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WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY
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IN TWO VOLUMES

SOPHOCLES

II

AJAX
ELCTRA
THERIANTHRO
PHILOCLES

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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
ΟΔΓΕΣΕΤΣ
ΑΙΑΣ
ΧΟΡΟΣ ΣΑΛΑΜΙΝΙΩΝ ΝΑΤΤΩΝ
ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ
ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ATHENA.

ODYSSEUS, King of Ithaca.

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

TECMESSA, his captive wife, daughter of Teleutus, 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.
ΑΙΑΣ

ΑΘΗΝΑ

'Αεί μέν, ὦ παῖ Δαρτίου, δέδορκα σε πείραν τιν' ἐχθρῶν ἁρπάσαι θηρώμενον. καὶ νῦν ἐπὶ σκηναῖσι σε ναυτικαῖσ ὁρῶ Αἰαντος, ἐνθα τάξιν ἐσχάτην ἔχει, πάλαι κυνηγετοῦντα καὶ μετροῦμενον ἵχνη τὰ κείνου νεοχάρας, ὡς ἐνδοὺς εἶτ' ἐνδοὺς εἶτ' ὅπε οὐκ ἐνδοὺ. εὖ δὲ σ' ἐκφέρει κυνὸς Δακαίνης ὡς τις εὐρύνος βάσις. ἐνδοὺς γὰρ ἀνὴρ ἄρτι τυνχάνει, κάρα στάξων ἱδρῶτι καὶ χέρας χειρωκότοινος. καὶ σ' οὔδεν εἰσω τῆς ἐπαίνων πύλης ἕτερον ἕστιν, ἐννέπειν δ' ὅτου χάριν σπουδὴν ἐθοῦ τῆν δ', ὡς παρ' εἰδυνας μάθης.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ὡς φθέγμ' Ἀθάνας, φιλτάτης ὑπὸ καλός, ὡς εὐμαθές σου, κἀν ἄποπτος ἃς ὁμοιος, φώνημ' ἄκουσ' καὶ εὐναρτάξω φρενὶ χαλκοστόμον κώδωνος ὡς Τυρσῆνικής. καὶ νῦν ἐπέγνως εὖ μ' ἐπ' ἄνδρι δυσμενει βάσιν κυκλούντ', Αἰαντὶ τῷ σακεσφόρῳ.
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:
ΑΙΑΣ

κείνον γὰρ, οὐδὲν' ἄλλον, ἰχνεύω πάλαι.
νυκτὸς γὰρ ἡμᾶς τῆσδε πρᾶγμας ἀσκοπον
ἐχει περάνας, εἶπερ εὐγασταὶ τάδε:
ίσμεν γὰρ ὑπὸν τρανὲς, ἀλλὰ ἀλώμεθα:
καγὼ θελοντῆς τῶν ὑπεξύγην.πόνω.
ἔφθαρμένας γὰρ ἀρτίως εὐρίσκομεν
λείας ἅπασας καὶ καθηαροῦμενας
ἐκ χειρὸς αὐτοῖς ποιμνίων ἑπιστάταισιν.
τὴνδ' οὖν ἐκεῖνῳ πᾶς τος αἰτίαν νέμει.
καὶ μοι τὸς ὑπὸτὴρ αὐτῶν εἰσιδῶν μόνων
πεδώντα πεδία σὺν νεορράντω ξίφει
φράζει το καθήλωσεν· εὐθέως δ' ἐγὼ
κατ' ἱχνός ἁςσω, καὶ τὰ μὲν σημαίνομαι,
τὰ δ' ἐκπέπληγμαι κοὐκ ἔχω μαθεῖν ὅτου.
καιρον δ' ἐφήκεις· πάντα γὰρ τὰ τ' οὖν πάρος
τὰ τ' εἰσέπειτα σῇ κυβερνώμαι χερί.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

ἔγνων, Ὀδυσσεῦ, καὶ πάλαι φύλαξ ἐβην
τῇ σῇ πρόθυμος εἰς ὁδὸν κυναγία.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἢ καί, φίλη δέσποινα, πρὸς καιρὸν πόνῳ;

ΑΘΗΝΑ

ὡς ἠστιν ἀνδρὸς τὸν ταύτῃ τάργα ταύτα σοι.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

καὶ πρὸς τί δυσλόγιστον ὅδ' ὑξεν χέρα;

ΑΘΗΝΑ

χόλῳ βαρυνθεὶς τῶν Ἀχιλλείων ὅπλων.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

τί δῆτα πούμναις τῆνδ' ἐπεμπήπτει βάσιν;

ΑΘΗΝΑ

δοκῶν ἐν ὑμῖν χείρα χραίνεσθαι φόνῳ,
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.
ΑΙΔΣ

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἡ καὶ τὸ βούλευμ’ ὡς ἐπ᾽ Ἀργείοισ τὸδ’ ἴν;

ΑΘΗΝΑ

κἂν ἐξεπράξατ’, εἰ κατημέλησ’ ἐγὼ.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ποίαισι τόλμαις ταίσδε καὶ φρενῶν θράσει;

ΑΘΗΝΑ

νῦκτωρ ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς δόλιος ὀρμᾶται μόνος.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἡ καὶ παρέστη κατ᾽ τέρμ᾽ ἀφίκετο;

ΑΘΗΝΑ

καὶ δὴ ’πὶ δισσαῖς ἴν στρατηγήσων πύλαις.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

καὶ πῶς ἐπέσχε χείρα μαιμῶσαν φόνον;

ΑΘΗΝΑ

ἔγω σφ’ ἀπείργω, δυσφόροις ἐπ’ ὀμμασι

γνόμας βαλοῦσα τῆς ἀνηκέστου χαρᾶς,

καὶ πρὸς τέ ποίμνας ἐκτρέπω σύμμικτά τε

λείας ἀδαστα βουκόλων φρουρήματα·

ἐνθ’ εἰσπεσῶν ἐκείρε πολύκερων φόνον

κύκλω ραχίζων· κάδοκει μὲν ἔσθ’ ὅτε

δισσοὺς Ἀτρείδας αὐτόχειρ κτείνειν ἔχων,

ἄλλοτ᾽ ἄλλον ἐμπίτνων στρατηλατῶν.

ἐγὼ δὲ φοιτῶντ’ ἄνδρα μανιάσιν νόσιοι

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δισσοὺς Ἀτρείδας αὐτόχειρ κτείνειν ἔχων,

ἄλλοτ᾽ ἄλλον ἐμπίτνων στρατηλατῶν.
AJAX

ODYSSEUS
What, was this onslaught planned against the Greeks?

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

ODYSSEUS
How could he venture such fool-hardiness?

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

ODYSSEUS
And did he reach us and arrive his goal?

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

ODYSSEUS
What then arrested him athirst for blood?

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

θαρσῶν δὲ μίμνε μηδὲ συμφορὰν δέχου
τὸν ἄνδρ’, ἐγὼ γὰρ ὁμμάτων ἀποστρόφους
αὐγὰς ἀπείρῳ σὴν πρόσοψιν εἰσιδεῖν.
οὔτος, σὲ τὸν τὰς αἰχμαλωτίδας χέρας
δεσμοῖς ἀπευθύνοντα προσμολεῖν καλῶ:
Ἀιαντα φοινῶ· στείχε δωμάτων πάροι.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

τί δρᾶς, Ἀθάνα; μηδαμῶς σφ᾽ ἐξω κάλει.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

οὐ σύγ ἀνέξει μηδὲ δειλίαν ἀρεῖ;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

μὴ πρὸς θεῶν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐνδον ἀρκεῖτω μένων.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

τί μὴ γένηται; πρόσθεν οὐκ ἀνήρ ὅδ’ ἤν;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἐχθρός γε τὰντος καὶ τανῦν ἔτι.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

οὐκοιν γέλωσ ήδιστος εἰς ἐχθροὺς γελᾶν;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἐμοὶ μὲν ἀρκεῖ τοῦτον ἐν δόμοις μένειν.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

μεμηνότ’ ἄνδρα περιφανῶς ὀκνεῖς ἰδεῖν;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

φρονοῦντα γάρ νυν οὐκ ἂν ἐξέστην ὀκνῶ.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ νῦν σε μὴ παρὸν ὅδη πέλας.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

πῶς, εἰπὲρ ὀφθαλμοῖς γε τοῖς αὐτοῖς ὅρα.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

ἐγὼ σκοτώσω βλέφαρα καὶ δεδορκότα.
AJAX

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

(To AJAX within the tent.)

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

ODYSSEUS

What dost thou, Goddess? Nowise call him forth.

ATHENA

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

ODYSSEUS

Nay, nay; suffice it that he bide within.

ATHENA

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

ODYSSEUS

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

ATHENA

What mockery sweeter than to mock at foes?

ODYSSEUS

Enough for me to hear of him within.

ATHENA

What, fear to see a madman face to face?

ODYSSEUS

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

ATHENA

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

ODYSSEUS

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

ATHENA

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

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
γένοιτο μένταν πάν θεοῦ τεχνωμένου.

ΑΘΗΝΑ
σίγα νυν ἐστώς καὶ μέν᾽ ὡς κυρεῖς ἐχων.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
μένοιμ' ἀν᾽ ἥθελον δ᾽ ἂν ἐκτὸς ὡν τυχεῖν.

ΑΘΗΝΑ
δ᾽ οὕτως, Αἴας, δεῦτερόν σε προσκαλῶ.
τί βαινὼν οὕτως ἐντρέπει τής συμμάχου;

ΑΙΑΣ
δ᾽ χαῖρ᾽ Ἀθάνα, χαῖρε Διογενές τέκνοιν,
ὅς εὑρ ἐπαρέστης· καὶ σε παγχρύσους ἐγὼ
στέψω λαφύροις τής τῆς ἄγρας χάριν.

ΑΘΗΝΑ
καλῶς ἔλεξας· ἀλλ᾽ ἐκεῖνό μοι φράσον,
ἔβαψας ἔγχος εὖ πρὸς Ἀργείων στρατῷ;

ΑΙΑΣ
κόμπος πάρεστι κοὐκ ἀπαρνοῦμαι τὸ μή.

ΑΘΗΝΑ
ἡ καὶ πρὸς Ἀτρείδαισιν ἥχμασας χέρα;

ΑΙΑΣ
ὁστ᾽ οὐποτ᾽ Ἀλαυθ' οὐδ᾽ ἄτιμάσουσο' ἔτι.

ΑΘΗΝΑ
τεθνᾶσιν ἄνδρες, ὡς τὸ σὸν ξυνῆκ᾽ ἐγὼ.

ΑΙΑΣ
θανόντες ἥδη τὰμ' ἀφαίρεισθων ὀπλα.

ΑΘΗΝΑ
εἰεν, τὰ γὰρ δὴ παῖς ὦ τοῦ Λαερτίου,
ποῦ σοι τύχης ἐστηκευ; ἡ πέφευγε σε;

ΑΙΑΣ
ἡ τοῦτοπτριττον κίναδος ἐξήρου μ᾽ ὀποῦν;
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?
ΑΘΗΝΑ ἔγωγ'. Ὅδυσσέα τὸν σοῦ ἐνστάτην λέγω.

ΑΙΑΣ ἦδιστος, ὥ δέσποινα, δεσμώτης ἔσω θακεῖ· θανεῖν γὰρ αὐτὸν οὐ τί πῶ θέλω.

ΑΘΗΝΑ πρὶν ἄν τί δράσης ἢ τί κερδάνης πλέου; 

ΑΙΑΣ πρὶν ἄν δεθεῖ πρὸς κίον' ἐρκείου στέγης

ΑΘΗΝΑ τί δήτα τὸν δύστηνον ἔργάσει κακῶν;

ΑΙΑΣ μάστιγι πρῶτον νῦτα φοινιχθεῖς θάνη.

ΑΘΗΝΑ μὴ δήτα τὸν δύστηνον ὡδὲ γ' αἰκίσῃ.

ΑΙΑΣ χαίρειν, Ἀθάνα, τἄλλ᾽ ἐγώ ὅ ἐφίεμαι

ΑΘΗΝΑ σὺ δ᾽ οὖν, ἐπειδὴ τέρψις ἥδε σοι τὸ δρᾶν,

ΑΙΑΣ χωρῶ πρὸς ἔργον· σοὶ δὲ τοῦτ' ἐφίεμαι,

ΑΘΗΝΑ ὃς, Ὅδυσσευ, τὴν θεῶν ἰσχὺν ὁσή;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ ἐγὼ μὲν οὐδέν' οἴδ' ἐποικίσω τὲ νιν

δύστηνον ἔμπασ, καίπερ οὖντα 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.
ΑΙΑΣ

οθούνεκ' ἄτη συγκατέξευκται κακῆ,
οὔδὲν τὸ τούτον μᾶλλον ἢ τοῦμον σκοπῶν·
όρῳ γὰρ ἡμᾶς οὖδὲν δυνας ἄλλο πλὴν
εἰδὼλ' ὅσιοπερ ζωμεν ἢ κούφην σκιάν.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

τοιαῦτα τοῖνυν εἰσορῶν ὑπέρκοπτον
μηδέν ποτ' εἴπης αὐτὸς εἰς θεοὺς ἕπος,
μηδ' ὄγκον ἄρη μηδέν', εἰ τινος πλέον
ἡ χειρὶ βρίθεις ἢ μακροῦ πλούτου βάθει.
ὡς ἡμέρα κλίνει τε κανάγει πάλιν
ἀπαντα τὰνθρώπεια τους δὲ σώφρονας
θεοὶ φιλοῦσι καὶ στυγοῦσι τους κακοὺς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Τελαμώνως παί, τῆς ἀμφιρύτου
Σαλαμίνος ἔχων βάθρον ἀγχιάλου,
σὲ μὲν εὐ πράσσοντ' ἐπιχαίρω·
σὲ δ' ὅταν πληγὴ Διὸς ἢ ζαμενῆς
λόγος ἐκ Δαμαῶν κακόθρους ἐπιβῆ,
μέγαν ὄκνον ἴχω καὶ πεφόβημαι
πτηνῆς ὃς ὄμμα πελείας.
ὡς καὶ τῆς νῦν φθιμένης νυκτὸς
μεγάλοι θόρυβοι κατέχουσ' ἡμᾶς
ἐπὶ δυσκλεία, σὲ τὸν ἱππομανῆ
λειμῶν' ἐπιβαν' ὄλεσαι Δαμαῶν
βοτὰ καὶ λείαν,
ἥπερ δορίληπτος ἢν λοιπή,
κτείνοντ' αἴθωνι σιδήρῳ.
τοιούσοςκ λόγονος ψιθύρους πλάσωσων
εἰς ὃτα φέρει πᾶσιν Ὅδυσσεύς,
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 Danaí, 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;
ΑΙΑΣ

καὶ σφόδρα πείθει· περὶ γὰρ σοῦ νῦν εὐπειστα λέγει, καὶ πᾶς ὁ κλύων τοῦ λέξαντος χαίρει μᾶλλον τοὺς σοῖς ἄχεσιν καθυβρίζων. τῶν γὰρ μεγάλων ψυχῶν ἑἰς οὖκ ἂν ἀμάρτοις· καὶ τὰ ὅ ἂν τίς ἐμοῦ τοιαῦτα λέγων οὖκ ἂν πείθοι· πρὸς γὰρ τὸν ἕχονθ’ ὁ φθόνος ἐρπεί. καίτοι σμικροὶ μεγάλων χωρίς σφαλερόν πῦργον ῥύμα πέλουν μετὰ γὰρ μεγάλων βαῖδος ἀριστ’ ἂν καὶ μέγας ὀρθοίθ’ ύπο μικροτέρων. ἀλλ’ οὐ δυνατὸν τοὺς ἀνήθους τούτων γνώμας προδιάσκειν. ύπ’ οὐ τοιούτων ἀνδρῶν θορυβεῖ χήμεις οὐδὲν σθένομεν πρὸς ταῦτ᾽ ἀπαλέξασθαι σοῦ χωρίς, ἃναξ. ἀλλ’ οτε γὰρ δὴ τὸ σὸν ὄμμ’ ἀπέδραν, παταγοῦσιν ἁπέρ πτηνῶν ἀγέλαι, μέγαν αἰγυπίων δ’ ὑποδείσαντες τάχ’ ἂν ἐξαίφνης, εἰ σὺ φανεῖς, σιγῇ πτήξειαν ἄφωνι.

ἡ ρά σε Ταυροπόλα Διὸς Ἄρτεμις— στρ. ὁ μεγάλα φάτις, ὁ μάτερ αἰσχύνας ἐμᾶς— ὁρμασε παιδάμους ἐπὶ βοῦς ἀγελάιας, ἡ ποῦ τινος νίκας ἀκάρπωτον χάριν, ἡ ρα κλυτῶν ἐνάρων ψευσθεῖσ’, ἅδώρως, εἰτ’ ἐλαφαβολίας;

1 Dawes adds δ’.
2 ψευσθεῖσα δώροις 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?
ἈΙΑΣ

ἡ χαλκοθώραξ μὴ τιν’ Ἑυνάλιος
μομφὰν ἔχον ξυνοῦ δορὸς ἐνυχίοις
μαχαναῖς ἐτίσατο λάβαν;

οὗ ποτε γὰρ φρενόθεν γ’ ἐπ’ ἀριστερά,
παῖ Τελαμώνος, ἔβας
τόσσον, ἐν ποίμναις πίτνων:

ἤκοι γὰρ ἄν θεία νόσος: ἀλλ’ ἀπερύκοι
και Ζεὺς κακὰν καὶ Φοῖβος Ἄργειων φάτιν.

εἰ δ’ ύποβαλλόμενοι
κλέπτουσι μύθους οἱ μεγάλοι βασιλῆς
ἡ τᾶς ἀσωτοῦ Σισυφιδᾶν γενεᾶς,
μὴ μή, ἄναξ, ἐθ’ ὁδ’ ἐφάλοις κλισίαις

ἀλλ’ ἄνα ἔξ ἐδράνων, ὁποὺ μακραίωνι
στηρίζει ποτὲ τάδ’ ἀγωνίω σχολᾶ

ἐχθρῶν δ’ ἀτάρβητα
ὁρμᾶται ἐν εὐανέμοις βάσσαις.

τεκμήρια

ναὸς ἄρωγοι τῆς Αἴαντος,
γενεὰς χθονίων ἀπ’ Ῥεχθειδῶν,
ἐχομεν στοναχὰς οἱ κηδομενοὶ
tοῦ Τελαμώνος τηλόθεν οἶκον.
νῦν γὰρ ὁ δεινὸς μέγας ἄθροι ρατῆς
Αἴας θολερῷ

κεῖται χειμῶνι νοσήσας.

1 ἡ 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?

(Ani.)

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 dreaded might
Stricken lies in desperate plight,
And his soul is dark as night.

1 Odysseus, reputed son of Sisyphus, not Laertes.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
τί δ’ ἐνήλλακται τῆς ἡμερίας
νύξ ἦδε βάρος;
παῖ τοῦ Φρυγίου Τελεύταντος,
λέγ’, ἐπεὶ σὲ λέχος δουριάλωτον
στέρξας ἀνέχει θούριος Αἴας:
ὡς τ’ οὐκ ἂν αἰδρίς ὑπεῖποις.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
πῶς δήτα λέγω λόγον ἀρρητον;
θανάτῳ γὰρ ἰσον βάρος ἐκπεύσει.
μανίς γὰρ ἀλον ς ἡμών ὁ κλεινὸς
νύκτερος Αἴας ἀπελωβήθη.
τοιαῦτ’ ἂν ἵδους σκηνῆς ἐνδον
χειροδάϊκτα σφάγι ἀίμοβαφῆ,
κείνου χρηστῆρια τάνδρός.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
οἶαν ἐδήλωσας ἀνέρος ἄετονος
ἀγγελίαν ἄτλατον οὐδὲ φευκτὰν,
τῶν μεγάλων Δαναῶν ὑπὸ κληζομέναν,
τὰν ὁ μέγας μῦθος ἀεί̊ει.
οἴμοι φοβούμαι τὸ προσέρπον’ περίφαντος ἁνὴρ
θανεῖται, παραπλάκτῳ χερὶ συγκατακτᾶς
κελαινοῖς ξίφεσιν βοτὰ καὶ βοτῆρας ἱππονώμας.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
ὁμοιοι λείθειν λείθευν ἄρ’ ἡμῖν
δεσμῶτιν ἄγων ἠλυθε πτοιμην’
ἄν τὴν μὲν ἐσω σφάξει ἐπὶ γαίας,
τὰ δὲ πλευροκοπῶν δι’ ἀνερρήγμων.
δύο δ’ ἄργυποδας κριόυς ἀνελῶν
tοῦ μὲν κεφαλῆν καὶ γλώσσαν ἂκραν

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 δ’ ὄρθον ἄνω
κίονι δῆσας
μέγαν ἱπποδέτην ῥυτῆρα λαβὼν
παλαὶ λυγρὰ μάστιγι διπλῆ,
κακὰ δευνάξων ρήμαθ’, ἃ δαίμων
κούδεις ἀνδρῶν ἐδίδαξεν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

órα τιν’ ἥδη τοι κράτα καλύμμασιν ἀντ.
κρυψάμενον ποδοὶ κλοπὰν ἀφέσθαι
ἡ θόδων εἰρεσίας ξυγὸν ἔξομενον
ποντοπόρον ναὶ μεθείναι.

