
βλέπω γὰρ ἐχθρὸν φῶτα, καὶ τάχ' ἀν κακοῖς
γελῶν ἄ δὴ κακούργος ἐξίκοιτ' ἀνήρ.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

τῆς δ' ἐστίν ὄντων ἄνδρα προσλέυσεις στρατοῦ;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Μενέλαος, τί δὴ τόνδε πλοῦν ἐστείλαμεν.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

ὅρῳ· μαθεῖν γὰρ ἐγγὺς ὑπ' οὐ δυσπετής.

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

οὔτος, σὲ φωνῶ τόνδε τὸν νεκρὸν χερῶν
μή συγκομίζειν, ἀλλ' ἐὰν ὅπως ἔχει.
AJAX

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

CHORUS

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

TEUCER

What captain dost thou see?

CHORUS

Menelaus, he at whose behest we sailed.

TEUCER

'Tis he, not hard to recognise thus near.

Enter MENELAUS

MENELAUS

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

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

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ
tίνος χάριν τοσόνδ' ἀνήλωσας λόγον;
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ
dοκούντ' ἐμοί, δοκούντα δ' ὃς κραίνει στρατοῦ.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ
οὕκονν ἄν εἴποις ἦττιν' αἰτίαν προθείς;
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

ὁθούνεκ' αὐτὸν ἐλπίσαντες οὐκοθεν
ἀγειν Ἀχαιοῖς ξύμμαχόν τε καὶ φίλον,
ἐξηύρομεν ζητοῦντες ἐχθῆω Φρυγῶν.
διὸς στρατῷ ξύμπαντι βουλευόμαι φόνον
νύκτωρ ἐπεστράτευσεν, ὡς ἔλει δόρει·
κεὶ μὴ θεῶν τις τὴνδε πεῖραν ἔσβεσεν,
ἡμεῖς μὲν ἄν τὴνδ' ἢ όδ' εἰληφτεν τύχην
θανόντες ἄν προυκείμεθ' αἰσχύσω μόρῳ,
οὕτος δ' ἄν ἔξη. νῦν δ' ἐνήλλαξεν θεὸς
tὴν τοῦδ' ὑβρίν πρὸς μῆλα καὶ ποίμνας πεσεῖν.

ὁν εἰνεκ' αὐτὸν οὕτως ἔστ' ἀνήρ σθένων
τοσόντων ὅστε σῶμα τυμβεύσαι τάφῳ,
ἀλλ' ἀμφὶ χλωρὰν ψάμθων ἐκβεβλημένος
ὅρνισι φορβὴ παραλίος γενήσεται.

πρὸς ταῦτα μηδὲν δεινὸν ἔξαρχης μένος.

εἰ γὰρ βλέποντος μὴ δυνήθημεν κρατεῖν,
πάντως θανόντος γ' ἁρξομεν, κὰν μὴ θέλης,
χερσὶν παρευθύνοντες· οὐ γὰρ ἔσθ' ὅπου
λόγων γ' ἀκούσαι ζῶν ποτ' ἠθέλησ' ἐμῶν.
καίτοι κακοῦ πρὸς ἀνδρὸς οὕτα δημότην
μηδὲν δικαιοῦν τῶν ἐφεστῶτων κλέειν.

οὐ γὰρ ποτ' οὔτ' ἄν ἐν πόλει νόμοι καλῶς
φέρωντ' ἂν, ἐνθα μὴ καθεστήκη δέος,
οὔτ' ἄν στρατός γε σωφρόνως ἄρχοντ' ἔτη,
μηδὲν φόβου πρόβλημα μηδ' αἰδοὺς ἔχων.
AJAX

TEUCER
Wherefore dost waste thy breath in these proud words?

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

TEUCER
On what pretence? wilt please to tell us that?

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

ἀλλ’ ἄνδρα χρῆ, καὶ σῶμα γεννήσῃ μέγα,
δοκεῖν πεσεῖν ἂν κἂν ἀπὸ σμικροῦ κακοῦ.
δέος γὰρ φ’ πρόσεστιν αἰσχύνῃ θ’ ὁμοῦ,
σωτηρίαν ἔχοντα τόνδ’ ἐπίστασο.
οποῦ δ’ ὑβρίζειν δρὰν θ’ ὄ θνεταί παρῆ,
ταύτην νόμιζε τὴν πόλιν χρόνῳ ποτὲ
ἐξ οὐρίων δραμοῦσαν εἰς βυθὸν πεσεῖν.
ἀλλ’ ἑστάτῳ μοι καὶ δέος τι καίριον,
καὶ μὴ δοκῶμεν δρῶντες ἂν ἡδόμεθα
οὐκ ἀντιτίσειν αὐθίς ἂν λυπώμεθα.
ἐρπεὶ παραλλάξ ταῦτα. πρόσθεν οὕτως ἦν
αἰθῶν ὑβριστής, νῦν δ’ ἐγὼ μέγ’ αὐ φρονῶ.
καὶ σοὶ προφωνῶ τόνδε μὴ θάπτειν, ὅπως
μὴ τόνδε θάπτων αὐτὸς εἰς ταφᾶς πέσῃ.

ΧΟΡΟΧ

Μενέλαε, μὴ γνώμας ὑποστήσας σοφᾶς
eἰτ’ αὐτὸς ἐν θανοῦσιν ὑβριστῆς γένη.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΧ

οὐκ ἂν ποτ’, ἄνδρες, ἄνδρα θαυμάσαμι’ ἔτι,
δς μὴ δέν δυναῖσιν εἶδ’ ἀμαρτάνει,
ὅθ’ οἱ δοκοῦντες εὐγενεῖς περακεύει
τοιαύθ’ ἀμαρτάνουσιν ἐν λόγοις ἔπη.
ἀγ’ εἰπ’ ἰη’ ἀρχῆς αὐθίς, ἢ σὺ φῆς ἅγειω
τόνδ’ ἄνδρ’ Ἀχαιώς δεύρο σύμμαχον λαβών;
οὐκ αὐτὸς ἐξέπλευσεν ὃς αὐτοῦ κρατῶν;
ποὺ σὺ στρατηγεῖς τοῦδε; ποὺ δ’ σοι λέων
ἐξεστ’ ἀνάσσειν ὃν δ’ ἡγαγ’ οἰκοθεν;
Σπάρτης ἄνασσον ἠλθες, οὐχ ἤμων κρατῶν:
οὐδ’ ἐσθ’ ὅποι σοὶ τόνδε κοσμήσαι πλέον
ἀρχῆς ἐκείτο θεσμὸς ἢ καὶ τῶδε σέ.
ὑπαρχος ἅλλων δεύρ’ ἐπελευσας, οὐχ ὅλων

90
AJAX

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

CHORUS

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

TEUCER

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

στρατηγός, ὦστ' Ἀλαντός ἡγεῖσθαι ποτὲ.
ἄλλ' ὄντερ ἄρχεις ἄρχε καὶ τὰ σέμν' ἐπὶ κόλαζ' ἐκείνους: τόνδε δ', εἰτε μὴ σὺ φῆς
eἰθ' ἀτερος στρατηγός, εἰς ταφᾶς ἐγὼ
θήσω δικαίως, οὐ τὸ σὸν δείσας στόμα.
οὐ γὰρ τι τῆς σῆς εἶνεκ' ἐστρατεύσατο
γυναικός, ὃςπέρ οἱ πόνου πολλοῦ πλέρω,
ἄλλ' εἶνεξ' ὃρκων οἶσιν ἢν ἔνωμοτος,
σοῦ δ' οὐδέν' οὐ γὰρ ἥξιον τοὺς μηδένας.
πρὸς ταῦτα πλείους δεύρο κήρυκας λαβὼν
καὶ τὸν στρατηγὸν ἦκε, τοῦ δὲ σοῦ ψόφον
οὐκ ἂν στραφεῖν, ἐως ἂν ἦς οἶὸς περ ἐι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
οὔθ' αὖ τοιαύτην γλώσσαν ἐν κακοῖς φιλῶ·
tὰ σκληρὰ γὰρ τοι, κἂν ὑπέρδικ' ἃ, δάκνει.

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ
ὁ τοξότης ἐῳκεν οὐ σμικρὸν φρονεῖν.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ
οὐ γὰρ βάναυσον τὴν τέχνην ἐκτησάμην.

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ
μέγ' ἂν τι κομπάσειας, ἀσπίδ' εἰ λάβοις.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ
κἂν ψιλὸς ἄρκεσαισι σοι γ' ὑπλισμένῳ.

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ
ἡ γλῶσσα σου τὸν θυμὸν ὡς δεινὸν τρέφει.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ
ξῦν τῷ δικαίῳ γὰρ μέγ' ἐξεστὶν φρονεῖν.

92
AJAX

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

CHORUS

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

MENELAUS

Methinks this archer hath a captain's pride.

TEUCER

Aye, as the master of no vulgar art.

MENELAUS

How wouldst thou strut, promoted to a shield!

TEUCER

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

MENELAUS

How valorous with thy tongue!

TEUCER

He can be bold who hath his quarrel just.

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

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

δίκαια γὰρ τόνδ' εὐτυχεῖν κτείναντά με;
ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

κτείναντα; δεινόν γ' εἶπας, εἰ καὶ ξῆς θανῶν.
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

θεὸς γὰρ ἐκσφέξει με, τόδε δ' οὐχομαι.
ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

μὴ νυν ἀτίμα θεοὺς, θεοῖς σεσωσμένοις.
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

ἐγὼ γὰρ ἂν ψέξαιμι δαιμόνων νόμους;
ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

εἰ τοὺς θανόντας οὐκ ἔξω θάπτειν παρῶν.
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

τοὺς γ' αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ πολεμίους. οὐ γὰρ καλὸν.
ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

ἡ σοι γὰρ Άιας πολέμως προύστη ποτέ;
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

μυστιν' ἐμίσει· καὶ σὺ τοῦτ' ἡπίστασο.
ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

κλέπτης γὰρ αὐτοῦ ψηφοποιοῖς ἡρέθης.
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

ἐν τοῖς δικασταῖς, κούκ ἐμοί, τόδ' ἐσφάλη.
ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

πόλλ' ἂν κακῶς λάθρα σὺ κλέψειας κακά.
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

τοῦτ' εἰς αὖναν τούπος ἔρχεται τινι.
ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

οὐ μᾶλλον, ὡς ἑοικεν, ἡ λυπήσομεν.
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

ἐν σοί φράσω· τόνδ' ἐστίν οὐχὶ θαπτέου.
ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἀντακούσει τούτων ὡς τεθάψεται.
AJAX

MENELAUS
Justice quotha, to exalt my murderer?

TEUCER
Murdered, and yet thou livest! that is strange!

MENELAUS
Heaven saved me; in intention I was slain.

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

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

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

MENELAUS
Of mine own foes; to bury them were sin.

TEUCER
Was Ajax e'en thine enemy in the field?

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

TEUCER
Aye, thou hast robbed him by suborning votes.

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

TEUCER
A fair face thou canst put on foulest frauds.

MENELAUS
Someone I know will suffer for that word.

TEUCER
He who provoked is like to suffer more.

MENELAUS
One word more; he shall not be buried.

TEUCER
One word in answer; buried he shall be.
ΑΙΑΣ

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

ηδὴ ποτ' εἴδον ἄνδρ' ἐγὼ γλῶσσῃ θρασύν
ναῦτας ἐφορμήσαντα χειμὼνος τὸ πλεῖν,
ὡς θέγμα ἄν νῦκ ἀν ἡφέρε, ἴνικ' ἐν κακῷ
χειμώνος εἰχετ', ἀλλ' υφ' εἰματος κρυφεὶς
πατεῖν παρεῖχε τῷ θέλοντι ναοῖλων.
οὕτω δὲ καὶ σὲ καὶ τὸ σὸν λάβρουν στόμα
σμικρὸν νέφους τάχ' ἀν τις ἐκπνεύσας μέγας
χειμώνας κατασβέσει τὴν πολλὴν βοήν.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

ἐγὼ δὲ γ' ἄνδρ' ὑποτα μωρίας πλέων,
δς ἐν κακοῖς ὑβρίζε τοῖς τῶν πέλας.
κατ' αὐτὸν εἰσιδῶν τις ἐμφερήσ ἐμοὶ
ὁργὴν θ' ὠμοίος εἰπε τοιούτοι λόγον' ἀνθρωπε, μὴ δρά τοὺς τεθνηκότας κακώς:
εἰ γὰρ ποήσεις, ἵσθι πτημανούμενος.
τοιαῦτ' ἀνολβὸν ἄνδρ' ἐνουθέτει παρών.
ὁρῶ δὲ τοῖς νῦν, κάστιν, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖν,
οὐδεῖς ποτ' ἄλλος ἢ σύ. μῶν ἴνιξάμην;

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

ἀπειμι· καὶ γὰρ αἰσχρὸν, εἰ πῦθωτό τις
λόγοις κολάζειν ὦ βιάζεσθαι πάρα.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

ἀφερτέ νου· καμοὶ γὰρ αἰσχιστὸν κλείν
ἄνδρος ματαιὸν φλαύρ' ἐπη μυθουμένου.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἕσται μεγάλης ἐρυθίδος τις ψάγων.
ἀλλ' ὡς δύνασαι, Τεῦκρε, ταχύνας
σπεύσουν κολῆν κἀπετόν τιν' ἵδειν
τάδ', ἐνθα βροτοῖς τὸν ἄείμνηστον
tάφον εὐρωέντα καθέξει.
AJAX

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

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

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

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

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

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ
καὶ μὴν ἐσ αὐτὸν καίρον οἶδε πλησίοι
πάρεισιν ἀνδρὸς τοῦδε παῖς τε καὶ γυνὴ,
tάφον περιστελοῦντε δυστήνου νεκροῦ.
ὁ παῖ, πρόσελθε δεύρο καὶ σταθεῖσ πέλας
ἰκέτης ἤφαισε πατρός, ὡς σ’ ἐγείνατο.
θάκει δὲ προστρόπαιος ἐν χερῶν ἔχον
κόμας ἐμᾶς καὶ τῆςδε καὶ σαυτοῦ τρίτου,
ἰκτηρίου βησαυρῶν. εἰ δὲ τις στρατοῦ
βλὰ σ’ ἀποστάσεις τοῦδε τοῦ νεκροῦ,
κακὸς κακῶς ἀδαπτῶς ἐκπέσοι χθονός,
γένους ἀπαντός ρίζαν ἔξημιμένος,
ἀυτῶς ὁπωσπερ τόνδ’ ἐγὼ τέμνω πλόκον.
ἐχ’ αὐτόν, ὁ παῖ, καὶ φύλασσε, μηδὲ σε
κινησάτω τις, ἀλλὰ προσπεσῶν ἔχων.
ὑμεῖς τε μὴ γυναίκες ἀντ’ ἀνδρῶν πέλας
παρέστατ’, ἀλλ’ ἁρήγοτ’, ἐστ’ ἐγὼ μολὼν
τάφον μεληθὼ τώδε, κἂν μηδεὶς ἔδι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τὶς ἀρα νέατος ἐσ πότε λήξει πολυπλάγκτων
ἐτέων ἀριθμός,
τὰν ἀπαντόσ τοι ἐμοὶ δορυσσοῦτοιν
μόχθων ἀταν ἐπάγων
ἀν τὰν εὐρώδεα Τρωίαν,1
dῦστανον οὐείδος Ἑλλάνων;

ἀντ. στρ. α’

ὅφελε πρότερον αἰθέρα δύναι μέγαν ἡ τὸν
πολύκοινον Ἀιδαγ
κεῖνος ἀνήρ, ὅπε στυγερῶν ἐδείξειν ὑπλῶν
"Ἐλλασιν κοινὸν Ἀρη.

1 ἀνά τὰν εὐρώδῃ Τροῖαν MSS., Ahrens corr.
AJAX

Enter TECMessa and CHILD.

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

[Exit TEUCER.

CHORUS
(St. 1)
When shall the score be told, the sum of the endless years?
Weary am I of camps and tramps and the hurtling of spears.
Hither and thither I roam o’er the windswept Trojan plain,
Shame and reproach for Greece, for Grecians trouble and pain.

(Ant. 1)
Would he had sunk to hell, or vanished in ether afar,
Who first admonished the Greeks to league themselves for the war—
ΑΙΑΣ

ιδο πόνοι πρόγονοι πόνων
κείνος γὰρ ἐπερευν ἀνθρώπους.

ἐκείνος οὔτε στεφάνων
οὔτε βαθείαν κυλίκων
νείμεν ἐμοὶ τέρψιν ὀμιλεῖν,
οὔτε γλυκῶν αὐλῶν ὀτὸσον,
δύσμορος, οὔτ' ἐνυχίαν
τέρψιν ιαύειν.
ἐρώτων δ', ἐρώτων ἀπέπανσεν, ὡμοί.
κεῖμαι δ' ἀμέριμνος οὔτως,
ἀεὶ πυκναῖς δρόσοις
τεγγόμενος κόμας,
λυγρᾶς μυήματα Τρολας.

καὶ πρὶν μὲν αἰὲν νυχίον.
δείματος ἢ μοι προβόλα
καὶ βελέων θεύριος Αἰας.

νῦν δ' οὗτος ἀνεῖται στυγερῷ
dαίμονι τίς μοι, τίς ἔτ' οὖν
tέρψις ἐπέσται;
γενοῦμαι ἵν' ὑλᾶεν ἐπεστὶ πόντου
πρόβλημ' ἀλλικυστον, ἀκραν
ὑπὸ πλάκα Σουνίου,
tὰς ἱερὰς ὅπως
προσείπομεν Ἀθάνας.

1 ἐνυχίαν MSS., Wolff corr.
AJAX

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ΤΕΤΙΚΡΟΣ
καὶ μὴν ἴδοις ἐσπευσα τὸν στρατηλάτην Ἄγαμέμονον ἤμων δεύρο τὸν ὅρμωμενον δῆλος δὲ μοῦστι σκαῖον ἐκλύσων στόμα.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
σὲ δὴ τὰ δεινὰ ρήματ’ ἀγγέλλουσι μοι τλῆναι καθ’ ἴμων ὅδ’ ἀνοιμωκτὶ χανείν; σὲ τοι, τὸν ἐκ τῆς αἰχμαλωτίδος λέγω, ἥ πον τραφεὶς ἀν μητρὸς εὐγενοῦς ἀπὸ ἴνηλ’ ἐκόμπεις καὶ’ ἀκρῶν ὠδοιπόρεις, ὃτ’ οὐδὲν ὡς τοῦ μηδὲν ἀντέστης ὑπὲρ, κοῦτε στρατηγοὺς οὕτε ναυάρχους μολεῖν ἡμὰς Ἀχαίον οὐδὲ σοῦ διομόσω, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸς ἀρχων, ὡς σὺ φής, Αἰας ἐπλει. ταῦτ’ οὐκ ἀκούεις μεγάλα πρὸς δούλων κακά; ποίον κέκραγας ἀνδρῷ ὅδ’ ὑπέρφρονα; ποί βάντος ἡ ποῦ στάντος οὕτε οὐκ ἐγώ; οὐκ ἄρ’ Ἀχαίος ἀνδρεῖς εἰσὶ πλην ὅδε; πικροὺς δουμεν τῶν Ἀχιλλείων ὄπλων ἀγώνας Ἀργείουσι κηρύξαι τότε, εἰ πανταχοῦ φανοῦμεθ’ ἐκ Τεύκρον κακόν, κοῦκ ἀρκέσεις ποθ’ ἡμῖν οὐδ’ ἡσημένοις εἰκεῖν α’ τοῖς πολλοῖς ἡρεσκεν κριταῖς, ἀλλ’ αἰέν ἡμᾶς ἡ κακοὶς βαλεῖτε ποῦ ἡ σὺν δόλῳ κεντήσεθ’ οἱ λελειμμένοι. ἐκ τῶν δὲ μέντοι τῶν τρόπων οὐκ ἂν ποτε κατάστατοι γένοιτ’ ἃν οὐδενὸς νόμου, εἰ τοὺς δίχη νυκῶντας ἐξωθήσομεν καὶ τοὺς ὑπόθεθεν εἰς τὸ πρόσθεν ἄξομεν. ἀλλ’ εἰρκτέον τάδ’ ἐστιν’ οὗ γὰρ οἱ πλατεῖς οὐδ’ εὐρύνωτοι φῶτες ἀσφαλέστατοι,
Enter TEUCER.

TEUCER

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

AGAMEMNON

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

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

ἀλλ' οἱ φρονοῦντες εὗ κρατοῦσι πανταχοῦ. μέγας δὲ πλευρὰ βοῦς ὑπὸ σμικρᾶς ὅμως μάστιγος ὁρθὸς εἰς ὁδὸν πορεύεται. καὶ σοὶ προσέρπου τοῦτ' ἐγὼ τὸ φάρμακον ὥρ᾽ τάχ', εἰ μὴ νοῦν κατακτήσει τινά· ὃς ἄνδρός σύκετ' ὄντος, ἀλλ' ἦδη σκίᾶς, θαρσῶν ὑβρίζεις καξελευθεροστομεῖς.

οὐ σωφρονήσεις; οὐ μάθων δὲ εἰ φύσιν ἀλλον τιν' ἄξεις ἄνδρα δεῦρ' ἐλεύθερον, ὅστις πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀντὶ σοῦ λέξει τὰ σὰ; σοῦ γὰρ λέγοντος φύκετ' ἀν μάθοιμ' ἐγὼ· τὴν βάρβαρον γὰρ γλῶσσαν οὐκ ἐπαίω.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

εἰθ' ὑμῖν ἀμφότεροι σωφρονεῖν· τοῦτον γὰρ οὐδὲν σφῶν ἐχω λύφων φράσαι.

ΤΕΙΚΡΟΣ

φεῦ· τοῦ θανόντος ὡς ταχεῖα τις βροτοῖς χάρις διαρρεῖ καὶ προδοῦσ' ἀλίσκεται,

εἰ σοῦ γ' ὃδ' ἄνηρ οὐδ' ἐπὶ σμικρῶν λόγων, Αἰασ, ἦτ' ἰσχεὶ μνήστων, οὐ σοῦ πολλάκις τὴν σὴν προτείνων προκαμές ψυχὴν δώρει. 1270

ἀλλ' οἴχεται δὴ πάντα ταῦτ' ἐρριμένα. ὁ πολλὰ λέξας ἄρτε κανόνη ἔπη,

οὗ μημονεύεις φύκετ' οὐδέν, ἥμισα ἔρκεοι ποθ' ὑμᾶς ὄντος ἐγκεκλημένους,

ἡ δὲ τὸ μηδὲν ὄντας, ἐν τροπῇ δορὸς ἐρρύσατ' ἐλθὼν μοῦν, ἀμφὶ μὲν νεὼν ἄκροισιν ἢδὲ ναυτικοὶς ἐδώλοις πυρὸς φλέγοντος, εἰς δὲ ναυτικὰ σκάφη πηδῶντος ἄρδην· Ἐκτότοκος τάφρων ὑπὲρ;

τὶς ταῦτ' ἄπειρξεν; ὦχι ὃδ' ἦν οἱ δρῶν τάδε, 1280
AJAX

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

CHORUS

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

TEUCER

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

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δυ οὐδαμοὶ φής, οὐ σὺ μή, βῆναι1 πολί;
ἀρ' ὡμίν οὖνος ταύτ' ἐδρασαμέν ἑνίθκα;
χῶτ' αὖθις αὐτὸς "Εκτορὸς μόνος μόνον
λαχών τε κάκελευστος ἢλθ' ἐναντίος,
οὐ δραπέτην τὸν κλήρον ἐς μέσον καθεῖς,
ὑγρᾶς ἀροῦρας βόλων, ἀλλ' ὦς εὐλόφον
κυνῆς ἐμελλὲ πρῶτος ἄλμα κουφεῖν;
δό' ἢν ὁ πράσσων ταύτα, σὺν δ' ἐγὼ παρὼν,
ὁ δοῦλος, οὐκ τῆς βαρβάρου μητρὸς γεγός.
δύστηνε, ποί βλέπων ποτ' αὐτὰ καλ θροεῖς;
οὐκ οἰσιθα σοῦ πατρὸς μὲν ὦς προύφοι πατήρ
ἀρχαίον ὁντα Πέλοπα βάρβαρον Φρύγα;
'Ατρέα δ', ὦς αὖ σ' ἔσπειρε δυσσεβέστατον,
προθεντ' ἀδελφῷ δεῖπνων οἰκεῖων τεκνών;
αὐτὸς δὲ μητρὸς ἐξέφυς Κρήσσης, ἐφ' ἢ
λαβὼν ἐπακτὸν ἀνδρὸς φίλους, πατήρ
ἐφήκεν ἔλλοις ιχθύσιν διαφθοράν.
τοιοῦτος ὄν τοιοῦτον ὑειδίζεις σποράν;
ὁς ἐκ πατρὸς μὲν εἰμὶ Τελαμῶνος γεγός,
ὅστες στρατοῦ τὰ πρὸτ' ἀριστεύσας ἐμὴν
ἰσχεῖ ξύνευνον μητέρ', ἥ φύσει μὲν ἥν
βασίλεια, Δαομέδουτος. ἔκκριτον δέ νυν
dώρημα κείνω "δωκεν Ἀλκμήνης γώνοι.
ἀρ' ὦδ' ἀριστος ἦς ἀριστέων δυοὶ
βλαστῶν διὰ αἰάξυνοι με τοὺς πρὸς ἀῖματος,
οὐσ νῦν σὺ τοιοῦτον ἐν πονοσί κειμένους
ἀθάντους, οὐδ' ἐπαισχύνει λέγων;
εὐ ἑυ τόδ' ἵσθη, τοῦτον εἰ βαλεῖτέ ποιν.
AJAX

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

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

βαλείτε χήμας τρεῖς ὅμοιοι συγκειμένοις.
ἐπεὶ καλὸν μοι τοῦδ᾽ ὑπερπονοομένῳ
θανεῖν προδήλως μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς σῆς ὑπὲρ
γυναικός, ἢ τοῦ σοῦ γ᾽ ὁμαίμονος λέγω;
πρὸς ταύθ᾽ ὅρα μὴ τούμον, ἄλλα καὶ τὸ σῶν
ὡς εἰ μὴ πημανεῖς τι, βουλήσει ποτὲ
καὶ δειλὸς εἶναι μᾶλλον ἢ 'ν ἐμὸι θρασῦς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀναξ Ὄδυσσεῦ, καιρὸν ἵσθ᾽ ἔληλυθός,
εἰ μὴ ἐκβολήσων, ἀλλὰ συλλύσων πάρει.

ΟΔΤΣΕΣΕΣ

τι δ᾽ ἔστων, ἄνδρες; τηλόθεν γὰρ ἡσθόμην
βοὴν Ἀτρειδῶν τῷ ἐπ᾽ ἀλκίμῳ νεκρῷ.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

οὐ γὰρ κλωντεῖς ἐσμεν αἰσχίστους λόγους,
ἀναξ Ὅδυσσεῦ, τοῦδ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἄνδρος ἄρτιως;

ΟΔΤΣΕΣΕΣ

πολοῦς; ἔγω γὰρ ἄνδρὶ συγγενώμην ἔχω
κλωντι φλαῦρα συμβαλεῖν ἐπὶ κακά.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

ἥκουσεν αἰσχρά: δρῶν γὰρ ἦν τοιαύτα με.

ΟΔΤΣΕΣΕΣ

τι γὰρ σ᾽ ἔδρασεν, ὡστε καὶ βλάβην ἔχειν;

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

οὐ φησ᾽ ἐάσεων τόνδε τὸν νεκρὸν ταφῆς
ἀμοιρον, ἄλλα πρὸς βίαν θάψειν ἐμοῦ.

ΟΔΤΣΕΣΕΣ

ἐξεστιν οὐν ἐπὶ τάληθι φίλῳ
sole μηδὲν ἥσουν ἢ πάρος ἐξεπηρετεῖν; 2

1 σοῦ θ᾽ MSS., Bothe corr. 2 ἐξεπηρετεῖν MSS., Lobeck corr.
AJAX

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

Enter Odysseus.

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

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

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

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

AGAMEMNON
I did abuse him as his acts deserved.

ODYSSEUS
Say by what action gave he just offence?

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

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

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

εἰπ'· ἢ γὰρ εἰπὺν οὐκ ἂν εὐ φρονῶν, ἐπεὶ φίλον σ' ἐγὼ μέγιστον Ἄργειῶν νέμω.

ΟΔΣΣΕΤΣ

ἀκουὲ νῦν. τὸν ἄνδρα τόνδε πρὸς θεῶν μὴ τλῆς ἁθαπτῶν ὅτι ἀναλγήτως βαλέιν· μηδ' ἡ βία σε μηδαμῶς νικησάτω τοσόνδε μισεῖν ὡστε τὴν δίκην πατεῖν.

κάμοι γὰρ ἂν τοθ' οὕτως ἔχθιστος στρατοῦ, ἐξ οὗ 'κράτησα τῶν 'Αχιλλείων ὑπλων, ἀλλ' αὐτὸν ἔμπας ὄντ' ἐγὼ τοιὸν' ἐμοὶ οὐκ ἀντατιμάσαιμ' ἂν, ὡστε μὴ λέγειν ἐν' ἄνδρ' ἰδεῖν ἄριστον Ἀργεῶν, ὅσοι Ἱππίαν ἁφικομεσθα, πλὴν Ἀχιλλέως. ὡστ' οὐκ ἂν ἐνδίκως γ' ἀτιμάζοιτό σοι· οὐ γάρ τι τούτων, ἀλλὰ τοὺς θεῶν νόμους φθείροις ἂν. ἄνδρα δ' οὐ δίκαιον, εἰ θάνοι, βλάπτειν τὸν ἐσθλόν, οὔτ' ἕαν μισῶν κυρῆς.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

σὺ ταύτ', 'Οδυσσεύ, τοῦδ' ὑπερμαχεῖς ἐμοί;

ΟΔΣΣΕΤΣ

ἐγωγ'· ἐμύσουν δ', ἡμίκ' ἂν μισεῖν καλῶν.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

οὐ γὰρ θανόντι· καὶ προσεμβῆναι σε χρή;

ΟΔΣΣΕΤΣ

μὴ χαἳρ', Ἀτρείδη, κέρδεσιν τοῖς μὴ καλοῖς.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

τὸν τοι τύραννον εὐσεβείν οὐ ράδιον.

ΟΔΣΣΕΤΣ

ἀλλ' εὐ λέγουσι τοῖς φίλοις τιμᾶς νέμειν.
AJAX

AGAMEMNON

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

ODYSSEUS

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

AGAMEMNON

Wilt thou, Odysseus, take his part against me?

ODYSSEUS

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

AGAMEMNON

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

ODYSSEUS

Delight not, son of Atreus, in ill gains.

AGAMEMNON

’Tis hard for monarchs to show piety.

ODYSSEUS

But not respect for friends who counsel well.
ΑΙΑΣ

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
κλύειν τὸν ἐσθλὸν ἄνδρα χρή τῶν ἐν τέλει.
ΟΔΤΕΣΕΤΕ
παύσαι· κρατεῖς τοι τῶν φίλων νικώμενος.
ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
μέμνησθι ὁποίῳ φωτὶ τὴν χάριν δίδως.
ΟΔΤΕΣΕΤΕ
οὐ ἕχθρος ἄνήρ, ἀλλὰ γενναῖος ποτ' ἦν.
ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
τί ποτε ποήσεις; ἕχθρον ὡδ' αἴδει νέκυν;
ΟΔΤΕΣΕΤΕ
νικᾶ γὰρ ἅρετή με τῆς ἕχθρας πολὺ.
ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
toioíde méntoi fôtès émplheticoi brotów.
ΟΔΤΕΣΕΤΕ
ἡ κάρτα πολλοί νῦν φίλοι καθὼς πικροί.
ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
toioúsd' épaineís δήτα σὺ κτάσθαι φίλους;
ΟΔΤΕΣΕΤΕ
σκληράν épaineív oû fíloû ψυχῆν ἐγώ.
ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
ἡμᾶς σὺ δείλοις τῇδε θῆμερα φανεῖς.
ΟΔΤΕΣΕΤΕ
ἄνδρας μὲν οὖν Ἄλλησι πᾶσιν ἐνδίκους.
ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
ἀνωγας οὖν μὲ τὸν νεκρὸν θάπτειν ἔὰν;
ΟΔΤΕΣΕΤΕ
ἐγγογέ· καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸς ἐνθάδ' ἵξομαι.
ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
ἡ πάνθ' ὁμοία πᾶς ἄνηρ αὐτῷ πονεῖ.
AJAX

AGAMEMNON
A true man ever heeds authority.

ODYSSEUS
Forbear: thou conquerest, yielding unto friends.

AGAMEMNON
Think to what kind of man thou showest grace.

ODYSSEUS
My foe he was, but still a noble foe.

AGAMEMNON
What wouldst thou? Honour a dead foeman’s corpse?

ODYSSEUS
With me his worth outweighs his enmity.

AGAMEMNON
Such sudden change of mind we call caprice.

ODYSSEUS
Common enough the change from friend to foe.

AGAMEMNON
Dost thou commend such fickle friends as these?

ODYSSEUS
A stubborn temper I would ne’er commend.

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

ODYSSEUS
Nay, as just rulers in the eyes of Greece.

AGAMEMNON
Thou bidst me then permit the burial?

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

AGAMEMNON
How true the saw, each labours for himself.
ΑΙΑΣ

ΟΔΥΣΕΙΤΕ
τῷ γάρ με μᾶλλον εἰκὸς ἢ μαυτῷ πονεῖν;
ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΟΝ
σὼν ἀρα τοῦργον, οὐκ ἐμὸν κεκλῆσεται.
ΟΔΥΣΕΙΤΕ
ὡς ἂν ποῆσης, πανταχῇ χρηστός γ᾽ ἔσει.
ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΟΝ
ἀλλ᾽ εὖ γε μέντοι τούτ᾽ ἐπίστασα" ὡς ἐγὼ
σοί μὲν νέμοιμ᾽ ἂν τῆςδε καὶ μείζω χάριν,
οὗτος δὲ κάκει κάνθάδ᾽ ὅν ἔμοιγ᾽ ὀμῶς
ἐχθιστος ἐσται· σοὶ δὲ δράν ἐξεσθ᾽ ἄ χρῆς."
ΧΟΡΟΣ
δότις σ᾽, Ὀδυσσεύ, μὴ λέγει γνώμη σοφὸν
φύναι, τοιούτον ὃντα, μῶρος ἐστ᾽ ἄνηρ.
ΟΔΥΣΕΙΤΕ
καὶ νῦν γε Τεῦκρος τάπο τοῦδ᾽ ἀγγέλλομαι,
ὁσον τὸτ᾽ ἐχθρὸς ἦ, τοσόνδ᾽ εἶναι φίλος.
καὶ τὸν θανόντα τόνδε συνθάπτειν θέλω
καὶ ξυμπονείν καὶ μηδὲν ἐλλείπειν ὅσων
χρὴ τοῖς ἀρίστοις ἀνδράσιν πονεῖν βροτοῦς.
ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ
ἀριστ᾽ Ὀδυσσεύ, πάντ᾽ ἔχω σ᾽ ἐπαινέσαι
λόγοις, καὶ μ᾽ ἐφευσας ἐλπίδος πολύ.
τούτῳ γὰρ ὃν ἐχθιστος Ἀργείων ἄνηρ
μόνος παρέστης χερσίν, οὐδ᾽ ἐτλης παρὼν
θανόντι τάδε ξῶν ἐφυβρίσαι μέγα,
ὡς ὁ στρατηγὸς οὐτιβρόντης μολὼν
αὐτὸς τε χῶξ εὔναιμος ἡθελησάτην
λωβητὸν αὐτὸν ἐκβαλεῖν ταφῆς ἀτερ.
τουγάρ σφ᾽ Ὀλύμπου τοῦδ᾽ ὁ πρεσβεύων πατῆσι
1 χρῆ MSS., Dindorf corr.

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AJAX

ODYSSEUS
And who deserves my labour more than I?

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

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

AGAMEMNON
To thee, my friend, of this be well assured,
I'd grant a favour greater e'en than this.
But that man, as in living so in death,
Shall have my hate. So do as pleaseth thee.

[Exit AGAMEMNON.

CHORUS
Whoe'er, Odysseus, having proof like this,
Denies thy wisdom is himself a fool.

ODYSSEUS
And now to Teucer, once my foe, henceforth
I proffer friendship staunch and true as was
Mine enmity; and I would ask to share
With you in obsequies and ritual
To grace his grave; no service would I stint
That man can render to the mighty dead.

TEUCER
Noblest Odysseus, I have naught but praise
For thy good words that all belie my fears.
Of all the Greeks thou wast his deadliest foe,
Yet thou alone didst dare espouse his cause,
And hadst no heart to insult this dumb cold clay,
Like yonder crack-brained chief of the host who came,
He and his brother general, with intent
To cast him forth defamed without a grave.
For that may he who rules in heaven supreme,
ΑΙΑΣ

μνήμων τ’ Ἐρυνύς καὶ τελεσφόρος Δίκη κακοὺς κακῶς φθείρειαν, ὡσπερ ἥθελον τὸν ἀνδρα λῶβαις ἐκβαλεῖν ἀναξίως.

σὲ δ’, ὁ γεραιοῦ σπέρμα Δαέρτου πατρός, τάφου μὲν ὁκνὸ τοῦδ’ ἐπιφανεῖν ἐὰν, μὴ τῷ θανόντι τούτῳ δυσχερὲς ποιῶ.

τὰ δ’ ἀλλὰ καὶ ξύμπρασσε, κεῖ τινα στρατοῦ θέλεις κομίζειν, οὐδὲν ἁλγος ἐξομεν.

ἐγὼ δὲ τάλλα πάντα πορούνω. σὺ δὲ ἀνήρ καθ’ ἡμᾶς ἐσθλὸς ὁν ἐπίστασο.

ΟΔΥΣΕΙΣ

ἀλλ’ ἥθελον μὲν. εἰ δὲ μὴ στί σοι φίλον πράσσειν τάδ’ ἡμᾶς’, εἰμ’ ἐπαινέσας τὸ σόν.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

ἀλις: ἢδη γὰρ πολὺς ἐκτέταται χρόνος. ἀλλ’ οἱ μὲν κοίλην κάπητον χερσὶ ταχύνατε, τοῖ δ’ ύψιβατον τρίποδ’ ἀμφίπτυρον λουτρῶν ὅσιὼν θέσθ’ ἐπίκαιρον.

μιὰ δ’ ἐκ κλισίας ἀνδρῶν ὅλῃ τὸν ὑπαπτίδιον κόσμον φερέτω.

παῖ, σὺ δὲ πατρός γ’, ὅσον ἵσχύεις, φιλότητι θυγών πλευρὰς σύν ἐμοὶ τάσ’ ἐπικούφις. ἔτι γὰρ θερμαὶ σύριγγες ἀνω φυσώσι μέλαιν μένος. ἀλλ’ ἂγε πᾶς, φίλος ὅστις ἀνήρ

116
AJAX

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

ODYSSEUS

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

TEUCER

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

φησι παρείναι, σούσθω, βάτω,
tόδε ἀνδρὶ ποιών τῷ πάντ᾽ ἀγαθῷ
κούδενί πω λόγου θυμητῶν
[Αἰαντος, ὅτι ἦν, τότε φωνᾶ].

ΧΩΡΟΣ

ἡ πολλὰ βροτοῖς ἔστιν ἱδούσιν
γνώμαι. πρὶν ἴδεὶν ὅ σὺνεὶς σοῖς
τῶν μελλόντων, ὅ τι πράξει.

1 Rejected by Dindorf.
AJAX

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

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

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

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

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ΧΟΡΟΣ
ΧΡΤΖΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ΚΑΙΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ
ΛΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ
DRAMATIS PERSONAE

AGED SERVANT OF ORESTES

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

EL ECTRA, CHRYSOETHERMIS {daughters of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra

CLYTEMNESTRA, Queen of Argos and Mycenae.

AEGISTHUS, cousin of Agamemnon, sometime paramour of Clytemnestra and now prince consort

CHORUS OF MYCENEAN WOMEN.

SCENE: At Mycenae before the Palace of Agamemnon.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

'Ω τού στρατηγήσαντος ἐν Τροίᾳ ποτὲ Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖ, νῦν ἐκείν' ἔξεστι σοι παρόντι λεύσεων, ὅποι πρόθυμος ἦσθ' ἄει. τὸ γὰρ παλαιὸν Ἀργος οὐπόθεις τόδε, τῆς οἰστροπλήγος ἄλογος Ἰνάχου κόρης· αὐτῆ δ', Ὀρέστα, τοῦ λυκοκτόνου θεοῦ ἀγορὰ Δύκειος· οὐξ ἀριστέρᾶς δ' ὅδε Ἡρας ὁ κλεινὸς ναός· οὐ δ' ἰκάνομεν, φάσκειν Μυκήνας τὰς πολυχρύσους ὅραν πολύφθορον τε δῶμα Πελοπιδῶν τόδε, ὁθεν σε πατρὸς ἐκ φονῶν ἐγώ ποτε πρὸς σῆς ὁμαίμον καὶ κασιννήτης λαβῶν ἴμεγα κ' ἰξέσωσα καξέθερψάμην τοσόνδ' ἐσ ἡβης, πατρὶ τιμωρόν φόνου. νῦν οὖν, Ὀρέστα καὶ σὺ φίλτατε ξένων Πυλάδη, τί χρὴ δράν ἐν τάχει βουλευτέον.
ELECTRA

Enter aged servant with Orestes and Pylades.

Aged Servant

O Child of Agamemnon, who sometime
Was Captain of the host that leaguered Troy,
'Tis thine at last to view before thee spread
The scene thy heart was set on. Yonder lies
Old Argos thou so long hast yearned to see,
Once refuge of the gadfly-driven maid,\(^1\)
Daughter of Inachus; and, Orestes, here
The market-place from the Wolf-slayer\(^2\) named;
There on our left is Hera's far-famed shrine;
And lo! before us, at our very feet
Thou seest Mycenae of the golden hoard,
And there the palace grim of Pelops' line,
Deep stained with murder. Thence I bore thee once
Snatched from beside thy father's bleeding corse
By kindly hands, thy sister's; rescued thus
I fostered thee till thou hadst reached the age
To be the avenger of thy father's blood.
But now, Orestes, and thou, Pylades,
Dearest of friends, the hour for you is ripe
To take resolve and that right speedily.

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

\(^2\) Apollo Lukeios, the god of light, but by folk-etymology connected with λύκος, wolf.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὡς ἡμὺν ἤδη λαμπρὸν ἠλέον σέλας
eφα κινεὶ φθέγματ' ὅρνιθων σαφῆ
μελαίνα τ' ἀστρων ἐκλέλοιπεν εὐφρόνη.
πρὶν οὖν τιν' ἀνδρῶν ἐξοδοιπορεῖν στέγης,
ἐυνάπτετον λόγοισιν· ὡς ἐνταῦθ' ἐμέν,1
ἰν' οὐκέτ' ὁκνεῖν καιρός, ἀλλ' ἐργῶν ἀκμῆ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἀνάφατ' ἀνδρῶν προσπόλων, ὡς μοι σαφῆ'
σημεῖα φαίνεις ἐσθόλας εἰς ἡμᾶς γεγώς.
ὡσπερ γὰρ ὄπτοις εὐγενῆς, κἂν ἢ γέρων,
ἐν τοῖς δεινοῖς θυμοῦν οὐκ ἀπόλεσεν,
ἀλλ' ὀρθῶν οὐς ἱστησιν, ὡσαύτως δὲ σὺ
ἡμᾶς τ' ὁτρύνεις καῦτος ἐν πρῶτοις ἔπει.
τουγάρα τα μὲν δόξαντα δηλώσω, σὺ δὲ
δείχειν ἁκοῦν τοῖς ἐμοῖς λόγοις διδοῦς,
eἰ μὴ τι καιροῦ τυχικῶν, μεθάρμοσον.
ἐγω γὰρ ἡμῖν' ἢκόμην τὸ Πυθικὸν
μαντεῖον, ὡς μάθωμ' ὅτερ τρόπῳ πατρὶ
dίκας ἀροίμην τῶν φονευσάντων πάρα,
χρῆ μοι τοιαῦθ' ὁ Φοῖβος ὅν πεῦσει τάχα·
ἄσκενον αὐτὸν ἀσπίδων τε καὶ στρατοῦ
думοις κλέψαι χειρὸς ἐνδίκους σφαγᾶς.
ὁτ' οὖν τοιύς ἐθηκεμόν εἰσηκούσαμεν,
σὺ μὲν μολὼν, ὅταν σε καιρὸς εἰσάγῃ,
ὀμοι ἐσώ τόντ', ἵσθι πἀν τὸ ὀμλέμνου,
ὅπως ἄν εἶδος ἡμῖν ἀγγείλης σαφῆ.

οὐ γάρ σε μὴ γῆρα τε καὶ χρόνῳ μακρῷ
γνώσ', οὔδ' ὑποπτεύσουσιν ὥδ' ἤνθισμένου.
λόγῳ δὲ χρῶ τοιόν', ὅτι ἔνος μὲν εἰ
Φωκέως παρ' ἀνδρὸς Φανοτέως ἦκον' ὃ γὰρ

1 ἐμέν cannot stand. Hartung's ὃς, ἵν' ἔσταις, οὐκ ἔστ' ἵν' ὁκνεῖν καιρὸς is the most probable emendation.

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ELECTRA

For lo, already the bright beams of day
Waken to melody the pipe of birds,
And black night with her glimmering stars has
waned.
So ere a soul be stirring in the streets
Confer together and resolve yourselves.
No time for longer pause; now must we act.

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

129.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

μέγιστος αὐτῶς τυγχάνει δορυξένων. ἀγγελλε δ’ ὁρκοῦν προστιθεὶς θοῦνεκα τέθυνηκ’ Ὑρέστης ἕξ ἀναγκαίας τύχης, ἅθλοισι Πυθικοῖσιν ἐκ τροχηλάτων δύρερον κυλισθεὶς. ὃδ’ ἦ μῦθος ἐστάτω. 

ἡμεῖς δὲ πατρὸς τύμβοιν, ὡς ἐφετο, λοιβαίσι πρώτοιν καὶ καρατόμοις χλίδαις στέψαντες εἰτ’ ἀγορον ἤξομεν πάλιν, τύπωμα χαλκόπλευρον ἤρμενοι χεροῖν, ὃ καὶ σὺ θάμνους ὀσθᾶ πον κεκρυμένον, ὅπως λόγῳ κλέπτοντες ἤδειαν φάτιν φέρωμεν αὐτοῖς, τούμον ὡς ἔρρει δέμας φλογιστὸν ἠδὴ καὶ κατηρθρακωμένον. 

τί γάρ με λυπεῖ τοῦθ’, ὅταν λόγῳ θανῶν ἐργοὺς σωθὼ κάζενέγκωμαι κλέος; 

δοκῶ μὲν, οὐδὲν ῥήμα σὺν κέρδεις κακόν. ἠδὴ γάρ εἶδον πολλάκις καὶ τούς σοφοὺς λόγῳ μάτην θυσικοντας. εἰθ’, ὅταν δόμους ἐλθὼσιν αὕτης, ἐκτετῆμηνι πλέον ὃς καμ’ ἐπανχώ τήσει τῆς φήμης ἀπο δεδορκοτ’, ἐχθροίς ἀστρον ὡς λάμψεων ἔτι. 

ἀλλ’, ὃ πατρφα γῆ θεοὶ τ’ ἐγχώριοι, δέξασθε μ’ εὐτυχοῦντα ταῦτα ταῖς ὀδοίς, σὺ τ’, ὃ πατρών δῶμα: σοῦ γὰρ ἐρχομαι δίκη καθαρτής πρὸς θεοῦ ὑμημένος: 

καὶ μῆ μ’ ἀτιμον τῆς ἀποστείλητε γῆς, ἀλλ’ ἀρχέπλουτον καὶ καταστάτην δόμων. εἰρηκα μὲν νυν ταῦτα: σοι δ’ ἦδη, γέρου, τὸ σὸν μελέσθω βάντι φρονῆσαι χρέος. 

νῦ δ’ ἔξαιμεν καίρος γάρ, ὅσπερ ἀνδράσιν μέγιστος ἐργοῦ παυτός ἐστ’ ἐπιστάτης.

1 ὅρκη MSS., Reiske corr.
ELECTRA

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

ιό μοι μοι δύστηνος.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΟΓΟΣ
καὶ μὴν θυρῶν ἐδοξὰ προσπόλων τινὸς
ὑποστενούσης ἔνδουν αἰσθέσθαι, τέκνον.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἀρ’ ἐστὶν ἡ δύστηνος Ἡλέκτρα. θέλεις
μείνωμεν αὐτοῦ καὶ πακούσωμεν γόνων;

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΟΓΟΣ
ἡκιστα. μηδὲν πρόσθεν ἢ τὰ Δοξίου
πειρώμεθ’ ἐρδειν κἀπὸ τῶν ἀρχηγετεῖν,
πατρὸς χέοντες λουτρά· ταῦτα γὰρ φέρει
νίκην τ’ ἐφ’ ἡμῖν καὶ κράτος τῶν δραμένων.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὁ φάος ἄγνω
καὶ γῆς ἱσόμοιρ’ ἄηρ, ὡς μοι
πολλὰς μὲν θρῆνων φῶδας,
πολλὰς δ’ ἀντήρεις ἤσθοιν
στέρων πληγὰς αἰμασσομενῶν,
ὅπόταν δυοφερὰ νῦξ ὑπολειφθῇ
τὰ δὲ παννυχίδων ἡδὴ στυγερὰλ
ξυνίσαστ’ εὐναὶ μογερῶν οἶκων,
ὅσα τὸν δύστηνον ἐμὸν θρηνῶ
πατέρ’, δι’ κατὰ μὲν βάρβαρον αἰαν
φοίνιος Ἄρης οὐκ ἔξενισεν,
μήτηρ δ’ ἡμὴ χῶ κοινολεχής
Αἴγισθος ὤπως δρῦν ύλοτόμοι

1 κακακούσωμεν MSS., Nauck corr.
ELECTRA

ELECTRA (within)
Ah me! unhappy me!

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

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

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

[Exeunt. Enter ELECTRA from the palace.

ELECTRA
O holy light,
O circumambient air,
What wailings of despair,
What sight
Have ye not witnessed in the first grey morn,
Beatings of breasts and bosoms madly torn!
By night for me is spread
No festal banquet in this haunted hall,
But my lone pallet bed.
All night I muse upon my father dead,
Not in a foreign land at Ares' call,
But here, at home, by my own mother slain;
Her and Aegisthus, these adulterers twain;
Felled by their axe's bloody stroke,
E'en as the woodman fells an oak.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

σχίζουσι κάρα φωνής πελέκει,
kούδεις τούτων οίκτως ἀπ’ ἀλλής
ἡ, μοῦ φέρεται, σοῦ, πάτερ, οὖτως
αἰκῶς οἰκτρῶς τε θανόντος.

ἀλλ’ οὐ μὲν δὴ
λήξω θρήνων στυγερῶν τε γόων,
ἐστ’ ἂν παμφεγγεῖς ἀστρῶν
ῥιπάς, λεύσσω δὲ τὸ δὲ ἡμαρ,
μὴ οὐ τεκνολέτειρ’ ὡς τις ἄνθρων
ἐπὶ κωκυτῷ τόνδε πατρῶν
πρὸ θυρών ἧχῳ πᾶσι προφωνεῖν.
ἀ δῶμ’ Αἴδου καὶ Περσεφόνης,
ἀς χθόνις Ἑρμῆ καὶ πότιν Ἄρα
σεμναὶ τε θεῶν παῖδες Ερυμνές,
αἰ τοὺς ἀδίκως θυσσοκόντας ὀρᾶθ’,
αἰ τοὺς εὖνας ὑποκλεπτομένους,
ἐλθεῖ, ἀρίξατε, τίσασθε πατρός
φόνου ἡμετέρου,
καὶ μοι τὸν ἐμὸν πέμψατ’ ἀδελφὸν
μοῦνη γὰρ ἄγειν οὐκέτι σωκῷ
λύπης ἀντίρροπον ἄχθος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὁ παῖ, παῖ δυστανοτάτας
'Ηλέκτρα ματρός, τίν’ ἂει
tάκεις δὴ ἀκόρεστον οἴμωγάν
τὸν πάλαι ἐκ δολερᾶς ἄθεωτα τα
ματρὸς ἀλούτ’ ἀπάταις Ἀγαμέμνονα
κακὰ τε χειρὶ πρόδοτον; ὡς ὁ τάδε πορὼν
ἀλούτ’, εἰ μοι θέμις τάδ’ αὐδᾶν.
ELECTRA

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

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

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

Enter CHORUS.

CHORUS

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

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ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὡς γενέθλα γενναίων,
ηκεὶ ἐμὸν καμάτων παραμύθιον.
οἶδά τε καὶ ξυνήμι τάδ', οὗ τὶ με
φυγγάνει, οὐδ' ἐθέλω προλιπεῖν τόδε,
μὴ οὐ τὸν ἐμὸν στενάχειν πατέρ' ἀθλιον.
ἀλλ' ὁ παντοίας φιλότητος ἀμειβόμεναι χάριν,
ἐκτε μ' ὃδ' ἀλυεῖν,
ἀλαί, ἰκνούμαι

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὗτοι τὸν γ' ἐξ Ἀίδα
παγκοίνου λίμνας πατέρ' ἀν-
στάσεις οὐτε γόοισιν οὔτ' εὐχαίς.ον
ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τῶν μετρίων ἐπ' ἀμήχανον
ἀλγος ἀεὶ στενάχουσα διόλυσαι,
ἐν οἷς ἀνάλυσις ἐστιν ὦδεμια κακῶν.
τὶ μοι τῶν δυσφόρων ἐφίει;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

νήπιος δὲ τῶν οἰκτρῶς
οἴχομένων γονέων ἐπιλάθεται.
ἀλλ' ἐμέ γ' ἀ στονόεσσ' ἀραεν φρένας,
ἄ Ιτν, αἰὲν ᾿Ιτν ὀλοφύρεται,
ὄρνωσ ἀτυχομένα, Διὸς ἀγγελος.
ἰῶ παντλάμων Νιόβα, σὲ δ' ἐγωγε νέμω θεύν, 150
ἀτ' ἐν τάφῳ πετραῖφ
ἀεὶ δακρύεις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὗτοι σοὶ μοῦνα, τέκνον,
ἄχος ἐφάνη βροτῶν,

1 οὔτε γάοις οὔτε λιταίσιν MSS., Erfurdt corr.
ELECTRA

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

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

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

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

πρὸς ὁ τι σὺ τῶν ἐνδον εἶ περισσά,
ois òmòthen eî kai γονᾶ ἕψαιmos,
oi Xρυσόθεμς ζώει kai Ἰφιάνασσα,
krupta t' ἀχέων ἐν ἦβα,
δέβιος, ὃν ἀ κλεινά
gâ potê Mυκηναίων
dêçetai εὐπατρίδαν, Δῖος εὐφρονι
βῆματι μολόντα τάνδε γὰν Ὄρεσταν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὁν γ' ἐγὼ ἀκάματα προσμένουσ', ἀτεκνος,
tάλαιν', ἀνύμφευτος αἰεν οἶχνω,
δάκρυσι μυδαλέα, τὸν ἀνήνυτον
οἵτον ἤχουσα κακῶν'. ὅ δὲ λάθεται
ὁν τ' ἐπαθ' ὃν τ' ἐδάγ. τί γὰρ οὐκ ἐμοι
ἐρχεται ἀγγελίας ἀπατώμενον;
ἀεὶ μὲν γὰρ ποθεῖ,
pothôn δ' οὐκ ἄξιοι φανῆναι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

θάρσει μοι, θάρσει, τέκνον.

ἀντ. β'

ἔτι μέγας οὐρανῷ
Zeús, ὃς ἐφορᾷ πάντα καὶ κρατύνει·
ὅ τὸν ὑπεράληγη χόλου νέμουσα
μήθ' οίς ἐχθαίρεις ὑπεράχθεο μήτ' ἐπιλάθουν·
χρόνοις γὰρ εὖμαρῆς θεός.
οὔτε γὰρ ὁ τὰν Κρίσαν
βούνομον ἤχου ἀκτάν
παῖς Ἀγαμεμνονίδας ἀπερίτρωπος
οὐθ' ὁ παρὰ τὸν 'Αχέροντα θέος ἀνάσσων.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ' ἔμε μὲν ὁ πολὺς ἀπολέοντεν ἦδη
βίοτος ἀνέλπιστος, οὐδ' ἔτ' ἀρκὼν'
ELECTRA

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

ELECTRA

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

CHORUS

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

ELECTRA

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

ἀτις ἀνευ τεκέων ¹ κατατάκομαι,
ἀς φίλος οὕτις ἀνήρ ὑπερισταται,
ἀλλ' ἀπερεῖ τις ἐποικος ἀναξία
οἰκονομώ θαλάμους πατρός, ὥδε μὲν
ἀεικεὶ σὺν στολῇ,
κεναῖς δ' ἀμφίσταμαι τραπέζαις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οἰκτρὰ μὲν νόστους αὖδα,
οἰκτρὰ δ' ἐν κοίταις πατρόβαις
ὅτε οἱ ² παγχάλκων ἀνταία
γενύων ὄρμαθε πλαγά.
δόλος ἦν ὁ φράσας, ἔρος ὁ κτείνας,
δεινὸς δεινὸς προφυτεύσαντες
μορφᾶν, εἰτ' οὖν θεὸς εἰτε βροτῶν
ἥν ὁ ταύτα πράσσων.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὶ πασὰν κείνα πλέον ἁμέρα
ἐλθοῦσ' ἐχθύστα δή μοι·
οὺ νύξ, ἀν διεἰπων ἀρρήτων
ἐκπαγι' ἀχθη,  
τοὺς ἐμὸς ἱδὲ πατήρ
θανάτους αἰκεῖς διδύμαιν χειροῖν,
ἀι τὸν ἐμὸν εἰλον βίον προδοτον, ἀι μ' ἀπώλεσαιν·
ois θεὸς ὁ μέγας Ὁλύμπιος
ποίμιμα πάθεα παθεῖν πόροι,
μηδὲ ποτ' ἀγλαίας ἀποναίατο
τοιάδ' ἀνύσαντες ἔργα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

φράζον μη πόροσ φωνεῖν.

οὐ γρώμαν ἵσχεις ἐξ οἴων

¹ τοκέων MSS., Meineke corr.
² οτε σοι MSS., Hermann corr.
ELECTRA

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

CHORUS

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

ELECTRA

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

CHORUS

(O curb thy tongue! hast thou no thought

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ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

tà παρόντ' οἰκεία, εἰς ἀτας
ἐμπίπτεις οὕτως αἰκώς;
pολὺ γάρ τι κακῶν ὑπερεκτῆσον,
σὰ δυσθύμῳ τίκτουσ᾽ ἀεὶ
ψυχᾷ πολέμους· τὰ δὲ τοῖς δυνατοῖς
οὐκ ἔριστα πλάθειν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

dεινοῖς ἡμαγκάσθην, δεινοῖς·
ἐξοδῇ, οὐ λάθει μ᾽ ὀργά.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐν γάρ δεινοῖς οὐ σχῆσω
ταῦτας ἀτας,
όφρα με βίος ἔχη.
τίνι γάρ ποτ᾽ ἀν, ὧ φίλα γενέθλια,
πρόσφορον ἀκούσαμι ἔπος, τίνι φρονοῦντι καίρια;
ἀνετᾶς μ᾽ ἀνετε, παράγοροι·
tάδε γάρ ἀλυτα κεκλήσεται,
οὐδὲ ποτ᾽ ἐκ καμάτων ἀποπαύσομαι
ἀνάριθμος ὁδε θρήνων.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ᾽ οὖν εὐνοία γ᾽ αὐδῶ,
μάρτηρ ὠσεὶ τις πιστά,
μὴ τίκτειν σ᾽ ἀταν ἀταίς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

καὶ τί μέτρον κακότατος ἔφυ; φέρε,
πῶς ἐπὶ τοῖς φθιμένοις ἀμελεῖν καλῶν;
ἐν τίνι τούτ᾽ ἐβλαστ᾽ ἄνθρωπων;
μὴτ ἐἴην ἐντίμος τούτοις
μήτ', εἰ τῷ πρόσκειμαι χρηστῷ,
ἐμναίοιμ, εὐκήλος, γονέων
ἐκτίμους ἵσχουσα πτέρνυς
ὁξυτόνων γόων.

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ELECTRA

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

ELECTRA

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

CHORUS

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

ELECTRA

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

εἰ γὰρ ὦ μὲν θανῶν γὰ τε καὶ οὐδὲν ἂν
κεῖσεται τάλας,
οἱ δὲ μὴ πάλιν
δῶσουσ’ ἀντιφόνους δίκας,
ἐρροι τ’ ἄν αἰδῶς
ἀπάντων τ’ εὐσέβεια θυατῶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἐγὼ μὲν, δ’ παῖ, καὶ τὸ σὸν σπεύδουσ’ ἁμα
καὶ τοῦμον αὐτῆς ἦλθον. εἰ δὲ μὴ καλῶς
λέγω, σὺ νίκα: σοι γὰρ ἐψόμεσθ’ ἁμα.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

αἰσχύνομαι μὲν, δ’ ἄνων, εἰ δοκῶ
πολλοῦσι θρήνους δυσφόρειν ὑμῖν ἁγαν.
ἀλλ’ ἡ βία γὰρ ταῦτ’ ἀναγκάζει με δράν,
σύγγυσε. πῶς γὰρ ἦτις εὐγενὴς γυνῆ,
pατρῷ ὀρῶσα πήματ’, οὐ δρόθῃ τάδ’ ἄν;
ἀγὼ κατ’ ἡμαρ καὶ κατ’ εὐφρόνην ἀεὶ
θάλλοντα μᾶλλον ἡ καταφθάνουσ’ ὀρῶ.
ἡ πρῶτα μὲν τὰ μητρὸς, ἢ μ’ ἐγείνατο,
ἐχθιστα συμβεβηκεν: εἴτα δῶμαι ἐν
tοῖς ἐμαυτῆς τοῖς φονεύσι τοῦ πατρὸς
ξύνειμι, κακ’ τῶν’ ἀρχομαι κακ’ τῶν’ μοι
λαβεῖν θ’ ὁμοίος καὶ τὸ τητάσθαι πέλει.
ἐπειτα πολας ἡμέρας δοκεῖς μ’ ἀγείν,
ὅταν θρόνοις Λέγισθον ἐνθακοῦντ’ ἴδω
τοῖς πατρῴοις, εἰσίδω ὧ’ ἐσθήματα
φοροῦντ’ ἐκείνῳ ταῦτ’ καὶ παρεστίους
σπεύδοντα λοιβᾶς ἐνθ’ ἐκεῖνον ὄλεσεν,
ἴδω δ’ τούτων τὴν τελευταίαν ὑβρῖν,
tὸν αὐτοέντην ἡμῖν ἐν κολτή πατρὸς
ξύν τῇ ταλαίνῃ μητρί, μητέρ’ εἰ χρεὼν

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ELECTRA

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

CHORUS

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

ELECTRA

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

ταύτην προσαυδάν τόδε συγκομωμένην· ἢ δ’ ὁδε τλήμων ὡστε τῷ μῶστορι ἔννεστ’, ἐρωτοὶν οὕτων ἐκφοβουμένη· ἀλλ’ ὁσπέρ ἐγγελώσα τοῖς ποιουμένοις, εὐροῦσ’ ἐκείνην ἡμέραν, ἐν ἡ τότε πατέρα τὸν ἀμόν ἐκ δόλου κατέκτανεν, ταύτη χρονὸς ἴστησι καὶ μηλοσφαγεῖ θεοῖσιν ἐμμη’ ἡρά τοῖς σωτηρίοις. ἐγὼ δ’ ὁρῶ ἡ δύσμορος κατά στέγας κλαίω, τέτηκα, κάπηκωκύς πατρός τὴν δυστάλαιαν δαίτ’ ἐπωνομαζομένην αὐτὴ πρὸς αὐτήν. οὐδὲ γὰρ κλαύσαι πάρα τοσόνδ’ ὅσον μοι θυμός ἠδονήν φέρει. αὐτὴ γὰρ ἡ λόγοισι γενναία γυνὴ φωνοῦσα τοιάδ’ ἐξουνεδίζει κακὰ· ὃ δύσθεων μίσημα, σοὶ μόνη πατὴρ τέθνηκεν; ἄλλος δ’ οὕτως ἐν πένθει βροτῶν; κακῶς ὀλοιο, μηδὲ σ’ ἐκ γόγον ποτὲ τῶν νῦν ἀπαλλάξειαν οἱ κάτω θεοί. τάδ’ ἐξυβρίζει πλὴν ὅταν κλύψ τινὸς ἤξοντ’ Ὄρεστην· τηνικάυτα δ’ ἐμμακῆ βοᾷ παραστάσα· οὐ σὺ μοι τῶν δ’ αἰτία; οὐ σὸν τόδ’ ἐστὶ τούργον, ἡτίς ἐκ χερῶν κλέψας’ Ὅρεστην τῶν ἐμῶν ὑπεξέβου; ἀλλ’ ἵσθι τοι τίσουσά γ’ ἀξίαν δίκην. τοιαῦθ’ ἦλακτε, σὺν δ’ ἐποτρύνει πέλας ὁ κλείνος αὐτή ταύτα νυμφίος παρῶν, ο πάντ’ ἀνάλκας οὕτος, ὁ πᾶσα βλάβη, ὁ σὺν γυναικὶ τὰς μάχας ποιούμενος. ἐγὼ δ’ Ὅρεστην τῶνδε προσμένουσ’ ἀεὶ παυστήρ’ ἐφήξειν ἡ τάλαιν’ ἀπόλλυμαι. μέλλων γὰρ ᾧ ἂεὶ δρᾶν τι τὰς οὐσίας τέ μοι.
ELECTRA

His paramour? So lost to shame is she
That the adulteress fears no vengeance. No,
As if exulting in her infamy,
She watches month to month to know the day
Whereon by treachery she slew my sire,
And keeps that day with dance and sacrifice,
Each month, of sheep to tutelary gods.
Beholding this I weep and waste within,
And to myself bewail the unhallowed feast
Named of my sire, with silent tears, for e'en
The luxury of wailing is denied me.
This woman (saintly is her speech) upbraids
And rates me thus: "Ungodly, hateful girl,
Hast thou alone to bear a father's loss,
Art thou the only mourner? Out upon thee!
Perdition seize thee! and in hell may'st thou
Find no deliverance from thy present grief!"
So rails she, save at times when rumours run
Orestes is at hand, then wild with rage
She thunders in my ears "This is thy doing;
Was it not thou who from my hands didst steal
Orestes and convey him safe away?
Mark my words, thou shalt rue it!" So she screams,
And her abettor's there to egg her on,
Her glorious consort who repeats her gibes,
That rogue in grain, that dastardly poltroon,
Who fights his battles with a woman's aid.
Meanwhile I wait until Orestes comes
To end my woes, and waiting pine away.
Still, still he means to act and never acts,
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
καὶ τὰς ἀπούσας ἐλπίδας διέφθορεν.
ἐν οὖν τουούτοις οὔτε σωφρονεῖν, φίλαι,
οὔτ' εὔσεβεῖν πάρεστιν· ἀλλ' ἐν τοι κακοῖς
πολλῇ ὅτ' ἀνάγκη κάπιτηδεύειν κακά.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
φέρ' εἰπέ, πότερον ὄντος Αἰγίσθου πέλας
λέγεις τάδ' ήμιν ἢ βεβωτος ἢ δόμων;
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἡ κάρτα· μὴ δόκει μ' ἂν, εἴπερ ἢν πέλας,
θυραίον οἰχνεῖν· νῦν δ' ἀγροῖσι τυγχάνει.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἡ καὶ ἐγὼ θαρσοῦσα μᾶλλον ἐστὶν λόγους
τοὺς σοὺς ἵκολουν, εἴπερ ὅδε ταῦτ' ἔχει;
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὡς νῦν ἀπόντος ἰστόρευ· τί σοι φίλοι;
ΧΟΡΟΣ
καὶ δὴ σ' ἐρωτῶ· τοῦ κασυνήγητον τί φῆς,
ἠξοντος ἡ μέλλοντος· εἰδέναι θέλω.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
φησίν γε· φάσκων δ' οὐδὲν ἢν λέγει ποιεῖ.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
φίλεἳ γὰρ ὅκνειν πρᾶγμ' ἀνήρ πράσσων μέγα.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
καὶ μὴν ἐγών' ἔσωσ' ἐκεῖνον οὐκ ὅκνω.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
θάρσεω· πέφυκεν ἔσθλος, ὡστ' ἄρκείν φίλοις.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
πέποιθ', ἐπει τὰν οὐ μακρὰν ἔξων ἐγώ.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
μὴ νῦν ἦν' εἴπης μηδέν· ὡς δόμων ὁρῶ
τὴν σὴν ὁμαίμον ἐκ πατρὸς ταύτοι φύσιν,
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ELECTRA

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

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

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

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

ELECTRA
It is; ask what thou wilt.

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

ELECTRA
He says “I come,” but does not what he says.

CHORUS
A man thinks twice with some great work in hand.

ELECTRA
I thought not twice when I delivered him.

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

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

CHORUS
No more for this time; at the doors I see
Chrysothemis, thy sister, of one sire
Χρυσόθεμων, ἐκ τε μητρός, ἐντάφια χερῶν
φέρουσαν, οία τοῖς κάτω νομίζεται.