τοῖας ἐρέσσονις ἅπειλας δικρατεῖς Ἀτρείδαι
καθ’ ἡμῶν πεφόβημαι λιθόλευστοι Ἄρης
ξυναλγεῖν μετὰ τούδε τυπείσι, τὸν αἰῶν’
ἀπλατὸς ὑσχει.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

οὐκέτι λαμπρᾶς γὰρ ἄτερ στεροπῆς
ἀξιοῦν ὡς ἄλγος ἑξεχεὶν
καὶ νῦν φρόνιμος νέον ἀλγοῦς ἔχειν
τὸ γὰρ ἐσλεύσσειν οἰκεῖα πάθη,
κατὰ τοὺς παραπράξαντος,
μεγάλας ὀδύνας ὑποτείνει.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ’ εἰ πέπαυται, κάρτ’ ἀν εὐτυχεῖν δοκῶν
φροῦδου γὰρ ἥδη τοῦ κακοῦ μείων λόγος.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

πότερα δ’ ἂν, εἰ νέμοι τις αἱρεσίν, λάβοις,
φίλους ἄνιων αὐτὸς ἢδονας ἔχειν,
ἡ κοινὸς ἐν κοινοῖσι λυπεῖσθαι ξυνών;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τό τοι διπλάξου, ὦ γύναι, μεῖξον κακῶν.
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.
ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἡμεῖς ἄρ᾽ οὐ νοσοῦντες ἂτώμεσθα νῦν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πῶς τούτ᾽ ἐλέξασ; οὐ κάτοιδ᾽ ὅπως λέγεις.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἀνήρ ἐκεῖνος, ἡνίκ᾽ ἦν ἐν τῇ νόσῳ,
ἀυτὸς μὲν ἦδεθ᾽ οἶσιν εἰχετ' ἐν κακοῖς,
ἡμᾶς δὲ τοὺς φρονοῦντας ἡνία ξυνών
νῦν δ᾽ ὡς ἐληξε κανέπνευσε τῆς νόσου,
κεῖνός τε λύπῃ πᾶς ἐλήλαται κακῇ
ἡμεῖς θ᾽ ὅμοιος οὖδέν ἦσσον ἡ πάρος.
ἀρ' ἕστι ταῦτα δις τῶο' ἐξ ἀπλῶν κακά;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ξύμφημι δὴ σοι καὶ δέδοικα μὴ Ἰκ θεοῦ
πληγη τίς ἡ ἱκή.1 πῶς γάρ, εἰ πεπαιμένος
μηδέν τι μᾶλλον ἢ νοσῶν εὐφραίνεται;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ὡς δοθ' ἐχόντων τῶο' ἐπίστασθαί σε χρή.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τίς γάρ τδ΄ ἀρχὴ τοῦ κακοῦ προσέπτατο;
δήλωσον ἡμῖν τοῖς ξυναλγοῦσιν τύχας.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἀπαν μαθήσει τούργον ὡς κοινωνὸς ὄν.
κεῖνος γὰρ ἄκρας νυκτός, ἡνίχ᾽ ἔστεροι
λαμπτῆρες οὐκέτ᾽ ἦθον, ἄμφηκες λαβὼν
ἐμαίετ' ἐγχος ἔξοδους ἐρπείν κεῖνας.
κάγω ἀπλησσο καὶ λέγω· τί χρήμα δρᾶς,
Διάς; τί τῆν ἀκλητος οὐθ᾽ ὑπ᾽ ἀγγέλων
κληθεὶς ἀφορμὰς πείραν οὐτε τοῦ κλών
σάλπιγγος; ἀλλὰ νῦν γε πᾶς εὐδει στρατός.
ὁ δὲ εἰπε πρὸς με βαί', ἀει δ᾽ ὕμνούμενα.

1 ἕκει 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

γύναι, γυναιξὶ κόσμον ἡ σιγὴ φέρει.
καὶ ταῖς ἐκεῖ μὲν οὐκ ἔχω λέγειν πάθας:
ἐσω δὲ ἐσῆλθε συνδέτους ἄγων ὀμοῦ
tαύρους, κύνας βοτῆρας, εὐερÓN 1 τ' ἄγραν.
καὶ τοὺς μὲν ἡνύχεις, τοὺς δ' ἀνω τρέπων
ἔσφαζε κάρραξις, τοὺς δὲ δεσμών
ἡκίζεθ' ὡστε φῶτας ἐν ποίμναις πίτνων.
tέλος δ' ὑπάξας διὰ θυρῶν σκιά τινι
λόγους ἀνέστη, τοὺς μὲν ’Ατρειδῶν κάτα,
tοὺς δ' ἀμφ' Ὀδυσσεὺ, συντιθείς γέλων πολύν,
ὄσην κατ' αὐτῶν ὕβριν ἐκτίσαι ἤων
κἀπειτ' ἐπάξας αὐθίς ἐς δόμους πάλιν,
ἐμφρῶν μόλις πως ἔχων χρόνῳ καθίσταται,
kαὶ πλήρες ἄτης ὡς διοπτεύει στέγος,
pαίσας κάρα ῾θώὔξεν· ἐν δ' ἐρειπίοις
καὶ πλῆρας κάρα ᾿θώὔξεν' ἐν δ' ἐρειπίοις
καὶ τὸν μὲν ἥστο πλεῖστον ἀφθονον χρόνων
ἐπειτ' ἐμοὶ τὰ δείν' ἐπηπείλησ' ἔπη,
κἀγώ, φίλοι, δείσασα καθίσταται,
kαὶ τὸν μὲν ἥστο πλεῖστον ἀφθονον χρόνων
ἐπειτ' ἐμοὶ τὰ δείν' ἐπηπείλησ' ἔπη,
κἀγώ, φίλοι, δείσασα τοὔξειργασμένον

1 εὐκερών MSS., Schneidewin corr.
AJAX

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

ἀσιτος ἀνήρ, ἀποτος, ἐν μέσοις βοτοῖς σιδηροκμῆσιν ἥσυχος θακεῖ πεσὼν καὶ δῆλος ἐστὶν ὡς τι δρασείων κακών. τοιαύτα γὰρ πως καὶ λέγει κώδυρεται. ἀλλ', ὁ φίλοι, τούτων γὰρ οὔνεκ' ἐστάλην, ἀρήξατ' εἰσελθόντες, εἶ δύνασθέ τιν φίλων γὰρ οἳ τοιοίδε νικῶται λόγοις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

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

ΑΙΑΣ

ἲὼ μοί μοι.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

τάχ', ὡς ἐοικε, μᾶλλον ἡ οὐκ ἥκουσατε Αἰαντὸς οἳαν τήνδε θωύσσει βοήν;

ΑΙΑΣ

ἲὼ μοί μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀνήρ ἐοικεν ἡ νοσεῖν ἡ τοῖς πάλαι νοσῆμασιν ξυνοῦσι λυπεῖσθαι παρών.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἲὼ παῖ παῖ.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἲμοι τάλαιν᾽. Εὐρύσσακες, ἀμφὶ σοὶ βοῶ. τί ποτε μενοινᾶ; ποῦ ποτ' εἶ; τάλαιν' ἔγω.

ΑΙΑΣ

Τεῦκρον καλῶ. ποῦ Τεῦκρος; ἡ τὸν εἰσαἰ λεηλατήσει χρόνον, ἔγω δ' ἀπόλλυμαι;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀνήρ φρονεῖν ἐοικεν. ἀλλ' ἀνοίγετε. τάχ' ἀν τιν' αἰδῶ κατ' ἐμοὶ βλέψας λάβοι.
AJAX

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

CHORUS

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

AJAX

Woe, woe is me!

TECMESSA

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

AJAX

Woe, woe is me!

CHORUS

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

AJAX

My son, my son!

TECMESSA

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

AJAX

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

CHORUS

He seems himself again. Quick, ope the door.
Perchance the sight of us his humble friends
May bring him to a soberer mood.
ΛΙΑΣ
ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
ἰδοῦ, διοίγω· προσβλέπειν ὀ' ἐξεστὶ σοι
tὰ τοῦτο οἰκή, καυτὸς ὡς ἐχὼν κυρεῖ.
ΑΙΑΣ
ἰδὸς
φίλοι ναυβάται, μόνοι ἐμὸνον φίλων,
μόνοι ἐτ' ἐμὲνοντες ὀρθῦ νόμῳ,
ἰδεσθέ μ' οἴον άρτι κύμα φοινίας ὑπὸ ζάλης
ἀμφίδρομον κυκλεῖται.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
οὐμ' ὡς ἐοικας ὀρθὰ μαρτυρεῖν ἁγαν.
δηλοὶ δὲ τουργοὺς ὡς ἀφροντίστως ἔχει.
ΑΙΑΣ
ἰδὼς
γένος ναῖας ἀρωγὸν τέχνας,
ἀλιων δὲ ἐπέβας ἐλίσσων πλάταιν,
σέ τοι σέ τοι μόνον δέδορκα πημονὰν ἐπάρκεσοντ'
ἀλλά με συνδαίξον.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
εὐφήμα φώνει: μὴ κακὸν κακῷ διδοὺς
ἀκος, πλέον τὸ πῆμα τῆς ἄτης τίθει.
ΑΙΑΣ
ὅρας τὸν θρασύν, τὸν εὔκάρδου,
τὸν ἐν δαίοις ἀτρεστὸν μάχαις,
ἐν ἀφόβοις μὲ θηροὶ δεινὸν χέρας;
ὡμοι γέλωτος, ὦν ὑβρίσθην ἀρα.
ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
μὴ, δέσποτ' Αἴας, λίσσομαι ο', αὖδα τάδε.
ΑΙΑΣ
οὐκ ἐκτός; οὐκ ἄψορρον ἐκνεμεῖ πόδα;
αἰαὶ αἰαὶ.
AJAX

TECMESSA

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

AJAX

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

CHORUS

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

AJAX

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

CHORUS

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

AJAX

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

TECMESSA

Ajax, my dearest master, speak not so.

AJAX

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

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ πρὸς θεῶν ὑπείκε καὶ φρόνησον εὖ.

ΑΙΑΣ

ὠ δύσμορος, ὃς χερὶ μὲν μεθήκα τοὺς ἀλάστορας, ἐν δὲ ἐλίκεσσι βουσὶ καὶ κλυτοῖς πεσῶν αἰτπολίως ἔρεμνὸν αἷμ᾽ ἔδευσα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί δήτ᾽ ἂν ἀλγοίης ἐπ᾽ ἐξειργασμένοις; οὐ γὰρ γένοιτ᾽ ἂν ταὐθ᾽ ὅπως οὐχ ὃδ᾽ ἔχειν.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἵω πάνθ᾽ ὅρων ἀπάντων τ᾽ ἀεὶ ἀντ. β' κακὸν ὁργανον, τέκνον Λαρτίου, κακοπινέστατον τ᾽ ἀλημὰ στρατοῦ, ἦ ποῦ πολυν γέλωθ᾽ υψ᾽ ἡδονῆς ἀγείς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ξύν τοι θεῷ πᾶς καὶ γελᾷ κōδυρεται.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἵδοιμι μὴν νῦ, καῖπερ ὃδ᾽ ἀτώμενος. ἵω μοι μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μηδὲν μέγ᾽ εἴπης. οὐχ ὃρᾶς ἰν᾽ εἶ κακοῦ; ΑΙΑΣ

ὦ Ζεῦ, προγόνων προπάτωρ, πῶς ἢ τὸν αἰμυλώτατον, ἐχθρὸν ἄλημα, τοὺς τε δισσάρχας οἰίς βασιλῆς τέλος θάνοιμι καῦτος;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ὅταν κατεύχῃ ταῦθ᾽, ὁμοῦ κἀμοὶ θανεῖν εὔχου· τί γὰρ δεῖ ζῆν μὲ 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

σκότος, ἐμὸν φάος,

ἔρεβος ὁ φαεννότατον, ὡς ἐμοὶ,

ἔλεσθ᾽ ἐλεσθέ μ᾽ οἰκήτορα,

ἔλεσθέ μ᾽. οὔτε γὰρ θεῶν γένος οὐθ᾽ ἀμερίων

ἐτ᾽ αξίος βλέπειν τι' εἰς ὄνασιν ἀνθρώπων.

ἀλλά μ᾽ ἄ Διὸς

ἀλκίμα θεὸς

ὀλέθρι᾽ αἰκίζει.

ποί τις οὖν φύγη:

ποί μολὼν μενῶ;

εἰ τὰ μὲν φθίνει, φίλοι, τοιοῦσδ᾽

ὁμοὶ πέλας, μόραις δ᾽ ἄγραις προσκείμεθα,

πᾶς δὲ στρατὸς δίπαλτος ἂν με

χειρὶ φονεύοι.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ὁ δυστάλαινα, τοιὰδ᾽ ἄνδρα χρήσιμον

φωνεῖν, ἃ πρόσθεν οὗτος οὐκ ἔτλη ποτ᾽ ἄν.

ΑΙΑΣ

πόροι ἀλίρροθοι

πάραλα τ᾽ ἄντρα καὶ νέμος ἐπάκτιον,

πολὺν πολὺν με δαρόν τε δὴ

κατείχετ' ἀμφὶ Τροίαν χρόνον. ἀλλ᾽ οὐκέτι μ', οὐκ

ἐτ' ἀμπνοὰς ἐχοντα' τοῦτο τις φρονῶν ἴστω.

ὁ Σκαμάνδριοι

γείτονες ῥοαί,

εὐφρονεῖς ᾿Αργείοις,

οὐκέτ' ἄνδρα μὴ
tόνδ᾽ ἵδητ', ἐπος

1 τοῖσδ᾽ MSS., Jebb corr.
AJAX

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

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

AJAX

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

ἐξερῶ μέγ', οἷον οὔτινα
Τροία στρατοῦ δέρχθη χθονὸς μολόντ' ἀπὸ
Ἐλλανίδος· ταύτων δ' ἄτιμος
ведите πρόκειμαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὔτοι σ' ἀπείργειν οὔδ' ὅπως ἐῶ λέγειν
ἔχω, κακοῖς τοιοῦσιν συμπεπττοκότα.

ΑΙΑΣ

αἰαῖ' τίς ἂν ποτ' ᾧθ' ὅδ' ἐπώνυμον
tούμον ξυνοίσειν ὅνομα τοῖς ἐμοῖς κακοῖς;
νῦν γὰρ πάρεστι καὶ διὸς αἰάζειν ἐμοὶ
cal τρίς· τοιοῦτοις γὰρ κακοῖς ἐνυγχάνω·
ότου πατήρ μὲν τῆς ἀπ' Ἰδαιᾶς χθονὸς
tà πρῶτα καλλιστεῖ' ἀριστεύσας στρατοῦ
πρὸς οἴκον ἦλθε πάσαν εὐκλείαν φέρων,
ἐγὼ δ' ὦ κείνου παῖς, τὸν αὐτὸν ἐς τόπον
Τροίας ἐπελθὼν οὐκ ἔλασσον σθένει
οὐδ' ἐργα μεῖω χειρὸς ἀρκέσας ἐμῆς,
ἄτιμος Ἀργείοισιν ὧδ' ἀπόλλυμαι.
καὶ τοιούτῳ γ' ἐξεπίστασθαι δοκῶ·
ei ζων Ἀχιλλεὺς τῶν ὅπλων τῶν ὥν πέρι
crίνειν ἐμέλλει κράτος ἀριστείας τυποῦ,
οὐκ ἂν τὸς αὐτ' ἐμαρψεν ἄλλος ἄντ' ἐμοῦ.
νῦν δ' αὐτ' Ἄτρειδαι φωτὶ παντουργῷ φρένας
ἐπραξάν, ἀνδρὸς τοῦ ἀπώσαντες κράτη.
κεὶ μὴ τὸδ' ὡμα καὶ φρένες διάστροφοι
gνώμης ἀπήξαν τῆς ἐμῆς, οὐκ ἂν ποτε
dίκην κατ' ἄλλον φωτὸς ὡδ' ἐψηφίσαν.
νῦν δ' ἡ Διὸς γοργῷς ἀδάματος θεᾶ

40
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

γιὰς μ’ ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς χεῖρ’ ἐπεντύνοντ’ ἐμὴν ἐσφηλευ, ἐμβαλοῦσα λυσσώδη νόσουν, ὡστ’ ἐν τοιοῖσδε χείρας αἰμάξαι βοτοῖς· κεϊνοὶ δ’ ἐπεγγελῶσιν ἐκπεφευγότες, ἐμοῦ μὲν οὐχ ἐκόντος· εἰ δὲ τις θεῶν βλάπτοι, φύγωι τὰν χῶ κακὸς τὸν κρείσσωνα. καὶ νῦν τί χρὴ δρᾶν; ὅστις ἐμφανῶς θεῶις ἐχθαίρομαι, μισεῖ δὲ μ’ Ἀιλήνων στρατός, ἐχθεῖ δὲ Τρῶα πᾶσα καὶ πεδία τάδε.

πότερα πρὸς οἴκους, ναυλόχους λιπῶν ἐδρασ μόνους τ’ Ἀτρείδας, πέλαγος Αἰγαῖον περῶ; καὶ ποίον ὅρμα πατρὶ δηλῶσω φανεῖς Τελαμώνι; πῶς με τλήσεται ποτ’ εἰσιδεῖν γυμνὸν φανέντα τῶν ἀριστείων ἄτερ, ὅν αὐτὸς ἔσχε ἑυκλείας μέγας; οὐκ ἔστι τούργον καὶ νῦν τί χρῄ λοίσθιον θάνω; ἀλλ’ ὧδε γ’ Ἀτρείδας ἄν εὐφράναιμὶ ποιν,

οὐκ ἔστι ταῦτα. πεῖρα τις ξητητέα τοιάδ’ ἂφ’ ἢς γέροντι δηλῶσω πατρὶ μὴ τοῦ φύσιν γ’ ἀσπλαγχνὸς ἐκ κεϊνον γεγώς. αἰσχρὸν γὰρ ἄνδρα τοῦ μακροῦ χρήζειν βίον, κακοῖσιν ὅστις μηδὲν ἐξαλλάσσεται.

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

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐδεὶς ἔρει ποθ’ ὡς ὑπόβλητον λόγον,
Αἴας, ἔλεξας, ἀλλὰ τῆς σαυτοῦ φρενὸς:
παῦσαι γε μέντοι καὶ δὸς ἀνδράσιν φίλοις
γνώμης κρατήσαι, τάσδε φροντίδας μεθείς.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ὁ δέσποτ’ Αἴας, τῆς ἀναγκαίας τύχης
οὐκ ἔστιν ὡς ὑπόβλητον λόγον,
Αἴας, ἔλεξας, ἀλλὰ τῆς σαυτοῦ φρενὸς:
ἰὼ ,
παῦσαί γε μέντοι καὶ δὸς ἀνδράσιν φίλοις
γνώμης κρατήσαι, τάσδε φροντίδας μεθείς.
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, ὅσον κακὸν κείνῳ τε κάμοι τοῦθ’, ὅταν θάνης, νευμεῖς. ἐμοὶ γὰρ οὐκέτ’ ἔστιν εἰς ὃ τι βλέπω πλὴν σοῦ. σὺ γὰρ μοι πατρίδ’, ἠστῶσας δόρει, καὶ μητέρ’ ἄλλη μοῦρα τὸν φύσαντά τε καθεῖλεν Ἄιδου θανασίμους οἰκήτορας, τίς δὴ ἐμοὶ γένοιτ’ ἀν ἀντὶ σοῦ πατρίδις; τίς πλοῦτος; ἐν σοὶ πᾶσ’ ἐγωγε σφόζομαι. ἀλλʼ ἰσχε κάμοι μνήστιν’ ἀνδρὶ τοι χρεῶν μνήμην προσεῖναι, τερπζν ν κτιν ή τίκτους’ ἀεί: ἵτου δ’ ἀπορρεῖ μνήστις εν πεπουθότος, οὐκ ἄν γένοιτ’ ἐθ’ οὔτος εὐγενῆς ἀνήρ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Αίας, ἐχειν σ’ ἂν οἰκτον ὡς κἀγὼ φρενὶ θέλομι, ἀν’ αἰνοίης γάρ ἄν τὰ τῆσδ’ ἔπη.

ΑΙΑΣ
καὶ κάρτ’ ἐπαίνου τεύξεται πρὸς γοῦν ἐμοῦ, ἐὰν μόνον τὸ ταχθὲν ἐν τολμᾶ τελεῖν.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
ἀλλʼ ὦ φίλ’ Αἴας, πάντ’ ἐγώγε πείσομαι.

ΑΙΑΣ
κόμιζε νῦν μοι παῖδα τὸν ἐμόν, ὡς ἵδω.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
καὶ μὴν φόβοις γ’ αὐτὸν ἐξελυσάμην.

ΑΙΑΣ
ἐν τούς ὑδε τοῖς κακοῖσιν; ἡ τί μοι λέγεις;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
μὴ σοὶ γέ ποιν δύστηνοι ἀντήσας θάνου.

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

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

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

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

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

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

AJAX
When I was stricken? Or what meanest thou?

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

AJAX
That fate indeed had matched my fortunes well.
ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἀλλ’ οὖν ἐγὼ 'φύλαξα τούτο γ’ ἀρκέσαι.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἐπήνεσ’ ἔργον καὶ πρόνοιαν ἂν ἔθου.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

τί δήτ’ ἂν ὡς ἐκ τῶνδ’ ἂν ὄφελοιμ’ σε;

ΑΙΑΣ

δός μοι προσειπεῖν αὐτὸν ἐμφανῆ τ’ ἰδεῖν.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

καὶ μὴν πέλασ γε προσπόλοις φυλάσσεται.

ΑΙΑΣ

τί δήτα μέλλει μή οὐ παρόνσιαν ἔχειν;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ὡ παῖ, πατήρ καλεί σε. δεύρο προσπόλων ἂγ’ αὐτὸν ὡσπερ χερὰν εὐθύνων κυρεῖν.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἔρποντι φωνεῖσ ἢ λελειμμένῳ λόγων;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

καὶ δὴ κομίζει προσπόλων ὡδ’ ἐγγύθεν.

ΑΙΑΣ

αἱρ’ αὐτὸν, αἱρε δεύρο. ταρβήσει γὰρ οὐ νεοσφαγῆ ποὺ τόνδε προσλεύσων φόνον,

εἴπερ δικαίως ἢ στ’ ἐμὸς τὰ πατρόθεν.

ἀλλ’ αὐτίκ’ ὡμοῖς αὐτὸν ἐν νόμοις πατρὸς

δεῖ πωλοδαμνεῖν κάξομοιοὔσθαι φύσιν.

ὡ παῖ, γένοιο πατρός εὔτυχέστερος,

τὰ δ’ ἀλλ’ ὡμοίοις’ καὶ γένοι’ ἂν οὐ κακός.

καίτοι σε καὶ νῦν τοῦτο γε ξηλοῦν ἔχω,

ὁθούνεκ’ οὖδὲν τῶνδ’ ἐπαισθάνει κακῶν’

ἐν τῷ φρονεῖν γὰρ μηδὲν ἢδιστος 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 ἕως τὸ χαίρειν καὶ τὸ λυπεῖσθαι μάθης. ὅταν δ' ἢκη πρὸς τούτο, δεῖ σ' ὅπως πατρός δείξεις ἐν ἐχθροῖς, οἶος εἶ οἴου' τράφης. τέως δὲ κούφοις πνεύμασιν βόσκου, νέαν ψυχὴν ἀτάλλων, μητρὶ τῇδε χαρμονὴν. οὗτοι σ'. Ἀχαιῶν, οίδα, μὴ τις ύβρίσῃ στυγναῖσι λόββαις, οὐδὲ χωρίς ὕπτ' ἐμοῦ. τοῖον πυλωρὸν φύλακα Τεῦκρον ἀμφί σοι λείψω τροφὴ τ' ἄοκνον ἐμπα, κεὶ ταῦν τηλωπὸς οἴχνει, δυσμενῶν θήραν ἔχων. ἀλλ', ἄνδρες ἀσπιστῆρες, ἐνάλιος λεώς, ὕμιν τε κοινὴν τήν' ἐπισκῆπτω χάριν, κείμφω τ' ἐμὴν ἀγγειλατ' ἐντολὴν, ὅπως τὸν παῖδα τόνδε πρὸς δόμους ἐμοῦς ἐμὸς ἐγὼν Τελαμώνι δείξει μητρὶ τ', 'Ερυθοία λέγω, ὁς σφυν γένηται γηροβοσκὸς εἰσαεί, [μέχρις οὐ μνεῖσιν κίχωσι τοῦ κάτω θεοῦ],² καὶ τὰ σφιννέα τεύχη μὴ τ' ἀγωνάρχαι τινὲς θήσουσ' Ἀχαιῶν μὴθ' ὁ λυμεων ἐμός. ἀλλ' αὐτῷ μοι σὺ, παί, λαβὼν ἐπίστανον, Εὐρύσακες, ἵσχε διὰ πολυρράφου στρέφων πόρπακος, ἑπτάβοιον ἀρρηκτὸν σάκος; τὰ δ' ἀλλα τεύχη κοιν᾽ ἐμοὶ τεθάψεται. ἀλλ' ὡς τάχος τὸν παῖδα τόνδε ἦδη δέχον καὶ δῶμα πάκτου, μηθ' ἐπισκῆπτος γούσους δάκρυς; κάρτα τοι φιλοκτιστοῦ γυνῆ. πύκαζε θάσσοιν' οὐ πρὸς ἰατροῦ σοφοῦ θρηνεῖν ἐπιφώδας πρὸς τομώντι πᾶματι.

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.’
ΔΙΑΣ

ΧΟΡΩΣ
δέδοικ' ἄκούον τήν την προθυμίαν·
οὐ γάρ μ' ἀρέσκει γλῶσσά σου τεθηγμένη.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
ὡ δέσποτ' Αἴας, τί ποτε δρασείεις φρενί;

ΑΙΑΣ
μὴ κρίνε, μὴ 'ξέταζε· σωφρονεῖν καλὸν.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
οἴμ' ὡς ἀθυμὼ· καί σε πρὸς τοῦ σοῦ τέκνου
καὶ θεῶν ἵκνοῦμαι, μὴ προδοὺς ἦμᾶς γένη.

ΑΙΑΣ
ἀγαν γε λυπεῖς· οὐ κάτοισθ' ἐγὼ θεοῖς
ὡς οὔδεν ἁρκεῖν εἰμ' ὀφείλετις ἐτι;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
εὔφημα φώνει.

ΑΙΑΣ
τοῖς ἄκούονσιν λέγε.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
σὺ δ' οὖχὶ πέλεσι;

ΑΙΑΣ
πόλλ' ἄγαν ἡδη θροεῖς.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
ταρβῶ γάρ, ὅναξ.

ΑΙΑΣ
οὐ ξυνέρξεθ' ὡς τάχος;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
πρὸς θεῶν, μαλάσσου.

ΑΙΑΣ
μῶρα μοι δοκεῖς φρονεῖν,
eἰ τοῦμον ἥθος ἄρτι παιδεύειν νοεῖς.
AJAX

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

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

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

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

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

TECMESSA
Oh hush, blaspheme not!

AJAX
Speak to ears that hear.

TECMESSA
Wilt thou not heed?

AJAX
I have heard from thee too much.

TECMESSA
Fear, my lord, makes me speak.

AJAX
Quick, close the doors.

TECMESSA
Yield, I implore thee.

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

[Exit AJAX.]

53
ΑΙΑΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ κλεινὰ Σαλαμίς, σὺ μὲν που τὰ ςιν περίφαντος ἄει· ἠγῶ δ᾽ ὁ τλάμων παλαιὸς ἁφ᾽ οὗ χρόνος Ἰδαῖα μίμων λειμώνι ἐπαυλα μηνῶν ἀνήριθμος αἰὲν εὐνόμαι ¹ χρόνῳ τρυχόμενος, κακαῖν έλπίδ᾽ ἐχών ἐπὶ μὲ ποτ ἁνύσεων τὸν ἀπότροπον ἀἰδηλον "Αιδαν.

καὶ μοι δυσθεράπευτος Αίας ἀντ. α’ ἐξωστιν ἐφεδρος, ὥμοι μοι, θεία μανία ξύνανλος· ὅταν ἐξεπέμψω πρὶν δὴ ποτε θουρίῳ κρατοῦντ᾽ ἐν Ἀρείῳ νῦν δ’ αὐθ’ φρενὸς οἰοβώτας φίλοις μέγα πένθος ηὔρηται. τὰ πρὶν δ’ ἐργα χεροῖν μεγίστας ἀρετᾶς ἀφίλα παρ’ ἀφίλοις ἔπεσ’ ἐπεσε μελέοις Ἀτρείδαις.

ἡ που παλαιᾷ μὲν σύντροφος ² ἁμέρᾳ, λευκῷ δὲ γῆρᾳ μάτηρ νιν ὅταν νοσοῦντα φρενομόρος ἀκούσῃ, αἰλινον αἰλινον οὐδ’ οἰκτράθι γόον όρυιδος ἁηδοὺς ἥσει δύσμορος, ἀλλ’ ἀξυτόνους μὲν φίδας 630

¹ Ἰδαῖα μίμων | λειμώνια πολαι, μῆλων | ἀνήριθμος αἰὲν εὐνομαι L.; Lobeck, Bergk, and Jebb corr.
² ἐντρόφος MSS., Nauck corr.
AJAX

CHORUS

Ah Salamis, blest isle, (Str. 1)

Secure, serene,

Above the waves that lash thy shore,

As ocean's queen,

Thou sittest evermore.

But I in exile drear,

Month after month, year after year,

On Ida's meads must bivouac, all forlorn

By time outworn;

And ever nearer, ever darker loom

The night of Hades and eternal gloom.

And now to crown my grief (Ant. 1)

Comes a new woe,

My leader Ajax, mad beyond relief,

By heaven laid low;

How fallen from that impetuous chief,

Who sailed to meet the foe.

Now, to his friends' distress,

He sits and broods in sullen loneliness;

Those doughty deeds his right hand wrought

Now count for naught,

And from that loveless pair, those men of sin,

No love but despite win.

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 δέ
ἐν στέρνοισι πεσοῦνται
δοῦποι καὶ πολιᾶς ἂμυγμα χαίτας.

κρείσσων παρ' Ἀιδα κεύθων ὁ νοσῶν μάταν,
δέ ἐκ πατρῴας ἥκων γενεᾶς ἄριστος 1
πολυπόνων Αχαιῶν,
οὐκέτι συντρόφοις
ὁργαῖς ἐμπεδοῖς, ἀλλὰ ἐκτὸς ὁμιλεῖ.

οὐ τλάμον πάτερ, οἶαν οὐκέτι συντρόφοις
παιδὸς δύσφορον ἄταν,
ἀλλ' οὐπω τις ἔθρεφεν
δίων Ἀιακιδᾶν ἀτερθε τοῦδε.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἀπαυθ' ὁ μακρὸς κάναριθμητος χρόνος
φύει τ' ἅδηλα καὶ φανέντα κρύπτεται:
κοὐκ ἔστ' ἄδηλα καὶ φανέντα κρύπτεται
καὶ γαῶρ, ὃς τὰ δείν' ἐκαρτέρου οὖν.

καὶ ἄριστος ἀγνίσας ἐμὰ
μῆνι βαρεῖαν ἐξαλύξωμαι θεᾶς
μολῶν τε χόρων ἐνθ' ἀν ἀστιβη κίχω,
εἰρνψ τῶ δέ ἐγχος τού τούμον, ἐχθιστον βελῶν,
γαῖας ὀρύξας ἐνθα μὴ τις θανέται
ἀλλ' αὐτὸ νῦξ Ἀιδης τε σφόντων κάτω.
ἀγὼ γάρ ἐξ ὃν χειρὶ τοῦτ' ἐδεξάμην

1 ἄριστος added by Triclinius.
AJAX

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

Enter AJAX.

AJAX

Time in its slow, illimitable course
Brings all to light and buries all again;
Strange things it brings to pass, the dreadest oath
Is broken and the stubbornest will is bent.
E'en I whose will aforetime was as iron
Steeled in the dipping, now have lost the edge
Of resolution, by this woman's words
Unmanned, to pity melted at the thought
Of her a widow and my orphan son
Left amidst foemen. But I go my way
To the sea baths and meadows by the beach,
That I may there assoil me and assuage
The wrathful goddess, having purged my sin.
Then will I seek some solitary spot
And hide this sword, of weapons most accursed,
Deep under earth, consigned to Night and Hell,
Where never eye of man may see it more;
For since the day I hanselled it, a gift
παρ’ Ἐκτορος δῶρημα δυσμενεστάτου, οὔπω τι κεδυνὸν ἐσχον Ἀργεῖων πάρα. ἀλλ’ ἔστ’ ἀληθής ἡ βροτῶν παροιμία, ἐχθρῶν ἀδώρα δῶρα κούκ ὤνησμα. τοιγάρ το λοιπὸν εἰσόμεσθα μὲν θεοῖς εἰκεῖν, μαθησόμεσθα δ’ Ἀτρείδας σέβειν. ἄρχοντέσ εἰσιν, ὡσθ’ ὑπεικτέον. τί μὴν;
καὶ γὰρ τὰ δεινὰ καὶ τὰ καρτερῶτα τούτο μὲν υφοστίβεῖς χειμώνες εὐκάρπῳ θέρει εξίσταται δὲ νυκτὸς αἰανὴς κύκλος τῇ λευκοπώλῳ φέγγος ἡμέρᾳ φλέγειν' δεινῶν τ’ ἄημα πνευμάτων ἐκοίμισε στένουτα πόντον: ἐν δ’ ὁ παγκρατὴς ὑπνὸς λῦει πεδῆσας, οὐδ’ ἄει λαβὼν ἐχειν.
ἡμεῖς δὲ πῶς οὐ γνωσόμεσθα σωφρονεῖν; ἔγωγ’ ἐπίσταμαι γὰρ ἀρτίως ὅτι ὅ τ’ ἐχθρὸς ἡμῖν ἐς τοσόν’ ἐχθαρτέος, ὡς καὶ φιλήσων αἰεὶς, ἐς τὸν φίλον τοσαύτ’ ὑπουργῶν ἐκοίμισε τὸν φίλον βροτῶν ἀντιστός ἐσθ’ ἐταφείας ημῖν.
ἀλλ’ ἀμφὶ μὲν τούτοισιν εὐ δεικνύσειν σὺ δὲ ἐσωθεοῖς ἐκδούσα διὰ τάχους, γύναι, εὐχον τελείσθαι τοῦμὸν ὡς ἱππά κέαρ. ἡμεῖς δ’, ἐταφείας, ταύτα τῆδε μοι τάδε τιμᾶτε, Τεύκρων τ’, ἡμίν μόλη, σημήνατε μέλειν μὲν ἡμῖν, ἐπισταμαί δ’ ὑμῖν ἁμά. ἔγω γὰρ εἰμ’ ἐκείσ’ ὑποὶ πορευτέον.

1 τί μὴ MSS., Herwerden corr.
2 ἔγω δ’ ἐπίσταμαι MSS., Blaydes corr.
AJAX

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

ὑμεῖς δ᾽ ἃ φράξω δράτε, καὶ τάχ᾽ ἂν μ᾽ ἵσως πύθοισθε, κεὶ νῦν δυστυχῶ, σεσωσμένου.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἐφρίξ᾽ ἐρωτί, περιχαρῆς δ᾽ ἀνεπτόμαν.

ΗΡΩΗΣ

Ἰω, ἰὼ Πὰν Πάν,

ὁ Πάν Πάν ἀλίπλαγκτε, Κυλλανίας χιονοκτύπου πετραῖας ἀπὸ δειράδος φάνηθ', ὥθεν χοροτοι' ἀναξ, ὅπως μοι Νύσια Κνώσι' ὤρχηματ' αὐτοδαῇ ξυνῶν ιάψης·

νῦν γὰρ ἐμοὶ μέλει χορεύσαι.

Ἡκαρίων δ᾽ ὑπὲρ πελαγέων μολὼν ἀναξ Απόλλων

ὁ Δάλιος εὐγνωστος ἐμοὶ ξυνείῃ διὰ παντὸς εὐφρον.

ἐλυσεν αἰνὸν ἄχος ἄπο ὀμμάτων Ἀρης.

ἌΝΤ.

ιὼ ἰowmentοι' ἐμοὶ ξυνεῖ διὰ παντὸς εὐφρον.

ἈΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἀνδρεσ φίλοι, τὸ πρῶτον ἀγγεῖλαι θέλω·

Τεύκρος πάρεστιν ἄρτι Μυσίων ἀπὸ κρημνῶν·

κρημνῶν· μέσον δὲ προσμολῶν στρατήγιον κυνάζεται τοῖς πάσιν Ἀργείοις ὀμοῦ.

στείχοντα γὰρ πρόσωθεν αὐτὸν ἐν κύκλῳ

θυμοῦ τ' Ἀτρείδαις μεγάλων τε νεικέων.

ἌΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἀνδρεσ φίλοι, τὸ πρῶτον ἀγγεῖλαι θέλω·

Τεύκρος πάρεστιν ἄρτι Μυσίων ἀπὸ κρημνῶν·

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στείχοντα γὰρ πρόσωθεν αὐτὸν ἐν κύκλῳ

1 θυμὸν τ' οἱ θυμὸν MSS., Hermann corr.
AJAX

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

CHORUS

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

(Ant.)

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

Enter MESSENGER.

MESSENGER

Teucer is here—that, friends, is my first news—
Back from the Mysian highlands newly come.
But as he neared headquarters in mid camp,
He was beset with universal shouts
Of obloquy; they spied him from afar,
μαθόντες ἀμφέστησαν, εἰτ' ὅνειδεσιν ἡρασσόν ἐνθεν κάνθεν οὔτις ἐσθ' ὃς οὖ, τὸν τοῦ μανέντος καταβολευτοῦ στρατοῦ ξύναιμον ἀποκαλοῦντες, ὡς οὐκ ἄρκέσοι τὸ μὴ οὖ πέτρωσεν πᾶς καταξαυθεὶς θανεῖν ὥστ' εἰς τοσοῦτον ἢθικὴν ὥστε καὶ χεροῖν κολεὼν ἐρυστὰ ἀπεπεραιώθη ξίφη. λήγει δ' ἔρις δραμοῦσα τοῦ προσωτάτω ἀνδρῶν γερόντων ἐν ξυναλλαγῇ λόγων. ἀλλ' ἵμιν Ἀίας ποῦ 'στιν, ὃς φράσω τάδε; τοῖς κυρίοις γὰρ πάντα χρὴ δηλοῖν λόγον.

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AJAX

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

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

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

CHORUS
What pressing business has been slackly done?

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

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

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

CHORUS
What prophecy? what knowest thou thereof?
ΔΙΑΣ

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
tosοῦτον οἶδα καὶ παρὼν ἑτύχανον.
ἐκ γὰρ συνέδρου καὶ τυραννικοῦ κύκλου
Κάλχας μεταστάσας ὀλοὶ Ἀτρειδῶν δίχα,
eἰς χείρα Τεύκρον δεξιὰν φιλοφρόνως
θείας εἴπε κατέσκηψε, παντοία τέχνη
eἴρξαι κατ᾽ ἰμαρ τούμφαινος τὸ νῦν τόδε
Ἄιανθ᾽ ὑπὸ σκηναῖσι μηδ᾽ ἀφέντ᾽ ἐὰν,
eἰ σῶντ᾽ ἐκεῖνον εἰσιδεῖν θέλοι ποτέ.
ἐλὰ γὰρ αὐτὸν τῇδε θῆμερα μόνη
dıas Ἀθάνας μῆνις, ὡς ἐφὶ λέγων.
tὰ γὰρ περισσὰ κανόνητα σώματα
πῦπτειν βαρείας πρὸς θεῶν δυσπραξίας
ἐφασχ᾽ ο μάντις, ὡς τοῦρωπον φύσιν
βλαστῶν ἔπειτα μη κατ᾽ ἀνθρωπον φρονή.
κεῖνος δ᾽ ἀπ᾽ οἴκων εὐθὺς εὔθυς ἐξορμώμενον
ἀνους καλῶς λέγοντος ἑυρέθη πατρός.
ὁ μὲν γὰρ αὐτὸν ἐννέπει. τέκνου, δόρει
βούλου κρατεῖν μὲν, σὺν θεῷ δ᾽ ἀεὶ κρατεῖν.
o δ᾽ ὕψικόμπως κἀφρόως ἡμείψατο·
πάτερ, θεοῖς μὲν κἂν ὃ καὶ ὃ καὶ τοῦρ ὄμοι
κράτος κατακυθήσατ᾽ ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ δίχα
κεῖνοι πέπουθα τοῦτ᾽ ἐπιστάσειν κλέος.
tοσόνδ᾽ ἐκόμπει μῦθον. εἶτα δεύτερον
días Ἀθάνας, ἡνίκ᾽ ὀτρύνουσά νιν
ηὔδατ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἐχθροῖς χείρα φοινίαν τρέπειν,
tότ᾽ ἀντιφωνεῖ δεινὸν ἄρρητον τ᾽ ἔπος·
ἀνασά, τοῖς ἄλλοισιν Ἀργείων πέλας
ἰστο, καθ᾽ ἡμᾶς ούκ ὀποῖον ἐκρήξει μάχη.
tοιοῦσδε τοι λόγοισιν ἀστεργῇ θείας
eκτῆσατ' ὄργην, οὐ κατ᾽ ἀνθροπῶν φρονῶν.
ἀλλ᾽ εἴπερ ἐστὶ τῇδε θῆμερα, τὰχ᾽ ἄν
AJAX

MESSENGER

Thus much I know, for I was there. The seer
Leaving the council of assembled chiefs,
From the Atridae drew aside and laid
His right hand lovingly in Teucer’s hand,
And spake and charged him straitly by all means,
For this one day whose light yet shines, to keep
Ajax within his tent nor let him forth,
If he would see him still a living man.

“Only to-day,” said Calchas, “will the wrath
Of dread Athena vex him, and no more.
O'erweening mortals waxing fat with pride
Fall in their folly, smitten by the gods
With dire disaster” (so the prophet spake),
“Whene'er a mortal born to man's estate
Exalts himself in thoughts too high for man.
Thus Ajax, e'en when first he left his home,
In folly spurned his father's monishments—
'Seek victory, my son' (so warned the sire),
'But seek it ever with the help of heaven.'
He in his wilful arrogance, replied,
'Father, with gods to aid, a man of naught
Might well prevail, but I without their help.'
Such was his haughty boast. A second time,
To Queen Athena, as she spurred him on
To turn his reeking hand upon his foes,
He spake a blasphemous, outrageous word,
'Queen, stand beside the other Greeks; where I
Am posted, fear not that our ranks will break.'
Such vaunting words drew on him the dire wrath
Of the goddess—pride too high for mortal man.
γενοίμεθ᾽ αὐτοῦ σὺν θεῷ σωτήριοι.
τοσαιδ᾽ ὁ μάντις εἶφ᾽· ὁ δ᾽ εὐθὺς ἐξ ἐδρας
πέμπει με σοὶ φέροντα τάσδ᾽ ἐπιστολὰς
Τεῦκρος φυλάσσειν. εἰ δ᾽ ἀπεστηρήμεθα,
οὐκ ἐστιν ἁνὴρ κεῖνος, εἰ Κάλχας σοφὸς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
δ᾽ δαία Τέκμησσα, δύσμορον γένος,
ὁρα μολοῦσα τόνδ᾽ ὁποῖ᾽ ἐπη θροεῖ·
ξυρεῖ γὰρ ἐν χρῷ τούτῳ μὴ χαίρειν τινά.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
τί μ᾽ αὐ τάλαιναν, ἀρτίως πεπαυμένη
κακῶν ἀτρύτων, ἐξ ἐδρας ἀνίστατε;

ΧΟΡΟΣ
τοῦδ᾽ εἰσάκουε τάνδρος, ὡς ἦκει φέρων
Ἀιάντος ἡμῶν πρᾶξιν ἢν ἡλιοθής ἐγὼ.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
οἴμοι, τί φής, ἀνθρωπε; μῶν ὀλώλαμεν;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
οὐκ οἶδα τὴν σὴν πρᾶξιν, Ἀιάντος δ᾽ ὅτι,
θυραῖος εἴπερ ἐστίν, οὐ θαρσῶ πέρι.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
καὶ μὴν θυραῖος, ὡστε μ᾽ ὀδίνειν τί φής.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
ἔκεινον εἴργειν Τεῦκρος ἐξεφίεται
σκηνῆς ὕπαυλον μηδ᾽ ἀφιέναι μόνον.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
ποῦ δ᾽ ἐστὶ Τεῦκρος, κἀπὶ τῷ λέγει τάδε;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
πάρεστ᾽ ἐκεῖνος ἄρτι· τήρυδε δ᾽ ἔξοδον
ὁλεθρίαν Ἀιάντος ἐλπίζει φέρειν.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
οἴμοι 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?

MESSENER

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!

MESSENER

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

TECMESSA

And where is Teucer? Wherefore speaks he thus?

MESSENER

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

TECMESSA

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

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
τοῦ Θεστορείου μάντεως, καθ’ ἡμέραν τὴν νύν, ὅτ’ αὐτῷ θάνατον ἢ βίον φέρει.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
οἳ γὰρ, φίλοι, πρόστητ᾽ ἀναγκαίας τύγχανες, καλὶ σπεύσαθ’, οἱ μὲν Τεῦκρον ἐν τάχει μολεῖν, οἳ δ’ ἐσπέρους ἀγκώνας, οἳ δ’ ἀντηλίανους ζητεῖτ’ ἑόροις τάνδρος ἔξοδον κακῆν. ἔγνωκα γὰρ δὴ φωτός ἡπατημένη καὶ τῆς παλαιᾶς χάριτος ἐκβεβλημένη. οἳ μοι, τί δράσω, τέκνον; οὐχ ἱδρυτέον’ ἀλλ’ εἶμι κάγω κεῖσ’ ὅποιτερ ἄν σθένω.