ΧΡΤΣΩΘΕΜΩΣ
τίν’ αὐ ἂν τῇ τήνδε πρὸς θυρῶνος ἐξόδοις
ἐλθοῦσα φωνεῖς, ὁ κασινήτης, φάτων,
κοῦδ’ ἐν χρόνῳ μακρῷ διδαχθήναι θέλεις
θυμῷ ματαιῷ μὴ χαρίζεσθαι κενά;
καίτοι τοσούτοις γ’ οἴδα κάμαυτήν, ὅτι
ἀλγὼ ’τι τοῖς παρούσιν’ ὅστ’ ἂν, εἰ σθένος
λάβαιμι, δηλώσαιμι ἂν οὗ’ αὐτοῖς φρονῶ.
νῦν δ’ ἐν κακοῖς μοι πλεῖον ὑφεμένα δοκεῖ,
καὶ μὴ δοκεῖν μὲν δράν τι, τημαίπειν δὲ μὴ
tοιαῦτα δ’ ἄλλα καὶ σε βούλομαι ποιεῖν.
καίτοι τὸ μὲν δίκαιον οὖχ ἢ ’γῳ λέγω,
ἄλλ’ ἢ σὺ κρίνεις: εἰ δ’ ἐλευθέραν με δεῖ
ξῆν, τῶν κρατοῦντων ἐστὶ πάντ’ ἀκουστέα.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
δεινόν γε σ’ οὔσαν πατρὸς οὐ σὺ παῖς ἔφυς,
κεῖνον λελήσατε, τῆς δὲ τικτούσης μέλειν.
ἄπαντα γὰρ σοι τὰμὰ νουθετήματα
κείσσα διδακτά, κοῦδεν ἐκ σαντῆς λέγεις.
ἐπειδ’ ἐλοῦ γε θάτερ’, ἢ φρονεῖν κακῶς
ἡ τῶν φίλων φρονοῦσα μὴ μνήμην ἔχειν,
ἡτις λέγεις μὲν ἄρτιόν ὡς, εἰ λάβοις
σθένος, τὸ τούτων μῦσον ἐκδείξειας ἂν,
ἐμοὶ δὲ πατρὶ πάντα τιμωρομένης
οὐτε ξυνέρδεις τὴν τε δρῶσαν ἐκτρέπεις.
οὐ ταῦτα πρὸς κακοῖς δειλίαν ἔχει;
ἐπεὶ διδαξὼν, ἢ μάθ’ εἰς ἐμοὶ, τι μοι
κέρδος γένοιτ’ ἂν τῶιδε ληξάσῃ γόων.
οὐ χῶ; κακῶς μὲν, οἴδ’ ἐπαρκοῦντος δ’ ἐμοὶ.
ELECTRA

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

Enter Chrysothemis.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

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

ELECTRA

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

λυπῶ δὲ τούτους, ὡστε τῷ τεθυγκάτι
τιμὰς προσάπτεσαι, εἰ τις ἄστε ἐκεῖ χάρις.
σὺ δ᾽ ἢμῶν ἢ μισοῦσα μισεῖς μὲν λόγῳ,
ἐργῷ δὲ τοῖς φονεύσαι τοῦ πατρὸς ξύνει.
ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ὅνικ ἄν ποτ’, οὐδ’ εἰ μοι τὰ σὰ
μέλλοι τις οἰσεῖν δῶρ’, ἐφ’ οὐσί νῦν χλιδᾶς,
τούτους ὑπεικάθοιμι· σοὶ δὲ πλουσία
τράπεζα κείσθω καὶ περιρρέτω βίος.
ἐμοὶ γὰρ ἔστω τούμε μὴ λυπεῖν μόνον
βόσκημα· τῆς σῆς δ’ οὐκ ἔρω τιμῆς τυχεῖν,
οὐδ’ ἀν σὺ, σώφρων ἡ ὄσα. νῦν δ’ ἐξὸν πατρὸς
πάντων ἀρίστων παῖδα κεκλήθαι, καλοῦ
τῆς μητρός· οὖτω γὰρ φανεῖ πλείστοις κακῆ,
θανόντα πατέρα καὶ φίλους προδοῦσα σοὺς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
μηδὲν πρὸς ὀργήν, πρὸς θεών· ὡς τοῖς λόγοις
ἐνεστὶν ἀμφοῖν κέρδος, εἰ σὺ μὲν μάθοις
τοῖς τῆς δεχῆσθαι, τοῖς δὲ σοὶς αὐτὴ πάλιν.

ΧΡΙΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ἐγὼ μὲν, δι γυναῖκες, ἡθάς εἰμὶ πως
τῶν τῆςδε μῦθων’ οὐδ’ ἄν ἐμνήσθην ποτέ,
εἰ μὴ κακοῦ μέγιστον εἰς αὐτὴν ἱδον
ήκουσ’, δ’ ταύτην τῶν μακρῶν σχῆσει γῶν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
φέρ’ εἰπὲ δὴ τὸ δεινὸν· εἰ γὰρ τῶνδε μοι
μεῖζὸν τι λέξεις, οὐκ ἂν ἀντειποιμ’ ἔτι.

ΧΡΙΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ἂλλ’ ἔξερω σοι πᾶν ὅσον κάτωδ’ ἐγὼ.
μέλλουσι γὰρ σ’, εἰ τῶνδε μὴ λέξεις γῶν,
ἐνταύθα πέμψει ἐνθα μὴ ποθ’ ἥλιον
φέγγος προσοψεί, ξῶσα δ’ ἐν κατηρεφεί
στέγη χθονὸς τῆςδ’ ἐκτὸς ὑμνήσεις κακά.
ELECTRA

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

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

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

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

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

πρὸς ταῦτα φράζου καὶ με μὴ ποθ’ ύστερον
παθοῦσα μέμψῃ, νῦν γὰρ ἐν καλῷ φρονεῖν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἡ ταῦτα δὴ με καὶ βεβούλευνται ποεῖν;
ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
μάλισθεν ὅταν περ ὁικαὶ Ἀὐγισθος μόλις.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ’ ἐξίκοιτο τοῦδε γ’ οὐνεκ’ ἐν τάχει.
ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
τίν’, ὡ τάλαινα, τὸν ἐπηράσω λόγον;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐλθεὶν ἐκείνων, εἰ τι τῶνδε δρὰν νοεῖ.
ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ὁπως πάθης τί χρῆμα; ποῦ ποτ’ εἰ φρενῶν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὁπως ἀφ’ ύμῶν ὡς προσωτάτω φύγω.
ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
βίον δὲ τοῦ παρόντος οὐ μνεῖαν ἔχεις;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

καλὸς γὰρ οὐμὸς βίοτος ὡστε θαυμάσαι.
ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ἀλλ’ ἂν αὖ, εἰ σὺ γ’ εῦ φρονεῖν ἥπιστασο.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

μὴ μ’ ἐκδίδασκε τοῖς φίλοις εἰναι κακὴν.
ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ἀλλ’ οὗ διδάσκω, τοῖς κρατοῦσι δ’ εἰκαθεῖν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

σὺ ταῦτα θώπευ’. οὐκ ἐμοὺς τρόπους λέγεις.
ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
καλὸν γε μέντοι μὴ ’ξ ἀβουλίας πεσεῖν.
ELECTRA

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

ELECTRA

Have they indeed resolved to treat me thus?  

CHRYSOTHEMIS

The instant that Aegisthus is returned.  

ELECTRA

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

CHRYSOTHEMIS

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

ELECTRA

Would he were here, if this be his intent.  

CHRYSOTHEMIS

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

ELECTRA

A flight long leagues away from all of you.  

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Art thou indifferent to thy present life?  

ELECTRA

O 'tis a marvellously happy life!  

CHRYSOTHEMIS

It might have been, couldst thou have schooled thyself.  

ELECTRA

Teach me not basely to betray my friends.  

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Not I; I teach submission to the strong.  

ELECTRA

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

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Yet not to fall through folly were no blame.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πεσούμεθ', εἰ χρή, πατρί τιμωρούμενοι.
ΧΡΙΣΘΩΜΙΣ
πατὴρ δὲ τούτων, οἶδα, συγγνώμην ἔχει.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ταῦτ' ἐστὶ τάπη πρὸς κακῶν ἐπαινέσαι.
ΧΡΙΣΘΩΜΙΣ
σὺ δ' οὐχὶ πείσεις καὶ συναινέσεις ἐμοί;
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὔ δὴ ἡταν' μή πω νοῦ τοσόνδ' εἰην κενή.
ΧΡΙΣΘΩΜΙΣ
χωρῆσομαι τάρ' οἴπερ ἐστάλην ὅδοι.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ποῖ δ' ἐμπορεύει; τῷ φέρεις τάδ' ἐμπυρα;
ΧΡΙΣΘΩΜΙΣ
μὴνρ μὲ πέμπει πατρὶ τυμβεύσαι χοάς.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
πῶς εἴπας; ἢ τῷ δυσμενεστάτῳ βροτῶν;
ΧΡΙΣΘΩΜΙΣ
δὲν ἐκταν' αὐτῇ· τούτο γὰρ λέξαι θέλεις.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἐκ τοῦ φίλων πεισθεῖσα; τῷ τούτ' ἤρεσεν;
ΧΡΙΣΘΩΜΙΣ
ἐκ δείματός του νυκτέρου, δοκεῖν ἐμοί.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὡς θεοὶ πατρῶι, συγγένεσθέ γ' ἀλλὰ νῦν.
ΧΡΙΣΘΩΜΙΣ
ἐχεις τι θάρσος τούδε τού γὰρ σάρβοις πέρι;
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
εἰ μοι λέγοις τῇν ὅψιν, εἴποιμ' ἀν τότε.
ELECTRA

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

CHRYSOTHEMIS
I trust our father pardons us for this.

ELECTRA
Traitors take refuge in like sentiments.

CHRYSOTHEMIS
Thou wilt not heed then or be ruled by me?

ELECTRA
I am not in my dotage, save the mark!

CHRYSOTHEMIS
Then I will do my errand.

ELECTRA
Whither away?
For whom art carrying these burnt offerings?

CHRYSOTHEMIS
My mother bids me crown our father's grave.

ELECTRA
Her mortal enemy's! How sayest thou?

CHRYSOTHEMIS
The husband whom she slew, so thou wouldst say.

ELECTRA
Which of her friends advised her? whence this whim?

CHRYSOTHEMIS
A nightly vision warned her, so I think.

ELECTRA
Gods of my fathers, aid me in this pass!

CHRYSOTHEMIS
Dost thou take heart of courage from her dread?

ELECTRA
Before I answer let me hear the dream.
ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΧ

άλλα οὐ κάτοικα πλην ἐπὶ σμικρὸν φράσαι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

λέγει' ἀλλὰ τοῦτο· πολλά τοι σμικρὸι λόγοι ἔσφηλαν ἢδη καὶ κατώρθωσαν βροτοίς.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΧ

λόγος τις αὐτῆς ἔστιν εἰσιδεῖν πατρὸς τοῦ σοῦ τε κάμοι δευτέραν ὀμιλίαν ἐλθόντος ἐς φῶς· εἶτα τόδε ἐφέστιον πῆξαι λαβόντα σκῆπτρον οὐφόρει ποτὲ αὐτός, ταῦν δ' Ἀλκισθος· εκ δὲ τοῦδ' ἄνω βλαστεῖν βρύσοντα θαλλόν, δ' κατάσκιον πᾶσαν γενέσθαι τὴν Μυκηναίων χθόνα. τοιαύτα τοῦ παρόντος, ἦν' Ἡλίων δείκνυσι τούναρ, ἔκλυν ἐξηγομένου. πλείω δὲ τούτων οὐ κάτοικα, πλὴν ὅτι πέμπει με κείνη τοῦτο τοῦ φόβου χάριν. πρὸς νυν θεῶν σε λίσσομαι τῶν ἐγγενῶν ἐμοὶ πιθέσθαι μηδ' ἀβουλία πεσεῖν· εἰ γάρ μ' ἀπώσει, σὺν κακῷ μέτει πάλιν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ', ὁ φίλη, τούτων μὲν ὄν ἔχεις χερῶν τύμβῳ προσάψῃς μηδέν· οὐ γάρ σοι θέμις οὐδ' ὅσιον ἐχήθας ἀπὸ γυναικὸς ἰστάναι κτέρισματ' οὔδε λουτρὰ προσφέρειν πατρί· ἀλλ' ἢ πνοαῖσιν ἢ βαθυσκαφεῖ κόνει κρύφων νυ, ἔνθα μὴ ποτ' εἰς εὐνῆν πατρὸς τοῦτων πρόσεισι μηδέν· ἀλλ' ὅταν θάνη κειμήλι' αὐτή ταῦτα σφέσθω κάτω. ἀρχὴν δ' ἂν, εἰ μὴ τλημονεστάτη γυνὴ πασῶν ἐβλαστε, τάσει δυσμενεῖς χονάς
ELECTRA

CHRYSOthemis
There is but little that I have to tell.

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

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

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

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ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ούκ ἂν ποθ' ὅν γ' ἐκτείνε, τῷδ' ἐπέστεφε. σκέψαι γὰρ εἰ σοι προσφιλῶς αὐτῇ δοκεῖ γέρα τάδ' οὖν τάφοισι δέξεσθαι νέκυς, ὡς ὅς θανῶν ἅτιμος, ὡστε δυσμενής, ἐμασχαλίσθη, κατ' λουτροῖσιν κάρα κηλίδας εξέμαζεν. ἀρα μη δοκεῖς λυτήρι αὐτῇ ταίτα τοῦ φόνου φέρειν; οὔκ ἔστιν. ἀλλὰ ταύτα μὲν μέθες· σὺ δὲ τεμούσα κρατός βοστρύχων ἀκρας φόβας κάμος ταλαίπης, σμικρὰ μὲν τάδ', ἀλλ' ὅμως 450 ἄχω, δὸς αὐτῷ, τήνδ' ἁλιπαρὴ τρίχα καὶ ξώμα τούμων οὐ χλιδαίς ἡσκήμενον. αἰτοῦ δὲ προσπίνουσα γῆθεν εὐμενή ἡμῶν ἄρωγον αὐτὸν εἰς ἐχθροὺς μολεῖν, καὶ παῖδ' Ὀρέστην ἐξ ὑπερτέρας χερὸς ἐχθροῖσιν αὐτοῦ ξώντ', ἐπεμβηκὼς τοῖς ὅπως τὸ λοιπὸν αὐτὸν ἀφνεωτέρας χερῶν στέφωμεν ἡ ταύν πορούμεθα. οἴμαι μὲν οὖν, οἴμαι τι κάκεινο μέλον πέμψαι τάδ' αὐτῇ δυσπρόσοπτ' ὅνειρατω· ὅμως δ', ἀδελφή, σοὶ θ' ὑπούργησον τάδε ἐμοὶ τ' ἄρωγα τῷ τῇ φιλτάτῳ βροτῶν πάντων, ἐν "Ἀδιδον κειμένῳ κοινῷ πατρί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πρὸς εὐσεβείαν ἡ κόρη λέγει· σὺ δὲ, εἰ σωφρονήσεις, ὥφιλη, δράσεις τάδε.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

δράσω. τὸ γὰρ δίκαιον οὐκ ἔχει λόγον δυοῖν ἐρίζειν, ἀλλ' ἐπισπεύδειν τὸ δράν.
ELECTRA

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

CHORUS

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

CHRYSOTHEMIS

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

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

πειρωμένη δὲ τῶν τῶν ἔργων ἐμοὶ
σιγῇ παρ’ ὑμῶν, πρὸς θεῶν, ἔστω, φίλαι·
ὡς εἰ τάδ’ ἡ τεκοῦσα πεύσεται, πικρὰς
dοκῶ με πείραν τήνδε τολμήσειν ἐτὶ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ.
eἰ μὴ γὰρ παράφρων μάντις ἕφυν καὶ γνῶμας
λειτομένα σοφᾶς,
eἴσων ἀ πρόμαντις
 Δίκα, δίκαια φερομένα χεροῖν κράτη·
μέτεισιν, ὁ τέκνον, οὐ μακροῦ χρόνου.
unteerτί μοι θάρσος,
ἀδυντών κλύουσαν
ἀρτίως ὀνειράτων.
οὐ γὰρ ποτ’ ἀμναστεῖ γ’ ὁ φύσας σ’1. Ἐλλάνων ἁναξ.
oὐδ’ ἀ παλαιὰ χαλκόπλακτος ἀμφάκης γένυς,
ἀ νιν κατέπεφνεν αἰσχίσταις ἐν αἰκίαις.

ἀντ.

ἥξει καὶ πολύπτους καὶ πολύχειρ ἀ δεινὸς
κρυπτομένα λόχοις
χαλκόπτους Ἐρινύς.
ἀλεκτρ’ ἀνυμφα γὰρ ἔπέβα μαιφώνων
γάμων ἀμιλλήμαθ’ οἷσιν οὐ θέμις.
πρὸ τῶν τοῦ μ’ ἕχει
μὴ ποτε μὴ ποθ’ ἡμῖν
ἀψεγεῖς πελαν τέρας
toῖς δρόσῳ καὶ συνδρόσων. ἦ τοι μαντεῖαι βροτῶν 500
οὐκ εἰσὶν ἐν δεινοῖς ὀνείροις οὐδ’ ἐν θεσφάτοις,
eἰ μὴ τόδε φάσμα νυκτὸς εὐ κατασχήσει.

1 Wakefield adds σ’.

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ELÉCTRA

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

[Exit CHRYSOTHEMIS.

CHORUS

(CStr.)

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

(Ant.)

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

ω Πέλοπος ἀ πρόσθεν
pολύπονος ἱππεία,
ὡς ἐμὸλεσ αἰανῆς
tάδε γα.
eὑτε γὰρ ὁ ποντισθεῖς
Μυρτίλος ἐκοιμάθης,
pαγχρύσεων δίφρων
δυστάνοις αἰκίαις
πρόρριζοις ἐκρυβεῖς,
οὐ τί πω
ἐλειπεν ἐκ τοῦδ' οἴκου
πολύπονος αἰκία.

ΚΑΛΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ
ἀνειμένη μὲν, ὡς ἔοικας, αὐ στρέφειν
οὐ γὰρ πάρεστ' Ἀὐγμοσθός, ὦς σ' ἐπεἶχ' ἄει
μὴ τοι θυραίαν γ' οὖςαν αἰσχύνειν φίλους·
νῦν δ' ὡς ἀπέστ' ἐκεῖνος, οὐδὲν ἐντρέπει
ἐμοὶ γε· καίτοι πολλὰ πρὸς πολλοὺς μὲ δὴ
ἐξείπας ὡς θρασεία καὶ πέρα δίκης
ἀρχω, καθυβρίζουσα καὶ σε καὶ τὰ σὰ·
ἔγω δ' ύβριν μὲν οὐκ ἐχω, κακῶς δὲ σε
λέγω κακῶς κλύουσα πρὸς σέθεν θαμὰ.
παθήρ γάρ, οὐδὲν ἄλλο, σοὶ πρόσχημ' ἄει
ὡς εἰ ἐμοὶ τέθηκεν. εἰ ἐμοῖ· καλῶς
ἐξοιδα· τῶνδ' ἀρνησίς οὐκ ἐνεστί μοι·
ἡ γὰρ Δίκη νιν εἶλεν, οὐκ ἐγὼ μόνη,
ἡ χρὴν σ' ἀρήγειν, εἰ φρονοῦσ' ἐτύγχανες·
ἐπεὶ παθήρ σὸς οὗτος, ὃν θρηνεῖς ἄει,
ELECTRA

O chariot-race of Pelops old,  
The source of sorrows manifold,  
What endless curse hath fallen on us  
Since to his sea-grave Myrtilus ¹  
Sank from the golden chariot hurled;  
Woe upon woe, of woes a world.

Enter CLYTEMNESTRA.

CLYTEMNESTRA

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

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

τὴν σὴν ὁμαιμον μοῦνος Ἐλλήνων ἔτην θύσας θεοῖσιν, οὐκ ἵσον καμὼν ἐμοὶ λύπης, ὃς ἐσπειρ', ὥσπερ ἡ τίκτουσ᾽ ἐγὼ. εἶν, δίδαξον δὴ μὲ τοὺ χάριν, τίνων ἐθυσεν αὐτὴν· πότερον Ἀργείων ἐρεῖς; ἀλλ' οὐ μετῆν αὐτοίσι τῇ γ' ἐμὴν κτανεῖν. ἀλλ' ἀντ' ἀδελφοῦ δὴτα Μενέλεω κτανῶν τὰμ', οὐκ ἐμελλε τῶνδε μοι δῶσειν δίκην; πότερον ἐκεῖνων παῖδες οὐκ ἦσαν διπλοὶ, οὐς τὴςδε μᾶλλον εἰκὸς ἦν θυησκευν, πατρὸς καὶ μυτρὸς δυτας, ἡς ὁ πλοῦς ὃδ' ἦν χάριν; ἡ τῶν ἐμὸν "Αἴδης τιν" ἵμερον τέκνων ἡ τῶν ἐκείνης ἔσχη δαίσασθαι πλέον; ἡ τῷ πανώλει πατρὶ τῶν μὲν ἔξ ἐμοῦ παίδων πόθος παρεῖτο, Μενέλεω δ' ἐνήν; οὐ ταύτ' ἀβουλοῦ καὶ κακοῦ γνώμην πατρὸς; δοκῶ μὲν, εἰ καὶ σῆς δίχα γνώμης λέγω· φαίη δ' ἄν ἡ θανοῦσά γ', εἰ φωνὴν λάβοι. ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν οὐκ εἰμὶ τοῖς πεπραμένοις δύσθυμος· εἰ δὲ σοι δοκῶ φρονεῖν κακῶς, γνώμην δικαίαν σχοῦσα τοὺς πέλας ψέγε. 540

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐρεῖς μὲν οὐχὶ νῦν γέ μ' ὡς ἀρξασά τι λυπηροὺν εἶτα σοῦ τάδ' ἐξήκουσον ὑπὸ· ἀλλ' ἢν εὖ ἤφης μοι, τοῦ τεθνηκότος θ' ὑπερ λέξαιμ' ἄν ὅρθως τῆς κασιγνητῆς θ' ὀμοῦ.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

καὶ μὴν ἐφήμ'· εἰ δὲ μ' ὃδ' ἀεὶ λόγος ἐξήρχες, οὐκ ἂν ἦσαν λυπηρὰ κλύειν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

καὶ δὴ λέγω σοι. πατέρα φής κτεῖναι. τίς ἂν τούτον λόγος γένοιτ' ἂν αἰσχίνων ἔτι,
ELECTRA

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

ELECTRA

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

 Clytemnestra

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

ELECTRA

Hear then. Thou say’st, “I slew thy father.” Who
Could well avow a blacker crime than that?
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

εὔτ’ οὖν δικαλως εὔτε μη’; λέξω δέ σοι 560
ώς οὐ δίκη γ’ ἐκτεινας, ἀλλὰ σ’ ἐσπασεν
πειθὼ κακοῦ πρὸς ἀνδρός, φ’ ταῦτα ξύνει.
ἔροῦ δὲ τὴν κυναγὸν Ἀρτεμιω, τῖνος
ποινὰς τὰ πολλὰ πνεύματ’ ἐσχ’ ἐν Αὐλίδι.
ἡ γ’ φράσω· κείνης γὰρ οὐ θέμες μαθεῖν.
πατήρ ποθ’ οὔμος, ὡς ἐγὼ κλώω, θεᾶς
παιξῶν κατ’ ἄλσος εξεκίνησεν ποδοῖν
στυκτὸν κεράστην ἔλαφον, οὐ κατὰ σφαγὰς
ἐκκομπάσας ἔπος τί τυγχάνει βαλῶν.
κάκ τοῦδε μηνίσασα Δητώα κόρη
κατείχ’ Ἀχαιοὺς, ὡς πατήρ ἀντίσταθμον
τοῦ θηρῶν ἐκθυσειε τὴν αὐτοῦ κόρην.
ὡς’ ἦν τὰ κείνης θύματ’; οὐ γὰρ ἦν λύσις
ἀλλ’ στρατῷ πρὸς οἰκον οὐδ’ εἰς Ἰλιον.
ἀνθ’ ὄν, βιασθεὶς πολλὰ κάντιβάς, μόλις
ἐθυσεν αὐτὴν, οὐχὶ Μενέλεω χάριν.
εἰ δ’ οὖν, ἐρῶ γὰρ καὶ τὸ σοῦ, κείνων θέλων
ἐπωφελήσαι ταῦτ’ ἔδρα, τούτου θανείν
χρῆν αὐτῶν οὐνεκ’ ἐκ σέθεν; ποίω νῦμφ;
ὅρα τιθεῖσα τόνδε τὸν νόμον βροτοῖς
μὴ πῆμα σαυτῇ καὶ μετάγγοιαν τιθῆς. 580
εἰ γὰρ κτενοῦμεν ἀλλον ἀντ’ ἄλλου, σὺ τοι
πρότηθα γάναν, εἰ δίκης γε τυγχάνοις.
ἀλλ’ εἰσόρα μὴ σκῆψιν οὐκ οὖσαν τίθης.
ei γὰρ θέλεις, δίδαξον ἀνθ’ ὅτου ταῦτων
αἰσχύστα πάντων ἐργα δρῶσα τυγχάνειν,
ητις εὐνεύδεις τῷ παλαμωίῳ, μεθ’ οὐ
πατέρα τῶν ἀμὸν πρόσβεθεν ἐξαπώλεσας,
καὶ παιδοποιεῖς, τοὺς δὲ πρόσλεσεν εὐσεβεῖς
καὶ εὐσεβῶν βλαστῶντας έκβαλούσ’ ἔχεις.
πῶς ταῦτ’ ἐπαινέσαιμ’ ἄν; ἢ καὶ ταῦτ’ ἔρεις

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ELECTRA

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

ός τῆς θυγατρὸς ἀντίποινα λαμβάνεις; αἰσχρῶς δ', εάν περ καὶ λέγης· οὐ γάρ καλὸν ἐχθροῖς γαμεῖσθαι τῆς θυγατρὸς οὕνεκα. ἀλλ' οὐ γάρ οúde νουθετεῖν ἤξεστί σε, ἢ πᾶσαν ἢς γλῶσσαν ὡς τὴν μητέρα κακοστομοῦμεν. καὶ σ' ἐγὼ γε δεσπότιν ἢ μητέρ' οὐκ ἔλασσον εἰς ἡμᾶς νέμω, ἢ ξῶ βίον μοχθηρόν, ἔκ τε σοῦ κακοῖς πολλοῖς ἀεὶ ξυνούσα τοῦ τε συννόμου· δ' ἀλλος ἔξω, χεῖρα σὴν μόλις φυγόν, τλῆμων Ὀρέστης δυστυχὴ τρίβει βίον· ἄν πολλὰ δὴ με σοὶ τρέφειν μάστορα ἐπητιάσω· καὶ τὸδ', εἴπερ ἔσθενον, ἔδρων ἄν, εὖ τούτ' ἵσθι· τούδε γ' οὔνεκα κήρυσσε μ' εἰς ἀπαντας, εἴτε χρῆσι κακήν εἴτε στόμαργον εἴτ' ἀναίδεῖας πλέαν. εἰ γὰρ πέφυκα τῶν τῶν ἔργων ἔδρις, σχέδον τί τὴν σὴν οὐ κατασχύνων φύσιν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὁρῶ μένος πνέουσαν· εἰ δὲ σὺν δίκη
ξύνεστι, τούδε φρουτίδ' οὐκέτ' εἰσορῶ.

ΚΑΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ποίας δ' ἐμοὶ δεὶ πρὸς γε τῆνδε φρουτίδος,
ἡτας τοιαύτα τὴν τεκοῦσαν ὑβρίσειν,
καὶ ταύτα τηλικούτος; ἀρά σοι δοκεῖ
χωρεὶν ἂν εἰς πὰν ἔργον αἰσχύνης ἀτερ;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

εὖ γνων ἐπίστω τῶνδε μ' αἰσχύνην ἔχειν,
κεὶ μὴ δοκῶ σοι· μαυθάνω δ' ὀθούνεκα
ἐξώρα πράσσω κοῦκ ἐμοὶ προσεικότα.
ἀλλ' ἢ γὰρ ἐκ σοῦ δυσμένεια καὶ τὰ σὰ.
ELECTRA

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

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

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

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

ἐργ’ ἐξαναγκάζει με ταύτα δρᾶν βία:
αἰσχροὶς γὰρ αἰσχρὰ πράγματ’ ἐκδιδάσκεται.

ΚΑΤΣΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ
οὐ θρέμμ’ ἀναιδεῖς, ἦ σ’ ἐγὼ καὶ τὰμ’ ἔπη
καὶ τάργα τὰμὰ πόλλ’ ἀγαν λέγειν ποεῖ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
σὺ τοι λέγεις μιν, οὐκ ἔγώ· σὺ γὰρ ποεῖς
τούργον· τὰ δ’ ἔργα τοὺς λόγους εὐρίσκεται.

ΚΑΤΣΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ
ἀλλ’ οὐ μᾶ τὴν δέσποιναν Ἀρτέμιν θράσους
tοῦδ’ οὐκ ἀλύξεις, εὖτ’ ἢν Λέγομαι μόλη.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὁρᾶς; πρὸς ὅργῃν ἐκφέρει, μεθεισά μοι
λέγειν ἄ χρήζοιμ’, οὐδ’ ἐπίστασαι κλύειν.

ΚΑΤΣΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ
οὐκον εάσεις οὐδ’ ὑπ’ εὐφήμου βοής
θύσαι μ’, ἐπειδῆ σοί γ’ ἐφήκα πᾶν λέγειν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἐὼ, κελεύω, θύε· μηδ’ ἐπαίτιῶ
τοῦμὼν στόμ’ ὥς οὖς ἄν πέρα λέξαιμ’ ἑτί.

ΚΑΤΣΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ
ἐπαίρε δὴ σὺ θύμαθ’ ἡ παροῦσά μοι
πάγκαρτ’, ἀνακτή τιθ’ ὅπως λυτηρίους
εὐχὰς ἀνάσχω δειμάτων, ὃ νῦν ἔχω.
κλύεις ἄν ἡδη, Φώβη προστατήρει,
κεκρυμμένην μου βάξιν· οὐ γὰρ ἐν φίλοις
ὁ μύθος, οὐδὲ πᾶν ἀναπτύξαι πρέπει
πρὸς φῶς παροῦσης τῆςδε πλησίας ἐμοί,
μὴ σὺν φθόνῳ τε καὶ πολυγλώσσῳ βοή
σπείρῃ ματαίαν βάξιν εἰς πᾶσαν πόλιν.
ἀλλ’ ὧδ’ ἄκουε· τῇδε γὰρ κάγῳ φράσω.
ELECTRA

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

CLYTEMNESTRA

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

ELECTRA

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

CLYTEMNESTRA

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

ELECTRA

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

CLYTEMNESTRA

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

ELECTRA

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

CLYTEMNESTRA

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

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ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀ γὰρ προσέθηκεν νυκτὶ τῇ δὲ φάσματα
dισεῶν ὄνειρων, ταῦτά μοι, Δύκει'] ἀναξ,
eἰ μὲν πέφηνεν ἐσθλά, δὸς τελεσφόρα,
eἰ δὲ ἐχθρά, τοὺς ἐχθροῖσιν ἐμπαλίν μέθει
καὶ μὴ με πλούτον τοῦ παρόντος εἰ τίνες
δόλοισι βουλεύουσιν ἐκβαλεῖν, ἐφής,
ἀλλ' ὧδε μ' αἰεὶ ζῶσαν ἀβλαβεῖ βίω
δόμους Ἀτρείδῶν σκῆπτρα τ' ἀμφέπειν τάδε,
φίλοισί τε ξυνούσαν οἷς ξύνειμι νῦν
εὐμεροῦσαν καὶ τέκνων ὅσων ἐμοι
dύσνοι μὴ πρόσεστιν ἡ λύπη πικρά.
ταῦτ', ὃ Δύκει'] Απόλλων, ἰλεώς κλύων
δὸς τάσιω ἡμῖν ὁσπερ ἐξαυτοῦμεθα.
τὰ δ' άλλα πάντα καὶ σιωπώσις ἐμοῦ
ἐπαξιῶ σε δαίμον' ὅτι' ἐξειδέναι
τοὺς ἐκ Διὸς γὰρ εἰκὸς ἔστι πάνθ' ὀράν.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΟΓΟΣ

ξέναι γυναῖκες, πῶς ἀν εἰδεῖ μη σαφῶς
εἰ τοῦ τυράννου δόματ' Ἀιγύπτου τάδε;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τάδ' ἔστιν, ὃ ξέν'· αὐτὸς ἤκασας καλῶς.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΟΓΟΣ

ἡ καὶ δάμαρτα τήν τ' ἐπεικάξων κυρῶ
κείνου; πρέπει γὰρ ὡς τύραννος εἰσορᾶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μάλιστα πάντων ὧδε σοι κείθ' πάρα.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΟΓΟΣ

ὡ χαϊρ', ἀνασά: σοι φέρων ἦκω λόγους
ηδεῖς φίλου παρ' ἀνδρὸς Ἀιγύπτου θ' ὀμοῦ.

ΚΑΤΑΤΑΙΜΗΣΟΡΑ

ἐδεξάμην τὸ ῥηθέν· εἰδέναι δὲ σοι
πρώτηστα χρῆξω τις σ' ἀπέστειλεν βροτῶν.
ELECTRA

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

AGED SERVANT

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

CHORUS

It is, Sir; thou thyself hast guessed aright.

AGED SERVANT

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

CHORUS

Indeed thou art in presence of the queen.

AGED SERVANT

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

CLYTEMNESTRA

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

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ
Φανοτεύς ὁ Φωκεύς, πράγμα πορσύνων μέγα.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ
tὸ ποῖον, ὦ ξέν', εἰπέ· παρὰ φίλον γὰρ ὃν ἀνδρός, σάφ' οἶδα, προσφιλεῖσ λέξεις λόγους.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ
tέθυνε ὁ Ὁρέστης· ἐν βραχεί ξυνθεὶς λέγω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὐ ἡ γω τάλαιν', ὀλωλα τῇ ἕν ἡμέρᾳ.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ
tί φῆς, τί φῆς, ὦ ξείνε; μὴ ταῦτας κλῦε.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ
θανόντι ὁ Ὁρέστης νῦν τε καὶ πάλαι λέγω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἀπωλόμην δύστηνος, οὐδέν εἰμ' ἐτι.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ
σὺ μὲν τὰ σαυτής πράσσε', ἐμοὶ δὲ σὺ, ξένε, τάληθές εἰπέ, τῷ τρόπῳ διόλλυται;

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ
κάπερμυπόμην πρὸς ταῦτα καὶ τὸ πάν φράσω. 680
κείνος γὰρ ἐλθὼν εἰς τὸ κλεινὸν Ἑλλάδος πρόσχημι ἀγῶνος Δελφικῶν ἀθλουν χάριν, ὅτι ἤσθετ ἀνδρῶς ὀρθών κηρυγμάτων ὅρμουν προκηρύξατος, οὐ πρώτη κρίσις, εἰσῆλθε λαμπρός, πᾶσι τοῖς ἐκεί σέβας· ὅρμουν ὦ ἰσώσας τάφεσει 1 τὰ τέρματα νῖκης ἔχων ἐξῆλθε πάντιμον γέρας. 690
χώπως μὲν ἐν πολλοῖς παῦρα σοι λέγω οὐκ οἶδα τοιοῦτο ἀνδρὸς ἔργα καὶ κράτη· ἐν δ' ἦσθ'. ὅσων γὰρ εἰσεκηρύξαν βραβῆς

1 τῇ φόσει MSS., Musgrave corr.
ELECTRA

AGED SERVANT
Phanoteus, the Phocian,
On a grave mission.

CLYTEMNESTRA
Tell me, stranger, what.
It must be friendly coming from a friend.

AGED SERVANT
Orestes' death, to sum in brief my tale.

ELECTRA
Me miserable! Now am I undone.

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

AGED SERVANT
I say again, Orestes is no more.

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

CLYTEMNESTRA
Attend to thine own business. (To aged servant.)
Tell me, Sir,
The circumstance and manner of his death.

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

[δρόμων διαύλων πένταθλ' ἀ νομίζεται].

τούτων ἐνεγκὼν πάντα τάπινίκια

ἀλβίζετ', Ἄργειδὸς μὲν ἀνακαλούμενος,

ὀνομα δ' Ὄρεστης, τού τὸ κλείνων Ἐλλάδος

Ἀγαμέμνονος στράτευμι ἀγείραντος ποτε.

καὶ ταῦτα μὲν τοιαῦθ'. ὅταν δὲ τις θεῶν

βλάπτη, δύναι' ἀν οὐδ' ἀν ἰσχύων φυγεῖν.

κεῖνος γὰρ ἀλλης ἡμέρας, θ' ἐπιπίκων

ὕν ἠλέον τέλλοντος ὁκύπους ἀγών,

ἐἰς ἡλθειτο πολλῶν ἀρματικῶν μέτα.

εἰς ἦν Ἀχαιός, εἰς ἄπο τοῦ Ἐλλήνων, δύο

Λίβυς θυγατέραν ἀρματών ἐπιστατᾶν·

κάκεινος ἐν τούτοις, Θεσσαλῶν ἔχων

ὑπόπους, ὁ πέμπτος· ἔκτος εἴπειν Ἀιτωλῶν

ζανθαίοι πόλεις· ἐβδομος Μάγνης ἄνήρ·

ὁ δ' ὁμοίος λεύκιππος, Αἰνιάν γένος·

ἐνατος Ἁθηνῶν τῶν θεομήτων ἀπὸ·

Βοιωτῶν ἄλλος, δέκατου ἐκπληρῶν ὅχον.

στάντες δ' ἵν' αὐτοὺς οἱ τεταγμένοι βραβεῖς

κλήροις ἐπῆλεν καὶ κατέστησαν δίφρους,

χαλκῆς υπαλ σάλπυγγος ἦξαν· οἱ δ' ἀμα

ὑπότεοι ὁμοκλῆσαντες ἦλιας χερῶν

ἐσεισάν· ἐν δὲ πᾶς ἔμεστῳθ' ὁδόμα

κτύπου κρητητῶν ἀρμάτων· κόνις δ' ἀνω

φορεῖθ'. ὁμοὶ δὲ πάντες ἀναμεμυγμένοι

φείδοντο κέντρων οὐδέν, ὡς ὑπερβαλοῦν

χυδας τις αὐτῶν καὶ φρυγάμαθ' ἐπικά.

ὁμοὺ γὰρ ἀμφί νότα καὶ τροχῶν βάσεις

ἡφρίζου, ἐσεβαλλον ἐπικαί πνοάι.

κεῖνος δ' ὑπ' αὐτὴν ἐσχάτην στήλην ἔχων

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

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ELECTRA

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

ἕχριμπτ' ἀεὶ σύρυγγα, δεξιῶν δ' ἀνείς
σειραίον ἵππον εἰργε τοῦν προσκείμενον.
καὶ πρὶν μὲν ὄρθοι πάντες ἐστασαν δίφροι·
ἐπειτα δ' Αινάνος ἀνδρὸς ἀστρομοί
πῶλοι βία φέρουσι· ἐκ δ' ὑποστροφῆς
tελοῦντες ἐκτόν ἐβδομόν τ' ἡδη δρόμον
μετωπα συμπαίουσι Βαρκαίοις ὅχιος·
κάντεθεν ἄλλος ἄλλον ἐξ ἐνὸς κακοῦ
ἐθραυν κανέπιπτε, πάν δ' ἐπίμπλατο
ναναγῖον Κρισάιον ἵππικῶν πέδον.

γνοὺς δ' οὐξ Ἀθηνών δεινὸς ἡμιστρώφος
ἐξо παρασπὰ κάνακωχεύει παρείς
κλύδων ἐφίππου ἐν μέσῳ κυκώμουν.

ἡλαυνε δ' ἐσχάτος μὲν, ὑστέρας δ' ἐχών
πῶλος Ὀρέστης, τῷ τέλει πίστιν φέρων·
ὁτως δ' ὅρα μόνον τιν ἐλλελειμένου,
ἐξον δ' ὅτων κέλαδον ἐνσείςας θοαῖς
πῶλοις διώκει, κάξισώσαντε νυγά

ἡλαυνεθήν, τότ' ἄλλος, ἄλλοθ' ἀτερος
κάρα προβάλλων ἱππικῶν ὁχημάτων.

καὶ τοὺς μὲν ἄλλους πάντας ἀσφαλεῖς δρόμους
ὁμιάθ' ὁ τλήμων ὀρθός ἐξ ὀρθῶν δίφρων·
ἐπειτα λύνω ἠμιάν ἀριστερὰν
κάμπτοντος ὕππου λαυθάνει στήλην ἀκραν

πάσας· ἐθραυσε δ' ἄξονοι μέσας χρώσας
κάζ ἀντύγων ὠλίσθεν· ἐν δ' ἐλίσσεται

τριτοῖς ἰμὰς· τοῦ δ' πίπτοντος πέδῳ
πῶλοι διεπάρησαν ἐς μέσον δρόμον.

στρατὸς δ' ὁπως ὅρα νυ ἐκπεπτωκότα
δίφρων, ἀνωλόλυξε τὸν νεανίαν,
οἰ ἔργα δράσας οὐα λαγχάνει κακά,

φορούμενος πρὸς οὔδας, ἄλλοτ' οὐρανῷ
ELECTRA

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

σκέλη προφαίνων, ἐς τέ νυν διφρηλάται, 
μόλις κατασχεθόντες ἵππικον δρόμον, 
ἔλυσαν αἴματηρον, ὡστε μηδένα 
γνώναι φίλων ἑδον' ἀν ἄθλιον δέμας. 
καὶ νυν πυρᾷ κέαντες εὐθὺς ἐν βραχεὶ 
χαλκῷ μέγιστον σῶμα δειλαίας ὑποδοῦ 
φέρουσιν ἄνδρες Φωκέων τεταγμένοι, 
ὅπως πατρφάνοι τόμβου ἐκλάχη χθονός. 
τοιαύτα σοὶ ταῦτ' ἑστίν, ὡς μὲν ἄν λόγῳ 
ἀλγεῦνα, τοῖς δ' ἰδοῦσιν, οἴμερ εἰδομεν, 
μέγιστα πάντων ὑπὸ ὁπωπ' ἐγὼ κακών.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

φεῦ φεῦ· τὸ πᾶν ὅ δ' ἔσπωτασι τοῖς πάλαι 
πρόρριζον, ὡς ἐοικεν, ἐφθαρται γένος.

ΚΑΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ὁ Ζεῦ, τί ταῦτα, πότερον εὐτυχῆ λέγω, 
ἡ δεινὰ μὲν, κέρδη δὲ; λυπηρῶς δ' ἔχει, 
ei tois ἐμαυτῆς τὸν βίον σάξω κακοῖς.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΟΓΟΣ

ti δ' ὁδ' ἄθυμεῖς, ὧ γύναι, τῷ νῦν λόγῳ;

ΚΑΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

deioun tò tìκτειν ἑστίν· οὐδὲ γὰρ κακῶς 
páσχοντι μίσος ὃν τέκη προσγλυνεται.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΟΓΟΣ

μάτην ἀρ' ἥμεις, ὡς ἐοικεν, ἢκομεν.

ΚΑΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

οὕτωι μάτην γε· πῶς γὰρ ἀν μάτην λέγοις, 
ei μοι θανόντος πίστ' ἔχων τεκμήρια 
προσῆλθες, ὡστὶς τῆς ἐμῆς ψυχῆς γεγώς, 
μαστῶν ἀποστάσι καὶ τροφῆς ἐμῆς, φυγὰς 
ἀπεξενοῦτο καὶ μ', ἐπεὶ τῆς χθονὸς 
ἐξηλθέν, οὐκετ' εἰδεν, ἐγκαλῶν ὃ μοι
ELECTRA

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

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

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

AGED SERVANT
Why, lady, why downhearted at my news?

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

AGED SERVANT
So it would seem our coming was in vain.

CLYTEMNESTRA
Nay, not in vain. How canst thou say “in vain,”
If of his death thou bringst convincing proof,
Who from my life drew life, and yet, estranged,
Forgot the breasts that suckled him, forgot
A mother’s tender nurture, fled his home,
And since that day has never seen me more,
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
φόνοις πατρόφους δείν' ἐπηλαδεῖλε τελείν;
οὐστ' οὖτε νυκτὸς ὑπνόιν οὔτ' ἐξ ἦμέρας
ἐμὲ στενάξειν ἥδιν, ἀλλ' ὁ προστάτων
χρόνος διηγέ μ' αἰεν ὡς θανουμένην.

νῦν δ'-ἡμέρα γὰρ τῆς ἀπηλλαγμαί φόβου
πρὸς τῆς ἐκείνου θ'. ἦδε γὰρ μείζων βλάβη
ἐνυοικός ἢ μοι, τούμῳ ἑκτίνουσ' ἀεὶ
ψυχῆς ἀκρατον αἶμα—νῦν δ' ἐκηλά που
τῶν τῆς ἀπειλῶν οὖν ἡμερεύσομεν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οἵμοι τάλαινα: νῦν γὰρ οἰμῶξαι πάρα,
Ὁρέστα, τὴν σὴν ἕμφοραν, ὦ' ὦδ' ἔχων
πρὸς τῆς ὑβρίζει μητρός. ἄρ' ἔχει καλῶς;

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ
οὔτοι σὺ' κεῖνος δ' ὡς ἔχει καλῶς ἔχει.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ackbar, Νέμεσι τοῦ θανόντος ἀρτίως.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ
ἡκουσεν δὸν δεὶ κατεκύρωσεν καλῶς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὕβριζε'. νῦν γὰρ ἐγνωκοῦσα τυγχάνεις.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ
οὐκοῦν Ὀρέστης καὶ σὺ παύσετον τάδε.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
πεπαιμεθ' ἦμεῖς, οὐχ ὡς σὲ παύσομεν.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ
πολλῶν ἀν ἦκοις, ὦ ξέν', ἁξίος τυχεῖν,
εἰ τῆν ἐπαυσάς τῆς πολυγλώσσου βοής.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ
οὐκοῦν ἁποστείχοιμ' ἀν, εἰ τάδ' εὖ κυρεῖ.
ELECTRA

Slandered me as the murderer of his sire
And breathed forth vengeance?—Neither night nor day
Kind slumber closed these eyes, and immanent dread
Of death each minute stretched me on the rack.
But now on this glad day, of terror rid
From him and her, a deadlier plague than he,
That vampire who was housed with me to drain
My very life blood—now, despite her threats
Methinks that I shall pass my days in peace.

ELECTRA

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

CLYTEMNESTRA

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

ELECTRA

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

CLYTEMNESTRA

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

ELECTRA

This is thine hour of victory; mock on.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Thou and Orestes then should silence me.

ELECTRA

We silence thee! We who are silent, both!

CLYTEMNESTRA

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

AGED SERVANT

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

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΗΝΗΣΤΡΑ

'Ηκιστ' ἐπείπερ οὔτ' ἐμοῦ κατάξεῖ ἀν
πράξειας οὔτε τοῦ πορεύσαντος ξένου.
ἀλλ' εἰσόθ' εἰσώ· τήνυε δ' ἐκτοθεν βοῶν
ἐα τά θ' αὐτῆς καὶ τὰ τῶν φίλων κακά.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀρ' ὑμῖν ὡς ἀλγοῦσα κόδυνωμένη
δεινώς δακρύσαι κάπικοκυκᾶσαι δοκεῖ
τὸν νῦν ἤ δύστηνος ὁδ' ὀλωλότα;
ἀλλ' ἐγγελώσα φροῦδος. ὃ τάλαιν' ἐγώ.
'Ορέστα φίλταθ', ὡς μ' ἀπόλεσας θανῶν.
ἀποσπάσας γὰρ τῆς ἐμῆς στήξει φρενῶς
αἱ μοι μόναι παρῆσαν ἐλπίδων ἔτι,
σὲ πατρὸς ἥξειν ξώντα τιμωρόν ποτε
κάμοι ταλαίνης. νῦν δὲ ποί με χρῆ μολεῖν;
μόνη γὰρ εἰμι, σοῦ τ' ἀπεσκεπήμενη
καὶ πατρὸς. ἦδη δεῖ με δουλεύειν πάλιν
ἐν τοῖς ἐχθρίστοισιν ἀνθρώπων ἐμοὶ
φονεύσαι πατρός. ἀρά μοι καλῶς ἔχει;
ἀλλ' οὖ τι μὴν ἔγωγε τοῦ λοιποῦ χρόνου
ἐξοικοῖς, εἰσειμί. ἀλλ' τῆδε πρὸς τὴν
παρεία ἐμαυτήν ἀφίλοις ἀνανόδον.
πρὸς ταῦτα καὶνέτω τις, εἰ βαρύνεται,
τῶν ἐνδον ὄντων· ὃς χάρισι μέν, ἡν κτάνη,
λύτη δ', εὰν ξώ· τοῦ βίου δ' οὐδεὶς πόθος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α'

ποὺ ποτε κεραυνοὶ Δίος ἦ ποὺ φαέθων
"Ἀλλος, εἰ ταῦτ' ἑφορῶταις κρύπτουσιν ἐκήλοι;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐ ἔ, αἰαὶ.

1 ἐσομ' MSS., Hermann corr.
ELECTRA

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

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

CHORUS (Str. 1)
Where, O Zeus, are thy bolts, O Sun-god, where is
thy ray,
If with thy lightning, thy light, these things be not
shewn to the day?

ELECTRA
Ah me! Ah me!

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ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

χορος

ο̱ παι, τι δακρύεις;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

φεῦ.

χορος

μηδέν μέγ' ἀυστης.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀπολεῖς.

χορος

πῶς;

ηλεκτρα

εἰ τῶν φανερῶς οἰχομένων
εἰς Ἀιδαν ἐλπίδ' υποίσεις, κατ' ἐμοῦ τακομένας
μᾶλλον ἐπεμβάσει.

χορος

ἀντ. ά

οἶδα γάρ ἀνακτ' Ἀμφιάρεων χρυσοδέτοις
ἐρκεσι κρυφθέντα γυναικῶν καὶ νῦν ὑπὸ γαίας

ηλεκτρα

ἐ ἐ, ἰώ.

χορος

πάμφυως ἀνάσσει.

ηλεκτρα

φεῦ.

χορος

φεῦ δῆτ' ὅλοα γάρ

ηλεκτρα

ἐδάμη.
ELECTRA

CHORUS
Daughter, why weep'st thou?

ELECTRA
Woe!

CHORUS
Hush! No rash cry!

ELECTRA
Thou'tt be my death.

CHORUS
What meanest thou?

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

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

ELECTRA
Ah me!

CHORUS
A living soul he reigns.

ELECTRA
Ah woe!

CHORUS
Aye woe! for the murderess—

ELECTRA
Was slain.

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

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ναι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οίδ' οίδ'. ἐφάνη γὰρ μέλετωρ ἀμφὶ τὸν ἐν πένθει. ἐμοὶ δ' οὕτως ἐτ' ἔσθ'. δὲ γὰρ ἐτ' ἦν,
φρούδος ἀναρπασθείς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

dεἰλαία δειλαίων κυρεῖς.

στρ. β'

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

κἀγὼ τούθ' ἑστωρ, ὑπερίστωρ,
πανσύρτωρ παμμήνῳ πολλῶν
dεινῶν στυγνῶν τ' αἴωνι.¹

ΧΟΡΟΣ

eἴδομεν ἄθρήνεις.²

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

μὴ μέ νυν μηκέτι
παραγάγῃς, ἵνα οὐ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

tί φής;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πάρεισιν ἐλπίδων ἐτὶ κοινοτόκων
εὐπατριδᾶν ἀρωγαί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πᾶσι θυατοῖς ἔφυ μόρος.

άντ. β' 860

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

η καὶ χαλάργοις ἐν ἀμίλλαις
οὕτως, ὡς κεῖνῳ δυστάνῳ,
τμητοῖς ἠλκοῖς ἐγκύρσαι;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀσκόπος ἄ λόβα.

¹ ἀχέων MSS., Hermann corr. ² ἠ θρεῖς MSS., Dindorf corr.
ELECTRA

CHORUS
Aye, slain.

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

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

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

CHORUS
We have watched its tearful course.

ELECTRA
Cease then to turn it where—

CHORUS
What wouldst thou say?

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

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

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

CHORUS
Torture ineffable!
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πῶς γὰρ οὐκ; εἰ ξένος
άτερ ἐμῶν χερῶν
ΧΟΡΟΣ
παπαὶ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
κέκευθεν, οὔτε του τάφου ἀντιάσας
οὔτε γόων παρ᾽ ἡμῶν.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ὐφ᾽ ἱδονῆς τοι, φιλτάτη, διώκομαι
τὸ κόσμου μεθεῖσα σὺν τάχει μολείν·
φέρω γὰρ ἱδονάς τε κανάπαυλαν ὅν
παροίθεν εἴχες καὶ κατέστενες κακῶν

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
πόθεν δ᾽ ἄν εὔροις τῶν ἐμῶν σὺν πημάτων
ἀρηξίν, οἷς ἱασίν οὐκ ἐνεστ᾽ ἰδεῖν;

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
πάρεστ᾽ Ὀρέστης ἡμῖν, ἵσθι τούτ᾽ ἐμοῦ
κλύουσ᾽, ἐναργῶς, ὠσπερ εἰσοράξ ἐμὲ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἀλλ᾽ ἡ μέμηνας, ὦ τάλαινα, καπὶ τοῖς
σαυτῆς κακοῦσι καπὶ τοῖς ἐμοῖς γελᾶς;

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
μᾶ τὴν πατρῴαν ἑστίαν, ἀλλ᾽ οὖχ ὑβρεῖ
λέγω τάδ', ἀλλ᾽ ἐκείνον ὅς παρόντα νῦν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οἵμοι τάλαινα: καὶ τίνος βροτῶν λόγον
τόνδε ἐισακούσας ὅδε πιστεύεις ἄγαν;

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ἐγὼ μὲν ἔξ ἐμοῦ τε κοῦκ ἄλλης, σαφῆ
σημεῖ' ἰδοῦσα, τῷ δὲ πιστεύω λόγῳ.
ELECTRA

ELECTRA
Yea, in a strange land far away—

CHORUS
Alas!

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

Enter CHRYSOthemis.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

tίν', ὦ τάλαω', ἔχουσα πίστιν; ἐς τὸ μοι βλέψασα θάλπει τῷ ἀνηκέστῳ πυρί;

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

πρὸς νυν θεῶν ἀκουσόν, ὡς μαθοῦσά μοι
tὸ λοιπὸν ἣ φρονοῦσαν ἢ μωρὰν λέγης.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

σὺ δ' οὖν λέγ', εἰ σοι τῷ λόγῳ τις ἤδονή.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

καὶ δὴ λέγω σοι πᾶν ὅσον κατειδόμην.
ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἠλθον πατρὸς ἀρχαῖον τάφου,
ορῶ κολώνης ἐξ ἄκρας νεορρύτων
πηγᾶς γάλακτος καὶ περιστεφθὲ κύκλῳ
πάντων ὦς' ἐστὶν ἄνθεων θήκην πατρός.
ἰδοὺσα δ' ἔσχον θαύμα, καὶ περισκοπῶ
μὴ ποὺ τις ἡμῖν ἐγγὺς ἐγχρίμπητη ἄντων.
ὡς δ' ἐν γαλήνῃ πάντ' ἐδερκόμης τόπον,
tύμβου προσείρπον ἄσσον ἐσχάτης δ' ὅρῳ
πυρᾶς νεωρη βόστρυχον τετμημένων
κεύθες ταλαίω ὅς εἶδον, ἐμπαίει τί μοι
ψυχῇ σύνηθες ὄμμα, φιλτάτου βροτῶν
πάντων Ὁρέστου τοῦθ' ὅραν τεκμηρίων
καὶ χερσὶ βαστάσασα δυσφήμῳ μὲν οὗ,
χαρὰ δὲ πίμπλημ' εὔθυς ὄμμα δακρύων.
καὶ νῦν θ' ὀμοίως καὶ τότ' ἐξεπίσταμαι
μή τού τόδ' ἀγιάσσα μὴν καὶ 
τῷ γὰρ προσήκει πλὴν ἡ' ἐμοὶ καὶ σοῦ τόδε;
κἂν μὲν οὐκ ἐδρασᾶ, τοῦτ' ἐπισταμαι,
οὐδ' αὐ σὺ πῶς γὰρ; ἦ γε μηδὲ πρὸς θεοῦς
ἐξετ' ἀκλαύστῳ τῇ ἁ' ἀποστῆναι στέγης.
ἀλλ' οὐδὲ μὲν δὴ μητρὸς οὖθ' ὁ νοῦς φιλεῖ.
ELECTRA

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

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

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

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

τοιαῦτα πράσσειν οὔτε δρῶσ' ἔλανθαν' ἂν· 1
ἀλλ' ἔστι Ὀρέστου ταύτα τάπιτυμβια. 2
ἀλλ', ὅ φίλη, θάρσυνε· τοὺς αὐτοίσι τοι
οὐχ αὐτός αἰεὶ δαμόνων παραστατεῖ.
νῦν ἴν τὰ πρόσθεν στυγνός· ἥ δὲ νῦν ἴσως
πολλῶν ὑπάρξει κύρος ἡμέρα καλῶν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

φεῦ, τῆς ἀνοίας ὡς σ' ἐποικτήρῳ πάλαι.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

τί δ' ἔστιν; οὔ πρὸς ἡδονὴν λέγω τάδε;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐκ οἰσθ' ὅποι γῆς οὔδ' ὅποι γνώμης φέρει.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

πῶς δ' οὐκ ἐγὼ κάτοιχ' ἂ γ' εἴδον ἐμφανῶς;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τέθυκεν, ὅ τάλαϊνα, τάκεινον δὲ σοι
σωτήρι' ἔρρει· μηδὲν εἰς κεῖνον γ' ὅρα.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

οἶμοι τάλαϊνα· τοῦ τάδ' ἡκουσας βροτῶν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τοῦ πλησίον παρόντος, ἡνίκ' ὀλλυτο.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

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

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

κατ' οἰκὼν, ἡδὺς οὔδε μητρὶ δυσχερής.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

οἶμοι τάλαϊνα· τοῦ γὰρ ἀνθρώπων ποτ' ἴν
τὰ πολλὰ πατρὸς πρὸς τάφων κτερίσματα;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οἶμαι μάλιστ' ἔγγυε τοῦ τεθυμηκότος
μνημεῖ' Ὀρέστου ταύτα προσθείναι τινα.

1 ἔλανθανεν MSS., Heath corr.
2 τάπιτυμβια MSS., Dindorf corr.
ELECTRA

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

ELECTRA

Alas! I pity thy simplicity,
Fond sister.

CHRYSOthemIS

Are not then my tidings glad?

ELECTRA

Thou knowst not in what land of dreams thou art.

CHRYSOthemIS

Wouldst have me doubt the evidence of my eyes?

ELECTRA

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

CHRYSOthemIS

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

ELECTRA

One who was present when he met his fate.

CHRYSOthemIS

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

ELECTRA

Within; our mother's not unwelcome guest.

CHRYSOthemIS

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

ELECTRA

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

ΧΡΤΣΘΕΜΙΣ

ὁ δυστυχής· ἐγώ δὲ σὺν χαρᾷ λόγους
tοιούσις· ἔχονσ' ἐσπευδον, οὐκ εἰδιν' ἄρα
ἂν ἠμεν ἄτησ· ἄλλα νῦν, ὃθ' ἴκομην,
tά τ' οὖντα πρόσθεν ἄλλα τ' εὐρίσκω κακά.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὔτως ἔχει σοι ταῦτ'· ἐὰν δὲ μοι πίθη,
tῆς νῦν παρούσης πημονής λύσεις βάρος.

ΧΡΤΣΘΕΜΙΣ

ἡ τοὺς θανόντας ἑξαναστήσω ποτὲ;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐκ ἐσθ' ὦ γ' εἴτον· οὐ γὰρ ὃθ' ἄφρων ἔφυν.

ΧΡΤΣΘΕΜΙΣ

τί γὰρ κελεύεις δῶν ἐγώ φερέγγυος;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τλῆναι σε δρῶσαν ἄν ἐγὼ παραινέσω.

ΧΡΤΣΘΕΜΙΣ

ἀλλ' εἰ τις ὠφέλειά γ', οὐκ ἀπώσομαι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

όρα, πόνου τοι χωρὶς οὐδέν εὐτυχεῖ.

ΧΡΤΣΘΕΜΙΣ

ὁρῶ. Ξυνοίσω πᾶν ὀσοπερ ἀν σθένω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀκουε δὴ νῦν ἡ βεβούλευμαι ποεῖν.

παρουσίαν μὲν οῖσθα καὶ σύ που φίλων
ὁς οὕτις ἥμιν ἔστιν, ἀλλ' Ἀιδῆς λαβὼν
ἀπεστέρηκε καὶ μόνα λελείμμεθον.

ἐγὼ δ' ἐως μὲν τῶν κασίγησθον βίω
θάλλοντ' ἐτ' εἰσήκουν, εἴχον ἐπίδας
φόνου ποτ' αὐτὸν πράκτορ' ἱεσθαί πατρός
νῦν δ' ἥνικ' οὐκέτ' ἐστιν, εἰς σὲ δὴ βλέπω,
ὁπως τὸν αὐτόχειρα πατρφόν φόνου
ELECTRA

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

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

CHRYSOTHEMIS
Wouldst have me raise the dead to life again?

ELECTRA
I meant not that; I am not so demented.

CHRYSOTHEMIS
What wouldst thou then that lies within my powers?

ELECTRA
Be bold to execute what I enjoin.

CHRYSOTHEMIS
If it can profit, I will not refuse.

ELECTRA
Success, remember, is the meed of toil.

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

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

ξύν τῇ δ’ ἀδελφῇ μὴ κατοκηνήσεις κτανεῖν
Αἰγίσθον· οὐδέν γάρ σε δεί κρύπτειν μ’ ἐτι.
ποι γάρ μεν εἰς ράθυμος, εἰς τίν’ ἐλπίδων
βλέψαις ἐτ’ ὀρθὴν; ἡ πάρεστι μὲν στενεῖν
πλούτου πατροφον κτήσειν ἐστερημένη,
pάρεστι δ’ ἄλγειν ἐσοδύντε τοῦ χρόνου
ἀλεκτρα γηράσκουσαν ἀνυμέναια τε.
καὶ τῶνδε μέντοι μηκέτ’ ἐλπίς ὡς τεῦξει ποτ’· οὐ γάρ ἂν ἄβουλος ἐστ’ ἀνήρ
Αἰγίσθος ὡστε σὸν σοτ’ ἢ κάμων γένος
βλαστεῖν ἔσσαι, πημονὴν αὐτῷ σαφῆ.
ἀλλ’ ἢν ἐπίστη τοὺς ἔμοις βουλεύμασιν,
πρῶτον μὲν εὐσέβειαν ἐκ πατρὸς κάτω
θαυμόντος οἴσει τοῦ κασιγνήτου θ’ ἀμα·
ἐπείτα δ’, ὦστερ ἐξέφυς, ἐλευθέρα
καλεὶ τὸ λοιπὸν καὶ γάμον ἔπαξιόν
τεῦξει· φίλει γάρ πρὸς τὰ χρηστὰ πᾶς ὅραν.
λόγων γε μὴν εὐκλειαν οὐχ ὅρας ὅσην
σαυτῇ τε κάμοι προσβαλεῖς πεισθείσ’ ἐμοί;
τίς γάρ ποτ’ ἀστῶν ἢ ἥνων ἡμᾶς ἵδῳ
τοιοῦτοι ἔπαινος οὐχὶ δεξιώσεται·
ἰδεσθε τῶδε τῷ κασιγνητῷ, φίλοι,
ὅ τον πατρὸφον οἰκον ἔξεσσωσάτην,
ὅ τοῖσιν ἔχθροις εὐ βεβηκόσιν ποτὲ
ψυχῆς ἀφειδήσαντε προστήτην φόνου·
tοιτὼ φίλεῖν χρή, τῶδε χρή πάντας σέβειν,
tῶδ’ ἐν θ’ ἔφωταις ἐν τε πανδήμῳ πόλει
τιμμᾶν ἀπαντάς οὔτεκ’ ἀνδρείας χρεών.
tοιαυτά τοι νῦ πᾶς τις ἔχερει βροτῶν,
ζώσαις βανοῦσαι τῷ ποτ’ ὅστε μὴ ἱλπεῖν κλέος.
ἀλλ’, ὦ φίλε, πεισθείτε, συμφόνει πατρί,
σύγκαμον ἀδελφῆς, παῦσον ἐκ κακῶν ἐμέ,
ELECTRA

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

παύσον δὲ σαυτήν, τούτῳ γυνώσκουσ’ ὅτι ξῆν αἰσχρὸν αἰσχρῶς τοῖς καλῶς πεφυκόσιν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις ἐστίν ἡ προμηθία
καὶ τῷ λέγοντι καὶ κλύνοντι σύμμαχος.

ΧΡΙΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

καὶ πρὶν γε φωνεῖν, ὦ γυναικεῖς, εἰ φρενῶν ἐτύγχαν’ αὕτη μή κακῶν, ἔσωξε τ’ ἀν τὴν εὐλάβειαν, ὡστερον οὐχὶ σώξεται.

ποῦ γάρ ποτ’ ἐμβλέψασα τοιοῦτον θράσος αὕτη θ’ ὀπλίζει καὶ υπηρετεῖν καλεῖς; οὐκ εἰσορᾶς; γυνὴ μὲν οὐδ’ ἀνὴρ ἐφυς, σθένεις δ’ ἔλασσον τῶν ἑαυτῶν χερί.

δαίμον ὃ τοῖς μὲν εὐτυχεῖ καθ’ ἡμέραν, ἡμῶν δ’ ἀπορρέει κατ’ ἡμέραν ἐρχεται.

τίς ὁ θεός τοιοῦτον ἀνδρα βουλεύον ἔλειν ἀλυσός ἠτίς ἐξαπαλλαχθήσεται;

ὁρα κακῶς πρᾶσσοντες μὴ μείζω κακὰ κτησόμεθ’, εἰ τις τούσδ’ ἀκούσεται λόγους.

λῦει γὰρ ἡμῖν οὔδὲν οὐδ’ ἐποφελεῖ

βάζειν καλὴν λαβόντες δυσκλεῖς θανεῖν.

οὐ γὰρ θανεῖν ἐχθρίστον, ἀλλ’ ὅταν θανεῖν

χρῆσον τις εἴτε μὴ δὲ τούτ’ ἔχῃ λαβεῖν.

ἀλλ’ ἀντιάζω, πρὶν πανωλέθρους τὸ πᾶν ἡμᾶς τ’ ὀλέσθαι καχερημώσει γένος, κατάσχεις ὄργην. καὶ τὰ μὲν λελεγμένα ἄρρητ’ ἐγὼ σοι κατελῆ φυλάξομαι,

αὕτη δὲ νοῦν σχεῖς ἀλλὰ τῷ χρόνῳ ποτὲ, σθένουσα μηδὲν τοῖς κρατοῦσιν εἰκαθεῖν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πείθον· προνοΐας οὐδέν ἀνθρώπως ἐφο

κέρδος λαβεῖν ἄμεινον οὐδε νοῦ σοφοῦ.
ELECTRA

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

CHORUS

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

CHRYSOSTHEMIS

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

CHORUS

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

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀπροσδόκητον οὐδὲν εἴρηκας· καλῶς δὲ ἥδη σ’ ἀπορρίψουσαν ἀπηγγελλόμην. ἀλλ’ αὐτόχειρί μοι μόνη τε δραστέον τούργον τόδ’· οὐ γὰρ δὴ κενὸν γ’ ἀφῆσομεν. 1020

ΧΡΤΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

φεῦ·

εἴθ’ ὄφελες τοιάδε τὴν γνώμην πατρὸς θυήσκοντος εἶναι· πάν γὰρ ἂν κατειργάσω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ’ ἡ φύσιν γε, τὸν δὲ νοῦν ἡσσων τότε.

ΧΡΤΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἄσκει τοιαύτη νοῦν δι’ αἰώνος μένειν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὡς οὐχὶ συνδράσουσα νουθετεῖς τάδε.

ΧΡΤΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

εἰκὸς γὰρ ἐγχειροῦντα καὶ πράσσειν κακὸς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ξηλῶ σε τοῦ νοῦ, τῆς δὲ δειλίας στυγῶ.

ΧΡΤΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἀνέξομαι κλύουσα χῶταν εὐ λέγης.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ’ οὐ ποτ’ ἔξ ἐμοῦ γε μὴ πάθης τόδε.

ΧΡΤΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

μακρὸς τὸ κρίναι ταῦτα χῶ λυπῶς χρόνος. 1030

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀπελθεῖ· σοὶ γὰρ ὄφελησις οὐκ ἔνι.

ΧΡΤΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἐνεστιν· ἄλλα σοὶ μάθησις οὐ πῦρα.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐλθοῦσα μητρὶ ταῦτα πάντ’ ἐξειπε σή.
ELECTRA

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

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

ELECTRA
My temper was the same, my mind less ripe.

CHRYSOSTHEMIS
Study to keep the same mind all thy days.

ELECTRA
This counsel means refusal of thine aid.

CHRYSOSTHEMIS
Yes, for misfortune dogs such enterprise.

ELECTRA
I praise thy prudence, hate thy cowardice.

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

ELECTRA
That trial thou wilt ne'er endure from me.

CHRYSOSTHEMIS
Who lives will see; time yet may prove thee wrong

ELECTRA
Begone! in thee there is no power to aid.