χωρῶν, ἐγκονώμεν, οὐχ ἐδρασ ἄκμη σφόξειν θέλουντας ἄνδρα γ’ ὅς σπεύδῃ θανεῖν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
χωρεῖν ἑτοιμασ, κοῦ λόγῳ δείξω μόνον τάχος γὰρ ἔργον καὶ ποδῶν ἀμ’ ἐφεται,

ΑΙΑΣ
ὁ μὲν σφαγεὺς ἑστηκεν ᾗ τομώτατος γένοιτ’ ἄν, εἰ τῷ καὶ λογίζεσθαι σχολὴ· δώρων μὲν ἄνδρος’ Εκτορος ξένων ἐμὸι μάλιστα μοσθέντος ἐχθιστοῦ θ’ ὀρᾶν· πέτηγε δ’ ἐν γῇ πολεμίᾳ τῇ Τροάδι, σιδηροβρῶτῃ θηγάνῃ νείκονης· ἐπηξα δ’ αὐτὸν εὗ περιστείλας ἐγὼ, εὐνοῦστατον τῷ ἄνδρὶ διὰ τάχος θανεῖν. οὕτω μὲν εὔσκευομεν’ ἐκ δὲ τῶιδε μοι σὺ πρῶτος, ὁ Ζεῦ, καὶ γάρ εἰκὸς, ἀρκεσον. αὐτήσομαι δὲ σ’ οὐ μακρὸν γέρας λαχεῖν. πέμψον τιν’ ἡμῖν ἀγγελοῦ, κακὴν φάτιν
AJAX

MESSENGER

The prophet, son of Thésthor, 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

Τεύκρῳ φέροντα, πρῶτος ὃς με βαστάσῃ
πεπτῶτα τὸ'dὲ περὶ νεορράντῳ ξίφει,
καὶ μὴ πρὸς ἔχθρῶν τοῦ κατοπτευθεῖς πάρος
ῥιφθὼ κυσίν πρόβλητος οἴωνοι θ᾽ ἔλωρ.
τοσαύτα σ', ὃ Ζεὺς, προστρέπτω, καλὸ δ' ἀμα
πομπαίον Ἐρμῆν χθόνιον εὖ με κοιμίσαι,
ξὺν ἀσφαδάστω καὶ ταχεὶ πηδήματι
πλευρὰν διαρρήξαντα τὸ'dὲ φασγάνῳ.
καλὸ δ' ἄρωγος τὰς ἀεὶ τε παρθένους
ἀεὶ θ᾽ ὡρώσας πάντα τὰν βροτοῖς πάθη,
σεμνὰς Ἐρμὺς τανύποδας, μαθεὶν ἐμὲ
πρὸς τῶν Ἀτρειδῶν ὃς διόλλυμαι τάλας,
καὶ σφας κακοὺς κάκιστα καὶ πανωλέθρους
ξυναρπάσειαν, ὥσπερ εἰςορώσ᾽ ἐμὲ
[αὐτοσφαγῆ πίττοντα, τῶς αὐτοσφαγεῖς
πρὸς τῶν φιλίστων ἐκγόνοιν ὅλοιατο].
.FILL, ὃ ταχεὶαι ποίνιμοι τ᾽ Ἐρινύες,
γενέσθε, μὴ φείδεσθε πανδήμου στρατοῦ.
σὺ δ', ὃ τὸν αἰπὺν οὐρανὸν διφρηλατῶν
"Ἠλιε, πατρφαν τὴν ἐμὴν ὅταν χθόνα
ἰδῆς, ἐπισχοῦν χρυσόνωτον ἦμιαν
ἀγγειλὼν ἀτὰς τὰς ἐμὰς μόρουν τ᾽ ἐμὸν
γέροντι πατρὶ τῇ ὁ ὁ ὁ ὁ ὁ ὁ ὁ ὁ ὁ ὁ ὁ ὁ ὁ ὁ ὁ ὁ ὁ ὁ ὁ ὁ ὁ ὁ
η ποὺ τάλανα, τὴν ὅταν κλὺν φάτων,
ἡσει μέγαν κοκυτὸν ἐν πάσῃ πόλει.
קלי oυδὲν ἔργον ταῦτα θρηνεῖσθαι μάτην,
αἰς ἀρκτέον τὸ πρᾶγμα σὺν τάχει τυνὶ.
ὁ Θάνατε Θάνατε, νῦν μ᾽ ἐπίσκεψαι μολὼν.
καίτοι σὲ μὲν κἀκεὶ προσαυδήσῳ χυνών.
σὲ δ', ὃ φαεννῆς ἠμέρας τὸ νῦν σέλας,
καὶ τὸν διφρευτὴν "Ἠλιον προσευνέπω,
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
πανύστατον δή κούπτοτ' αὖθις ύστερον.
ω φέγγος, ο γῆς ιερὸν οἰκείας πέδουν
Σαλαμίνος, ο πατρὸφοι ἕστιας βάθρον
κλειναί τ' �よりνια καὶ τὸ σύντροφον γένος
κρήναι τ' ύστερον, καὶ τὰ Τρωϊκὰ
πέδια προσανδώ, χαίρετ', ὃ τροφής ἐμοί·
τοῦθ' ὑμῖν Αἴας τούτος ύστατον θροεῖ,
τὰ δ' ἀλλ' ἐν ὁ "Αἴδου τοῖς κάτω μυθήσομαι.

HMIXOPION α'
πόνος πόνῳ πόνου φέρει.
πά πά
πά γάρ οὐκ ἐβαν ἐγώ;
κούδεις ἐπίσταται με συμμαθεῖν1 τόπος.
ἴδού.
δοῦπον αὐ κλύω τινά.

HMIXOPION β'
ἡμὸν γε ναὸς κοινόπλουν ὁμιλίαν.

HMIXOPION α'
τί οὖν δή;

HMIXOPION β'
πάν ἐστίβηται πλευρὸν ἐστερον νεῶν

HMIXOPION α'
ἐχεῖσ οὖν;

HMIXOPION β'
πόνον γε πλῆθος, κούδεν εἰς ὀψιν πλέον.

HMIXOPION α'
ἀλλ' οὐδὲ μὲν δή τὴν ἄφ' ἥλιον βολῶν
κέλευθον ἀνήρ οὐδαμοῦ δήλοι φανεῖς.

1 The Greek is obscure and probably corrupt, Jebb suggests, but does not print σφε συναίειν.
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.’
ΧΟΡΟΣ

τίς ἄν δῆτά μοι, τίς ἄν φιλοπόνων
ἀλιαδᾶν ἔχων ἀὕτπνους ἄγρασ,
ἡ τίς Ὁλυμπιάδων θεᾶν ἡ ῥυτῆν
Βοσπορίων ποταμῶν, τὸν ὀμόθυμον
eποθί πλαζόμενου λεύσσων
ἀπύοι; σχέτλια γὰρ
ἐμὲ γε τὸν μακρῶν ἀλάταν πόνων
οὐρίῳ μὴ πελάσαι δρόμῳ,
ἀλλ᾽ ἀμενηνὸν ἄνδρα μὴ λεύσσειν ὅπου.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἰῶ μοί μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τίνος βοή πάραυλος ἐξέβη νάπους;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἰῶ τλήμων.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τὴν δουρίλητπτον δύσμορον νύμφην δρόῳ
Τέκμησαν, οἴκτῳ, τὸδε συγκεκραμένην.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ὦχοκ᾽, ὀλωλα, διαπεπόρθημαι, φίλοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί δ᾽ ἔστιν;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

Αἴας ὅδ᾽ ἡμῶν ἀρτίως νεοσφαγῆς
κεῖται, κρυφάι ἄναξ ἰφαγάνῳ περιπτυχῆς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦμοι ἐμῶν νόστων;
ὦμοι, κατέπεφνες, ἄναξ,
τὸνδε συνναύταν, τάλας
ὦ ταλαῖφρων γύναι.
CHORUS

O that some toiling fisher by the bay,
    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 desery
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,
Teemessa, 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

όσο ὅτε τοῦ ἔχοντος αἰάζειν πάρα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τίνος ποτ' ἄρ' ἐπραξε χειρὶ δύσμορος;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

αὐτὸς πρὸς αὐτοῦ, δῆλων ἐν γάρ οἱ χθονὶ πηκτὸν τὸ ἔγχος περιπετεῖς κατηγορεῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὁμοι εἵμας ἄτας, οἶος ἄρ' αἰμάχθης, ἀφαρκτὸς φίλων'

ἔγω δ' ὅ πάντα κωφός, ὁ πάντ᾽ ἄιδρις, κατημέλησα. πᾶ πᾶ

κεῖται ο δυστράπελος, δυσώνυμος Αἴας;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

οὔτοι θεατὸς· ἀλλὰ νῦν περιπτυχεῖ

φάρει καλύψω τὸ δέ παμπῆδην, ἐπεὶ οὐδεὶς ἄν, ὡστις καὶ φίλος, τλαίη βλέπειν φυσῶντ᾽ ἄν χαῖραι ρίπας ἐκ τε φοινίας πληγής μελανθῆν ἄιμ᾽ ἀπ᾽ οἰκείας σφαγῆς.

οὗμοι, τί δράσω; τίς σε βαστάσει φίλων;

ποὺ Τεύκρος; ὡς ἄκμαὶ ἄν, εἰ βαίη, μόλοι, πεπτῶτ᾽ ἄδελφον τὸν θύμαθα συγκαθαρμόσαι.

ὁ δύσμορ' Αἴας, οἶος ὃν οifdef έχεις,

ὡς καὶ παρ᾽ ἐχθροῖς ἄξιοις ἀδελφὸν τυχεῖν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἐμελλες, τάλας, ἐμελλες χρόνῳ ἀντ.

στερεόφρων ἄρ' ἐξανύσσειν κακαὶ

μοῖραν ἀπειρεσίων κακῶν

μοῖραν ἅπειρεσίων τῶν. τοῖα μοῖ

πάννυχα καὶ φαέθοντ' ἄνεστέναζες ἀμφότερον ἔχθοδόπ' 'Ατρείδαιος

76
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,
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,
οὐλίω σὺν πάθει.
μέγας ἄρ' ἂν ἐκείνος ἄριχων χρόνος
πημάτων, ἦμος ἀριστόχειρ
- ο - ὀπλῶν ἐκεῖν ἅγών πέρι.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

χωρεῖ πρὸς ἥπαρ, οἴδα, γενναία δύν.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

τοιοῦτοι ἀποβλαφθεῖσαν ἀρτίως φίλον.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

σοὶ μὲν δοκείν ταῦτ᾽ ἐστ', ἐμοὶ δ᾽ ἄγαν φρονεῖν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

εὐναυδώ.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

οἴμοι, τέκνον, πρὸς οία δουλείας ζυγὰ
χωροῦμεν, οἴοι νῷν ἐφεστᾶσι σκοποί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

όμοι, ἀναλγήτων
δις ζυγῶν ἑθρόησας ἄναυδ' ἔργον τῷδ᾽ ἄχει.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

οὐκ ἂν τὰδ' ἐστὶ τῇδε μὴ θεῶν μέτα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀγαν ὑπερβριθὲς γὰρ ἄχθος ἦμισαν.

1 ἄναυδον ἔργον 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.
ΤΟΙΟΝΔΕ ΜΕΝΤΟΙ ΖΗΝΟΣ Ἡ ΔΕΙΝΗ ΘΕΟΣ
ΠΑΛΛΑΣ ΦΥΤΕΥΕΙ ΠΗΜ’ ὌΔΥΣΣΕΩΣ ΧΑΡΙΝ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
Ἡ ῥα κελαινώταν θυμὸν ἐφυβρίζει πολύτλας ἅνηρ,
γελά δὲ τοῦσκε μαυνώμενοι ἄχεσιν πολὺν γέλωτα,
феῦ φεῦ,
ξῦν τε διπλοὶ βασιλῆς κλύοντες Ἄτρείδαι.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
οἱ δ’ οὖν γελώντων κατιχαιρόντων κακοὶς
τοῖς τοῦδ’ ἱσως τοι, κεὶ βλέποντα μὴ ’τόθουν,
θαυμώτ’ ἂν οἰμώξειαν ἐν χρεία δορός.
οὶ γὰρ κακοὶ γνώμαισι τὰγάθον χερῶν
ἐχοντες οὐκ ἱσασι, πρὶν τις ἐκβάλη.
ἔμοι πικρὸς τέθνηκεν ἥ κείνοις γλυκύς,
αὐτῷ δὲ τερπνός· ὃν γὰρ ἡράσθη τυχεῖν
ἐκτήσαθ’ αὐτῷ, θάνειν ἄρτε λαμύνειν.
τί δὴ τοῦδ’ ἐπεγγελέατεν ἂν κάτα;
θεοῖς τέθνηκεν οὗτος, οὐ κείνοις, οὐ.
πρὸς ταῦτ’ ὍΔΥΣΣΕΩΣ ἐν κείνοις ύβριζέτω.
Αἴας γὰρ αὐτοῖς οὐκέτ’ ἐστίν, ἀλλ’ ἐμοὶ
λιπὼν ἄνιας καὶ γόους διοίχεται.

ΤΕΤΑΡΚΟΣ
ἰὼ μοι μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
σίγησον’ αὐδὴν γὰρ δοκῶ ΤΕΥΚΡΟΝ κλύειν
βοῶντος ἃτης τῆσ’ ἐπίσκοπον μέλος.

ΤΕΤΑΡΚΟΣ
ὁ φίλτατ’ Λῆας, ὃς ἐνεαίμον ὡμμ’ ἐμοὶ,
ἀρ’ ἡμπόληκας, ὡσπερ 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

ὁλωλεν ἄνηρ, Τεῦκρε, τοῦτ’ ἐπίστασο.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

ὦμοι βαρείας ἄρα τῆς ἐμῆς τύχης.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὡς ὦδ’ εχόντων

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

ὦ τάλας ἐγώ, τάλας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πάρα στενάξειν.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

ὦ περισπερχές πάθος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἄγαν γε, Τεῦκρε.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

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

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μόνος παρὰ σκηναῖσιν.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

οὐχ ὦσον τάχος δῆτ’ αὐτῶν ἄξεις δεῦρο, μή τις ὦς κενής σκυίμων λεαίνης δυσμενῶν ἀναρπάσῃ; ἵθ’, ἐγκόνει, σύγκαμψε· τοῖς θανοῦσι τοι φιλούσι πάντες κειμένοις ἐπεγγελάν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

καὶ μὴν ἐτὶ ζῶν, Τεῦκρε, τοῦδε σοι μέλειν ἐφίεθ’ ἄνηρ κεῖνος, ὡσπέρ οὖν μέλει.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

ὦ τῶν ἄπαντων δὴ θεαμάτων ἐμοὶ ἀλγιστον ὦν προσεῖδον ὀφθαλμοῖς ἐγώ,
AJAX

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

TEUCER
Then woe is me for my most grievous loss.

CHORUS
And since 'tis thus—

TEUCER
Alas for me, alas!

CHORUS
The hour for mourning—

TEUCER
O sharp pang of pain!

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

TEUCER
Ay me!

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

CHORUS
Alone beside the tent.

TEUCER
Then bring him quickly,
Lest of our foemen one should snatch him up,
As from a lioness forlorn her cub.
Go quick, bestir thyself. 'Tis the world's way
To flout and triumph o'er the prostrate dead.

[Exit Tecmessα.

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

οδὸς θ᾽ ήδὼν πασῶν ἀνιάσασα δὴ
μάλιστα τοῦμον σπλάγχνῳ, ἥν δὴ νῦν ἐβην.
ὁ φίλτατ' Αἴας, τὸν σοῦ ὡς ἐπηρθόμην
μόρον διώκων κἀξιχνοσκοποῦμενος.
ὀξεῖα yap σου βάξις ὡς θεοῦ τινος
ὠπεστέναξον, νῦν δ' ὅρων ἀπόλλυμαι.
οἴμοι.

ἤδε, ἐκκάλυψον, ὡς ἰδο τὸ πάν κακὸν.
δὶ δυσθέατον ὡμμα καὶ τόλμης πικρᾶς,
ὅσας ἀνίας μοι καταστείρας ἀφίνεις.
ποῖ γὰρ μολείν μοι δυνατὸν, εἰς ποίους βροτοὺς,
τοῖς σοὶς ἀρίζειτ' εἰς πόνοις μηδαμοῦ;
ἡ πού με ῾Τελαμών, σὸς πατὴρ ἐμός θ᾽ ἅμα,
δέξατ' ἀν εὐπρόσωπος ἰλεός τ' ἱσώς
χωροῦντ' ἀνευ σοῦ. πῶς γὰρ σὺν χαρά;
ὅσας ἀνίας μοи κατασπείρας φθίνεις.
ποῖ γὰρ μολεῖν μοι δυνατὸν, εἰς ποίους βροτοὺς,
τοῖς σοῖς ἀρήξαντ' ἐν πόνοις μηδαμοῦ; 4
ἢ ποῦ με ο Τελαμών, σὸς πατὴρ ἐμός θ᾽ ἅμα,
δέξατ' ἀν εὐπρόσωπος ἰλεός τ' ἱσώς
χωροῦντ' ἀνευ σοῦ. πῶς γὰρ σὺν χαρά;
ὅσας ἀνίας μοι κατασπείρας φθίνεις.
ποῖ γὰρ μολεῖν μοι δυνατὸν, εἰς ποίους βροτοὺς,
τὸν ἐκ δορὸς γεγῶτα πολεμίον νόθον,
τὸν δειλὰ προδότα καὶ κακανδρία
σῇ, φίλτατ' Αἴας, ἥ δύλοιςιν, ὡς τὰ σὰ
κράτη θανόντος καὶ δόμους νέμοιμι σοῦ.
τοιαῦτ' ἀνήρ δύσοργος, ἐν γήρᾳ βαρύς,
ἐρεῖ, πρὸς οὐδὲν εἰς ἔριν θυμοῦμενος.
τέλος δ᾽ ἀπωστὸς γῆς ἀπορριμφήσομαι,
δούλος λόγοισιν ἀντ' ἔλευθέρον φανεῖς.
τοιαῦτα μὲν κατ᾽ οἶκον ἐν Τροίᾳ δὲ μοι
πολλοὶ μὲν ἔχθροι, παῦρα δ᾽ ὥφελήσιμαι.
καὶ ταῦτα πάντα σοῦ θανόντος ἡμύρωμην.
οἴμοι, τὶ δράσω; πῶς σ᾽ ἀποστάσω πικροῦ

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 searcloth; 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,
τοῦ δ' αἰώλου κυώδοντος, ὦ τάλας, ὑφ' οὐ φονέως ἂρ' ἐξεπνευσασ; εἴδες ὡς χρόνῳ ἐμελλέ σ' Ἑκτωρ καὶ θανῶν ἀποθέσειν; σκέψασθε, πρὸς θεῶν, τὴν τύχην δύοίν βροτῶν. Ἑκτωρ μέν, ὦ δ' τοῦδ' ἔδωρηθή πάρα, ξωστήρι προσθεῖς ἰπτικῶν ἐξ ἀντύγων ἐκνάπτετ' αίέν, ἐστι' ἀπεψυκτών βιον' οὖτος δ' ἐκείνων τίνι κεφαλαίες δωρεάν ἐχων πρὸς τοῦδ' ὀλωλε θανασίμως πεσήματι. ἂρ' οὐκ Ἑρινὺς τοῦτ' ἐχάλκευσεν ξίφος κάκεινον 'Αιδής, δημουργός ἄγριος; ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν καὶ ταύτα καὶ τὰ πάντα ἄει φάσκοιμ' ἄν ἀνδρώποισι μηχαναν θεοὺς' ὅτω δὲ μὴ τάδ' ἐστίν ἐν γνώμῃ φίλα, κεῖνος τ' ἐκείνα στεργέτω κάγω τάδε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

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

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

τίς δ' ἐστίν ὄντιν' ἄνδρα προσλεύσσεις στρατοῦ; Μενέλαος, ὦ δ' ἡ τύδε πλοῦν ἐστείλαμεν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὅρω: μαθεῖν γὰρ ἐγγὺς δῶν οὐ δυσπετής.

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

οὖτος, σὲ φωνῇ τούδε τὸν νεκρὸν χερῶν μὴ συγκομίζεις, 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.
ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ
τίνος χάριν τοσόνδ' ἀνήλωσας λόγον;
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ
dοκοῦντ' ἐμοί, δοκοῦντα δ' ὡς κραίνει στρατοῦ. 1050
ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ
οὐκουν ἃν εἴποις ἦμτιν' αἰτίαν προθείς;
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ
ὅθονεκ' αὐτὸν ἐλπίσαντες οὐκοθεν
ἀγειν Ἀχαιῶς ξύμμαχον τε καὶ φίλον,
ἐξηύρομεν ἄνεις στρατῷ ξύμπαντι βουλεύςας φὸνον
νύκτωρ ἐπεστράτευσεν, ὡς ἐλοι δόρει
κεὶ μὴ θεών τις τὴνδε πείραν ἐσβεσν, 1060
ἥμεις μὲν ἃν τὴνδ' ἦν ὄδ' εἴληχεν τύχην
θανόντες ἃν προυκείμεθ' αἰσχίστοισ μόροι,
οὕτως δ' ἂν ἐζη. νῦν ὃ' ἐννήλλαξεν θεὸς
τὴν τοῦδ' ύβριν πρὸς μήλα καὶ ποίμνας πεσεῖν.
ἂν εἴνεκ' αὐτὸν οὔτις ἐστ' ἀνὴρ σθένων
τοσοῦτον ὡστε σῶμα ἐπιμβεσαι τάφοι,
ἀλλ' ἄμφι χλωρὰν ψάμαθον ἐκβεβλημένος
ὁρισι φορβὴ παραλίους γενήσεται.
πρὸς ταῦτα μηδὲν δεινον ἔξάρης μένος.
εἰ γὰρ βλέποντος μὴ 'δυνηθημεν κρατεῖν,
πάντως θανόντος γ' ἄργομεν, καὶ μὴ θέλης,
χεραίν παρευθύνοντες. οὐ γὰρ ἔσθ' ὅπου
λόγων γ' ἀκούσαι ξών ποτ' ἥθελης' ἐμῶν. 1070
καίτοι κακοῦ πρὸς ἀνδρὸς ὀντα δημοτὴν
μηδὲν δικαιοῦν τῶν ἐφέστωτων κλέειν.
οὐ γὰρ ποτ' οὕτ' ἃν ἐν πόλει νόμοι καλῶς
φέροιτ' ἂν, ἐνθα μὴ καθεστήκη δέος,
οὕτ' ἃν στρατὸς γε σωφρόνως ἄργοιτ' ἐτι,
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 armed force be disciplined Lacking the guard of awe and reverence.
ἈΙΑΣ

ἀλλ᾽ ἄνδρα χρῆ, κἂν σῶμα γεννήσῃ μέγα,
dοκεῖν πεσεῖν ἂν κἂν ἀπ᾽ σμικροῦ κακοῦ. 1080
dέος γὰρ ὃ πρόσεστιν αἰσχύνη θ᾽ ὁμοῦ,
σωτηρίαν ἔχοντα πόλεῖ ἐπίστασο:
ὁποὺ δ᾽ ύβρίζειν ὕπναν θ᾽ ἄ βουλεται παρῆ,
tαὐτὴν νόμιζε τῇ πόλιν πόλων χρόνῳ ποτὲ
ἐξ οὐρίων δραμούσαν εἰς βυθόν πεσεῖν.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐστάτω μοι καὶ δεός τι καίριον,
καὶ μὴ δοκῶμεν δρόντες ἂν ἡδόμεθα
οὐκ ἀντιτίσειν αὖθις ἄν νυπώμεθα.
ἔρπει παραλλὰξ ταῦτα. πρόσθεν οὖτος ἢ
αὐθων ύβριστής, νῦν δ᾽ ἐγὼ μέγ᾽ αὐ φροῦδ.
καὶ σοι προφωνῶ τόνδε μὴ θάππειν, ὅπως
μὴ τόνδε θάπτομεν αὐτὸς εἰς τάφας πέσησ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Μενέλαε, μὴ γνώμας ὑποστήσας σοφᾶς
εἶτ᾽ αὐτὸς ἐν θανοῦσιν ύβριστῆς γένη.

ΤΕΤΚΡΟΣ

οὐκ ἂν ποτ᾽, ἄνδρες, ἄνδρα θαυμάσασαι᾽ ἐτί,
ὅς μηδὲν ὡς γοναῖσιν εἴθ᾽ ἀμαρτάνει,
ὁθ᾽ οἱ δοκοῦντες εὐγενεῖς πεφυκέναι
τοιαῦθ᾽ ἀμαρτάνουσιν ἐν λόγοις ἐπηρ.
ἀγ᾽ εἰπ᾽ ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς αὐθις, ἢ σὺ φῆς ἁγεῖν
τόνδ᾽ ἄνδρ᾽ Ἀχαιῶν δεύρο σύμμαχον λαβῶν;
οὐκ αὐτὸς ἐξέπλευσεν ὃς αὐτοῦ κρατῶν;
ποὺ σὺ στρατηγεῖς τοῦδε; ποὺ δὲ σοι λεῶν
ἐξεστ᾽ ἀνάσσειν ὃν ὁδ᾽ ἡγαγ᾽ οἴκοθεν;
Σπάρτῆς ἄνάσσων ἢλθες, οὐχ ἡμῶν κρατῶν.
οὐδ᾽ ἐσθ᾽ ὁποῦ σοὶ τόνδε κοσμήσαι πλέον
ἀρχῆς ἐκείτο θεσμὸς ἥ καὶ τάδε σὲ.
ὑπαρχος ἄλλων δεύρ᾽ ἐπλευσας, οὐχ ὦλων

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,
ἈΙΑΣ

στρατηγός, ὡστ᾽ Ἀϊαντὸς ἤγεισθαί ποτε.
ἀλλ᾽ ὁπερ πρὶν ἄρχεις ἄρχε καὶ τὰ σέμν᾽ ἔπη κόλας᾽ ἐκείνους· τόνδε δ᾽, εἴτε μή σὺ φῆς εἴθ᾽ ἄτερος στρατηγός, εἰς ταφὰς ἔγῳ θήσω δικαίως, οὐ τὸ σὸν δείσας στόμα.

οὐ γὰρ τι τῆς σῆς εἴνεκ᾽ ἐστρατεύσατο γυναικός, ὥστερ οἱ πόνον πολλοῦ πλέρη, ἀλλ᾽ εἰνεχ' ἄρκων οἶς ἔναν ἐνώμοτος,

σοῦ δ᾽ οὐδὲν οὐ γὰρ ἥξιον τοὺς μηδένας.

πρὸς τὰ τάδ᾽ ἄρχοντες δεύρο κήρυκας ηρωκας λαβὼν καὶ τὸν στρατηγὸν ἦκε, τοῦ δὲ σοῦ ψύφον οὐκ ἄν στραφείνυ, ἔως ἂν ἢς οἴσοις περ ἦ. 1110

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ουδ' αὖ τοιαύτην γλῶσσαν ἐν κακοῖς Πιρό:

τὰ σκληρὰ γάρ τοι, κἂν ὑπέρδικ᾽ ἔκ, δάκνει.

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

ο τοξότης ἐοικεν οὐ σμικρὸν φρονεῖν. 1120

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

οὐ γὰρ βάναυσον τὴν τέχνην ἐκτησάμην.

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

μέγ᾽ ἄν τι κομπάσειας, ἀσπίδ᾽ εἰ λάβοις.

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

κἂν ψιλὸς ἀρκεσαιμί σοί γ᾽ ὡπλισμένῳ.

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

ἡ γλῶσσά σου τὸν θυμὸν ὡς δεινὸν τρέφει.

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

ξὺν τῷ δικαίῳ γὰρ μέγ᾽ ἐξεστών φρονεῖν.
AJAX

And captain unto Ajax ne'er couldst be.
Go, lord it o'er thy henchmen, chasten them
With lordly pride; but this man, whether thou,
Aye, or thy brother-general forbid,
I with due rites and offices will bury
Despite thy threatenings. 'Twas not to bring back
Thy wife that Ajax joined in the campaign,
Like thy serf drudges, but to keep the oath
Wherefo 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 ¹ 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.
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ
δίκαια γάρ τόνδ' εὐνυχεῖν κτείναντά με;
ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ
κτείναντα; δεινόν γ' εἴπας, εἰ καὶ ζῆς θανῶν.
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ
θεὸς γάρ ἐκσφόξει με, τόδε δ' οἶχομαι.
ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ
μὴ νυν ἀτίμα θεούς, θεοῖς σεσωσμένος.
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ
ἐγὼ γάρ ἄν ψέξαιμι δαιμόνων νόμους;
ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ
ei τοὺς θανόντας οὐκ ἐξες θάπτειν παρῶν.
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ
toûs γ' αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ πολέμιονς. οὐ γὰρ καλὸν.
ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ
ἡ σοι γὰρ Αἰας πολέμιος προὔστη ποτέ;
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ
μισοῦντ' ἐμίσει: καὶ σὺ τοῦτ᾽ ἠπίστασο.
ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ
κλέπτης γὰρ αὐτοῦ ψηφοποιὸς ἠὑρέθης.
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ
ἐν τοῖς δικασταῖς, κοὐκ ἐμοί, τόδ' ἐσφάλη.
ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ
πόλλ᾽ ἂν κακῶς λάθρᾳ σὺ κλέχειας κακά.
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ
toût' eis ἀνίαν τοῦπος ἔρχεται τινι.
ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ
οὐ μᾶλλον, ὡς ἔσικεν, ἤ λυπήσομεν.
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ
ἐν σοι φράσω· τόνδ' ἐστὶν οὐχὶ θαπτέον.
ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ
ἄλλ' ἀντακοῦσει τοῦτον ὡς τεθάψεται.
MENELAUS
Justice quotha, to exalt my murderer?

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

MENELAUS
Heaven saved me; in intention I was slain.

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

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

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

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

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

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

TEUCER
Aye, thou hadst robbed him by suborning votes.

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

TEUCER
A fair face thou canst put on foulest frauds.

MENELAUS
Someone I know will suffer for that word.

TEUCER
He who provoked is like to suffer more.

MENELAUS
One word more; he shall not be buried.

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

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

ηδη ποτ' ειδον ανδρ' εγω γλωσση θρασυν ναυτας εφομησαιτα χειμωνοσ το πλειν, 
ω φθεγμ' αν ουκ αν ηυρες, ηνικ' εν κακω χειμωνος ειχετ', 
αλλ' υφ' ειματος κρυφεις πατειν παρειχε τω θελοτι ναυτιλων.
ουτω δε και σε και το σου λαβρον στομα
σμικρου νεφους ταχ' αν τις εκπνευσας μεγας χειμων κατασβεσει την πολλην βοην.

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

εγω δε γ' ανδρ' οποτα μωριας πλεων,
ως εν κακοις υβριξε τοισι των πελασ.
κατ' αυτον εισιδων τις εμφερησ εμοι
οργην θ' ομοιος ειπε τοιουτον λογον·
ωνθρωπε, μη δρα τους τεθυκστας κακως·
ei γαρ ποησεις, ίσθι πημανομενος.
tοιαυτ' ανολβον ανδρ' ένουθετει παρων.
ορω δε τοι νιν, καστιν, ως εμοι δοκει,
ουδεις ποτ' άλλος ή συ. 
μων ηυξαμην;

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

απειμι και γαρ αισχρον, ει πυθοιτο τις
λογοις κολαζειν ο βιαζεσθαι παρα.

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

αφερπε νυν' καμοι γαρ αισχιστον κλυειν
ανδρος ματαιου φλαυρ' επη μυθομενου.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

εσται μεγαλης εριδος τις αγων.
αλλ' ως δυνασαι, Τευκρε, ταχυνας
σπευσον κοιλην καπετον τιν' ιδειν
tωδε, ενθα βροτως των αειμνηστον
ταφων ευρωεντα καθεξει.
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.

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.
ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ
καὶ μὴν ἐς αὐτὸν καιρὸν οίδε πλησίοι
πάρεισιν ἄνδρὸς τοῦδε παῖς τε καὶ γυνή,
tάφον περιστελοῦντε δυστήνου νεκροῦ.
ὦ παῖ, πρόσελθε δεύρο καὶ σταθεὶς πέλας
ικέτης ἐφασαι πατρός, ὡς σ' ἐγείνατο.
θάκει δὲ προστρόπαιος ἐν χεροῖν ἤχον
κόμας ἐμῶς καὶ τῆς καὶ σαυτοῦ τρίτου,
κόπηριον θησαυρὸν. εἰ δὲ τις στρατοῦ
βία σ' ἀποσπάσει τοῦδε τοῦ νεκροῦ,
κακὸς κακῶς ἄθαπτος ἐκπέσει θυσίας,
γένους ἄπαντος ρίζαν ἔξημημένος,
αὐτός ὅπως ἐπωσπερ τὸν ἔγω τέμνω πλόκον.
ἐχ' αὐτόν, ὦ παῖ, καὶ φύλασσε, μηδὲ σὲ
κινήσατω τις, ἀλλὰ προσπεσῶν ἤχουν.
ὑμεῖς τε μὴ γυναῖκες ἀντ᾽ ἀνδρῶν πέλας
παρέστατε, ἀλλ᾽ ἀρῇ, ἔστε ἐγὼ μολὼν
tάφου μεληθῶ τόδε, κὰν μηδεὶς ἕα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
τὸς ἀρά νέατος ἐς πότε λήξει πολυπλάγκτων
ἐτέων ἀρίθμως,
tὰν ἀπανστον αἰὲν ἐμοὶ δορυσσοῦτον
μόχθοιν ἄταν ἐπάγων
ἀν τὰν εὐρώδεια Τροίαν, 1
δύστανον ὅνειδος Ἐλλάνων;

ἀντ. α' О

ἐφελε πρότερον αἰθέρα δὺναι μέγαν ἢ τὸν
πολύκοινον "Αἰδαν
κεῖνος ἄνηρ, ὡς στυγερῶν ἔδειξεν ὅπλων
"Ελλασιν κοινὼν" Ἀρη.
1 ἀνὰ τὰν εὐρώδη Τροίαν MSS., Ahrens corr.
Enter TECMESSA and CHILD.

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

[Exit TEUCER.

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

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

ὶδῷ πόνοι πρόγονοι πόνων κεῖνος γὰρ ἔπερσεν ἀνθρώπους.

ἐκεῖνος οὔτε στεφάνων οὔτε βαθείαν κυλίκων νεῖμεν ἐμοὶ τέρψιν ὁμιλεῖν, οὔτε γλυκὺν αὐλῶν ὄτως, δύσμορος, οὔτ' ἐννυχίαν τέρψιν ιαύειν.

ἐρώτων δ', ἐρώτων ἀπέπαυσεν, ὃ μοι. κεῖται δ' ἀμέριμνος οὕτως, ἀεὶ πυκνῶς δρόσοις πεγγόμενος κόμας, λυγρὰς μνήματα Τροίας.

καὶ πρὶν μὲν αἰὲν νυχίου· δεῖματος ἂν μοι προβολὰ καὶ βελέων θούριος Δίς· νῦν δ' οὔτος ἀνέιται στυγερῷ δαίμονι· τίς μοι, τίς ἐτ' οὖν τέρψις ἐπέσται;

γενοίμαν ἐν' ὑλὰν ἐπεστί πόντου πρόβλημ' ἀλίκλυστον, ἀκραν ὑπὸ πλάκα Σουνίου, τὰς ἱερὰς ὅπως προσεῖποιμεν Ἀθάνας.

1 ἐννυχίου MSS., Wolff corr.
AJAX

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

Wretch! for me no garlands fine, \(\text{Str. 2.}\) 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, \(\text{Ant. 2.}\) 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!
ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

καὶ μὴν ἰδὼν ἔστευσα τὸν στρατηλάτην 'Αγαμέμνον ώθον δὲψυρό τόνδ' ὀρμῶμενον· δήλος δὲ μουστὶ σκαίδευν ἐκλύσων στόμα.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

σὲ δὴ τὰ δεινὰ ρήματ᾽ ἀγγέλλουσί μοι τλήναι καθ' ἡμῶν ὅδ' ἀνοιμωκτὶ χανεῖν; σὲ τοι, τὸν ἐκ τῆς αἰχμαλωτίδος λέγω, ἢ που τραφεῖς ἂν μητρὸς εὐγενοὺς ἀπὸ υψηλ' ἐκομπεῖς κατ' ἀκρων ἁδουπόρεις, ὅτ' οὐδὲν ὡς τοῦ μηδὲν ἀντέστης ὑπέρ, κούτε στρατηγοὺς οὔτε ναυάρχους μολεῖν ἡμᾶς 'Αχαιῶν οὔδὲ σοῦ διωμόσω, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ἄρχων, ὡς σὺ φῆς, Ἄιας ἐπλει. ταῦτ' ὡς ἀκούειν μεγάλα πρὸς δούλων κακά; ποίον κέκραγας αὐρίκεις ὅδ' ὑπέρφρονα; ποιβάντος ἡ ποῖ στάντος οὔπερ οὐκ ἐνῷ; οὐκ ἂρ 'Αχαιοὶς ἄνδρες εἰσὶ πλήν ὅδε; πικροὺς ἐνυμεν τῶν 'Αχιλλείων ὅπλων ἀγώνας Ἀργείωσι κηρύξαι τότε, εἰ πανταχοῦ φανούμεθ' ἐκ Τεύκρου κακοί, κοῦκ ἀρκέσει ποθ' ὑμῖν ὅδ' ἡσσημένους εἰκεῖν ἄ τοῖς πολλοῖσιν ἱτακεῖν κριταῖς, ἀλλ' αἰεὶ ἡμᾶς ἡ κακοὶς πολειμένοι. ἐκ τῶν δὲ μέντοι τῶν τρόπων οὐκ ἂν ποτε κατάστασις γένουτ' ἂν οὕδενος νόμοιν, εἰ τοὺς δίκη νικῶνας ἐξωθήσομε τοι ἂ σὺν δόλῳ κεντήσθηθ' οἱ λελειμμένοιν. ἐκ τῶν δὲ μέντοι τῶν τρόπων οὐκ ἂν ποτε κατάστασις γένουτ' ἂν οὕδενος νόμοιν.

123

124

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102
AJAX

Enter TEUCER.

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

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

ἀλλ’ οἱ φρονοῦντες εὖ κρατοῦσι πανταχοῦ. μέγας δὲ πλευρὰ βοῦς ὑπὸ σμικρᾶς ὠμῶς
μάστιγος ὡρθὸς εἰς ὁδὸν πορεύεται.
καὶ σοὶ προσέρτον τοῦτ’ ἐγὼ τὸ φάρμακον
ὀρῶ τάξ’, εἰ μὴ νοῦν κατακτήσει τινά:
ὸς ἄνδρος οὐκέτ’ ὄντος, ἀλλ’ ἥδη σκιᾶς,
θαρσῶν ὑβρίζεις κἀξελευθεροστομεῖς.
οὔ σωφρονήσεις; οὐ μαθὼν ὃς εἰ φύσιν
ἀλλον τιν’ ἄξεις ἄνδρα δεῦρ’ ἐλευθερον,
ὕστερ πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀντὶ σοῦ λέξει τὰ σά;
σος γὰρ ἑγούσθης οὐκέτ’ ἄν μάθοιμ’ ἑγὼ·
tὴν βάρβαρον γὰρ γῆλώσου ὁμὶ ἐπαίω.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

εἰδ’ ὑμῖν ἀμφοῖν νοοῦ γένοιτο σωφρονεῖν·
tούτου γὰρ σοὶ οὐδέν σφῆν ἐχὼ λῶν φράσαι.

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

φεῦ· τοῦ θανόντος ὡς ταχεῖα τις βροτοῖς
χάρις διαρρεῖ καὶ προδοῦσ’ ἀλίσκεται,
εἴ σοῦ γ’ ὃδ’ ἄνηρ οὐδ’ ἐπὶ σμικρῶν λόγων,
Αἴας, ἐτ’ ἵσχει μνήστιν, οὐ σοὶ πολλάκις
τὴν σοὶ προτείνω προοίμασι ψυχὴν δόρει. 1260
ἄλλ’ οὐχεῖται δὴ πάντα ταῦτ’ ἐρριμμένα.
ὁ πολλὰ λέξας ἄρτι κανόντι ἐπὶ,
οὐ μνημονεύεις οὐκέτ’ οὐδὲν, ηὐκά
ἐρκέων ποθ’ ὑμᾶς οὕτως ἐγκεκλημένοις,
ἡδη τὸ μηδὲν ὄντας, ἐν τροπῇ ὅπος
ἐρρύσατ’ ἔλθων μοῦνος, ἀμφὶ μὲν νεὼν
ἀκροισιν ἥδη ναυτικοῖς ἐδωλίους
πυρὸς φλέγοντος, εἰς δὲ ναυτικὰ σκάφη
πηδῶντος ἀρδὴν Ἑκτορὸς τάφρων ὑπερ;
tὶς ταῦτ’ ἀπείρξεν; οὐχ ὃδ’ ἦν ὁ ὅρδων τίδε, 1270

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."
ΑΙΑΣ

ὅν οὐδαμοῦ φής, οὔ σὺ μή, βῆναι1 ποδί; ἄρῃ μὴν οὕτως ταῦτ᾽ ἐδρασεν ἕνδικα; χῶτ᾽ αὖθις αὐτὸς "Εκτορὸς μόνος μόνον λαχών τε κάκελευντος ἥλθ᾽ ἐναντίος, οὐ δραπέτην τὸν κλῆρον ἕς μέσων καθείς, ὑγρᾶς ἀρούρας βόλου, ἄλλ᾽ ὡς εὐλόφου κυνῆς ἔμελλε πρώτος ἁλμα κουφιεῖν; ὁδ᾽ ἦν ὁ πράσσων ταῦτα, σὺν δ᾽ ἐγὼ παρών, ὁ δούλος, οὐκ τῆς βαρβάρου μητρὸς γεγός. δύστηρε, ποὶ βλέπων ποτ᾽ αὐτὰ καὶ θροεῖς; οὐκ οἶσθα σοῦ πατρὸς μὲν ὅς προῦφι πατήρ ἀρχαῖον ὄντα Πέλοτα βάρβαρον Φρύγα; Ἄτρεα δ᾽, ὃς οὖ σ᾽ ἐστεπερε δυσεβέστατον, προθέντ᾽ ἀδελφὸν δεῖπνον οἰκείων τέκνων; αὐτὸς δὲ μητρὸς ἐξέφυς Κρήσσης, ἐφ᾽ ἡ λαβὼν ἐπακτὸν ἀνδρ᾽ ὁ φιτύσωσ πατήρ ἐφήκεν ἐλλοίς ἰχθύσιν διαφθοράν. 

τοιοῦτος ὅν τοιφδ᾽ ὄνειδίζεις σποράν; ὅς ἐκ πατρὸς μὲν εἴμι Τελαμώνος γεγός, ὅστις στρατοῦ τὰ πρῶτ᾽ ἀριστεύσας ἔμην ἵσχει ἐγνευνοῦν μητέρ᾽, ἢ φύσει μὲν ἦν βασίλεια, Δασμεδοντος. έκκροτον δὲ νῦν δώρημα κείνῳ ἰδόκειν Ἀλκμήνης γόνος. ἀρ᾽ ὡδ᾽ ἀριστος ἐξ ἀριστεύουν δυνών βλαστῶν ἀν αὐχύνουμι τοὺς πρὸς αἵματος, οὖς νῦν σὺ τοιοῦτον ἐν πόνοις κειμένους ὧθεὶς ἀθάπτους, ὥδ᾽ ἐπαισχύνει λέγων; εὖ νυν τόδ᾽ ἵσθι, τοῦτον εἴ βαλεῖτε πον,
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 Alemena's son.
She was my mother. And am I, thus born
Nobly of parents both of noblest birth,
Am I to shame my kindred overthrown,
Now helpless, whelmed in utter misery,
Whom thou wouldst spurn and rob of burial rites,
Nor art ashamed to promulgate this ban?
Know this full well, where'er ye cast this man,

\(^1\) An allusion to the story of Cresphontes who after the
Dorian Conquest agreed to cast lots for his share of the
Peloponnese and in order to secure the last lot, which he
coveted, put a lump of clay into the urn instead of a
potsherd.
βαλεῖτε χήμας τρεῖς ὅμοι συγκειμένους. ἐπεὶ καλὸν μοι τοῦδ᾽ ὑπερπονομένῳ θανεῖν προδήλως μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς σῆς ὑπὲρ γυναικὸς, ἢ τοῦ σοῦ γ᾽ ὁμαίμονος λέγω; πρὸς ταῦθ᾽ ὁρᾷ μὴ τοῦμόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ σῶν ὡς εἴ με πημανεῖς τι, βουλήσει ποτὲ καὶ δειλὸς εἶναι μᾶλλον ἢ ἐμοὶ θρασύς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἀναξ Ὅδυσσεῦ, καριοῦ ὅσθ᾽ ἐληλυθῶς, εἰ μὴ εὐνάψων, ἀλλὰ συλλύσων πάρει.

ΟΔΤΣΖΞΕΤΣ
τί δ᾽ ἔστιν, ἄνδρες; τηλόθεν γὰρ ἕσθομην βοὴν Ἀτρειδῶν τῷ δ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀλκίμῳ νεκρῷ.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
οὐ γὰρ κλύουστες ἐσμεν αἰσχίστους λόγους, ἀναξ Ὅδυσσεῦ, τοῦδ᾽ ὑπ᾽ ἀνδρὸς ἀρτίως;

ΟΔΤΣΖΞΕΤΣ
ποίους; ἐγὼ γὰρ ἀνδρὶ συγγνώμην ἔχω κλύνοντι φλαῦρα συμβαλεῖν ἐπὶ κακά.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
ἤκουσεν αἰσχρὰ δρῶν ὃν τοιαῦτα με.

ΟΔΤΣΖΞΕΤΣ
τί γὰρ σ᾽ ἔδρασεν, ὡστε καὶ βλάβην ἔχειν;

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
οὐ φησ᾽ εάσεων τόνθε τὸν νεκρὸν ταφῆς ἀμοιρὸν, ἀλλὰ πρὸς βίαν θάψεων ἐμοῦ.