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

ELECTRA
Go to thy mother; tell it all to her.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΧΡΤΣΩΘΕΜΙΣ
ούδ' αύ τοσούτων ἐχθος ἐχθαίρω σ' ἐγώ.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἀλλ' οὖν ἐπίστω γ' οί μ' ἀτιμίας ἄγεις.
ΧΡΤΣΩΘΕΜΙΣ
ἀτιμίας μὲν οὖ, προμηθίας δὲ σοῦ.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
τῷ σῷ δικαίῳ δὴ ἐπιστέσθαι με δεῖ;
ΧΡΤΣΩΘΕΜΙΣ
ὅταν γὰρ εὑ φρονῆς, τόθ' ἡγησεί σὺ νῦν.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἡ δεινὸν εὑ λέγουσαν ἐξαμαρτάνειν.
ΧΡΤΣΩΘΕΜΙΣ
eἰρηκας ὅρθως ὃ σὺ πρόσκεισαι κακῷ.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
tί δ'; οὖ δοκῶ σοι ταύτα σὺν δίκη λέγειν;
ΧΡΤΣΩΘΕΜΙΣ
ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἐνθα χῆ δίκη βλάβην φέρει.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
tούτως ἐγὼ ξῆν τοῖς νόμοις οὐ βούλομαι.
ΧΡΤΣΩΘΕΜΙΣ
ἀλλ' εἰ ποῆσεις ταύτ', ἐπαινέσεις ἐμέ.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
cαὶ μὴν ποῆσῳ γ' οὐδὲν ἐκπλαγείσα σε.
ΧΡΤΣΩΘΕΜΙΣ
cαὶ τούτ' ἄληθές, οὔδὲ βουλεύσει πάλιν;
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
βουλής γὰρ οὐδέν ἔστιν ἐχθιου κακῆς.
ΧΡΤΣΩΘΕΜΙΣ
φρονεῖν ἐοικας οὐδέν ὡν ἐγώ λέγω.
ELECTRA

CHRYSOTHEMIS
My hatred of thee does not reach so far.

ELECTRA
Thou wouldst dishonour me; that much is sure.

CHRYSOTHEMIS
Dishonour? No, I seek to save thine honour.

ELECTRA
Am I to make thy rule of honour mine?

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

ELECTRA
Sound words; 'tis sad they are so misapplied.

CHRYSOTHEMIS
Thou hittest well the blot that is thine own.

ELECTRA
How? dost deny the plea I urge is just?

CHRYSOTHEMIS
No; but e'en justice sometimes worketh harm.

ELECTRA
I choose not to conform to such a rule.

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

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

CHRYSOTHEMIS
Is this thy last word? Wilt not be advised?

ELECTRA
No, naught is loathlier than ill advice.

CHRYSOTHEMIS
Thou seemest deaf to all that I can urge.
ΗΔΕΚΤΡΑ

πάλαι δέδοκται ταύτα κού νεωστί μοι.

ΧΡΙΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἀπειμι τοῖνυν· οὔτε γὰρ σὺ τάμ' ἔπη
tολμᾶς ἐπανείν οὔτ' ἔγω τοὺς σοὺς τρόπους.

ΗΔΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ' εἰσιθ'. οὐ σοι μὴ μεθέψομαι ποτε,
οὐδ' ἢν σφόδρ' ἰμείρουσα τυγχάνησ· ἐπεὶ
πολλής ἀνοίας καὶ τὸ θηρᾶσθαι κενά.

ΧΡΙΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἀλλ' εἰ σεαυτῇ τυγχάνεις δοκοῦσά τι
φρονεῖν, φρόνει τοιαῦθ'. ὅταν γὰρ ἐν κακοῖς
ἡδὴ βεβήκης, τάμ' ἐπανέσεις ἔπη.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. ἀ'
tί τοὺς ἀνωθέν φρονιμωτάτους οἰωνοὺς ἐσορόμενοι
tροφᾶς
κηδομένους ἄφ' ὅν τε βλάστωσιν ἄφ' ὅν τ' ὅνασιν
eὐρ-ωσι, τάδ' οὐκ ἐπ' ἵσας τελοῦμεν;
ἀλλ' οὗ τὰν Διὸς ἀστραπὰν
καὶ τὰν οὐρανίαν Θέμιν,
δαρὸν οὐκ ἀπόνητοι.

ὁ χθονία βροτοίσι φάμα, κατὰ μοι βόσασον οἰκτρὰν
ὅτα τοῖς ἐνερθ' Ἀτρείδαις, ἀχόρευτα φέρουσ' ὀνείδη.

ἀντ. ἀ'

ὅτι σφίν ἡδὴ τὰ μὲν ἐκ δόμων νοσεῖ δή,1 τὰ δὲ
πρὸς τέκνων διπλῆ
φύλοπις οὐκέτ' ἐξισούτα τυχοτασίῳ διαί-
tας πρόδοτος δὲ μόνα σαλέει

1 Triclinius adds δή.

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ELECTRA

ELECTRA
My resolution was not born to-day.

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

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

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

[Exit CHRYSOTHEMIS.

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

Tell him his house is stricken sore,
Tell him his children now no more
In amity together dwell;
Dire strife the twain divides,
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

'Ηλέκτρα, τὸν ἄει 1 πατρὸς
dειλαία στενάχουσα', ὅπως
ά πάνυρτος αἴγδων,
οὕτε τι τοῦ θανεῖν προμηθῆς τὸ τε μὴ βλέπειν
ἐτοίμα,
dιδύμαν ἔλούσο Ἐρινύν· τίς ἄν εὐπατρίς ὥδε 1080
βλάστσοι;

οὐδεὶς τῶν ἁγαθῶν γὰρ 2 στρ. β'
ξών κακῶς εὐκλειαν αἰσχῆναι θέλει
νόνυμος, ὁ παῖ παῖ.
ὡς καὶ σὺ πάγκλαυτον αἰώνα κοινὸν εἶλος,
τὸ μὴ καλὸν καθοπλίσασα, δύο φέρειν ἐν ἑνὶ
λόγῳ,
σοφά τ' ἀρίστα τε παῖς κεκλήσθαι.
ζῷης μοι καθύπερθεν ἀντ. β'. 1090
χεῖρι καὶ πλοῦτω τεῶν ἑχθρῶν ὡςον
νῦν ὑπόχειρ 3 ναίεις·
ἐπεὶ σ' ἐφηύρηκα μοῖρα μὲν οὐκ ἐν ἐσθλᾷ
βεβώσαν, ἄ δὲ μέγιστ' ἐβλαστεῖ νόμιμα, τόνδε
φερομέναν
ἀριστα τὰ Ζηνὸς 4 εὐσεβεία.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἀρ', ὁ γυναῖκες, ὅρθα τ' εἰσηκούσαμεν
ὁρθῶς θ' ὀδοιποροῦμεν ἐνθα χρήζομεν;

ΧΟΡΟΣ
τί δ' ἐξερευνᾶς καὶ τί βουληθεὶς πάρει;

1 The text is corrupt, and no plausible emendation has yet been suggested.
2 Hermann adds γὰρ metri gratia.
3 ἐπὶ χεῖρα MSS., Musgrave corr.
4 Διὸς MSS., Triclinius corr.

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ELECTRA

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

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

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

ORESTES

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

CHORUS

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

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

Αὐγισθον ἐνθ' ὕκηκεν ἵστορῶ πάλαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' εὖ θ' ἰκάνεις χώ φράσας ἀξίημοι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τίς οὖν ἃν ὑμῶν τοῖς ἐσω φράσειεν ἁν Ἱμῶν ποθεινὴν κοινόσουν παρουσίαν;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὁδ', εἰ τὸν ἄγχιστον γε κηρύσσειν χρεών.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ιθ', ὃ γύναι, δήλωσον εἰσελθοῦσ' ὅτι Φωκῆς ματεύσοσ' ἀνδρες Αὐγισθόν tines,

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οἰμοὶ τάλαιν', οὐ δὴ ποθ' ἃς ἱκούσαμεν φήμης φέροντες ἐμφανή τεκμήρια;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐκ οἶδα τὴν σὴν κληρὸν'. ἀλλ' χρον ἐφείτ' Ὄρεστον Στρόφιος ἀγγείλαι πέρι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τί δ' ἐστιν, ὃ ξέν'; ὃς μ' ὑπέρχεται φόβος.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

φέροντες αὐτοῦ σμικρὰ λείψαν' ἐν βραχεὶ τεύχει θανόντος, ὡς ὅρας, κομίζομεν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὶ ἡγ' τάλαινα, τοῦτ' ἐκεῖν' ἡδ' σαφὲς πρόχειρον ἄχθος, ὡς ἐοίκε, δέρκομαι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

εἴπερ τι κλαίεις τῶν Ὅρεστεῖων κακῶν, τόδ' ἀγγος ἵσθι σῶμα τούκεινον στέγον.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὁ ξείνε, δός νυν, πρὸς θεῶν, εἴπερ τόδε κέκευθεν αὐτὸν τεύχος, εἰς χεῖρας λαβεῖν,
ELECTRA

ORESTES
I seek and long have sought Aegisthus’ home.

CHORUS
’Tis here; thy guide is nowise blameable.

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

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

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

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

ORESTES
I’ve heard no “rumours.” Agéd Strophius
Charged me with tidings of Orestes.

ELECTRA
Ha!

What tidings, stranger? how I quake with dread!

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

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

ORESTES
If for Orestes thou art weeping, know
This brazen urn contains the dust of him.

ELECTRA
O if it hold his ashes, let me, friend,
O let me, let me take it in my hands.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὁ πῶς ἐμαυτὴν καὶ γένος τὸ πᾶν ὅμοιον τῇ κλαύσω καποδύρωμαι σποδώ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

δόθ᾽ ἤτις ἠστί, προσφέροντες οὐ γὰρ ὡς ἐν δυσμενείᾳ γ᾽ οὐσ᾽ ἐπιτείται τάδε, ἀλλʼ ἢ φίλον τίς ἢ πρὸς αἳματος φύσιν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὁ φιλτάτου μνημείου ἀνθρώπων ἐμοὶ ψυχῆς Ὁρέστου λοιπόν, ὡς σ᾽ ἀπ᾽ ἐλπίδων οὐχ ὄντερ ἐξέπεμπτον εἰςεδεξάμην.

νῦν μὲν γὰρ οὐδὲν ὄντα βαστάζω χερῶν, δόμων δὲ σ᾽, ὦ παῖ, λαμπρὸν ἐξέπεμψ᾽ ἐγὼ.

1130 ὥς ὠφελον πάροιθεν ἐκλιπεῖν βίον, πρὶν ἐς ξένην σε γαῖαν ἐκπέμψαι χερῶν κλέψασα ταύτες κάνασώσασθαι φῶνω, ὅπως θανών ἔκεισο τῇ τόθ᾽ ὣμερα,

τύμβου πατρὸς κοινὸν εἰληχῶς μέρος.

νῦν δ᾽ ἐκτὸς οίκων κατὶ γῆς ἄλλης φυγὰς κακῶς ἀπώλου, σῆς κασιγνήτης δίχα,

1140 κοῦτ᾽ ἐν φιλαισι χερῶν ἡ τάλαιν ἑγὼ λουτροῖς σ᾽ ἐκόσμησ᾽ οὔτε παμφλέκτου πυρὸς ἀνελόμην, ὡς εἰκός, ἄθλιον βάρος,

ἀλλ᾽ ἐν ἐξανισι χεροὶ κηδειθέας τάλας σμίκρος προσήκες ὁγκοὶ ἐν σμικρῷ κύτει.

οἶμοι τάλαινα τῆς ἐμῆς πάλαι τροφῆς ἀνωφελήτου, τὴν ἑγὼ ἑαυτό ἀμφὶ σοὶ πόνῳ γυλκεῖ παρέσχον ὃυτε γὰρ ποτὲ μητρὸς σὺ γ᾽ ἤσθα μάλλον ἡ κάμῳ φίλος,

1150 οὔθ᾽ οἵ κατ᾽ οἶκον ἤσαν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐγὼ τροφός ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἀδελφὴ σοὶ προσηνύωμη ἀει.

νῦν δ᾽ ἐκλέισοπε ταύτ᾽ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ μιᾷ.
ELECTRA

Not for this dust alone, but for myself
And all my house withal, I'll weep and wail.

ORESTES

Bring it and give it her, whoe'er she be;
For not as an ill-wisher, but as friend,
Or haply near of kin, she asks the boon.

ELECTRA

Last relics of the man I most did love,
Orestes! high in hope I sent thee forth;
How hast thou dashed all hope in thy return!
Radiant as day thou speddest forth, and now
I hold a dusty nothing in my hands.
Would I had died before I rescued thee:
From death and sent thee to a foreign land!
Then hadst thou fallen together with thy sire
And lain beside him in the ancestral tomb:
Now in a strange land, exiled, far from home,
Far from thy sister thou hast died, ah me!
How miserably! I was not by to lave
And deck with loving hands thy corse, and snatch
Thy charred bones from out the flaming pyre.
Alas! by foreign hands these rites were paid,
And now thou comest back to me, of dust
A little burden in this little urn.
O for the nursing and the toil, no toil,
I spent on thee an infant, all in vain!
For thou wast ne'er thy mother's babe, but mine;
Thou hadst no nurse in all the house but me,
I was thy sister, none so called but me.
But now all this hath vanished in a day,
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

θανόντι σὺν σοί· πάντα γὰρ συναρπάσας
θύελλ᾽ ὡπως βέβηκας. οἰχεῖται παθήρ·
tέθυηκε ἐγώ σοι· φροῦδος αὐτὸς εἰ θανὼν·
γελῶσι δ᾽ ἐχθροί· μαίνεται δ᾽ ὑφ᾽ ἥδονής
μήτηρ ἀμήτωρ, ἦς ἔμοι σὺ πολλάκις
φήμας λάθρα προὀπεμπετοῖς ὡς φανούμενοι
tιμωροῦσα αὐτὸς. ἀλλὰ ταῦθ᾽ οὐ δυντυχῆς
dαιμών ὁ σὸς τε κάμος ἔξαφείλετο,
ὅς σ᾽ ὀδύς μοι προὕπεμψεν ἀντὶ φιλτάτης
μορφῆς σποδόν τε καὶ σκιάν ἀνωφελῆς.
οἴμοι μοι.

ὁ δέμας οἰκτρὸν. φεῦ φεῦ.
ὁ δεινοτάτας, οἴμοι μοι,
πεμφθεῖς κελεύθουσαι, φιλταθ᾽, ὃς μ᾽ ἀπώλεσας·
ἀπώλεσας δὴ, ὦ κασώγητον κάρα.
τοιγάρ σὺ δέξας μ᾽ ἐσ τὸ σὸν τόδε στέγος,
τὴν μηδὲν εἰς τὸ μηδέν, ὃς σὺν σοι κάτω
ναιὸ τὸ λοιπὸν· καὶ γὰρ ἤνεκ᾽ ἥσθ᾽ ἄνω,
ξύν σοι μετείχον τῶν ἱσων, καὶ νῦν ποθῶ
τοῦ σοῦ θανοῦσα μὴ ἀπολείπεσθαι τάφον.
τοὺς γὰρ θανόντας οὐχ ὅρω λυπομένους.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

θυντοῦ πέφυκας πατρός, Ἡλέκτρα, φρόνει,
θυντὸς δ᾽ ὂρεστῆς. ὅστε μὴ λίαν στένε.
πάσιν γὰρ ἡμῖν τοῦτ᾽ ὀφείλεται παθεῖν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

φεῦ φεῦ. τί λέξω; ποὶ λόγων ἅμηχανών
ἔλθω; κρατεῖν γὰρ οὐκέτι γλῶσσης σθένω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τί δ᾽ ἔσχες ἄλγος; πρὸς τί τοῦτ᾽ εἰπὼν κυρεῖς;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἡ σὸν τὸ κλεινὸν εἴδος; Ἡλέκτρας τόδε;
ELECTRA

Dead with thy death, a whirlwind that passed by,
And left all desolate; thy father's gone,
And I am dead in thee, and thou art lost;
And our foes laugh. That mother, mother none,
Whose crimes, as oft thou gav'st me secret word,
Thou wouldst thyself full speedily avenge,
Is mad for joy. But now malignant fate,
Thy fate and mine, hath blasted all and sent me,
Instead of that dear form I loved so well,
Cold ashes and an unavailing shade.
  Ah me!  Ah me!
  O piteous corse!
  Ah woe is me!

O woeful coming! I am all undone,
Undone by thee, beloved brother mine!
Take me, O take me to thy last lone home,
A shadow to a shade, that I may dwell
With thee for ever in the underworld;
For here on earth we shared alike, and now
I fain would die to share with thee thy tomb;
For with the dead there is no mourning, none.

CHORUS

Child of a mortal sire, Electra, think,
Orestes too was mortal; calm thy grief.
Death is a debt that all of us must pay.

ORESTES

Ah me! what shall I say where all words fail?
And yet I can no longer curb my tongue.

ELECTRA

What sudden trouble made thee speak like this?

ORESTES

Is this the famed Electra I behold?
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
τόδ' ἔστ' ἐκεῖνο, καὶ μᾶλ' ἀθλίως ἔχον.
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
οἴμοι ταλαίνης ἀρα τῆςδε συμφόρας.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὐ δὴ ποτ' ὃ ξέν', ἀμφ' ἐμοὶ στένεις τάδε;
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ὡ σῶμ' ἀτίμως κάθεως ἐφθαρμένον.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὗτοι ποτ' ἀλλην ἦ μὲ δυσφημεῖς, ξένε.
ΟΤΕΣΤΗΣ
φεῦ τῆς ἀνύμφοι δυσμόρου τε σῆς τροφῆς.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
τί δὴ ποτ', ὃ ξέν', ὃδ' ἐπισκοπῶν στένεις;
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ὡς οὐκ ἂρ' ᾑδη τῶν ἐμῶν οὐδὲν κακῶν.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἐὰν τῷ διαγγεῖς τούτῳ τῶν εἰρημένων;
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ὁρῶν σε πολλοῖς ἐμπρέπουσαν ἄλγεσιν.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
καὶ μὴν ὃρᾶς γε παῦρα τῶν ἐμῶν κακῶν.
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
καὶ πῶς γένοιτ' ἄν τῶν ἔτ' ἔχθιω βλέπειν;
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οθούνει' εἰμὶ τοῖς φουεῦσι σύντροφος
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
τοῖς τοῦ; πόθεν τοῦτ' ἐξεσήμηνας κακῶν;
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
τοῖς πατρός· εἶτα τοῖσδε δουλεύω βία.
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
τῖς γὰρ σ' ἀνάγκη τῆςδε προτρέπει βροτῶν;

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ELECTRA

'Tis she, and very wretched is her state.
ORESTES
O for the heavy change! Alas, alas!
ELECTRA
Surely thy pity, sir, is not for me.
ORESTES
O beauty marred by foul and impious spite!
ELECTRA
Yea, sir, this wreck of womanhood am I.
ORESTES
Alas, how sad a life of singleness!
ELECTRA
Why gaze thus on me, stranger, and lament?
ORESTES
Of my own ills how little then I knew!
ELECTRA
Was this revealed by any word of mine?
ORESTES
By seeing thee conspicuous in thy woes.
ELECTRA
And yet my looks reveal but half my woes.
ORESTES
Could there be woes more piteous to behold?
ELECTRA
Yea, to be housemate with the murderers—
ORESTES
Whose murderers? at what villainy dost hint?
ELECTRA
My father's; and their slave am I perforce.
ORESTES
Who is it puts upon thee this constraint?
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
μήτηρ καλείται, μητρὶ δ’ οὐδὲν ἐξισσοὶ.
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
τί δρῶσα; πότερα χερῶν ἡ λύμη βίου;
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
καὶ χερῶ καὶ λύμασι καὶ πᾶσιν κακοῖς.
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
οὐδ’ οὐπαρῆξον οὐδ’ ὁ κωλύσων πάρα;
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὐ δὴθ’. δε ἦν γάρ μοι σὺ προὐθηκας σποδόν.
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ὡ δύσποτμ’, ὡς ὅρων σ’ ἐποικίσας πάλαι.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
μόνος βροτῶν νυν ἵσθ’ ἐποικίσας ποτέ.
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
μόνος γὰρ ἥκω τοῖς ἵσοις ἀλγῶν κακοῖς.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὐ δὴ ποθ’ ἡμῖν ἔυγγενῆς ἥκεις ποθέν;
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἐγὼ φράσαμ’ ἂν, εἰ τὸ τῶν οὐνοῦν πάρα.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἀλλ’ ἐστὶν εὖνουν, ὡστε πρὸς πιστὰς ἔρεισ.
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
μέθες τὸδ’ ἄγγος νῦν, ὅπως τὸ πᾶν μάθησ.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
μὴ δῆτα πρὸς θεῶν τοῦτο μ’ ἐργάσῃ, ξένε.
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
πείθον λέγοντι κοὐχ ἀμαρτήσει ποτέ.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
μὴ, πρὸς γενείου, μὴ ’ξέλῃ τὰ φίλτατα.
ELECTRA

ELECTRA
My mother, not a mother save in name.
ORESTES
By blows or petty tyrannies or how?
ELECTRA
By blows and tyrannies of every kind.
ORESTES
And is there none to help or stay her hand?
ELECTRA
None; there was one, the man whose dust I hold.
ORESTES
Poor maid! my pity's stirred at sight of thee.
ELECTRA
Thou art the first who ever pitied me.
ORESTES
I am the first to feel a common woe.
ELECTRA
What, canst thou be some kinsman from afar?
ORESTES
If these are friends who hear us, I would answer.
ELECTRA
Yes, they are friends; thou needest not fear to speak
ORESTES
Give back this urn, and then I'll tell thee all.
ELECTRA
Ask not so hard a thing, good sir, I pray.
ORESTES
Do as I bid thee; thou shalt not repent it.
ELECTRA
O, I adjure thee, rob me not of that
The most I prize on earth.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
οῦ φημὶ ἑάσειν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὖ τάλαιν ἐγὼ σέθεν,
Ὀρέστα, τῆς σῆς εἰ στερήσομαι ταφῆς.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
eὐφημα φῶνει· πρὸς δίκης γὰρ οὐ στένεις.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
πῶς τῶν θανῶν ἄδελφὸν οὐ δίκη στένω;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
οὐ σοι προσήκει τήνδε προσφωνεῖν φάτιν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὕτως ἄτιμος εἰμὶ τοῦ τεθνηκότος;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἄτιμος οὐδὲν οὐ· τοῦτο δὲ οὐχὶ σῶν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
eἰπερ γυ' Ὀρέστου σῶμα βαστάζω τόδε;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἀλλὰ οὐκ Ὀρέστου, πλὴν λόγῳ γυ' ἡσκημένον.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ποῦ δ' ἔστ' ἐκείνου τοῦ ταλαιπώρου τάφος;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
οὐκ ἔστι· τοῦ γὰρ ζῶντος οὐκ ἔστιν τάφος.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
πῶς εἰπας, ὦ παῖ;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ψεῦδος οὐδέν ὦν λέγω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἡ γὰρ ἀνήρ;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
eἰπερ ἐμψυχόσ γυ' ἐγώ.

222
ELECTRA

ORESTES

It may not be.

ELECTRA

Ah! woe for thee, Orestes, woe is me,
If I am not to give thee burial.

ORESTES

Guard well thy lips; thou hast no right to mourn.

ELECTRA

No right to mourn a brother who is dead!

ORESTES

To speak of him in this wise is not meet.

ELECTRA

What, am I so dishonoured of the dead?

ORESTES

Of none dishonoured: this is not thy part.

ELECTRA

Not if Orestes' ashes here I hold?

ORESTES

They are not his, though feigned to pass for his.

ELECTRA

Where then is my unhappy brother's grave?

ORESTES

There is no grave; we bury not the quick.

ELECTRA

What sayst thou, boy?

ORESTES

Nothing that is not true.

ELECTRA

He lives?

ORESTES

As surely as I am alive.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἡ γὰρ σὺ κεῖνος;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
tίνυδε προσβλέψασά μου
σφραγίδα πατρὸς ἐκμαθή εἰ σαφῆ λέγω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὡς φίλτατον φῶς.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

φίλτατον, συμμαρτυρῶ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὡς φθέγμ', ἀφίκου;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

μηκέτ' ἀλλοθεν πύθη,

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐχω σε χερσίν;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὡς τὰ λοίπ' ἔχοις ἄει.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὡς φίλταται γυναῖκες, ὡς πολίτιδες,

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἀρατ' Ὄρεστην τόμδε, μηχαναῖσι μὲν
θανόντα, νῦν δὲ μηχαναῖσι σεσωσμένου.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὁρῶμεν, ὡς παῖ, κἂπι συμφοραίοι μοι
γεγηθῶς ἔρτει δάκρυνον ὀμμάτων ἄπο.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ιῷ γοναί,

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

γοναὶ σωμάτων ἐμοὶ φιλτάτων,
ἐμόλευτ' ἀρτίως,
ἐφηύρετ', ἠλθετ', εἴδεθ' οὐς ἔχρηζετε.

Πάρεσμεν· ἀλλὰ σὺν' ἑχουσα πρόσμενε.
ELECTRA

ELECTRA
What, art thou he?
ORESTES
Look at this signet ring,
My father's; let it witness if I lie.

ELECTRA
O happy day!
ORESTES
O, happy, happy day!

ELECTRA
Thy voice I greet!
ORESTES
My voice gives greeting back.

ELECTRA
My arms embrace thee!
ORESTES
May they clasp me aye!

ELECTRA
My countrywomen, dearest friends, behold
Orestes who in feigning died, and so
By feigning is alive again and safe.

CHORUS
We see him, daughter, and this glad surprise
Makes our eyes overflow with happy tears.

ELECTRA
Son of my best loved sire,
Now hast thou come, art here to find, to see
Thy heart's desire.

ORESTES
E'en so; but best keep silence for a while.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ


tί ὦ ἔστιν;

ΟΡΕΣΘΗΣ
συγάν ἄμεινον, μη τις ἐνδοθεν κλύῃ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἀλλ’ οὐ μὰ τὴν ἄδμητον αἰέν Ἄρτεμιν, τότε μὲν οὐ ποτ’ ἄξιόωσιν τρέσαι,
περισσὸν ἄχθος ἐνδον γυναικῶν ὃν αἰεὶ.

ΟΡΕΣΘΗΣ
δορα γε μὲν δὴ κἂν γυναιξίν ὡς Ἄρης ἐνεστίν· εὖ ὅ ἐξοισθα πειραθεῖσά πον.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὁτοτοτοτοὶ τοτοὶ,
ἀνέφελον ἐνέβαλες οὐ ποτὲ καταλύσιμον,
οὐδὲ ποτὲ λησόμενον ἀμέτερουν
οἶν ἐφ’ κακῶν.

ΟΡΕΣΘΗΣ
ἐξοίδα, παῖ, ταῦτ’· ἀλλ’ ὅταν παρουσία
φράξῃ, τότ’ ἔργων τῶν ἡ μεμνήθαι χρεῶν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὁ πᾶς ἐμοὶ,
ὁ πᾶς ἂν πρέποι παρῶν ἐννέπειν
τάδε δίκαι χρόνος·
μόλις γὰρ ἔσχον νῦν ἐλεύθερον στόμα.

ΟΡΕΣΘΗΣ
ἐξίμφημι κἂγὼ· τουγαροῦν σφίζον τόδε.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
τί δρῶσα;

ΟΡΕΣΘΗΣ
οὐ μή ὅστι καιρὸς μὴ μακρὰν βουλου λέγειν.

1 ἀλλ’ οὐ τὰν Ἄρτεμιν τὰν αἰέν ἄδμηταν MSS., Fröhlich corr.
ELECTRA

What need for silence?

ORESTES
'Twere wise, lest someone from the house should hear.

ELECTRA
Nay, by Queen Artemis the virgin maid,
Of women-folk I ne'er will be afraid,
Those stay-at-homes, mere cumberers of the ground.

ORESTES
Yet note that in the breasts of women dwells
The War-God too, as thou methinks hast found.

ELECTRA
Ah me, ah me!
Thou wak'st a memory
Inveterate, ineffaceable,
An ache time cannot quell.

ORESTES
I know it too; but when the hour shall strike
Then it behoves us to recall those deeds.

ELECTRA
All time, each passing hour
Henceforward I were fain
To tell my griefs, my pain,
For late and hardly have I won free speech.

ORESTES
'Tis so; then forfeit not this liberty.

ELECTRA
How forfeit it?

ORESTES
By speaking out of season overmuch.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τίς οὖν ἂν ἄξιαν γε σοῦ πεφηνότος
μεταβάλοιτ', ἂν ὥδε σιγὰν λόγων;
ἐπεὶ σε νῦν ἀφράστως
ἀξέπτως τ' ἐσείδον.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
τὸτ' εἶδες, εῦτε ἃ θεοὶ μ' ἐπώτρυναν μολεῖν
οὐκ ὅτι ποτὲ ὅτε ἄναμνες.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἐφρασας ὑπερτέραν
τὰς πάρος ἐτὶ χάριτος, εἴ σε θεὸς ἐπόρισεν
ἀμέτρεα πρὸς μέλαθρα, δαίμονον
ἀυτὸ τίθημι ἐγώ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
τὰ μὲν σ' ὁκνῶ χαίρονταν εἰργαθεῖν, τὰ δὲ
δέδοικα λίαν ἡδονῆ νικωμένην.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἰδ' χρόνῳ μακρῷ φιλτάται ὁδὸν.
ἐπαξιώσας ὥδε μοι φανῆγαι,
μὴ τί με, πολύπονον ὡδ' ἰδὼν
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
τί μὴ ποήσω;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
μὴ μ' ἀποστερήσῃς
τῶν σῶν προσώπων ἡδονὰν μεθέσθαι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἡ κάρτα κἀν ἄλλοις θυμολίμην ἰδὼν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ξυναίνεις;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
τί μὴν οὐ;

1 MSS. ἑτε, Jebb. corr. MSS. ἐπρυναν, Reiske corr.
ELECTRA

ELECTRA
But who would barter speech for silence now,
Who could be dumb,
Now that beyond all thought and hope
I've seen thee come?

ORESTES
That sight was then vouchsafed thee when the gods
First monished me to turn my steps towards home.

ELECTRA
If a god guided thee
To seek our halls, this boon
Surpasses all before, I see
The hand of heaven.

ORESTES
To check thy gladness I am loth, and yet
This ecstasy of joy—it makes me fear.

ELECTRA
O after many a weary year
Restored to glad my eyes,
Seeing my utter misery, forbear—

ORESTES
What is thy prayer?

ELECTRA
Forbear to rob me of the light,
The presence of thy face.

ORESTES
If any dared essay it, I were wrath.

ELECTRA
Dost thou consent?

ORESTES
How could I otherwise?
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

Ω φίλαι, ἐκλυνὸν ἀν ἐγὼ οὐδ' ἀν ἥλπιοι' αὐδάν, οὐδ' ἀν ἔσχον ὅρμαν 1 ἄναυδον οὐδὲ σὺν Βοᾶ κλύουσα, τύλανα. νῦν δ' ἔχω σε' προνφάνης δὲ φιλτάται ἐχων πρόσωφιν, ἂς ἐγὼ οὖδ' ἂν ἐν κακοῖς λαθοίμαν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τὰ μὲν περισσεύοντα τῶν λόγων ἄφες, καὶ μήτε μήτηρ ὡς κακὴ δίδασκε με, μήθ' ὡς πατρῴαν κτῆσιν Αἴγυπθος δόμων ἀντλεῖ, τὰ δ' ἐκχεῖ, τὰ δὲ διασπείρει μάτην· χρόνου γὰρ ἂν σοι καιρὸν ἐζεύργοι λόγος.

α δ' ἀρμόσει μοι τῷ παρόντι νῦν χρόνῳ σήμαιν', ὅπου φανέντες ἡ κεκρυμμένοι γελώντας ἐχθροῦς παύσομεν τῇ νῦν ὅδῷ. οὕτω δ' ὅπως μήτηρ σε μη' πιγνώστει τοις ναύσοις μήτηρ, μὴν προσώπῳ παῦσομεν τῇ μάτῃ λεγεμένη στέναζ· ὅταν γὰρ εὐτυχῆσωμεν, τότε χαίρειν παρέσται καὶ γελᾶν ἐλευθέρως.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ' ὃ κασίγνηθ', δδ' ὅπως καὶ σοι φίλον καὶ τούμον ἔσται τῷ· ἐπεὶ τὰς ήδονὰς πρὸς σοῦ λαβοῦσα κούκ ἐμᾶς ἐκτησάμην, κοῦδ' ἄν σε λυπήσασα δεξαίμην βραχὺ αὐτὴ μέγ' εὑρεῖν κέρδος· οὐ γὰρ ἄν καλῶς ὑπηρετοῖν τῷ παρόντι δαίμονι.

ἀλλ', οὖσθα μὲν τἀνθένδε, πῶς γὰρ οὐ, κλύνων θοῦνεκ' Αἴγυπθος μὲν οὐ κατὰ στέγας, μήτηρ δ' ἐν οἰκοίς· ἢν σὺ μή δείσης ποθ' ὡς

1 Arndt adds οὐδ' ἂν. Blomfield reads ὅρμαν for ὅργαν of MSS.
ELECTRA

ELECTRA (to CHORUS)
Friends, a voice is in my ear,
That I never hoped to hear.
At the glad sound how could I
Be mute nor raise a joyous cry?
But I have thee, and the light
Of thy countenance so bright
Not e'en sorrow can eclipse,
Or still the music of those lips.

ORESTES
Spare me all superfluity of words—
How vile our mother, how Aegisthus drains
By waste and luxury our father's house;
The time admits not such prolixity.
But tell me rather what will best subserve
Our present need—where we must show ourselves,
Or lie in wait, and either way confound
The mockery and triumph of our foes.
And see that when we twain are gone within
Our mother read not in thy radiant looks
Our secret; weep as overwhelmed with grief
At our feigned story; when the victory's won
We shall have time and liberty to laugh.

ELECTRA
Yea, as it pleaseth thee it pleases me,
Brother, for all my pleasure is thy gift,
Not mine; nor would I purchase for myself
The greatest boon that cost thee the least pang:
So should I cross the providence that guides us.
How it stands with us, doubtless thou hast heard.
Aegisthus, as thou knowest, is away;
Only our mother keeps the house, and fear not
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

γέλωτι τούμων φαιδρὸν ὤφεται κάρα.
μῆσος τε γὰρ παλαιών ἐντέτηκε μοι,
καπέι σ’ ἐσείδου, οὖ ποτ’ ἐκλήξω χαρὰ
dακρυρροούσα· πῶς γὰρ ἂν λήξαμ’ ἐγὼ,
ητίς μιὰ σε τῇ ὴδῇ θανόντα τε
καὶ ξύντ’ ἐσείδου; εἰργασαι δὲ μ’ ἁσκοπτα’
ώστ’ εἰ πατήρ μοι ξύν’ ἴκοιτο, μηκέτ’ ἂν
tέρας νυμίζειν αὐτό, πιστεύειν δ’ ὄραν.
ὁτ’ ὄντ’ τοιαῦτην ἦμιν ἐξήκεις ὄδον,
ἀρχ’ αὐτός ὦς σοι θυμός· ὥς ἐγὼ μόνη
οὐκ ἂν δυνόην ἡμαρτον· ἡ γὰρ ἂν καλῶς
ἔσωσ’ ἐμαυτὴν ἡ καλῶς ἀπωλόμην.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

σιγὰν ἐπήνευσ’ ὡς ἐπ’ ἐξόδῳ κλύω
τῶν ἐνδοθέν χωροῦντος.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

εἴστ’, ὦ ξένοι,
ἀλλως τε καὶ φέροντες ο’ ἄν οὕτε τίς
δόμων ἀπώσαιτ’ οὔτ’ ἄν ἤσθείη λαβῶν.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

ὁ πλείστα μῶροι καὶ φρενῶν τητόμενοι,
pótera παρ’ οὔδὲν τοῦ βίου κήδεσθ’ ἔτι
ἡ νοῦς ἐνεστὶν οὕτε ὑμῖν ἐγγενής,
ὁτ’ οὗ παρ’ αὐτοῖς, ἀλλ’ ἐν αὐτοίσιν κακοῖς
tοῖσιν μεγάλοις ὄντες οὐ γιγνόμενες;
ἀλλ’ εἰ σταθμοῖσι τοῖσδε μὴ ’κύρον ἐγὼ
πάλαι φιλάσσων, ἧν ἄν ὑμῖν ἐν δόμοις
tὰ δρόμεν’ ὑμῶν πρόσθεν ἢ τὰ σώματα·
nῦν ὦ εὐλάβειαν τῶν δε προσθέμην ἐγὼ.
καὶ νῦν ἀπαλλαχθέντε τῶν μακρῶν λόγων
καὶ τῆς ἀπλήστου τῆς δὲ σὺν χαρᾶ βοής.
ELECTRA

That she will see my face lit up with smiles;  
My hatred of her is too deep engrained.  
Moreover, since thy coming I have wept,  
Wept for pure joy and still must weep to see  
The dead alive, on one day dead and living.  
It works me strangely; if my sire appeared  
In bodily presence, I should now believe it  
No mocking phantom but his living self.  
Thus far no common fate hath guided thee;  
So lead me as thou wilt, for left alone  
I had myself achieved of two things one,  
A noble living or a noble death.

ORESTES

Hush, hush! I hear a stir within the house  
As if one issued forth.

ELECTRA (to ORESTES AND PYLADES)

Pass in, good sirs,
Ye are sure of welcome; they within will not  
Reject your gift, though bitter it may prove.

Enter AGED SERVANT.

AGED SERVANT

Fools! madmen! are ye weary of your lives,  
Or are your natural wits too dull to see  
That ye are standing, not upon the brink,  
But in the midst of mortal jeopardy?  
Nay, had I not kept watch this weary while,  
Here at the door, your plot had slipped inside  
Ere ye yourselves had entered. As it is,  
My watchfulness has fended this mishap.  
Now that your wordy eloquence has an end,  
And your insatiable cries of joy, go in.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

εἰσώ παρέλθεθ' ὡς τὸ μὲν μέλλειν κακὸν ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις ἐστ', ἀπηλλάχθαι δ' ἀκμή.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

πῶς οὖν ἔχει τὰντεῦθεν εἰσίντι μοι;

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

καλῶς· ὑπάρχει γάρ σε μὴ γνώναι τίνα.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἡγγείλας, ὡς ἐσικεῖν, ὡς τεθηκότα.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

εἰς τῶν ἐν" Αἰδοῦ μάνθαν' ἐνθάδ' δων ἀνήρ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

χαίρουσιν οὖν τούτοις; ἢ τίνες λόγοι;

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

tελουμένον εἰποιμ' ἂν· ὡς δὲ νῦν ἔχει, καλῶς τὰ κείνων πάντα, καὶ τὰ μὴ καλῶς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τίς οὗτος ἐστ', ἀδελφέ; πρὸς θεῶν φράσον.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐχὶ ξυνίσ;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οῦδὲ γ' ἐς θυμὸν φέρω.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐκ οἰσθ' ὅτω μ' ἔδωκας εἰς χέρας ποτέ;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ποίω; τί φωνεῖς;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐ τὸ Φωκέων πέδου ὑπεξεπέμφθην σῇ προμηθήλα χεροῖν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἡ κείνος οὗτος, ὃν ποτ' ἐκ πολλῶν ἐγὼ μόνον προσήρουν πιστῶν ἐν πατρὸς φόνῳ;
ELECTRA

'Tis ill delaying in such case, and well
To make an end.

ORESTES
How shall I fare within?

AGED SERVANT
Right well; to start with, thou art known to none.

ORESTES
Thou hast reported, I presume, my death.

AGED SERVANT
They'll speak of thee as though thou wert a shade

ORESTES
And are they glad thereat, or what say they?

AGED SERVANT
I'll tell thee when the time is ripe: meanwhile
Whate'er they do, however ill, is well.

ELECTRA
I pray thee, brother, tell me who is this?

ORESTES
Dost thou not see?

ELECTRA
I know not, nor can guess.

ORESTES
Not know the man to whom thou gav'st me once?

ELECTRA
What man? how mean'st thou?

ORESTES
He that stole me hence,
Through thy forethought, and safe to Phocis bore.

ELECTRA
Can this be he who, when our sire was slain,
Faithful among the many false I found?
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οδ' ἔστι· μή μ' ἐλεγχὲ πλείοσιν λόγοις.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὁ φίλτατος φῶς, ὃ μόνος σωτὴρ δόμων Ἄγαμέμνονος, πῶς ἥλθες; ἢ σὺ κεῖνος εἰ, ὄς τόνδε καμὸ ἔσσωσας ἐκ πολλῶν πόνων; ὁ φίλταται μὲν χεῖρες, ἢδιστον δ' ἔχων ποδῶν ὑπηρέτημα, πῶς οὕτω πάλαι ἔτυνων μ' ἔλθῃς οὔδ' ἔφαινες, ἀλλά μὲ λόγοις ἀπώλλυς, ἔργ' ἔχων ἢδιστ' ἐμοί· χαίρ', ὁ πάτερ· πατέρα γὰρ εἰσορᾶν δοκῶ· χαίρ'. ἵσθι δ' ὡς μάλιστα σ' ἀνθρώπων ἐγώ ἠχθηρα καφήλης' ἐν ἡμέρα μιᾷ.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΟΓΟΣ

ἀρκεῖν δοκεῖ μοι· τοὺς γὰρ ἐν μέσῳ λόγους πολλαὶ κυκλοῦνται νῦκτες ἡμέραι τ' ἵσαι, αἰ ταῦτα σοι δείξουσιν, Ἡλέκτρα, σαφῆ. σφόν δ' ἐννέπω γε τοῖν παρεστῶτοι ὅτι νῦν καιρὸς ἐρδεῖν· νῦν Κλυταμνήστρα μόνη, νῦν οὔτις ἀνδρῶν ἐνδον· εἰ δ' ἐφέξετον, φροντίζεθ' ὡς τοῦτοι τε καὶ σοφωτέροις ἀλλοισι τούτων πλείοσιν μαχοῦμενοι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐκ ἀν μακρῶν ἔθ' ἢμῖν οὐδὲν ἀν λόγων, Πυλάδη, τὸδ' εἶπ τοῦργον, ἀλλ' ὅσον τάχος χωρεῖν ἐσω, πατρῷα προσκύσανθ' ἔδη θεῶν, ὅσιπερ πρόπυλα ναίουσιν τάδε.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀναξ' Ἄπολλον, ἠλεως αὐτοῖν κλύε.
ELECTRA

ORESTES
'Tis he; let that suffice thee; ask no more.

ELECTRA
O happy day! O sole deliverer
Of Agamemnon's house, how cam'st thou hither?
Art thou indeed our saviour who redeemed
From endless woes my brother and myself?
O hands beloved, O messenger whose feet
Were bringers of glad tidings, how so long
Couldst thou be with me and remain unknown,
Stay me with feigned fables and conceal
The truth that gave me life? Hail, father, hail!
For 'tis a father whom I seem to see.
Verily no man in the self-same day
Was hated so and so much loved as thou.

AGED SERVANT
Enough methinks; the tale 'twixt then and now—
Many revolving nights and days as many
Shall serve, Electra, to unfold it all.
(To ORESTES AND PYLADES)
Why stand ye here! 'tis time for you to act,
Now Clytemnestra is alone; no man
Is now within; but, if ye stay your hand,
Not only with her house-carls will ye fight
But with a troop more numerous and more skilled.

ORESTES
Our business, Pylades, would seem to crave
No longer parley; let us instantly
Enter, but ere we enter first adore
The gods who keep the threshold of the house.
[ORESTES AND PYLADES ENTER THE PALACE.

ELECTRA
O King Apollo! lend a gracious ear
ΗΔΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐμοῦ τε πρὸς τούτοις, ή σε πολλὰ δὴ ἀφ’ οὐν ἔχοιμι λιπαρεὶ προὔστην χερί.
νῦν δ’, οὐ Λύκει Ἀπόλλων, ἔξ οἶων ἔχω αιτῶ, προπίτνω, λίσσομαι, γενοῦ πρόφρων
ἡμῖν ἁρωγὸς τῶντε ὑδον βουλευμάτων,
καὶ δείξων ἀνθρώποις τὰπιτίμια
τῆς ὁυσεβείας οἷα δωροῦνται θεοί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἰδοθ’ ὅποι προνέμεται
τὸ δυσέριστον αἶμα φυσῶν Ἀρης.
βεβάσιων ἄρτι δωμάτων ὑπόστεγοι
μετάδρομοι κακῶν πανουργημάτων ἅφωτοι κύνες,
ὡς’ οὐ μακρὰν ἐτ’ ἀμμενεὶ
tοῦμον φρενῶν ὀνειρον αἰωρούμενον.

παράγεται γὰρ ἐνέρων
δολίων ἁρωγὸς εἰσῳ στέγας,
ἀρχαίοπλουτα πατρὸς εἰς ἐδώλια,
νεακόνητον αἶμα χειροῖν ἔχων· ὅ Μαίας δὲ ποῖς
Ἐρμῆς σφ’ ἄγει δόλων σκότῳ
κρύψας πρὸς αὐτὸ τέρμα κοῦκετ’ ἀμμένει.

ΗΔΕΚΤΡΑ

ὁ φιλταται γυναῖκες, ἀνδρες αυτίκα
tελοῦσι τούργουν· ἀλλὰ σύγα πρόσμενε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πῶς δῇ; τί νῦν πράσσουσιν;

ΗΔΕΚΤΡΑ

ἡ μὲν ἐς τάφον
λέβητα κοσμεῖ, τῶ δ’ ἐφέστατον πέλας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

σὺ δ’ ἐκτὸς ἡξας πρὸς τί;
ELECTRA

To them and me, to me too who so oft
Laid on thy shrine with humble hands my best.
And now with vows (I cannot offer more),
Apollo, Lord Lycean, I beseech,
Implore, adjure thee, prosper this our work,
Defend the right and show to godless men
How the gods vindicate impiety.

CHORUS

Breathing out blood and vengeance, lo! (Str.)
Stalks Ares, sure though slow.
É'en now the hounds are on the trail;
Within, the sinners at their coming quail.
A little while and death shall realise
The vision that now floats before mine eyes.

For now within the house is led (Ant.)
By stealth the champion of the dead;
He treads once more the ancestral hall of kings,
And death new-whetted in his hands he brings.
Great Maia's son conducts him on his way
And shrouds his guile and brooks not more delay.

ELECTRA

O dearest women, even as I speak (Str.)
The men are at their work; but not a word.

CHORUS

What work? what are they at?

ELECTRA

É'en now she decks
The urn for burial and the pair stand by.

CHORUS

Why spedst thou forth?
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

φρουρήσουσ᾽ ὡπως
Αὐγισθος ἡμᾶς μὴ λάθη μολὼν ἔσω.
ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

αιαὶ. ἵω στέγαι
φίλων ἔρημοι, τῶν δ᾽ ἀπολλύντων πλέαι.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

βοᾷ τις ἐνδον᾽ οὐκ ἀκούετ᾽, ὦ φίλαι;
ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἡκουσ᾽ ἀνήκουστα δύστανος, ὡστε φιξάι.
ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

οὖμοι τάλαιν᾽. Αὐγισθε, ποῦ ποτ᾽ ὧν κυρεῖς;
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἴδον μάλ᾽ αὖ θροεῖ τις.
ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ὁ τέκνον τέκνον,
οὐκτίρε τὴν τεκούσαν.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ᾽ οὖκ ἐκ σέθεν
φικτίρεθ᾽ οὗτος οὐδ᾽ ὁ γεννήσας πατήρ.
ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὁ πόλις, ὁ γενεὰ τάλαινα, νῦν σοι ἡ μοῖρα καθαμερία φθίνει φθίνει.
ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ὁμοὶ πέπληγμαι.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

παῖσον, εἰ σθένεις, διπλὴν.
ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ὁμοὶ μάλ᾽ αὖθις.

1 νῦν σε MSS., corr. R. Whitelaw
ELECTRA

ELECTRA
To keep a watch for fear
Aegisthus should forestall us unawares.

CLYTEMNESTRA (within)
Woe! woe! O woeful house,
Of friends forsaken, full of murderers!

ELECTRA
Listen! a cry within—hear ye not, friends?

CHORDUS
I heard and shuddered—oh, an awesome cry.

CLYTEMNESTRA
Ah woe is me! Aegisthus, where art thou?

ELECTRA
Hark; once again a wail.

CLYTEMNESTRA
O son, my son,
Have pity on thy mother!

ELECTRA
Thou hadst none
On him or on the father that begat him.

CHORDUS
Unhappy realm and house,
The curse that dogged thee day by day
Is dying, dying fast.

CLYTEMNESTRA
I am stricken, ah!

ELECTRA
Strike, if thou canst, again.

CLYTEMNESTRA
Woe, woe is me once more!

VOL. II.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ei γὰρ Αἰγίσθῳ θ' ὁμοῦ.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
tελοῦσ᾿ ἀραί· ξῶσιν οἱ γὰς ὑπαί κείμενοι.
pαλίρρυτον γὰρ αἶμ ὑπεξαιρούσι τῶν
κτανόντων οἱ πάλαι θανόντες.
καὶ μὴν πάρεισιν οἴδε· φοινία δὲ χείρ ἀντ.
στάζει θυηλῆς Ἀρεος, οὐδ' ἔχω ψέγειν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
'Ορέστα, πῶς κυρεῖτε;
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
τὰν δόμοισι μὲν
καλῶς, Ἀπόλλων εἰ καλῶς ἔθεσπισεν.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
tέθυνεν ἢ τάλαινα;
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
μῆκετ' ἐκφοβοῦ
μητρῴον ὡς σε λῆμ' ἀτιμάσει ποτὲ.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
παύσασθε· λεύσσω γὰρ Λύγισθον ἐκ προδήλου.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
δὲ παῖδες, οὐκ ἄψορροι;
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
eἰσοράτε ποῦ
tὸν ἄνδρ';
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἐφ' ἡμῖν οὕτως ἐκ προαστίου
χωρεῖ γεγηθὼς <···················
ΧΟΡΟΣ
βάτε κατ' ἀντιθύρων ὄσον τάχιστα,
νῦν, τὰ πρὶν εὖ θέμενοι, τάδ' ὡς πάλιν.

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ELECTRA

ELECTRA
I would that woe
Were for Aegisthus not for thee alone.

CHORUS
The curses work; the buried live again,
And blood for blood, the slayer’s blood they drain,
The ghosts of victims long since slain.

Enter Orestes and Pylades from the palace.

Lo they come forth with gory hands that reek (Ant.)
Of sacrifice to Ares—’twas done well.

ELECTRA
How have ye sped, Orestes?

ORESTES
All within
Is well, if Phoebus’ oracle spake well.

ELECTRA
The wretched woman’s dead?

ORESTES
No longer fear
Thy mother’s arrogance will flout thee more.

CHORUS
Cease, for I see Aegisthus full in sight.

ELECTRA
Back, youths, back to the house!

ORESTES
Where see ye him?

ELECTRA
Approaching from the suburb with an air
Of exultation. He is ours!

CHORUS
Quick to the palace doorway! half your work
Is well done; do no less well what remains.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

θάρσει· τελούμεν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

χι νοεῖς ἐπενγε νυν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

καὶ δὴ βέβηκα.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ταῦθάδ’ ἀν μέλοιτ’ ἐμοί.

XΟΡΟΣ

δὲ ὠτὸς ἀν παύρα γ’ ὡς ἡπίως ἐννέπειν πρὸς ἄνδρα τόνδε συμφέροι, λαθραίον ὡς ὀρούσῃ πρὸς δίκας ἀγώνα.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

τῆς οἴδεν ὑμῶν, ποῦ ποθ’ οἱ Φωκής ξένοι, οὕς φασ’. Ὀρέστῃν ἡμῖν ἑγεῖλαι βιῶν λελοιπόθ’ ἵππικοίσιν ἐν ναναγίοις; σὲ τοι, σὲ κρίνω, ναὶ σὲ, τὴν ἐν τῷ πάρος χρόνῳ θρασεῖαι· ὡς μάλιστα σοὶ μέλειν οἰμαί, μάλιστα δ’ ἀν κατειδύιαν φράσαι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐξοέσθα· πῶς γὰρ οὐχί; συμφορᾶς γὰρ ἀν ἐξώθεν εἰην τῶν ἐμῶν τῆς φιλτάτης.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ποῦ δὴ τ’ ἀν εἶεν οἱ ξένοι; δίδασκε με.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐνδον φίλης γὰρ προξένου κατήνυσαν.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ἡ καὶ θανόντ’ ἡγεῖλαν ὡς ἐτητύμως;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐκ, ἀλλὰ κατέδειξαν, οὐ λόγῳ μόνον.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

πάρεστ’ ἀρ’ ἡμῖν ὡστε κάμφαν’ μαθεῖν;

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ORESTES

Fear not, we shall.

ELECTRA

Then speed thee on thy way.

ORESTES

See, I am gone.

ELECTRA

Leave what is here to me.

[Exeunt Orestes and Pylades; Aegisthus approaches.

CHORUS

'Twere not amiss to breathe some soft words in his ear,
That he may blindly rush into the lists of doom.

AEGISTHUS

Could any of you tell me where to find
The Phocian strangers who, I hear, have brought
News of Orestes midst the chariots wrecked?
Thee, thee I question, thee, in former days
So froward: it concerns thee most, methinks,
And thou, as best informed, canst tell me best.

ELECTRA

I know for sure, else were I unconcerned
In what has happened to my nearest kin.

AEGISTHUS

Where then are these newcomers? Tell me straight.

ELECTRA

Within; they've won their kindly hostess' heart.

AEGISTHUS

Did they in very truth report his death?

ELECTRA

They did; and more, they showed us the dead man.

AEGISTHUS

May I too view the body to make sure?
Ἡλεκτρά

πάρεστι δήτα, καὶ μᾶλ’ ἄξηλος θέα.

Αἰγίσθος

ἡ πολλὰ χαῖρειν μ’ εἶπας οὐκ εἰωθῶτως.

Ἡλεκτρά

χαῖροις ἃν, εἰ σοὶ χαρτὰ τυγχάνοι τάδε.

Αἰγίσθος

συγὰν ἀνωγα κανάδεικνυναι πύλας
πᾶσιν Μυκηναῖοισιν Ἀργείοις θ’ ὅραν,
ὡς εἰ τις αὐτῶν ἐλπίσιν κεναῖς πάρος
ἐξῆρετ’ ἀνδρὸς τοῦδε, νῦν ὅρῶν νεκρὸν
στῶμα δέχηται τὰμά μηδὲ πρὸς βίαν
ἐμοῦ κολαστοῦ προστυχοῦν φύσῃ φρένας.

Ἡλεκτρά

καὶ δὴ τελεῖται τάπ’ ἐμοῦ’. τῷ γὰρ χρόνῳ
νοῦν ἔσχον, ὡστε συμφέρειν τοῖς κρείσσοσιν.

Αἰγίσθος

ὦ Ζεῦ, δέδορκα φάσμ’ ἀνευ φθόνου μὲν οὐ
πεπτωκός’. εἰ δ’ ἑπεστὶ νέμεσις, οὐ λέγω.
χαλάτε πάν κάλυμμ’ ἀπ’ ὀφθαλμῶν, ὅπως
το συγγενές τοι κάτ’ ἐμοῦ’ θρήνων τύχῃ.

Ὀρεστῆς

αὐτὸς σὺ βάστας’. οὐκ ἐμὸν τὸδ’, ἀλλὰ σὸν,
τὸ ταῦθ’ ὅραν τε καὶ προσηγορεῖν φίλως.

Αἰγίσθος

ἀλλ’ εὗ παραμεῖνεσ’ κακοπείσομαι: σὺ δὲ,
εἰ ποὺ κατ’ οἰκόν μοι Κλυταίμνηστρα, κάλει.

Ὀρεστῆς

αὕτη πέλας σοῦ μηκέτ’ ἀλλοσε σκόπει.
ELECTRA

ELECTRA
Thou mayst, but 'tis a gruesome spectacle.

AEGISTHUS
Thou givest me much joy against thy wont.

ELECTRA
I wish thee joy, if here is food for joy.

AEGISTHUS
Silence! attend! throw open wide the gate,
For all Mycenae, Argos all, to see.
If any heretofores was puffed with hopes
Of this pretender, now he sees him dead,
Let him in time accept my yoke, nor wait
Wisdom by chastisement to learn too late.

ELECTRA
My lesson's learnt already; time hath taught me
The wisdom of consenting with the strong.
(The scene opens showing a shrouded corpse with ORESTES
and Pylades beside it.)

AEGISTHUS
O Zeus, I look upon this form laid low
By jealousy of Heaven, but if my words
Seem to thee overbold, be they unsaid.
Take from the face the face-cloth; I, as kin,
I too would pay my tribute of lament.

ORESTES
Lift it thyself; 'tis not for me but thee
To see and kindly greet what lieth here.

AEGISTHUS
Well said, so will I. (To ELECTRA.) If she be within
Go call me Clytemnestra, I would see her—

ORESTES
She is beside thee; look not otherwhere.
(AEGISTHUS lifts the face-cloth.)
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ
οἴμοι, τί λέυσσω;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
τίνα φοβεῖ; τίν' ἄγνοεῖς;

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ
τίνων ποτ' ἀνδρῶν ἐν μέσοις ἀρκυστάτοις
πέπτωχ' ο' τὸλµῶν;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
οὐ γὰρ αἰσθάνει πάλαῖ
ζώντας ἃ ἑαυτοὺς οὐκ' ἀντανᾶς ἵσα;

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ
οἴμοι, ἐξωνήκα τοῦτος· οὐ γὰρ ἐσθ' ὅπως
ὅδ' οὐκ 'Ορέστης ἐσθ' ὁ προσφωνόν ἐμὲ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
καὶ μάντις ὃν ἀριστος ἐσφάλλου πᾶλαι.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ
οἷλολα δὴ δείλαιος. ἀλλά μοι πάρες
καὶ σμικρὸν εἰπεῖν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

μὴ πέρα λέγειν ἔα
πρὸς θεῶν, ἄδελφέ, μηδὲ μηκύνεων λόγους.
τί γὰρ βροτῶν ἂν σὺν κακοῖς μεμιγμένων
θυήσκειν ο' μέλλων οὐ χρόνον κέρδος φέροι;
ἀλλ' ὡς τάχιστα κτεῖνε καὶ κταίνων πρόθες
tαφεύσιν, ὃν τῶν' εἰκός ἔστιν τυγχάνειν,
ἀποπτον ἥμων' ὡς ἐμοὶ τόδ' ἂν κακῶν
μόνον γένοιτο τῶν πάλαι λυτήριον.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
χωροῖς ἃν εἴσῳ σὺν τάχειν. λόγων γὰρ οὖ
νῦν ἔστιν ἄγων, ἀλλὰ σῆς ψυχῆς πέρι.

1 ζῶν τοῖς MSS., Tyrwhitt corr.
ELECTRA

AEGISTHUS

O horror!  

ORESTES  

Why dost start? is the face strange?  

AEGISTHUS  

Who spread the net wherein, O woe is me,  
I lie enmeshed?  

ORESTES  

Hast thou not learnt ere this  
The dead of whom thou spakest are alive?  

AEGISTHUS  

Alas! I read thy riddle; 'tis none else  
Than thou, Orestes, whom I now address.  

ORESTES  

A seer so wise, and yet befooled so long!  

AEGISTHUS  

O I am spoiled, undone! yet suffer me,  

One little word.  

ELECTRA  

Brother, in heaven's name  
Let him not speak a word or plead his cause.  
When a poor wretch is in the toils of fate  
What can a brief reprieve avail him?  No,  
Slay him outright and having slain him give  
His corse to such grave-makers as is meet,  
Far from our sight; for me no otherwise  
Can he wipe out the memory of past wrongs.  

ORESTES (to AEGISTHUS)  

Quick, get thee in; the issue lies not now  
In words; the case is tried and thou must die,
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ
τι δ' εσ δομους άγεις με; πώς, τόδ' ει καλ'ν
tούργουν, σκότου δει κοι πρόχειρος ει κτανειν;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
μη τάσσε: χώρει δ' ένθατορ κατέκτανες
πατέρα τον αμόν, ως δν εν ταυτώ θάνης,

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ
η πάς' ανάγκη τήνδε την στέγην ίδειν
τά τ' οντα καλ μέλλουτα Πελοπιδών κακά;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
τά γούν σ'· εγώ σοι μάντις ειμι τών' άκρος.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ
άλλ' ου πατρέαν τήν τέχνην ἐκόμπασας.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
πόλλ' αντιφωνεις, ἦ δ' ὁδός βραδύνεται.
άλλ' ερφ'.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

υφηγου.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
σοι βαδιστέον πάρος.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

η μη φύνω σε;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
μη μεν σοίν καθ' ἧδονή
θάνης· φυλάξαι δει με τούτο σοι πικρών.
χρήν δ' ευθὺς εἶναι τήνδε τοίς πᾶσιν δίκην,
ὅστις πέρα πράσσειν τι τῶν νόμων θέλει,
κτείνειν· τὸ γὰρ πανούργουν οὐκ ἀν ἦν πολύ.

ΧΩΡΟΣ

ὁ σπέρμ' Ἀτρέως, ως πολλὰ παθὼν
di' ἐλευθερίας μόλις ἔξηλθες
tῇ νῦν ὀρμῇ τελεωθέν.
ELECTRA

AEGISTHUS

Why hale me indoors? if my doom be just,
What need of darkness? Why not slay me here?

ORESTES

'Tis not for thee to order; go within;
Where thou didst slay my father thou must die.

AEGISTHUS

Ah! is there need this palace should behold
All woes of Pelops' line, now and to come?

ORESTES

Thine own they shall; thus much I can predict.

AEGISTHUS

Thy skill as seer derives not from thy sire.

ORESTES

Thou bandiest words; our going is delayed.
Go.

AEGISTHUS

Lead the way.

ORESTES

No, thou must go the first.

AEGISTHUS

Lest I escape?

ORESTES

Nay, not to let thee choose
The manner of thy death; thou must be spared
No bitterness of death, and well it were
If on transgressors swift this sentence fall,
Slay him; so wickedness should less abound.

CHORUS

House of Atreus! thou hast passed
Through the fire and won at last
Freedom, perfected to-day
By this glorious essay.

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TRACHINIAE
ARGUMENT

Deianira, alarmed at the long absence of her husband, resolves to send their son Hyllus in quest of his father. When he left home Heracles had told her that in fifteen months would come the crisis of his fate—either death or glory and rest from his toils. As she meditates, Lichas, the henchman of Heracles, comes in sight, tells her that his master is safe and will shortly follow. He is now at Cape Cenaeum in Euboëa, about to raise an altar to Zeus in honour of his victories. With Lichas are a train of captive maidens and among them she espies Iolè. By cross-questioning she learns that Heracles has transferred to Iolè his love, and determines to win it back by means of a love-charm that the Centaur Nessus had left to her as he lay dying. So she sends by the hand of Lichas a festal robe besmeared with what proves to be a burning poison. Too late she discovers her mistake. The flock of wool that she had used to apply the charm and flung away smoulders self-consumed before her eyes. Hyllus returns from Euboëa and denounces his mother as a murderer, describing the agonies of his tortured father.
ARGUMENT

At the news Deianira passes within the house and slays herself with a sword. The dying Heracles is borne home on a litter. He gives his last injunctions to Hyllus, to bear him to Mount Oeta, there burn him on a pyre, and then to return and take Iolè to wife. With a bitter word against the gods who have thus afflicted their own son, the noblest man on earth, Hyllus gives an unwilling consent.
ΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ
ΤΑΛΟΣ
ΧΟΡΟΣ ΠΑΡΘΕΝΩΝ ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΩΝ
ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
ΛΙΧΑΣ
ΤΡΟΦΟΣ
ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ
DRAMATIS PERSONAE

HERACLES, son of Zeus and Alcmena.
DEIANIRA, daughter of Oeneus, his wife
HYLLUS, their son.
LICHAS, herald of Heracles.
A MESSENGER.
NURSE.
OLD MAN.
IOLÉ, daughter of Eurytus, captive wife to Heracles
Captive Women.
CHORUS OF TRACHINIAN MAIDENS.

Scene: Before the house of Heracles at Trachis.
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

Δόγχος μὲν ἐστ’ ἀρχαῖος ἀνθρώπων φανείς, ὡς οὐκ ἂν αἰῶν’ ἐκμάθως βρότων, πρὶν ἂν θάνη τις, οὔτ’ εἰ χρηστῶς οὔτ’ εἰ τῷ κακός· ἐγὼ δὲ τὸν ἔμων, καὶ πρὶν εἰς Ἄιδον μολεῖν,
ἐξοῦ’ ἔχουσα δυστυχῆ τε καὶ βαρὺν, ἦτις πατρὸς μὲν ἐν δόμοις Ὁινέως ναίοις’ ἑτ’ ἐν Πλευρῷ νυμφεῖον ἄκων ἀλγιστοῦ ἐσχόν, εἶ τις Αἰτωλίς γυνή.

μηστὴρ γὰρ ἂν μοι ποταμός, Ἀχελῶν λέγω, ὅς μ’ ἐν τρισὶν μορφαίσιν ἐξήτει πατρός,
φοιτῶν ἑναρχῆς ταύρους, ἄλλοτ’ αἰόλος ἀράκων ἐλκτός, ἄλλοτ’ ἀνδρείᾳ κύτει
βούτρφοις· ἐκ δὲ δασκίον γενειάδος κρουνοῖ διερραίνοντο κρηναῖον ποτοῦ.

τούτω’ ἐγὼ μηστήρα προσδεδεγμένη δύστηνος αἰεὶ καταβαίνει ἐπηγχομην, πρὶν τῇς κοίτης ἐμπελασθήναι ποτε.

χρόνῳ δ’ ἐν ὑστέρῳ μὲν, ἄσσεθη δὲ μοι,
ὁ κλευνός ἦλθε Ζηνός Ἀλκμήνης τε παῖς· ὁς εἰς ἄγωνα τῷ τῷ συμπεσὼν μάχης
ἐκλυείται με’ καὶ τρόποις μὲν ἂν τοῖς
οὐκ ἂν διείποιμ’· οὐ γὰρ οἶδ’· ἀλλ’ ὅστις ἦν

1 ἑτ’ added by Erfurdt.
TRACHINIAE

Enter DEIANIRA and NURSE.

DEIANIRA

There is an old-world saying current still,
"Of no man canst thou judge the destiny
To call it good or evil, till he die."
But I, before I pass into the world
Of shadows, know my lot is hard and sad.
E'en in my childhood's home, while yet I dwelt
At Pleuron with my father, I had dread
Of marriage more than any Aetolian maid;
For my first wooer was a river god,
Acheloüs, who in triple form appeared
To sue my father Oeneus for my hand,
Now as a bull, now as a sinuous snake
With glittering coils, and now in bulk a man
With front of ox, while from his shaggy beard
Runnels of fountain-water spouted forth.
In terror of so strange a wooer, I
Was ever praying death might end my woes,
Before I came to such a marriage bed.
Then to my joy, though long delayed, the son
Of Zeus and of Alcmena, good at need,
Grappled the monster and delivered me.
The circumstance and manner of that fight
I cannot tell, not knowing; whoso watched it,
ΔΕΣΠΟΙΝΑ Δημάνειρα, πολλά μέν σ’ ἕγῳ κατείδον ἦδη παιδάκρυτ’ ὀδύρματα τῆς Ἡράκλειον ἔξοδον γοωμένην: νῦν δ’, εἰ δίκαιον τοὺς ἑλευθέρους φρενοῦν.
TRACHINIAE

Indifferent to the issue, might describe.
For me—I sat distracted by the dread
That beauty in the end might prove my bane.
But Zeus who holds the arbitrament of war
Ordered it well, if well indeed it be.
For since, his chosen bride, I shared the home
Of Heracles, my cares have never ceased;
Terror on terror follows, dread on dread,
And one night's trouble drives the last night's out.
Children were born to us, but them he sees
E'en as the tiller of a distant field
Sees it at seedtime, sees it once again
At harvest, and no more. Such life was his
That kept him roaming to and fro from home,
To drudge for some taskmaster. And to-day
When he has overcome these many toils,
To-day I am terror-stricken most of all.
For since he slew the doughty Iphitus,
We have been dwelling with a stranger, here
In Trachis, banished from our home, and he—
None knoweth where he bides; but this I know,
He has gone and left me here to yearn and pine.
Surely some mischief has befallen him,
(For since he went an age—ten long, long months,
And other five—has passed, and not a word),
Some dread calamity, as signifies
This tablet that he left me. Oh! how oft
I've prayed it prove no harbinger of woe.

NURSE

My lady Deianira, many a time
I've listened to thy lamentable plaints
And groanings for the absence of thy lord.
Now, if I seem not overbold, a slave
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

γνώμαισι δούλαις, κάμε χρή φράσαι το σόν' πώς παισὶ μὲν τοσοῦδε πληθύεις, ἀτάρ ἄνδρός κατὰ ζήτησιν οὐ πέμπεις τινά, μάλιστα δ᾿ ὄντερ εἰκὸς "Τλλοῦν, εἰ πατρὸς νέμοι τιν᾿ ὅραν τοῦ καλῶς πράσσειν δοκεῖν; ἐγγὺς δ᾿ ὅδ᾿ αὐτὸς ἀρτίπους θρώσκει δόμοις, ὥστε εἰ τί σοι πρὸς καιρὸν ἐννέπειν δοκῶ, πάρεστι χρῆσθαι τάνδρι τοῖς τ᾿ ἐμὸις λόγοις.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ὦ τέκνον, ὦ παῖ, καξ ἄγεννήτων ἄρα μῦθοι καλῶς πίπτουσιν· ἤδε γὰρ γυνὴ δούλη μὲν, εἴρηκεν δ᾿ ἔλευθερον λόγον.

ΤΛΛΟΧ

ποιον, δίδαξον, μῆτερ, εἰ διδακτά μοι.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

σὲ πατρὸς οὕτω δαρῶν ἐξενωμένου τὸ μὴ πυθέσθαι ποῦ ἵστων, αἰσχύνῃ φέρειν.

ΤΛΛΟΧ

ἀλλ᾿ οἴδα, μῦθοις εἰ τι πιστεύειν χρεών.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

καὶ ποῦ κλύεις νῦν, τέκνον, ἱδρύσθαι χθονός;

ΤΛΛΟΧ

τὸν μὲν παρελθόντι ἄρτιτον ἐν μῆκει χρόνου Δυνὴ γυναικὶ φασί νῦν λάτρειν πονεῖν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

πᾶν τοίνυν, εἰ καὶ τοῦτ᾿ ἔτη, κλύοι τις ἄν.

ΤΛΛΟΧ

ἀλλ᾿ ἔξαφεῖται τοῦτο ὡς ἐγὼ κλύω.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ποῦ δῆτα νῦν ξὼν ἡ θανῶν ἀγγέλλεται;
TRACHINIAE

Would lend her counsel to a free-born dame. Why, since thou art so rich in sons, not send One on the quest, and Hyllus most of all? Who could assist thee better, if he cares To ascertain the safety of his sire? And lo, I see him in the nick of time Approaching hotfoot. Wherefore, if I seem To speak in season, use my rede and him. Enter HYLLUS.

DEIANIRA

My child, my boy! wise words in sooth may fall From humble lips. This woman is a slave, But her words breathe the spirit of the free.

HYLLUS

What, mother? tell me, if it may be told.

DEIANIRA

She said that never to have gone in search Of thy long absent father brings thee shame.

HYLLUS

Nay, but if rumour's true, I know of him.

DEIANIRA

Where hast thou heard, my son, that he abides?

HYLLUS

Last season, so they say, the whole year through He served as bondsman to a Lydian dame.

DEIANIRA

Naught would surprise me if he sank so low.

HYLLUS

Well, that disgrace is over, so I hear.

DEIANIRA

Where is he now reported, living or dead?
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΤΑΔΟΣ
Εὐβοΐδα χώραν φασίν, Εὐρύτου πόλιν,
ἐπιστρατεύειν αὐτὸν ἢ μέλλειν ἔτι.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
ἀρ’ οἴσθα δῆτ’, ὃ τέκνον, ὡς ἔλειπέ μοι
μαντεία πιστὰ τήσε τῆς χώρας πέρι;

ΤΑΔΟΣ
τὰ ποία, μήτερ; τὸν λόγον γὰρ ἀγνοῶ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
ὡς ἡ τελευτὴν τοῦ βίου μέλλει τελείω
ἡ τοῦτον ἁγας ἁθλον εἰς τὸ γ’ ὑστερον
τὸν λοιπὸν ἢ ἴσον ἑυαίων’ ἔχειν.
ἐν οὖν ῥοπὴ τοιάδε κειμένῳ, τέκνον,
οὐκ εἶ ἐγνέρξων, ἡνίκ’ ἢ σεσώσμεθα
[ἡ πίπτομεν σοῦ πατρὸς ἐξολωλότος]
κείνῳ βίον σώσαντος, ἡ οἴχομεσθ’ ἁμα;

ΤΑΔΟΣ
ἀλλ’ εἰμι, μήτερ: εἰ δὲ θεσφάτων ἐγὼ
βάξων κατήδη τῶνδε, κἀν πάλαι παρὴ:
νῦν δ’ ὁ ἐφυνήθης πότμος οὐκ εἰά
πατρὸς ἡμᾶς προταρβεῖν οὐδὲ δειμαίνειν ἄγαν.
νῦν δ’ ὃς ἐφυνήμ’, οὐδέν ἐπλεῖψω τὸ μὴ οὐ
πᾶσαν πυθέσθαι τῶνδ’ ἀληθείαν πέρι.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
χώρει νυν, ὃ παί· καὶ γὰρ ὑστέρφ τὸ γ’ εὗρ
πράσσειν, ἐπεὶ πῦθοιτο, κέρδος ἐμπολᾶ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ὅν αἰόλα νῦξ ἐναριξομένα
στρ. α’
tίκτει κατευνάζει τε, φλογιζόμενον
"Αλιον," Αλιον αἰτῶ
τοῦτο καρδεῖα, τὸν Ἀλκμήνας πόθι μοι πόθι παις

1 εἰς τὸν ὑστερον MSS., Reiske corr,
2 εῇ MSS., Vauvilliers corr,
TRACHINIAE

HYLLUS
He wars, or is about to war, they say,
Against Euboea and King Eurytus.

DEIANIRA
Know'st thou, my son, that when he went away
He left sure oracles anent that land?

HYLLUS
What, mother? I ne'er heard of them before.

DEIANIRA
That either he should find his death, or when
He had achieved this final task, henceforth
Lead an unbroken life of peaceful ease.
Son, when his fate thus trembles in the scale,
Wilt thou not go to aid him? If he's saved,
We too are saved; if lost, we perish too.

HYLLUS
Ay, mother, I'll away; had I but known
Of this prediction I had long been gone.
But, as it was, his happy star forbade
Excess of fear or doubt; but, now I know,
No pains I'll spare to learn the perfect truth.

DEIANIRA
Go then, my son. However late the quest,
The bringer of good news is well repaid!

Enter CHORUS. [Exit HYLLUS.

CHORUS
Child of star-bespangled Night,
   (Str. 1) Born as she dies,
Laid to rest in a blaze of light,
Tell me, Sun-god, O tell me, where
Tarries the child of Alcmena fair;
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ναιει ποτ', ὁ λαμπτρα στεροτα φλεγέθων,
ἡ ποντίας αὐλώνος ἡ δισασίσων ὀπείροις κλιθείς,
εἴπ', ὁ κρατιστεφών κατ' ὄμμα.

ποθούμενα γὰρ φρενὶ πυνθάνομαι ἀντ. α'
τὰν ἀμφινεικὴ Δημάνειραν ἄει,
οἷά τιν' ἀθλον ὅριν,
οὔτοτ' εὐνάξειν ἀδακρύτας βλεφάραν πόθον, ἄλλ' εὐμμαστὸν ἀνδρὸς δείμα τρέφουσαν ὄδου
ἐνθυμῶς εὐναῖς ἀνανδρώτοσι τρύχεσθαι, κακὰν
dύστανον ἐλπίζουσαν αἰθαν.

στρ. β'

πολλὰ γὰρ ὡστ' ἀκάμαντος ἡ νότον ἡ βορέα τις
cύματ' ἅν εὐρεὶ πόντῳ βάντ' ἐπιόντα τ' ἵδοι,
oὐτῶ δὲ τὸν Καδμογενῆ στρέφει, 1 τὸ δ' αὖξει,
βιότον πολύπονον ὁσπερ πέλαγος
Κρήσιον. ἄλλα τις θεῶν αἰὲν ἀναμπλάκητον ὁ' Αἰδα
σφε δόμων ἑρύκει.

ἀντ. β'

ὅν ἐπιμεμφομένα σ' αἰδοῖα 2 μέν, ἀντία δ' οἴσω.

φαμί γὰρ οὐκ ἀποτρύνει ἐλπίδα τὰν ἀγαθὰν
χρήνα σ'. ἀνάλγητα γὰρ οὐδ' ὁ πάντα κράινων
βασιλεὺς ἐπέβαλε θνατοῖς Κρονίδας·
ἀλλ' ἐπὶ πήμα καὶ χαρὰ πᾶσι κυκλούσων, οἶον
ἀρκτον στροφάδες κέλευθοι.

μένει γὰρ οὔτ' αἰόλα
νυξ βροτοίσων οὗτε κῆρες

1 στρέφει MSS., Reiske corr.
2 άδεια MSS., Musgrave corr.
TRACHINIAE

Thou from whose eyes,
Keen as lightning, naught can hide.
Doth he on either mainland bide?
Roams he over the sea straits driven?
Thou, omniscient eye of heaven,
Declare, declare!

For like bird bereft of her mate
(Sad my tale)
Deianira, desolate,
She the maiden of many wooed,
Pines by fears for her lord pursued;
Ever she bodes some instant harm
Ever she starts at a new alarm,
With vigils pale.

(Anl. 1)

For as the tireless South or Northern blast
Billow on billow rolls o'er ocean wide,
So on the son of Cadmus follows fast
Sea upon sea of trouble, tide on tide;
And now he sinks, now rises; still some god
Is nigh to save him from Death's whelming flood.

(Anl. 2)

Bear with me, lady, if I seem to chide thee.
Why by despondency is fair hope slain?
Think that high Zeus, if evil now betide thee,
No human lot ordaineth free from pain;
But as the Bear revolves in heaven all night,
So mortals move 'twixt sorrow and delight.

The sheen of night with daybreak wanes;
Pleasure follows after pains.
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

οὔτε πλούτος, ἀλλ' ἄφαρ
βέβακε, τῷ δ' ἑπέρχεται
χαίρειν θεὶ καὶ στέρεσθαι.
ἄ καὶ σὲ τὰν ἀνασσαν ἐπίσιν λέγω
τάδ' αἰέν ἵσχειν· ἐπεὶ τίς ὥδε
tέκνοισι Ζῆν' ἄβουλον εἶδεν;

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

πεπυμένη μὲν, ὡς ἀπεικάσαι, πάρει
πάθημα τοὐμόν· ὡς δ' ἔγο θυμοφορῶ,
μὴτ' ἐκμάθουσι παθοῦσα νῦν τ' ἀπειρος εἰ.
τὸ γὰρ νεάζου ἐν τοιοῦσὶ βόσκεται
χώροισιν αὐτοῦ, καὶ νῦν οὐ θάλπος θεωῦ
οὐδ' ὁμβρος οὐδὲ πυνεμάτων οὐδὲν κλονεῖ,
ἀλλ' ἡδονάς ἀμοχθον ἐξαίρει βίον
ἐς τοὐθ' ἐως τις ἀντὶ παρθένον γυνή
κληθῇ λάβῃ τ' ἐν νυκτὶ φροντίδων μέρος,
ητοι πρὸς ἀνδρὸς ἦ τέκνων φοβουμένῃ.
τὸτ' ἄν τις εἰσίδοιτο, τὴν αὐτοῦ σκοπών
πρᾶξιν, κακοῖς οἷς ἔγως βαρύνομαι.

πάθη μὲν οὖν δὴ πόλλ' ἐγωγ' ἐκλαυσάμην·
ἐν δ', οἷον οὕτω πρόσθεν, αὐτίκ' ἐξερώ.

ὁδὸν γὰρ ἤμοι τὴν τελευταίαν ἀνάξ
ὁρμᾶτ' ἀπ' οὐκὸν Ἁρακλῆς, τότ' ἐν δόμοις
λείτει παλαιὰν δέλτον ἐγγεγαμμένην
ξυνθῆμαθ', ἀμοὶ πρόσθεν οὐκ ἔτλη ποτε,
πολλοὺς ἀγώνας ἐξιών, οὔτω φράσαι,
ἀλλ' ὡς τι δράσων εἰρπε κού θανούμενος.

νῦν δ' ὡς ἐτ' οὖν ὄν εἶπε μὲν λέχους ὅ τι
χρείη μ' ἐλέσθαι κτῆσιν, εἶπε δ' ἦν τέκνους
TRACHINIAE

If perchance to-day thou art sad,
Then another man is glad.
Gains with losses alternate;
Naught is constant in one state:
Ponder this, my Queen, nor let
Carking care thy spirit fret.
Tell me hast thou ever known
Zeus unmindful of his own?

DEIANIRA

Doubtless ye must have heard of my distress,
And therefore come; but how my heart is racked
Ye cannot know—pray God ye ne’er may know it
By suffering!

Like to us, the tender plant
Is reared and nurtured in some garden close;
Nor heat, nor rain, nor any breath of air
Vexes it, but unruffled, unperturbed,
It buds and blossoms in sequestered bliss;
So fare we till the maid is called a wife
And finds her married portion in the night—
Dread terror for her husband or her child.
Only the woman who by trial knows
The cares of wedlock knows what I endure.
Many have been my sorrows in the past,
But now of one, the woefullest of all,
I have to tell. When Heracles, my lord,
On his last travel was about to start,
He left an ancient tablet in the house,
Inscribed with characters that ne’er before
However desperate the enterprise,
He would interpret; for he aye set forth
As one about to do and not to die.
This time, as on his death bed, he prescribed
Due portion of his substance as my dower,
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

μοίραν πατρώας γῆς διαρετῶν νέμοι,
χρόνον προτάξας ὡς τρίμηνον ἥμικα
χώρας ἀπείχα κανιαύσιον βεβώς,
tότ' ἡ θανείν χρείῃ σφε τῶδε τῷ χρόνῳ
ἡ τοῦθ' ὑπεκδραμόντα τοῦ χρόνου τέλος
τὸ λοιπὸν ἢδη δὴν ἀλυτήτῳ βίῳ.
tοιαύτ' ἐφραζέ πρὸς θεῶν εἰμαρμένα
τῶν Ἡρακλείων ἐκτελευτάσθαι πόνων,
ὡς τὴν παλαιὰν φηγὸν αὐδὴσαι ποτε
Δωδώνι δισσῶν ἐκ Πελειάδων ἔφη.
καὶ τόνδε ναμέρτεια συμβαίνει χρόνου
τοῦ νῦν παρόντος, ὡς τελεθήναι χρεών·
ὡσθ' ἡδέως εὐδουσαν ἐκπηδᾶν ἐμὲ
φόβῳ, φίλαι, ταρσοῦσαν, εἰ μὲ χρὴ μένειν
πάντων ἀρίστον φωτὸς ἐστερημένην.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

εὐφημίαν νῦν ἵσχ'. ἐπεὶ καταστεφῇ
στείχουθ' ὅρῳ τίν' ἄνδρα πρὸς χαρὰν λόγων.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

déseποινα Δηάνειρα, πρῶτος ἀγγέλων
ὄκνου σε λύσω· τὸν γὰρ Ἄλκμήνης τόκον
καὶ ζώντ' ἐπίστω καὶ κρατοῦντα κάκις
ἀγοντ' ἀπαρχὰς θεότι τοῖς ἐγχωρίοις.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

tίν' ἐιπας, ὃ γεραιε, τόνδε μοι λόγον;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

tάχ' ἐς δόμους σοὺς τὸν πολύζηλον πόσιν
ἡξειν φανέντα σὰν κράτει νικηφόρῳ.

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TRACHINIAE

And to his children severally assigned
Their heritage of lands; and fixed a date,
Saying that when a year and three full moons
Had passed since he departed from his home,
He needs must die, or, if he then survived,
Live ever after an untroubled life;
So by the mouth of the two priestly Doves
Dodona's sacred oak had once declared.
And now, this very day, the hour has struck
For confirmation of the prophecy.
Thus from sweet slumber, friends, ye see me start
With terror at the thought of widowed days,
If he, the noblest of all men, were gone.

CHORUS
Hush! no ill-omened words! I see approaching
A messenger, bay-wreathed—he brings good news.

Enter MESSENGER.

MESSENGER
Queen Deianira, let me be the first
To rid thee of thy fears. Be well assured
Alcmena's son is living; o'er his foes
Victorious he is bringing home the spoils,
To offer firstfruits to his country's gods.

DEIANIRA
Old man, what dost thou tell me?

MESSENGER
That anon
Thou shalt behold in presence, at thy gate,
Illustrious, crowned with victory, thy lord.

1 The Peleids were the priestesses of Dodona who interpreted the rustling of the oak or the cooing of the sacred doves and their name in folk etymology was identified with peleiai, doves.

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ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙΑ

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
καὶ τοῦ τὸδ᾽ ἀστῶν ἢ ἔσενων μαθῶν λέγεις;
ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
ἐν βουθερεῖ λεμῶν πρὸς πολλοὺς θροεῖ;
Δίχας ὁ κήρυξ ταῦτα· τοῦδ᾽ ἐγὼ κλύων
ἀπὴξ', ὡπως τοι πρῶτος ἀγγείλας τάδε
πρὸς σοῦ τι κερδάναιμ καὶ κτῶμην χάριν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
αὐτὸς δὲ πῶς ἀπεστιν, ἢπερ εὐτυχεῖ;
ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
οὐκ εὐμαρεία χρώμενος πολλῆ, γύναι.
κύκλῳ γὰρ αὐτὸν Μηλεὺς ἄπας λεῶς
κρίνει παραστάς, οὐδ᾽ ἐχει βὴναι πρόσω·
tὸ γὰρ ποθοῦν ἐκαστός ἐκμαθεῖν¹ θέλων
οὐκ ἂν μεθεῖτο, πρὶν καθ᾽ ἡδονὴν κλύειν.
οὔτως ἐκεῖνος οὐχ ἐκὼν, ἐκοῦσι δὲ
ζύνεστιν· ὅψει ὃ αὐτὸν αὐτίκ᾽ ἐμφανῆ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
ὦ Ζεῦ, τὸν Οἰλῆς ἄτομον ὃς λεμῶν ἔχεις,
ἐδωκας ἡμῖν ἀλλὰ σὺν χρόνῳ χαράν.
φωνήσατι, ὦ γυναικεῖς, αἰ τ᾽ εἴςω στέγῃς
αἰ τ᾽ ἐκτὸς αὐλής, ὡς ἄειπτον ὃμι᾽ ἐμοὶ
φήμης ἀνασχὸν τῆς δὲ νῦν καρποῦμεθα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἀνολολυξάτω ² δόμοις ἐφεστίοις
ἄλαλαγαῖς ἃ ³ μελλόνυμφος, ἐν δὲ
κοινὸς ἀρσένων ἵτω
κλαγγὰ τὸν εὐφαρέτραν
"Απόλλω προστάτας" ὁμοῦ δὲ

¹ M. L. Carle's ἐκπληθαί is the likeliest emendation of a probably corrupt line.
² ἀνολολυξάτω MSS., Burges corr. ³ ἃ MSS., Erfurdt corr.
TRACHINIAE

DEIANIRA
Some stranger or a native told thee this?

MESSENGER
The herald Lichas is proclaiming it
There in the summer pastures to the crowd.
From him I heard, and sped to be the first
To bring the news and win reward and thanks.

DEIANIRA
If such his news, why comes he not himself?

MESSENGER
That were no light task; all our Malian folk
Cluster around him, hem him on all sides,
Ply him with questions, one and all intent
To hear his news; he cannot stir a step,
Midst willing hosts a most unwilling guest,
Till all their eagerness is satisfied.
But thou shalt see him face to face anon.

DEIANIRA
Lord of the unshorn meads of Oeta, Zeus,
Though long delayed, thou giv'st me joy at last.
Women within, and ye without the gates,
Uplift your voices, hail the new-born light
That dawns to glad me when all hope had fled.

CHORUS
Maidens, let your joyous shout
Of triumph from the hearth ring out,
Swell the quire of men who raise
Their paean to Apollo's praise.
Sing, man and maid,
Phoebus our aid,
Lord of the quiver,
Strong to deliver!
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

παίανα παίαν' ἀνάγετ', ὦ παρθένοι,
βοῶτε τάν ὁμόσπορον
'Αρτεμίν 'Ορτυγίαν
ἐλαφαβόλου ἀμφίπυρον,
γείτονάς τε Νύμφας.
ἀείρομαι οὐδ' ἀπώσομαι
tὸν αὐλόν, ὦ τύραννε τᾶς ἐμᾶς φρενός.
ἰδοὺ μ' ἀναταράσσει,
εὐοί μ',
ὁ κυσσός ἄρτι βακχίαν
ὑποστρέφων ἅμιλλαν. ἵδ' ἵδι Παίαν.
ἵδ', ὦ φίλα γύναι,
tάδ' ἀντίπροφα δή σοι
βλέπειν πάρεστ' ἐναργῆ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ὁρῶ, φίλαι γυναῖκες, οὐδὲ μ' ὅμματος
φρονῶν παρῆλθε, τῶνδε μὴ λεύσειν στόλον
χαιρεῖν δὲ τὸν κήρυκα προωνύμητο, χρώνῳ
πολλῷ φανέντα, χαρτὸν εἰ τι καὶ φέρεις.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἀλλ' εὖ μὲν ἐγμεθ', εὖ δὲ προσφωνούμεθα,
γύναι, κατ' ἔργου κτήσιν ἄνδρα γὰρ καλῶς
πράσσοντ' ἀνάγκῃ χρηστὰ κερδαίνειν ἔπη.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ὁ φίλτατ' ἄνδρῶν, πρῶθ' ἣ πρῶτα βούλομαι
dίδαξον, εἰ ζῴονθ' Ὑρακλῆ προσδέξομαι.
TRACHINIAE

Hymn his sister, maid and man,
Artemis Ortygian.
    Slayer of deer,
    With fiery brand
    In either hand,
    O goddess, hear!
Hymn ye the nymphs too, her attendant band.
My spirit spurns the ground;
Bid the shrill fife outsound,
My sovereign I obey.
    Evoë!
    The thyrsus, see,
Calls me; I must away
To join the Bacchic rout,
With Maenads dance and shout,
Once more the paean raise;
    For, lady, here,
    In presence clear,
My joy takes shape and stands before thy gaze.

DEIANIRA

Kind friends, I see, nor have my wistful eyes
Failed to perceive this company’s approach—
Hail to thee, herald, if indeed thou bring’st
News that will gladden me, though long delayed.

Enter LICHAS with CAPTIVE WOMEN.

LICHAS

Yea, lady, glad is our return and glad
Thy greeting, as besuits the deed achieved.
He who speeds well a welcome fair deserves.

DEIANIRA

First tell me what I first would learn, best friend,
Shall I embrace my Heracles alive?
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἐγωγέ τοι σφ’ ἐλεύπον ἵσχύοντά τε καὶ ζώντα καὶ θάλλοντα κοῦ νόσῳ βαρύν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ποῦ γῆς; πατρῴας εἴτε βαρβάρου; λέγε.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἀκτὴ τις ἐστ’ Εὔβοισ, ἔνθ’ ὀρίζεται βωμοὺς τέλη τ’ ἐγκαρπα Κηναιω Διί.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

εὔκταλι φαίνων ἢ ἀπὸ μαντείας τινός;

ΛΙΧΑΣ

εὐχαίς ὅθ’ ἤρει τῶν ἀνάστατων δορὶ χώραν γυναικῶν δὲν ὅρας ἐν ὄμασιν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

αὕται δὲ, πρὸς θεῶν, τοῦ ποτ’ εἰσὶ καὶ τίνες; οἰκτραὶ γὰρ, εἰ μὴ ἐξυμφοραὶ κλέπτουσί με.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ταύτας ἐκείνος Εὐρύτου πέροςας πόλιν ἐξεἰλεθ’ αὐτῷ κτήμα καὶ θεοῖς κριτόν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἡ κατὶ ταύτη τῇ πόλει τοῦ ἀσκοποῦν χρόνου βεβώς ἢν ἠμερῶν ἀνήριθμον;

ΛΙΧΑΣ

οὐκ, ἀλλὰ τῶν μὲν πλείστουν ἐν Δυνοὺς χρόνου κατείχεθ’, ὡς φησ’ αὐτός, οὐκ ἐλεύθερος, ἀλλ’ ἐμποληθεῖς τοῦ λόγου δ’ οὐ χρῆ φθόνον, 250 γύναι, προσεῖναι, Ζεὺς δ’ οὗν πράκτωρ φανῇ. κείνος δὲ πραθεὶς Ὀμφάλη τῇ βαρβάρῳ ἐνιαυτὸν ἐξέπλησεν, ὡς αὐτὸς λέγει.
TRACHINIAE

LICHAS
Surely; I left him both alive and hale,
In lusty strength and sound in every limb.

DEIANIRA
Where? upon Greek soil, tell me, or abroad?

LICHAS
Upon a headland in Euboea, where
He marks out altars to Cenaean Zeus,
And dedicates the fertile lands around.

DEIANIRA
In payment of some former vow, or warned
By oracles?

LICHAS
'Tis for a vow he made
When he went forth to conquer and despoil
Oechalia of these women whom thou see'st.

DEIANIRA
O tell me who these captives are and whose;
So piteous, to judge them by their plight.

LICHAS
He chose them for himself and for the gods,
When he had sacked the town of Eurytus.

DEIANIRA
Was it to take that city he delayed
All those interminable, countless days?

LICHAS
Not so; that time he mostly was detained
In Lydia; by his own account, not free,
But sold in bondage; nor shouldst thou resent
A tale of outrage, when the doer is Zeus.
Thus he fulfilled (these were his very words)
A year of servitude to Omphalè,
The barbarous queen. So grievous was the sting
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

χούτως ἐδίχθη τοῦτο τοῦνειδος λαβὼν ὡσθ' ὄρκον αὑτῷ προσβαλὼν διώμοσεν, ἢ μὴν τὸν ἀγχιστήρα τούδε τοῦ πάθους ξὺν παιδὶ καὶ γνωικὲ δουλώσειν ἐτι. κοῦκ ἠλίωσε τούπος, ἀλλ' ὁθ' ἀγνὸς ἦν, στρατὸν λαβὼν ἐπακτὸν ἔρχεται πόλει τῆν Εὐρυτείαν. τόνδε γὰρ μεταίτιον μόνον βροτῶν ἐφασκε τοῦι ἐ κείνα πάθους; ὅς αὐτὸν ἔλθοντ' ἐς δόμους ἐφέστιον, ξένου παλαιόν ὄντα, πολλὰ μὲν λόγοις ἐπερρόθησε, πολλὰ δ' ἀτηρᾶ φρενι., λέγων χερὸν μὲν ὡς ἀφυκτ' ἔχων βέλη τῶν ὧν τέκνων λείποιτο πρὸς τὸξον κρίσιν, φωνεὶ δὲ δούλος ἀνδρὸς ὡς ἐλευθέρον Ῥάιοιτο. δεῖπνοις δ' ἡνίκα' ἦν φυγοκομός, ἔργησεν ἐκτὸς αὐτοῦ. ὦν ἔχων χόλον, ὡς ἱκετ' αὐθίς Ιφίτος Τυρνθίλαν

πρὸς κλίτων, ἦπους νομάδας ἐξιχνοσκοπῶν, τὸτ' ἄλλοσ' αὑτὸν ὄμμα, θατέρα δὲ νοῦν ἔχουτ', ἀπ' ἀκρασ ἤκε πυργώδους πλακός. ἔργου δ' ἔκατι τοῦδε μηνίσας ἀναξ ὁ τῶν ἀπάντων Ζεὺς πατὴρ Ὀλύμπιος πρατῶν μιν ἔξεπεμψι' οὖδ' ἴμεσχετο, ὅθούνεκ' αὐτὸν μοῦνον ἀνθρώπων δόλῳ ἔκτεινεν οἵ γὰρ ἐμφανοὶ ἡμῖνα, Ζεὺς τῶν συνεγνω ξύν δίκη χειρουμένη- ὕβριν γὰρ οὗ στέργουσιν οὔδὲ δαίμονες. κείνοι δ' ὑπερχλίλοστες εκ γλώσσης κακῆς αὐτοὶ μὲν Ἀδαν πάντες εἰς' οἰκήτορες, πόλεις δὲ δούλη μᾶς δ' ἀστερ εἰσορᾶς ἐξ ὀλβίων ἄξηλον εὐφόβαι βίον χωροῦσι πρὸς σὲ· ταύτα γὰρ πόσις τε σὸς

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TRACHINIAE

Of his reproach, that by a mighty oath
He swore one day to enslave with wife and child
The author of this foul calamity.
Nor vain that vow. No sooner was he purged,
Than he enlisted straight an alien host,
And marched against the city of Eurytus;
For Eurytus alone of men he deemed
The guilty cause, who when he came a guest
To one by ties of ancient friendship bound,
With many a bitter taunt and bitter spite
Assailed him, saying, "Thou indeed hast shafts
Unerring, yet in feats of archery
My sons surpass thee," or again he'd cry,
"Out on thee, slave, a freeman's down-trod thrall."
Once at a banquet too he cast him forth
When he was in his cups. Whereat incensed,
Encountering Iphitus upon the hill
Of Tiryns in pursuit of his strayed mares,
As the youth stood at gaze, his wits afield,
He hurled him from the craggy battlements.
That deed of violence provoked our King,
The sire of all, Olympian Zeus, who drave him
Forth to be sold, and spared him not, because
That once (his sole offence) he slew a foe
By treachery; had he slain him in fair fight,
Zeus had approved his righteous wrath, for gods
No more than men can suffer insolence.
So all those braggarts of outrageous tongue
Lie low in Hades and their town's enslaved,
And these, the women whom thou seest, fallen
To abject misery from their high estate,
Are to thy hands delivered. Thus my lord
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ἐφεῖτ', ἔγω δὲ πιστὸς ἄν κείμη τελώ. 
αὐτὸν δ' ἐκείνον, εὑτ' ἀν ἄγνα θύματα 
ῥέξῃ πατρῷ φιλή ἡ άλωσεως, 
φρονεῖ νῦν ὁς ἤξοντα· τοῦτο γὰρ λόγου 
πολλοῦ καλῶς λεχθέντος ἢδιστον κλύειν. 290

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀνασα, νῦν σοι τέρψις ἐμφανῆς κυρεῖ, 
τῶν μὲν παρόντων, τὰ δὲ πεπυσμένη λόγῳ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

πῶς δ' οὐκ ἐγώ χαίρομι' ἂν, ἀνδρός εὔτυχῆ 
κλύουσα πράξεων τῆς, πανδήκῳ φρενί; 
πολλή' στ' ἀνάγκῃ τῇ τοῦτο συντρέχειν. 
ὁμοις δ' ἐνεστί τοῖς εὐ σκοπουμένους 
ταρβεῖν τὸν εὐ πράσσοντα, μὴ σφαλῇ ποτε. 
ἐμοὶ γὰρ οἶκτος δεινὸς εἰσέβη, φίλαι, 
ταύτας ὁρώσῃ δυσπότμους ἑπὶ ξένης 
χώρας ἀοίκους ἀπάτοράς τ' ἀλωμένας, 300
αἱ πρὶν μὲν ἦσαν ἐξ ἐλευθέρων ἰσως 
ἀνδρῶν, ταυτὶ δὲ δοῦλον ἵσχουσιν βίον. 
ὁ Ζεὺς τρωπαίε, μη ποτ' εἰσδοιμι σε 
πρὸς τοὺμόν οὐτω σπέρμα χωρήσαντα ποι, 
μηδ', εἴ τι δράσεις, τῆς δὲ γε ζωῆς ἐτι. 
οὕτως ἐγώ δέδουικα τάσδ' ὀρωμένη. 
ὁ δυστάλαινα, τῆς ποτ' εἴ νεανίδων; 
ἀνανδρὸς η τεκνοῦσα; 1; πρὸς μὲν γὰρ φύσιν 
πάντων ἀπειρος τῶνδε, γενναία δὲ τις. 
Διόχα, τίνος ποτ' ἐστίν η ἥνεθ ἐβρῶν; 
τῆς ἡ τεκνοῦσα, τῆς δ' ὁ φιτύσας πατήρ; 
ἐξειπ'; ἐπεὶ νῦν τῶνδε πλείστον φιλισά 
βλέπουσ', ὀσφπτερ καὶ φρονεῖν οἴδειν μόνη. 310

1 τεκνοῦσα MSS., Brunck corr.
TRACHINIAE

Charged me, and I, his liegeman true, obey.
Doubt not himself, so soon as he has paid
Due sacrifices for his victory
To Zeus his sire, will presently be here.
This crowns and consummates my happy tale.

CHORUS

Now, lady, is thy joy assured, in part
Present, with promise sure for what remains.

DEIANIRA

Hearing these happy tidings of my lord
How can I but rejoice, as it is meet,
For our two fortunes run in parallels.
Yet one who thinks on change and chance must dread
Lest such success be prelude to a fall.
And a strange pity hath come o’er me, friends,
At sight of these poor wretches, motherless,
Fatherless, homeless, in an alien land,
Daughters, it well may be, of free-born sires,
And now condemned to live the life of slaves.
Never, O Zeus who turn’st the tide of war,
Never may I behold a child of mine
Thus visited, or if such lot must be,
May it not fall while Deianira lives.
Such dread, as I behold these maids, is mine.

(To Iole)

Say, who art thou, most miserable girl,
Mother or maid? To judge thee by thy looks
Thou hast full warrant of virginity,
Yea and of high birth. Lichas, who is she?
Who was her father, and her mother?
Speak.
Her most of all I pity, for she shows
Alone the sense of her calamity.
ΤΡΑΞΙΝΙΑΙ

ΔΙΧΑΣ
τί δ’ οἶδ’ ἐγώ, τί δ’ ἂν με καὶ κρίνοις; ἵσως γέννημα τῶν ἐκεῖθεν οὐκ ἐν ὑστάτοις.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
μὴ τῶν τυράννων; Εὐρύτου σπορά τις ἦν;

ΔΙΧΑΣ
οὐκ οἶδα· καὶ γὰρ οὐδ’ ἀνιστόρουν μακράν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
οὐδ’ ὄνομα πρὸς τού τῶν ξυνεμπόρων ἔχεις;

ΔΙΧΑΣ
ἡκιστα· συγῇ τούμον ἔργον ἦνυτον.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
eἰπ’· ὦ τάλαιν’, ἀλλ’ ἦμιν ἐκ σαυτῆς, ἐπεῖ καὶ ξυμφορά τοι μὴ εἰδέναι σε γ’ ἦτις εἰ.

ΔΙΧΑΣ
οὗ τὰρα τῷ γε πρόσθεν οὕδεν ἐξ ἵσου χρόνῳ διήσει1 γλῶσσαν, ἦτις οὐδαμὰ προόπηνεν οὔτε μείζον’ οὔτ’ ἐλάσσονα, ἀλλ’ αἰέν ὀδύνουσα συμφορᾶς βάρος δακρυρροεὶ δύστηνος, ἐξ ὁτου πάτραν διήμερον λέλοιπεν· ἢ δὲ τοι τύχη κακή μὲν αὐτῇ γ’, ἀλλὰ συγγνώμην ἔχει.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
ἡ δ’ οὖν ἐάσθω, καὶ πορενέσθω στέγας οὕτως ὅπως ἦδιστα, μηδὲ πρὸς κακοῖς τοῖς οὖσιν ἄλλην2 πρὸς γ’ ἐμοῦ λύπην λάβης.3 ἀλὶς γὰρ ἡ πάροισα. πρὸς δὲ δούματα χωρῶμεν ἡδὴ πάντες, ὥς σύ θ’ οἱ θέλεις σπεύδης, ἐγὼ τε τάνδουν ἐξαρκὴ τιθῶ.

1 διήσει MSS., Wakefield corr.
2 οὖσιν MSS., F. W. Schmidt corr.
3 λάβης MSS., Blaydes corr.
TRACHINIAE

LICHAS
How should I know? Why question me? Perchance
She was of noblest lineage in that land.

DEIANIRA
What, of their kings? Had Eurytus a daughter?

LICHAS
I know not, did not question her at length.

DEIANIRA
Did'st thou not even learn her name from one
Of her companions?

LICHAS
No, I had my work
To do, and had no time for questioning.

DEIANIRA
Then speak to me and tell me who thou art,
Poor maid; it grieves me truly not to know.

LICHAS
Well, if she opens now her lips, 'twill be
Unlike her former self, for hitherto
She hath not uttered word or syllable;
But still in travail with her heavy grief
She weeps and stays not weeping since she left
Her wind-swept home. 'Tis sad and ill for 'her,
This melancholy, yet 'tis natural.

DEIANIRA
Leave her in peace and let her pass within,
As is her humour. Heaven forbid that I
Should add another to her present pains,
Enough God knows. Now let us all go in,
That thou may'st start at once upon thy way.
And I make all things ready in the house.

[Exeunt LICHAS and CAPTIVES.]
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
αὕτου γε πρῶτον βαΐον ἀμμέαινας’, ὡς μάθης ἀνευ τῶνδ’, οὐστινάς τ’ ἄγεις ἔσω, ὅν τ’ οὐδὲν εἰσήκουσας ἐκμάθης ᾧ δεῖ· τούτων ἔχω γὰρ πάντ’ ἐπιστήμην ἐγώ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
τί δ’ ἐστί; τοῦ με τήνδ’ ἐφίστασαι βάσιν;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
σταθείς’ ἀκούσον’ καὶ γὰρ οὐδὲ τὸν πάρος μῦθον μάτην ἥκουσας, οὐδὲ νῦν δοκῶ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
πότερον ἐκεῖνοι δήτα δεῦρ’ αὖθις πάλιν καλῶμεν, ἢ ’μοι ταῖσδε τ’ ἐξειπείν θέλεις;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
σοι ταῖσδε τ’ οὐδὲν εἰργηταί, τούτους δ’ ἔα.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
καὶ δὴ βεβάσι, χῶ λόγος σημαίνετω.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
ἀνὴρ ὁδ’ οὐδὲν ὄν ἔλεξεν ἀρτέως φωνεῖ δίκης ἐς ὦρθον, ἀλλ’ ἢ νῦν κακὸς ἢ πρόσθεν οὐ δίκαιος ἀγγελος παρήν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
τί φῆς; σαφῶς μοι φράξε πᾶν ὀσον νεοῖς· ἢ μὲν γὰρ ἐξειρήκας ἀγνοία μ’ ἔχει.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
τούτου λέγοντος τάνδρος εἰσήκουσ’ ἐγώ, πολλῶν παρόντων μαρτύρων, ὡς τῆς κόρης ταύτης έκατε κεῖνος Ἐνρυτόν θ’ ἔλοι τὴν θ’ ὑφίπτυργον Οἰχαλίαν, ὦ Ἔρως δέ νῦν μόνος θεῶν θέλειεν αἰχμάσαι τάδε,
TRACHINIAE

MESSENGER
So be it, but first tarry here awhile
That thou may'st learn in private who are these
Whom thou dost welcome 'neath thy roof, and hear
Matters of import still untold, whereof
I have full cognisance.

DEIANIRA
What meanest thou?
Why dost thou bid me pause and stay my steps?

MESSENGER
Attend and listen. As my former news
Was worth the hearing, so methinks is this.

DEIANIRA
Say, shall I call the others back to hear,
Or wouldst thou speak with me and these alone?

MESSENGER
With thee and these; the rest are well away.

DEIANIRA
See, they are gone; proceed then with thy tale.

MESSENGER
Yon fellow spake not the straightforward truth
In aught he told thee; either now he's false,
Or else before was no true messenger.

DEIANIRA
How say'st thou? Tell me clearly all thy mind.
These covert hints I cannot understand.

MESSENGER
'Twas for this maiden's sake (I heard the man,
And many witnesses were by, declare it)
That Heracles laid prostrate in the dust
Oechalia's battlements and Eurytus.
Love was his leader, love alone inspired
This doughty deed, not his base servitude.
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

οὐ ταύτι Λυδοῖς οὐδ’ ὑπ’ Ὄμφαλῃ πόνων λατρεύματ’ οὐδ’ ὁ ῥητῶς Ἱφίτων μόρος· ὅν νῦν παρώσας οὗτος ἐμπαλίν λέγει. ἂλλ’ ἦνικ’ οὐκ ἔπειθε τὸν φυτοσπόρον τὴν παίδα δοῦναι, κρύφιον ὃς ἔχοι λέχος, ἔγκλημα μικρὸν αἰτίαν ἡ ἐτοιμάσας ἐπιστρατεύει πατρίδα τὴν ταύτης, ἐν ἦ τὸν Εὐρυτόν τῶν ἔπει δεσπόζειν θρόνων, κτείνει τ’ ἀνακτα πατέρα τῆςδε καὶ πόλιν ἔπερσε. καὶ νῦν, ὡς ὀρᾶς, ἢκεί δόμους ὡς τούσδε πέμπτων οὐκ ἀφροτίστως, γύναι, οὔδ’ ὡστε δουλήν· μηδὲ προσδόκα τόδε· οὔδ’ εἰκός, εἰπερ ἐντεθέρμανται πόθφ. ἐδοξεν οὖν μοι πρὸς σὲ δηλώσαι τὸ πᾶν, δέσποτιν’, ὁ τούδε τυγχάνω μαθὼν πάρα. καὶ ταῦτα πολλοὶ πρὸς μέση Τραχινῶν ἀγορὰ συνεξήκονον ὡςαύτως ἔμοι, ὡστ’ ἐξελέγχειν· εἰ δὲ μὴ λέγω φίλα, οὐχ ἦδομαι, τὸ ὃ’ ὀρθὸν ἐξείρηθ’ ὄμως.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

οὐμοι τάλαινα, ποῦ ποτε εἰμὶ πράγματος; τῶν εἰςδέθεγμαι πημονὴν ὑπάστεγον λαθραίων; ὃ δύστηνος· ἀρ’ ἀνώνυμος πέφυκεν, ὅσπερ οὐπάγων διώμυντο;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἡ κάρτα λαμπρά καὶ κατ’ ὄνομα καὶ φύσιν, πατρός μὲν οὐσα γένεσιν Εὐρύτον ποτὲ Ἰόλη καλεῖτο, τῆς ἐκείνος οὔδαμα βλάστας ἐφώνει, δὴθεν οὐδὲν ἴστορὼν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

δόλωτο — μὴ τι πάντες ὸι κακοί, τὰ δὲ λαθραὶ δὲ ἀσκεῖ μὴ πρέποντ’ αὐτῷ κακά.
TRACHINIAE

As bondsman under Lydian Omphalê,
Nor ruth for Iphitus hurled headlong down,
As Lichas feigned, who shrank to tell of love.
So, when he failed to win her sire's consent
To give the maiden for his paramour,
Picking some petty cause of quarrel, he
Made war upon her land (the land in which
Eurytus, as the herald said, was King)
And slew the prince her sire and sacked the town.
Now, as thou see'st, he comes and sends before him
The maiden, with set purpose, to his house;
Not as a slave—how could he so intend,
Seeing his heart is kindled with love's fire?
So I determined, Queen, to tell thee all
I had heard from Lichas; many heard it too
Who stood with me in the Trachinean mote,
And can convict him. If my words give pain,
It grieves me, but, alas, they are too true.

DEIANIRA

Ah me unhappy! in what plight I stand!
What bane have I received beneath my roof,
Unwitting, for my ruin! Is she then
A nameless maid, as he who brought her sware?

Messerger

Nay, she hath name and fame, a princess born,
Iolê, daughter of-King Eurytus;
This girl whose parents Lichas could not tell,
Because, forsooth, he had not questioned her.

CHORUS

A curse on evil doers, most on him
Who by deceit worketh iniquity!
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

τί χρή ποιεῖν, γυναίκες; ώσ ἐγὼ λόγοι
tοῖς νῦν παροῦσιν ἐκπεπληγμένη κυρῶ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πεύθου μολούσα τάνδροσ, ὡς τάχι αὐν σαφῆ
λέξειν, εἴ νῦν πρὸς βίαν κρίνειν θέλουσ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἀλλ’ εἶμι· καὶ γὰρ οὖκ ἀπὸ γυνώμης λέγεις.

ἈΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἡμεῖς δὲ προσμένωμεν; ἢ τί χρή ποιεῖν;

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

μῖμυν’, ὡς ὁδ’ ἄνηρ οὖκ ἔμων ὑπ’ ἀγγέλων,
ἀλλ’ αὐτόκλητος ἐκ δόμων πορεύεται.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

τί χρή, γύναι, μολόντα μ’ Ἡρακλεῖ λέγειν;
διδαξον, ὡς ἔρποντος, ὡς ὦρᾶς, ἐμοῦ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ὡς ἐκ ταχείας σὺν χρόνῳ βραδεῖ μολὼν
ἀσσείς, πρὶν ἡμᾶς κἀννεῶσασθαι λόγους.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἀλλ’ εἰ τι χρήξεις ἰστορεῖν, πάρειμ’ ἐγὼ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἡ καὶ τὸ πιστὸν τῆς ἀληθείας νέμεις;

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἱστῳ μέγας Ζεὺς, ὃν γ’ ἄν εξειδῶς κυρῶ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

τίς ἡ γυνὴ δὴ τ’ ἐστίν ἢν ἡκεῖς ἁγων;

ΛΙΧΑΣ

Εὐβοιις· ὃν δ’ ἐβλαστεῖν οὖκ ἔχω λέγειν.

1 εἰσορᾶς MSS., Wakefield corr
TRACHINIAE

DEIANIRA
My friends, what shall I do? this latest news Bewilders me.

MESSENGER
Go in and question Lichas; Perchance, if pressed, he'll tell thee all the truth.

DEIANIRA
There's reason in thy counsel; I will go.

MESSENGER
And I—shall I remain, or what would'st thou That I should do?

DEIANIRA
Remain, for here he comes Without my summons, of his own accord.
Re-enter LICHAS.

LICHAS
Lady, what message shall I bear my lord? Instruct me; I am starting, as thou see'st.

DEIANIRA
Thou cam'st at leisure, but dost part in haste, And hast no time for further talk with me.

LICHAS
If thou wouldst question me, I wait thy pleasure.

DEIANIRA
Say, dost thou reverence the honest truth?

LICHAS
So help me Zeus, I'll speak what truth I know.

DEIANIRA
Who is this woman then whom thou hast brought?

LICHAS
Euboean; of her parents I know naught.
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
οὗτος, βλέψ ὡδε· προς τιν έννεπειν δοκεῖς;
ΛΙΧΑΣ
σὺ δει εἰς τι δή με τούτο ἔρωτήσας ἔχεις;
ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
τόλμησον εἰπεῖν, εἰ φρονεῖς, ὃ σε ἱστορῶ.
ΛΙΧΑΣ
πρὸς τὴν κρατοῦσαν Δηάνειραν, Οἰνέως
cόρην δάμαρτά θ' Ἡρακλεόσιν, εἰ μὴ κυρὼ
λεύσσων μάταια, δεσπότιν τε τὴν ἔμην.
ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
τούτο αὐτ' ἔχρηζον, τούτο σου μαθείν λέγεις
dέσπιοιναν εἶναι τήνδε σήν;
ΛΙΧΑΣ
δίκαια γάρ.
ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
tί δήτα; πολαν ἀξίοις δοῦναι δίκην,
ἡν εὑρεθῇς ἐς τήνδε μὴ δίκαιος ὡν;
ΛΙΧΑΣ
πῶς μὴ δίκαιος; τί ποτε ποικιλας ἔχεις;
ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
οὗδέν· σὺ μέντοι κάρτα τούτο δρῶν κυρείς.
ΛΙΧΑΣ
ἀπειμω· μᾶρος δή ἡ πάλαι κλύων σέθεν.
ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
οὐ, πρὶν γ' ἄν εἶπης ἱστορούμενο βραχύ.
ΛΙΧΑΣ
λέγ', εἰ τι χρήζεις· καὶ γάρ οὐ σιγηλὸς εἰ.
ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
tὴν αἰχμάλωτον, ἢν ἐπέμψας ἐς δόμους,
κάτοικθα δήπου;

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TRACHINIAE

MESSENGER
Hark, sirrah, look me in the face: dost know
To whom thou speakest?

LICHAS
Who art thou to ask me?

MESSENGER
Be pleased to answer, if thou hast the wit.

LICHAS
To my most gracious mistress whom I serve,
Daughter of Oeneus, spouse of Heracles,
Deianira, if I be not blind.

MESSENGER
My question's answered to the point. Thou sayest
She is thy sovereign.

LICHAS
Whom I am bound to serve.

MESSENGER
Then tell me what should be thy punishment,
If in thy duty thou art proved to fail.

LICHAS
Fail in my duty? What dark riddle is this?

MESSENGER
My words are plain, the riddling speech is thine.

LICHAS
I go; I was a fool to stay for thee.

MESSENGER
Depart, but answer one brief question first.

LICHAS
Ask what thou wilt; thou hast a wagging tongue.

MESSENGER
That captive whom thou broughtest here—thou
know'st
The maid I mean?
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΔΙΧΑΣ
φημή· πρὸς τι δ’ ἱστορεῖς;
ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
οὕκουν σὺ ταύτην, ἢν ὑπ’ ἀγνοίας ὀρᾶς,
Ἰόλην ἐφασκεῖς Εὐρώτου στοράν ἄγειν;

ΔΙΧΑΣ
ποίοις ἐν ἀνθρώποις; τίς πόθεν μολὼν
σοι μαρτυρῆσε ταύτ’ ἐμοῦ κλύειν πάρα; ¹
ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
πολλοὶσιν ἀστῶν· ἐν μέσῃ Τραχινίων
ἀγορᾶ πολὺς σου ταύτα γ’ εἰσήκουσ’ ὀχλος.

ΔΙΧΑΣ
κλύειν γ’ ἐφασκοῦ: ταύτὶ δ’ οὐχὶ γίγνεται
δόκησιν εἰπεῖν κάξακρισίωσι λόγον.
ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
ποιαν δόκησιν; οὐκ ἐπώμοτος λέγων
δάμαρτ’ ἐφασκεῖς Ἡρακλεῖ ταύτην ἄγειν;

ΔΙΧΑΣ
ἐγὼ δάμαρτα; πρὸς θεῶν, φράσον, φίλη
δέσποινα, τόνδε τίς ποτ’ ἐστίν ὁ ξένος.
ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
ὅς σοῦ παρὼν ἠκούσεν, ὡς ταύτης πόθῳ
πόλις δαμεῖν πᾶσα, κοῦρ ἢ Λυδία
πέρσειν αὐτὴν, ἀλλ’ ὁ τῆςδ’ ἔρως φανεῖς.

ΔΙΧΑΣ
ἀνθρωπός, ὃ δέσποιν’, ἀποστήτω· τὸ γὰρ
νοσοῦντι ληρεῖν ἀνδρὸς οὐχὶ σώφρονος.
ΑΙΗΑΝΕΙΡΑ
μή, πρὸς σε τοῦ κατ’ ἄκρον Οἰναῖον νάπος
Δίου καταστράπτοντος, ἐκκλέψῃς λόγον.

¹ παρὼν MSS., Bothe corr.
TRACHINIAE

LICHAS
I know, and what of her?

MESSENGER
Said'st thou not she thou scarce dost know by sight
Was Iolè, the child of Eurytus?

LICHAS
To whom and when? What witness canst thou bring
To vouch for hearing such a tale from me?

MESSENGER
Scores of our townsfolk—all the multitude
That heard thee at the great Trachinean mote.

LICHAS
They may have said so, but the vulgar bruit
Of mere surmise is not strict evidence.

MESSENGER
‘Surmise,’ quotha! Did'st thou not say on oath,
‘I am bringing home a bride for Heracles’?

LICHAS
‘Bringing a bride?’ Dear lady, tell me, pray,
Who is this stranger?

MESSENGER
One who heard thy tale
How a whole city fell for love of her,
That 'twas the passion kindled by her eyes,
And not the Lydian queen who sacked the town.

LICHAS
Send him away, good lady; 'tis not wise
To bandy folly with a brain-sick fool.

DEIANIRA
Nay, by the god, I pray, who hurlts his bolts
On Oeta's wooded heights, hold nothing back;
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

οὐ γὰρ γυναικὶ τοὺς λόγους ἐρεῖς κακῇ
οὐδὲ ἦτις οὐ κάτοικε ταῦθρωταν, ὥστε
χαίρειν πέφυκεν οὐχὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἄει.

Εὑρωτὶ μὲν νῦν ὅστις ἀντανίσταται
πυκτῆς ὅπως ἐς χεῖρας, οὐ καλῶς φρονεῖ:
οὕτως γὰρ ἄρχει καὶ θεῶν ὅπως θέλει,
καμοῦ γεν. πῶς δὲ οὐ κατέρασ σῆς γ' ἐμοῦ;
ὡς εἰ τι τῶμῳ τ' ἀνδρὶ τήδε τῇ νόσῳ
ληφθέντι μεμπτός εἰμι, κάρτα μαίνομαι,
ἡ τήδε τῇ γυναικὶ τῇ μετανία
τοῦ μηδὲν αἰσχροῦ μηδ' ἔμοι κακοῦ τινος.

οὐκ ἔστι ταύτῃ. ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν ἐκ κείνου μαθῶν
ψευδεί, μάθησιν οὐ καλῶς ἐκμανθάνεις.

εὐ δ' αὐτὸς αὐτὸν ὅδε παίδευε, ὅταν
θέλῃς γενέσθαι χρηστός, ὥθησει κακός.

ἀλλ' εἰπὲ πᾶν τάληθές· ὡς ἐλευθέρω
ψευδεί καλείσθαι κῇρ πρόσεστιν οὐ καλῆ.

ὅπως δὲ λήσεις, οὐδὲ τοῦτο γύρνεται:
πολλοὶ γὰρ οὐς εἰρήκας, οἱ φράσουσ' ἐμοὶ.
κεὶ μὲν δέδοικας, οὐ καλῶς ταρβεῖς, ἐπεὶ
tο μή πυθέσθαι, τοῦτο μ' ἀλγύνειν ἀν' 
tο δ' εἴδεναι τὶ δεινόν; οὐχὶ κατέρασ
πλείστας ἀνήρ εἰς Ἡρακλῆς ἑγγεῖ δή;

κοῦπω τις αὐτῶν ἐκ γ' ἐμοῦ λόγου κακὸν
ἡμέγκατ' ὅδε ὅνειδος. ἤδε τ' οὐδ' ἄν εἰ
cάρτ' ἐντακείς τῷ νικηίν, ἐπεὶ σφ' ἐγὼ

φίλτρα δὴ μᾶλστα προσβλέψαι', ὡς
tο κάλλος αὐτὴς τὸν βίον ὁμόλογον,

καὶ γῆν πατρόιν οὐχ ἐκούσα δύσμορος
ἐπερσε κάδοῦλσεν. ἀλλὰ ταύτα μὲν

ῥείτω κατ' οὔρον. σοι δ' ἐγὼ φράξω κακὸν

πρὸς ἄλλων εἰναι, πρὸς δ' ἐμ' ἢψευδείν ἄει,
TRACHINIAE

To no ungenerous woman wilt thou speak,
But one that knows the inconstancy of men,
Who e'en in joys delight not in one kind.
The gamester who would pit himself 'gainst Love
Is ill advised. Love rules at will the gods,
And me—why not then others weak as I?
So were I mad indeed either to blame
My husband stricken with love's malady,
Or her the partner of his dalliance:
That brings to them no shame or wrong to me.
I have more sense. But if he taught thee thus
To lie, the lesson thou hast learnt is base;
Or if thy fraud is self-taught, thou art like
To prove most cruel, meaning to be kind.
Nay, tell me the whole truth. The name of liar
Is to the free-born man a deadly brand.
And think not that thy lying will not out,
For many heard thy tale and will inform me.
Art thou afraid of me? Thy fears are vain.
'Twould vex me much not to be told the truth;
To know it hurts not. Hath not Heracles
Had loves before (no mortal more than he)
And no one of them ever had harsh word
Or taunt from me; nor shall this maid, howe'er
She dotes, consumed with passion, on my lord.
Nay, my heart bled for pity seeing her
Whose beauty was her bane; poor innocent,
Who brought to wrack and bondage her own land.
All that is past and over, let it sail
Adown the stream of time. But O, be thou,
Whate'er thou art to others, true to me.
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πείθου λεγούση χρηστά, κού μέμψει χρώνι
γυναίκε τήδε κατ' ἐμοῦ κτήσει χάριν.

ΔΙΧΑΣ

ἀλλ', ὡς φίλη δέσποιν', ἐπεῖ σε μανθάνω
θυντὴν φρονούσαν θυντὰ κούκ ἀγκώμονα,
pán soi φράσω τάληθες οὐδὲ κρύψομαι.
ἐςτιν γὰρ οὕτως ὀστερ οὕτως ἐννέπει.
tαύτῃς ὁ δεινὸς ζυμερῶς πόθ᾽ Ἡρακλῆ
δεῖλθε, καὶ τῆςδ᾽ εἰνεχ᾽ Ἡ πολύφθορος
καθηρέθη πατρίφοις Οἰχαλία δόρει.
καὶ ταῦτα, δεῖ γὰρ καὶ τὸ πρὸς κεῖνον λέγειν,
οὔτ' εἴπει κρύπτειν οὔτ᾽ ἀπηρνήθη ποτὲ,
ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὸς, ὡς δέσποινα, δειμαίνων τὸ σῶν
μὴ στέρνον ἀλγύνομι τοῖσδε τοῖσ λόγοις,
ἡμαρτον, εἰ τι τῆνδ᾽ ἀμαρτίαν νέμεις.
ἐπεὶ γε μὲν δὴ πάντ᾽ ἐπίστασαι λόγον,
κεῖνον τε καὶ σὴν ἐξ ᾐσου κοινὴν χάριν
καὶ στέργε τὴν γυναίκα καὶ βούλου λόγους,
οὺς εἴπας ἐς τῆνδ᾽, ἐμπέδως εἰρηκέναι·
ὡς τὰλλ᾽ ἐκεῖνος πάντ᾽ ἀριστεῦων χερῶν
τοῦ τῆςδ᾽ ἔρωτος εἰς ἀπανθ᾽ ἦσσων ἐφυ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἀλλ' ὠδὶ καὶ φρονοῦμεν ὡστε ταῦτα δρᾶν,
κοῦτοι νόσου γὰ ἐπακτὸν ἐξαροῦμεθα,
θεοίσι δυσμαχοῦντες. ἀλλ᾽ εἰσὶ στέγῃς
χωρῶμεν, ὡς λόγῳ τ᾽ ἐπιστολᾶς φέρης,
ἀ τ᾽ ἀντὶ δῶρων δῶρα χρῆ προσαρμόσαι,
καὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἄγγης: κενὸν γὰρ οὐ δίκαια σε
χωρεῖν προσελθόντθ' ὁδε σὺν πολλῷ στόλῳ.
TRACHINIAE

CHORUS
Heed her, she counsels well, and thou shalt win
Her commendation soon, and thanks from me.

LICHAS
Nay, then, dear mistress, since I see thou hast
A human feeling for the infirmities
Of poor humanity, I will tell thee all
Frankly and fully. 'Tis as this man saith;
The overmastering passion that inspired
The soul of Heracles was for this maid,
And for her sake he sacked Oechalia,
Her desolate home. This much in his defence
I needs must add, he ne'er himself denied
Nor bade me hide it from thee. It was I,
Fearing to wound thee, lady, I who sinned,
If such concealment should be deemed a sin.
Now, lady, that thou know'st the tale in full,
For both your sakes—thine own no less than his—
Suffer this maiden gladly, and abide
By the kind words thou spak'st concerning her.
For he who never yielded to a foe,
By her was vanquished and by love laid low.

DEIANIRA
This way my thoughts too, as thou bidst, inclined,
Nor will I fondly aggravate my trouble
By warring against Heaven. Let us indoors,
That thou may'st bear a message to my lord,
And, as a fit return for gifts received,
My gift withal. It were not meet that thou
Should'st leave me empty-handed, having come
Accompanied by such a goodly train.

[Exeunt LICHAS and DEIANIRA.]
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μέγα τι σθένος ἃ Κύπρις ἐκφέρεται νίκας ἀεὶ.
καὶ τὰ μὲν θεῶν
παρέβαν, καὶ ὅπως Κρονίδαν ἀπάτασεν οὐ λέγω,
οὐδὲ τὸν ἐννυχον ᾿Αἰδαν
ἡ Ποσειδάωνα τινάκτορα γαίας
ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ τάνδ’ ἄρ’ ἄκοιτων
τίνες ἀμφύγοι κατέβαν πρὸ γάμων,
τίνες πάμπληκτα παγκόνιτά τ’ ἐξῆλθον ἀεθλ’
ἀγώνων;

ἀντ.

ὁ μὲν ἦν ποταμοῦ σθένος, ὑψίκερω τετραόρου
φάσμα ταύρου,
᾿Αχελώος ἀπ᾿ Οἰνιαδᾶν, ὁ δὲ Βακχίας ἀπὸ
ἡλθε παλάκτονα Θήβας
τόξα καὶ λόγχας ῥοπαλόν τε τινάσσων,
παιὸς Διός· οὗ τὸτ’ ἀολλεῖς
ἰσαν ἐς μέσον ἴμενοι λεχέων·
μόνα δ’ εὐλεκτος ἐν μέσῳ Κύπρις ῥαβδονόμει
ξυνοῦσα.

tότ’ ἦν χερός, ἦν δὲ τόξων πάταγος,
ταυρείων τ’ ἀνάμγια κεράτων·
ἡν δ’ ἀμφόπλεκτοι κλίμακες,
ἡν δὲ μετόπων ὀλόεντα
πλήγματα, καὶ στόνος ἀμφοῖν.

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TRACHINIAE.

chorus

Many a trophy of war the Cyprian bears away;
To tell of the triumphs she wins o'er gods I may not stay,
How the Olympian King and the Lord of the realms of night,
Yea, and the Shaker of Earth, Poseidon, owns her might.
Fitter theme for my song the well-matched champion pair,
Rivals who entered the lists to win the hand of the fair.
Dread the strife, and the sky with dust of battle was full.

(ant.)

One was a river-god, four-footed and horned like a bull,
Oeneadæ was his home and Acheloüs his name;
But from Thebæ, beloved of Bacchus, the other came,
With bow and with brandished club and javelins twain at his side,
Child of Zeus. So they met and fought for a winsome bride.
But with her umpire wand the Cyprian Queen was there,
Goddess who rules the fight and assigns the hand of the fair.

Hark! the thud of fisted blow,
Crash of horns and twanging bow,
Grapplings close-entwined, and now
Buttings of the hornèd brow;
And amid the storm, in tones
Faint and muffled, deep-drawn groans.
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ά δ' εὐώτις ἀβρὰ
tηλανγεῖ παρ' ὄχθω
ἡστο, τὸν ὅν προσμένουσ' ἀκοίταν.
ἀγὼν δὲ μαργαὶ 1 μὲν οἶα φράξω.
tὸ δ' ἀμφινείκητον ὁμμα νύμφας
ἐλεινὸν ἀμένει:
κάπο ματρὸς ἀφαρ βέβακεν,
ὡστε πόρτις ἔρήμα.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἡμος, φίλαι, κατ' οἰκον ὦ ἕνος θροεῖ
tαῖς αἰχμαλώτοις παιοῦν ός ἐπ' ἔξοδον,
τῆμος θυραῖος ἦλθον ός ὑμής λάβρα,
tα μὲν φράσουσα χερσον ἀτεχνησάμνη,
tὰ δ' οἷα πάσχω συγκατοικισθένει.
κόρην γάρ, οἷμαι δ' οὐκετ', ἀλλ' ἐξευθημένην,
παρεισδεδηγμαί φόρτου ὡστε ναύτιλος,
λαβητὸν ἐμπόλημα τῆς ἐμῆς φρενός,
καὶ νῦν δὖ οὖσαι μίμησοι μιᾶς ὑπὸ
χλαίνης ὑπαγκάλισμα. τοιάδ' Ἡρακλῆς,
ο πιστὸς ἡμῖν κάγαθὸς καλοῦμενος,
οἰκούρι ἀντέπεμψε τοῦ μακροῦ χρόνου.
ἐγὼ δὲ θυμοῦσθαι μὲν οὐκ ἐπίσταμαι
νοσούντι κείνο πολλὰ τήδε τῇ νόσῳ:
tὸ δ' αὖ ἕνυοικεῖν τῇ δ' ὀμοῦ τὸς ἀν γυνὴ
dύνατο, κοινωνούσα τῶν αὐτῶν γάμων;
ὅρω γὰρ ἦβην τὴν μὲν ἐρπουσαν πρόσω,
tὴν δὲ φθίνουσαν  ἧν ἀφαρπάξειν φιλεῖ
ὁφθαλμὸς ἀνθός, τῶν δ' ὑπεκτρέπει πόδα.
tαύτ' οὖν φοβοῦμαι μὴ τῶσι μὲν Ἡρακλῆς
ἐμὸς καλῆται, τῆς νεωτέρας δ' ἦνήρ.

1 ἐγὼ δὲ μάτηρ of MSS. is clearly corrupt. Jebb suggests,
but does not print, ἐγὼν δὲ μαργαῖ.
TRACHINIAE

But afar upon the sward
Sate the tender tearful maid,
While in doubt the battle swayed,
Musing who should be her lord.
Long she sate and wept forlorn,
Then, like heifer driven to stray,
Weanèd, from her dam away,
Sudden from her home was torn.

Enter DEIANIRA.

DEIANIRA

Friends, while our herald guest is in the house
Conversing with the captives, ere he leaves,
I have stolen forth to speak with you alone;
Partly to tell you what my hands have wrought,
And to command your sympathy. This maid—
No maiden she but mistress now, methinks—
I have harboured (as some merchant takes on board
An over-freight) to wreck my peace of mind.
And now we twain must share a common couch,
To one lord wedded. Such the recompense
That Heracles, whom I was wont to extol
As model of all virtue, makes me now
For all my faithful service as a wife.
Yet to be wroth with one like him, infect
With this love-plague, I cannot bring myself;
But then to share his bed and board with her—
What wife could bear it? She's the budding rose,
And I o'erblown and withering on the thorn.
Men cull the flower and when the bloom has fled
Fling it far from them. This then is my fear,
That Heracles will leave me the bare name
Of consort, while the younger is his wife.
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

αλλ’ ού γάρ, διασπερ εἰπον, ὀργαίνειν καλὸν
γυναῖκα νοῦν ἔχουσαν· ἥ δ’ ἔχω, φίλαι,
λυτήριον λάφημα,1 τῆδ’ ὑμῖν φράσω.

ἡν μοι παλαιὸν δῶρον ἀρχαῖον ποτὲ
θηρός, λέβητι χαλκέῳ κεκρυμένου,
δ’ παῖς ἐτ’ οὔσα τοῦ δασυστέρου παρὰ
Νέσσου φθίνοντος ἐκ φονῶν ἀνειλόμην,
ὅς τιν βαθύρρουν ποταμὸν Ἐὐνυν βροτοὺς
μισθοῦ πόρευε χερσίν, οὔτε πομπίμοις
κόπταις ἐρέσσων οὔτε λαίφεσιν νεώς.

ὅς καμέ, τοῦ πατρὸν ἕνικα στόλον
ἐλιν Ἡρακλεῖ τὸ πρῶτον εὐνος ἐστόμην,
φέρων ἐπ’ ὠμοίοι, ἕνικ’ ἡ μέσφ πόρφ,
ψαυει ματαίαις χερσίν· ἐκ δ’ ἡνι’ ἐγώ,
χω Ζηνὸς εὔθες παῖς ἐπιστρέφας χερῶν
ἡκεν κομήτην ἴον· ἔσ δ’ πλεύμονας
στέρνων διερροίζησεν. ἐκθυνήσκων δ’ ὁ θήρ
tοσοῦτον εἰπέ· παῖ γέροντος Οὐνέως,
τοσῶν ὤνῃσε τῶν ἐμῶν, ἔδω πάθη.

πορθμῶν, ὀθούνεξ’ ύστάτην σ’ ἐπεμψ’ ἐγὼ·
ἐάν γάρ ἀμφίθρεπτον αἴμα τῶν ἐμῶν
σφαγῶν ἐνέγκη χερσίν, ἡ μελαγχόλους
ἐβαψαν ἐνὸς θρῆμα Δερναίας ὑδρας,
ἐσται φρενός σοι τούτο κηλητήριον
tῆς Ἡρακλείας, ὡστε μῆτιν’ εἰσιδὸν
στέρξει γυναῖκα κεῖνος ἀντὶ σοῦ πλέον.

τοῦτ’ ἐννοήσασ’, ὤ φίλαι, δόμοις γάρ ἦν
κεῖνον θανόντος ἐγκεκλημένον καλῶς,
χυτώνα τὸν ἐβαψα, προσβαλοῦσ’ ὤσα
ζῶν κεῖνος εἰπέ· καὶ πεπείρανται τάδε.

1 λόγημα MSS., Jebb corr.
TRACHINIAE

But, as I said, 'tis folly to be wroth.  
I have a better way to ease my pain,  
A remedy that I will now reveal.  
Stored in an urn of brass I long have kept  
A keepsake of the old-world monster; this  
The shaggy-breasted Nessus gave to me  
While yet a girl, and from his wounded side  
I took it as he lay at point of death;  
Nessus who ferried wayfarers for hire  
Across the deep Evenus in his arms,  
Without the help of oar or sail.  I too,  
When first I went with Heracles, a bride  
Assigned him by my sire; I too was borne  
On his broad shoulders, and in mid-stream he  
Touched me with wanton hands.  I shrieked aloud,  
He turned, the son of Zeus, and straight let fly  
A winged shaft that, whizzing in the air,  
Pierced to the lungs.  Faint with approaching death  
The Centaur spake: "Daughter of Oeneus old,  
This profit of my ferrying at least,  
As last of all I've ferried, shall be thine,  
If thou wilt heed me.  Gather with thy hands  
The clotted gore that curdles round my wound,  
Just where the Hydra, Lerna's monstrous breed,  
Has tinged the barbed arrow with her gall.  
Thus shalt thou have a charm to bind the heart  
Of Heracles, and never shall he look  
On wife or maid to love her more than thee."  
So I bethought me of this philtre, friends,  
Which since the Centaur's death I had preserved  
Locked in a secret place, and I have smeared  
This robe as he directed while he lived.  
'My work is now accomplished.  Far from me
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

κακὰς δὲ τὸλμας μητ’ ἐπισταϊμὴν ἐγὼ μήτ’ ἐκμάθοιμι, τὰς τε τολμῶσας στυγῶ· φίλτροις δ’ ἐάν πως τήνδ’ ὑπερβαλώμεθα· τὴν παίδα καὶ θέλητοις τοῖς ἐφ’ Ἡρακλεῖ, μεμηχανῆται τοῦργον, εὐ τι μὴ δοκῶ πράσσειν μάταιον· εἰ δὲ μή, πεπαύσομαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ’ εἰ τις ἐστὶ πίστις ἐν τοῖς δρωμένοις, δοκεῖς παρ’ ἥμιν οὐ βεβουλεύσθαι κακῶς.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

οὔτως ἔχει γ’ ἡ πίστις, ὡς τὸ μὲν δοκεῖν ἐνεστὶ, πείρα δ’ οὐ προσωμὴν πω·

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ’ εἰδέναι χρὴ δρῶσαι, ὡς οὐδ’ εἰ δοκεῖς ἔχειν, ὅχοις ἀν γνῶμα, μὴ πειρωμένη.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἀλλ’ αὐτίκ’ εἰσὸμεσθα, τὸνδε γὰρ βλέπω θυραίον ἡδη· διὰ τάχους δ’ ἐλέυσεται. μόνον παρ’ ὑμῶν εὐ στεγοὶμεθ’· ὡς σκότῳ καὶ άισχρὰ πράσσης, οὔπω’ αἰσχύνῃ πεσεῖ.