ΟΔΤΣΖΞΕΤΣ
ἐξεστίν οὖν εἰπόντι τάληθή φίλῳ σοὶ μηδὲν ἔσσον ἤ πάρος ἐνηρετεῖν; ἢ
1 σοῦ θ᾽ MSS., Bothe corr. 2 ἐνηρετεῖν 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?
ΑΙΔΣ

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
εἶπ᾽· ἦ γὰρ εἴην οὐκ ἂν εὐ φρονῶν, ἐπεὶ φίλον σ᾽ ἐγὼ μέγιστον ᾿Αργείων νέμω.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
άκουὲ νυν. τὸν ἄνδρα τόνδε πρὸς θεῶν μὴ πλὴς ἀθαπτὸν δόδ᾽ ἀναλγήτως βαλεῖν· μηδ᾽ ἡ βία σε μηδαμῶς νικησάτω τοσόνδε μισεῖν ὡστε τὴν δίκην πατεῖν. κάμοι γὰρ ἂν ποθ’ οὕτως ἐχθιστος στρατοῦ, ἐξ οὗ ἑκάτησα τῶν ῾Αχιλλείων ὁπλων, ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὸν ἐμπας ὧν ἑγὼ τοιόνδ᾽ ἐμοὶ οὐκ ἀντατιμάσαιμ᾽ ἄν, ὡστε μὴ λέγειν ἐν ἀνδρ’ ἵδειν ἀριστον ὧν ὁ ὅσοι Τροίαν ἀφικόμεσθα, πλὴν ῾Αχιλλέως. ὡστ᾽ οὐκ ἂν ἐνδίκως γ᾽ ἀτιμάξοιτό σοι· οὐ γὰρ τὶ τοῦτον, ἀλλὰ τοὺς θεῶν νόμοις φθέγως ἄν. ἀνδρα δ᾽ οὐ δίκαιον, εἰ θάνοι, βλάπτειν τὸν ἐσθλόν, οὐδ᾽ εάν μισῶν κυρῆς.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
σὺ ταῦτ᾽, ´Οδυσσεῦ, τοῦδ᾽ ὑπερμαχεῖς ἐμοί;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
ἔγωγ᾽· ἐμίσουν δ᾽, ἢνίκ᾽ ἦν μισεῖν καλὸν.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
οὐ γὰρ θανόντι καὶ πρόσεμβηναί σε χρῆ;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
μὴ χαῖρ᾽, Ὦτρείδη, κέρδεσιν τοῖς μὴ καλοῖς.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
tὸν τοι τύραννον εὐσεβεῖν οὐ ράδιον.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
ἀλλ᾽ εὐ λέγουσι τοῖς φίλοις τιμᾶς νέμειν.
AGAMEMNON

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

ODYSSEUS

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

AGAMEMNON

Wilt thou, Odysseus, take his part against me?

ODYSSEUS

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

AGAMEMNON

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

ODYSSEUS

Delight not, son of Atreus, in ill gains.

AGAMEMNON

'Tis hard for monarchs to show piety.

ODYSSEUS

But not respect for friends who counsel well.
ΑΙΑΣ

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
κλύειν τὸν ἐσθλὸν ἀνδρὰ χρῆ τῶν ἐν τέλει.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
παῦσαι κρατεῖς τοι τῶν φίλων νικῶμενος.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
μέμνησ᾽ ὁποίῳ φωτὶ τὴν χάριν δίδως.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
οδ' ἔχθρος ἄνηρ, ἀλλὰ γενναῖος ποτ' ἦν.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
tί ποτε ποῆσεις; ἔχθρὸν ὦδ' αἴδει νέκυν;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
νικᾶ γὰρ ἄρετὴ μὲ τῆς ἔχθρας πολὺ.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
tοιοίδε μέντοι φῶτες ἐμπληκτοὶ βροτῶν.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
ἡ κάρτα πολλοὶ νῦν φίλοι καθὶς πικροί.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
tοιοῦσδ' ἐπαινεῖς δὴτα σὺ κτᾶσθαι φίλους;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
σκληρὰν ἐπαινεῖν οὐ φιλῶ ψυχὴν ἐγώ.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
ἡμᾶς σὺ δειλοὺς τῇδε θήμερᾳ φανεῖς.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
ἀνδρὰς μὲν οὖν ὁδ' "Ελλησι πᾶσιν ἐνδίκους.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
ἀνωγας οὖν μὲ τὸν νεκρὸν θάπτειν ἐᾶν;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
ἔγωγε· καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸς ἐνθάδ' ἴξομαι.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ
ἡ πάνθ' ὁμοίᾳ 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.
ΑΙΛΣ

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

τῷ γὰρ με μᾶλλον εἰκὸς ἢ μαυτῷ πονεῖν;

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

σὸν ἄρα τούργον, οὐκ ἐμὸν κεκλήσεται.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ὡς ἂν ποῆσης, πανταχὺ χρηστὸς γ᾽ ἔσει.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

ἀλλ᾽ εὗ γε μέντοι τοῦτ᾽ ἐπίστασαι ὡς ἐγὼ

σοι μὲν νέμοιμ' ἄν τήσδε καὶ μείζων χάριν,

οὗτος δὲ κάκει κανθάμα ὅν ἐμοιγ' ὀμοὶς

ἐχθιστος ἔσται. σοι δὲ δράν ἐξεσθ' ἀν χρῆς. 1

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὁστὶς σ', Ὄδυσσεῦ, μὴ λέγει γνώμη σοφὸν

φύναι, τοιοῦτον ὄντα, μῶρός ἐστ' ἀνήρ.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

καὶ νῦν γε Τεύκρῳ τἀπὸ τοῦδ᾽ ἀγγέλλομαι,

ὡς ποὴσῃς, πανταχὺ χρηστὸς γ᾽ ἔσει.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

ἀλλ᾽ ἐν τοῦτον τοῦτ᾽ ἐπίστασαι ὡς ἐγὼ

σοι μὲν νέμοιμ' ἄν τήσδε καὶ μείζων χάριν,

οὗτος δὲ κάκει κανθάμα ὅν ἐμοιγ' ὀμοὶς

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ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

ὡς ὁ στρατηγὸς οὑπιβρόντητος μολὼν

αὐτὸς τε χὁ ξύναιμος ἠθελησάτην

λωβητὸν αὐτὸν ἐκβαλεῖν ταφῆς ἄτερ.

τοιγάρ σφ᾽ ee τοῦδ᾽ ὁ πρεσβεύων πατὴο 1390

1 χρῆ MSS., Dindorf corr.
AJAX

ODYSSEUS
And who deserves my labour more than I?

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

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

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

[Exit AGAMEMNON.

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

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

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

μνήμων τ' Ἐρινύς καὶ τελεσφόρος Δίκη
κακοὺς κακῶς φθείρειαν, ὡσπερ ἦθελον
τὸν ἄνδρα λάβαις ἐκβαλεῖν ἀναξίως.
σὲ δ', ὦ γεραιοῦ σπέρμα Δαέρτου πατρός,
tάφου μὲν ὅκυρο τοῦτ' ἐπιψαύειν ἐὰν,
μὴ τῷ θανόντι τοῦτο δυσχερῆς ποιώ.
tὰ δ' ἄλλα καὶ ξύμπρασον, κεῖ τινα στρατοῦ
θέλεις κομίζειν, οὐδὲν ἄλγος ἔξομεν.
ἐγὼ δὲ τάλλα πάντα πορσυνῶ. σὺ δὲ
ἀνήρ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἐσθὸλος ὅν ἐπίστασο.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἀλλ' ἦθελον μέν· εἰ δὲ μὴ στὶ σοι φίλον
πράσσειν τῶν ἡμᾶς', εἰμ' ἐπαινέσας τὸ σῶν.

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

ἀλις· ἦδη γὰρ πολὺς ἐκτέταται
χρόνος. ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν κοίλην κάπητον
χεροὶ ταχύνατε, τοὶ δ' ὑψίβατον
τρόπον ἀμφίπτυρον λουτρῶν ὑςίων
θέσθ' ἐπίκαιροι.
μία δ' ἐκ κλισίας ἀνδρῶν ἢ
τὸν ὑπασπίδιον κόσμον φερέτοι.

παῖ, σὺ δὲ πατρός γ', ὅσον ἱσχυεις,
φιλότητι θυγατέρα πλευράς σὺν ἐμοὶ
τάσδ' ἐπικούφιος· ἔτι γὰρ θερμαί

σὺμφωνεῖς ἀνω φυσῶσι μέλαν
μένοι. ἀλλ' ἂγε πᾶς, φίλος ὀςτίς ἂνήρ
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.
ΔΙΑΣ

φησὶ παρεῖναι, σούσθω, βάτω,
tωδ' ἀνδρὶ πονῶν τῷ πάντ᾽ ἀγαθῷ
κοῦδενὶ πω λόφοι βυνητῶν
[Διαντὸς, ἄτ ἤν, τότε φωνῶ].

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἡ πολλὰ βροτοῖς ἐστὶν ἰδοῦσιν
γνῶναι: πρὶν ἰδεῖν ὦ σοῦδεις μάντις
τῶν μελλόντων, ὦ 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 Mycenean women hail the death of the usurper which ends the curse on the house of Atreus.
ΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ΧΟΡΟΣ
ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ
ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

124
DRAMATIS PERSONAE

AGED SERVANT OF ORESTES

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

ELECTRA daughters of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra

CHRYSOTHEMIS

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.
ἩΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

"Ω τοῦ στρατηγήσαντος ἐν Τροίᾳ ποτὲ Ἄγαμέμνονος παῖ, νῦν ἐκεῖν ἔξεστι σοι παρόντι λεύσσειν, δῶν πρόθυμος ἦσθ᾽ ἀεὶ. τὸ γὰρ παλαίον Ἄργος οὐπόθεις τόδε, τῆς οἰστροπλῆγος ἄλσος Ἰνάχου κόρης· αὕτη δ', Ὅρεστα, τοῦ λυκοκτόνου θεοῦ ἀγορὰ Δύκειος· οὐξ ἀριστερὰς δ' ὅδε Ἡρας ὁ κλεινὸς ναὸς· οἱ δ' ἰκάνομεν, φάσκειν Μυκήνας τὰς πολυχρύσους ὁρᾶν πολυφθορὸν τὲ δῶμα Πελοπιδῶν τόδε, ὅθεν σε πατρὸς ἐκ φονῶν ἐγὼ ποτὲ πρὸς σῆς ὁμαίμου καὶ κασιγνήτης λαβὼν ἣνεγκα κείσωσα καξεθρεψάμην τοσὸν ἐς ἦβης, πατρὶ τιμωρῶν φόνου. νῦν οὖν, Ὅρεστα καὶ σὺ φίλτατε ξένων Πυλάδη, τί χρὴ δρᾶν ἐν τάχει βουλευτέουν·"
Enter aged servant with Orestes and Pylades.

Aged Servant

O Child of Agamemnon, who sometime
Was Captain of the host that leaguered Troy,
'Tis thine at last to view before thee spread
The scene thy heart was set on. Yonder lies
Old Argos thou so long hast yearned to see,
Once refuge of the gadfly-driven maid,¹
Daughter of Inachus; and, Orestes, here
The market-place from the Wolf-slayer² named;
There on our left is Hera's far-famed shrine;
And lo! before us, at our very feet
Thou seest Mycenae of the golden hoard,
And there the palace grim of Pelops' line,
Deep stained with murder. Thence I bore thee once
Snatched from beside thy father's bleeding 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.
ἩΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὡς ἡμῖν ἣδη λαμπρὸν ἡλίου σέλας
εἴδε κινεῖ φθέγματ᾽ ὀρνίθων σαφῆ
μέλαινα τ᾽ ἄστρων ἐκλέλοιπεν εὐφρόνη.
πρὶν οὖν τινὶ ἀνδρῶν ἐξοδοπορεῖν στέγης,
ξυνάπτετον λόγουσιν ὡς ἑνταῦθ᾽ ἔμεν,1
Ιν᾽ οὐκέτ᾽ ὁκνεῖν καίρος, ἀλλ᾽ ἔργων ἄκμη.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὁ φίλτατ᾽ ἀνδρῶν προσπόλων, ὡς μοι σαφῆ
σημεῖα φαίνεσσι ἐσθλὸς εἰς ἡμᾶς γεγὼς.
ὁσπερ γὰρ ὅτες εὐγενῆς, κἂν ἢ γέρων,
ἐν τοῖσι δεινοῖς ὑμῶν οὐκ ἀπώλεσεν,
ἀλλ᾽ ὁρθῶν οὖς ἱστησιν, ὠσαύτως δὲ σὺ
ἡμᾶς τ᾽ ὀτρύνεις καυτὸς ἐν πρώτοις ἐπει.
τοιγάρ τὰ μὲν δόξαντα δηλώσω, σὺ δὲ
ὁξεῖαν ἀκοὴν τοῖσι ἔμοις λόγουσι διδούσι,
εἰ μὴ τι καιρῶν τυχώνου μεθάρμοσον.
ἔγω γὰρ ἴναη' ἰκόμην τὸ Πυθικὸν
μαντεῖον, ὡς μάθοιμ' ὅτως τρόπῳ πατρὶ
dίκας ἀροίμην τῶν φονευσάντων πάρα,
χρῆ μοι τοιαῦθι οὐτὸς ὅπε σεῖς τάχα:
ἀσκευον αὐτὸν ἀσπίδων τε καὶ στρατοῦ
dόλοισι κλέψας χειρὸς ἐνδίκους σφαγάς.
ὅτ᾽ οὖν τοιόνδε χρησμὸν εἰσηκούσαμεν,
σὺ μὲν μολὼν, ὅταν σε καιρὸς εἰσώγῃ,
ὅτως ἐν τῷ νῦν, ἵσθι πᾶν τὸ δρόμενον,
ὅπως ἄν εἰδὼς ἡμῖν ἀγγείλῃς σαφῆ.
οὐ γὰρ σε μὴ γῆρα τε καὶ χρόνῳ μακρῷ
γνῶσ᾽, οὐδ᾽ ὑποτεύσουσιν ὧδ᾽ ἦν θυμισμένον.
λόγῳ δὲ χρῶ τοιώθ', ὅτι ἐνεός μὲν εἰ
Φωκέως παρ' ἀνδρὸς Φανοτέως ἦκων' ὁ γὰρ

1 ἔμεν cannot stand. Hartung's ὡς, ἵν᾽ ἐσταμεν, οὐκ ἐστ᾽ ὁκνεῖν καίρος is the most probable emendation.
For lo, already the bright beams of day
Waken to melody the pipe of birds,
And black night with her glimmering stars has waned.
So ere a soul be stirring in the streets
Confer together—and resolve yourselves.
No time for longer pause; now must we act.

ORESTES
Dearest of followers, how well thou show'st
The constant service of thy loyalty!
For as the high-bred steed, though he be old,
Pricks up his ears and champs the bit for joy
When battle rages, even so dost thou
Both urge us on and follow with the first.
Therefore I will unfold our plans, and thou
Note well my words, and if in aught I seem
To miss the mark, admonish and correct.
Know then that when I left thee to consult
The Pythian oracle and learn how best
To execute just vengeance for my sire
On those that slew him, Phoebus answered thus:
*Trust not to shields or armed hosts, but steal*
*The chance thyself the avenging blow to deal.*
Since then the Pythian god hath thus advised,
Go thou and watch thine opportunity
To enter in the palace and observe
What happens there and bring us full report.
And fear not to be recognised; long years
And thy white locks, the blossom of old age,
Have changed thee wholly. Forge some specious tale:
Thou art a Phocian stranger hither sent
By Phanoteus their doughtiest ally.
μέγιστος αὐτοῖς τυγχάνει δορυξένων. ἀγγελλε δ᾽ ὅρκον! προστιθεὶς ὀθούνεκα τέθυνηκ᾽ ὁρέστην ἐναγκαίας τύχης, ἀθλοισὶ Πυθικοίσιν ἐκ τροχηλάτων διφρων κυλισθεῖς· ὡδ' ὁ μύθος ἑστάτω. ἡμεῖς δὲ πατρὸς τύμβον, ὡς ἐφίετο, λοιβαῖσι πρώτον καὶ καρατόμοις χλιδαῖσι στέψαντες εἰτ' ἀνφορρον ἡξομεν πάλιν, τύπωμα χαλκόπλευρον ἠρμένοι χεροῖν, ὅ καὶ σὺ θάμνοις οἰσθά ποὺ κεκρυμμένον, ὅπως λόγω κλέπτοντες ἱδεῖαιν φάτων φέρωμεν αὐτοῖς, τοῦμον ὡς ἔρρει δέμας φλογιστὸν ἑδῶ καὶ κατηνθρακωμένον.

τί γάρ με λυπεῖ τοῦθ', ὅταν λόγῳ θανών ἔργουσι σωθῶ καξενέκουσιν κλαῖσι; δοκῶ μέν, οὐδὲν ῥήμα σὺν κέρδει κακόν. ἡμεῖς δὲ πατρὸς τύμβον, ὡς ἐφίετο, λοιβαῖσι πρῶτον καὶ καρατόμοις χλιδαῖσι στέψαντες εἰτ' ἄψορρον ἥξομεν πάλιν,

1 ὅρκῳ 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 feigned 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 emprise!
And greet me too, thou palace of my sires;
A heaven-sent purger of thy stain I come.
Send me not forth again to banishment,
But O! restore to me its ancient wealth,
May I refound 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.
ἩΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ⲭ᾽ μοὶ μοὶ δύστηνος.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ
καὶ μὴν θυρῶν ἔδοξα προσπόλων τινὸς
ὕποστενούσης ἐνδον αἰσθέσθαι, τέκνον.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἂρ᾽ ἐστὶν ἡ δύστηνος Ἡλέκτρα. θέλεις
μείνωμεν αὐτοῦ καπακούσῳμεν1 γόων;

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ
Ἦκιστα· µηδὲν πρόσθεν ἢ τὰ Δοξίου
πειρώµεθ᾽ ἐρδέων κἀπὸ τῶν ἀρχηγετεῖν,
πατρὸς χέοντες λουτρά· ταῦτα γὰρ φέρει
νίκην τ᾽ ἐφ᾽ ἡµῖν καὶ κράτος τῶν δρωµέων.

ἩΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ φάος ἄγνον
καὶ γῆς ἱσόµοιρ ἀήρ, ὡς µοὶ
πολλὰς μὲν θρήνων φῶδας,
pολλὰς δ᾽ ἀντήρεις ἡσθοὺν
στέρνων πληγῶς αἴµασσοµένων,
ὃπόταν δυοφερὰ νῦξ ὑπολειφθη.
tὰ δὲ πανυχίδων ἡδή στυγεραὶ
ξυνίσασ᾽ εὐναὶ μογερῶν οἴκων,
ὅσα τὸν δύστηνον ἐµὸν θρηνῶ
πατέρ᾽, ὅν κατὰ µὲν βάρβαρον αἰαν
φοίνιος Ἀρης οὐκ ἐξένισεν,
µήτηρ ὑµὴ κοινολεκχῆς
Αὔγισθος ὅπως δρῦν ὑλότοµοι
1 καπακούσῳµεν 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.
σχίζουσι κάρα φονίῳ πελέκει,
kούδεις τούτων οίκτος ἀπ᾽ ἀλλης ἦμοιοι φέρεται, σοῦ, πάτερ, οὖτως αἰκώς οἰκτρῶς τε θανόντος.

ἀλλ᾽ οὐ μεν δὴ
λήξω θρήνων στυγερῶν τε γόων, ἐστ᾽ ἂν παμφεγγεῖς ἀστρων ῥιπάς, λεύσσω δὲ τόδ᾽ ἡμαρ, μη οὐ τεκνολέτειρ᾽ ὃς τις ἀγόων ἐπὶ κωκυτῷ τὸνδε πατρφῶν πρὸ θυρῶν ἥχῳ πάσι προφονεῖν. ὁ δὲ 'Αἴδου καὶ Περσεφόνης, ὁ χθόνε 'Ερμῆ καὶ πότνι Ἀρα σεμναὶ τε θεῶν παιδε 'Ερινύες, αἱ τοὺς ἀδίκως θυσικοντας ὅραθ', αἱ τοὺς εὐνὰς ὑποκλεπτομένους, ἐλθετ', αρῆξατε, τίσασθε πατρὸς φόνων ἡμετέρου, καὶ μοι τὸν ἐμὸν πέμψατ' ἀδελφόν μούνη γὰρ ἄγειν ounskέτι σωκῶ λύπης ἀντιρροπον ἄχθος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ παῖ, παῖ δυστανοτάτας
᾿Ἠλέκτρα ματρὸς, τίν᾽ αἰεί
tάκεισ ὃδ' ἀκόρεστον οἰμωγάν
tὸν πάλαι ἐκ δολερᾶς ἀθεώταιτα
ματρὸς ἀλῶντ᾽ ἀπάταις Ἀγαμέμνονα
κακὰ τε χειρὶ πρόδοτον; ὡς ὁ τάδε πορῶν ὀλούτ', εἰ μοι θέμις τάδ' αὐδὰν.
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!
ὦ γενέθλια γενναίων,
ηκετ᾽ ἐμὸν καμάτων παραμύθιον.
oïdâ te kai ξυνήμμεν τάδ᾽, ὦ τί με
φυγγάνει, οὐδ᾽ ἔθέλω προλιπεῖν τόδε,
μὴ οὐ τὸν ἐμὸν στενάχειν πατέρ᾽ ἀθλιον.
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ παντοῖς φιλότητος ἀμειβόμεναι χάριν,
εἰσέ μ’ ὠδ᾽ ἀλύειν,
αἰαὶ, ἰκνοῦμαι

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἀλλ᾽ οὖτοι τὸν γ᾽ ἐξ ᾿Αἴδα
παγκοίνου λέμναις πατέρ᾽ ἀν-
στάσεις ὀυτε γόοισιν ὀυτ᾽ εὐχαῖς. 1
ἀλλ᾽ ἀπὸ τῶν μετρίων ἐπ᾽ ἀμήχανον
ἀλγος ἀεὶ στενάχουσα διόλλυσαι,
ἐν οἷς ἀνάλυσις ἐστιν οὐδεμίᾳ κακῶν.
tί μοι τῶν δυσφόρων ἐφίει;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
νήπιος δὲ τῶν ὀικτρῶς
οἰχομένων γονέων ἑτιλάθεται.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐμὲ γ᾽ ἀ στονόσσ᾽ ἄραβεν φρένας,
ἀ ᾿Ιτυν, αἰεν ῾Ιτυν ὀλοφύρεται,
ὅρυς ἀτυζομένα, Διὸς ἀγγελος.
ἰω παντλάμων Νιόβα, σὲ δ᾽ ἐγωγε νέμω θεόν,
ἄτ᾽ ἐν τάφῳ πετραίφ
αἰεὶ δακρύεις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
οὖτοι σοι μούνα, τέκνον,
ἄχος ἐφάνη βροτῶν,
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 ὃ τι σ’ τῶν ἐνδοὺ εἰ περισσά, οἷς ὀμόθεν εἰ καὶ γονὰ ἔνιειμος, οία Χρυσόθεμις ζώει καὶ Ἰφιάνασσα, κρυπτὰ τ’ ἀχέων ἐν ἥβᾳ, οἷς ἡμαὶ, ὃν ἁ κλεινὰ γὰ ποτε Μυκηναίων δέξεται εὐπατρίδαν, Διὸς εὐφροι βήματι μολόντα τάνδε γὰν Ὀρέσταν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὁν γ’ ἐγὼ ἀκάματα προσμένουσ’, ἄτεκνος, τάλαιν’, ἀνύμφευτος αἰὲν οἴχω, δάκρυσι μυδαλέα, τὸν ἄνυμπτον οἷτου ἔχουσα κακῶν’ ὃ δὲ λάθεται ὁν τ’ ἔπαθ’ ὅν τ’ ἔδαγ. τί γὰρ οὐκ ἐμοὶ ἔρχεται ἀγγελίας ἀπατώμενον; αἰὲ μὲν γὰρ ποθεὶ, ποθῶν δ’ οὐκ ἄξιοι φαινήαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

θάρσει μοι, θάρσει, τέκνοι. ἀντ. β’

ἔτι μέγας οὐρανῷ

Zeus, ὃς ἑφορά πάντα καὶ κρατύνει·

φ’ τὸν ὑπεραλήγχοι κόλον νέμουσα μὴθ’ οἰς ἐχθαίρεις ὑπεράχθεο μὴ’ ἐπιλάθουν·

χρόνος γὰρ εὐμαρῆς θεός.