ΔΙΧΑΣ

τῇ χρῆ ποείν; σήμαινε, τέκνον Οἰνέως, ὡς ἐσμέν ἡδη τῷ μακρῳ χρόνῳ βραδεῖς.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἀλλ’ αὐτὰ δὴ σοι ταῦτα καὶ πράσσω, Δίχα, δεῖς σὺ ταῖς ἐσωθὲν ἡγορῶ ἐξέναις, ὅπως φέρῃς μοι τόνδε ταναύφῃ πέπλουν, δόρυμ’ ἐκείνῳ ταῦτης τῆς ἐμῆς χερῶς. διδούς δὲ τόνδε φράζ’ ὅπως μηδεῖς βροτῶν κείνου πάροικθεν ἀμφιδύσθεται χροί, μή δ’ ὄψεται νῦν μήτε φέγγος ἡλίου.
TRACHINIAE

Be thought of evil witch-craft or desire
To learn it; wives who try such arts I hate.
But how by love-charms I may win again
My Heracles and wean him from this maid,
This I have planned—unless indeed I seem
O'erwanton; if ye think so, I desist.

CHORUS
If thou hast warranty thy charm will work,
We think that thou hast counselled not amiss.

DEIANIRA
No warrant, for I have not tried it yet,
But of its potency I am assured.

CHORUS
Without experiment there cannot be
Assurance, howsoever firm thy faith.

DEIANIRA
Well, we shall know ere long, for there I see
Lichas just starting; he is at the gate.
Only do you be secret; e'en dark deeds
If they be done in darkness bring no blame.
Enter LICHAS

LICHAS
What are thy orders, child of Oeneus, say;
Already I have tarried over long.

DEIANIRA
Whilst thou wert talking with the maids within
I have been busied, Lichas, with thy charge,
This robe; 'twas woven by my hands, a gift
That thou must carry to my absent lord.
Instruct him straitly, when thou givest it,
That he, and none before him, put it on;
And let no sunlight, nor the altar flame
Behold it, nor the fire upon his hearth,
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

μήθ᾽ ἔρκος ἱερὸν μὴν ἐφέστιον σέλας,
πρὶν κεῖνος αὐτὸν φανερὸς ἐμφανὸς σταθεὶς
dείξῃ θεοίσιν ἡμέρᾳ ταυροσφάγῳ.
οὕτω γὰρ ἡγημὴν, εἰ ποτ’ αὐτὸν ἐσ᾽ ὀδοὺς
ίδοιμι σωθέντ’ ἡ κλύομι πανδίκως,
στελείν χιτῶνι τῶδε καὶ φανεῖν θεοῖς
θυτῆρα καὶ φιλῷ καινὸν ἐν πεπλώματι.
cαὶ τών’ ἀποίσεις σήμ’, ὁ κεῖνος εὐμαθὴς
σφραγίδος ἔρκει τῶδ’ ἐπὸν μαθήσεται.1
ἀλλ’ ἔρπε, καὶ φύλασσε πρῶτα μὲν νόμον,
tὸ μὴ πιευμὲν πομπὸς ἃν περισσὰ δρὰν.
ἐπειθ’ ὅπως ἡ ἀρχὴ κείνον τὸ σοι
καμοῦ ξυνελθοῦσ’ ἔξ ἀπλῆς διπλῆς φανῆ.

ΔΙΧΑΣ

ἀλλ’ εἶπερ Ἐρμοῦ τῷ δια πομπεύω τέχνην
βέβαιον, οὐ τί μὴ σφαλῶ γ’ ἐν σοὶ ποτε,
tὸ μὴ οὐ τὸδ’ ἄγγος ὡς ἔχει δεῖξαι φέρων,
λόγων τε πίστιν ὃν λέγεις 2 ἐφαρμοσαί.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

στείχους ἂν ἤδη: καὶ γὰρ ἐξημίστασαι
tὰ γ’ ἐν δόμοισιν ὡς ἔχοντα τυγχάνει.

ΔΙΧΑΣ

ἐπισταμαί τε καὶ φράσω σεσωσμένα.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἀλλ’ οὐθά μὲν δὴ καὶ τὰ τῆς ξένης ὅρων
προσδέγματ’, αὐτὴν ὡς ἐδεξάμην φίλως.

ΔΙΧΑΣ

ὁστ’ ἐκπλαγήματο τούμον ἡδονὴ κέαρ.

1 ἐξ’ ὁμμα θῆσεται MSS., Billerbeck corr.
2 ἔχεισ MSS., Wunder corr.
TRACHINIAE

Till he stand forth in sight of all arrayed
For gods to see it, at some solemn feast.
For I had vowed, if ever I should see
Or hear for certain of his safe return,
To invest him in this newly-woven robe,
And so present him duly to the gods,
A votary for the sacrifice new-dight.
And as a token point him out this seal,
The impress of my signet-ring, that he
Will surely recognise.

Now go thy way,
And heed the rule of messengers, nor let
Thy zeal outrun thy orders, but so act
That thou may’st win a double meed of thanks
For service rendered both to him and me.

LICHAS

Call me no master of the mystery
Of Hermes, if in ought I trip or fail—
Deliver not this casket as it is,
And add in attestiation of the gift
Thy very words.

DEIANIRA

Thou may’st be going now.
How things are in the house thou know’st full well.

LICHAS

I know, and will report all safe and sound.

DEIANIRA

And thou canst tell him of the captive maid—
How kindly I received and welcomed her.

LICHAS

Yea, I was filled with wonder and delight.
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

τι δήτ’ ἂν ἄλλο γ’ ἐννέποις; δέδοικα γὰρ
μη πρὶ πέρα διόγου ἂν τὸν πόθον τὸν ἐξ ἐμοῦ,
πρὶν εἰδέναι τάκειθεν εἰ ποθοῦμεθα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὁ ναύλοχα καὶ πετραία στρ. α’
θερμὰ λουτρὰ καὶ πάγους
Οἶτας παραναίετόντες, οὐ τε μέσσαν Μηλίδα πάρ
λίμναν
χρυσαλακάτου τ’ ἀκτῶν κόρας,
ἐνθ’ Ἐλλάνων ἀγοραί
Πυλάτιδες κλέονται·

ὁ καλλιβόας τάχ’ ὑμῖν
ἀυλὸς οὐκ ἀναρσίαν
ἀχῶν καναχαὐ ἐπάνευσιν, ἄλλα θείας ἀντίλυρον
μούσας.
ὁ γὰρ Διὸς Ἄλκμήνας κόρος
σοῦται πάσας ἀρετᾶς
λάφυρ’ ἐχων ἐπ’ οἶκους.

διν ἀπόπτολιν εἰχομεν παντά, στρ. β’
δυνακαίδεκαμήνον ἀμένουσαι
χρόνου, πελάγου, ἱδρεῖς οὐδέν·
ἀ δὲ οἱ φίλα δάμαρ
τάλανων δυστάλανα καρδίαν
πάγκλαυτος αἰὲν ὀλλυτο·
νῦν δ’ Ἀρης οἰστρηθεῖς
ἐξέλυο’ ἐπίπονον ἀμέραν.

ἀφίκωτ’ ἀφίκωτο’ μὴ σταίη
πολυκώτων ὀχῆμα ναὸς αὐτῷ,
ἀντ. β’
TRACHINIAE

DEIANIRA

What further message have I? None, I fear;
To tell him of my longing were too soon,
Before I know that he too longs for me.

[Exeunt LICHAS and DEIANIRA.

CHORUS

Ye who on Oeta dwell, (Str. 1)
Or where the hot springs well
And down the cliffs their steaming waters pour;
Or by the inmost shore
Of Malis, where the golden-arrowed Maid
Haunts the green glade,
Where at thy Gates, far-famed from times of old,
Greeks counsel hold;

Soon shall the clear-voiced flute (Ant. 1)
Sweet as Apollo’s lute,
Echo amid your hills and vales again,
No sad funereal strain,
But hymeneals meet for gods to hear.
For now he draweth near,
The Zeus-born conqueror, Alcmena’s son,
His victory won.

Him twelve weary months we wait. (Str. 2)
Wondering what may be his fate;
And his true wife wastes away,
Pining at her lord’s delay.
But the War-god, with his foes
Wroth, has given at last repose.

Spread the sail and ply the oar, (Ant. 2)
Waft him, breezes, from the shore,
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

πρὶν τάνδε πρὸς πόλιν ἀνύσειε, νασιώτιν ἔστιαν ἀμείψας, ἑνθὰ κλῆξεται θυτήρος, οἶδεν μολον πανίμερος, τὰς πειθῶν παγχρήστω συγκραθεῖς ἐπὶ προφάσει φάρον.2

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
γυναῖκες, ὡς δέδοικα μὴ περαιτέρω πεπραγμέν' ὃ μοι πάνθ' ὁσ' ἀρτίως ἔδρων. ΧΟΡΟΣ
τί δ' ἔστι, Δηάνειρα, τέκνων Οἰνέως;

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
οὔκ οἶδ' ἀθυμῷ δ', εἰ φανήσομαι τάχα κακὸν μέγ' ἐκπράξασ' ἀπ' ἐλπίδος καλῆς. ΧΟΡΟΣ
οὐ δὴ τί τῶν σῶν Ἡρακλῆς δωρημάτων;

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
μάλιστά γ', δοστε μήποτ' ἄν προθυμων ἀδηλον ἐργον τῷ παρακλέσαι λαβεῖν. ΧΟΡΟΣ
didaxov, εἰ didaktōn, ἔξ ὅτου φοβεί.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
τοιούτων ἐκβεβηκένοι οἶνον, ἦν φράσω, γυναῖκες, ὑμᾶς 3 θαυμ' ἀνέλπιστον μαθεῖν. οὗ γὰρ τῶν ἐνδυτήρα πέπλου ἄρτιώς ἔχριον, ἀργής οἴος εὐέρον πόκος,4 τοῦτ' ἡφάνισται διάβορον πρὸς οὐδενὸς τῶν ἐνδον, ἀλλ' ἐδεστόν ἐξ αὐτοῦ φθινει,

1 πανίμερος MSS., Mudge corr.
2 θηρός MSS., Haupt corr. 3 ὑμῖν MSS., Jebb corr.
4 ἀργήτ' ... πόκο MSS., Lobeck corr.
TRACHINIAE

Where to Zeus, his vows all paid,
Sacrifices he hath made.
May the magic mantle fire
All his heart with fond desire,
Speed him to his true love's arms
Captive to her subtle charms.

Enter DEIANIRA.

DEIANIRA
Maidens, I fear I have been over bold
And ill advised in all I did of late.

CHORUS
What mean'st thou, Deianira, Oeneus' child.

DEIANIRA
I know not, but I tremble lest deceived
By fond hopes I have wrought a grievous harm.

CHORUS
Thou speak'st not of thy gift to Heracles?

DEIANIRA
'Tis so; and I would henceforth counsel none
To act in haste, unless the issue's clear.

CHORUS
Tell, if thou may'st, the cause of thy alarm.

DEIANIRA
My friends, a thing has come to pass, so strange
That, if I tell it, you will deem you hear
A miracle. The flock of wool wherewith
E'en now I smeared the festal robe ('twas plucked
From a white fleece) has disappeared, untouched
By aught within the house, but self-consuming
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

καὶ ψῆ κατ' ἀκρας σπιλάδος· ὡς δ' εἰδῆς ἂπαν,
τοῦτ' ἐπράξθη, μείζον' ἐκτενῶ λόγον.

έγω γὰρ ὁν ὁ θήρ με Κένταυρος, ποιών
πλευράν πικρᾶ γλωχίν, προνιδίδαξατο
παρῆκα θεσμῶν οὐδέν, ἀλλ' ἐσφόμην
χαλκῆς ὡπος δύσκυπτον ἐκ δέλτου γραφῆς.

καὶ μοι τὰδ' ἢν πρόρρητα καὶ τοιαῦτ' ἔδρων·
τὸ φάρμακον τοῦτ' ἀπορον ἀκτινὸς τ' ἄει
θερμῆς θάκτον ἐν μυχοῖς σφώνει ἐμὲ,
ἐως ὑν ἀρτίχριστον ἀρμόσασίμη ποιν.

κάδρων τοιαῦτα. γὰρ δ', ὅτι ἢ ἐργαστέον,
ἐχρισα μὲν κατ' οἶκον ἐν δόμοις κρυφῆ
μαλλὰ, σπάσασα κτησίου βοτοῦ λάχην,
κάθηκα συμπτύξας' ἀλαμπὲς ἥλιο
κοίλῳ χυμάστρω δῷρον, ἀστερ εἴδετε.

εἴσο δ' ἀποστείχουσα δέρκομαι φάτιν
ἀφραστον, ἀξύμβλητον ἀνθρώπῳ μαθεῖν.

τὸ γὰρ κάταγμα τυγχάνω ῥήσασα ποιν.

τῆς οἰδε, ὦ προύχριν, ἐσ μέσην φλόγα,
ἀκτίν' ἐσ ἡλιώτιν' ὡς δ' ἑθάλπετο,

ῥεῖ παῦ ἄθηλον καὶ κατέψηκται χθονί,
μορφῆ μάλιστ' εἰκαστὸν ὡστε πρίονος
ἐκβρῶματ' ἀν βλέψειας ἐν τομῇ ξύλου.

τοιῶδε κεῖται προπτετές' ἐκ δ' ἡγεί, ὅθεν
προύκειτ', ἀναζέουσι θρομβώδεις ἀφροί,
γλαυκῆς ὅπωρας ὡστε πίονος ποτοῦ
χυθέντος εἰς την Βαγχίας ἀπ' ἀμπέλου.

ὡστ' οὐκ ἔχω τάλανα ποι γνώμης πέσω·

ὁρῶ δ' ἐν ἐργον δεινὸν ἐξεργασμένην.

πόθεν γὰρ ἂν ποτ', ἀντὶ τοῦ θυρήκουν ὁ θήρ
ἐμοὶ παρέσχε εὐνοιαν, ὡς ἐθύνης ὑπερ;

οὐκ ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ τὸν βαλόντ' ἀποφθίσαι.
TRACHINIAE,

It wasted, melting on the flags, away.
But all that chanced I will relate in full.
The precepts given me by the Centaur-beast,
What time the barb was rankling in his side,
Fixed in my memory, like some ordinance
Graven on brass indelible, I kept.
All that he then commanded me I did:
He bade me hide in some dark nook the salve,
Remote from firelight and the sun's hot ray,
Till I had need to use it, freshly smeared.
And so I did, and, when the occasion rose,
I took a tuft of wool that I had plucked
From one of our home flock; therewith I spread
The unguent in my chamber privily;
Then folded and within its coffer laid,
Safe from the sunlight, as ye saw, my gift.
But as I passed indoors behold a sight
Portentous, well nigh inconceivable.
It chanced that I had thrown the hank of wool
Used for the smearing into the full blaze
Of sunlight; with the gradual warmth dissolved
It shrunk and shrivelled up till naught was left
Save a fine powder, likest to the dust
That strews the ground when sawyers are at work—
Mere dust and ashes. But from out the spot
Where lay the strewments clotted froth upwelléd,
As when the spilth of Bacchus, from the grapes
New pressed and purple, on the ground is poured.
Thus I for trouble know not where to turn,
And only see a fearful thing I have done.
Why should the dying Centaur then have shown
Regard for me, the author of his death?
Impossible! no, he was cozening me,
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

χρήζων έθελγε μ'. διν ἐγὼ μεθύστερον, ὅτε οὐκέτ' ἄρκει, τὴν μάθησιν ἀρνυμαι. μόνη γὰρ αὐτὸν, εἰ τι μὴ θεοσομαί γνώμης, ἐγὼ δύστηνος ἕξαποθεροῦ. τὸν γὰρ βαλόντω' ἀτρακτὸν οἶδα καὶ θεὸν Χείρωνα πημήναντα, χολυπερ δὲν θίγη, φθείρει τὰ πάντα κνώδαλ'. ἐκ δὲ τοῦδ' ὅδε σφαγῶν διελθὼν ἴδος αἵματος μέλαι πῶς οὐκ ὅλει καὶ τὸνδε; δόξῃ γοῦν ἐμῇ. καῖτοι δεδοκται, κεῖνος εἰ σφαλήσεται, ταῦτα σὺν ὀρμή καὶ συνθανεὶν ἀμα. ξῆν γὰρ κακῶς κλύουσαν οὐκ ἀνασχετὸν, ἦτις προτιμᾶ μὴ κακὴ πεφυκέναι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ταρβεῖν μὲν ἔργα δεῖν ἀναγκαίως ἔχει, τὴν δ' ἐλπίδ' οὔ χρὴ τῆς τύχης κρίνειν πάροι.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν τοῖς μὴ καλοῖς βουλεύμασιν οὐδ' ἐλπίς, ἦτις καὶ θράσος τι προξενεῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἄμφι τοῖς σφαλείσι μὴ ἕκουσιας ὅργῃ πέτειρα, τῆς σε τυγχάνειν πρέπει.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

τοιαύτα δ' ἄν λέξεις εἰλήτοι στὸ λογισκόν, ἀλλ' ὡς μηδὲν ἔστ' οἶκοι βαρύ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

σιγάν ἄν ἀρμόζειν σε τὸν πλεῖω λόγον, εἰ μὴ τι λέξεις παιδί τῷ σαυτῇς· ἐπεὶ πάρεστι, μαστήρ πατρὸς ὅσ πρὶν φῶτο.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

ὡ μήτερ, ὡς ἄν ἐκ τριῶν σ', ἐν εἰλόμην, ἢ μηκέτ' εἶναι ζῶσαν, ἢ σεσωμένη

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TRACHINIAE

And sought, through me, his slayer to undo.
Too late, too late, when knowledge naught avails,
My eyes are opened. I alone am doomed,
(Unless my fears prove false) to slay my lord.
I know the shaft that slew the Centaur scathed
E'en Cheiron, though a god, and any beast
It touches dies. So the black venomed gore
That from the wound of Nessus oozed must slay
Likewise my lord. Thus I, alas, must think.
Howbeit I am resolved, if fall he must,
The selfsame stroke of fate shall end my days.
What woman noble born would dare live on
Dishonour'd when her fair repute is gone?

CHORUS
'Tis true dread perils threaten; yet 'twere well
To cherish hope till the event be known.

DEIANIRA
They who have counselled ill cannot admit
One ray of hope to fortify their soul.

CHORUS
Men will not look severely on an act
Unwittingly committed, as was thine.

DEIANIRA
With a good conscience one might urge this plea
Which ill becomes a partner in the crime.

CHORUS
'Twere better to refrain from further speech,
Unless thou wouldst address thy son; for he
Who went to seek his father is at hand.

Enter HYLLUS.

HYLLUS
Mother, I would that of three wishes one
Were granted me—that thou wert lying dead,
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

άλλου κεκλήσθαι μητέρ’, ἢ λόφους φρένας τῶν νῦν παρουσῶν τῶν ἀμείψασθαι ποθεν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
τί δ’ εστίν, ὦ παί, πρὸς γ’ ἐμοί στυγούμενον;

ΤΑΛΟΣ
τὸν ἀνδρὰ τὸν σὸν ἵσθι, τὸν δ’ ἐμὸν λέγω πατέρα, κατακτείνασα τῇδ’ ἐν ἡμέρα.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
οίμοι, τίν’ ἐξήνεγκας, ὦ τέκνου, λόγον;

ΤΑΛΟΣ
δὲν οὐχ οἶδα τε μὴ οὔ τελεσθῆναι τὸ γὰρ φανθεν τίς ἀν δύνατ’ ἀν ἀγένητον ποιεῖν;

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
πῶς εἴπας, ὦ παί; τὸ παρ’ ἀνθρώπων μαθὼν ἄξηλον οὔτως ἔργον εἰργάσθαι με φῆς;

ΤΑΛΟΣ
αὐτὸς βαρεῖαν ξυμφόραν ἐν ὅμμασιν πατρὸς διδορκώς κοῦ κατὰ γλώσσαν κλύων.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
ποῦ δ’ ἐμπελάξεις τὰνδρὶ καὶ παρίστασαι;

ΤΑΛΟΣ
ei χρὴ μαθεῖν σε, πάντα δὴ φωνεῖν χρεών. ὅθ’ εἰρπτε κλεινήν Εὐρύτου πέρσας τόλιν, νίκης άγων τροπαῖα κάκροθίνα, ἀκτῆς τις ἀμφίκλυστος Εὐβοίας άκρον Κηναιόν ἔστων, ἐνθα πατρῷ Δι’ βωμοὺς όριζει τεμενίαν τε φυλλάδα· ὅ νυν τὰ πρῶτ’ ἐσείδον ἀσμενὸς πόθω. μέλλοντι δ’ αὐτῷ πολυθύτων τεύχειν σφαγὰς κήρυξ ἀπ’ οἰκόν ἵκετ’ οἰκείος Λίχας, τὸ σὸν φέρων δώρημα, θανάσιμον πέπλουν.
TRACHINIAE

Or, if alive, no mother wert of mine,  
Or that thy nature might be wholly changed.

DEIANIRA  
What dost thou so abhor in me, my son?

HYLLUS  
Woman, I tell thee thou hast done to death  
Thy husband, yea my sire, this very day.

DEIANIRA  
Ah me! what word hath passed thy lips, my son?

HYLLUS  
A word that of fulfilment shall not fail;  
For what is done no mortal can undo.

DEIANIRA  
What say'st thou, son? What warranty is thine  
To charge me with a deed so terrible?

HYLLUS  
The evidence of my eyes; myself I saw  
My father's anguish; 'tis no hearsay charge.

DEIANIRA  
Where didst thou find him? wast thou by his side?

HYLLUS  
As thou must hear it, I must tell thee all.  
He had sacked the famous town of Eurytus,  
And thence returning rich with spoils of war,  
Had reached a sea-washed promontory, named  
Cenaeum, where Euboea fronts the north.  
There I first met him as he marked the bounds  
Of altars and a sacred grove to Zeus,  
His father. At the sight my heart was glad.  
He stood addressed to offer sacrifice,  
A lordly hecatomb, when Lichas came,  
His own familiar herald, bringing him
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

δὲν κείνος ἐνδύσα, ὡς σὺ προωρεῖσο, ταυροκτονεῖ μὲν δόδεκ’ ἐντελεῖς ἔχων
λείας ἀπαρχὴν βοῦς· ἀτὰρ τὰ πάνθ’ ὀμοῦ
ἐκατὸν προσῆγε συμμυγὴ βοσκήματα.
καὶ πρῶτα μὲν δείλαιος ἵλεος φρενί,
κόσμῳ τε χαίρων καὶ στολῆ, κατηχετο’
ὅπως δὲ σεμνῶν ὀργίων ἐδαιέτο
φλῶξ αἰματηρὰ κατὸ πιείρας δρυός,
ἴδρως ἀνήει χρωτί, καὶ προσπτύσσεται
πλευραίσιν ἄρτικολλος, ὡστε τέκτονος,
χυτὸν ἀπαν κατ’ ἄρθρον’ ἤλθε δ’ ὦστέων
ἀδαμφὸν ἀντίσπαστος· εἶτα φοινίας
ἐχθρᾶς ἐχίδνης ὦς ὦς ἐδαιόντω.
ἐνταῦθα δὴ ἥβοσε τὸν δυσδαίμονα
Λίχαν, τὸν οὐδὲν αἰτιον τοῦ σοῦ κακοῦ,
pολιάς ἐνέγκω τόνδε μηχαναῖς πέπλουν
ό δ’ οὐδὲν εἰδῶς δύσμορος τὸ σὺν μόνης
dώρημ’ ἠλέξει, ὡσπερ ἦν ἐσταλμένον.
κάκεινος ὦς ἥκουσε καὶ διώδυνος
σπαραγμὸς αὐτοῦ πλευμώνων ἀνθήψατο,
μάρφας ποδὸς φιλ’, ἄρθρον ἄνυγκτεται,
μετεπὶ πρὸς ἀμφίκλυστον ἐκ πόντου πέτραν
κόμης δὲ λευκὼν μελετὸν ἐκραίνει, μέσου
κρατός διασπαρέντος αἰματός θ’ ὀμοῦ.
ἀπας δ’ ἀνυφήςθησεν οἶμωγῆ λεώς,
τοῦ μὲν νοσοῦντος, τοῦ δὲ διαπεπραγμένου
κούδεις ἐτόλμα τάνδρος ἀντίον μολεῖν.
ἐσπάτο γὰρ πέδουδε καὶ μετάρασθος,
βοῶν, ἱύζων· ἀμφὶ δ’ ἠκτύπουν πέτραι,
Δοκρῶν τ’ ὀρειοὶ πρώνες Εὐβοίας τ’ ἀκραί.
TRACHINIAE

Thy gift, the fatal robe; he put it on
According to thy precept; then began
His sacrifice with twice six faultless bulls,
The firstfruits of the booty; but in all
A hundred victims at the altar bled.
At first, poor wretch, with joyous air serene,
Proud of the pomp and ceremony, he prayed;
But when the blood-red flame began to blaze
From the high altars and the resinous pine,
A sweat broke out upon him; and the coat
Stuck to his side, and clung to every limb,
Glued, as it were, by some skilled artisan.
A pricking pain began to rack his bones.
Soon the fell venom of the hydra dire
Worked inward and devoured him. Thereupon
He called for Lichas, who, poor witless wretch,
Had in thy guilt no part or lot, demanding
Who hatched the plot and why he had brought the robe.
The youth unwitting said it was thy gift,
Thine only, and delivered as 'twas sent.
While yet he listened a convulsive spasm
Shot through his lungs. He caught him by the foot,
Just at the ankle joint, and hurled him full
Against a rock out-jutting from the foam:
His skull was crushed to fragments, and his hair
Bedaubed with blood and flecked with scattered brains.
A cry of horror from the crowd arose
At sight of one distraught and one struck dead;
And no man dared to face him, for the pain
Now dragged him down, now made him leap in air,
While with his yells and screams the rocks resound
From Locrian headlands to Euboean capes.
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ἔπει δ’ ἠπείπτε, πολλὰ μὲν τάλας χθονὶ κρύπτων ἐαυτῶν, πολλὰ δ’ οἰμωγῆ βοῶν, τὸ δυσπάρευνον λέκτρον ἐνδατοῦμενος σοῦ τῆς ταλαίνης, καὶ τὸν Οἰνέως γάμον ὦν κατακτήσατο λυμαντὴν βίου, τὸν’ ἐκ προσέδρου λυγνὸς διάστροφον ὀφθαλμὸν ἀρας εἰδὲ μ’ ἐν πολλῷ στρατῷ δικρυπποῦντα, καὶ με προσβλέψας καλεῖ ὦ παῖ, πρόσελθε, μὴ φύγῃς τούμον πακόν, μὴ δ’ εἰ σε χρῆ θανόντι συνθανεῖν ἐμὸν· ἀλλ’ ἄρον ἔξω, καὶ μάλιστα μὲν με θέες ἐνταῦθ’ ὅπου με μὴ τίς ὑπεταίρωτοι εἰ δ’ οἰκτὸν ἱσχεις, ἀλλὰ μ’ ἐκ γε τῆς ἡγήσας κόμμων ὡς τάχιστα, μηδ’ αὐτὸν θάνω. τοσαύτη ἐπισκήψασθος, ἐν μέσῳ σκάφει θέντες σφε πρὸς γῆν τῇ ἐκέλεσάμεν μόλις βρυχώμενον σπασμοῖς· καὶ νῦν αὐτίκα ἢ γιὼν ἐσόψεσθ’ ἡ τεθυκτὸ ἄρτως. τοιαύτα, μήτερ, πατρὶ βουλεύσας’ ἐμῶ καὶ δρῶσ’ ἐλήφθης, ὦν σε ποίημος Δίκη τίσατ’ Ἐρυνής τ’. εἰ θέμες δ’, ἐπεύχομαι θέμες δ’, ἐπεὶ μοι τὴν θέμων σὺ προύβαλες, πάντων ἄριστον ἄνδρα τῶν ἐπὶ χθονὶ κτείνασ’ ὁποῖον ἄλλον οὐκ ὑπει ποτέ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τι σίγ’ ἀφέρπεις; οὖ κάτοισθ’ οἴθοινεκα ξυνηγορεῖς συγώσα τῷ κατηγόρῳ;

ΤΔΟΣ

ἐὰν’ ἀφέρπεις, οὖρος ὀφθαλμὸν ἐμὸν αὐτῇ γένοιτ’ ἀπώθεν ἐρπούσῃ καλὸς. ὤγκον γὰρ ἄλλως ὄνοματος τι δεῖ τρέφειν

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TRACHINIAE

But when his agony had spent itself—
Now writhing prone, now making loud lament,
With curses on his marriage bed and thee,
The bride he won from Oeneus for his bane—
From out the cloud of smoke that compassed him
He wildly gazed and spied me in the throng
Weeping, and fixed his eye on me and spake:
"Come hither, boy, shun not my misery,
E'en if my son must share his father's death,
But bear me hence and set me, if thou wilt,
Where none shall see me more, no matter where;
Or if thou hast no heart for this, at least
Ferry me quickly hence, lest here I die."
So he enjoined. We laid him on the deck
In torment, groaning loud; and presently
Ye shall behold him living or just dead.

Such, mother, is the evil 'gainst my sire
That thou hast planned and wrought. Thy guilt is
plain:
May Vengeance and the Erinys visit thee!
So pray I, if 'tis right, and right it is,
For I have seen thee trample on the right,
Slaying the noblest man who ever lived,
Whose peer thou never shalt behold again.

[Exit DEIANIRA.

CHORUS

Why dost thou steal away thus silently?
Such silence sure is eloquent of guilt.

HYLLUS

Let her depart and speed before the gale
Out of my sight. Why should the empty name
Of mother henceforth swell her vanity,
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

μητρφων, ἢτις μηδέν ὡς τεκόνσα δρα; ἀλλ' ἐρπέτω χαίρουσα· τὴν δὲ τέρψιν ἢν τῶμη δίδωσι πατρί, τὴνδ' αὐτὴ λάβοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ιδ' ὕλων, ὁ παῖδες, προσέμεξεν ἀφαρ στρ. α'. τοῦπος τὸ θεοπρόπον ἡμῖν τὰς παλαιφάτου προνοίας, ὃ τ' ἐλακεν, ὅποτε τελεομηνος ἐκφεροι δωδέκατος ἁρτος, ἀναδοχαν τελειν πόνων τῷ Δίῳ αὐτόπαιδι· καὶ τάδ' ὀρθῶς ἐμπεδα κατουρίζει. πῶς γὰρ ἂν ὁ μὴ λεύσων ἐτ' ἐτ' ἐπίτηδον πόνων ἕχοι θανῶν λατρείαν;

εἰ γάρ σφε Κενταύρου φοινα νεφέλα ἀντ. α' χρίει δολοποιῶς ἁνάγκα πλευρά, προστακέντως ἵνα, ἰν τεκετο θάνατος, ἐτρεφε' δ' αἰολος δράκων, πῶς δδ' ἂν ἀέλιον ἐτερον ἡ ταυνύν ἵδοι, δεινοτάτω ῥη σφετετακώς φάσματι; μελαγχαίτα δ' ἀμμιγα νιν αἰκίζει Νέσουν ὑποφόνια δολιόμυθα κέντρ' ἐπιξέσαντα.

στρ. β'

δν ἄδ' ἄ τλάμων ἄκονος μεγάλαν προορώσα δόμοισι θλάβαν νέων ἀἰσθούσαν γάμων τὰ μὲν αὐτὰ προσέβαλε, τά δ' ἀπ' ἀλλόθρου

1 Gleditsch inserts πόνων. 2 ἦτεκε MSS., Lobeck corr. 3 νέσου θ' ὑποφόνια δολιόμυθα MSS., Gleditsch corr. 4 ἀἰσθούσαν MSS., Nauck corr. 5 ὅβ τί MSS., Blaydes corr.

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TRACHINIAE

Who in her deeds shows naught of motherhood?
Let her depart in peace, and may she share
Herself the happiness she brings my sire!

CHORUS
Lo, maidens, in our eyes            (Str. 1)
Fulfilled this day
The word inspired of ancient prophecies.
Did not the god's voice say,
The twelfth year, when its tale of months is run,
Shall end his toils for Zeus's true-born son?
That promise doth not fail,
'Tis wafted on the gale.
Can he when once the light of life has fled
Be subject still to bondage 'mongst the dead?

(Ant. 1)

And if the mists of death enfold him now,
If the doom grips his heart,
Wrought by the Centaur's art;
How racked by venom bred
Of Death, on asp's blood fed,
How in the clutches of the Hydra, how
Can he survive to see to-morrow's sun,
When through each vein doth run
The leprous bane prepared
By the fell beast, black-haired
Nessus, his life to drain,
And vex him with tumultuous pain?

Of this our ill-starred queen,             (Str. 2)
All innocent, knew naught:
Only the curse to void, I ween,
Of a new bride she sought.
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

γνώμας μολόντ' ὀλεθρίαισι συναλλαγάις
ἡ ποὺ ὅλοα στένει,
ἡ ποὺ ἄδινὼν χλωράν
tέγγει δακρύων ἀχγαν.
ἀ δ' ἐρχομένα μοÎδα προφαίνει δολίαν
καὶ μεγάλαν ἀταν.

ἀντ. β'
ἐρρωγεῖν παγὰ δακρύων κέχυται νόσος, ὁ πόποι,
oiὸν ἀναρεὺς
οὐποὶ Ἦρακλέους ἀγακλειτὸν ἐπέμωλε πάθος
οἰκτίσαι.

ὡ ἑλαινὰ λόγχα προμάχου δορός,
ἀ τὸτε θοᾶν νύμφαν
ἄγαγες ἀπ᾿ αἰτεινᾶς
tάνδ᾽ Οἰχαλίας αἴχμα;
ἀ δ᾿ ἀμφίπολος Κύπρις ἀναυὸς φανερὰ
tῶνδ᾿ ἐφήνη πράκτωρ.

ΗΜΙΧΟΠΙΟΝ α'
πότερον ἐγὼ μάταιος, ἡ κλύω τινὸς
οἰκτοῦ δι᾽ οίκων ἀρτίως ὀρμωμένου;
tί φημι;

ΗΜΙΧΟΠΙΟΝ β'
ηχεῖ τις οὐκ ἄσημον, ἀλλὰ δυστυχῇ
kωκυτοῦ εἶσω, καὶ τι καινίζει στέγη.

ΗΜΙΧΟΠΙΟΝ

ξύνες δὲ
tήνδ᾿ ὡς κατηφῆς καὶ συνωφρυμένη
χωρεῖ πρὸς ἡμᾶς γραῖα σημανοῦσά τι.

1 Ἦρακλέους is clearly a gloss, and the true reading must remain conjectural.
2 ἄθης MSS., Blaydes corr.

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TRACHINIAE

Witless a stranger’s remedy she used.
How was her fond simplicity abused!
Too late her error doth she rue,
And pearly tears her eyes bedew:
Awe-stricken we await
The swoop of instant fate.

Our pent up tears outflow. (Ant. 2)
Ye gods! did e’er such blow
From his worst foes afflict our King before
As this fell plague? O bloodstained spear that bore
From proud Oechalia’s height
Stormed by the hero’s might,
A vanished bride, how clear
The Cyprian’s wiles appear!
Unseen, thy spear she steeled,
And now she stands revealed.

SEMI-CHORUS 1
Listen! I seem to hear—or do I dream?—
A cry of sorrow pealing through the house.
Heard you it?

SEMI-CHORUS 2
Yea, a despairing wail rings out within,
Distinct; the house has suffered something strange.

CHORUS
Mark ye that aged crone!
With what a cloud upon her puckered brow
She comes to bring us news of grave import!
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

οι παιδείς, οἱ ἄρ' ἦμιν οὐ σμικρῶν κακῶν ἦρξεν τὸ δώρον Ἡρακλεὶ τὸ πόμπιμον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τι δ', ὦ γεραιά, καινοποιηθὲν λέγεις;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

βέβηκε Δημάνειρα τὴν πανυστάτην ὄδῳν ἀπασῶν εἷς ἀκινήτου ποδός.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐ δὴ ποθ' ὡς θανοῦσα;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

πάντ' ἀκήκοας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τέθυηκεν ἡ τάλαινα;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

δεύτερον κλύεις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τάλαιν' ὀλεθρία τίνι τρόπῳ θανεῖν σφε φής;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

σχετλιώτατά γε πρὸς πράξεν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

εἶπε τῷ μόρφῳ, γύναι, ξυντρέχει.

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

αὐτὴν διηύςτωσε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τίς θυμὸς ἡ τίνες νόσοι τάνδ' αἰχμᾶι βέλεος κακοῦ ἐνυεῖλε; πως ἐμήσατο πρὸς θανάτῳ θάνατον ἀνύσασα μόνα;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

στονόεντος ἐν τομῇ σιδάρου.

1 αἰχμᾶι MSS., Hermann corr.
TRACHINIAE

Enter Nurse from the house.

Nurse
My daughters, what a crop of miseries
We are reaping from that gift to Heracles!

Chorus
What new misfortune, mother, hast to tell?

Nurse
Deianira has departed hence
On her last journey, yet not stirred a step.

Chorus
Thou canst not mean she is dead.

Nurse
My tale is told.

Chorus
Poor lady, dead!

Nurse
I say it once again.

Chorus
Alas, poor wretch! How came she by her end?

Nurse
O 'twas a gruesome deed!

Chorus
Say woman, how?

Nurse
By her own hand.

Chorus
What rage, what fit of madness,
Whetted the felon blade, how compassed she
This death on death, herself alone the cause?

Nurse
By the stroke of a dolorous sword.

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ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἐπείδες, ὃ ματαιά, τάνδε τὴν ὑβρὶν;
ΤΡΟΦΟΣ
ἐπείδον, ὡς δὴ πλησία παραστάτης.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
tὶς ἧν; πῶς; φέρε εἰπέ.
ΤΡΟΦΟΣ
αὐτὴ πρὸς αὐτῆς χειροποιεῖται τάδε.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
tὶ φωνεῖς;
ΤΡΟΦΟΣ
σαφὴν.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἐτεκεν ἐτεκε δὴ μεγάλαν
ἀ νεόρτος ἄδε νύμφα
δόμοισι τοῖσ' ἐρινύν.
ΤΡΟΦΟΣ
ἄγαν γε' μᾶλλον δ', εἰ παρούσα πλησία
ἐλευσότες οἴ' ἔδρασε, κάρτ' ἅν ἰκτισάς.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
καὶ ταῦτ' ἔτη τις χείρ γυναικεία κτίσαι;
ΤΡΟΦΟΣ
dεινῶς γε' πεύσει δ', ὡστε μαρτυρεῖν ἐμοί.
ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἦλθε δωμάτων εἰσω μόνη
καὶ παῖδ' ἐν αὐλαῖς εἰδὲ κοίλα δέμνα
στορυνύθ', ὡς ἄψωρρον ἀντίθη πατρί,
κρύψαο' ἑαυτὴν ἐνθα μή τις εἰσίδοι,
βρυχάτῳ μὲν βωμοῖς προσπίπτουσ' ὦτι
γένουτ' ἔρημοι, 'κλαίε δ' ὅργανων ὅτου
ψαύσειν οἷς ἐχρήτῳ δειλαίᾳ πάρος;
ἀλλή δὲ κάλλη δωμάτων στρωφωμένη,
TRACHINIAE

CHORUS
Saw'st thou the horror, beldam?

NURSE
I saw it; I was standing at her side

CHORUS
Saw what? what did she? speak!

NURSE
Herself upon herself she did the deed.

CHORUS
What dost thou say?

NURSE
Plain truth.

CHORUS
Verily this new bride
Hath borne, as the fruit of her womb,
A curse, a curse to the house.

NURSE
Too true; and had you been at hand to see,
The pity of it would have touched you more.

CHORUS
Could woman's hand perform so bold a deed!

NURSE
'Twas passing strange, but when ye hear the tale
Ye'll bear me out.

She went indoors alone,
And in the court she came upon her son
Preparing a deep litter wherewithal
To bear his sire back. Seeing him she fled,
And, crouching by the altar out of sight,
She groaned aloud, "O altars desolate!"
Then each familiar chattel in the house
She fingered tenderly, poor wretch, and wept.
Then roaming through the palace, up and down,
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

εἰ τοῦ φίλον βλέψειεν οἰκετῶν δέμας,
ἐκλαμεν ἡ δυστηνὸς εἰσορωμένη,
αὐτὴ τὸν αὐτῆς δαίμον ἀνακαλουμένη
καὶ τὰς ἀπαίδιας ἐς τὸ λουτρὸν οὐσίας. 1
ἐπεὶ δὲ τόν διὸ ἔληξεν, ἐξαίφνης σφ' ὅρῳ
tὸν Ἡράκλειον θάλαμον εἰσορωμένην.
κἀγὼ λαθραῖον ὄμμ' ἐπεσκιασμένη
φρούρουν ὅρῳ δὲ τὴν γυναῖκα δεμνίοις
tοῖς Ἡρακλείοισι στρωτὰ βάλλουσαν φάρη,
ὅπως δ' ἐτέλεσε τοῦτ', ἐπευθοῦσον ἀνώ
cαθέζετ' ἐν μέσουσι εὐνατηρίοις,
καὶ δακρύων ῥήξασα θερμὰ νάματα
ἔλεξεν ὧς λέξη τε καὶ νυμφεῖ ἐμά,
tὸ λουτρὸν ἤδη χαίρεθ', ὡς εἰ' οὖποτε
dέξεσθ' ἐτ' ἐν κοίταις ταῖσ' εὐνάτριαν.
tοσαύτα φωνήσασα συντόνω χερί
λύει τὸν αὐτῆς πέπλον, ἦς 2 χρυσήλατος
προύκειτο μαστῶν περοῦσ, ἐκ δ' ἐλώπισεν
πλευρὰν ἀπασαν ὑλένην τ' εὐώνυμον.
κἀγὼ δρομαία βάσ', ὀσυνπερ ἔσθενον,
tῷ παιδὶ φράξω τῆς τεχνωμένης τάδε.
kᾶν δ' τὸ κεῖσε δευρό τ' ἐξορμώμεθα,
ὁράμεν αὐτὴν ἀμφιπληγὴν φασγάνω
πλευρὰν ύφ' ἦπαρ καὶ φρένας πεπληγμένην.
идὼν δ' ὁ παῖς ὀμοίωσεν ἤγινω γὰρ τάλας
tοῦργον κατ' ὀργην ὡς ἐφάγειεν τόδε,
ὑψ' ἐκδιδαχθεὶς τῶν κατ' ὀζκὸν οὐνεκα
ἀκούσα πρὸς τοῦ θηρὸς ἔρξείεν τάδε.
kάνταῦθ' ὁ παῖς δύστηνος οὖτ' ὀδυρµάτων

1 The line is corrupt. The translation follows Jebb's conjecture, καὶ τῆς ἐπ' ἄλλοις ἐς τὸ λοιπὸν οὐσίας,
2 ἦς MSS., Wakefield corr.
TRACHINIAE

As one or other of her maids she met,
She gazed upon her long and wept again,
Bewailing her own fortunes and the house
Henceforth condemned to serve an alien lord.
Then she was silent, and I saw her speed
Within the bed chamber of Heracles.
I from a coign of spial, unobserved
Watched, and I saw her snatch a coverpane
And fling it on the bed of Heracles.
That done, she leapt upon it, sat her down
And loosed the floodgate of hot tears and spake:
"O bridal bed and chamber, fare ye well,
A long farewell; never again shall ye
Lap me to slumber in your soft embrace!"
That was her last word; with a sudden wrench
She tore the gold-wrought brooch above her breast
And laid her left arm and her side all bare.
I ran at once, as fast as age allowed,
In haste to warn the son of her intent.
Alack! between my going and return,
In that brief space, she had driven a two-edged sword
Home through the midriff to the very heart.

He saw and shrieked heart-stricken at the sight,
Knowing his wrath had goaded her to death.
For all too late from those about the queen
He learned that she in utter innocence
Had done according to the Centaur's word.
Since then, poor boy, his misery has no end:
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ἐλείπετ' οὐδέν, ἀμφὶ νων γοώμενος,
οὔτ' ἀμφιπίπτων στόμασιν, ἀλλὰ πλευρόθεν
πλευρὰν παρεῖς ἐκεῖτο πόλλ' ἀναστένων,
ὡς νων ματαίως αἰτία βάλοι κακῆ,
κλαίων ὦθούνεκ' ἐκ δύοιν ἔσοιδ' ἀμα,
πατρός τ' ἐκείνης τ', ὠρφανισμένος βίον.
τοιαύτα τάνθάδ' ἐστίν: ὡστ' εἰ τις δύο
ἡ καὶ τι πλείονος τ' ἡμέρας λογίζεται,
ματαίος ἐστίν: οὐ γὰρ ἐσθ' ἡ γ' αὐριον,
πρὶν εὐ πάθῃ τις τὴν παροῦσαν ἡμέραν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πότερα πρότερον ἐπιτετένω,
πότερα μέλεα ἡ περαιτέρω,
δύσκρητ' ἐμοιγε δυστάνῳ.

τάδε μὲν ἔχομεν ὅραν δόμοις,
τάδε δὲ μένομεν ἐπ' ἐλπίσιν
κοινὰ δ' ἔχειν τε καὶ μέλλειν.

εἴθ' ἀνεμόσσα τις
γένοντ' ἐπουροφός ἐστιῶτις αύρα,
ἡτις μ' ἀποκισίειν ἐκ τόπων, ὡσπος
τὸν Δίον ἀλκίμον γόνο
μὴ ταρβαλέᾳ θάνοιμι
μοῦνον εἰσίδους' ἀφαρ
ἐπεὶ ἐν δυσαπαλلاκτοις ὀδύναις
χωρεῖν πρὸ δόμων λέγουσιν
ἀσπετῶν τι θαῦμα.

ἀγχοῦ δ' ἄρα κοῦ μακράν
προύκλαιον, ὡξύφωνος ὡς ἀγδόν.

1 καὶ πλείους τις MSS., Dindorf corr.
2 τέλεα MSS., Musgrave corr. 3 didś MSS., Nauck corr.
TRACHINIAE

He mourned for her with sighs and sobs and groans,
He kissed her lips, he clasped her in his arms,
And prone beside her railed against himself:
"By my foul slander have I stricken her,"
He cried, "and now am I bereaved of both,
Of father and of mother, in one day."
So fares it with us. And if any man
Counts on the morrow, or on morrows more,
He reckons rashly. Morrow is there none,
Until to-day its course has safely run.

CHORUS
Which first of woes, which next, (Str. 1)
Wherewith my soul is vext,
To wail, I am perplexed;

One here accomplished, (Ant. 1)
One hanging o'er my head,
One as the other dread.

O that a gale might suddenly upspring (Str. 2)
To waft me out of sight,
Lest when the Zeus-born hero home they bring,
I die of panic fright.
E'en now, they say, in pains no leech can quell,
Home is he borne, O piteous spectacle!

Ah, not far off, but nigh, (Ant. 2)
The woe that stirred my cry,
A boding wail
As of some shrill-voiced nightingale.

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ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ξένων γὰρ ἐξόμιλος ἦδε τις βάσις.
πὰ δ᾽ αὐτ φορεὶ νυν; ὡς φίλου
προκηδομένα βαρεῖαν
ἀψοφον φέρει βάσιν.
αιαί, ὥδ᾽ ἀναύδατος φέρεται.
τὴ χρὴ θανόντα νυν ἢ καθ᾽
ὑπνον ὑπτα κρίναι;

ΤΑΔΟΣ
οἴμοι ἐγὼ σοῦ,
πάτερ, οἴμοι ἐγὼ σοῦ μέλεος.
τὶ πάθω; τὶ δὲ μήσομαι; οἴμοι.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
σίγα, τέκνον, μὴ κινήσῃς
ἀγρίαν ὀδύνην πατρὸς ὀμόφρονος.
ζῇ γὰρ προπετῆς; ἀλλ᾽ ἵσχε δακῶν
στόμα σοῦ.

ΤΑΔΟΣ
πῶς φῆς, γέρον; ἢ ἥ; βάρος ἀπλετον· ἐμέμονεν φρῆν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὁ Ζεῦ,
ποὶ γὰς ἦκω; παρὰ τοὺς βροτῶν
κεῖμαι πεποιημένοις ἀλλήλοις
ὀδύναις; οἴμοι μοι ¹ ἐγὼ τλάμων.

ἡ δ᾽ αὐ μιᾶρα βρύκει. φεῦ.

¹ Brunck adds μοι.
TRACHINIAE

Lo a foreign train appear,
And they move with muffled tread,
Mute as bearers of a bier.
Is it sleep, or is he dead?

Enter HYLLUS, an OLD MAN, and ATTENDANTS bearing
HERACLES on a litter.

HYLLUS
Ah woe is me,
Woe, father, woe for thee!
Alack! I am undone,
Help know I none.

OLD MAN
Hush, son, lest thou awake
The intolerable ache.
He lives, though nigh to death;
Hold hard thy breath.

HYLLUS
What, is he still alive?

OLD MAN
Hush, hush, lest thou revive
And waken from its fitful rest
The plague that racks his breast.

HYLLUS
Beneath this weight of misery
My spirit sinks; it maddens me.

HERACLES
O Zeus, where am I? who
These strangers standing by,
As tortured here I lie?
Ah me! the foul fiend gnaws anew.
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
άρ' ἐξήδῃ σ' ὄσον ἦν κέρδος
συγη κεύθειν καὶ μὴ σκεδάσαι
.τῶδ' ἀπὸ κρατὸς
βλεφάρων θ' ὑπνον;

ΤΑΛΟΣ
οὐ γὰρ ἔχω πῶς ἄν
στέρξαιμι κακὸν τὸδε λευσσόν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὁ Κηναία κρητῆς βωμῶν,
ιερῶν οἰαν οἰων ἐπὶ μοι
μελέω χάριν ἣνύσω· ὁ Ζεῦ.
οἰαν μ' ἀρ' ἔθουν λόβαν, οἰαν
ἡν μὴ ποτ' ἐγὼ προσιδεῖν ὦ τάλας
ὁφελον ὄσσους, τὸδ' ἀκῆλητον
μανίας ἄνθος καταδερχῆναι.
τὶς γὰρ ἀοιδός, τὶς ὁ χειροτέχνης
ἰατορίας, ὃς τὴν ἄτη
χωρίς Ζηνός κατακηλῆσει;
θαύμ' ἄν πόρρωθεν ἱδοίμην.

ἐ ὡς,
ἐάτε μ', ἐάτε με δύσμορον ύστατον,
ἐάθ' ύστατον εὐνάσθαι.₁

πά πά μον ψαύεις; ποὶ κλίνεις;
ἀπολείπεις μ', ἀπολείπεις.
ἀνατέτροφας ὡ τι καὶ μύσῃ.
ἠπταί μοῦ, τοτοτοὶ, ἢδ' ἀὐθ' ἔρπει. πόθεν ἔστ', ὡ 1010
πάντων ἔλλανων ἁδικῶτατοι ἀνέρες, οὐς δὴ

₁ ἐάτε με δύστατον εὐνάσασι MSS., Wunder corr.

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TRACHINIAE

OLD MAN
Did I not bid thee keep
Silence, nor scare the sleep
That over eyes and head
Awhile like balm was spread?

HYLLUS
Nay, how can I refrain
At sight of such grim pain?

HERACLES
O altar on Cenaean height,
How ill dost thou requite
My sacrifice and offerings!
O Zeus, thy worship ruin brings.
Accursed headland, would that ne'er
My eyes had seen thine altar-stair!
So had I 'scape this frenzied rage
No incantation can assuage.
Where is the charmer, where the leech,
Whose art a remedy could teach,
Save Zeus alone? If one could tell
Of such a wizard, 'twere a miracle.

O leave me, let me lie
In my last agony! (Str. 1)

Ye touch me? have a care!
Would turn me? O forbear!
To agony ye wake
The slumbering ache.
Once more it has me in its grip, the fiend comes on apace.
O Greeks, if ye be Greeks indeed, most faithless of your race!

(Str. 2)

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VOL. II.
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

πολλὰ μὲν ἐν πόντῳ κατὰ τε δρία πάντα καθαίρων ὀλεκόμαν ὁ τάλας, καὶ νῦν ἐπὶ τῷ τοῦ νοσοῦντι οὐ πῦρ, οὐκ ἔχος τις ὄνησιμον οὐκ ἐπιτρέψει;

ἐ ἐ', ἀντ. α'
oῦδ' ἀπαράξαι κράτα βίαν ἔθελε μολὼν τοῦ στυγεροῦ; φεῦ φεῦ.

ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΣ

ὁ παῖ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς, τοῦργον τόδε μείζον ἀνήκει ἡ κατ' ἐμῶν ῥώμαν· σὺ δὲ σύλλαβε, σοὶ γὰρ ἐτοίμα

ἐς πλέον ἡ δ' ἐμοὶ σφόξειν.2

ΤΑΛΔΟΣ

ψαύω μὲν ἔγωγε,
λαθίπτονοι δ' ὁδυνῶν οὐτ' ἔνδοθεν οὔτε θύραθεν ἔστι μοι ἐξανύσαι βίοτον· τοιαῦτα νέμει Ζεὺς.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὁ παῖ, ποῦ ποτ' εἶ; τάδε με τάδε με στρ. γ' πρόσλαβε κουφίσας. ἐ ἐ', ἰδ' δαῖμον.

θρόσκει δ' αὖ, θρόσκει δειλαία

ἀντ. β'

διολούσ' ἡμᾶς ἀποτίβατος ἀγρία νόσος.

ὁ Παλλᾶς Παλλᾶς, τόδε μ' αὖ λωβάται. ἰδ' παῖ, τὸν φύτορ' οἰκτίρας, ἀνεπίφθοιον εἰρυσον ἔγχος, παῖσον ἐμᾶς ὑπὸ κλῆδος· ἀκοῦ δ' ἄχος, ὑ μ' ἐχόλωσεν

σὰ μάτηρ ἄθεος, τὰν ὅδ' ἐπίδοιμι πεςοῦσαν αὕτως, ὅδ' αὐτώς ὡς μ' ἔλησεν. ὁ γλυκὺς' Αἰδας, 1040

1 βίον MSS., Wakefield corr.
2 σοὶ τε γὰρ δρᾶ τις ἐπιλευν MSS., Jebb corr.
TRACHINIAE

For you I laboured hugely and spent myself, to free
Your land from ravening beasts of prey and monsters
of the sea;
And now in long drawn agony ye leave me to expire.
Will none of you deliver me with sword or kindly fire?

Would God that I were dead! (Ant. 1)
Will no man sever at a stroke this head?

OLD MAN
O help me, son of Heracles, for I am all too frail
To ease him; if thou lend thine aid, perchance we
may prevail.

HYLLUS
That will I, but nor thou nor I can rid him of the
pain
That haunts him to the very end. Such doom the
gods ordain.

HERACLES (Str. 3)
My son, where art thou? Raise me, hold me here,
here! (Ant. 2)
Ah me! once more the pest doth leap
Upon me and its fangs bite deep.

Pallas! 'tis torture. O for pity save
Thy father; son, unsheath an innocent glaive,
Pierce thy sire's heart and so the wild pain cure
That from thine impious mother I endure.
Thus may I see her die, like mine her end!


ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ἀντ. γ'

ὁ Δίὸς αὐθαίμων, εὐνασον εὐνασον μ' ἐκυπέτα μόρο τὸν μέλεον φθίσας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

κλύουσ' ἐφριξα τάσε συμφοράς, φίλαι, ἀνακτος, οίας οἶος ὁν ἔλαυνεται.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὁ πολλα δή καὶ θερμα κοι λόγοι 1 κακὰ καὶ χερσὶ καὶ νώτοις. μοχθήσας ἐγὼ κούπω τοιοῦτον οὐτ' ἀκοίτης ἢ Δίὸς προὔθηκεν οὖθ' ο στυγὸς Εὔρυσθεὺς ἐμοί, οὐν τὸδ' ἢ δολώπις Οἰνέως κόρη καθήψεν ὡμοίς τοῖς ἔμοις Ἐρινύων υφαντὸν ἀμφίβλητρον, ο διόλλυμαι. πλευραίσι γὰρ προσμαχήν ἐκ μὲν ἐσχάτας βέβρωκε σάρκας, πλεύμονός τ' ἀρτηρίας ῥοφεῖ ξυνοικοῦν, ἐκ δὲ χλωρὸν αἰμά μου πέπωκεν ἤδη, καὶ διέθφαρμαι δέμας τὸ πάν, ἀφράστῳ τῇ δε χειρωθεῖς πέθη. κοῦ ταῦτα λόγχη πεδίας, οὐθ' ο γηγενὴς στρατὸς Γιγάντων οὔτε θῆρεος βία, οὔθ' Ἐλλὰς οὔτε ἀγλωσσῶς οὔθ' ὅσην ἐγὼ γαίαν καθαίρων ἰκόμην, ἔδρασε πτώ.

γυνὴ δέ, θῆλυς φύσα 2 κοῦκ ἀνδρός φύσιν, μόνη με δὴ καθείλε φασγάνου δίκα. ὁ ταῖ, γενοῦ μοι παιδί ἐτήτυμος γεγοὶ, καὶ μὴ τὸ μητρὸς ὅνομα πρεσβεύσῃς πλέον. δός μοι χεροῖν σαῦν αὐτὸς ἐξ οἰκον λαβὼν ἐς χεῖρα τὴν τεκούσαν, ὡς εἰδῶ σάφα εἰ τούμον ἀλγεῖς μᾶλλον ἡ κείνης ὁρῶν λαβητόν εἴδος ἐν δίκη κακομενον.

τῇ', ὁ τέκνων, τόλμησον οἴκτιρόν τέ με

1 καὶ λόγψ MSS., Bothe corr. 2 ὁδα MSS., Nauck corr.
TRACHINIAE

(Ant. 3)

Brother of Zeus, kind Death, be now my friend;
Lay me to rest and swift deliverance send.

CHORUS

I shudder, friends, to hear this woeful plaint.
How great a hero, and how ill bestead!

HERACLES

Many and grievous, not in name alone,
The toils and burdens of these hands, these loins.
Yet trial like to this was never set me
By Heaven's Queen or grim Eurystheus' hate,
Such as the child of Oeneus, false and fair,
Hath fastened on my back, this hellish net
She wove to snare me, in whose coils I die.
It hugs me close, it eats into my flesh,
It sucks the channels of my breath, hath drained
My life-blood, and my whole frame wastes and withers,
Fast locked in these unutterable bonds.
And this my fall no warrior's lance hath wrought
Nor Giant's earth-born brood, nor savage beast,
Nor Grecian nor barbarian, nor the lands
Whither I fared to rid them of their pests;
No, but a woman, weak as all her sex,
Hath quelled me, single-handed and unarmed.
Son, show thyself thy father's son in deed,
Mine, not thy mother's—mother in name alone.
Hale her thyself, hand her thyself to me,
The wretch, that when she meets her righteous doom
I may make trial which sight moves thee more,
A mother's or a father's agony.
For pity's sake shrink not; to see me thus
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

πολλοίσιν οίκτρον, ὡστε ὅστε παρθένος
βέβρυχα κλαίων, καὶ τὸ δ᾽ οὐδ’ ἄν εἰς ποτὲ
tόνδ᾽ ἄνδρα φαίη πρόσθ᾽ ἰδεῖν δεδρακότα,
ἀλλ᾽ ἀστένακτος αἰέν εἰπόμην κακοῖς.

νῦν δ᾽ ἐκ τοιοῦτον θῆλυς θύρημα τάλας.
καὶ νῦν προσελθὼν στῆθι πλησίον πατρός,
σκέψαι θ᾽ ὅποιας τοις συμφορᾶς ὑπὸ
πέτονθα: δείξω γὰρ τάδ᾽ ἐκ καλυμμάτων.

ἰδοὺ, θεᾶσθε πάντες ἄθλων δέμας,
ὁράτε τὸν δύστην, ὡς οίκτρως ἔχω.

αἰαὶ, ἄ τάλας,
ἐθαλψεν ἄτης σπασμὸς ἀρτίως ὡδ᾽ αὐ,
δέξει πλευρῶν, οὐδ᾽ ἀγύμναστόν μ᾽ ἐὰν
ἐοικεν ἢ τάλαινα διάβορος νόσος.

οναξ Ἡλίξη, δέξαι μ᾽,
ὦ Δίὸς ἀκτίς, παίσον,
ἐνεψεισον, ὅναξ, ἐγκατάσκηψον βέλος,
πάτερ, κεραυνοῦ· δαίνυται γὰρ αὐ τάλιν,

ηὐθηκεν, ἔξωρμηκεν. ὃ χέρες χέρες,
ὦ νῶτα καὶ στέρν', ὃ φίλοι βραχίονες,

ὑμεῖς δὲ κεῖνοι δὴ καθέσταθ', οΐ ποτὲ ἢ
Νεμέας ἐνοικον, βουκόλων ἀλάστορα

λέοντ', ἀπλατον θρέμμα καπροσήγορον,
βία κατεφράσασθε, Δερμαίαν θ᾽ ὦδραν,
δύψη τ᾽ ἀμικτον ἱπποβάμονα στρατόν
θηρῶν, ὑβριστὴν ἄνομον, ὑπέροχον βίαν,
Ἑρμανάθιον τε θῆρα, τὸν θ᾽ ὑπὸ χθόνος

"Ἄιδον τρίκρανον σκύλακ', ἀπρόσμαχον τέρας,
δεώς Ἡχίδνης θρέμμα, τὸν τε χρυσέων

δράκοντα μήλουν φύλακ' ἐπ᾽ ἐσχάτους τόποις.

άλλων τε μόχθων μυρίων ἐγευσάμην,
κούδεις τροπαί ἐστησε τῶν ἐμῶν χερῶν.
TRACHINIAE

(‘Twould move to pity e’en a heart of stone)
Puling and weeping like a girl, unmanned.
So none can boast to have seen me, for till now
I took what’er befell me with a smile.
And now—’tis I who play the woman now.
Come closer, stand beside me; see, my son,
To what a pass ill fate hath brought thy sire.
Lo, I will lift the veil; look all of you
On this poor maimèd body, and declare
Was ever wretch so piteous as I.
Ah me!
Again the deadly spasm; it shoots and burns
Through all my vitals. Will it never end,
This struggle with the never-dying worm?
Lord of the Dead, receive me!
Smite me, O fire of Zeus!
Hurl, Father, on my head thy crashing bolt!
Again it burgeons, blossoms, blazes forth,
The all-consuming plague.

O hands, my hands,
Arms, breast and shoulders, once all puissant,
Are ye the same whose thews of old subdued
The scourge of herdsmen in his savage lair,
The Nemean lion, a beast untamable;
Slew the Lernaean hydra; overcame
That twy-form multitude, half man, half horse,
Rude, lawless, savage, unapproachable,
Unmatched in might; and the Erymanthian boar;
Tamed in the nether world the monstrous whelp
Of dread Echidna, the three-headed hound
Of Hades, and the dragon-guard who watched
The golden apples at the world’s far end.
These were my toils, and others manifold,
And none could ever boast of my defeat.
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

νῦν δ’ ὁδ’ ἄναρθρος καὶ κατερρακωμένος τυφλῆς ὑπ’ ἅτης ἐκπεπορθημαὶ τάλας,
ὅ τις ἀρίστης μητροὶ ὄνομασμένος,
ὅ τοῦ κατ’ ἄστρα Ζηνός αἰνηθεῖς γόνοι.
ἀλλ’ εὖ γέ τοι τόδ’ ἵστε, καὶ τοῦ μηθὲν ὃ
cαὶ μηθὲν ἔρπω, τήν γε δράσασαν τάδε
χειρόσωμαι κἀκ τὼνθε’ προσμόλοι μόνον,
ἰν’ ἐκδιδαχθῆ πᾶσιν ἀγγέλλειν ὅτι
καὶ ξῶν κακοῦς γε καὶ θανῶν ἐτισάμην.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὁ τλήμων Ἑλλάς, πένθος οἴον εἰσορῶ
ἐξουσαν, ἀνδρός τούδε γ’ εἰ σφαλῆσεται.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

ἐπεὶ παρέσχες ἀντιφωνήσαι, πάτερ,
συγὴρ παρασχὼν κλύθη μου, νοσῶν ὅμως,
αἰτήσομαι γάρ σ’ ὧν δίκαια τυγχάνειν.
δός μοι σεαυτόν, μὴ τοσοῦτον ὡς δάκνει
θυμῷ δύσοργος: οὐ γὰρ ἄν γνοίης ἐν οἷς
χαίρειν προθυμεῖ κἀκ ὦσις ἀλγείς μάτην.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

εἰπὼν ὁ χρήζεις λήξον· ὡς ἐγὼ νοσῶν
οὐδὲν ξυνίημ’ ὅν σὺ ποικίλλεις πάλαι.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

τῆς μητροὶ ἥκω τῆς ἐμῆς φράσων ἐν οἷς
νῦν ἐστιν ὡς θ’ ἡμαρτεν οὐχ ἐκουσία.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὁ παγκάκιστε; καὶ παρεμνήσω γὰρ αὖ
τῆς πατροφόντος μητρός, ὡς κλύειν ἐμέ;

ΤΑΛΟΣ

ἐχει γὰρ οὔτως ὡστε μὴ συγάν πρέπειν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐ δήτα τοῖς γε πρόσθεν ἡμαρτημένοις.
TRACHINIAE

Now out of joint, a thing of shreds I lie
Baffled by hands invisible, I who claim
A mother of the noblest, and for sire
The ruler of the starry heavens, Zeus.
But of one thing be sure, though I am naught
And cannot stir a step, yet even thus
I am a match for her who wrought my woe.
Let her but come that she may learn of me
This lesson to repeat to all, that I
Living and dying chastened all that's vile.

CHORUS

O hapless Greece, what mourning will be thine,
If thou must lose thy mightiest warrior?

HYLLUS

O father, since thy silence seems to invite
An answer, hear me, stricken though thou art.
I shall but ask what's fair; O be again
Thy true self, not by pain and rage distraught;
Else wilt thou never learn how vain thy thirst
For vengeance, how unjust thy bitterness.

HERACLES

Say what thou wilt and end; I am too sick
To catch the drift of all thy riddling words.

HYLLUS

'Tis of my mother I would tell thee—how
She fares, and how unwittingly she sinned.

HERACLES

O shameless reprobate, thou dar'st to name
Thy father's murderess, name her too to me?

HYLLUS

Her case is such that silence were unmeet.

HERACLES

Of her past misdeeds it was meet to speak.
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΤΑΛΩΣ

ἀλλ' οὐδὲ μὲν δὴ τοῖς γ' ἐφ' ἤμεραν ἔρεις.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

λέγ', εὐλαβοῦ δὲ μὴ φανής κακος γεγόσ.

ΤΑΛΩΣ

λέγω· τέθυνκεν ἀρτίως νεοσφαγής.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

πρὸς τοῦ; τέρας τοι διὰ κακῶν ἑθέσπισας.

ΤΑΛΩΣ

αὐτὴ πρὸς αὐτῆς, οὔδενος πρὸς ἐκτόπου.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οἶμοι· πρὶν ὡς χρήν σφ' ἔξ ἐμῆς θανεῖν χερὸς;

ΤΑΛΩΣ

κἀν σοῦ στραφεῖ θυμός, εἰ τὸ πᾶν μάθους.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

dεινοῦ λόγου κατήρξας· εἰπὲ δ' ἢ νοεῖς.

ΤΑΛΩΣ

ἀπαν τὸ χρήμ', ἤμαρτε χρηστὰ μωμένη.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

χρήστ', ὅ κάκιστε, πατέρα σὸν κτείνασα δρᾶ;

ΤΑΛΩΣ

στέργημα γὰρ δοκοῦσα προσβαλεῖν σέθεν ἀπήμπλαχ', ὡς προσείδε τοὺς ἐνδον γάμους.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

καὶ τὶς τοσοῦτος φαρμακεύς Τραχυίων;

ΤΑΛΩΣ

Νέσσος πάλαι Κένταυρος ἔξεπτεσέ νων τοὺς διέ φίλτρῳ τὸν σὸν ἐκμὴν πόθον.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἰοῦ ἱοῦ δύστηνος, σίκομαι τάλας· ὀλωλ' ὀλωλα, φέγγος οὐκέτ' ἔστι μοι.
TRACHINIAE

HYLLUS
And of her deeds this day, as thou wilt own.

HERACLES
Speak, but I fear thy speech will prove thee base.

HYLLUS
Hear then. She is dead, slain but an hour agone.

HERACLES
By whom? this portent likes me not; 'tis strange.

HYLLUS
By her own hand, none other, was she slain.

HERACLES
Out on her! she hath baulked my just revenge.

HYLLUS
E'en thou wouldst soften if thou knewest all.

HERACLES
A wondrous prologue! make thy meaning plain.

HYLLUS
The sum is this: she erred with good intent.

HERACLES
"Good," say'st thou, wretch? Was it good to slay thy sire?

HYLLUS
Nay, when she saw thy new bride, she devised
A charm to win thee back, but was misled.

HERACLES
Could Trachis boast a wizard of such might?

HYLLUS
The Centaur Nessus taught her long ago
How to enkindle in thy heart love's flame.

HERACLES
Alas, alas! I am undone, undone,
The light of day has left me; now I see
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

οὗμοι, φρονῶ δὴ ξυμφορᾶς ἵνα ἔσταμεν.

ἀδ', ὁ τέκνον, πατήρ γὰρ οὐκέτι ἔστι σοι
cάλει τὸ πᾶν μοι σφέρα σῶν ὁμαιμόνων,
kάλει δὲ τὴν τάλαιαν Ἀλκμήνην, Δίος
μάτην ἄκουσιν, ὡς τελευταίαν ἔμοι
φήμην πύθησθε θεσφάτων δο' ὀδ' ἐγώ.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὕτε μῆτηρ ἐνθάδ', ἀλλ' ἐπακτία
Τίμυνθι συμβέβηκεν ὡστ' ἔχειν ἔδραν.
pαίδων δὲ τοὺς μὲν ξυλλαβοῦσ' αὐτὴ τρέφει,
tους δ' ἀν τὸ Θήβης ἀστυ ναίοντας μάθοις
ἡμεῖς δ' ὅσοι πάρεσομεν, εἴ τι χρή, πάτερ,
πράσσεις, κλύνοντες ἐξυπνητήσομεν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

σὺ δ' οὖν ἄκουε τοῦργον· ἐξηκεῖς δ' ἵνα
φανεῖς ὅποιος ὄν ἀνὴρ ἐμὸς καλεῖ.

ἐμοὶ γὰρ ἢν πρόφαντον ἐκ πατρὸς πάλαι,
tῶν ἐμπνεόντων 1 μηδείνος θανεῖν ὑπο,
ἀλλ' ὅστις "Αἰδοὺ φθίμενος οἰκήτωρ πέλοι.
ὅδ' οὖν ὁ θὴρ Κένταυρος, ὡς τὸ θεῖον ἢν
πρόφαντον, οὕτω ζωντά μ' ἔκτεινεν θανών.

φανῶ δ' ἐγὼ τούτους συμβαίνοντ' ἵσα
μαντεία καινά, τοῖς πάλαι ξυνήγορα,
ἀ τῶν ὅρειον καὶ χαμαικοίτων ἐγὼ
Σελλῶν ἐσελθὼν ἀλογος εἰσεγραψάμην
πρὸς τῆς πατρίδας καὶ πολυγλωσσοῦ δρυὸς,
ἡ μοι χρόνῳ τῷ ζωντί καὶ παρόντι νῦν
ἐφασκε μόχθων τῶν ἐφεστῶτων ἐμοὶ

λύσιν τελείῳ: καδόκοιον πράξειν καλῶς.
tὸ δ' ἢν ἄρ' οὔδεν ἄλλο πλὴν θανεῖν ἐμέ.
tοῖς γὰρ θανοῦσι μόχθος οὐ προσύγνυται.

1 ἀπὸ τῶν πνεύμων MSS., Erfurdt corr.
TRACHINIAE

In what extremity of fate I stand.
Go, son, thy father is no more; go summon
Thy brethren one and all, go summon too
Alcmena, bride of Zeus—an empty name—
That from my dying lips ye all may learn
What oracles I know.

HYLLUS

I cannot call
Thy mother; she at Tiryns by the sea
Far hence abides; and of thy children some
She took to live with her; others at Thebes,
As thou may'st learn, are lodged; but all of us
Here present, father, will obey thy hest.

HERACLES

Then listen thou and heed me. Now's the hour
To prove thy breed—if thou art rightly called
My son. It was foreshown me by my sire
That I should perish by no living wight,
But by a dweller in the realms of Death.
So by this Centaur beast, as was foretold,
I perish, I the living by the dead.
A later oracle, as thou shalt learn,
Meets and confirms the ancient prophecy.
'Twas in the grove whose priests, the Selli, make
The earth their bed, rude hillsmen, that I heard it
Breathed by my Father's oak of many tongues;
Heard it, and wrote it down, my present doom,
Now at this living moment brought to pass.
Release it promised from my toils, and I
Augured a happy life, but it meant death,
For with the dead there can be no more toil.
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ταῦτ’ οὖν ἐπειδὴ λαμπρὰ συμβαίνει, τέκνον, δεῖ σ’ αὐ γενέσθαι τώδε ταῦτα σύμμαχον καὶ μὴ ’πιμεῖναι τούμον ὃξυναι στόμα, ἀλλ’ αὐτῶν εἰκαθόντα συμπράσσειν, νόμον κάλλιστον ἔξευρόντα, πειθαρχεῖν πατρί.

ΤΛΔΟΣ

ἀλλ’, ὦ πάτερ, ταρβῶ μὲν εἰς λόγου στάσιν τοιάνθ’ ἐπελθὼν, πείσομαι ὃ’ ἂ σοι δοκεῖ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἐμβαλλε χεῖρα δεξιὰν πρώτιστά μου.

ΤΛΔΟΣ

ὁς πρῶς τί πίστιν τήνδ’ ἄγαν ἐπιστρέφεις;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐ θάσσον οἰσείς μὴ ἀπιστήσεις ἐμοί;

ΤΛΔΟΣ

идον προτείνω, κουδὲν ἀντειρήσεται.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὁμών Διός νυν τοῦ με φύσαντος κάρα,

ΤΛΔΟΣ

ἡ μὴν τί δράσειν; καὶ τὸδ’ ἐξειρήσεται;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἡ μὴν ἐμοὶ τὸ λεχθὲν ἔργον ἐκτελεῖν.

ΤΛΔΟΣ

ὁμωμ’ ἔγγογη, Ζηῆ’ ἔχων ἐπώμοτον.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

εἰ δ’ ἐκτὸς ἔλθοις, πημονᾶς εὐχων λαβεῖν.

ΤΛΔΟΣ

οὐ μὴ λάβω· δράσω γάρ· εὐχομαι δ’ ὀμως.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ομοθ’ οὖν τὸν Ὅιτης Ζηῆς ψιστον πάγον;
TRACHINIAE

Since, then, my weird thus plainly comes to pass,
Thou, son, must do thy part and lend thine aid.
Delay not till I goad thee in my wrath,
But aid me with a will as one who knows
The golden rule, a father to obey.

HYLLUS
Yea, father, though the issue gives me pause
And I misdoubt thy purport, I'll obey.

HERACLES
Well said, but first lay thy right hand in mine.

HYLLUS
Wherefore impose on me this needless pledge?

HERACLES
Thy hand at once; obey and argue not.

HYLLUS
Here is my hand; I do as I am bid.

HERACLES
Now by the head of Zeus my Father swear.

HYLLUS
What wouldst thou have me swear? May I not know?

HERACLES
Swear to perform the task that I enjoin.

HYLLUS
I will and take the oath, so help me Zeus.

HERACLES
And add thereto the curse on perjurers.

HYLLUS
No need, for I shall keep it; yet I will.

HERACLES
Thou know'st the peak of Oeta, shrine of Zeus?
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΤΑΛΟΣ
οίδ', ὡς θυτήρ γε πολλὰ δὴ σταθείς ἀνω.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ
ἐνταῦθα μὴν χρῆ τούμον ἐξάραντά σε
σῶμ' αὐτόχειρα καὶ ξίνῳ οἰς χρήζεις φίλων.
πολλὴν μὲν ὠλὴν τῆς βαθυρρίζου δρῦς
κείραντα, πολλὸν δ' ἀρσεν' ἐκτεμόνθ' ὁμοὶ
ἀγρον ἔλαιον, σῶμα τούμον ἐμβαλεῖν,
καὶ πενείνης λαβόντα λαμπάδος σέλας
πρῆσαι. γόου δὲ μηδὲν εἰσίτω δάκρυ,
ἀλλ' ἀστένακτος κάδακρυτος, εἶπερ εἰ
tοῦθ' ἄνδρος, ἔρξον. εἰ δὲ μῆ, μενῶ σ' ἐγὼ
καὶ νέβθεν ὅν ἀραῖος εἰςαεὶ βαρύς.

ΤΑΛΟΣ
οίμοι, πάτερ, τί δ' εἶπας; ολά μ' εἰργασάι.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ
ὁποῖα δραστ' ἔστιν. εἰ δὲ μὴ, πατρὸς
ἀλλον γενοῦ του μηδ' ἐμὸς κληθῆς ἔτι.

ΤΑΛΟΣ
οίμοι μάλ' αὖθις, ολὰ μ' ἐκκαλεῖ, πάτερ,
φονέα γενέσθαι καὶ παλαμναίον σέθεν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ
οὐ δὴτ' ἐγὼ', ἀλλ' ὃν ἐχω παιὼνον
καὶ μοῦνον ἰατῆρα τῶν ἐμῶν κακῶν.

ΤΑΛΟΣ
καὶ πῶς ὑπαίθων σῶμ' ἄν ἵφμην τὸ σῶν;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ
ἀλλ' εἰ φοβεῖ πρὸς τοῦτο, τάλλα γ' ἐργασάι.

ΤΑΛΟΣ
φορὰς γε τοι φθόνησις οὐ γενήσεται.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ
ἡ καὶ πυρὰς πλήρωμα τῆς εἰρημένης;

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HYLLUS
Yea, I have climbed it oft to sacrifice.

HERACLES
Thither thyself, thou with what friends thou wilt, Must carry me. From the deep-rooted oak Lop many a branch, and many a faggot hew From the wild-olive’s lusty stock, and lay me Upon the pyre. Kindle a torch of pine, And fire it. Not a tear or wail or moan! Unweeping, un lamenting must thou do Thy part and prove thou art indeed my son. Fail, and my ghost shall haunt thee ever more.

HYLLUS
O father, canst thou mean it? Hear I right?

HERACLES
Thou hast thy charge. If thou refuse it, get Another sire, be called no more my son.

HYLLUS
O woe is me! What dost thou ask, that I Should be thy murderer, a parricide?

HERACLES
Not so, but healer of my sufferings, The one physician that can cure my pains.

HYLLUS
How can I heal thy stricken frame by fire?

HERACLES
Well, if thou shrink from this, perform the rest.

HYLLUS
The task of bearing thee I will not grudge.

HERACLES
Nor yet to heap the pyre, as I have bid?
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΤΑΛΩΣ

όσον γ΄ ἄν αὐτὸς μὴ ποτεψαύων χερῶν·
tὰ δὲ ἄλλα πράξω κοῦ καμεὶ τούμον μέρος.

ἩΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἀλλ’ ἀρκέσει καὶ ταύτα· πρόσνειμαι δὲ μοι
χάριν βραχεῖαν πρὸς μακροίς ἄλλοις διδοῦσ.

ΤΑΛΩΣ

eὶ καὶ μακρὰ κάρη’ ἐστίν, ἐργασθῆσεται.

ἩΡΑΚΛΗΣ

τὴν Εὐρυτείαν οἴσθα δῆτα παρθένον;

ΤΑΛΩΣ

Ἰόλην ἐλεξας, ὡς γ΄ ἐπεικάζειν ἐμέ.

ἩΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἐγνως. τοσοῦτον δὴ σ’ ἐπισκῆπτω, τέκνων
ταύτην ἐμοὶ θανόντος, εἰπερ εὐσεβεῖν
βούλει, πατρῴων ὅρκίων μεμνημένος,
προσθοῦ δάμαρτα, μηδ’ ἀπιστήσῃς πατρί·
μηδ’ ἄλλος ἀνδρῶν τοῖς ἐμοῖς πλευροῖς ὁμοὶ
κλιθεῖσαν αὐτήν ἄντι σοῦ λάβῃ 1 ποτέ,
ἀλλ’ αὐτὸς, οὐ παῖ, τοῦτο κήδευσον λέχος.

Πείθου τὸ γάρ τοι μεγάλα πιστεύσατ’ ἐμοὶ
σμικροῖς ἀπιστεῖν τὴν πάρος συγχεὶ χάριν.

ΤΑΛΩΣ

οἴμοι τὸ μὲν νοσοῦντι θυμούσθαι κακὸν,
τὸ δ’ ὄδ’ ὅραν φρονοῦντα τίς ποτ’ ἄν φέροι;

ἩΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὡς ἐργασεῖσθων οὐδὲν ὃν λέγω θροεῖς.

ΤΑΛΩΣ

τὸ γάρ ποθ’, ἡ μοι μητρὶ μὲν θανεῖν μόνη
μεταῖτιος σοὶ τ’ αὕτης ὡς ἔχεις ἔχειν,

1 λάβῃ MSS., Elmsley corr.
TRACHINIAE

HYLLUS
So that I light it not with my own hands; All else I will perform and do my part.

HERACLES
That will suffice. But add one other boon, A little one, to crown the great ones given.

HYLLUS
It shall be granted, be it ne'er so great.

HERACLES
Thou know'st the maiden, child of Eurytus?

HYLLUS
Methinks thou meanest Iolē.

HERACLES
None else. This is my charge to thee concerning her. When I am dead, if thou wouldst keep the oath Thou sworest to obey thy father's will, Take her to wife, let not another have her Who by my side hath lain; but thine, my son— Thine let her be, joined in the marriage bond. Much hast thou granted, to refuse one more, One little boon, would cancel all the score.

HYLLUS
Ah me! 'tis ill to quarrel with one sick— But who could bear to see him in this mind?

HERACLES
Thy murmuring augurs disobedience.

HYLLUS
What her, the sole cause of my mother's death, And worse, the cause of this thy grievous plight!
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

τίς ταῦτ' ἂν, ὅστις μὴ ἐὰν ἀλαστόρων νοσοῦ, ἔλοιτο; κρείσσον καμέ γ', ὃ πάτερ, θανεῖν ἢ τοῖς εὐχήσωμας συνναλεῖν ὅμοι.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἀνὴρ ὄδ', ὡς ἔοικεν, οὐ νεμεῖν ἐμοί φθινοντι μοῦρα' ἀλλὰ τοῖς θεῶν ἀρὰ μενεὶ σ' ἀπιστήσαντα τοῖς ἐμοῖς λόγοις.

ΤΑΛΩΣ

ὁμοί, τὰχ', ὡς ἔοικας, ὡς νοσεῖς φράσεις.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐ γὰρ μ' ἀπ' εὐναοσθέντος ἐκκινείς κακοῦ.

ΤΑΛΩΣ

δείλαιος, ὡς ἐς πολλὰ τάπορεῖν ἔχω.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐ γὰρ δικαιοῖς τοῦ φυτεύσαντος κλέειν.

ΤΑΛΩΣ

ἀλλ' ἐκδιδαχθὼ δήτα δυσθεῖν, πάτερ;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐ δυσθεῖνα, τοῦμὼν εἰ τέρψεις κέαρ.

ΤΑΛΩΣ

πράσσειν ἀνωγας οὐν με πανδίκως τάδε;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἐγώγε· τοῦτοι μάρτυρας καλῶ θεοῦς.

ΤΑΛΩΣ

τοῦγὰρ ποῆσω κούκ ἀπώσομαι, τὸ σὸν θεοῖσι δεικνύς ἔργον· οὐ γὰρ ἂν ποτὲ κακὸς φανεῖν σοί γε πιστεύσας, πάτερ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

καλῶς τελευτᾶς, καπτὶ τούσδε τὴν χάριν ταχεῖαι, ὃ παῖ, πρόσθεσ, ὡς πρίν ἐμπεσεῖν σπαραγμὸν ἢ τιν' οἴστρου, ἐς πυράν με θῆς.
TRACHINIAE

Who, were he not possessed of fiends, would do it? Better, my father, I with thee should die Than live united with our direst foe.

HERACLES

The boy, it seems, is not inclined to heed A father's dying prayer; but heaven's curse Awaits full sure a disobedient son.

HYLLUS

I fear thy frenzy soon will show itself.

HERACLES

Yea, for thou wakenest my pain that slept.

HYLLUS

O what a coil of dread perplexities!

HERACLES

Because thou wilt not deign to heed thy sire.

HYLLUS

What, must I learn impiety from thee?

HERACLES

'Tis piety to glad a father's heart.

HYLLUS

I have thy warrant then for what I do?

HERACLES

I call the gods to witness it is just.

HYLLUS

Then I consent and hesitate no more. Let heaven attest this act of thine, for I Cannot be blamed for filial piety.

HERACLES

Thou endest well. Now crown thy gracious words With action; haste and lay me on the pyre Before the spasms and fever-fit return.
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ἀγ’ ἐγκονεῖτ', αἴρεσθε. παῦλα τοι κακῶν αὐτή, τελευτῇ τοὐδε τάνδρος ὕστάτη.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

ἀλλ’ οὔδὲν εἰργεῖ σοι τελειοῦσαι τάδε, ἐπεὶ κελεύεις κάξαναγκάζεις, πάτερ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἀγε νυν, πρὶν τὴν ἀνακινῆσαι νόσον, ὁ ψυχὴ σκληρά, ἀλυβὸς λιθοκόλλητον στόμων παρέχουσ’, ἀνάπαυε βοήν, ὡς ἐπίχαρτον τελέουσ’ ἀεικούσιον ἔργον.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

αἴρετ’, ὀπαδῶ, μεγάλην μὲν ἐμοὶ τούτων θέμενοι συγγνωμοσύνην, μεγάλην δὲ θεῶν ἀγνωμοσύνην εἰδότες ἔργων τῶν πρασσομένων, οἳ φύσαντες καὶ κληξὺμενοι πατέρες τοιαύτ’ ἑφορῶσι πάθη. τὰ μὲν οὖν μέλλουσ’ οὐδεὶς ἑφορά, τὰ δὲ νῦν ἐστῶτ’ οἰκτρὰ μὲν ἠμῶν, αἰσχρὰ δ’ ἐκεῖνοις, χαλεπώτατα δ’ οὖν ἀνδρῶν πάντων τῷ τήνδ’ ἀτην ὑπέχουντι.

λείπτων μηδὲ σῦ, παρθέν’, ἀπ’ οἶκων, μεγάλους μὲν ἰδοῦσα νέους θανάτους, πολλὰ δὲ πῆματα καὶ καινοπαθῆ, κοῦδεν τούτων ὁ τι μὴ Ζεὺς.
TRACHINIAE

(To attendants)
Ho, haste and lift me. Thus I find repose
The end and consummation of my woes.

HYLLUS
Since, father, this thou straitly dost command,
Naught hinders the fulfilment of thy will.

HERACLES
Rouse, arm thyself, O stubborn heart,
Before again the plague upstart;
Set on thy lips a curb of steel,
Thy mouth let stony silence seal;
Go meet thy doom without a cry,
A victim, happy thus to die.

HYLLUS
Lift him, men, nor take amiss
That I bear a part in this.
We are blameless, but confess
That the gods are pitiless.
Children they beget, and claim
Worship in a father's name,
Yet with apathetic eye
Look upon such agony.
What is yet to be none knows,
But the present's fraught with woes,
Woes for us, for them deep shame;
And of all beneath the sun
Worse than he hath suffered none.

Come, maidens, come away!
Horrors have ye seen this day,
Dire death and direr fall:
And Zeus hath wrought it all.

[Exeunt omnes.]
PHILOCTETES
ARGUMENT

Nine years before the play begins Philoctetes, afflicted by a noisome wound, had been landed by the Greek chiefs on the desert island of Lemnos. He bore with him the famous bow and arrows of Heracles; and without these, as a seer afterwards declared to them, Troy could not be taken. So Odysseus was commissioned to bring back by force or fraud the hero and his arms, and he took with him, to aid him in his purpose, the son of Achilles, Philoctetes' dearest friend.

When the play begins Odysseus has landed and is instructing Neoptolemus in his part. He is to find Philoctetes and reveal who he is, but pretend that he has come to take him back, not to Troy, but home to Greece. Neoptolemus at first indignantly declines the task and is hardly persuaded to play the traitor. He meets Philoctetes coming forth from his cave, makes himself known, and, to gain his confidence, relates fictitious wrongs that he, too, has suffered at the hands of the Greeks. He consents to take Philoctetes home, but as they are starting for the ship a merchant-captain appears (a sailor disguised by Odysseus) who tells them that the Greek captains have sent in pursuit of both. They hasten their departure, but first visit the cave that Philoctetes may fetch away the simples he needs to dress his wound.
ARGUMENT

As he is leaving the cave Philoctetes is seized with a paroxysm of pain. Knowing that after such attacks deep slumber is wont to follow, he entrusts his bow and arrows to Neoptolemus who swears to keep them safe and restore them to their owner. On awakening he demands his bow, but Neoptolemus refuses to give it back and confesses the plot that Philoctetes now suspects. Stung by the denunciation of his treachery and the pathetic appeal to his better nature, Neoptolemus repents him and is in the act of restoring the bow, when Odysseus, who has been watching the scene in hiding, appears to prevent him. The bow Odysseus will have; Philoctetes may go or stay as he chooses. The pair depart together for the ships and Philoctetes is left behind with the chorus of sailors who endeavour to persuade him to return with them. But he is obdurate and they are about to leave him when Neoptolemus is seen hurrying back with the bow, closely followed by Odysseus who tries in vain to arrest him and threatens to denounce him as a traitor to the host. Philoctetes regains his bow and would have used it to let fly a mortal shaft at Odysseus, had not Neoptolemus stayed his hand. Again he is urged to go back to Troy and again he refuses. Neoptolemus true to his word, reluctantly agrees to convey him home. At this point an apparition is seen in the air above them, the divine form of Heracles, sent by Zeus from Olympus to bid Philoctetes go back to Troy with Neoptolemus and so fulfil the oracle. At last he bows to the will of Heaven.
ΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΟΔΥΣΕΥΣ
ΧΟΡΟΣ
ΣΚΟΠΟΣ & ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ
ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ
DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ODYSSEUS.
NEOPTOLEMUS.
PHILOCTETES.
SAILOR (disguised as Merchant Captain).
HERACLES.
CHORUS, Scyrian sailors of Neoptolemus' Crew.

SCENE: Rocky Coast on the Island of Lemnos.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΤΣ

'Ακτή μὲν ἦδε τῆς περιπρότου χθονὸς
Δήμου, βροτοῖς ἀστιττοῖς οὐδ' οἰκουμένη,
ἐνθ', ὦ κρατίστοι πατρὸς Ἑλλήνων τραφεῖς
'Αχιλλέως παῖ Νεοπτόλεμο, τὰν Μηλᾶ
Ποιάντος ύδων ἐξέθηκ' ἐγὼ ποτε,
tαχθεὶς τόδ' ἐρδεὶν τῶν ἀνασσάντων ὑπο,
νόσῳ καταστάξοντα διαβόρφ πόδα·
ὅτ' οὔτε λοιβής ἦμᾶν οὔτε θυμάτων
παρὴν ἐκήλους προσθιγεῖν, ἀλλ' ἀγρίαις
κατείχ' ἀεὶ πᾶν στρατόπεδον δυσφημίαις,
βοῶν, στενάζων. ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν τί δεὶ
λέγειν; ἀκμῇ γὰρ οὗ μακρῶν ἡμῖν λόγων,
μῆ καὶ μάθη μ' ἢκουτα κάκχεω τὸ πᾶν
σόφισμα, τῷ νῦν αὐτίχ' αἵρησειν δοκῶ.
ἀλλ' ἔργον ἴδη σὸν τὰ λοιφ' ὑπηρετεῖν
σκοπεῖν θ' ὧποι 'στ' ἐνταῦθα δίστομος πέτρα
τοιάδ', ἵν' ὑπὸ γύχηι μὲν ἡλίου διπλῆ
πάρεστιν ἐνθάκησις, ἐν θέρει δ' ὑπνον
δι' ἀμφιτρήτος αὐλήν πέμπει πυνή.
βαιῶν δ' ἐνερθεὶν ἐξ' ἀριστερᾶς τάχ' ᾧν
ἴδοις ποτὸν κρηναίον, εἶπερ ἐστὶ σῶν.
ἀ μοι προσελθὼν σύγα σήμαιν' εἶτ' ἐκεί
PHILOCTETES

Enter ODYSSEUS, NEOPTOLEMUS; in the background, a SAILOR.

ODYSSEUS

Son of Achilles, Neoptolemus,
Sprung from the noblest of the Grecian host,
This is the beach of Lemnos, sea-girt isle,
A land untrod, untenanted, where once,
As bidden by the chiefs, I put ashore
The Malian, son of Poeas, grievously
Afflicted by his foot's envenomed wound.
For us there was no peace at sacrifice
Or at libations, but the whole camp rang
With his discordant screams and savage yells,
Moaning and groaning. But what skills it now
To tell this tale? No time for large discourse
That might betray our presence and undo
The plot I've laid to catch him presently.
To work! it rests with thee to play thy part,
And help me to discover hereabouts
A cave with double mouth by nature made
To catch on either side the winter sun,
Or by the breeze that through the archway blows
Invite in summer's heat to gentle sleep;
And lower down, a little to the left,
A spring, if still it flows, thou art like to find.
Go warily to work and bring me word,
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

χὼρον τὸν αὐτὸν ¹ τόνδ’ ἐτ’ ἐἰτ’ ἄλλῃ κυρεῖ, ὡς τάπλοιτα τῶν λόγων σὺ μὲν κλύσης, ἐγὼ δὲ φράζω, κοινὰ δ’ ἐξ ἀμφοῖν ἦ.

ΝΕΟΙΠΟΔΕΜΟΣ
ἀναξ’ Ὀδυσσεὺ, τοῦργον οὐ μακρὰν λέγεις· δοκῶ γὰρ οἶνον εἴπας ἀντρον εἰσορᾶν.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΣΕΞ
ἀνοθέν ἢ κάτωθεν; οὐ γὰρ ἐννοῶ.

ΝΕΟΙΠΟΔΕΜΟΣ
τὸδ’ ἐξύπερθε· καὶ στίβου γ’ οὐδεὶς κτύπος.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΣΕΞ
ὁρα καθ’ ύπνον μὴ καταυλισθεῖσι κυρεῖ.

ΝΕΟΙΠΟΔΕΜΟΣ
ὁρῶ κενὴν οἰκισθεὶν ἄνθρωπων δίχα.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΣΕΞ
οὐδ’ ἐνδον οἰκοποιῶς ἡστὶ της τροφῆς;

ΝΕΟΙΠΟΔΕΜΟΣ
στιπτῆ γε φυλλᾶς ὡς ἐναυλίζοντι τῷ.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΣΕΞ
τὰ δ’ ἄλλ’ ἔρημα, κούδεν ἡσθ’ ὑπόστεγον;

ΝΕΟΙΠΟΔΕΜΟΣ
αὐτὸξυλὸν γ’ ἐκτῶμα, φλαυρουργόυ τινος τεχνήματ’ ἄνθρος, καὶ πυρεῖ ὁμοῦ τάδε.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΣΕΞ
κεῖνον τὸ θησαύρισμα σημαίνεις τόδε.

ΝΕΟΙΠΟΔΕΜΟΣ
ἰοῦ ἵοῦ· καὶ ταῦτά γ’ ἄλλα θάλπαται ῥάκη, βαρείας του νοσηλείας πλέα.

ΟΔΤΣΣΕΣΕΞ
ἀνὴρ κατοικεῖ τούσδε τοὺσ τόπους σαφῶς, ⁴⁰ καστ’ οὐχ ἐκάς ποι’ πώς γάρ ἀν νοσῶν ἀνὴρ

¹ πρὸς αὐτὸν MSS., Blaydes corr.
PHILOCTETES

Whether he still is there or further gone.
That done, thy part will be to listen, mine
To instruct, that both may gain our common end.

NEOPTOLEMUS

No distant quest, my lord Odysseus, this;
Here, if I err not, is the cave thou seek'st.

ODYSSEUS

Above me or below? I see it not.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Up there; but not a footfall can I hear.

ODYSSEUS

Look if he be not gone within to rest.

NEOPTOLEMUS

The chamber's empty; no man is within.

ODYSSEUS

And no provision for a man's abode?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Litter of trodden leaves as for a couch.

ODYSSEUS

And is that all—no other sign of life?

NEOPTOLEMUS

A cup of uncouth handiwork, rough hewn
From out a log; some tinder, too, I see.

ODYSSEUS

These are his household treasures.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Faugh! and here

Spread in the sun to dry, are filthy rags
Dank with the ooze of some malignant sore.

ODYSSEUS

This clearly is his dwelling-place, and he
Hard by, for how could any travel far
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
κῶλον παλαιὰ κηρὶ προσβαίη μακράν;
ἀλλὰ ἢ τὶ φορβῆς νόστον ἐξελήλυθεν
ἢ φύλλον εἰ τι νῶδυνον κάτοικδε που.
τὸν οὖν παρόντα πέμψον εἰς κατασκοπήν,
μὴ καὶ λάθη με προσπεσόν᾽ ὡς μᾶλλον ἂν
ἔλοιτό μ᾽ ἢ τοὺς πάντας Ἀργείους λαβεῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἀλλ᾽ ἐρχεται τε καὶ φυλάξεται στίβος.
σὺ δὲ, εἰ τι χρῆσθεις, φράζε δευτέρῳ λόγῳ.

ΟΔΥΣΕΤΣ
Ἄξιλλέως παῖ, δεὶ σ᾽ ἐφ᾽ οἷς ἐλήλυθας
γενναῖον εἶναι, μὴ μόνον τῷ σώματι,
ἀλλ᾽ ἢν τι καίνον ὧν πρὶν οὐκ ἀκήκοας
κλύῃ, ὑπουργεῖν, ὡς ὑπηρέτης πάρει.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
τί δὴτ' ἀνωγας;

ΟΔΥΣΕΤΣ
τὴν Φιλοκτήτου σε δεὶ
ψυχήν ὅπως δόλοισιν ἐκκλέψεις λέγων.
ὅταν σ᾽ ἐρωτᾶ τίς τε καὶ πόθεν πάρει,
λέγειν, Ἀξιλλέως παῖς· τόδ᾽ οὐχὶ κλεπτέον
πλεῖσθ᾽ ὡς πρὸς οίκον, ἐκλιπῶν τὸ ναυτικὸν
στράτευμ᾽ Ἀχαιῶν, ἐχθὸς ἐχθήρας μέγα,
οί σ᾽ ἐν λιταῖς στείλαντες ἐξ οἴκων μολεῖν,
μόνην ἔχοντες τήνδ᾽ ἀλώσιν Ἰλίον,
οὐκ ἠξίωσαν τῶν Ἀχιλλείων ὄπλων
ἔλθοντι δοῦναι κυρίος αὐτομένη, ἀλλ᾽ αὐτ᾽ ὁδυςεῖ παρέδοσαν· λέγων δ᾽ ἂν
θέλῃς καθ᾽ ἡμῶν ἔσχατ᾽ ἐσχάτων κακά.

1 λόγοισιν MSS., Gedike corr.
PHILOCTETES

Thus maimed and hobbled by an ancient wound?
Either in quest of food, or else to find
Some simples known to him as anodynes,
He's gone abroad, and shortly will return;
So post thy henchman there to watch the path,
Lest he surprise me. I of all the Greeks
Am the one foe he liefest here would catch.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Guard shall be kept; my man is on his way;
And now if thou hast more to say, say on.

[Exit ATTENDANT

ODYSSEUS

Son of Achilles, not in thews alone
Or prowess must thou prove thy breed to-day.
If tasks be set thee that seem strange, no less
Thou must perform them; therefore wast thou sent.

NEOPTOLEMUS

What is thy hest?

ODYSSEUS.

Thou must cajole and cheat
The soul of Philoctetes by fair words,
And when he asks thee who and whence thou art,
"Achilles' son," make answer; hide not this.
But add, "I am sailing homewards and have left
The fleet in dudgeon, wroth against the chiefs
Who first prevailed on me to quit my home,
Because without me Troy could ne'er be taken,
And then upon my coming basely spurned
My righteous title to Achilles' arms,
And gave them to Odysseus." At my name
Heap on me every-scoff and scorn and taunt;
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

tοῦτῳ ἂγαρ οὐδέν μὴ ἀλγυνεῖς· εἰ δὲ ἐργάσεις μὴ ταῦτα, λύπην πᾶσιν Ἀργείων βαλεῖς. εἰ γὰρ τὰ τοῦτο τὸξα μὴ ληφθῆσεται, οὐκ ἔστι πέρσαι σοι τὸ Δαρδάνου πέδον. ὡς δ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐχί, σοι δ᾽ ὀμιλία πρὸς τὸνδε πιστὴ καὶ βέβαιος, ἐκμαθε. σὺ μὲν πέπλευκας οὔτ᾽ ἐνορκος οὐδενὶ οὔτ᾽ ἐξ ἀνάγκης οὔτε τοῦ πρῶτον στόλου· ἐμοὶ δὲ τούτων οὐδέν ἐστ᾽ ἀρνήσιμον. ὦστε εἰ με τόξων ἐγκρατὴς αἰσθῆσεται, ὅλωλα καὶ σὲ προσδιαφθερὸ ἐυνών. ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὸ τοῦτο δεὶ σοφισθήναι, κλοπεὺς ὅτως γενήσει τῶν ἀνυκτῶν ὁπλῶν. ἐξοίδα, παι, φύσει σε μὴ πεφυκότα τοιαῦτα φονεῖν μηδὲ τεχνᾶσθαι κακά· ἀλλ᾽ ἤδυ γὰρ τι κτῆμα τῆς νίκης λαβεῖν, τόλμα· δίκαιοι δ᾽ αὐθίς ἐκφαινούμεθα. νῦν δ᾽ εἰσ ἀναίδες ἡμέρας μέρος βραχὺ δὸς μοι σεαυτόν, κἀτα τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον κέκλησο πάντων εὐσεβιστάτος βροτῶν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἐγὼ μὲν οὖς ἄν τῶν λόγων ἀλγῶ κλύων, Δαερτίουν παι, τοῦσδε καὶ πρᾶσσειν στυγῶ· ἐφων γὰρ οὐδὲν ἐκ τέχνης πρᾶσσειν κακῆς, οὔτ᾽ αὐτὸς οὔθ᾽, ὡς φασιν, οὐκφύσας ἐμε. ἀλλ᾽ εἰμὶ ἐτοίμασιν πρὸς βιῶν τὸν ἄνδρ᾽ ἄγειν καὶ μὴ δόλοιςιν· οὐ γὰρ ἔξ ἐνὸς πολὺς ἡμᾶς τοσοῦτοι πρὸς βιῶν χειρώστει. πεμφθείς γε μέντοι σοι ἐνυπεράτης δικῶν προδότης καλεῖσθαι· βούλομαι δ᾽, ἀναξ, καλῶς δρῶν ἐξαμαρτεῖν μᾶλλον ἥ νικᾶν κακῶς.

1 τοῦτων MSS., Buttmann corr.
PHILOCTETES

It will not hurt me, but if thou should'st fail
'Twill sorely vex the Argives one and all.
This man's artillery we needs must have;
No hope to capture Troy-town otherwise.
Why thou canst hold free converse with the man
Securely and I cannot, thou shalt learn.
Thou wast not bound by oath or pledge to sail
Nor wast thou with the fleet that first embarked;
But naught of this, if taxed, can I deny.
Therefore, if, bow in hand, he counters me,
I die, and shall involve thee in my death.
How to possess us of those matchless arms—
There is the puzzle; set thy wits to that.
I know, my son, thy honest nature shrinks
From glozing words and practice of deceit;
But (for 'tis sweet to snatch a victory)
Be bold to-day and honest afterwards.
For one brief hour of lying follow me;
All time to come shall prove thy probity.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Son of Laertes, what upon my ear
Grates in the telling, I should hate to do.
Such is my nature; any taint of guile
I loathe, and such, they tell me, was my sire.
But I am ready, not by fraud, but force,
To bring the man; for, crippled in one foot,
Against our numbers he can prove no match.
Nathless, since I was sent to aid thee, prince,
I fear to seem a laggard; yet prefer
To fail with honour than succeed by fraud.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΟΔΥΣΕΥΣ

ἔσθλον πατρὸς παῖ, καὶ τὸ ὅν νέος ποτὲ
γλώσσαν μὲν ἄργον, χεῖρα δ’ εἶχον ἐργάτων
νῦν δ’ εἰς ἔλεγχον ἐξίῳ ὅρῳ βροτοῖς
τὴν γλώσσαν, οὐχὶ τάργα, πάνθ’ ἄγουμένην.

ΝΕΟΠΟΔΩΜΟΣ

τί μ’ οὖν ἀνωγας ἀλλο πλὴν ψευδή λέγειν;

ΟΔΥΣΕΥΣ

λέγω σ’ ἔγω δόλῳ Φιλοκτήτην λαβεῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΟΔΩΜΟΣ

τί δ’ ἐκ δόλῳ δεὶ μᾶλλον ἡ πέσαντ’ ἄγειν;

ΟΔΥΣΕΥΣ

οὐ μὴ πίθηται πρὸς βίαν δ’ οὐκ ἂν λάβοις.

ΝΕΟΠΟΔΩΜΟΣ

οὔτως ἔχει τι δεινὸν ἴσχύος θράσος;

ΟΔΥΣΕΥΣ

ἰοῦς γ’ ἄφυκτους καὶ προσπέμποντας φόνον.

ΝΕΟΠΟΔΩΜΟΣ

οὐκ ἀρ’ ἐκεῖνῳ γ’ οὔδε προσμίζαι θράσυ;

ΟΔΥΣΕΥΣ

οὐ, μὴ δόλῳ λαβόντα γ’, ὡς ἔγω λέγω.

ΝΕΟΠΟΔΩΜΟΣ

οὐκ αἰσχρὸν ἴγεὶ δῆτα τὸ ψευδὴ λέγειν;

ΟΔΥΣΕΥΣ

οὐκ, εἰ τὸ σωθήναι γε τὸ ψεῦδος φέρει.

ΝΕΟΠΟΔΩΜΟΣ

πῶς οὖν βλέπων τις ταῦτα τολμήσει λακεῖν; 110

ΟΔΥΣΕΥΣ

ὅταν τι δρᾶς εἰς κέρδος, οὐκ ὄκνειν πρέπει.

ΝΕΟΠΟΔΩΜΟΣ

κέρδος δ’ ἔμοι τί τούτον ἐς Τροίαν μολεῖν;

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PHILOCTETES

ODYSSEUS
Son of a gallant sire, I too in youth
Was slow of tongue and forward with my hand;
But I have learnt by trial of mankind
Mightier than deeds of puissance is the tongue.

NEOPTOLEMUS
It comes to this that thou would'st have me lie.

ODYSSEUS
Entangle Philoctetes by deceit.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Why not persuade him rather than deceive?

ODYSSEUS
Persuasion's vain, and force of no avail.

NEOPTOLEMUS
What arms hath he of such miraculous might?

ODYSSEUS
Unerring arrows, tipp'd with instant death.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Might not a bold man come to grips with him?

ODYSSEUS
No, as I told thee, guile alone avails.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Thou deem'st it, then, no shame to tell a lie?

ODYSSEUS
Not if success depends upon a lie.

NEOPTOLEMUS
To utter falsehoods I should blush for shame.

ODYSSEUS
If thou wouldst profit thou must have no qualms.

NEOPTOLEMUS
What gain to me, should he be brought to Troy?
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΟΔΩΣΕΤΩ

αἱρεῖ τὰ τόξα ταῦτα τὴν Τροίαν μόνα.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ ἂρ' ὁ πέρσων, ὡς ἐφάσκετ', εἰμ' ἐγώ;

ΟΔΩΣΕΤΩ

οὗτ' ἀν σὺ κείνου χωρὶς οὕτ' ἐκεῖνα σοῦ.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

θηρατεὶ οὗν γύνοιτ' ἀν, εἴπερ δῶ δέ έχει.

ΟΔΩΣΕΤΩ

ὡς τοῦτο γ' ἔρξας δύο φέρει δωμήματα.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ποῖω; μαθὼν γὰρ οὐκ ἂν ἀρνοίμην τὸ δρᾶν.

ΟΔΩΣΕΤΩ

σοφὸς τ' ἀν αὐτὸς κἀγαθὸς κεκλῆ' ἀμα.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἔτω· ποῆσω, πᾶσαν αἰσχύνην ύφεις.

ΟΔΩΣΕΤΩ

ἡ μνημονεύεις οὖν ἀ σοι παρῆνεσα;

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

σάφ' ἵσθ', ἐπείπερ εἰσάπαξ συνήνεσα.

ΟΔΩΣΕΤΩ

σὺ μὲν μένων νυν κείνου ἐνθάδ' ἐκδέχον,

ἔγω δ' ἀπειμ. μὴ κατοπτευθῶ παρὼν,

καὶ τὸν σκοπὸν πρὸς ναῦν ἀποστελῶ πάλιν.

καὶ δεύρ', ἐάν μοι τὸν χρόνον δοκῆτε τι

κατασχολάξειν, αὖθις ἐκπέμψω πάλιν

tοῦτον τὸν αὐτὸν ἅδρα, ναυκλήρου τρόποις

μορφὴν δολώσας, ὡς ἂν ἄγνοια προσῆ:

οὐ δήτα, τέκνου, ποικίλως αὐδωμένου

dέχον τὰ συμφέροντα τῶν ἀεὶ λόγων.

ἔγω δὲ πρὸς ναῦν εἶμι, σοὶ παρεῖς τάδε·

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PHILOCTETES

ODYSSEUS
Without these arms Troy-town cannot be sacked.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Ye told me I should take it. Was that false?

ODYSSEUS
Not thou apart from these nor these from thee.

NEOPTOLEMUS
The quarry's worth the chase, if this be so.

ODYSSEUS
Know that success a double meed shall win.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Make plain this twofold prize and I'll essay.

ODYSSEUS
Thou wilt be hailed as wise no less than brave.

NEOPTOLEMUS
I'll do it—here's my hand—and risk the shame.

ODYSSEUS
Good. My instructions—thou rememberest them?

NEOPTOLEMUS
I have consented; trust me for the rest.

ODYSSEUS
Stay here then and await his coming, whilst,
Lest I should be espied, I go away
And send back to the ship our sentinel;
But if ye seem to dally overmuch,
He shall return, the same man, but disguised
Past recognition, as a sailor clad.
When he accosts thee, mark each word, my son,
To catch the hid significance, for he
Will speak in riddles. This I leave to thee
And seek the vessel. Hermes aid us both,
Who sent us on our way, the God of cunning,
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

΄Ερμής δ’ ο πέμπτων δόλων ἡγήσατο νῦν
Νίκη τ’ Ἀθάνα Πολιάς, ἦ σφάζει μ’ ἄει.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α’

τι χρή τι χρή με, δέσποτ’, ἐν ξένα ξένον
στέγειν ἢ τι λέγειν πρὸς ἀνδρ’ ὕπότταν;
φράξε μοι. τέχνα γὰρ
téchnas étēras prouýchie
καὶ γνώμα παρ’ ὅτι το θείον
Δίως σκῆπτρον ἀνάσσεται.
σε δ’, ὃ τέκνον, τὸδ’ ἔληλυθεν
πᾶν κράτος ὁγὐγιον’ τὸ μοι ἐννεπε
τι σοι χρεὼν ὑπουργεῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

νῦν μέν, ἵσως γὰρ τόπον ἐσχατιάς
προσιδεῖν ἐθέλεις ὄντινα κεῖται,
δέρκου θαρσῶν· ὀπόταν δὲ μόλη
dëwos odíthēs, tòvod’ ouk 1 meláthron
πρὸς ἐμὴν αἰεῖ χείρα προχωρῶν
πειρᾶ ὑ τὸ παρὸν θεραπεῖειν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μέλον πάλαι μέλημά μοι λέγεις, ἀναξ, ἀντ. α’

φρουρεῖν ὃμμ’ ἐπὶ σῷ μάλιστα καιρῷ
νῦν δὲ μοι λέγ’, αὐλᾶς
pōias énedros nai ei

καὶ χώρον τίν’ ἔχει. τὸ γὰρ μοι

μαθεῖν οὐκ ἀποκαίριον,
mη προσπεσόν με λάθη ποθέν:
tis tópos ἢ tis ἔδρα; tìn’ ἔχει στίβον,

έναυλον ἢ θυραῖον;

1 ἐκ MSS., Jebb corr.
PHILOCTETES

And she who never failed me yet, my queen,
Athenè Polias, queen of victory!

[Exit ODYSSEUS.

Enter CHORUS OF SCYRIAN SAILORS.

CHORUS

What, O my master, what must I conceal
And what reveal,
In a strange land a stranger, by what wile
His shrewd suspects beguile?

Instruct me; for his art all art excels
With whom there dwells
The sovereignty of Zeus, the Kingly Crown
That hath to thee come down,

My son, by immemorial right divine;
Such skill is thine;
So teach me, master, how I best may speed
Thy present need.

NEOPTOLEMUS

First to find his lair, no doubt,
Ye are keen; so boldly scout.
When the wild man ye have spied
Who within this cave doth bide,
Watch the motions of my hand,
Prompt to act as I command.

CHORUS

Now, as at all times, Prince, I gladly heed,
And serve thy need.
But first to learn his common haunts t’were well;
I pray thee tell,
Lest he should light upon me unaware,
His track, his lair.
Say, if within his den he will be found,
Or roaming round.

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ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
οἶκον μὲν ὁρᾶς τόνδ᾽ ἀμφίθυρον
πετρίως κοίτης.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ποῦ γὰρ ὁ τλῆμων αὐτὸς ἀπεστίων;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
dήλον ἔμοι ὡς φοβῆσ χρείας
ςτίβουν ὅμοιοι τῇδε1 πέλας που.
tαῦτην γὰρ ἔχειν βιωθῆς αὑτὸν
λόγος ἐστὶ φύσιν, θηροβολοῦντα
πτυχοῖς ἰοὶς στυγερὸν στυγερῶς,
οὐδὲ τιν’ αὐτῷ
παιῶνα κακῶν ἐπινωμᾶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
οἰκτίρω νυν ἔγαγε, ὅπως,
μὴ του κηδομένου βροτῶν
μηδὲ ξύντροφον ὁμι᾽ ἔχων,
δύστανος, μόνος ἀεὶ,
νοσεὶ μὲν νόσον ἀγρίαν,
ἀλλ᾽ ἐπὶ παντὶ τῷ
χρείας ἱσταμένῳ. πῶς ποτὲ πῶς δύσμορος ἀν-
tέχει;

ἀ παλάμαι θεῶν,2
ἀ δύστανα γένη βροτῶν,
οἶς μὴ μέτριος αἰών.

οὕτως πρωτογόνων ἰσως
οἰκών οὔδενως ὑστερος,
pάντων ἀμμορος ἐν βίῳ
κεῖται μοῦνοι ἄπτ' ἄλλων,

1 τόνδε MSS., Blaydes corr.
2 ὑπτῶν MSS., Lachmann corr.
PHILOCTETES

NEOPTOLEMUS
See you that two-mouthed cavern? There
His rocky dwelling-place.

CHORUS
And where
Is the sad inmate of the grot?

NEOPTOLEMUS
I doubt not somewhere near the spot,
Gone forth in search of daily food,
Dragging his steps through wold or wood;
For so, 'tis said, by toilsome pains
A painful sustenance he gains,
Shooting whatever living thing
Comes within reach of his dread bow.
The years go by and never bring
A leach to heal his woe.

CHORUS
O how piteous thy lot, (Str. 2)
Luckless man, by man forgot;
None thy solitude to share,
None to tend with loving care;
Plagued and stricken by disease,
Never knowing hour of ease,
Facing death each moment, how
Hast, poor wretch, endured till now?
O the crooked ways of heaven!
Hapless men to whom are given
Lots so changeful, so uneven.

He who with the best might vie, (Ant. 2)
Of our Grecian chivalry.
On a desert island left,
Perishes, of all bereft;
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

στικτῶν ἢ λασίων μετὰ
θηρῶν, ἐν τ’ ὀδύναις ὅμοι
λιμῷ τ’ οἰκτρός, ἀνήκεστα μεριμνήματ’ ἔχων· ὅρει-
α δ’ ἀθυρόστομος
’Αχώ τηλεφανής πικράς
οἰμωγαῖς ὑπακούει. 2

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐδὲν τούτων θαυμαστόν ἐμοῦ·
θεία γάρ, εἰπερ καγώ τι φρουώ,
καὶ τὰ παθήματα κεῖνα πρὸς αὐτὸν
tῆς ὀμόφρονος Χρύσης ἐπέβη,
καὶ νῦν ἄ πονεὶ δίχα κηδεμόνων,
οὐκ ἔσθ’ ὡς οὐ θεῶν τοῦ μελέτη
tοῦ μὴ πρότερον τόνδ’ ἐπὶ Τροία
tείναι τὰ θεῶν ἀμάχητα βέλη,
πρὶν οὐ’ ἔξηκοι χρόνος, ὃ λέγεται
χρήναι σφ’ ὑπὸ τῶν δαμήναι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

εὐστομ’ ἔχε, παῖ.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί τοῦτε;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

προφυάνῃ κτύπος,

φωτὸς σύντροφος ὡς τειρομένου του, 3
ἡ ποὺ τῇδ’ ἡ τῇδε τῶπων.
βᾶλλει βᾶλλει μ’ ἑτύμα
φθογγά του στίβου κατ’ ἀνάγκαν
ἐρποντός; οὐδὲ με λάβει
βαρεία τηλόθεν αὕτα τρυσάνωρ· διάσημα γὰρ
θρηνεῖ.

1 βαραῖα δ’ MSS., Mekler corr.
2 πικράς οἰμωγαῖς ὑπόκειται MSS., Blaydes corr.
3 του added by Porson.
PHILOCTETES

With the savage beasts doth dwell
Of spotted hide or shaggy fell;
Pangs of hunger doth endure,
Racked with aches that know no cure.
Echo, too, with babbling tongue,
As she sits her hills among,
Iterates in undertones
His interminable groans.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Nothing strange I see in this.
By heaven ordained (if not amiss
I augur) comes this punishment,
By the unpitying Chryse¹ sent;
And what he suffers now must be
Designed by some wise deity,
Lest too soon 'gainst Troy should go
The arrows of his wizard bow,
For when the fated hour has come
By them must Troy-town find its doom.

CHORUS

Hush, my son! (Str. 3)

NEOPTOLEMUS

Wherefore?

CHORUS (back)

Hist! there comes a sound
As of one sore afflicted. Is it here
Or here? 'Tis nearer now, I look around,
The footfall of a laboured tread grows clear;
And now, though distant still, I catch a cry
Distinct, the voice of human agony.

¹ The nymph by whose guardian serpent Philoctetes was bitten. See l. 1326.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ’ ἔχε, τέκνον, ἀντ. γ’

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

λέγ’ ὦ τί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

φροντίδας νέας.

ὡς οὐκ ἔξεδρος, ἀλλ’ ἐντοπος ἀνήρ,

οὐ μολπάν σύριγγος ἔχων,

ὡς πομην ἀγροβότας, ἀλλ’ ἤ που πταίων ὑπ’

ἀνάγκας

βοᾷ τηλωποῦν ἰωάν,

ἡ ναὸς ἄξενον αὐγάξων ὅρμον προβοά τί γαρ

dεινόν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἰδ’ ἔξεοι,

τίνες ποτ’ ἐς γῆν τήνδε κακὸς ποίας πάτρας

κατέσχετ’ οὔτ’ εὐρομὸν οὔτ’ οίκουμένην;

ποίας ἄν υμᾶς πατρίδος ἣ γένους ποτὲ

τύχουμ’ ἄν εἰπὼν; σχῆμα μὲν γὰρ Ἑλλάδος

στολῆς ὑπάρχει προσφιλεστάτης ἐμοῖ:

φωνῆς δ’ ἀκούσατ’ βούλομαι: καὶ μὴ μ’ ὅκνω

δεῖσαντες ἐκπλαγητ’ ἀπηγριμένον,

ἀλλ’ οἰκτίσαντες ἀνδρα δύστην, μόνον,

ἔρημον δὲ κάφιλον κακούμενον,2

φωνήσατ’, ἐπερ ὦς φίλοι προσήκετε.

ἀλλ’ ἀνταμείνασθ’. οὐ γὰρ εἰκὸς οὔτ’ ἐμὲ

ὑμῶν ἀμαρτεῖν τοῦτο γ’ οὕθ’ υμᾶς ἐμοῖ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ’, ὦ ξέν’, ἵσθι τοῦτο πρῶτον, οὖνεκα

Ἔλληνες ἐσμεν’ τοῦτο γὰρ βούλει μαθεῖν.

1 πάτρας ἄν υμᾶς MSS., Dindorf corr.
2 καλούμενον MSS., Brunck corr.
PHILOCTETES

CHORUS
Bethink thee, Prince.  

NEOPTOLEMUS
Of what?

CHORUS
Some fresh device;
For now the man approaches very near.
This is no shepherd-swain who homeward hies,
No melody of pastoral pipe I hear;
But as he stumbles 'mid the jagged stones
He rends the air with far resounding groans,
Or as he eyes the sea without a sail,
He utters (hear his voice!) a hideous wail.

Enter PHILOCTETES.

PHILOCTETES
Sirs, who are ye and whence, who have landed here
Upon this harbourless and desolate shore?
What countrymen and of what race? If I
Might make conjecture by your garb and mien,
Ye are Greeks—a sight most welcome to my eyes;
But I would hear your voices. Shrink not back
In horror at my savage aspect; speak;
Pity a lonely, friendless, stricken man
Thus stranded; if indeed as friends ye come,
Make answer, I entreat ye; fair reply
I may expect from you, as you from me.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Well, I will answer first thy question, Sir;
Thou hast conjectured rightly, we are Greeks.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ο φίλτατον φῶνημα· φεῦ τὸ καὶ λαβεῖν
πρόσφθεγμα τοιοῦτον· ἀνδρὸς ἐν χρώμῳ μακρῷ.
tίς σ’, ὃ τέκνον, προσέσχε, τίς προσήγαγεν
χρέα; τίς ὅρμη; τίς ἀνέμων ὁ φίλτατος;
γέγονε μοι πᾶν τοῦθ’, ὅπως εἴδώ τίς εἰ.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἐγὼ γένος μὲν εἴμι τῆς περιρρύτουν
Σκύρουν· πλέω δ’ ἐς οἶκον· αὐδῶμαι δὲ παῖς
’Αχιλλέως, Νεοπτόλεμος. οἴσθα δὴ τὸ πᾶν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὁ φιλτάτον παῖ πατρός, ὁ φίλης χθονός,
ὁ τοῦ γέροντος θρέμμα Δυκομήδους, τίνι
στόλῳ προσέσχες θύμε δὴ γῆν πόθεν πλέων;

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἐξ ’Ιλιοῦ τοι δὴ ταῦτα γε ναυστολῶ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

πῶς εἶπας; οὐ γὰρ δὴ σύ γ’ ἴσθα ναυβάτης
ἡμῖν κατ’ ἀρχὴν τοῦ πρὸς ’Ιλιον στόλου.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἡ γὰρ μετέσχες καὶ σὺ τοῦτε τοῦ πόλου;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὁ τέκνον, οὐ γὰρ οἰσθά μ’ ὄντιν’ εἰσορᾶς;

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

πῶς γὰρ κάτοικ’ οὐν γ’ εἴδον οὐδεπώποτε;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐδ’ ὄνομ’ ἀρ’ οὐδὲ τῶν ἐμῶν κακῶν κλέος
ἡσθον ποτ’ οὐδέν, οἷς ἐγὼ διωλλύμην;

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὡς μηδὲν εἰδότ’ ἵσθι μ’ ὅν ἀνιστορεῖς.

1 ἀρ’ added by Erfurdt.
PHILOCTETES

O welcome utterance! Ah how good it is
To hear those accents, long unheard, from thee.
What quest, my son, what venture brought thee here,
What breeze compelled thy canvas? Happy breeze!
Speak, tell me all, that I may know my friend.

NEOPTOLEMUS

My home's the wave-lapped Scyros, and I sail
Homewards; my name is Neoptolemus,
My sire Achilles. Now thou knowest all.

PHILOCTETES

Son of a sire most dear, and land most dear,
Old Lycomedes' foster-child, what quest
Has brought thee hither, from what port didst sail?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Hither I sailed direct from Ilium.

PHILOCTETES

From Ilium? Surely thou wast not on board
When first our expedition sailed for Troy.

NEOPTOLEMUS

What, wert thou partner in that enterprise?

PHILOCTETES

Dost thou not know with whom thou speak'st, my son?

NEOPTOLEMUS

How should I know a man ne'er seen before?

PHILOCTETES

Know'st thou not e'en my name? hast never heard
How I was wasting inch by inch away?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Of all thou questionest I nothing know.

ccc 2
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ο πόλλ’ ἐγὼ μοχθηρός, ὦ πικρὸς θεοίς, οὐ μηδὲ κληδῶν ὅδ’ ἔχοντος οἶκαδε μηδ’ Ἐλλάδος γῆς μηδαμοῦ διήλθε ποι. 
ἀλ’ οἱ μὲν ἐκβαλόντες ἀνοσίως ἐμὲ γελόσι άτιγ’ ἔχοντες, ἡ δ’ ἐμὴ νόσος ἡλι τέθηκε κατί μειζον ἔρχεται.

ο τέκνον, ο παῖ πατρὸς ἀχιλλέως, ὅδ’ εἰμ’ ἐγὼ σοι κάνως, ὅν κλεισίς ζωγς τῶν Ἡρακλείων ὑπα δεσπότην ὄπλων, 
ό τοῦ Πολιαντος παῖς Φιλοκτήτης, ὅν οἱ δίσοι στρατηγοὶ χω Κεφαλλήων ἀναξ ἔρρησι παῖσχρος ὅδ’ ἔρημοι, ἀγρίᾳ 
νόσῳ καταφθίνουτα, τῆς ἀνδροφόρου πληγεντ’ έχιδνης ἀγρίῳ χαράγματι. 
ξύν ὄ μ’ ἐκεῖνοι, παῖ, προδέντες ἐνθάδε φχουτ’ ἔρημοι, ἦνικ’ εκ τῆς ποντίας 
Χρύσης κατέσχον δείρῳ ναυβάτη στόλῳ. 
τοῦ ἄσμενοι μ’ ὡς έιδον ἐκ πολλοῦ σάλου 
εὐδοντ’ ἐπ’ ἀκτῆς ἐν κατηρεφεὶ πέτρᾳ, 
λιπόντες σχονθ’, οἰα φωτ’ δυσμόρῳ 
μάκη προδέντες βαία καὶ τι καὶ βοράς 
ἐπωφέλησα σμικρόν, ο’ αὐτοῖς τύχοι.

συ δή, τέκνον, ποίαν μ’ ἀνάστασιν δοκεῖς αὐτῶν βεβώτων ἐξ ὑπνοῦ στῆναι τότε; 
ποι’ ἐκδακρύσαι, ποφ’ ἀπομιᾶγαι κακά; 
ὅροντα μὲν ναῖς, ἅς ἔχων ἐναιστόλουν, 
πάσας βεβώσας, ἀνδρα ὄ οὐδέν’ ἔντοπον, 
νῦχ ὡς τοῦ ἀρκέσειν οὐδ’ ὡς τοῦ νόσου 
καμνοντι συλλάβοιτο. πάντα δὲ σκοπῶν 
ηὐρίσκον οὐδέν πλην ἀνιᾶσθαι παρόν, 
τοῦτο δ’ πολλὴν εὐμάρειαν, ὦ τέκνον.
PHILOCTETES

O what a heaven-forsaken wretch am I,
Of whose disastrous plight no rumour yet
Hath reached my home or any Grecian land!
But they, the godless knaves who cast me forth,
Laugh and are mute. My malady the while
Rankles, and daily grows from bad to worse.
O boy, O son sprung from Achilles' loins,
I am that man, of whom thou mayst have heard,
Heritor of the bow of Heracles,
The son of Poeas, Philoctetes, whom
The Atridae and the Cephalenian prince
Cast forth thus shamelessly, a derelict,
Plague-stricken, wasting slowly, marked for death
By a man-slaying serpent's venomous fangs.
Thus plagued, my son, they left me here, what time
Their fleet from sea-girt Chrysè touched this shore.
Tired with long tossing I had fallen asleep
Beneath a rock upon the beach; they laughed
To see me witless, laughed and sailed away,
Flinging me, as they went, some cast-off rags,
A beggar's alms, and scraps of food. God grant
That they may some day come to fare like me!
Picture, my son, when I awoke and found
All gone, what waking then was mine; what tears,
What lamentations, when I saw the ships
In which I sailed all vanished; not a soul
To share my solitude or tend my wound.
All ways I gazed and nothing found but pain,
Pain, and of pain, God wot, enow, my son.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ο μὲν χρόνος δὴ διὰ χρόνου προύβαινε μοι, κάδει τι βαιὰ τῇ ὑπὸ στέγη μόνον διακονεῖσθαι. γαστρὶ μὲν τὰ σύμφορα τόξον τόδ' ἐξηρύσκε, τὰς ὑποπτέρους βάλλον πελείας, πρὸς δὲ τοῦθ', ὅ μοι βάλοι νευροσπαδῆς ἄτρακτος, αὐτὸς δὲν τάλας εἰλυόμην, δύστηνον ἐξέλκων πόδα, πρὸς τούτ' ἀν' εἰ τ' ἔδει τι καὶ ποτὸν λαβεῖν, καὶ ποὺ πάγου χυθέντος, οὐα χείματι, ἐξελον τι θραύσαι, ταῦτ' ἀν' ἐξέρπων τάλας ἐμμηχανώμην εἶτα πῦρ ἀν ὦ παρῆν, ἀλλ' ἐν πέτροισι πέτρον ἐκτρίβων μόλις ἐφῆν' ἀφαντὸν φῶς, καὶ καὶ σφίξεις μ' ἀεί. οὐκομενή γὰρ οὐν στέγη πυρὸς μέτα πάντ' ἐκπορίζει πλὴν τὸ μή νοσεῖν ἔμε... φέρ', ὁ τέκνον, νῦν καὶ τὸ τῆς νήσου μάθης. ταῦτ' πελάζει ναυβάτης οὐδεὶς ἑκὼν' οὐ γὰρ τις ὄρμος ἔστιν οὐδ' ὅποι πλέων ἐξεμπολῆσει κέρδος ή ἐξενώσεται. οὐκ ενθάδ' οἱ πλοῦς τοῖς σώφροσιν βροτῶν. τάχ' οὖν τις ἄκων ἔσχε' πολλὰ γὰρ τάδε ἐν τῷ μαχρῷ γένοιτ' ἀν ἀνθρώπων χρόνῳ' οὕτοι μ', ὅταν μὸλοσιν, ὁ τέκνον, λόγους ἐλεύσῃ μὲν, καὶ ποὺ τι καὶ βορᾶς μέρος προσέδοσαν οἰκτηράντες ή τινα στολῆν' ἐκεῖνο δ' οὐδείς, ἥνικ' ἀν μνησθῇ, θέλει, σῶσαι μ' ἐς οἴκους, ἀλλ' ἀπόλλυμαι τάλας ἔτος τὸδ' ἤδη δέκατον ἐν λιμῷ τε καὶ κακοίαι βόσκων τήν ἀδηφάγων νόσον. τοιαυτ' 'Ατρείδαι μ' ἢ τ' 'Οδυσσέως βία, ὁ παῖ, δεδράκας', οἱ 'Ολύμπιοι θεοὶ δοιέν ποτ' αὐτοῖς ἀντίποιν' ἐμοῦ παθεῖν.
PHILOCTETES

So passed the crawling hours, day upon day,  
Year after year. I shifted for myself  
Beneath this homeless, solitary roof.  
To sate my hunger with this bow I shot  
The wingèd doves and ever when my bolt  
Sped from the taut string to the mark, I crawled  
Thither my lamed foot trailing painfully.  
And if of water I had need, or when  
In winter time the ground was hoar with frost,  
And firewood must be fetched, forth would I creep  
Somewise to compass this. I had no fire,  
But from the hard rock striking flint on flint  
Brought forth the hidden spark that keeps me alive.  
For, look ye, a bare roof and fire withal  
Serve all my needs, save healing of my sore.  

Now let me tell thee of this isle, my son.

No mariner sails hither of his will,  
For anchorage is none, nor mart whereat  
He may find lodging and exchange his wares  
For profit; prudent men sail not this way.  
Yet a stray visitor—such accidents  
Must happen in long years—puts in perforce.  
From such, my son, when they do come, I get  
Kind words of pity and perchance an alms  
Of food or raiment, but at the first hint  
Of passage home, they one and all refuse.  
So here for ten long years I linger on,  
Consumed with hunger, dying inch by inch;  
Only the worm that gnaws me dieth not.  
To the Atridae and Odysseus, boy,  
I owe this misery. God in heaven requite  
In kind the wrongs that they have done to me!
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἔσοικά κάγω τοῖς ἀφιγμένοις ἵσα
ξένοις ἐποικίρειν σε, Ποιάντος τέκνον.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἐγὼ δὲ καύτος τοῖσδε μάρτυς ἐν λόγοις,
ὡς εἰς ἀληθείς οἴδα, συντυχῶν κακῶν
ἀνδρῶν Ἀτρείδῶν τῆς τ᾿ Ὄδυσσεός βίαις.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἡ γὰρ τι καί σὺ τοῖς πανωλέθροις ἔχεις
ἐγκλημα Ἀτρείδαις, ὡστε θυμοῦσθαι παθῶν;

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

θυμῶν γένοιτο χειρὶ πληρῶσαι ποτε,
ἰὼν Μυκῆναι νοικίαν ἡ Ἑπάρτῃ θ᾿ ὑπὶ
χῇ Σκύρος ἀνδρῶν ἄλκιμων μήτηρ ἑφυ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

εὖ γ᾿, ὦ τέκνον· τίνος γὰρ ὕδε τὸν μέγαν
χόλον κατ᾿ αὐτῶν ἐγκαλῶν ἐλῆλυθας;

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὁ παι Ποιάντος, ἐξερῴ, μόλις ὦ ἔρω,
ἀγωγ` ὑπ᾿ αὐτῶν ἐξελοβῇθην μολὼν.
ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἐσχέ μοῦρ Ἀχιλλεία θανεῖν,

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οἶμοι· φράσης μοι μὴ πέρα, πρὶν ἄν μάθω
πρῶτον τόδ᾿, ἡ τέθνηκ᾿ ὁ Πηλέως γόνος;

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

tέθνηκεν, ἀνδρὸς οὐδενός, θεοῦ ὦ ὑπο,
tοξευτός, ὡς λέγουσιν, ἐκ Φοῖβου δαμείς.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀλλ᾿ εὐγενῆς μὲν ὁ κτανῶ τε χῶ θανῶν·
ἀμηχανῶ δὲ πότερον, ὦ τέκνον, τὸ σὸν
πάθημα ἐλέγχω πρῶτον ἡ κείνον στένω.
PHILOCTETES

CHORUS
O son of Poeas, I too pity thee
No less methinks than did those visitors.

NEOPTOLEMUS
And I myself am witness that thy tale
Is true; for I have proved the villainy
Of the Atridae, and Odysseus too.

PHILOCTETES
What have those cursed Atridae wronged thee?
Art thou too stirred to anger by some wrong?

NEOPTOLEMUS
O that my wrath might vent itself in deeds!
Mycenae then and Sparta both would learn
That Scyros too is mother of brave sons.

PHILOCTETES
Well said, my son! But I would know the grounds
Of thy resentment, what the charge thou bring'st,
Why thou art here.

NEOPTOLEMUS
I scarce know how, O son
Of Poeas, yet I'll tell the tale of wrongs
I suffered on my coming at their hands.
When by the doom of Fate Achilles died—

PHILOCTETES
Woe's me! No more; first tell me, is he dead,
The son of Peleus?

NEOPTOLEMUS
He is dead indeed,
Slain by no man but by a god; a shaft
Pierced him; by Phoebus sped, so runs the tale.