οὔτε γὰρ ὁ τῶν Κρίσαν

βούνομοι έχουν ἀκτάν

πάις Ἀγαμεμνονίδας ἀπερίτροπος

οὐθ’ ὁ παρὰ τὸν Ἀχέροντα θεὸς ἀνάσσων.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ’ ἐμὲ μὲν ὁ πολὺς ἀπολέλουτεν ἡδὴ βιότος ἀνέλπιστος, οὐδ’ ἐτ’ ἀρκῶ.”
ELECTRA

Think on thy kinsfolk whom afflictions press
Than thine no less,
Iphianassa and Chrysothemis.
Think of thy brother; sorrow now is his,
An exiled youth, yet shortly shall he come
By heaven’s good guidance home,
And glad 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 (Ant. 2)

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

ELECTRA

Nay but for me is spent
The best of life; I languish in despair.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
οίκτρα μὲν νόστοις αὐδά,
oίκτρα δ' ἐν κοίταις πατρίδις
οὐτε οὐ̂ ² παγχάλκων ἀντάλλα
γενύσι ώρμάθη πλαγά.
dόλος ἦν ὁ φράσας, ἔρος ὁ κτείνας,
dεινών δεινῶς προφυτεύσαντες
μορφάν, εἴτ' οὖν θεός εἴτε βροτῶν
ἡμ ὁ ταῦτα πράσσων.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὦ πασάν κείνα πλέον ἀμέρα
ἐλθοῦσ' ἔξοδοα δὴ ἄφθα
ὡ νύξ, ὡ δείπνων ἄρρητων
ἐκπαγγέ ἄνθρωποι,
τοὺς ἐμὸς ῥεῖ πατήρ
θανάτοις αἰκείς διδύμαιν χειρῶν,
αἰ τοῦ ἐμὸν ἐλούν βίον πρόδοτον, αἰ μ' ἀπώλεσαν·
οἷς θεὸς ὁ μέγας Ὁλύμπιος
ποίμα πάθεαι παθεῖν πόροι,
μηδὲ ποτ' ἀγαλματίς ἀποναίατο
tοιάδ' ἀνύσαντες ἔργα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
φράζοις μὴ πόρσοι φωνεῖν.
οὐ γρώμαν ἵσχες ἔξ ὀὗν

¹ τοκεών MSS., Meineke corr.
² οὗ τοι MSS., Hermann corr.
Fordone with care,
Without a parent's love or husband's aid,
An orphaned maid.
Here in the chambers of my sire I wait
In low estate,
Or like a stranger who in beggar's weeds
On fragments feeds.

CHORUS (Str. 3)
Dire was the voice that greeted first
Thy sire's return, and dire the cry
That from the banquet-chamber burst,
A wail of agony;
What time the brazen axe's blow
Struck him and laid him low,
'Twas lust begat and craft conceived the deed,
A monstrous offspring of a monstrous seed,
Whether a god or mortal wrought the woe.

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

CHORUS (Ant. 3)
O curb thy tongue! hast thou no thought
HAEKTRA

τὰ παρόντ᾽ οἰκεία, εἰς ἄτας ἐμπίπτεις οὕτως αἰκῶς; 
πολὺ γάρ τι κακῶν ὑπερεκτῆσω, σὰ δυσθύμῳ τίκτουσ᾽ ἀεὶ ψυχὰ πολέμους. τὰ δὲ τοῖς δυνατοῖς οὐκ ἐριστὰ τὰ πλάθειν.

HAEKTRA

dεινοῖς ἲμαγκάσθην, δεινοῖς ἐξοδ', οὐ λάθει μ᾽ ὀργά. ἀλλ᾽ ἐν γὰρ δεινοῖς οὐ σχῆσω ταύτας ἄτας, ὁφρα με βίος ἔχη.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ᾽ οὖν εὐνοίᾳ γ᾽ αὐδῶ, μάτηρ ὡσεί τις πιστά, 
μὴ τίκτειν σ᾽ ἄταν ἄταις.

HAEKTRA

καὶ τί μέτρον κακότατος ἐφυ; φέρε, πῶς ἐπὶ τοῖς φθιμένοις ἀμελεῖν καλὸν; ἐν τίνι τούτ᾽ ἐβλαστ᾽ ἀνθρώπων; μήτ' εἴην ἐντιμος τούτοις μήτ', εἰ τῷ πρόσκεμαι χρηστῷ, εὐκηλοις, γονέων ἐκτίμους ὑσχουσα πτέρυγας ὀξυτόνων γόων.
ELECTRA

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

ELECTRA

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

CHORUS

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

ELECTRA

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

εἰ γὰρ ὁ μὲν θανὼν γὰ τε καὶ οὐδὲν ὃν κείσεται τάλας,
o ὁ δὲ μὴ πάλιν
dῶσον' ἀντιφόνους δίκας,
ἐρροι τ' ἀν αἴδως
ἀπάντων τ' εὐσέβεια θυατῶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

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

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

αἰσχύνομαι μὲν, ὦ γυναῖκες, εἰ δοκῶ πολλοῖσι θρήνοις δυσφορεῖν ὑμῖν ἄγαν.
ἀλλ' ἢ βία γὰρ ταῦτ' ἀναγκάξει με δρᾶν,
σύγγνωτε· πῶς γὰρ ἦτις εὐγενῆς γυνή,
πατρῷ ὀρῶσα πήματ', οὐ δρῶν τάδ' ἀν; ἄγω κατ' ἡμαρ καὶ κατ' εὐφρόνην ἀεὶ βάλλοντα μᾶλλον ἀναγκάζων ἄρω· ἢ πρῶτα μὲν τὰ μητρός, ἢ μ' ἐγεῖνατο,
ἐχθιστα συμβέβηκεν· εἰτα δῶμαι
ἐν τοῖς ἐμαυτοῖς τοῖς φονεύσι τοῦ πατρὸς ἔνυεμι, κὰκ τῶν ἄρχομαι κὰκ τῶν ἄν 
λαβεῖν θ᾽ ὁμοίως καὶ τὸ τητάσθαι πέλει.
ἐπειτα ποιας ἡμέρας δοκεῖς μ' ἄγειν,
ὅταν θρόνοις Ἀἴγισθον ἐνθακοῦντ' ἴδω τοῖς πατρόισι, εἰσίδω δ' ἐσθήματα
φοροῦντ' ἐκείνῳ ταῦτα καὶ παρεστίους
σπεύδουτα λοιβὰς ἐκείνου ὡλεσεν,
ἴδω δὲ τούτων τὴν τελευταίαν ὑβριν,
τὸν αὐτὸέντην ἥμιν ἐν κοίτῃ πατρὸς
ξυπ τῇ ταλαίνῃ μητρί, μητέρ' εἰ χρεὼν.
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

ταῦτην προσαυδᾶν τῶδε συγκοιμομένην·
ή δ᾽ ὥδε τλήμων ὡστε τῷ μιστορι
ξύνεστ', ἐρινὺν οὔτιν' ἐκφοβομένην·
ἀλλ' ὡστερ ἐγγελῶσα τοῖς ποιουμένοις,
εὐροῦσ' ἐκείνην ἡμέραν, ἐν ἤ τοτε
πατέρα τοῦ ἀμὸν ἐκ δόλου κατέκτανεν,
tαὐτὴ χοροὺς ἱστησαὶ καὶ μηλοσφαγεῖ
θεοίσιν ἐμμὴν' ἱερὰ τοῖς σωτηρίοις.

ἐγὼ δ' ὥρωσ' ἤ δύσμορος κατὰ στέγας
κλαίω, τέτηκα, κἀπικωκύω πατρὸς
tὴν ὅλοον ηδυνὴν πάρα
tὸν νῦν ἵστησι καὶ μηλοσφαγεῖ
θεοῖσιν ἐμμὴν' ἱερὰ τοῖς σωτηρίοις.

κακῶς ὀλοιο, μηδὲ σ＇ ἐκ γόων ποτὲ
tὸν νῦν ἤποτομ' ὅσον οὐ τιμὸς ἡδύνην
tέθνησ᾽. ὥσπερ ἐγγελῶσα τοῖς ποιουμένοις,
εὑροῦσ᾽ ἡμέραν, ἐν ᾗ τότε
πατέρα τὸν ἀμὸν ἐκ δόλου κατέκτανεν,

ταῦτη χοροὺς ἱστησαὶ καὶ μηλοσφαγεῖ
θεοίσιν ἐμμὴν' ἱερὰ τοῖς σωτηρίοις.

ἨΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ταῦτην προσαυδᾶν τῶδε συγκοιμομένην·
ή δ᾽ ὥδε τλήμων ὡστε τῷ μιστορι
ξύνεστ', ἐρινὺν οὔτιν' ἐκφοβομένην·
ἀλλ' ὡστερ ἐγγελῶσα τοῖς ποιουμένοις,
εὐροῦσ' ἐκείνην ἡμέραν, ἐν ἤ τοτε
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εὑροῦσ᾽ ἡμέραν, ἐν ᾗ τότε
πατέρα τὸν ἀμὸν ἐκ δόλου κατέκτανεν,
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,
καὶ τὰς ἀπούσας ἐλπίδας διέφθορεν.
ἐν οὖν τοιούτοις οὔτε σωφρονεῖν, φίλαι,
οὔτ᾽ εὐσεβεῖν πάρεστιν. ἀλλ᾽ ἐν τοι κακοῖς
πολλὴ στ' ἀνάγκη κάπιτηδεύειν κακά.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
φήρ' εἰπέ, πότερον ὅντος Αἰγίσθου πέλας
λέγεις τάδ᾽ ἥμων ἢ βεβώτος ἐκ δόμων;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἡ κάρτα· μὴ δόκει μ᾽ ἄν, εἴπερ ἢν πέλας,
θυραῖον οἰχνεῖν νῦν δ᾽ ἀγροῖσι τυγχάνει.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἡ κάν ἐγώ θαρσοῦσα μάλλον ἐς λόγους
τούς σους ἱκοῖμην, εἴπερ ὧδε ταῦτ᾽ ἔχει;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὡς νῦν ἀπόντος ἱστόρει· τί σοι φίλοι;

ΧΟΡΟΣ
καὶ δὴ σ᾽ ἔρωτῶ· τοῦ κασιγνήτου τι φής,
ἡξοντος ἢ μέλλοντος; εἰδέναι θέλω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
φησίν γε· φάσκων δ᾽ οὐδέν ὃν λέγει ποεῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
φιλεῖ γὰρ ὀκνεῖν πρᾶγμ᾽ ἀνὴρ πράσσων μέγα.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
καὶ μὴν ἔγωγ᾽ ἔσωσ᾽ ἐκεῖνον οὐκ ὄκνῳ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
θάρσει· πέφυκεν ἐσθλός, ὥστ᾽ ἀρκεῖν φίλοις.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
πέποιθ᾽, ἐπεὶ τὰν οὐ μακρὰν ἐξων ἐγώ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
μὴ νῦν ἔτ᾽ εἴπης μηδέν· ὡς δόμων ὅρω
τὴν σὴν ὃμαιμον ἐκ πατρὸς ταύτου φύσιν,
ELECTRA

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

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

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

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

ELECTRA
It is; ask what thou wilt.

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

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

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

ELECTRA
I thought not twice when I delivered him.

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

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

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

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

τίν’ αὖ σὺ τήνδε πρὸς θυρῶνος ἐξόδους ἐλθούσα φωνεῖς, ὥς κασιγνήτη, φάτων, κοῦδ’ ἐν χρόνῳ μακρῷ διδαχθῆναι θέλεις θυμῷ ματαίῳ μὴ χαρίζεσθαι κενά; καίτοι τοσούτον γ’ οἴδα κάμαντήν, ὅτι ἀλγῶ ’τι ποίς παροῦσιν ’ὀστ’ ἂν, εἰ σθένος λάβοιμι, δηλούσαιμ’ ἂν οὐ’ αὐτοῖς φρονῶ. νῦν δ’ ἐν κακοῖς μοι πλείων ὑφειμένῃ δοκεῖ, καὶ μὴ δοκεῖν μὲν δρᾶν τι, πημαίνειν δὲ μὴ τοιαύτα δ’ ἄλλα καὶ σὲ βούλομαι ποιεῖν. καίτοι τὸ μὲν δίκαιον οὐχ ἢ ’γω λέγω, ἄλλα ἢ σὺ κρίνεις: εἰ δ’ ἐλευθέραν με δεῖ ζῆν, τῶν κρατοῦντων ἐστὶ πάντ’ ἀκουστέα.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

δεινόν γέ σ’ οὖσαν πατρὸς οὗ σὺ παῖς ἔφυς, κείνου λελῆσθαι, τῆς δὲ τικτούσῃ μέλειν. ἀπαντα γάρ σοι τάμα νουθετήματα κείνης διδακτά, κοῦδεν ἐκ σαυτῆς λέγεις. ἔπειθ’ ἐλοῦ γε θάτερ’, ἥ φρονεῖν κακῶς ἢ τῶν φίλων φρονοῦσα μὴ μιμήσθην ἤχειν ἢτες λέγεις μὲν ἄρτιως ὡς, εἰ λάβοις σθένος, τὸ τούτων μῖσος ἐκδείξειας ἂν, ἐμοῦ δὲ πατρὶ πάντα τιμωροւμένης οὐτε ἔννερδείς τὴν τὲ δρῶσαν ἐκτρέπεις. 350

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

οὐ ταῦτα πρὸς κακοίσι δειλίαν ἐχεί; ἐπεῖ διδαξόν, ἢ μάθ’ ἐξ ἐμοῦ, τί μοι κέρδος γένοιτ’ ἂν τῶνδε ληξάσῃ γόων. οὐ ὑ; κακῶς μὲν, οἶδ’, ἐπαρκοῦντος δ’ ἐμοὶ.
ELECTRA

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

Enter Chrysotemis.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

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

ELECTRA

O shame that thou, the child of such a sire,
Should'st him forget and take thy mother's part;
For all these admonitions are not thine,
A lesson thou repeatest, learnt of her.
Make thine election then, to be unwise,
Or show thy wisdom by forgetting friends.
Thou saidst, "If but the power were granted me,
I would make plain the hate I feel for them;"
And yet when I am straining every nerve
To avenge my sire, thou wilt not aid me; nay,
Dissuadest and wouldst have me hold my hand.
Shall we to all our ills add cowardice?
Tell me—or let me tell thee—what have I
To gain by ceasing from my sad complaint?
I still have life? a sorry life, indeed,
Λυπώ δε τούτοις, ὡστε τῷ τεθυνότι
tιμᾶς προσάπτειν, εἰ τις ἐστ᾽ εκεῖ χάρις.
σὺ δ᾽ ἡμῶν ἡ μισοῦσα μισεῖς μὲν λόγῳ,
ἔργῳ δὲ τοῖς φονεύσαι τοῦ πατρὸς ξύνει.
ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν οὐκ ἂν ποτ᾽, οὐδ᾽ εἰ μοι τὰ σὰ
μέλλοι τις οὔσειν δῶρ᾽, ἐφ᾽ οἷς νῦν χλιδᾶς,
tούτοις ὑπεικάθοιμι· σοὶ δὲ πλουσία
τράπεζα κείσθω καὶ περιργᾶτώ βίοις.
ἐμοὶ γὰρ ἐστω τοῦμε μὴ λυπεῖν μόνον
βόσκημα· τῆς σῆς δ᾽ οὐκ ἐρω τιμῆς τυχεῖν,
οὐδ᾽ ἂν σὺ, σωφρᾶν γ᾽ οὖσα. νῦν δ᾽ ἐξου πατρὸς
πάντων ἀρίστου παιδά κεκλήσθαι, καλοῦ
τῆς μητρὸς· οὕτω γὰρ φανεὶ πλείστοις κακῆ,
θανόντα πατέρα καὶ φίλους προδοῦσα σοὺς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
μηδὲν πρὸς ὀργήν, πρὸς θεῶν᾽ ὡς τοῖς λόγοις
ἐνεστὶν ἀμφοῖν κέρδος, εἰ σὺ μὲν μάθοις
τοῖς τῆς χρῆσθαι, τοῖς δὲ σοῖς αὕτη πάλιν.
ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ἐγὼ μὲν, ὦ γυναῖκες, ήθάς εἰμί ποις
τῶν τῆς δικῆς μύθων· οὐδ᾽ ἂν ἐμνήσθην ποτὲ,
εἰ μὴ κακῶν μέγιστον εἰς αὐτὴν ἱὸν
ἕκους', ὃ ταῦτην τῶν μακρῶν σχῆσει γόων.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
φέρ᾽ εἰπὲ δὴ τὸ δεινὸν· εἰ γὰρ τῶνδε μοι
μεῖζον τι λέεις, οὐκ ἂν ἀντείποι μ᾽ ἐτι.
ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ἀλλ᾽ ἐξερωθεὶς σοι πᾶν ὅσον κάτοικ᾽ ἐγὼ.
μέλλουσι γὰρ σ᾽, εἰ τῶνδε μὴ λήξεις γόων,
ἐνταῦθα πέμψει ἐνθα μὴ ποθ᾽ ἥλιον
φέγγος προσόψει, ξώσα δ᾽ ἐν κατηρέφει
στέγῃ χθονὸς τῆς δ᾽ ἐκτῶς ὑμνήσεις κακά.
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 φράζον καὶ με μὴ ποθ' ύστερον
παθοῦσα μέμψη, νῦν γὰρ ἐν καλῷ φρονεῖν.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

μάλισθ' ὅταν περ οἴκαδ' Ἀἰγισθος μόλη.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἄλλ' ἐξίκοιτο τοῦδ' ἐν τάχει.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

τίν', ὥ τάλαινα, τόνδ' ἐπηράσω λόγον;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

εἶπεν ἐκεῖνον, εἴ τι τῶνδ' ὡς νοεῖ.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ὅπως πάθῃς τί χρῆμα; ποῦ ἐίναι φρενῶν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὅπως ἀφ ὑμῶν ὡς προσωτάτω φύγω.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

βίου δὲ τοῦ παρόντος οὐ μνείαν ἔχεις;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

καλὸς γὰρ οὕμος βίοτος ὡστε θαυμάσαι.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἄλλ' ἦν αὖ, εἰ σὺ γ' εὔ φρονεῖν ἥπιστασο.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

μὴ μ' ἐκδίδασκε τοῖς φίλοις εἶναι κακὴν.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἄλλ' οὐ διδάσκω τοῖς κρατοῦσι δ' εἰκαθεῖν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

σὺ ταῦτα θώπευ', οὐκ ἔμοις τρόπους λέγεις.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

καλὸν γε μέντοι μὴ 'ζ ἀβουλίας πεσεῖν.
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.
HLA E K T R A

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
πατὴρ δὲ τούτων, οἶδα, συγγνώμην ἔχει.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ταῦτ᾽ ἔστι τάπη πρὸς κακῶν ἐπαινέσαι.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
σὺ δ᾽ οὐχὶ πείσει καὶ συναινέσεις ἐμοί;

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
οὐ δῆται· μὴ πω νοῦ τοσὸν εἶνη κενή.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
σὺ δ᾽ οὐχὶ πείσει καὶ συναινέσεις ἐμοί;

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
οὐ δῆτα μή πω νοῦ τοσὸν εἶνη κενή.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
χωρήσομαι τάρ᾽ οἶτερ ἐστάλην ὀδοῦ.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ποὶ δ᾽ ἐμπορεύει; τῷ φέρεις τάδ᾽ ἐμπυρα;

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
μήτηρ μὲ πέμπει πατρὶ τυμβεῦσαι χοάς.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
πῶς εἶπας; ἢ τῷ δυσμενεστάτῳ βροτῶν;

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ἀγεῖν αὐτῆ· τοῦτο γὰρ λέξαι θέλεις.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ἐκ τοῦ φίλων πεισθεῖσα; τῷ τούτ᾽ ἦρεσεν;

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ἐκ δείματός τοῦ νυκτέρου, δοκεῖν ἐμοί.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ὅ θεοὶ πατρὸφοι, συγγένεσθέ γ᾽ ἀλλὰ νῦν.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ἐξεις τι θάρσος τοῦδε τοῦ τάρβους πέρι;

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
εἰ μοι λέγοις τὴν ὄψιν, εἰποιμ᾽ ἄν τότε.
If needs be, in a father's cause I'll fall.

I trust our father pardons us for this.

Traitors take refuge in like sentiments.

Thou wilt not heed then or be ruled by me?

I am not in my dotage, save the mark!

Then I will do my errand.

Whither away? For whom art carrying these burnt offerings?

My mother bids me crown our father's grave.

Her mortal enemy's! How sayest thou?

The husband whom she slew, so thou wouldst say.

Which of her friends advised her? whence this whim?

A nightly vision warned her, so I think.

Gods of my fathers, aid me in this pass!

Dost thou take heart of courage from her dread?

Before I answer let me hear the dream.
ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

λόγος τις αὐτὴν ἔστιν εἰσιδεῖν πατρὸς
tοῦ σοῦ τε κάμοι δευτέραν ὀμιλίαν
έλθοντος ἐς φῶς· εἶτα τόνδ' ἐφέστιον
πῆξαι λαβόντα σκῆπτρον οὐφόρει ποτὲ
αὐτὸς, ταῦν ὁ Λύγισθος· εἰκὲ δὲ τοῦδ' ἄνω
βλαστεῖν βρύοντα θαλλόν, ὡς κατάσκιον
πᾶσαν γενέσθαι τῇ Μυκηναίων χθόνα.
τοιαῦτα τοῦ παρόντος, ἤνίχ' Ἡλίῳ
δείκνυσι τούναρ, ἔκλυον ἔξηγουμένου.
πλείω δὲ τούτων οὐ κάτοιδα, πλὴν ὅτι
πέμπει με κείνη τοῦδε τοῦ φόβου χάριν.
πρὸς νῦν θεῶν σε λίσσομαι τῶν ἐγγενῶν
ἔμοι πιθέσθαι μηδὲν 'ἀβουλίᾳ πεσεῖν'
εἰ γὰρ μ' ἀπώσει, σὺν κακῷ μέτει πάλιν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ', δοφίλη, τούτων μὲν δῶν ἐχεῖς χερῶν
tύμβῳ προσάψῃ μηδὲν· οὐ γὰρ σοι θέμις
οὐδ' ὅσιον ἔχθρας ἀπὸ γυναικός ἰστάναι
κτερίσματ' οὐδὲ λουτρὰ προσφέρειν πατρὶ·
ἀλλ' ἡ πνοαίσιν ἡ βαθυσκαφεῖ κόνει
κρύψον νῦν, ἐνθα μὴ ποτ' εἰς εὖν ἔνθα πατρὸς
τοῦτων πρόσειμι μηδέν· ἀλλ' ὅταν θάνῃ
κευμήλι' αὐτῇ τάῦτα σφυέσθω κάτω.
ELECTRA

CHRYSOTHEMIS
There is but little that I have to tell.