PHILOCTETES
Noble alike the slayer and the slain!
I know not whether first, my son, to make
Inquiry of thy woes or weep for him.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οίμαι μὲν ἄρκειν σοὶ γε καὶ τὰ σ', ὦ τάλας, ἀληήμαθ', ὡστε μὴ τὰ τῶν πέλας στένειν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὁρθῶς ἑλέξας· τοιγαροῦν τὸ σὸν φράσον
αὐθις πάλιν μοι πράγμ', ὅτι σ' ἐνύβρισαν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἡλθόν με νηλ ποικιλοστόλω μέτα
δῖος τ' Ὅδυσσεύς χῶ τροφεύς τούμοι πατρός,
λέγοντες, εἶτ' ἄληθες εἰτ' ἀρ' οὖν μάθην,
ὡς οὐ θέμις γίγνοιτ', ἐπεὶ κατέφθιτο
πατὴρ ἐμός, τὰ πέργαμ' ἄλλου ἂ μ' ἑλείν.
ταῦτ', ὦ ξέν', οὖτως ἐννέποντες οὗ πολὺν
χρόνον μ' ἐπέσχον μῆ με ναυστολεῖν ταχύ,
μάλιστα μὲν δὴ τοῦ θανόντος ἰμέρῳ,
ὅπως ἰδούμι' ἄθαπτον' οὐ γὰρ εἰδόμην,
ἐπείτα μὲντοι χῶ λόγος καλὸς προσήν,
εἰ τὰπὶ Τροία πέργαμ' αἰρήσοιμ' ἵον.
ἡν δ' ἦμαρ ἡδη δεύτερον πλέουντι μοι,
καγώ πικρὸν Σίγειον οὖρῳ πλάτη
κατηγόμην· καὶ μ' εὐθὺς ἐν κύκλῳ στρατὸς
ἐξαίλαντα πᾶς ἡσπάζετ', ὀμνύντες θλέπειν
τὸν οὐκέτ' οὔτα ξόντι Ἀχιλλέα πάλιν.
κείνους μὲν οὖν ἐκείτ'· ἐγὼ δ' ὁ δύσμορος
ἐτελ' ἄκρυσα κείνον, οὐ μακρῷ χρόνῳ
ἐλθὼν Ἀτρείδας πρὸς φίλους, ὡς εἰκὸς ἦν,
τὰ θ' ὅπλ' ἀπήτουν τοῦ πατρὸς τὰ τ' ἄλλ' ὃ σ' ἦν.
οἱ δ' εἶπον, οὐμοι, τλημονέστατον λόγου
ὁ σπέρμ' Ἀχιλλέως, τάλλα μὲν πάρεστι σοι
πατρῷ ἐλέεσθαι, τῶν δ' ὅπλων κείνων ἀνὴρ
ἀλλ' ἀλλος κρατύνει νῦν, ὁ Δαέρτου γόνος.
PHILOCTETES

NEOPTOLEMUS
Thou hast enough of thine own pains, poor soul,
Without lamenting for another's woe.

PHILOCTETES
True, true indeed! So tell me once again
From the beginning how they outraged thee.

NEOPTOLEMUS
To fetch me in a gay decked galley came
Odysseus and my father's foster-sire.¹
They told me (if the tale was true or feigned
I know not) that, my father having fallen,
No hand but mine could take the Citadel.
Thus urged I did not dally or delay.
Forthwith I sailed. Chiefly I longed to see
My father whom in life I had not seen,
Before his burial, and in part, I own,
The promise fair that I should take Troy-town
Flattered my pride. Well, on the second day,
With oars and breeze to speed us, we had reached
Sigeum (hateful name) and when I landed
The whole host pressed to greet me, and they swore
They saw Achilles come to life again.
There lay my sire in death, and I, poor fool,
When I had mourned for him a while, betook me
To the Atridae as my natural friends,
Claiming my sire's arms and what else was his.
O 'twas a sorry answer that they made:
"Child of Achilles, all that was thy sire's
Is thine and welcome—all except his arms;
These to Laertes' son have been assigned."

¹ Phoenix.

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ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

καγώ δακρύσας εύθυς ἐξανίσταμαι ὁργῇ βαρείᾳ, καὶ καταλυγήσας λέγω ω σχέτις, ἡ τολμήσατ' ἄμε ἐμοῦ τινι δούναι τὰ τεύχῃ τάμα, πρὶν μαθεῖν ἐμοῦ; ὡδ' εἰπ' Ἄινουσεύς, πλησίον γὰρ ὅν κυρεῖ, ναῖ, παῖ, δεδώκασ' ἔνδικως οὔτοι τάδε· ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτ' ἔσωσα κάκεινον παρῶν. καγὼ χολωθεῖς εὔθυς ἤρασσον κακοῖς τοῖς πάσιν, οὐδὲν ἐνδεές ποιούμενοι, εἰ τάμα κεῖνος ὅπλ᾽ ἀφαιρῆσοιτο με. ὡδ' εὐθυμὸν ἦκω, καίπερ οὗ δύοργος ὄν, δηχθεὶς πρὸς ἄξηκουσεν ὅδ' ἤμειψατο· ὥν ἤσθ᾽ ἤν ἤμεις, ἀλλ᾽ ἀπῆσθ᾽ ἵνα ὅσει ἕπει καὶ ταῦτ᾽, ἐπειδὴ καὶ λέγεις θρασυστομῶν, οὔ·μήποτ᾽ ἐσ τὴν Σκύρου ἐκπλεύσῃς ἔχων. τοιαῦτ᾽ ἀκούσας κἀξονείδισθεὶς κακὰ πλέω πρὸς οἴκους, τῶν εἰμῶν τητῶμενοι πρὸς τοῦ κακίστου κάκον Ὄδυσσεώς. κοῦκ αἰτιῶμαι κεῖνον ὅς τοὺς ἐν τέλει πόλις γὰρ ἐστὶ πάσα τῶν ἡγουμένων στρατός τε σύμπας: οἱ δ᾽ ἀκοσμοῦντες βροτῶν διδασκαλῶν λόγοις γέγονονται κακοῖ. λόγος λέξεκται πᾶς: ὡδ' Ὀτρείδας στυγῆν ἐμοί θ' ὁμοίως καὶ θεὸς εἶ ἄλη φίλος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὁρεστέα παμβώτι Γᾶ, μάτερ αὐτοῦ Διός, ἵ τὸν μέγαν Πακτωλόν εὐχρυσον νέμεις, σὲ κάκει, μάτερ πότνι', ἐπηυδόμαν,
PHILOCTETES

I wept, I started to my feet in wrath,
And bitterly I spake, "O tyrannous men,
How dare ye give these arms, my own by right,
My leave unasked, to any man but me?"
Then said Odysseus who was standing by,
"Yes, boy, and rightly are they given to me,
Who rescued both their master and his arms."  
I boiled with rage, I hurled at him abuse
The bitterest tongue could frame, I cursed the man
Who would defraud me of my rightful arms.
He, though not cholerick, challenged thus direct,
Stung to the quick by my retort, replied:
"Thou wast not with us, a malingerer thou!
Take this for answer to thy blustering boasts:
To Scyros with these arms thou ne'er shalt sail."
Thus flouted and abused I left the host,
And now am sailing homewards, robbed by him,
Odysseus, the base villain, basely born.
Yet is he less to blame than those who rule;
For like a commonwealth each armèd host
Perforce is subject to authority,
And all the lawless doings in the world
Spring from ill teaching. All my tale is told.
But whoso hates the Atridae, as do I,
May he find Heaven, no less than me, his friend!

CHORUS

O mother Earth, enthronèd on the hills,
Mother of Zeus himself, who feedest all;
From thee Pactolus draws his brimming rills,
His golden sands; Mother, to thee I call,

1 According to the tradition that Ovid followed (Met. 13. 284) Odysseus rescued the body and arms of Achilles from the fray.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

οτ' ἐσ τοῦτ' Ἀτρειδᾶν ὑβρις πᾶσ' ἐχώρει, ὅτε τὰ πάτρια τεῦχεα παρεδίδοσαν, ἵδω μάκαρα ταυροκτόνων λεοντων ἔφεδρε, τῷ Δαρτίου σέβας ὑπέρτατον.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ἔχοντες, ὃς ἐοικε, σύμβολον σαφὲς λύπης πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ὃ ξένοι, πεπλεύκατε, καὶ μοι προσάδεθ' ὅστε γιγνώσκειν ὅτι ταυτ' ἐξ Ἀτρειδῶν ἔργα κἀ' Ὀδυσσέως. ἔξοιδα γὰρ μν παντὸς ἀν λόγων κακοῦ γλώσσῃ θυγόντα καὶ πανουργίας, ἀρ' ἂς μηδὲν δίκαιον ἐς τέλος μέλλοι ποιεῖν.

ἀλλ' οὗ τι τούτο βαύμ' ἔμοιγ', ἀλλ' εἰ παρῶν 410 Ἀιας ὁ μείζων ταῦθ' ὅρων ἤνείχετο.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὔκ ἦν ἐςτι ζῶν, ὃ ξέν'· οὐ γὰρ ἄν ποτε ζώντος γ' ἐκείνου ταυτ' ἐσυλήθην ἐγώ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

πῶς εἶπας; ἀλλ' ἡ χοῦτος οἴχεται θανῶν;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὡς μηκέτ' ὄντα κεῖνον ἐν φάει νόει.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

οἴμοι τάλας. ἀλλ' οὖχ ὁ Τυδέως γόνος οὐδ' οὐμπολητὸς Σίσυφον Δαερτίφ, οὐ μὴ θάνωσι· τούσδε γὰρ μὴ ζῆν ἔδει.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐ δῆτ'. ἐπίστω τούτο γ'· ἀλλ' καὶ μέγα θάλαυντες εἰσα νῦν ἐν 'Αργείων στρατῷ. 420

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

tί δ'· οὐ παλαιός ἰ πάγαθος φίλος τ' ἐμός,

1 τί δ' ὁ παλαιός (or ὁς τ.) MSS., Meineke corr.
PHILOCTETES

As once I called when, flushed with upstart pride,
   The fierce Atridae 'gainst my master raged,
(O lady who on yokèd lions doth ride,
    Their bloody ravening by thee assuaged,)
What time the tyrants to Laertes' son
The guerdon gave, those arms his sire had won.

PHILOCTETES

Good sirs, ye bring me as a talisman,
A common grief; a plaint attuned to mine.
Full well I recognise in this your tale
The Atridae and Odysseus. He, I warrant,
Would have a hand and lend his tongue to abet
Any conspiracy, any deep-laid plot,
If he could compass some dishonest end.
This is not wonderful; but was indeed
The greater Ajax by, to see and brook it?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Ajax, my friend, was dead; had he been living
They would not thus have robbed me and despoiled.

PHILOCTETES

What say'st thou, boy? is he too dead and gone?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Yea he hath left the light.

PHILOCTETES

   Alas, alas!
But not the son of Tydeus, nor the son
Named of Laertes, bred of Sisyphus;
They die not who should never have been born.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Not they indeed, I warrant; they live on,
And in the Argive host are mighty men.

PHILOCTETES

And what of him, my good old friend and true,
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

Νέστωρ ο Πύλως, ἔστιν; οὗτος γὰρ τὰ γε 
κεῖνων κακ' ἔξηρυκε, βουλεύον εὐφόροι.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
κεῖνος για πράσσει νῦν κακῶς, ἐπεὶ θανῶν 
"Αντίλοχος αὐτῷ φροῦδος, ὃς παρὴν, γόνος.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οἷμοι, δὴ αὐτώ ἄνδρ' ἔλεξας,1 οἷν ἔγω 
ηκιστ' ἀν ἡθέλησ' ὀλολότων κλέειν. 
φεῦ φεῦ· τί δήτα δεῖ σκοπεῖν, ὦθ' οἶδε μὲν 
τεθνάο', 'Οδυσσεὺς δ' ἔστιν αὐτῷ κάνταυθ' ἵνα 
χρῆν ἀντὶ τούτων αὐτόν αὐδάσθαι νεκρῶν; 430

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
σοφὸς παλαιστής κεῖνος· ἀλλὰ χαῖ σοφαὶ 
γνώμαι, Φιλοκτῆτ', ἐμποδίζοντα θαμά.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
φέρ' εἰπὲ πρὸς θεῶν, ποῦ γὰρ ἦν ἑνταῦθα σοι 
Πάτροκλος, ὃς σοῦ πατρὸς ἦν τὰ φιλτατὰ; 440

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
χοῦτος τεθηκὼς ἦν· λόγῳ δέ σ' ἐν βραχεῖ 
τοῦτ' ἐκδειχάξω· πόλεμος υἱὸν ἄνδρ' ἐκὼν 
aἱρεὶ πονηρῶν, ἀλλὰ τοὺς χρηστοὺς ἀεὶ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἐμμαρτυρῶ σοι· καὶ κατ' αὐτὸ τοῦτό γε 
ἀναξίου μὲν φωτὸς ἐξερήσομαι, 
γλῶσσῃ δὲ δεινῶ καὶ σοφοῦ, τί νῦν κυρεῖ.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ποίου δὲ τούτου πλῆν γ' 'Οδυσσέως ἐρεῖς; 450

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οὗ τούτου εἴπον, ἀλλὰ Θερσίτης τις ἦν, 
ὁς οὐκ ἔν μὲν ἐξεῖπεν ἐισάταξ εἰπεῖν, ὅπου 
μὴ δεῖς ἐφ' τούτοις οἴσθ' εἰ ἥν κυρεῖ; 

1 autws dein' ἔλεξας MSS., Jebb corr.
PHILOCTETES
The Pylian Nestor, lives he not? for he
Oft by his wisdom checked their ill designs.

NEOPTOLEMUS
He is not what he once was, since he lost
His best belovèd son, Antilochus.

PHILOCTETES
Alas! thou tell'st me of a double loss,
The two men whom of all I least could spare.
Ah me! What hope is there when two such men
Are taken and Odysseus lives, whose death
Instead of theirs thou hadst by rights announced?

NEOPTOLEMUS
A cunning gamester, but the cunningest,
O Philoctetes, are full often thrown.

PHILOCTETES
But tell me, prithee, where was he the while,
Patroclus, once thy father's bosom friend?

NEOPTOLEMUS
Dead like the rest, for this in sooth is true:
War never slays an evil man by choice,
But still the good.

PHILOCTETES
In that I'll bear thee out.
By the same token, I would ask of one,
A worthless wight, but shrewd and glib of tongue.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Thou mean'st Odysseus, surely?

PHILOCTETES
Not of him
I asked, but of Thersites, one whose tongue
Was ever wagging most when wanted least,
An empty babbler. Know'st thou if he lives?
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ούκ ἐίδον αὐτῶν, ἠσθόμην δὲ ἔτ' ὄντα νῦν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἐμελλ· ἐπεὶ οὐδέν πω κακὸν γ' ἀπώλετο,
ἀλλ' εὖ περιστέλλουσιν αὐτὰ δαίμονες,
καὶ πως τὰ μὲν πανοῦργα καὶ παλιντριβή
χαῖρουσ' ἀναστρέφοντες ἐξ Ἰδίου, τὰ δὲ
δίκαια καὶ τὰ χρήστ' ἀποστελλοῦσ' ἀεὶ.
ποῦ χρῆ τίθεσαι ταῦτα, ποῦ δ' αἰνεῖν, ὅταν
τὰ θεῖ' ἐπαινῶν τοὺς θεοὺς εὖ ῥω κακοὺς;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἐγὼ μέν, ὁ γενεθλοῦν Οἰναῖον πατρός,
τὸ λοιπὸν ᾦδη τηλόθεν τὸ τ' Ἰλιον
καὶ τοὺς Ἀτρείδας εἰσορὼν φυλάξομαι;
ὅπου δ' ὁ χείρων τάγαθοῦ μείζον σθὲνει
κατοφθίνει τὰ χρηστὰ χω δείδης κρατέι,
τοῦτος ἐγὼ τοὺς ἀνδρας οὐ στέρξω ποτέ·
ἀλλ' ἡ πτεραία Σκύρος ἐξαρκοῦσά μοι
ἐσται τὸ λοιπὸν, ὡστε τέρπεσθαι δόμφρ.

νῦν δ' εἴμι πρὸς ναῦν καὶ σύ, Πολυντός τέκνου,
χαίρ' ὡς μέγιστα, χαίρε καί σε δαίμονες
νόσου μεταστήσειαν, ὡς αὐτὸς θέλεις.
ἡμεῖς δ' ἰσομέν, ὡς ὀπτηνίκ' ἀν θεὸς
πλοῦν ἧμιν εἰκή, τηνικαθ' ὀρμώμεθα.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἣν, τέκνον, στέλλασθε;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
καιρὸς γὰρ καλεῖ
πλοῦν μὴ ἵ ἀπόπτοτον μᾶλλον ἦ γύθευν σκοπεῖν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
πρὸς νῦν σε πατρός πρὸς τε μητρός, ὁ τέκνον,
πρὸς τ' εἰ τί σοι κατ' οἰκόν ἐστι προσφιλές,
PHILOCTETES

NEOPTOLEMUS
I saw him not, but heard he was alive.

PHILOCTETES
I thought as much; for evil never dies,
Fostered too well by gods who take delight,
Methinks, to turn back from the gates of hell
All irredeemable rascality,
But speed the righteous on their downward way.
What should I deem of this, how justify
The ways of Heaven, finding Heaven unjust?

NEOPTOLEMUS
For my part, son of an Oetean sire,
I shall take heed henceforward to behold
Troy and the two Atridae from afar.
Where villainy to goodness is preferred,
And virtue withers, and the base hold sway,
Such company I never will frequent.
Enough for me henceforth my native rocks,
My island home in Scyros; there I'll bide.
Now to the ships. Farewell, a fond farewell,
O son of Poeas; may the gods fulfil
Thy heart's desire and heal thee of thy wound!
Now we must leave thee and prepare to sail
Whene'er the gods shall send a favouring breeze.

PHILOCTETES
So soon, my son, departing?

NEOPTOLEMUS
'Tis high time,
Not here, but from the strand to watch the tide.

PHILOCTETES
Oh! in thy father's, in thy mother's name,
By all the sanctities of home, my son,
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ικέτης ικνούμαι, μὴ λάπης μ’ οὔτω μόνον, ἔρημον ἐν κακοῖσι τοῖσοδ’ οἷοις ὅρασις ὄσοιοι τ’ ἐξήκουσας ἐνναίοντα μὲ· ἀλλ’ ἐν παρέργῳ θοῦ με. δυσχέρεια μέν, ἐξοα, πολλὴ τούδε τοῦ φορηματος· ὁμῶς δὲ τλῆθι: τοῖσι γενιαίοισι τοι· τὸ τ’ αἰσχρόν ἐχθρὸν καὶ τὸ χρηστὸν εὐκλεές· σοι δ’ ἐκλυόντι τούτ’ οὐείδος οὐ καλόν, δράσαντι δ’, ὃ παί, πλείστον εὐκλεέας γέρας, ἐὰν μόλω ἴγω ξῶν πρὸς Οὐταῖαν χθόνα. ζθο’· ἡμέρας τοις μόχθοις οὐχ ὁλῆς μιᾶς· τόλμησον. ἐμβαλοῦ μ’ ὅπη θέλεως ἁγαν, εἰς ἀντλίαν, εἰς πρόφαγι, εἰς πρύμνην, ὅποι ἡκιστα μέλλω τούς ἐννύωντας ἀλγυνεῖν. νεῦσον, πρὸς αὐτοῦ Ζηνός ἰκεσίον, τέκνον, πείσθητι· προσπίνω σε γόνασι, καίτερ ὄν ἀκριτωρ ὁ τλήμων, χωλός. ἀλλὰ μὴ μ’ ἀφής ἔρημον οὔτω χωρίς ἀνθρώπων στίθουν, ἀλλ’ ἢ πρὸς οίκον τὸν σὸν ἐκσωσῶν μ’ ἁγαν ἢ πρὸς τὰ Χαλκόδοντος Εὐβοίας σταθμά· κάκειθεν ὦ μοι μακρὸς εἰς Οἰνθν τόλος Τραχινίαν τε δεράδα 1 καὶ τὸν εὐροον Σπερχείων ἔσται· πατρί μ’ ὡς δείξης φίλῳ, δεὶ παλαιὸν εξ’ ὅτου δεδοκ’ ἐγὼ μὴ μοι βεβήκην. πολλὰ γὰρ τοῖς ιγμένοις ἐστελλὰν αὐτὸν ἰκεσίονς πέμπων λυτάς, αὐτόστολον πέμψαντά μ’ ἐκσωσαι δόμους. ἀλλ’ ἢ τέθυκεν ἢ τὰ τῶν διακόνων, ὡς εἰκός, οἶμαι, τοῦμον ἐν σμικρῷ μέρος ποιούμενοι τὸν οἰκαδ’ ἰπευγον στόλον. νῦν δ’, εἰς σε γὰρ πομπόν τε καῦτον ἀγγελον 500

1 δειράδα MSS., Toup corr. Jebb reads δειράδ’ ἢδ’ ἐς εὐροον.
PHILOCTETES

Leave me not, I adjure thee, here alone,
Abandoned to such ills as thou hast seen
And others worse whereof thou hast been told.
Think of me as a stowaway! well I know
The irksomeness of such a passenger.
Bear it! to true nobility of soul
All shame is shameful, honour honourable.
And it would smirch thine honour to decline
This task, my son; to do it, bring thee fame
And glory, if ye carry me alive
To Oeta. Come, 'tis but a day's annoy.
Take heart of courage; stow me where thou wilt—
The hold, the bows, the stern, no matter where—
Wherever I shall least offend my mates.
By Zeus, the god of suppliants, O consent,
O hearken! at thy knees I fall, albeit
A cripple maimed and helpless. Leave me not
An outcast in a land where no man dwells;
But either take me safe to thine own home,
Or to Euboea and Chalcodon's realm,
Whence I may cross to Oeta ('tis not far)
And the Trachinean passes and the stream
Of broad Spercheius, and behold once more
My father. Ah! these weary years I've feared
He must be dead, for messages full oft
I sent by those who passed my way, entreating
That he would fetch me in his own ship home
But either he is dead, or, like enough,
My envoys ('tis the way of envoys) recked
Little of my concerns and hastened home.
But now to thee, my messenger at once

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ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ηκω, συ σώσουν, συ μ' έλεησον, εἰσορῶν ὁς πάντα δεινα κἀπικινδύνως βροτοῖς κεῖται παθείν μὲν εὖν, παθείν δὲ θάτερα. χρή δ' ἐκτὸς οὖντα πημάτων τὰ δεῖν' ὅραν, χῶταν τὶς εὗ ἔξη, τηνικαῦτα τὸν βίον σκοπεῖν μάλιστα, μὴ διαφθαρεῖς λάθη.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀντ.
οίκτιρ', ᾧ ναξζ. πολλῶν ἔλεξεν δυσοίστων πόνων ἄθλ', ολα μηδείς τῶν ἔμον τύχοι φίλων. εἰ δὲ πικρούς, ᾧ ναξζ, ἔχθεις Ἀτρείδας, ἐγὼ μὲν, τὸ κείμων κακῶν τὸ πε κέρδος μετατιθέμενως, ἐνθαπερ ἐπιμέμονεν, ἐπὶ εὐστόλου ταχείας νεώς πορεύσαιμ' ἄν ἐς δόμους, τὰν θεῶν νέμεσιν ἐκφυγών.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὅρα συ μή νῦν μὲν τὶς εὔχερης παρῆς, ὅταν δὲ πλησθῆς τῆς νόσου ξυνουσία, τὸτ' οὐκέθ' αὐτὸς τοῖς λόγοις τούτοις φαυῆς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἡκιστα· τοῦτ' οὖκ ἐσθ' ὅπως ποτ' εἰς ἐμὲ τούνειδος ἐξεῖς ἐνδίκως ὀνειδίσαι.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' αἰσχρὰ μέντοι σοῦ γέ μ' ἐνδεέστερον ἔνως φαυῆι πρὸς τὸ καίριον πονεῖν. ἀλλ' εἰ δοκεῖ, πλέωμεν, ὀρμάσθω ταχὺς· χὴ ναῦς γὰρ ἄξει κοῦκ ἀπαρμηθήσεται. μόνον θεοὶ σφόξοιεν ἐκ τε τήσδε γῆς ἡμᾶς ὅποι τ' ἐνθένδε βουλοίμεσθα πλεῖν.
PHILOCTETES

And saviour, I appeal; save, pity me,
Seeing upon how slippery a place
Fortune for mortals and misfortune stand.
Therefore the man that lives at ease should look
For rocks ahead, and when he prospers most
Watch lest he suffer shipwreck unawares.

CHORUS

Pity, my chief! (Ant.)
Pity a tale of agonizing grief!
Pray God no friend
Of mine may ever come to such an end!
O pity him!
I know thou hatest, prince, the Atridae grim;
Turn to his gain
The villainy they plotted for his bane.
O take him home!
With him let our brave vessel cleave the foam;
There would he be;
Thus from the dread Avengers shall we flee.

NEOPTOLEMUS

See that your present kindliness be not
A passing mood, lest after, when ye come
In closer contact with his malady,
Ye falter and belie these promises.

CHORUS

No, I shall ne'er be open to such charge.

NEOPTOLEMUS

'Twere shame indeed should I less zealous prove
Than thou to help a stranger in his need.
So, if you please, we'll sail; let him aboard;
Our ship methinks will not refuse her aid.
Only may heaven convey us from this shore
Safe to the haven whither we would sail!
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὁ φίλτατον μὲν ἡμαρ, ἡδιστὸς δ' ἀνήρ, φίλοι δὲ ναῦται, πῶς ἀν ύμιν ἐμφανὴς ἔρχῃ γενομένη, ὡς μ' ἐθεσθε προσφιλή; ἵωμεν, ὦ παῖ, προσκύναστε τὴν ἔσω ἄοικον εἰσοίκησιν, ὡς με καλ μάθης ἄφ' ὄν διέξων ὡς τ' ἔφυν εὐκάρδιος. οἴμαι γὰρ οὐδ' ἂν ὁμμασίων μόνην θέαν ἄλλον λαβόντα πλὴν ἐμοῦ τλήναι τάδε· ἐγὼ δ' ἀνάγκη προὔμαθον στέργειν κακά.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἐπίσχετον, μάθωμεν· ἄνδρε γὰρ δύο, ὦ μὲν νεώς σής ναυβάτης, ὦ δ' ἄλλαθρους, χορεῖτον, ὅν μαθόντες αὖθις εἰσιτον.

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

Ἄχιλλεως παί, τόνδε τὸν ξυνέμποτον, ὅς ἦν νεώς σής σὺν δυοὶν ἄλλων φῦλαξ, ἐκέλευσ' ἐμοὶ σε ποῦ κυρῶν εἰς φράσαι, ἐπειπέρ ἀντέκυρον, δοξάζων μὲν οὐ, τύχῃ δὲ πως πρὸς ταῦτον ὁμοσθεῖς πέδων. πλέων γὰρ ὄς ναύκληρος οὐ πολλῷ στόλῳ ἀπ' Ἰλίου πρὸς οἰκον ἐς τὴν εὐβοτρυν Πεπάρθον, ὡς ἦκουσα τοὺς ναῦτας ὧτι σοὶ πάντες εἰείν συννεανστοληκότες, ἔδοξέ μοι μὴ σίγα, πρὶν φράσαιμι σοί, τὸν πλοῦν ποιῶσθαι, προστυχόντι τῶν ἰσων. αὐδὲν σὺ ποῦ κάτοικα τῶν σαυτοῦ πέρι, ἂ τοίσιν Ἀργείοισιν ἀμφὶ σοὶ νέα βουλεύματ' ἐστί, κοῦ μόνου βουλεύματα, ἀλλ' ἔργα δρόμεν', οὐκέτ' ἐξαργούμενα.
PHILOCTETES

PHILOCTETES
O gladdest day, O dearest, dearest friend,
And ye, kind sailors, would that I could prove
By acts my heartfelt gratitude! My son,
Let us be going, but before I go
Salute this homeless home, that thou mayst learn
How hard my life, how great my hardship.
I think scarce any other man than I,
Had he but seen it once, could have endured;
But I was schooled by hard necessity.

[NEOPTOLEMUS is about to enter the cave with him.

CHORUS

Stay, for I see two men approach, the one
A sailor from thy ship, and one a stranger.
First let us learn their errand, then go in.

Enter two sailors, one disguised as a Merchant Captain

SAILOR

Son of Achilles, finding I was moored
In the same roadstead as thyself (by chance
Not of intent), I asked thy shipmate here,
Who with two other hands was left aboard
On guard, to to me where thou might’st be found.
For I, the captain of a single craft,
Was on my way from Ilium, homeward bound,
To Peparethus, for its vintage famed;
And learning that the crew I met ashore
Were all thy fellow-voyagers, I thought
It would be well, before I sailed away,
To have a word with thee and earn my dues.
I doubt thou knowest naught of thy concerns—
What new designs the Argives have upon thee:
Designs, say I? Nay rather, plots full hatched.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ’ ἡ χάρις μὲν τῆς προμηθίας, ξένε, εἰ μὴ κακὸς πέφυκα, προσφιλής μενεῖ· φράσον δ’ ἀπερ, γ’ ἐλεξάς, ὡς μάθω τί μοι νεώτερον βούλευμι ἀπ’ Ἀργείων ἔχεις.

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

φρούδοι διώκοντές σε ναυτικῷ στόλῳ Φοίνιξ ὁ πρέσβυς ο’ ἦν τε Θησέως κόροι.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὡς ἐκ βίας μ’ ἄξοντες ἡ λόγοις πάλιν;

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

οὐκ οἶδ’. ἀκούσας δ’ ἄγγελος πάρειμι σοι.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἡ ταὐτα δὴ Φοίνιξ τε χοί ξυπναυβάται ὁυτω καθ’ ὀρμὴν δρῶσιν Ἅτρειδῶν χάριν;

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

ὡς ταῦτα ἐπίστω δρόμεν’, οὐ μέλλοντ’ ἔτι.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

πῶς οὖν Ὀδυσσεύς πρὸς τάδ’ οὐκ αὐτάγγελος πλεῖν ἦν ἔτοιμος; ἡ φόβος τις εἰργε νῦν;

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

κεῖνος γ’ ἔπ’ ἄλλον ἄνδρ’ ὁ Τυδέως τε πάις ἐστελλόν, ἤνικ’ ἐξανηγόμην ἐγώ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

πρὸς ποιον αὖ τόνδ’ αὐτὸς οὐδυσσεύς ἐπλει.;

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

ἡν δὴ τις—ἀλλὰ τόνδε μοι πρῶτον φράσον τίς ἐστίν· ἄν λέγης δὲ μὴ φωνεῖ μέγα.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὅδ’ ἐσθ’ ὁ κεῖνος σοι Φιλοκτήτης, ξένε.
PHILOCTETES

NEOPTOLEMUS
I shall remember, sir, thy zealous care
On my behalf; I am no graceless churl.
But tell me more precisely: let me learn
These strange designs against me of the Greeks.

SAILOR
Old Phoenix has embarked with Theseus’ sons
On a war galley in pursuit of thee.

NEOPTOLEMUS
To bring me back by force or of my will?

SAILOR
I know not; I report but what I heard.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Are Phoenix and his co-mates fired with zeal
To pleasure the Atridae? can this be?

SAILOR
’Tis no surmise of mine; they are on the way.

NEOPTOLEMUS
How came it that Odysseus had no mind
To sail on his own business? Was he afraid?

SAILOR
He and the son of Tydeus were engaged
In quest of yet another, when I sailed.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Another? Who this second man for whom
Odysseus sailed himself?

SAILOR
A certain one...
Stay, who is this beside thee? tell me first
His name, and breathe it softly in my ear.

NEOPTOLEMUS
This, sir, is Philoctetes of world fame.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ
μή νῦν μ’ ἔρη τὰ πλεύοι, ἀλλ’ ὅσον τάχος ἐκπλεῖσα σεαυτὸν ξύλλαβον ἔκ τῆς δε γῆς.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
τί φησιν, ὦ παῖ; τί με κατὰ σκότον ποτὲ διεμπολα λόγοισι πρὸς σ’ ὁ ναυβάτης;

ΝΕΟΠΟΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
οὺκ οἴδα πω τί φησιν. δει δ’ αὐτὸν λέγειν εἰς φῶς δ’ λέξει, πρὸς σὲ καμὲ τούσδε τε.

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ
ὦ σπέρμ’ Ἀχιλλέως, μὴ με διαβάλῃς στρατῷ λέγονθ’ ἃ μὴ δεῖ. πόλλ’ ἔγω κεῖνον ὑπὸ δρῶν ἀντιπάσχω χρηστά θ’, σ’ ἀνήρ πένης.

ΝΕΟΠΟΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἔγω εἰμ’ Ἀτρείδας δυσμενῆς. οὗτος δὲ μοι φίλος μέγιστος, οὔνεκ’ Ἀτρείδας στυγεῖ. δεὶ δὴ σ’ ἐμοῦ ἐλθόντα προσφιλῆ, λόγων κρύψαι πρὸς ἡμᾶς μηδὲν’ ὅν ἀκήκοας.

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ
ὅρα τί ποιεῖς, παῖ.

ΝΕΟΠΟΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
σκοπῶ καγὼ πάλαι.

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ
σὲ θῆσομαι τῶν’ αίτιον.

ΝΕΟΠΟΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ποιοῦν λέγων.

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ
λέγω. τ’ τοῦτον ἀνδρὲ τῶδ’ ὅπερ κλύεις, ὁ Τυδέως παῖς ἢ τ’ ὁδυσσέως βλα, διώμοσι τι πλέοσιν ἢ μὴν ἢ λόγῳ πείσαντες ἄξειν ἢ πρὸς ἰσχύος κράτος.
PHILOCTETES

SAILOR
Stop not for further questioning! Remove!
Fly with all speed thou mayest from this land.

PHILOCTETES
What says he, boy? What does he whisper thee,
As though I were a piece of merchandise.

NEOPTOLEMUS
I know not yet, but he shall tell his tale
Aloud, for thee and me and these to hear.

SAILOR
Child of Achilles, charge me not to the host
For blabbing secrets. I’m a poor man and
Greatly beholden to the generals,
Who’ve paid me for my service handsomely.

NEOPTOLEMUS
The Atridae are my enemies, and this man
Because he hates them is my dearest friend.
And, if indeed thou comest as a friend,
Thou art bound to tell me all that thou hast learnt.

SAILOR
Take heed, boy, what thou’rt asking.

NEOPTOLEMUS
I have heeded.

SAILOR
Then thou must bear the consequence.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Say on.

SAILOR
Hear then: the two I named, Odysseus and
The son of Tydeus now are hither bound
To fetch this man, and they have sworn an oath
To bring him by persuasion or by force.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

καὶ ταῦτ’ Ἀχαιοὶ πάντες ἤκουον σαφῶς ὁδυσσεῖως λέγοντος. οὕτος γὰρ πλέον τὸ θάρσος εἶχε θατέρου δράσειν τάδε.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ.

τίνος δ’ Ἀτρείδαι τοῦ ἀγαν οὕτω χρόνῳ τοσῳδ’ ἐπεστρέφοντο πράγματος χάριν, διὸ ἐδικοῦ ἥδις χρόνου ἐκβεβληκότες; τίς ὁ πόθος αὐτοῦ ἵκετ’, ἥ θεοῦ βία καὶ νέμεσις, οἱ περ ἔργ’ ἔμυνουσιν κακᾶ;

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

ἐγὼ σε τοῦτ’, ἰσωσ γὰρ οὐκ ἀκήκοας, πᾶν ἐκδιδάξω. μάντις ἦν τις εὐγενής, Πριάμοι μὲν νιός, ὄνομα δ’ ἄνωμάζετο Ἕλενως, δὴ οὕτω νυκτὸς ἔξελθὼν μόνος, ἀρόντ’ ἀκούων αἰσχρὰ καὶ λαοβῆτ’ ἐπὶ δόλλως ὁδυσσεῖς εἶλε. δέσμιον τ’ ἄγων ἐδεις’. Ἀχαιοὶς ἔς μέσον, θῆραν καλῆν δὴ τὰ τ’ ἀλλ’ αὐτοῖς πάντ’ ἐθέσπισεν καὶ τὰ πλ’ Ὁρῖα πέργαμ’ ὡς ὦ μῆ ποτε πέρσοιεν, εἰ μὴ τοῦτε πείσαντες λόγῳ ἄγωντο νήσου τῆς’ ἐφ’ ἦς ναὶεί ταῦτ᾽.

καὶ ταῦθ’ ὅπως ἄκουσ’ ὁ Δαέρτων τόκος τοῦ μάντιν εἰπότ᾽, εὐθέως ὑπέσχετο τόν ἄνδρ’ Ἀχαιοῖς τόνδε δηλώσειν ἄγων’ οὐκ οὖν μὲν μάλισθ’ ἐκούσιοι λαβὼν, εἰ μὴ θέλοι δ’, ἄκοντα· καὶ τοῦτον καρά τέμνειν ἐφείτῳ τῷ θέλοντι μὴ τυχών. ἄκουσας, ὦ παῖ, πάντα· τὸ σπεύδειν δὲ σοι καὶ τῷ παραινῶ κεὶ τίνος κήδει πέρι.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

οἶμοι τάλας· ἡ κείνος, ἡ πάσα βλάβη, ἐμ’ εἰς Ἀχαιοὺς ὀμοσεν πείσασ στελεῖν;

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PHILOCTETES

This by Odysseus plainly was professed
In presence of the host; for he, more bold
Than his co-partner, staked his credit on it.

NEOPTOLEMUS

But wherefore now, after the lapse of years
Should the Atridae be concerned about
A man they had abandoned and forgot?
Was it compassion touched them, or the dread
Of retribution and the avenging gods?

SAILOR

A matter that perchance to thee is strange
I will unfold. There was a high born seer,
A son of Priam, Helenus was his name.
Him that vile wretch—what epithet can match
His utter villainy?—that sly old fox,
Odysseus, on a nightly prowl waylaid,
Bound, and displayed him to the Argive host,
A goodly prize. Much else of grave import
The prophet uttered, and he spake this word:
"Ne’er can ye take the citadel of Troy
Till by persuasion ye have won him over
And brought him from the island where he bides."
Hearing the prophet’s word, Odysseus straight
Engaged himself to bring the man away
And show him to the host. "Willing" (he said),
"I hope, but at the worst, against his will."
He staked his head on the venture; any one
Who chose might be his headsman if he failed.
Thou hast heard all, my son; be warned in time;
Take heed for thine own safety and thy friend’s.

PHILOCTETES

Ah me! did that arch-felon swear indeed
To bring me by persuasion to the Greeks?
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

πεισθήσομαι γὰρ ὁδὸ καὶ "Ἀιδὼν θανῷν πρὸς φῶς ἀνελθεῖν, ὥσπερ οὐκεῖνον πατήρ.

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

οὐκ οἶδ᾿ ἐγὼ ταῦτ᾿. ἀλλ᾿ ἐγὼ μὲν εἰμ᾿ ἐπὶ ναῦν, σφῶν δ᾿ ὅπως ἀριστα συμφέροι θεὸς.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐκον τάδ᾿, ὦ παῖ, δείνα, τὸν Δαερτίον ἐμ᾿ ἐπίσαι ποτ᾿ ἀν λόγοις μαλθακοῖς δεῖξαι νέως ἄγοντ᾿ ἐν Ἀργείωις μέσους; οὐθ᾿ ὑσσον ἀν τῆς πλείας ἐχάσης ἐμοὶ κλύουμ᾿ ἐχίδνης, ἢ μ᾿ ἐθηκεν ὅδ᾿ ἀπον. ἀλλ᾿ ἤστ᾿ ἐκεῖνῳ πάντα λεκτά, πάντα δὲ τολμητά· καὶ νῦν οἶδ᾿ ὅθονει ἦχεται. ἀλλ᾿, ὦ τέκνον, χωρῶμεν, ὃς ἡμᾶς πολύ πέλαγος ὄριζη τῆς Ὀδυσσέως νεώς. ἰώμεν· ἢ τοι καίριος σπονδή πόνου λήξαντος ὑπον κανάπαυλαν ἡγαγεν.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκον ἐπειδὰν πνεῦμα τούκ πρόφας ἀνή, τότε στελοῦμεν· νῦν γὰρ ἀντιοστατεῖ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἄει καλὸς πλοῦς ἐσθ᾿, ὅταν φεύγῃς κακά.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ, ἀλλὰ κάκεινοισι ταῦτ ἐναντία.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐκ ἐστὶ λησταῖς πνεῦμι ἐναντιούμενον, ὅταν παρῇ κλέψαι τι χάρπάσαι βία.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ᾿ εἰ δοκεῖ, χωρῶμεν, ἐνδοθεν λαβῶν ὅτου σε χρεία καὶ πόθος μάλιστ᾿ ἔχει.
PHILOCTETES

As soon by prayers shall I be brought again
From death, as was his father,¹ to the light.

SAILOR

That's not for me to say, I must be going
To join my ship. Farewell, and may the gods
Be with you both and order all things well.

PHILOCTETES

What say'st thou, boy? That he, Laertes' son,
Should think to wheedle me aboard his ship,
And make a show of me to the Greek host!
Is it not monstrous? Sooner would I heed
My mortal foe, the snake that crippled me.
But he—no word, no practice is too vile
For him to stick at. He will come for sure.
Haste thee, my son, and put a many leagues
Of ocean 'twixt Odysseus and our ship.
Bestir ye! Who in season labours best,
His labours ended, has the sweetest rest.

NEOPTOLEMUS

All in good time; soon as the headwind drops
We will weigh anchor; now 'tis in our teeth.

PHILOCTETES

To those who fly from ill all winds are fair.

NEOPTOLEMUS

But this wind's contrary for them no less.

PHILOCTETES

For pirates no wind's adverse, when there's chance
Of pillaging or robbery under arms.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Well, as thou wilt, we'll sail; but from the cave
Take anything thou needest or dost prize.

¹ Sisyphus, the reputed father of Odysseus, ordered his wife to leave his body unburied and so obtained leave from Pluto to return to earth in order to punish her impiety.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

αλλ' ἔστιν δὲν δεῖ, καίπερ οὐ πολλῶν ἀπο.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

tί τοθ' ὃ μὴ νεώς γε τῆς ἐμῆς ἐπὶ;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

φῦλλον τί μοι πάρεστιν, φ' μάλιστ' ἄει
κοιμῶ τόδ' ἔλκος, ὡστε πραύνειν πάνυ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

αλλ' ἐκφερ' αὐτό. τί γὰρ ἔτ' ἀλλ' ἐρᾶς λαβεῖν;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

eὶ μοι τι τόξων τῶν ἀπημελημένων
παρερρύηκεν, ὡς λήπω μὴ τῷ λαβεῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἡ ταύτα γὰρ τὰ κλεινὰ τόξ᾽ ἀ νῦν ἔχεις;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

tαὐτ', οὐ γὰρ ἀλλ' ἐστ', ἀλλ' ἀ βαστάζω χεροῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀρ' ἔστιν ὡστε κἀγγυθεν θέαν λαβεῖν
καὶ βαστάσαι με προσκύσαι θ' ὡστερ θεόν;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

σοὶ γ', ὃ τέκνων, καὶ τοῦτο κάλλο τῶν ἐμῶν
ὀποῖοι ἀν σοι ξυμφέρῃ γενήσεται.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

καὶ μὴν ἐρῶ γε, τὸν δ' ἔρωθ' οὔτως ἔχω·
eἰ μοι θέμις, θέλωμ' ἀν· eἰ δὲ μὴ, πάρεις.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὅσιά τε φωνεῖς ἔστι τ', ὃ τέκνων, θέμις,
δὲ γ' ἦλιον τόδ' εἰσορᾶν ἐμοὶ φάος
μόνος δέδωκας, ὃς χθόν' Οἰταλαν ἰδείν,
δὲ πατέρα πρέσβειν, δὲ φίλους, δὲ τῶν ἐμῶν

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PHILOCTETES

PHILOCTETES
My store is scant, but certain things I need.

NEOPTOLEMUS
What that thou wilt not find on board my ship?

PHILOCTETES
A herb of wondrous virtue wherewithal
I use to mollify and lull my wound.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Then bring it with thee. What else wouldst thou take?

PHILOCTETES
Some shafts, that may have dropped by accident,
Lest a chance-comer find them, I would fetch.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Is that then in thy hands the famous bow?

PHILOCTETES
This and none other is the famous bow.

NEOPTOLEMUS
May I have leave to gaze upon it close,
Handle it, aye adore it as a god?

PHILOCTETES
Right willingly, my son, and aught beside
That I can do to profit thee, command.

NEOPTOLEMUS
I have this longing, I confess, but if
My longing seem not lawful, let it be.

PHILOCTETES
A pious scruple; but this privilege,
My son, is thine by right, for thou alone
Hast given me to behold the light of day,
And Óeta, and my aged sire, and friends;
For when I lay beneath my enemies' heel,
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ἐχθρῶν μ’ ἐνερθεν ὄντ’ ἀνέστησας πέρα.
θάρσει, παρέσται ταυτά σοι καὶ θυγγάνειν
καὶ δόντι δοῦναι κόλπεν ξασθαι βροτῶν
ἀρετῆς ἔκατι τῶν ἐπιφανῶν μόνων ἐνεργετῶν γὰρ καῦτος αὐτ’ ἐκτησάμην.

ΝΕΟΠΟΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
οὐκ ἄχθομαι σ’ ἴδων τε καὶ λαβὼν φίλον
ὁστις γὰρ εὗ δρᾶν εὗ παθῶν ἐπίσταται,
pαυτὸς γένοιτ’ ἀν κτήματος κρείσσων φίλοσ.
χωρίς ἂν εἰσώ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ
καὶ σέ γ’ εἰσάξω· τὸ γὰρ νοσοῦν ποθεῖ σε ξυμπαραστάτην λαβέων.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
λόγῳ μὲν ἐξῆκουσ’, ὅπωτα δ’ οὐ μάλα,
στρ. α’
tὸν πελάταν λέκτρων ποτὲ τῶν Δίως
cατὰ δρομάδ’ ἀμπυκα δέσμων ὡς ἐβαλεν1 πάγ-
κρατῆς Κρόνου παῖς.

ἀλλον δ’ οὔτω ἐγωγ’ οἶδα κλύων οὐδ’ ἑσίδων μοίρα
tοῦδ’ ἔχθιοι συντυχόντα
θνατῶν, ὃς οὔτ’ ἔρξας τιν’ οὗ τι ἄνοσφίσας,
ἀλλ’ ἵσος ὥς ἵσοις ἀνήρ,
ἀλλυθ’ ἀδ’ ἀναξίως.

τόδε τοι θαυμά μ’ ἔχει,
pῶς ποτε πῶς ποτ’ ἀμφιπλάκτων ἤθιων μόνος
κλύων,
pῶς ἀρα πανδάκρυτων οὕτω βιοταν κατέσχεν·

ἀντ. α’

ἐν’ αὐτὸς ἂν πρόσουρος, οὐκ ἔχων βάσιν,
οὐδέ τιν’ ἐγχώρων κακογείτονα,

1 ἐβαλεν κατ’ ἀμπυκα δ’ δρομάδα δέσμων ὡς ἐλαβ’ ο’ MSS.,
Schneidewin corr. 2 οὕτε MSS., Schneidewin corr.

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PHILOCTETES

'Twas thou upliftedst me above their heads,
It shall be thine to handle and return;
Fear not, and thou shalt boast that thou alone
Of mortals, for thy worth, hast handled it.
'Twas for a service done it came to me.¹

NEOPTOLEMUS

'Tis pleasant to have found and proved a friend;
For him who good for good returns I hold
A friend more precious than unnumbered gold.
Now go within.

PHILOCTETES

That will I, and entreat
Thine escort, for my ailment craves thine aid.

(They enter the cave.)

CHORUS

I saw him not, yet fame affirms the tale
Of one who dared the bed of Zeus assail.
Him to the wheel that never stays its round
Of torture, the great son of Kronos bound.
    But, save of him alone,
To me no sadder fate is known
    Than of this saddest wight,
Or by report or sight:
Poor innocent who here to death art done!
    He robbed or wrongèd none
I marvel how thus desolate, all forlorn,
These long long years of anguish he hath borne,
Hearing the breakers gride the cold grey stones,

(ANT. 1)

Himself for neighbour to himself he groans;
    Limping with crippled feet,
    He treads his weary beat;

¹ For kindling the funeral-pyre of Heracles on Mount Oeta.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

παρ’ φ’ στόνον ἀντίτυπον βαρυβρῶτ’ ἀποκλαύσειν αἰματηρῶν
δε τάν θερμοστάταιν αἰμάδα κηκισμέναν ἐλκέων ἐνθῆρον ποδὸς ἦπιοισι
φύλλοις κατευνάσειεν, εἰ τις ἐμπέσοι, φορβάδος ἐκ γαίας ἐλών
eἰρπε γὰρ ἄλλοτ’ ἄλλαχα τὸτ’ ἂν εἰλυόμενος
παῖς ἀτερ ὡς φίλας τιθήμας ὃθεν εὐμάρει ὑπάρχου πόρον, ἀνίκ’ ἐξανείη δακέθυμος ἀτα’

στρ. β’

οὐ φορβάν ἱερᾶς γὰς σπόρον, οὐκ ἄλλων ἀίρων τῶν νεκρόμεσθ’ ἀνέρες ἀλφησταί,
πλὴν ἔξ ἀκυβόλων εἰ ποτὲ τόξων πτανοῖς ἵοις ἀνύσεις γαστρὶ φορβάν.
ὁ μελέα ψυχά,
ὅς μηδ’ οἰνοχύτου πώματος ἡσθῆ δεκέτει χρόνῳ,
λεύσσων δ’ ὅπου γυνὴ στατῶν εἰς υδώρ, ἀεὶ προσενώμα.

ἀντ. β’

νῦν δ’ ἀνδρῶν ἄγαθῶν παιδὸς ὑπαντήσας εὐδαιμῶν ἀνύσει καὶ μέγας ἐκ κείσων
δὲ νῦν ποντοπόρῳ δούρατι, πλήθει πολλῶν μηνῶν, πατρίαν ἄγει πρὸς αὐλὰν
Μαλιάδων νυμφάν Σπερχειοῦ τε παρ’ ὀχθας, ἵν’ ὁ χάλκασσις ἄνηρ
θεοῖς πλάθει πατρὸς τ’ θείω πυρὶ παμφαίης,
Οἰτας ὑπὲρ ὀχθων.

1 πᾶσι MSS., Jebb corr.
PHILOCTETES

No comrade by
To give him sigh for sigh,
No friend in whose responsive ear to pour
His woes—the anguish of his festering sore;
To quell the burning rage,
The throbs assuage
With simples gathered from the kindly soil;
But 'twixt the spasms he must crawl and moil
To find the herb, a spell to lay the curse,
Like some weak infant parted from its nurse.

Not his to sow the seed
Or on the largesse feed
That boon earth showers on all the sons of men;
Happy, if now and then
The bolt from his unerring bow can wing
Some living thing.
Poor wretch, who ten long years athirst did pine,
Without one draught of soul-refreshing wine,
But sought some stagnant pool
His parchèd throat to cool.

Now hath he found a champion good and true,
And by his woes ennobled shall renew
His pristine fame. The tale of months complete,
Home shall he journey with our homing fleet.
There on Spercheios' marge, his ancient home,
The haunt of Malian naiads, he shall roam,
Where the famed hero of the brazen shield,
His full divinity in flames revealed
And in a fiery car ascending high
O'er Oeta was translated to the sky.
ΦΙΛΟΚΘΗΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἐρ π', εἰ θέλεις. τί δὴ ποθ' ὡδ' ἐξ οὐδενός
λόγου σιωπᾶς κἀπόπληκτος ὡδ' ἔχει;
ΦΙΛΟΚΘΗΤΗΣ
ἀἀ, ἀἀ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
τί δ' ἕστιν;
ΦΙΛΟΚΘΗΤΗΣ
οὐδὲν δεινόν· ἕλλ' ἢθ', ὁ τέκνον.
ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
μῶν ἀλγος ἵσχεις τῆς παρεστώσης νόσου;
ΦΙΛΟΚΘΗΤΗΣ
οὐ δὴτ' ἐγὼγ', ἕλλ' ἄρτι κοιφίζειν δοκῶ.
ὡ̣ θεοί.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
τί τοὺς θεοὺς ὡδ' ἀναστένων καλεῖς;
ΦΙΛΟΚΘΗΤΗΣ
σωτήρας αὐτοὺς ἥπιοις θ' ἡμῖν μολεῖν.
ἀἀ, ἀἀ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
τί ποτὲ πέπονθας; οὐκ ἔρεις, ἕλλ' ὡδ' ἐσεὶ
συγηλῶς; ἐν κακῷ δὲ τῷ φαίνει κυρῶν.
ΦΙΛΟΚΘΗΤΗΣ
ἀπόλωλα, τέκνον, κοῦ δυνήσομαι κακὸν
κρυψάι παρ' ὑμῖν, ἀτταταί· διέρχεται
diérχetai. δύστηνος, ὃ τάλας ἐγὼ.
ἀπόλωλα, τέκνον· βρύκομαι, τέκνον· παπαί,
ἀπαππαπαί, παπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπαπα.
πρὸς θεῶν, πρόχειρον εἰ τί σοι, τέκνον.,πάρα
ξῖφος χεροῖν, πάταξον εἰς ἄκρον πόδα.
ἀμάμησον ὥς τάχιστα· μὴ φείσῃ βίον.
ὡ', ὁ παῖ.

1 Erfurdt added δ'.
PHILOCTETES

NEOPTOLEMUS
Be moving if it please thee . . . Why, what means
This sudden silence, this amazedness?

PHILOCTETES
Ah me! Ah me!

NEOPTOLEMUS
What is it?

PHILOCTETES
A mere nothing, boy; go on.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Thou feelest thine old malady again?

PHILOCTETES
No, a mere twinge; I think 'tis passing now—
O God!

NEOPTOLEMUS
Why groan aloud and call on God?

PHILOCTETES
To save me and deliver me. . . . Ah me!

NEOPTOLEMUS
What ails thee? Wilt not tell me? Wilt not speak?
That something troubles thee is very plain.

PHILOCTETES
My son, I am lost, undone! Impossible
To hide it longer from you; lost, undone!
It stabs me, stabs me through and through and
through.
Ah me! ah me! ah me!
For heaven's sake, if thou hast a sword at hand,
Draw it, my son, strike swiftly, at a stroke
Cut off this foot, no matter if it kill me;
Quick, quick, my son!
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
τί δ’ ἔστων οὕτω νεοχύρων ἐξαλφητῆς, ὦτου τοσήρδ’ ἵνα γην καὶ στόνον σαντού ποεῖ;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οἶσθ’, ὦ τέκνου;

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
τί δ’ ἔστων;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οἶσθ’, ὦ παι;

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
τί σοί;

οὐκ οἶδα.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
πῶς οὐκ οἶσθα; παππαπαππαπαϊ.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
δεινὸν γε τοῦπίσαγμα τοῦ νοσήματος.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
δεινὸν γὰρ οὐδὲ ῥητῶν· ἄλλ’ οἰκτιρέ με.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
τί δήτα δράσω;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
μὴ με ταρβήσας προδόφος· ἥμει γὰρ αὐτῇ διὰ χρόνου πλάνοις ἵσως ὡς ἐξεπλήσθη.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἰὼ ἰὼ δύστηνε σύ,
δύστηνε δήτα διὰ πόνων πάντων φανέροις. 760
βούλει λάβωμαι δήτα καὶ θίγω τί σου;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
μὴ δήτα τοῦτὸ γ’· ἄλλα μοι τὰ τόξ’ ἐλὼν τάδ’, ὡσπερ ἤτοι μ’ ἀρτίως, ἔως ἀμή

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PHILOCTETES

NEOPTOLEMUS
What is this sudden fit
That makes thee moan so and bewail thyself?

PHILOCTETES
Thou knowest, boy.

NEOPTOLEMUS
What is it?

PHILOCTETES
Thou knowest.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Nay,

What ails thee?

PHILOCTETES
Knowest thou not? Ah me! Ah me!

NEOPTOLEMUS
The burden of thy pain is terrible.

PHILOCTETES
Yea, terrible, past words. O pity me.

NEOPTOLEMUS
What shall I do?

PHILOCTETES
Fear me not, leave me not:
My ailment loves to play the truant, stray
Awhile, and then come home again, belike
Tired with its holiday.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Alas! poor wretch,
Wretched indeed in all thy suffering proved.
Wilt lean on me? Shall I take hold of thee?

PHILOCTETES
Nay touch me not, I beg, but take this bow
Which thou didst crave to handle, and until
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

tὸ πῆμα τούτο τῆς νόσου τὸ νῦν παρὰν, σφῖς' αὐτὰ καὶ φύλασσε. λαμβάνει γὰρ οὖν ὕπνος μ', ὅταν περ τὸ κακὸν ἐξίη τόδε· κοὐκ ἐστὶ λῆξαι πρότερον· ἀλλ' ἐὰν χρεῶν ἐκθλον εὖδειν. ἢν δὲ τῷ τῷ χρόνῳ μόλως' ἐκείνω, πρὸς θεῶν ἐφελεῖν ἐκόντα μηδ' ἄκοντα μηδὲ τῷ τεχνῆ
κείνως μεθείναι ταῦτα, μὴ σαυτόν θ' ἁμα κἀμ', ὅντα σαυτοῦ πρόστροπον, κτείνας γένη.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
θάρσει προνοίας σφίν.· οὐ δοθήσεται πλὴν σοὶ τε κάμοι. ἔξω τὔχη δὲ πρόσφερε.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἰδοὺ δέχου, παί· τὸν φθόνον δὲ πρόσκυσον μὴ σοι γενέσθαι πολύπον' αὐτὰ μηδ' ὅπως ἐμοί τε καὶ τῷ πρόσθ' ἐμοῦ κεκτημένω.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ὁ θεοί, γένοιτο ταῦτα νῦν.· γένοιτο δὲ πλοῦς οὐρίδος τε κεύσταλής ὅποι ποτὲ θεοὺς δικαιοὶ χω στόλος πορσύνεται.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἀλλ' οὖν δέδοικα μὴ ἀτέλεστ' εὐχη, τέκνων.1 στάξει γὰρ αὐ μοι φοίνιον τὸν ἐκ βυθοῦ
κηκίον αἶμα, καὶ τὶ προσδοκῶ νέουν.
παπαῖ, φεῦ.
παπαῖ μᾶλ', ὁ πούς, οἶα μ' ἐργάσει κακά.
προσέρχεται,
προσέρχεται τὸν ἐγγύς. οἴμοι μοι τάλας.
ἐχέτε τὸ πράγμα.· μὴ φύγητε μηδαμή.
ἀτταται.

1 ἀλλ' δέδοικ', δ' παῖ, μὴ μ' ἀτέλης εὐχή MSS. The text is a combination of Triclinius and Jebb.

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PHILOCTETES

The spasm that now disables me is gone,
Keep it and guard it well; for when the fit
Passes, a drowsiness comes over me;
And sleep's the only medicine that gives ease.
So let me slumber undisturbed, and if
They come the while, I charge thee, boy, by heaven,
Let them not have it, yield not up the bow,
Willing or nilling, or by force or fraud;
Lest thou should'st prove a double murderer,
And slay thyself and me thy suppliant.

NEOPTOLEMUS

I will be vigilant, fear not; none shall have it
But thou and I alone; so give it to me.
Good luck attend it!

PHILOCTETES

Take it then, my son,
But first propitiate the Jealous God,
Lest it should prove to thee a bane, as erst
To me and to its former lord it proved.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Heaven grant this prayer to both of us, and grant
A fair and prosperous voyage whithersoe'er
Our destined course is set and heaven ordains!

PHILOCTETES

Alas, my son! I fear thy prayers are vain;
For once again upwelling from the wound
The black blood trickles auguring a relapse.
Out, out upon thee, damnèd foot! Alack!
What plague hast yet in store for me? Alack!
It prowls, it stalks amain, ready to spring.
Woe! Now ye know my torture, leave me not!
Ah me! Ah me!
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὁ ξένες Κεφαλλήνης, εἰσε σοι διάμπερες στέρνου ἔχοιτ' ἀληθείας ἦδε. φεῦ, παπαῖ, παπαὶ μὰλ' αὖθις: ὁ διπλοὶ στρατηλάται, Ἀγάμεμνον, ὁ Μενέλας, πῶς ἀν ἀντ' ἐμοῦ τὸν ἰσον χρόνον τρέφοιτε τήν ἐν τῆς νόσου; ἰὼ μοι.

ὁ Θάνατε Θάνατε, πῶς ἂεὶ καλούμενος ὁμως κατ' ἓμαρ, όι δύνα μολείν ποτε; ὁ τέκνον ὁ γενναίον, ἀλλὰ συλλαβὼν τῷ Δημηνίῳ τῷ ἀνακαλομένῳ πυρὶ ἐμπρήσου, ὁ γενναίες κἀγὼ τὸ ποτε τὸν τοῦ Διὸς παῖδ' ἀντὶ τῶν τῶν ὄπλων, ὧ νῦν σος σφέξεις, τοῦτ' ἐπηξέωσα δρᾶν. τὶ φής, παῖ; τι φής; τι σιγᾶς; ποῦ ποτ' ὅν, τέκνον, κυρεῖς:

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλγὼ πάλαι δὴ τὰπὶ σοὶ στένων κακά.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀλλ' ὁ τέκνον, καὶ θάρσος ἵσχ' ὅς ἦδε μοι ὑξεῖα φοιτᾶ καὶ ταχεῖ ἀπέρχεται. ἀλλ' ἀνάμαζω, μή με καταλίπῃς μόνον.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

θάρσει, μενούμεν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἡ μενεὶς;

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

σαφῶς φρόνει.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐ μὴν σ' ἕνορκόν γ' ἄξιωθ' θέσθαι, τέκνον.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὡς οὐ θέμως γ' ἐμοῦστι σοῦ μολείν ἄτερ.
PHILOCTETEES

Would God, O Cepallenian, through thy breast
This spasm might pass and hold thee in its grip!
Woe's me and woe once more! Ye generals twain,
Menelaus, Agamemnon, might this worm
Devour your vitals no less time than mine!
O Death, Death, Death! how is it that invoked
Day after day, thou wilt not heed my call?
Boy, noble boy, of thy nobility
I pray thee take and in those Lemnian flames
Consume me, welcome now to me as when
I dared to do it for the son of Zeus,
And won for meed the bow thy bearest now.
Speak! answer! why thus absent, O my son?

NEOPTOLEMUS

My heart was heavy, musing on thy woes.

PHILOCTETES

Nay, be of better cheer, my son; this pain,
As in its onset sudden, so departs.
Only, I pray thee, leave me not alone.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Take heart; we'll stay.

PHILOCTETES

Thou wilt?

NEOPTOLEMUS

In sooth I will.

PHILOCTETES

It were not meet to bind thee with an oath.

NEOPTOLEMUS

I am bound in honour not to leave thee here.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ
ἐμβάλλε χειρὸς πίστιν.
ΝΕΟΠΟΙΛΕΜΟΣ
ἐμβάλλω μενεῖν.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ
ἐκείσε νῦν μ’, ἐκείσε
ΝΕΟΠΟΙΛΕΜΟΣ
ποὶ λέγεις;
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ
ἀνω
ΝΕΟΠΟΙΛΕΜΟΣ
tί παραφρονεῖς αυ; tί τὸν ἀνω λεύσσεις κύκλον;
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ
μέθες μέθες με.
ΝΕΟΠΟΙΛΕΜΟΣ
ποὶ μεθῶ;
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ
μέθες ποτέ.
ΝΕΟΠΟΙΛΕΜΟΣ
οὐ φημ’ ἐάσειν.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ
ἀπὸ μ’ ὅλεις, ἢν προσθίγης.
ΝΕΟΠΟΙΛΕΜΟΣ
καὶ δὴ μεθήμ’, εἰ τι ¹ δὴ πλέον φρονεῖς.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ
ὡ γαῖα, δέξαι θανάσιμον μ’ ὅπως ἔχω τὸ γὰρ κακὸν τὸδ’ οὐκέτ’ ὀρθοῦσθαι μ’ ἐὰ.
ΝΕΟΠΟΙΛΕΜΟΣ
tὸν ἀνδρ’ ἔσκευς ὑπὸς οὐ μακροῦ χρόνου ἔζειν· κάρα γὰρ ὑπτιάζεται τὸδε ἰδρῶς γέ τοι νῦν πᾶν καταστάξει δέμας,
¹ μεθήμ’ τι δὴ MSS., Hermann corr.
PHILOCTETES

PHILOCTETES

Thy hand upon it.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Here's my hand in pledge.

PHILOCTETES

Then yonder, let me yonder—

NEOPTOLEMUS

Whither then?

PHILOCTETES

Up higher—

NEOPTOLEMUS

Art thou wandering once again?
Why starest at the firmament on high?

PHILOCTETES

Let me go.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Whither?

PHILOCTETES

Let me go, I say.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Thou shalt not.

PHILOCTETES

Touch me not, 'twould be my death.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Well, I release thee. Thou art calmer now.

PHILOCTETES

Take me, O Earth, a dying man, so near
His end with sickness that he cannot stand.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Methinks in no long time he'll be asleep;
For, see, his head sinks backward, and o'er all
His body, look you, trickle beads of sweat,
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

μέλαινα τ’ ἀκρον τις παρέρρωγεν ποδὸς
αἰμορραγής φλέψ. Ἄλλ’ ἔάσωμεν, φίλοι,
ἐκήλουν αὐτόν, ὥς ἂν εἰς ὑπνον πέσῃ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

"Τπν’ ὀδύνας ἀδαίς," Τπνε δ’ ἀλγέων,
εὐαῖς ἡμῖν ἔλθοις,
εὐαίων εὐαίων, ὄναξ:
ὀμμασεὶ δ’ ἀντίσχους
τάνδ’ αἰγλαν, ἀ τέταται ταῦτ.’
ἰθι ἰθι μοι παίων.
ὦ τέκνοι, ὥρα ποῦ στάσει,
ποῖ δέ μοι ταῦθένδε βάσει,²
φροντίδος. ὀρᾶς ἡδη.
πρὸς τί μενοῦμεν πράσσενς;
καιρὸς τοι πάντων γνώμαν ἵσχων
πολύ τι πολὺ παρὰ πόδα κράτος ἀρνυται.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἄλλ’ ὄδε μὲν κλύελ οὐδὲν, ἑγὼ δ’ ὄρῳ οὐνεκα θήραν
τὴν λ’ ἄλιως ἐχομεν τόξων, δίχα τούδε πλέοντες.
τούδε γάρ ὁ στέφανος, τοῦτον θεὸς ἐλπὶ κομίζεων.
κομπείν δ’ ἐστ’ ἀτελὴ σὺν ψεύδεσιν αἰσχρὸν
ἀνειδος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἄλλα, τέκνου, τάδε μὲν θεὸς ὑψηται: ἀντ.
ἂν δ’ ἂν ἀμείβῃ μ’ αὖθις,
βαίαν μοι, βαίαν, ὦ τέκνοι,
πέμπε λόγον φάμαν.

¹ εὐαῖς MSS., Hermann corr.
² ποὶ δὲ βάσει, πῶς δέ μοι ταῦτεθιν MSS., Jebb corr.
PHILOCTETES

And from an artery in his wounded foot
The black blood spurs. So let us leave him, friends
In peace and quiet till he fall asleep.

CHORUS
Sleep immune of cares,
Sleep that knows not cumber,
Breathe thy softest airs,
Prince of painless slumber!
O'er his eyes alway
Let thy dream-light play;
Healer come, we pray.

My son, bethink thee how
Thou standest, and what next
Thou purposest; not now
The time to halt perplexed.
Why longer here remain?
Ever occasion ta'en
At the full flood brings gain.

NEOPTOLEMUS
We might escape and steal his bow indeed
(He hears us not); but little should we speed
Without the man. Himself he must be brought,
So the God bade; he is the prize we sought;
He crowns our triumph, and 'twere double shame
Falsely a fraud-won victory to claim.

CHORUS
Far things with Heaven lie,
Look thou to what is near,
And, when thou mak'st reply,
Low breathe it in my ear:

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ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὡς πάντων ἐν νόσῳ εὐδρακής ὑπνος ἀὕπνοις λευσσεῖν.
ἀλλ' ὦτι δύνα μάκιστον κεῦνο δὴ μοι κεῦνο λάθρα
ἐξείδου ὁπα πρᾶξεις.
σίσθα γὰρ ἂν 1 αὐτῶμαι,
eἰ ταῦτα τούτων γνῶμαν ἵσχεις,
μάλα τοι ἀπορά πυκνοῖς ἐνιδεῖν πάθη.

οὐρός τοι, τέκνον, οὐρος·
ἀνήρ δ' ἀνόμματος οὐδ' ἔχων
ἀρωγάν ἐκτέταται νύχιος,
(ἀλείς ὑπνος ἐσθλός,) 850
οὐ χερός, οὐ ποδός, οὐ τινος ἄρχων,
ἀλλὰ τις ὃς Ἄιδα παρακείμενος.
ὁρα, βλέπῃ εἰ κάρια
φθέγγει· τὸ δ' ἀλώσιμον
ἐμὰ φροντίδι, παϊ,
πόνοις ὁ μὴ φοβῶν κράτιστος.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

συγάν κελεύω μηδ' ἀφεστάναι φρενῶν·
κινεῖ γὰρ ἀνήρ ὅμα κανάγει κάρα.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ φέγγος ὑπνον διάδοχον τὸ τ’ ἐλπίδων ἀπιστον οἰκουρημα τοῦτο τῶν ξένων.
οὐ γὰρ ποτ’, ὦ παῖ, τούτ’ ἄν ἔξημυχησ’ ἐγώ,
τλήναι σ’ ἐλεινῶς ὅδε τὰμά τῆματα
μείναι παρόντα καὶ ξυνωφελοῦντα μοι.
οὐκον Ἀτρεῖδαι τούτ’ ἔτλησαν εὐφόρως 2
οὕτως ἐνεγκείειν, ἀγαθοὶ στρατηλάται.

1 δὲ ov ἂν MSS., Hermann corr.
2 εὐφόρως MSS., Brunck corr.
PHILOCTETES

Sleepless the sick man's sleep,
    Quick-eared to catch each sound;
His eyes, though closed, yet keep
    Sharp watch around.

Wherefore explore in stealth, my son,
How what thou dost may best be done.
If thy plan be still the same,
What it is I need not name,
Plain to one who looks before
Are his troubles vast and sore.

The breeze sets fair, sets fair, my son,
    And there outstretched he lies
    As one who hath nor ears nor eyes.
(How good to sleep i' the sun!)
Of hand or foot, no motion has he, none
    More than the dead who in Earth's bosom rest.
Then look, my son, look that thou utterest
Sane counsels. If a plain man might advise
Thy wisdom, the discreetest way is best.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Silence, and keep your wits; his eyes begin
To open and he raises now his head.

PHILOCTETES

O sweet to wake to the broad day and find,
What least I hoped, my kindly guardians by.
For this, my son, I never had presumed
To hope, that thou would'st thus compassionately
Wait to attend my woes and minister.
The Atridae, those brave captains never showed
Courage to bear them patiently. But thou
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀλλ’ εὐγενής γὰρ ἡ φύσις καξ εὐγενῶν, ὦ τέκνων, ἡ σή, πάντα ταῦτ’ ἐν εὐχερείᾳ ἔθουν, βοήσα τε καὶ δυσσομίας γέμων. καὶ νῦν ἐπειδὴ τούτῳ τὸ κακὸν δοκεῖ λήθη τις εἶναι κανάπαιλα δὴ, τέκνοι, σὺ μὲν αὐτὸς ἀρον, σὺ μὲ κατάστησον, τέκνοι, ἵν’ ἤμικ’ ἀν κοτός μ’ ἀπαλλάξῃ ποτέ, ὀρμώμεθ’ ἐς ναῦν μηδ’ ἐπίσχωμεν τὸ πλεῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ’ ἧδομαι μὲν σ’ εἰσίδον παρ’ ἐλπίδα ἀνόδυνον βλέποντα καμπνέον’ ἐτ’ ἀ’ οὐκέτ’ ὠντος γὰρ τὰ συμβολαία σοι πρὸς τὰς παρούσας εὐμφορὰς ἐφαίνετο. νῦν δ’ αἱρε σαυτόν’ εἰ δ’ σοι μᾶλλον φίλον, οἴσουσι σ’ οἴδε’ τοῦ πόνου γὰρ οὐκ ὀκνος, ἐπειπερ οὕτω σοι τ’ ἐδοξ’ ἐμοὶ τε δρὰν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

αἰῶν τάδ’, ὥ παὶ, καὶ μ’ ἔπαιρ’, ὡσπερ νοεῖς τούτους δ’ ἔασον, μὴ βαρυνθῶσιν κακὴ ὀσμῆ πρὸ τοῦ δέοντος’ οὕπι νη’ γὰρ ἀλις πόνος τοῦτοσι συνναλεῖν ἐμοὶ.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἐσται τάδ’. ἀλλ’ ἵστω τε καὶ τοὺς ἀντέχω.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

θάρσει τό τοι σύνηθες ὀρθώσει μ’ ἔθους.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

παπαί: τί δῆτ’ ἀν δριμ’ ἐγὼ τοῦνθένδε γε; ἦς τε ἔστιν, ὥ παῖ; πο’ πο’ ἐξέβης λόγῳ;

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ οἶδ’ ὅποι χρῆ τάπορον τρέπειν ἔπος.
PHILOCTETES

By nature noble as by birth, my son,
Mad'st light of all the sores to eye and ear,
And nostrils, that my malady infects.
But now at last, 'twould seem, a lull has come,
A respite and oblivion of my ills;
Raise me thyself, boy, set me on my feet,
That, when the attack has wholly spent itself,
We may aboard and instantly set sail.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Right glad am I to see thee breathing still,
Alive, beyond all hope, and freed from pain;
For to appearance thou didst bear the seal
And signature of death. Now raise thyself,
Or if thou choosest, these shall carry thee;
Such service will they readily perform,
Since thou and I alike are thus resolved.

PHILOCTETES

I thank thee, son, and, if it pleaseth thee,
Raise me thyself and spare thy men this task,
Lest they be sickened with my fetidness
Before the time; they'll have enough to bear
With me for messmate when we are aboard.

NEOPTOLEMUS

So be it; now, stand up, lay hold of me.

PHILOCTETES

Fear not, long use and wont has taught me how.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Ye Gods! What now remains for me to do?

PHILOCTETES

What is it, my son, what mean these whirling
words?

NEOPTOLEMUS

I speak perplexly, know not how to speak.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἀπορεῖς δὲ τοῦ σὺ; μὴ λέγῃ, ὡ τέκνον, τάδε.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἀλλ᾽ ἐνθάδ᾽ ἦδη τούδε τοῦ πάθους κυρῶ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οὐ δὴ σε δυσχέρεια τοῦ νοσήματος ἐπείσεν ὡστε μὴ μ᾽ ἄγειν ναύτην ἔτι;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἀπαντα δυσχέρεια, τὴν αὐτοῦ φύσιν ὅταν λυπῶν τις δρᾶ τὰ μὴ προσεικότα.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲν ἔξω τοῦ φυτεύσαντος σὺ γε δρᾶς οὐδὲ φωνεῖς, ἐσθλῶν ἀνδρ᾽ ἐπωφελῶν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
αισχρὸς φανοῦμαι· τοῦτ᾽ ἀνώμα μι πάλαι.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οὔκοιν ἐν οἷς γε δρᾶς· ἐν οἷς δ᾽ αὐῦδας ὁκνῶ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ο Ζεὺ, τί δράσω; δεύτερον ληφθῶ κακὸς, κρύπτων θ᾽ ὑ μὴ δεῖ καὶ λέγων αἰσχιστ᾽ ἐπῶν;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἀνὴρ ὃς, εἰ μὴ ἵως κακὸς γνώμων ἔφυν, προδοὺς μ᾽ ἐοικε κάκλιπων τὸν πλούν στελεῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
λιπῶν μὲν οὐκ ἔγωγε· λυπηρῶς δὲ μὴ πέμπω σε μᾶλλον, τοῦτ᾽ ἀνιώμαι πάλαι.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
τί ποτε λέγεις, ὡ τέκνον; ὡς οὐ μανθάνω.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
οὐδέν σε κρύψω· δεὶ γὰρ ἐς Τροίαν σε πλεῖν πρὸς τοὺς Ἀχαιοὺς καὶ τὸν Ἀτρειδῶν στόλον.
PHILOCTETES

PHILOCTETES
What can perplex thee? say not so, my son.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Too deep involved, I cannot otherwise.

PHILOCTETES
What! the offensiveness of my complaint
Will stay thee now from taking me aboard?

NEOPTOLEMUS
All is offensive when a man is false
To his true self and, knowing right, does wrong.

PHILOCTETES
But thou dost naught in word or deed to shame
Thy birth in succouring a worthy man.

NEOPTOLEMUS
I shall be proved a rogue; this tortures me.

PHILOCTETES
Not in thy deeds—thy words do give me pause.

NEOPTOLEMUS
God help me now! Must I appear twice base,
Hide what I should not and my shame reveal?

PHILOCTETES
The youth, if I misjudge him not, intends
To play me false and leave me stranded here.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Leave thee? Not so, but what will irk thee more,
Convey thee hence. "Tis this that tortures me.

PHILOCTETES
Thy words are dark, I cannot catch their drift.

NEOPTOLEMUS
I will be plain and round with thee. To Troy
Thou sailest, to the Atridae and the host.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οἷμοι, τί εἶπας;

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
μὴ στέναξε, πρὶν μάθησ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ποῖον μάθημα; τί με νοεῖς δρᾶσαι ποτε;

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
σώσαι κακοῦ μὲν πρῶτα τοῦδ', ἔπειτα δὲ
ξῦν σοι τὰ Τροίας πεδία πορθήσαι μολὼν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
καὶ ταῦτ' ἀληθῆ δρὰν νοεῖς;

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
πολλῇ κρατεῖ
toύτων ἀνάγκη, καὶ σὺ μὴ θυμοῦ κλύων.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἀπόλωλα τλήμων, προδέδομαι. τί μ', ὦ ξένε,
δέδρακας; ἀπόδος ὡς τάχος τὰ τόξα μοι.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἀλλ', οὐχ οἶδ' τε' τῶν γὰρ ἐν τέλει κλῦειν
tὸ τ' ἔνδικον με καὶ τὸ συμφέρον ποεῖ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ὠ πῦρ σὺ καὶ πᾶν δείμα καὶ πανουργίας
δεινῆς τέχνημ' ἔχθιστον, ολ' μ' εἰργάσω,
οἱ' ἡπάτηκας' οὐδ' ἐπαισχύνει μ' ὄρδον
tὸν προστρόπαιον, τὸν ἰκέτην, ὦ σχέτλε;
ἀπεστέρηκας τὸν βίον τὰ τόξ' ἐλὼν.
ἀπόδος, ἵκνονμαι σ', ἀπόδος, ἴκνεύω, τέκνον·
πρὸς θεῶν πατρίφων, τὸν βίον με μὴ ἀφέλης.1

1 μὴ μ' ἀφέλης MSS., Elmsley corr.

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PHILOCTETES

PHILOCTETES
Alas! What say'st thou?

NEOPTOLEMUS
Murmur not but hear me—

PHILOCTETES
Hear me, quoth he! what wilt thou do with me?

NEOPTOLEMUS
First from this misery rescue thee, and then,
With thee to aid me, ravage Ilium.

PHILOCTETES
Wilt thou indeed do this?

NEOPTOLEMUS
Necessity
Leaves me no choice; so take it not amiss.

PHILOCTETES
Me miserable! I am undone, betrayed
How hast thou used me, sir! I charge thee straight
Give back my bow!

NEOPTOLEMUS
That cannot be, for I
By policy and duty both am bound
To obey my chiefs.

PHILOCTETES
Thou fire, thou utter monster,
Abhorred masterpiece of knavery,
How hast thou served me, cheated me, abused?
Art not ashamed to look on me, thou wretch,
Thy suppliant, thy bedesman? Robbing me
Of this my bow thou robbest me of life.
Restore it, I beseech thee, O my son,
Oh, an thou lov'st me, give me back my bow;
Rob me not, by thy gods I pray, of life!
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

όμοι τάλας. ἀλλ' οὐδὲ προσφωνεῖ μ' ἐτι, ἀλλ' ὡς μεθήσων μήποθ', ὅδ' ὀρὰ πάλιν. ὡς λεμένες, ὡς προβλήτες, ὡς ξυνουσίαι θηρῶν ὀρείων, ὡς καταρράγεις πέτραι,

ὑμῖν τάδ', οὐ γὰρ ἄλλον οἶδ' ὅτῳ λέγω, ἀνακλαίομαι παροῦσι τοῖς εἰσόθοιν,

οἴ' ἐργ' ὁ παῖς μ' ἐδρασεν οὐξ Ἀχιλλέως'

όμοσας ἀπάξειν οἰκαδ', ἐς Τρολαν μ' ἀγεῖ.

προσθεῖς τε χείρα δεξιάν, τὰ τόξα μου

ιερὰ λαβὼν τοῦ Ζηνὸς Ἡρακλέους ἔχει,

καὶ τοίσιν Ἀργείοις φήμασθαι θέλειν:

ὡς ἄνδρ' ἐλών ἵσχυρὸν ἐκ βλας μ' ἀγεί,

κοῦν οἴδ' ἐναίρων νεκρὸν ἡ κατούχοι σκιάν,

εἰδώλων ἄλλως· οὐ γὰρ ἄν σθένοντά γε εἶλέν μ'. ἐπεὶ οὐδ' ἄν ὅδ' ἔχοντ', εἰ μὴ δόλῳ

νῦν δ' ἡπάτημαι δύσμορος. τί χρή με δρὰν;

ἀλλ' ἀπόδος, ἀλλὰ νῦν ἔτ' ἐν σαῦτο γενόυ.

τί φής; σιωπᾶς; οὐδέν εἰμ' ὁ δύσμορος.

ὁ σχῆμα πέτρας δίπυλον, αὕθις αὖ πάλιν
eἰσεμι πρὸς σὲ ψιλός, οὐκ ἔχων τροφῆν· ἀλλ' αὐναύομαι τῷ ἐν αὐλῷφ μόνος,

οὐ πτηνόν ὄρων οὐδὲ θήρ' ὀρειβάτην
tόξοις ἐναίρων τοισίδ', ἀλλ' αὐτὸς τάλας

θανὸν παρέξω δαῖθ' ὑφ' ὅν ἐφερβόμην,

καὶ μ' οὐς ἔθηρων πρόσθε θηράσουσι νῦν

φόνου φόνου δὲ ὑτίουν τίςω τάλας

πρὸς τοῦ δοκοῦντος οὔδ' εἰδέναι κακόν.

ὁλοιο—μή πω, πρὶν μάθοιμ' εἰ καὶ πάλιν

γνώμην μετοίσεις· εἰ δὲ μή, θάνως κακῶς.
PHILOCTETES

Ah me! he turns away, he will not speak;
His silence says he will not give it back.
Ye creeks, ye promontories, dens and lairs
Of mountain beasts, ye cliffs precipitous,
To you—none else will heed me—I appeal,
On you, familiars of my woes, I call;
Hear what I suffer from Achilles' son!
He swore to bring me home again, and now
To Troy he takes me; on his plighted troth
I gave, he keeps my bow, the sacred bow
That erst to Zeus-born Heracles belonged,
To flout it 'fore the Argive host as his;
He takes me hence his prisoner, as if
His arm had captured some great warrior,
And sees not he is slaying a dead man,
A shade, a wraith, an unsubstantial ghost;
For in my strength he had not ta'en me, no,
Nor as I am, disabled, save by guile.
But now, entrapped, ah whither shall I turn?
Have pity, give me, give me back my bow!
Be once again thy true self, even now.
What answer? None. O woe is me, I am lost!
O cave with double mouth, to thee I turn;
Stripped of my arms and lacking means of life,
Here shall I wither in this lonely cell.
No bird of air, no beast of the upland wold
Yon bow shall slay, but dying I shall make
A feast for those who fed me when alive,
A quarry for the creatures I pursued,
My blood for their blood shed. And this I owe
To one who seemed a child in innocence.
My curse upon thee—nay I will forbear,
Till first I hear whether thou wilt repent
Or not; if no, die blasted by my curse!
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ
τί δράμεν; ἐν σοὶ καὶ τὸ πλεῖν ἡμᾶς, ἀναξ,
ηδὴ στὶ καὶ τοὺς τούδε προσχωρεῖν λόγοις.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἐμοὶ μὲν οἷκος δεινὸς ἐμπέπτωκε τὶς
tοῦδ' ἀνδρὸς ὦ νῦν πρῶτον, ἄλλα καὶ πάλαι.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἐλέησον, ὦ παί, πρὸς θεῶν, καὶ μὴ παρῆς
σαυτοῦ βροτοῖς ὀνείδος, ἐκκλέψας ἐμέ.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
οἶμοι, τῖ δράσω; μὴ ποτ' ὄφελον λεπτῶν
tὴν Σκύρουν· οὔτω τοῖς παροῦσιν ἀχθομαί.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οὐκ εἰ κακὸς σὺ, πρὸς κακῶν ὁ ἀνδρῶν μαθῶν
ἐοικας ἥκειν αἰσχρά· νῦν ὁ ἀλλοισι δοὺς
οἶς εἰκὸς ἐκπλει, τὰμά μοι μεθεὶς ὅπλα.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
τί δράμεν, ἄνδρες;

ὈΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
ὡ κάκιστ' ἀνδρῶν, τί δρᾶς;
οὐκ εἰ μεθεὶς τὰ τὸξα ταῦτ' ἐμοὶ πάλιν;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οἶμοι, τῖς ἀνήρ; ἄρ' Ἡ ὸδυσσέως κλώο;

ὈΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
'Οδυσσέως, σάφ' ἵσθ', ἐμοῦ γ', ὅν εἰσορῆς.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οἶμοι· πέτραμαι κατόλωλ'· ὦδ' ἦν ἄρα
ὁ ξυλαβῶν με κάτονοσφίσας ὅπλων.

ὈΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
ἐγώ, σάφ' ἵσθ', οὐκ ἄλλος· ὀμολογῶ τάδε.
PHILOCTETES

CHORUS
What shall we do, prince? 'tis for thee to say
Whether we sail or hearken to his prayer.

NEOPTOLEMUS
My heart is strangely wrought, and from the first
I have been moved with pity for the man.

PHILOCTETES
In heaven's name show mercy, let not men
Brand thee as my betrayer, O my son!

NEOPTOLEMUS
What shall I do? Would I had never left
Scyros, to fall into this desperate plight.

PHILOCTETES
Thou art not base, but coming here wast schooled
To play the rogue by villains; leave that part
To others framed by nature to be rogues.
Sail hence, but ere thou sail give back my arms.

NEOPTOLEMUS
What shall we do, friends?

ODYSSEUS appears suddenly from behind the cave.

ODYSSEUS
Wretch, what art thou at?
Back with thee, sirrah! give the bow to me—

PHILOCTETES
Ah who is here? Is that Odysseus' voice?

ODYSSEUS
Odysseus, as thou seeest. Here am I.

PHILOCTETES
Oh I am sold, betrayed. So it was he
Who trapped me and bereft me of my arms.

ODYSSEUS
I and no other. I avow 'twas I.

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ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἀπόδος, ἄφες μοι, παῖ, τὰ τόξα.

ΟΔΥΣΕΥΣ
τοῦτο μὲν,
oὐδ’ ἣν θέλῃ, δράσει ποτ’ ἀλλὰ καὶ σὲ δεὶ
στείχειν ἀμ’ αὐτοῖς, ἢ βιὰ στελοῦσί σε.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἐμ’, ὡ κακῶν κάκιστε καὶ τολμήστατε,
oὐδ’ ἐκ βίας ἀξουσιῶν;

ΟΔΥΣΕΥΣ
ἂν μὴ ἔρπης ἔκους.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ὁ Δημήτρια χθὼν καὶ τὸ παγκρατὺς σέλας
Ἡφαιστότευκτον, ταῦτα δή ἀνασχέτα,
ἐι μ’ οὕτος ἐκ τῶν σῶν ἀπάξεται βία;

ΟΔΥΣΕΥΣ
Zeús ἔσθ’, ἵν’ εἶδῆς, Zeús, ὃ τῆς ὑπὲρ κρατῶν,
Zeús, ὃ δέδοκται ταῦθ’ ὑπηρετῶ δ’ ἑγώ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ὁ μῦς, οὐλα κάζανεν ἔσκεις λέγειν;
θεοὺς προτιλῶν τοὺς θεοὺς ψευδεῖς τίθη.

ΟΔΥΣΕΥΣ
οὖκ, ἀλλ’ ἄληθεῖς· ἢ δ’ ὁδὸς πορευτέα.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οὐ φημ’.

ΟΔΥΣΕΥΣ
ἔγώ δε φημ. πειστεύον τάδε.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οἵμοι τάλας. ἢμᾶς μὲν ὡς δουλοὺς σαφῶς
πατήρ ἀρ’ ἐξέφυσεν οὐδ’ ἐλευθέρους.
PHILOCTETES

PHILOCTETES

(To chorus)
Ye also, friends, will ye abandon me
And show no pity for my sad estate?

CHORUS
This stripling is our captain, and whate'er
He says, we say the same; his word is law.

NEOPTOLEMUS
I know I shall be twitted by my chief
As weak and tender-hearted; but what odds?
If our friend wills it, tarry here until
Our crew have made all t'ight and yare, and we
Have offered prayers, as fitting. He the while
Perchance may come to a better mind and melt.
So we will hasten forward, he and I,
And ye, make haste to follow when we call.

[Exeunt Odysseus and Neoptolemus.

PHILOCTETES

O cavern'd rock, my cell
    (Str. 1)
Now hot, now icy chill,
How long with thee it was my lot to dwell:
    To thee till death I shall be constant still.
Tell me, sad lodging, haunted by my pain,
How shall I day by day my life sustain?
Ye timorous doves whose flight
    Whirrs in the air o'erhead,
Now where ye will unharmed alight;
    No shafts of mine henceforward need ye dread.

CHORUS.
'Tis thou hast willed it thus, infatuate,
Thou art the author of thy sad estate;
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ἀλλοθεν ἔχει τύχα τάδ' ἀπὸ μείζονος, εὐτέρε γε παρὸν φρονῆσαι
τοῦ λύονος δαίμονος εἶλου τὸ κάκιον αἰνεῖν. ¹

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ὁ τλάμων τλάμων ἂρ' ἔγω ἀντ. α'
καὶ μόχθω λωβατός, ὅς ἥδη μετ' οὐδενὸς ύστερον
ἀνδρῶν εἰσοπίσω τάλας ναίων ἐνθάδ' ὅλομαι,
αἰαὶ αἰαὶ,
οὺ δερμάν ἐτι προσφέρων,
οὐ πτανῶν ἀπ' ἐμῶν ὅπλων
κραταιαῖς μετὰ χερσίν
ἰσχων ἀλλὰ μοι ἄσκοπα
κρυπτά τ' ἐπη δολερὰς ὑπέδυ ψενοὸς.
ἰδοίμαν δὲ νυν,
τὸν τάδε μησάμενον, τὸν ἵσον χρόνον
ἐμὰς λαχώντ' ἀνίας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πότμος, πότμος σε δαίμονων τάδ',
οὐδὲ σὲ γε ὅλος,
ἔσχεν ὑπὸ χειρὸς ἁμάς. ² στυγερὰν ἔχε
δύσποτμον ἀρὰν ἐπ' ἄλλους.
καὶ γὰρ ἐμοὶ τούτῳ μέλει, μῆ φιλότητ' ἀπώσῃ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

οἴμοι μοι, καὶ ποινοὶ στρ. β'
πὸντον θεῶς ἐφήμενος
ἐγγελαί, χερὶ πάλλων
τὰν ἐμὰν μελέου τροφάν,
τὰν οὐδεῖς ποτ' ἐβάστασεν.
ὁ τόξων φίλων, ὁ φίλων
χειρῶν ἐκβεβιασμένον,

¹ ἔλειν MSS., Hermann corr.
² ἔσχ' ὑπὸ χειρὸς ἁμάς MSS., Bergk corr.

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PHILOCTETES

Nor to some higher force canst thou assign
Thy woes, but, when free choice was thine,
   The good thou did'st reject,
   The worse elect.

PHILOCTETES
Ah wretched, wretched then am I, (Ant. 1)
Consumed with utter misery,
Doomed for all time to linger on.
Without one friend, one comrade, one,
   To aid me till I die.
   No more my arrows fleet
   Shall win my daily meat;
Poor unsuspecting fool,
A base intriguer's tool,
By his forged legend caught!
Wretch who my ruin wrought,
Would I might see him pine
Long years like me in agony like mine!

CHORUS
By destiny, by destiny 'twas sent.
To treachery my hand was never lent;
Point not at me thy baleful curse, for fain
Thy friend, as heretofore, I would remain.

PHILOCTETES
Ah me! he's sitting now (Str. 2)
   Upon the grey sea sands,
And laughs at me, I trow;
   My bow is in his hands,
The bow that was my life, the bow
That never lord save me did know.

My bow, my matchless bow of yew,
   If thou canst feel, how must thou grieve,
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἡ που ἔλευσόν ὁρᾶς, φρένας εἰ τινας
ἐχεις, τὸν Ἡρακλεον
ἀρμον ὤδε σοι
οὐκέτι χρησόμενον τὸ μεθ' ύστερον,
ἀλλού δ' ἐν μεταλλαγα
πολυμηχανον ἀνδρός ἐρέσσει
ὁρῶν μὲν αἰσχρὰς ἀπάτας, στυγνῶν δὲ φῶτ' ἐχθο-
δοπόν,
μυρ', ἀπ' αἰσχρῶν ἀνατέλλονθ', ὃς ἐφ' ἡμῖν κάκ'
ἐμήσατ', ὡς Ζευ.1

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀνδρός τοι τὰ μὲν ἑνδικ' ἀλὲν 2 εἰπεῖν,
eἰπόντος δὲ μὴ φθονερὰν
ἐξώσαι γλῶσσας ὄδυναν.
κεῖνος δ' εἰς ἀπὸ πολλῶν
tαχθεὶς τῶν ἐφθημοσύνα
κοινὰν ἣνυσεν ἐς φίλους ἀρωγάν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὁ πταναὶ τὴραι χαρωπῶν τ' ἀντ. Β'
ἐθνη θηρῶν, οὓς ὅδ' ἔχει
χῶρος οὐρεσιβῶτας,
μηκέτ' ἀπ' αὐλίων φύγα
πηδατ'.3 οὔ γαρ ἐχω χεροῖν
tὰν πρόσθεν βέλεων ἄλκάν,
ὁ δύστανος ἐγὼ ταὐνύν,
ἀλλ' ἀνέδημι, ὅ δὲ χῶρος ἃρ' οὐκέτι
φοβητὸς οὐκέθ' ὑμῖν,4
ἔρπετε· νῦν καλὸν
ἀντίφωνον κορέσαι στόμα πρὸς χάριν

1 'Οδυseeing MSS., Dindorf corr.'
2 τὸ μὲν εὗ δικαίον MSS., Arndt corr.
3 φυγα ο' οὐκέτι ἀπ' αὐλίων | πελατ' MSS., Jebb corr.
4 δὲ χῶρος ἐρύκεται | οὐκέτι φοβητὸς ὑμῖν MSS., Jebb corr.
PHILOCTETES

Thus wrested from thy master true,
   Constrained his loving hands to leave,
Thy master who, through Hellas famed,
The friend of Heracles was named.

Now art thou handled by a knave,
   Past master in each cunning art,
Must do his bidding, as a slave,
   In all his misdeeds take thy part.
And aid the unrelenting foe,
The source and spring of all my woe.

CHORUS
A man should aye his rightful cause maintain,
But from malign and venomous taunts refrain;
And he but serves the common interest,
Speaks for the host, obeying their behest.

PHILOCTETES
Ye feathered tribes, my prey,              (Ant. 2)
   Ye bright-eyed beasts who roam
The hills, start not away
   Scared from the hunter's home.
Stray where ye will, secure, unharmed;
Why shun a helpless man unarmed?

Gone is the mighty bow;
   Flock hither without dread,
Why should ye fear a foe
   So weak, so ill bestead.
Draw near your gluttonous mouths to fill,
Mangle my carrion flesh at will.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ἐμᾶς σαρκὸς αἰόλας:
ἀπὸ γὰρ βίοις αὐτίκα λείψω.
πόθεν γὰρ ἔσται βιοτά; τίς ὡδ᾽ ἐν αὐραῖς τρέφεται, μὴ κέτι μηδένος κρατύνων ὅσα πέμπει βιόδωρος αἷα;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πρὸς θεῶν, εἴ τι σέβει ξένον, πέλασσον,
εὐνοία πᾶσα πελάταιν;
ἀλλὰ γνῶθ', εὐ γνῶθ' ἐπὶ σοὶ 1
κήρα τάνδ᾽ ἀποφεύγειν.
οίκτρα γὰρ βόσκειν, ἀδάφις ὦ
ἐχειν μυρίον ἄχθος, ὦ ἐνυοικεί.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

πάλιν πάλιν παλαιῶν ἀληθῆ ὑπέμνασας, ὦ
λώστε τῶν πρὶν ἐντόπων.
τί μ᾽ ὄλεσας; τί μ᾽ εἰργασάι;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί τοὔτ᾽ ἔλεξας;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

εἴ σὺ τὰν ἐμοὶ στυγερᾶν
Τρφάδα γὰν μ᾽ ἥλπισας ἄξειν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τόδε γὰρ νοῶ κράτιστον.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ἀπὸ νῦν με λείπετ' ἢδη.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

φίλα μοι, φίλα ταῦτα παρήγγειλας ἐκόντι τε πράσσειν.

ἐσμεν ἐσμεν

ναὸς ἐν ἡμῖν τετακταί.

1 ὥστε σοὶ MSS., Seyffert corr.

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PHILOCTETES

Here shall I waste away,
    Soon will ye eye me dead;
Who can survive one day
    By airs of heaven fed?
Of all that Earth affords each son,
Herb, root and fruit, possessing none.

CHORUS
If thou regardest a well-wishing friend,
Draw near and to his kindly rule attend.
Think well; from this intolerable bane,
That thou dost feed, and aggravate thy pain,
With thee it rests deliverance to gain.

PHILOCTETES
O why recall my ancient grief once more,
Kindest of all who e'er have touched this shore?
Why twice undo a wretch undone before?

CHORUS
What meanest thou?

PHILOCTETES
I mean that thou wast fain
To take me to the Troy I hate again.

CHORUS
'Tis for thy good.

PHILOCTETES
O leave me then, begone!

CHORUS
Thanks for that word. We will be off anon,
Back to the ship, and each man to his oar.

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ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
μή, πρὸς ἄραιον Δίος, ἔλθης, ἰκετεύω.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
μετρίας.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
δὲ κένοι,
μείνατε, πρὸς θεῶν.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
τί θροείς;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
αιαὶ αἰαὶ, δαίμων δαίμων:
ἀπὸ λωλ' ὁ τάλας;
ὁ ποὺς ποὺς, τί σε ἐτ' ἐν βίφ
τεύξω τῷ μετόπῳν τάλας;
ὁ κένοι, ἐλθετ' ἐπῆλυδες αὕδις.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
τί βέσοντες ἀλλοκότῳ
γνώμα τῶν πάρος, ὁν προφαινεις;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οὕτων νεμεσητών,
ἀλύοντα χειμερίφ
λύπη καὶ παρὰ νοὺν θροεῖν.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
βάθι νυν, ὁ τάλαν, ὡς σε κελεύομεν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οὐδέποτ' οὐδέποτ', ἵσθι τὸδ' ἐμπεδον,
οὐδ' εἰ πυρφόρος ἀστεροτητῆς
βροντάς αὐγαίς μ' εἰσι φλογίζων.
ἀρράτω Ἰλιον οὐθ' ὑπ' εκείνῳ
πάντως ὁσοὶ τὸδ' ἐτλασαν ἐμοῦ ποδὸς ἄρθρον
ἀπώσαι.

Ἄλλως, δὲ κένοι, ἐν γῇ μοι εὐχος ὧρέξατε.
PHILOCTETES

PHILOCTETES
O leave me not, for God's sake, I implore.

CHORUS

Calm thyself.

PHILOCTETES
Stay, O stay!

CHORUS
Why should we wait?

PHILOCTETES
O woe is me! Out on my fate, my fate!
Accursed foot, what shall I make of thee?
I am undone! O friends, come back to me.

CHORUS
What would'st thou? First thou bid'st us go, and then
In the same breath thou biddest us remain.

PHILOCTETES
O be not wrath if one distraught with pain
Blurts out discordant words beside the mark.

CHORUS
Come then, unhappy man, with us embark.

PHILOCTETES
Never, no never, though the King of Heaven
Should threat to blast me with his fiery leven.
No, perish rather Ilium, perish all
The Achaean host that batter at its wall;
Hard hearts who cast me forth as halt and maim
From you, my friends, one parting boon I claim.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ποίον ἐρεῖς τόδ' ἔπος;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ξίφος, εἴ ποθεν,
ἡ γέννη τι προπέμψατε.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
ὡς τίνα δὴ ῥέξης παλάμαν ποτὲ;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
χρώτ' ἀπὸ πάντα καὶ ἄρθρα τέμω χερί·
φονᾶ φονᾶ νόος ἢδη.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
tί ποτε;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
πατέρα ματεύων.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
ποί γὰς;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἐσ" Ἀιδοῦν·
οὐ γὰρ ἐστ' ἐν φαίνῃ γ' ἐτι.
ὡ πόλις, ὡ πατρία,
πῶς ἂν εἰσιδοίμ' ἀθλιός σ' ἀνήρ,
ὅς γε σᾶν λιπὼν ιερὰν

λυβάδ' ἔχθροις ἔθαν Δαναοῖς
ἀρωγός· ἐτ' οὐδέν εἰμι.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἐγὼ μὲν ἦδη καὶ πάλαι νεὼς ὁμοῦ
στείχων ἂν ἢ σοι τῆς ἐμῆς, εἰ μὴ πέλας
'Οδυσσέα στείχοντα τὸν τ' Ἀχιλλέως
γόνον πρὸς ἡμᾶς δεύρ' ἰόντ' ἐλεύσομεν.

ΟΔΕΣΧΕΣ
οὐκ ἂν φράσειας ἤτυν' αὐ ταλάντροπος
κέλευθον ἔρπεις ὁδε σὺν σπουδῇ ταχύς;

1 κράτ' MSS., Hermann corr.
PHILOCTETES

CHORUS
What would'st thou ask?

PHILOCTETES
An axe, a spear, a brand,
No matter what—the weapon first to hand.

CHORUS
Wherefore! What deed of violence wouldst thou do?

PHILOCTETES
Hack, mangle, limb by limb my body hew;
My thoughts are bloody.

CHORUS
Wherefore?

PHILOCTETES
I would go
To seek my father.

CHORUS
In what land?

PHILOCTETES
Below;
For I shall find him nowhere on this earth.
My native land, fair land that gave me birth,
Might I but see thee! Wherefore did I roam
And leave the sacred stream that guards my home?
To help the Greeks those stormy seas I crossed,
My mortal foes, by them undone, lost, lost!

CHORUS
I should have left thee long ago and now
Be near my ship, but that I saw Odysseus
Advancing towards us and Achilles' son.

Enter Neoptolemus followed by Odysseus.

ODYSSEUS
Wilt thou not tell me why thou hurriest back
In such hot haste and on what errand bound?
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
λύσων δο' ἔξημαρτον ἐν τῷ πρῶν χρόνῳ.

ΟΔΤΣΕΣΕΤΣ
δεινῶν γε φωνεῖς; ἢ δ' ἀμαρτία τῆς ἂν;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἂν σοὶ πιθόμενος τῷ τε σύμπαντι στρατῷ

ΟΔΤΣΕΣΕΤΣ
ἐπράξας ἔργον ποιῶν ἄν οὐ σοί πρέπον;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἂπαταιςιν αἰσχραῖς ἄνδρα καὶ δόλους ἔλων.

ΟΔΤΣΕΣΕΤΣ
τὸν ποιῶν; ὃμοι' μῶν τι βουλεύει νέον;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
νέον μὲν οὐδέν, τῷ δὲ Ποίαντος τόκῳ,

ΟΔΤΣΕΣΕΤΣ
τὶ χρήμα δράσεις; ὃς μ' ὑπῆλθέ τις φόβοις.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
παρ' οὔπερ ἔλαβον τάδε τὰ τόξ', αὖθις πάλιν

ΟΔΤΣΕΣΕΤΣ
ὁ Ζεῦ, τι λέξεις; οὐ τί ποιν δοῦναι νοεῖς;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
αἰσχρῶς γὰρ αὐτὰ κοι δίκη λαβῶν ἐχω.

ΟΔΤΣΕΣΕΤΣ
πρὸς θεῶν, πότερα δὴ κερτομῶν λέγεις τάδε;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
εἰ κερτόμησίς ἐστι τάληθ' λέγειν.

ΟΔΤΣΕΣΕΤΣ
τί φής, Ἀχιλλέως παῖ; τίν' εἰρήκας λόγον;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
δίς ταῦτα βούλει καὶ τρίς ἀναπολείν μ' ἕπη;

ΟΔΤΣΕΣΕΤΣ
ἀρχὴν κλώειν ἄν οὐδ' ἀπαξ ἑβουλόμην.

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PHILOCTETES

NEOPTOLEMUS
I come to expiate all former wrongs.

ODYSSEUS
A strange reply. What wrong did'st thou commit?

NEOPTOLEMUS
When in obedience to the host and thee—

ODYSSEUS
Prithee, what did'st thou that beseemed thee not?

NEOPTOLEMUS
I snared a man by base deceit and guile.

ODYSSEUS
What man? Thou hast not something rash in hand?

NEOPTOLEMUS
Naught rash, but to the son of Poeas I—

ODYSSEUS
What wilt thou do? My soul forbodes some ill.

NEOPTOLEMUS
From whom I took the bow, to him again—

ODYSSEUS
Great Zeus! What meanest thou? Not give it back?

NEOPTOLEMUS
Yes, for I got it basely, shamefully.

ODYSSEUS
In Heaven's name, say'st thou this to mock at me?

NEOPTOLEMUS
If it be mockery to speak the truth.

ODYSSEUS
What now? What meanest thou, Achilles' son?

NEOPTOLEMUS
Must I repeat the same words twice and thrice?

ODYSSEUS
Far better had I never heard them once.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
εὐ νῦν ἐπίστω πάντ᾽ ἀκηκοῶς λόγου.

ΟΔΤΞΕΣΕΣ
ἔστιν τις, ἔστιν ὃς σε κωλύσει τὸ δράν.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
τι φής; τις ἔσται μο' οὐπικολύσων τάδε;

ΟΔΤΞΕΣΕΣ
ξύμπας Ἀχαιῶν λαός, ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἑγώ.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
σοφὸς πεφυκὼς οὐδὲν ἔξαυνδὰς σοφόν.

ΟΔΤΞΕΣΕΣ
σὺ δʿ οὔτε φωνεῖς οὔτε δρασεῖς· σοφά.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἀλλ᾽ εἰ δίκαια, τῶν σοφῶν κρέσσοις τάδε.

ΟΔΤΞΕΣΕΣ
καὶ πῶς δίκαιον, ἃ γ᾽ ἔλαβες βουλαίς ἑμαῖς, πάλιν μεθείναι ταῦτα;

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
τήν ἀμαρτίαν
αἰσχρὰν ἀμαρτῶν ἀναλαβεῖν πειράσομαι.

ΟΔΤΞΕΣΕΣ
στρατὸν δ᾽ Ἀχαιῶν οὐ φοβεῖ, πράσσων τάδε;

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ξὺν τῷ δίκαιῳ τὸν σὸν οὗ ταρβῶ φόβον.

ΟΔΤΞΕΣΕΣ
[ξὺν τῷ δίκαιῳ χείρ ἐμὴ σ᾽ ἀναγκάσει.]¹

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἀλλ᾽ οὔδε τοι σῇ χειρὶ πεῖθομαι τὸ δράν.

ΟΔΤΞΕΣΕΣ
οὐ τάρα Τρωσίν, ἀλλὰ σοι μαχοῦμεθα.

¹ Hermann pointed out that a verse is here missing. The line in the text (one of Jebb's suggestions) with the same beginning would explain the omission.

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PHILOCTETES

NEOPTOLEMUS
Rest well assured I have nothing more to add.

ODYSSEUS
There is, I tell thee, one to stay thy hand.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Who prithee? who to stay me or prevent?

ODYSSEUS
The whole Achaean host, and I for one.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Thy words lack wisdom though thou lack'st not wits.

ODYSSEUS
Unwisdom marks thy words and actions both.

NEOPTOLEMUS
If just, 'tis better than unjust and wise.

ODYSSEUS
Can it be justice to give back the prize
Won by my policy?

NEOPTOLEMUS
Shameful was my fault,
And I will try to make amends for it.

ODYSSEUS
Hast thou no terror of the Achaean host?

NEOPTOLEMUS
A bugbear this with justice on my side.

ODYSSEUS
[Justice must yield if I resort to force.]

NEOPTOLEMUS
Not even thou canst force me 'gainst my will.

ODYSSEUS
Then not with Trojans must we war, but thee.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΟΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἔτως τὸ μέλλον.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

χείρα δεξίαν ὅρᾶς
κώπης ἐπιψαύουσαν;

ΝΕΟΠΟΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλὰ κἀμὲ τοι
ταύτῶν τὸδ’ ὤψει δρῶντα κοῦ μέλλουν’ ἔτι.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

καίτοι σὺ ἐάσως· τῷ δὲ σύμπαντι στρατῷ
λέξω τάδ’ ἔλθων, ὡς σε τιμωρήσεται.

ΝΕΟΠΟΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἔσωφρόνησας· κἂν τὰ λοιφ’ οὕτω φρονήσῃ,
ἴσως ἂν ἔκτος κλαυμάτων ἔχοις πόδα.

σὺ δ’, ὦ Ποιαντὸς παῖ, Φιλοκτήτην λέγω,
ἐξείλθ’, ἀμείψας τάσσε πετρήρεις στέγας.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

τίς αὖ παρ’ ἄντροις θόρυβος ἱσταται βοής;
τί μ’ ἐκκαλείσθε; τοῦ κεχρημένου, ξένου;
ὁμοί’ κακὸν τὸ χρῆμα. μῶν τί μοι νέα
πάρεστε πρὸς κακοῖς πέμποντες κακά;

ΝΕΟΠΟΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

θάρσει· λόγους δ’ ἀκούσον οὕς ἕκω φέρων.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

dédoικ’ ἐγώνει· καὶ τὰ πρὶν γὰρ ἐκ λόγων
καλῶν κακῶς ἐπράξα, σοὶς πεισθεὶς λόγοις.

ΝΕΟΠΟΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκοῦν ἐνεστὶ καὶ μεταγνώναι πάλιν;

1 ἔτω MSS., Wecklein corr.
PHILOCTETES

NEOPTOLEMUS
So be it, if it must be.

ODYSSEUS
See'st my hand

Upon my sword-hilt?

NEOPTOLEMUS
Me too shalt thou see
Ready to follow suit and keen to draw.

ODYSSEUS
Well, I will leave thee, but I shall report
To the whole army. They shall punish thee.

NEOPTOLEMUS
A wise discretion. Keep this prudent mind,
So mayest thou henceforth with a whole skin live.

[Exit ODYSSEUS

Ho! Philoctetes, son of Poeas, leave
The shelter of thy rocky home; come forth!

PHILOCTETES
What means this hubbub at my cave again?
Why summon me, what would ye with me, Sirs?

(Appears at mouth of cave and sees NEOPTOLEMUS.)

Ha! I dislike the look of it. Are ye come
As heralds of new woes to crown the old?

NEOPTOLEMUS
Take heart and listen to the news I bring.

PHILOCTETES
I am afraid. Thou camest once before;
I trusted thy fair words and ill I sped.

NEOPTOLEMUS
May not a man repent him?
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ
τοιοῦτος ἦσθα τοῖς λόγοις χάτε μου.
τὰ τὸξ᾽ ἐκλεπτεῖς, πιστὸς, ἄτηρὸς λάθρα.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ᾽ οὐ τι μὴν νῦν. Βούλομαι δὲ σου κλύειν,
πότερα δέδοκταί σοι μένοντι καρτερεῖν
ἡ πλεῖν μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

παῦε, μὴ λέξῃς πέρα.
μάτην γὰρ ἂν εἴπης γε πάντ᾽ εἰρήσεται.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὕτω δέδοκταί;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

καὶ πέρα γ᾽ ἵσθ᾽ ἡ λέγω.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ᾽ ἦθελον μὲν ἂν σε πεισθῆναι λόγοις
ἐμοίσιν εἰ δὲ μὴ τι πρὸς καίρον λέγων
κυρῶ, πέπαυμαι.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

πάντα γὰρ φράσεις μάτην.

οὐ γὰρ ποτ᾽ εὔνουν τὴν ἐμὴν κτήσει φρένα,
ὅστις γ᾽ ἐμοῦ δόλοις τὸν βίον λαβῶν ἀπεστέρηκας, κἀτα νοθετεῖς ἐμὲ
ἐλθὼν, ἀρίστου πατρὸς αὐχεστος γεγὼς.
ἀλοισθ᾽ Ἄτρειδαι μὲν μάλιστ᾽, ἔπειτα δὲ
ὁ Δαρτίον παῖς καὶ σὺ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

μὴ ἱεύξῃ πέρα.

δέχον δὲ χειρὸς ἦς ἔμης βέλη τάδε.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

πῶς εἴπας; ἀρα δεύτερον δολούμεθα;
PHILOCTETES

PHILOCTETES

Such thou wast,
No less fair-spoken, when thou wert about
To steal my bow, black treachery in thy heart.

NEOPTOLEMUS

But now another man, who fain would learn
Whether thou still persistest to stay here,
Or wilt embark with us.

PHILOCTETES

Stop, say no more!
All that thou sayest will be wasted breath.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Art resolute?

PHILOCTETES

More resolute than words can tell.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Well, I would gladly have persuaded thee
By argument, but if thou wilt not heed,
Why, I have done.

PHILOCTETES

Thou needs must speak in vain.
How canst thou win me o’er to friendliness,
Thou who didst rob me of my life by fraud,
And then dost come to counsel me? Base son
Of noblest sire! Perdition on you all;
The Atridae first, Odysseus then, and thee!

NEOPTOLEMUS

Forbear thy curses. Take from me thy bow.

PHILOCTETES

What say’st thou? Am I tricked a second time?
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἀπώμοσι' ἀγνὸν Ζηνὸς ὑψίστοι σέβας.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ὡς φίλτατ' εἴπον, εἴ λέγεις ἐπήτυμα.
ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
tουργον παρέσται φανερών· ἀλλά δεξιὰν
προτεινὲ χεῖρα, καὶ κρατεῖ τῶν σῶν ὄπλων.
ΟΔΥΣΕΥΣ
ἐγὼ δ' ἀπανθῶ γ', ὃ θεοὶ ἔμπνευστορες,
ὑπὲρ τ' Ἀτρειδῶν τοῦ τε σύμπαντος στρατοῦ.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
tέκνων, τίνος φώνημα, μῶν Ὄδυσσεώς,
ἐπηρθόμην;
ΟΔΥΣΕΥΣ
σάφ' ἵσθι· καὶ πέλας γ' ὀρᾶς,
ὅς σ' ἐσ τὰ Ἰρωνὶς πεδί' ἀποστελῶ βιοι,
ἐάν τ' Ἀχιλλέως παῖς εάν τε μὴ θέλῃ.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἀλλ' οὗ τι χαίρων, ἢν τὸδ' ὀρθώθη βέλος.
ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἀ', μηδαμῶς, μῆ, πρὸς θεῶν, μεθῆς βέλος.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
μέθες με, πρὸς θεῶν, χειρα, φίλτατον τέκνων.
ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
οὐκ ἄν μεθείην.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
φεῦ· τί μ' ἄνδρᾳ πολέμουν
ἐχθρόν τ' ἀφείλομεν μὴ κτανεῖν τόξοις ἔμοις;
ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἀλλ' οὔτ' ἐμοὶ τοῦτ' ἐστίν οὔτε σοι καλὸν.
PHILOCTETES

NEOPTOLEMUS
No, by the name of Zeus most high, I swear it.

PHILOCTETES
O comfortable words, if they be true.

NEOPTOLEMUS
The deed shall follow to attest this truth
Reach hither thy right hand and take thy bow.
(As he is handing the bow to PHILOCTETES, ODYSSEUS appears.)

ODYSSEUS
Hold! I protest 'fore Heaven, and in the name
Of the Atridae and the host forbid it.

PHILOCTETES
Who spake, my son, was that Odysseus' voice
I heard?

ODYSSEUS
None other; and he's hard at hand,
Ready to take thee back to Troy by force,
Whether it please Achilles' son or no.

PHILOCTETES
But at thy peril, if this shaft fly straight.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Hold, hold! in heaven's name let not fly thy shaft!

PHILOCTETES
Let go my hand in heaven's name, dearest son!

NEOPTOLEMUS
I will not.

PHILOCTETES
Why, O why didst thou prevent me
From slaying with my bow the man I hate?

NEOPTOLEMUS
That were dishonourable for thee and me.

[Exit ODYSSEUS.

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ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

άλλοι οὐν τοσοῦτον γ' ἵσθι, τοὺς πρώτους στρατοῦ, τοὺς τῶν Ἀχαιῶν-ψευδοκήρυκας, κακοῖς ὄντας πρὸς αἰχμῆν, ἐν δὲ τοῖς λόγοις θρασεῖς.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

eἶν τὰ μὲν δὴ τὸξ' ἔχεις, κοῦκ ἔσθ' ὅτου ὄργην ἔχοις ἄν οὐδὲ μέμψιν εἰς ἐμὲ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ἐξέμφημ' τὴν φύσιν δ' ἔδειξας, ὡ τέκνον, ἔξ ἦς ἐ βλαστήτες, οὐχὶ Σισύφου πατρός, ἀλλ' ἐξ Ἀχιλλέως, ὃς μετὰ ξόντων ὅτ' ἦν ἕκον' ἄριστα, νῦν δὲ τῶν τεθνηκότων.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἥσθην πατέρα τὸν ἀμον εὐλογούντα σε αὐτὸν τ' ἐμ'. δὲν δὲ σου τυχεῖν ἐφίεμαι, ἄκουσον. ἀνθρώποις τὰς μὲν ἐκ θεῶν τύχας δοθείσας ἔστ' ἀναγκαῖον φέρειν ὅσοι δ' ἐκουσίοισιν ἔγκειναι βλάβαις, ἀναπέρ σύ, τούτως οὔτε συγγνώμην ἔχειν δίκαιον ἔστιν οὖτ' ἑποκτίρειν τινά.

σὺ δ' ἡγρίωσαι, κοῦτε σύμβουλον δέχει, εάν τε νοθετῇ τις εὐνοία λέγων, στυγείς, πολέμου δυσμενή θ' ἤγοιμενος. ὁμοις δὲ λέξω: Ζήνα δ' ὅρκιον καλῶν καὶ ταὐτ' ἐπίστω καὶ γράφου φρενῶν ἔσω. σὺ γὰρ νοσεῖς τόδε ἄλγος ἐκ θείας τύχης, Χρυσῆς πελασθεῖς φύλακος, ὃς τὸν ἀκαλυφή σηκὸν φυλάσσει κρύφιοι οἰκουρῶν ὅφις καὶ παύλαν ἵσθι τῇς μὴ ποτ' ἄν τυχεῖν νόσου βερείας, ἔως ἄν αὐτὸς ἦλιος ταύτῃ μὲν αἰρῃ, τῇς δ' αὐ δύνη πάλιν, πρὶν ἄν τὰ Τροίας πεδί ἐκῶν αὐτὸς μόλης.

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PHILOCTETES

PHILOCTETES
Well of one thing thou may'st be sure, the chiefs,
Those lying heralds of the Achaean host,
Are brave in words and cowards in the fight.

NEOPTOLEMUS
So be it. The bow is thine again, and now
Thou hast no grief or quarrel against me.

PHILOCTETES
None, my brave boy, for thou hast proved this day
Thy race and lineage, not of Sisyphus,
But of Achilles, noblest once of men
In life, and now the noblest of the dead.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Sweet to my ears the praises of my sire,
And of myself; but now I crave of thee
A boon. What fates the gods allot to men
They needs must bear, but whoso hug their griefs,
As thou dost,—who can pity or condone
Such self-tormentors? Thou, inexorable,
Wilt tolerate no counsel, deemest him
Who would admonish thee in love a foe;
Yet will I speak the truth, so help me Zeus!
Write on the table of thy memory
These words: thy sore plague is a heaven-sent doom;
With foot profane, in Chrysè's roofless shrine,
Thou didst insult her tutelary snake.
For this sin wast thou stricken, and no relief
Canst win from thy affliction, whilst the sun
Shall run from East to West his daily course,
Before of thy free will thou com'st to Troy.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

καὶ τοῖν παρ’ ἦμῖν ἔντυχών Ἀσκληπίδαιν νόσου μαλαχθῆς τήσει, καὶ τὰ πέργαμα ἐν τοῖς τόξοις ἐν τ’ ἐμοὶ πέρρας φανῆς. ὡς δ’ οἶδα ταῦτα τῇ ἔχοντ’ ἐγὼ φράσσω. ἀνὴρ γὰρ ἦμῖν ἐστίν ἐκ Τροίας ἄλοις, Ἑλευς ἀριστόμαντις, δς λέγει σαφῶς ὡς δεῖ γενέσθαι ταῦτα· καὶ πρὸς τοῖς ἔτι ὡς ἐστ’ ἀνάγκη τοῦ παρεστῶτος θέρους Τροίαν ἀλώναι πᾶσαι· ἢ δίδωσ’ ἐκῶν κτεῖνει ἔαυτόν, ἢν τάδε ψευσθῇ λέγων. ταῦτ’ οὖν ἐπει κατοίσθα, συγχώρει θέλων. καλὴ γὰρ ἢ πίκτησις, Ἑλλήνων ἔνα κριθέντ’ ἀριστον τοῦτο μὲν παιωνίας ἐς χεῖρας ἔλθειν, εἶτα τὴν πολύστονον Τροίαν ἐλόντα κλέος ὑπέρτατον λαβεῖν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὁ στυγνὸς αἰών, τί με, τί δῆτ’ ἔχεις ἀνω βλέποντα κοῦν ἅφηκας εἰς “Λιδοῦ μολεῖν; οἴμοι, τί δράσω; πῶς ἀπιστήσω λόγοις τοῖς τοῦτ’ ὃς εὑνοῦσ’ δω ἐμοὶ παρῆγεσ’; ἀλλ’ εἰκάθω δῆτ’; εἶτα πῶς ὁ δύσμορος εἰς φῶς τάδ’ ἔρχας εἶμι; τῷ προσήγορος; πῶς, ὃ τὰ παντ’ ἱδόντες ἀμφ’ ἐμοὶ κύκλοι, ταῦτ’ ἐξανασχήσεσθε, τοῖς Ἄτρέως ἐμὲ ξυνόντα παισίν, οὗ μ’ ἀπώλεσαν; πῶς τῷ πανώλει παιδὶ τῷ Δαερτίου; οὐ γάρ με τάλγος τῶν παρελθόντων δάκνει, ἀλλ’ οἷα χρῆ παθεῖν με πρὸς τοῦτον ἔτι δοκῶ προλεύσεις; οἷς γάρ ἡ γυνή κακῶν μήτηρ γένηται, τάλλα παιδεύει κακοὺς. καὶ σοῦ δ’ ἔγωγε θαυμάσας ἔχω τόδε. χρῆν γάρ σε μήτ’ αὐτῶν ποτ’ ἐς Τροίαν μολεῖν
PHILOCTETES

There shalt thou find our famed Asclepidae,
And healed by them, with thy bow's aid and mine,
Shalt take and sack the towers of Ilium.
Thou askest how I know all this. Attend:
We have a Trojan prisoner, Helenus,
Chiefest of seers, who plainly prophesied
All I have told thee, and revealed besides
That, ere this summer passes, Troy must fall;
His life the forfeit if his word proved false.
Now that thou know'st this, yield with a good grace.
How fair a vision—to be singled out
As bravest of the host, and, first made whole
By healing hands, as conqueror of Troy,
Woe-wearied city, win undying fame!

PHILOCTETES

O hateful life that keep'st me lingering on
In this vile world and wilt not let me join
The world of shades! Ah me! What can I do?
How turn a deaf ear to the kindly words
Of one who counsels well and seeks my good?
Shall I then yield? How, having yielded, face
The public gaze? Will not all turn from me?
Ye eyes, so long the witness of my wrongs,
How will ye brook to see me once again
Consorting with my torturers, the sons
Of Atreus and Odysseus, the arch-fiend?
'Tis not resentment for the past that stings,
But a prevision of the ills to come;
For when a mind is warped it takes the ply,
And evil-doers will be evil still.
Thee too, my son, I marvel much at thee;
Never should'st thou have gone thyself to Troy,

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ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ημᾶς τ’ ἀπείργειν, οί γέ σου καθύβρισαν,
pατρός γέρας συλώντες, εἶτα τοίς σὺ
eὶ ξυμμαχήσων, 1 καὶ ἀναγκάζεις τὸδε;
μὴ δὴτα, τέκνον ἀλλ’ ἡ μοι ξυνῷμοσας,
πέμψον πρὸς οἰκους, καῦτος ἐν Σκύρῳ μένων
ὲα κακῶς αὐτοὺς ἀπόλλυσθαι κακοὺς.
χούτω διπλῆν μὲν ἕξ ἐμοὶ κτήσει χαρίν,
διπλῆν δὲ πατρός, κοῦ κακοὺς ἕπωφελῶν
dόξεις ὁμοίος τοῖς κακοῖς πεφυκέναι.

ΝΕΟΠΟΔΕΜΟΣ

λέγεις μὲν εἰκῶτ’, ἀλλ’ ὁμως σε βούλομαι
θεοίς τε πιστεύσαντα τοῖς τ’ ἕμοὶς λόγοις
φίλου μετ’ ἀνδρός τοῦδε τῆσδε ἐκπλείν χθονός.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἡ πρὸς τὰ Τροίας πεδία καὶ τὸν Ἄτρέως
ἐχθιστὸν νιῶν τρὸδε δυστήμφ ποδί;

ΝΕΟΠΟΔΕΜΟΣ

πρὸς τοῖς μὲν οὖν σε τήνδε τ’ ἐμπνων βάσιν
παύσοντας ἁλγοὺς κάτοποσώσοντας νόσου.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὁ δεινὸν αἰνοὺν αἰνέσας, τί φῆς ποτε;

ΝΕΟΠΟΔΕΜΟΣ

ἀ σοὶ τε κάμοι λύσθ’ ὅρῳ τελοῦμενα.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

καὶ ταῦτα λέξας οὗ καταμισώνει θεοὺς;

ΝΕΟΠΟΔΕΜΟΣ

πῶς γάρ τις αἰσχύνοιτ’ ἄν ὠφελῶν φίλους; 2

1 L. 1365:
[οἱ τὸν ἄθλιον
Αἰανθ’ ὀπλων σοῦ πατρός ὑστερον δίκη
'Οδυσσέως ἔκρινεν.]

These lines, clearly an interpolation, have been omitted.

2 ὠφελοῦμενοι MSS., Buttmann corr.

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PHILOCTETES

Nor sought to bring me thither. How could'st thou, When they had robbed thee of thy father's meed And flouted thee? ¹ How can'st thou after that Fight at their side thyself, or bid me fight? Not so, my son, but do as thou hast sworn, Convey me home; thyself in Scyros bide; Leave those ill-doers to their evil doom. Thus shalt thou win a double thanks from me And from my sire; nor will men say of thee: Abetting base men he himself is base.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Thy words are reasonable; natheless I Would have thee trust my promise and the god's, And confidently sail with me, thy friend.

PHILOCTETES

What! to the plains of Troy, to him I loathe, The son of Atreus, with this cursed foot?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Nay, but to kind physicians who will treat Thy ulcered limb and heal thee of thy hurt.

PHILOCTETES

O wondrous weird! What means this mystery?

NEOPTOLEMUS

One fraught with happy issue for us both.

PHILOCTETES

Hast thou no fear of heaven, thus to speak?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Why should a man feel fear who helps his friends?

¹ The omitted lines are:

Who judged Odysseus of thy father's arms
More worthy than the hapless Ajax.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

λέγεις δ’ Ατρείδαις οφέλος ἡ ’π’ εμοὶ τόδε;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

σοὶ που, φίλος γ’ ὤν, χω λόγος τοιόσοδε μοι.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

πῶς, ὃς γε τοῖς ἑχθροῖς μ’ ἐκδούναι θέλεις;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὡ τάν, διδάσκου μή θρασύνεσθαι κακοῖς.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

όλεις με, γυγνώσκω σε, τοίσδε τοῖς λόγοις.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκον ἐγώγε· φημὶ δ’ οὐ σε μανθάνειν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ἔγω οὐκ Ἀτρείδας ἐκβαλόντας οἶδα με;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἄλλ’ ἐκβαλόντες εἰ πάλιν σώσουσ’ ὄρα.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

οὐδέποθ’ ἐκόντα γ’ ὡστε τὴν Τροίαν ἰδεῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί δῆτ’ ἄν ἡμεῖς δρόμοισ, εἰ σὲ γ’ ἐν λόγοις

πείσειν δυνησόμεσθα μηδὲν ὄν λέγω;

ὡς βάστ’ ἐμοὶ μὲν τῶν λόγων λήξαι, σὲ δὲ

ζῆν, ὡσπερ ἡδὴ ζῆς, ἀνευ σωτηρίας.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ἐὰ με πᾶσχειν ταῦθ’ ἀπερ παθεῖν με δει·

ἀ δ’ ἥνεσας μοι δεξίως ἐμὴς θυγών,

πέμπειν πρὸς οἶκους, ταύτα μοι πρᾶξον, τέκνων,

καὶ μὴ βράδυνε μηδ’ ἐπιμνησθῆς ἐτὶ

Τροίας· ἀλίς γάρ μοι τεθρήνηται γόοις.

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PHILOCTETES

PHILOCTETES
Help for the sons of Atreus, or for me?
NEOPTOLEMUS
For thee, as these my words attest, thy friend.
PHILOCTETES
A friend, when thou would'st hand me to my foes?
NEOPTOLEMUS
O let not suffering make thee truculent.
PHILOCTETES
I know thou would'st undo me pleading thus.
NEOPTOLEMUS
Not I, but thou thyself, who wilt not learn.
PHILOCTETES
Do I not know the Atridae cast me forth?
NEOPTOLEMUS
'Tis true, but now they would deliver thee.
PHILOCTETES
Not with my will, if first I must to Troy.
NEOPTOLEMUS
What must I do, if all persuasion fails
To make thee budge an inch? 'Twere easier
To cease from words and leave thee here to live,
As thou hast lived, a hopeless castaway.
PHILOCTETES
Well, let me dree my weird; but thou, my son,
Perform the promise made with clasp of hands,
Take me straight home, and talk no more of Troy.
My cup of lamentations I have drained.

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ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ei dōkei, steîchōmen.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ
ō gennaiou eîrnikós épso.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ántereide vín básin sîn.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ
eis óson γ' égô oðênôw.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
aitiav de pôs 'Achaiôn feûxomai;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ
μη phrontísychs.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
tî gar, év an porðhôsi kêrâv tîn emîn;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ
égô paròv

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
tînâ prôsofélhsein ërxêis;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ
bêlesi toîs 'Hraklèous

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
pôs légeis;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ
eîrîw peîlázêin.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
steîchê prôskûsas khôna.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ
mîptô ge, prîn ãn tôw ëmetênôw
âîsîs múthôv, paî Poiàntos;

φâskêiv õ' aûðhîn tîn 'Hraklèous

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PHILOCTETES

NEOPTOLEMUS
As thou wilt then; let us forward.

PHILOCTETES
Nobly spoken, let us go.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Forward! plant thy footsteps firmly.

PHILOCTETES
To my utmost will I so.

NEOPTOLEMUS
But the wrath of the Achaeans will pursue me.

PHILOCTETES
Never care.

NEOPTOLEMUS
What if they lay waste my borders?

PHILOCTETES
Never fear, I shall be there—

NEOPTOLEMUS
What assistance canst thou render?

PHILOCTETES
Heracles, his mighty bow—

NEOPTOLEMUS
Say'st thou?

PHILOCTETES
Will prevent their landing.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Kiss the earth and let us go.

Apparition of HERACLES behind the stage.

HERACLES
Go not yet till thou hast heard, 
Son of Poeas, first my word:
Heracles to thee appears,
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

άκοη τε κλύειν λεύσειν τ’ οψιν.
τήν σήν δ’ ἥκω χάριν οὐρανίας
ἐδρας προλιπών,
τὰ Δίος τε φράσων θυγατηράτα σοι
κατερητύσων θ’ ὄδὸν ἢν στέλλει
σὺ δ’ ἐμῶν μῦθων ἐπάκουσον.

καὶ πρῶτα μὲν σοι τὰς ἐμὰς λέξεις τύχας,
ὅσους πονήσας καὶ διεξέλθων πόνους
ἀθάνατον ἀρετὴν ἔσχων, ὡς πάρεσθ’ ὀρᾶν.
καὶ σοὶ, σάφ’ ἵσθι, τούτ’ ὁφεῖλεται παθεῖν,
ἐκ τῶν πόνων τῶν’ ἐυκλεὰ δέσθαι βίον.
ἐλθὼν δὲ σὺν τῷ’ ἀνδρὶ πρὸς τὸ Τρωικὸν
πόλισμα, πρῶτον μὲν νόσου παύσει λυγρᾶς,
ἀρετὴ τε πρῶτος ἐκκριθεὶς στρατεύματος,
Πάριν μὲν, ὃς τῶν’ αἰτίως κακῶν ἔφυ,
τὸξοισι τοῖς ἐμοῖς νοσφεῖς βίον,
πέρσεις τε Τροίαν, σκυλά τ’ εἰς μέλαθρα σὰ
πέμψεις, ἀριστεὶ´ ἐκλαβῶν στρατεύματος,
Ποίαντι πατρὶ πρὸς πάτρας Οἰνής πλάκα.
ἀ δ’ ἀν λάβῃς σὺ σκύλα τοῦδε τοῦ στρατοῦ,
τόξων ἐμῶν μυημεῖα πρὸς πυρὰν ἐμὴν
κόμιζε. καὶ σοὶ ταῦτ’ Ἀχιλλέως τέκνων,
παρήνσε’ οὔτε γὰρ σὺ τοῦδ’ ἀτερ σθένεις
ἔλειν τὸ Τροίας πεδίον οὔθ’ οὔτος σέθεν.
ἀλλ’ ὡς λέοντε συννόμω φυλασσεῖν
οὔτος σὲ καὶ σὺ τόνδ’ ἐγὼ δ’ Ἀσκληπιῶν
πανάστηρα πέμψω σῆς νόσου πρὸς Ἰλιον.
τὸ δεύτερον γὰρ τοῖς ἐμοῖς αὐτὴν χρέων

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PHILOCTETES

His the voice that thrills thine ears.
'Tis for thy sake I have come,
Leaving my Olympian home.
Mandate from high Zeus I bring
To forbid thy journeying:
Hear the will of heaven's King.

But first I'll mind thee of my own career,
How, having laboured huge and endured,
I won immortal glory, as thou seest.
Know that thy fortune like to mine shall be,
Through suffering to glorify thy life.
Go with yon man to Ilium. There first
Thou shalt be heal'd of thy grievous sore;
Then, chosen as the champion of the host,
With these my arrows thou shalt pierce to the heart
Paris, the guilty cause of all that woe.
Troy shalt thou sack, and, winning from the host
The meed of bravest, carry home rich spoils
To glad old Paeas and the Oetaean halls.
But of the spoils, whate'er the host assigns thee,
Bring to my pyre, as tribute to my bow,
A tithe.

I have a message too for thee,
Son of Achilles. Thou without his aid
Can'st not take Troy, nor he apart from thine;
But like two lions together on the prowl,
Either the other guards.

To cure thy wounds
Asclepius, the healer, will I send
To Troas; for a second time Troy towers
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

tόξοις ἀλώναι. τούτο δ' ἐννοεῖδ', ὅταν πορθήτε γαῖαν, εὐσεβεῖν τὰ πρὸς θεούς· ὡς τάλλα πάντα δεύτερ' ἥγειται πατήρ Ζεὺς· οὔ γὰρ εὐσέβεια συνθυσκεῖ βροτοῖς· κάν ἡσὶ κάν θάνωσιν, οὔκ ἀπόλλυται.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὁ φθέγμα ποθεινὸν ἐμοὶ πέμψας χρόνιος τε φανεῖς, οὐκ ἀπιθήσω τοῖς σοῖς σοῖς μύθοις.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

κάγῳ γνώμην ταύτη τίθεμαι.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

μὴ νυν χρόνιοι μέλλετε πράσσειν· καιρὸς καὶ πλοῦς ὃδ' ἐπείγει γὰρ κατὰ πρύμνην.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

φέρε νυν στείχων χώραν καλέσω. χαῖρ', ὃ μέλαθρον συμφρούρον ἐμοὶ, νῦμφαι τ' ἐνυδροι λειμωνιάδες, καὶ κτύπος ἁρσην πόντου προβολῆς, ὃς πολλάκι θὴ τοῦμον ἐτέγχθη κράτ', ἐνδόμυχον πληγαίσι νότου, πολλὰ δὲ φωνῆς τῆς ἠμετέρας Ἑρμαίοιν ὁροι παρέπεμψεν ἐμοὶ στόνον ἀντίτυπον χειμαζομένω. νῦν δ', ὃ κρῆναι Λυκίον τε ποτόν, λεῖπομεν ὑμᾶς, λεῖπομεν ἢδη δόξης οὐ ποτε τῆσδ' ἐπιβάντες.

¹ προβλῆς MSS., Hermann corr.
PHILOCTETES

Must fall before my shafts. Only take heed,
In laying waste the land to reverence
Its gods; all else by Zeus my sire is less
Regarded. Piety can never die;
It lives on earth and blossoms in the grave.

PHILOCTETES

Voice for which I long have yearned,
Form, long visioned, now discerned!
Thee I cannot disobey.

NEOPTOLEMUS

I too obey.

HERACLES

Then to work! No time to spare;
Seize the hour; the wind sets fair.

PHILOCTETES

Yet ere I part I fain would bid farewell.
Home of my vigils, rocky cell,
Nymphs of the streams and grass-fringed shore,
Caves where the deep-voiced breakers roar,
When through the cavern’s open mouth,
Borne on the wings of the wild South,
E’en to my dwelling’s inmost lair,
The rain and spray oft drenched my hair;
And oft responsive to my groan
Mount Hermaeum made his moan;
O Lycian fount, O limpid well,
I thought with you all time to dwell;
And now I take my last farewell.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

χαίρ', ὃ Δήμουν πέδου ἀμφίαλον,
καὶ μ' εὐπλοία πέμψον ἀμέμπτως,
ἐνθ' ἀ μεγάλη Μοῖρα κομίζει
γνώμη τε φίλων χω πανδαμάτωρ
dαίμων, δε ταῦτ' ἐπέκρανεν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

χωρῶμεν δὴ πάντες ἀολλεῖς,
νύμφαις ἀλίασιν ἐπευξάμενοι
νόστου σωτήρας ἰκέσθαι.

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PHILOCTETES

Sea-girt Lemnos, hear my prayer,
Bid thy guest a voyage fair
Speed him to the land where he,
Borne by mighty Destiny,
And the god at whose decree
All was ordered, fain would be.

CHORUS
Let us to the Sea Nymphs pray
To waft us on our Troy-ward way.
Mariners, attend my call;
Let us voyage, one and all.

END OF VOL. II.