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

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

ELECTRA
Nay, let not aught, my sister, touch the tomb,  
Of all thou bearest. 'Twere a shame, a sin,  
To offer on behalf of her, the accursed,  
Gifts or libations to our father's ghost.  
Scatter them to the winds or bury them  
Deep in the dust, where nothing may defile  
Our father's lone couch; let her find them there,  
A buried treasure when she comes to die.  
Were she not abjectest of womankind,  
She ne'er had thought with offerings of hate
οὐκ ἀν ποθ᾽ ὧν γ᾽ ἐκτείνε, τῷδ᾽ ἐπέστεφε.
σκέψαι γὰρ εἰ σοι προσφιλῶς αὐτῇ δοκεῖ
γέρα τάδ᾽ ὃν τάφοισι δέξεσθαι νέκυς,
ὑφ᾽ ής θανῶν ἀτιμος, ὡστε δυσμενής,
ἐμασχαλίσθη, κατὶ λουτροῖσιν κάρα
κηλίδας ἐξέμαξεν. ἀρα μὴ δοκεῖς
λυτήρι αὐτῇ ταῦτα τοῦ φόνου φέρειν;
οὐκ ἔστιν. ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν μέθες· σὺ δὲ
tεμοῦσα κρατός βοστρύχων ἀκρας φόβας
κάμοι ταλαίνης, σμικρὰ μὲν τάδ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως
ἄχω, δὸς αὐτῷ, τῇ ὕπνῳ ἀλταρῆ τρίχα
καὶ ζώμα τούμον ὦν χλιδαῖς ἢσκημένον.
αἰτοῦ δὲ προσπίτνουσα γῇθεν εὐμενή
ἡμῖν ἀρωγὸν αὐτὸν εἰς ἐχθροὺς μολεῖν,
καὶ παὶδ᾽ Ὀρέστην ἐξ ὑπερτέρας χερὸς
ἐξερχόυσιν αὐτοῦ ζωντ᾽ ἐπεμβήναι ποδί,
ὅπως τὸ λοιπὸν αὐτὸν ἀφιερωτέραις
χερσὶν στεφώμεν ἢ ταυτὸν δωρούμεθα.
οἶμαι μὲν ὦν, οἶμαι τί κακεῖνο μέλον
πέμψα τάδ᾽ αὐτῇ δυσπρόσοπτ᾽ ὑπείρατα·
ὁμος δ᾽, ἀδελφῆ, σοὶ θ᾽ ὑπούργησον τάδε
ἐμοὶ τ᾽ ἀρωγὰ τῳ τε φιλτάτῳ βροτῶν
πάντων, ἐν "Αἴδου κειμένῳ κοινῷ πατρί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πρὸς εὐσέβειαν ἦ κόρη λέγειι· σὺ δὲ,
eἰ σωφρονῆσεις, ὦ φίλη, δράσεις τάδε.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

drásos· το γὰρ δίκαιον ὦν ἔχει λόγον
dυνών ἐρίζειν, ἀλλ' ἐπιστευδείν τὸ δρᾶν.
ELEKTRA

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.
πειραμένη δὲ τῶν ἔργων ἐμοὶ
σιγή παρ᾽ ὑμῶν, πρὸς θεῶν, ἐστῶ, φίλαι
όσε οὐν τάδ᾽ ἡ τεκοῦσα πεύσεται, πικρὰν
dοκῶ με πείραν τήνδε τολμήσειν ἐτι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ στρ.

ei μὴ ἵμω παράφρων μάντις ἐφυν καὶ γυνόμας
λειπομένα σοφᾶς,
eἰσιν ἄ πρόμαντις
Δίκα, δίκαια φερομένα χερὸν κράτη-
μέτεισιν, ὡ τεκνοῦν, οὐ μακροῦ χρόνου.
ὑπεστὶ μοι θάρσως,
ἀδυπνῶν κλύουσαν
ἀρτίως ὀνειράτων.
οὐ γάρ ποτ' ἀμναστεί γ' ὁ φύσας σ᾽ Ἐλλάνων
ἄναξ,
οὐδ' ἃ παλαιὰ χαλκόπλακτος ἁμφάκης γένυς,
ἄ νιν κατέπεφνεν αἰσχίσταις ἐν αἰκίαις.

ἀντ.

ἡξεὶ καὶ πολύτους καὶ πολύχειρ ἃ δεινοῖς
κρυπτομένα λόχοις
χαλκόπους Ἐρινύς.
ἀλεκτρὸ ἄνυμφα γάρ ἐπέβα μιαίφονων
γάμων ἀκαλλήμαθ' ὅσιν οὐ θέμις.
πρὸ τῶν ὑπὸ τοῖς μ' ἐχεῖ
μή ποτε μNonNull μὴ ποθ' ἡμῶν
ἀνεφεῖς πελάνν ἡμῶν
τοῖς δρῶσι καὶ συνδρῶσιν. ἢ τοῦ μαντεία βροτῶν
οὐκ εἰσὶν ἐν δεινοῖς ὀνειροῖς οὐδ' ἐν θεσφάτοις,
eἰ μὴ τόδε φάσμα νῦκτος εὖ κατασχήσει.
Only when I essay this perilous task,
Be silent, an you love me, friends, for if
My mother hears of it, I shall have cause
To rue my indiscretion soon or late.

[Exit Chrysothemis.

CHORUS (Str.)

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

(ant.)

So leaping from her ambush, brazen-shod,
Comes the Erinys with an armed host's tread,
For she hath seen a pair who knew not God
Driven by lust to an adulterous bed,
A bed with stains of murder dyed,
A bridal without groom or bride.
Therefore I know that not in vain is sent
This portent that the fall of guilt foretells,
For, if this vision fails of its intent,
Vain is all sooth, all dreams, all oracles.
ὦ Πέλοπος ἁ πρόσθεν
πολύπονος ἵππεία,
ὡς ἐμολύς αἰανής
tάδε γὰρ.
eὔτε γὰρ ὁ ποντισθεὶς
Μυρτίλος ἐκοιμάθη,
pαγχρύσεων δίφρων
dυστάνους αἰκίαις
πρότρηζος ἐκριφθεὶς,
οὐ τί πω
ἐλευθεν ἐκ τοῦδ᾽ οἶκου
πολύπονος αἰκία.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ
ἀνειμένη μέν, ὡς ἔοικας, αὖ στρέφειν:
οὐ γὰρ πάρεστ' Ἀἴγισθος, ὡς σ᾽ ἐπεῖ ἀεὶ
mὴ τοι θυραίαν. γ᾽ οὕσαν αἰσχύνειν φίλους:
νῦν δ᾽ ὡς ἀπεστ᾽ ἱκείνος, οὐδὲν ἐντρέπει
ἐμοῦ γε' καίτοι πολλὰ πρὸς πολλοὺς με δὴ
exείπας ὡς θρασεία καὶ πέρα δίκης
ἀρχω, καθυβρίζουσα καὶ σὲ καὶ τὰ σά·
ἔγω δ᾽ ὑβριν μὲν οὐκ ἔχω, κακῶς δὲ σὲ
λέγω κακῶς κλύουσα πρὸς σέθεν θαμά.

πατὴρ γὰρ, οὐδὲν ἄλλο, σοὶ πρόσχημ᾽ ἀεὶ
ὡς εὖ ἐμοῦ τέθνηκεν. ἐξ ἐμοῦ καλῶς
eξοίδα· τῶν ἄρνησις οὐκ ἐνεστὶ μοι·
ἡ γὰρ Δίκη νιν εἶλεν, οὐκ ἐγὼ μόνη,
ἡ χρῆν σ᾽ ἄρνηγειν, εἰ φρονοῦσ᾽ ἑτύγχανες·
ἐπεὶ πατὴρ σὸς οὕτως, ὅν θρηνεῖσ ἀεῖ,
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
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

tὴν σὴν ὄμοιον μοῦνος 'Ελλήνων ἔτλη θύσαι θεοῖσιν, οὐκ ἴσον καμὼν ἐμοὶ λύπης, ὥσπερ ἥσπερ ἡ τίκτους' ἐγὼ. 
εἶεν, δίδαξον ὅτι με τοῦ χάριν, τίνων ἐθυσεν αὐτήν. πότερον Ἀργεῖων ἔρεις; 
ἀλλ' οὗ μετήν αὐτοῖς τὴν γ' ἐμὴν κτανεῖν. ἀλλ' ἀντ' ἀδελφοῦ δῆτα Μενέλεω κτανῶν τάμ', οὐκ ἐμελλε τὸνδε μοι δώσειν δίκην; 
pότερον ἐκείνῳ παῖδες οὐκ ἥσαν διπλοῖ, οὐς τήσδε μᾶλλον εἰκὸς ἦν θυήσκειν, πατρός καὶ μητρὸς ὂντας, ὅς ὁ πλοῦς ὅδ' ἦν χάριν; 
ἡ τῶν ἐμῶν 'Αιδης τιν' ἔμερον τέκνων ἢ τῶν ἐκείνης ἐσχε δαίσασθαι πλέον; 
ἡ τῶν πανώλει πατρὶ τῶν μὲν ἐς ἐμὸν παῖδων πόθος παρεῖτο, Μενέλεω δ' ἐνήν; 
ού ταῦτ' ἀβούλου καὶ κακοῦ γνώμην πατρός; δοκῶ μὲν, εἰ καὶ σῆς δίχα γνώμης λέγω· 
φαίη δ' ἂν ἡ θανοῦσά γ' εἰ φωνὴν λάβοι. ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν οὐκ εἰμὶ τοὺς πεπραγμένους 
δύσθυμοι· εἰ δὲ σοὶ δοκῶ φρονεῖν κακῶς, γνώμην δικαίαν σχούσα τοὺς πέλας ψέγε.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐρεῖς μὲν οὐχὶ νῦν γέ μ' ὡς ἄρξασά τι λυπηρὸν εἶτα σοῦ τάδ' ἐξήκουσ᾽ ὕπο. 
ἀλλ' ἂν ἐπὶ θυίς μοι, τοῦ τεθνηκότας θ' ὑπερ λέξαιμ' ἂν ὅρθως τῆς κασιγνήτης θ' ὁμοῦ.

ΚΑΪΤΑΙΜΗΤΡΑ

καὶ μὴν ἐφήμ' εἰ δὲ μ' ὥδ' ἀεὶ λόγους ἐξήρχες, οὐκ ἂν ἦσθα λυπηρὰ κλύειν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

καὶ δή λέγω σοι. πατέρα φής κτεῖναι. τίς ἂν τούτου λόγος γένοιτ' ἂν αἰσχίων ἐτί,
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.

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.

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

Hear then. Thou say’st, “I slew thy father.” Who
Could well avow a blacker crime than that?
εἴτ' οὖν δικαίως εἴτε μή; λέξω δὲ σοι
ὡς οὔ δίκη γ' ἐκτείνας, ἀλλὰ σ' ἐσπασέν
πειθῶ κακοῦ πρὸς ἀνδρός, ἐς ταῦτα ἔσευς.
ἐροῦ δὲ τὸν κυναγὸν Ἄρτεμιν, τίνος
ποινᾶς τὰ πολλὰ πνεύματ' ἔσχε' ἐν Αὐλίδι·
η' γ' φράσω· κεῖνης γὰρ οὐ θέμις μαθεῖν.
πατήρ ποθ' οὖμός, ὡς ἐγὼ κλύω, θεαὶ
παῖζων κατ' ἀλσος ἐξεκίνησεν ποδοῖν
στικτῶν κεράστην ἐλαφοῦ, οὐ κατὰ σφαγὰς
ἐκκομπάσας ἐπος τι τυχχάνει βαλῶν.
κάκ τούδε μνήσασα Δητώα κόρη
κατείχ' Ἀχαίοις, ὡς πατήρ ἀντίσταθμον
τοῦ θηρὸς ἐκθύσει τὴν αὐτοῦ κόρην.
ἀν' ἦν τὰ κείνης θύματ'· οὖ γὰρ ἦν λύσις
ἀλλή στρατῷ πρὸς οἰκον σὺδ' εἰς Ἰλιον.
ἀνθ' ὃν, βιασθεὶς πολλὰ κάντιβας, μόλις
ἐθυσεν αὐτὴν, οὔχι Μενέλεω χαρίν.
εἰ δ' οὖν, ἐρώ γὰρ καὶ τὸ σῶν, κεῖνων θέλων
ἐπωφελήσαι ταῦτ' ἐδρα, τοῦτοι θανεῖν
χρὴν αὐτῶν οὔνεκ' ἐκ σέθεν; ποιῷ νόμῳ;
ὅρα τιθεῖσα τόνδε τὸν νόμον βροτοῖς
μὴ πῆμα σαντ' καὶ μετάγνωσιν τιθῆς.
εἰ γὰρ κτενοῦμεν ἄλλων ἄντ' ἄλλοι, σύ τοι
πρώτη θάνοις αὖ, εἰ δίκης γε τυνχάνοις.
ἀλλ' εἰσὸρα μὴ σκῆψιν οὐκ οὔσαιν τίθης.
εἰ γὰρ θέλεις, δίδαξον ἀνθ' ὅτου ταῦτα
αἰσχύσας τὰν τοῦ παλαμναίω, μεθ' οὖ
πατέρα τὸν ἄμον πρόσθεν ἐξαπώλεσας,
καὶ παιδοποιεῖς, τοὺς δὲ πρόσθεν εὔσεβεῖς
κἀξ εὔσεβῶν βλαστοῦτας ἐκβαλοῦσ', ἔχεις.
πῶς ταῦτ' ἐπαινέσαιμ' αὖ; ἦ καὶ ταῦτ' ἐρεῖς
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,
ὥς τῆς θυγατρὸς ἀντίποινα λαμβάνεις; αἰσχρῶς δ’, ἕαν περ καὶ λέγησ. οὐ γὰρ καλὸν ἐχθροὶς γαμεῖσθαι τῆς θυγατρὸς οὕνεκα. ἀλλ’ οὐ γὰρ οὐδὲ νουθετεῖν ἔξεστι σε, ἢ πᾶσαν ἡς γλῶσσαν ὡς τὴν μητέρα κακοστομοῦμεν. καὶ σ’ ἐγώγες δεσπότιν ἢ μητέρ’ οὐκ ἔλασσον εἰς ἡμᾶς νέμω, ἢ ξῶ βίον μοχθηρόν, ἐκ τε σοῦ κακοῖς πολλοῖς αἰεὶ ξυνοῦσα τοῦ τε συννόμου. δ’ ἄλλος ἔξω, χεῖρα σὴν μόλις φυγὼν, τλήμων Ὅρεστις δυστυχῆ τρίβει βίον. ὃν πολλὰ δὴ με σοὶ τρέφειν μιάστορα ἐπητιασω. καὶ τὸδ’, εἴπερ ἐσθενον, ἔδρων ἄν, εῦ τοῦτ’ ἵσθιν’ τοῦδ’ γ’ οὖνεκα κηρυγγε μ’ εἰς ἀπαντας, εὔ τε χρῆς κακῆν εἴτε στόμαργον εἰτ’ ἀναιδείας πλέαν. εἰ γὰρ πέφυκα τῶνδε τῶν ἔργων ἰδρις, σχεδὸν τι τὴν σὴν οὐ καταισχύνω φύσιν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὁρῶ μένος πνέουσαν’ εἰ δὲ σὺν δίκη εὐνεστί, τοῦδε φροντίδ’ οὐκέτ’ εἰςορῶ.

ΚΑΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ποίας δ’ ἐμοι δεί πρός γε τήνδε φροντίδος, ἢτις τοιαύτα τὴν τεκοῦσαν ὑβρισεν, καὶ ταῦτα τηλικοῦτος; ἀρα σοι δοκεῖ χωρείν ἂν εἰς πᾶν ἔργον αἰσχύνης άτερ;
This too was vengeance for a daughter's blood?
A shameful plea, if urged, for shame it is
To wed a foeman for a daughter's sake.
But in convincing thee I waste my breath;
Thou hast no answer but to scream that I
Revile a mother; and in sooth to us
Thou art mistress more than mother, for I pine
A wretched drudge, by thee and by thy mate
Downtrodden; and that other child who scarce
Escaped thy hands, Orestes, wears away
In weary exile his unhappy days.
Oft hast thou taxed me that I reared him up
For vengeance; so I willed it, had I power.
Go to, proclaim me out of my own mouth
A shrew, a scold, a vixen—what thou wilt.
For if I be accomplished in such arts,
Methinks I show my breed, a trick o' the blood.

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

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

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

ἐργ᾽ ἐξαναγκάζει με ταύτα δράν βία·
αισχροῖς γὰρ αἰσχρὰ πράγματ᾽ εκδίδασκεται.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ
ο ἥρεμῳ ἀναίδες, ἢ σ᾽ ἐγὼ καὶ τάμ᾽ ἔπη καὶ τάργα τάμὰ πόλλ᾽ ἁγαν λέγειν ποεῖ.

HΛΕΚΤΡΑ
σύ τοι λέγεις νῦν, σύκ ἐγὼ· σύ γὰρ ποεῖς τούργον· τὰ δ᾽ ἐργα τοὺς λόγους εὑρίσκεται.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ
ἀλλ᾽ οὐ μᾶ τῇν δέσποιναν "Ἀρτεμιν θράσους τοῦδ᾽ οὐκ ἄλφεις, εὔτ᾽ ἂν Αὐγισθὸς μόλῃ.

HΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὁρᾶς; πρὸς ὄργῃν ἐκφέρει, μεθεισά μοι λέγειν ἄ χρήζοιμ᾽, οὐδ᾽ ἐπίστασαι κλύειν.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ
οὐκουν ἐάσεις οὐδ᾽ ὡτ' εὐφήμου βοής θῦσαι μ', ἐπειδὴ σοί γ᾽ ἐφῆκα πᾶν λέγειν;

HΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἐὼ, κελεύω, θυε· μηδ᾽ ἐπαιτιῶ τοῦμον στόμ᾽, ὡς οὐκ ἂν πέρα λέξαιμ ἔτι.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ
ἐπαιρε δὴ σὺ θύμαθ᾽ ἡ παροῦσα μοι πάγκαρπ', ἀνακτὶ τῶδ᾽ ὡτ' λατρεῖς εὐχὰς ἀνάσχου δεμάτων, ἂ νῦν ἐχώ. κλύοις ἂν ἡδή, Φοῖβε προστατής, κεκρυμμένην μου βάξιν᾽ ὡς οὐκ ἂν πέρα λέξαιμ ἔτι. 

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ
ἐγερερ δὴ σὺ θύμάθ᾽ ἡ παροῦσα μοι πάγκαρπ', ἀνακτὶ τῶδ᾽ ὡτ' λατρεῖς εὐχὰς ἀνάσχου δεμάτων, ἂ νῦν ἐχώ. κλύοις ἂν ἡδή, Φοῖβε προστατής, κεκρυμμένην μου βάξιν᾽ ὡς οὐκ ἂν πέρα λέξαιμ ἔτι.
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 grantest me
Free speech, and wilt not listen when I speak.

CLYTEMNESTRA

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

ELECTRA

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

CLYTEMNESTRA

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

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ἨΛΕΚΤΡΑ

δ' γὰρ προσεῖδον νυκτὶ τήδε φάσματα
dισσῶν ὀνείρων, ταῦτά μοι, Δύκει' ἀναξ,
eἰ μὲν πέφηνεν ἐσθλά, δός τελεσφόρα,
eἰ δ' ἐχθρά, τοὺς ἐχθροίσιν ἐμπαλίν μέθες:
καὶ μὴ με πλοῦτον τοῦ παρόντος εἰ τινὲς
dόλοσι βουλεύουσιν ἐκβαλεῖν, ἐφῆς,
ἀλλ' ὁδέ μ' αἰεὶ ξιὼς ἀβλαβεὶ βίῳ
dόμους 'Ατρειδῶν σκῆπτρα τ' ἀμφέπειν τάδε,
φίλοισι τε ἐννοοῦσαν ὅσ' ἐγνεύμι νῦν
ἐυμεροῦσαν καὶ τέκνων ὅσων ἐμοὶ
dύσνοιμη μὴ πρόσεστιν ἡ λύπη πικρα.
tαὐτ', ὦ Δύκει' Ἀπολλον, ἰλέως κλύων
δός τάσιν ἡμῖν ὡσπέρ ἐξαιτούμεθα.
tά δ' ἀλαπάντα καὶ σιωπώσης ἐμοὺ
ἐπαξιῶσε σε δαίμον' ὄντ' ἐξειδέναι:
tοὺς ἐκ Διὸς γὰρ εἰκός ἐστι πάνθ' ὅραν.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

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

τάδ' ἐστίν, ὦ ξέν' αὐτὸς ἤκασας καλῶς.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

ἡ καὶ δαμαρτα τήνδε ἐπεικάξων κυρῶ
κεῖνου; πρέπει γάρ ὅσ τύραννος εἰσορᾶν.
ΧΟΡΟΣ

μάλιστα πάντων' ἡδεὶς σοι κεῖνη πύρα.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

ὁ χαῖρ', ἄνασσαν τοι φέρον ἡκὼ λόγους
ἡδεὶς φίλου παρ' ἀνδρὸς Αἰγίσθῳ θ' ὁμοῦ.

ΚΑΛΕΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ἐδεξάμην τὸ ῥηθέν' εἰδέναι δὲ σοι
πρώτιστα χρήζω τίς σ' ἀπεστείλειν βροτῶν.
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

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΟΓΟΣ

Φανοτεύς ὁ Φωκεύς, πράγμα πορσύνων μέγα.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

τὸ ποῖον, ὃ ξέν'; εἶπέ· παρὰ φίλου γὰρ ὃν ἀνδρός, σάφ' οἶδα, προσφιλεῖς λέξεις λόγους.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΟΓΟΣ

τέθνηκ' Ὅρεστης· ἐν βραχεῖ ξυνθεὶς λέγω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οἱ 'γὰ τάλαιν', ὄλωλα τῇ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

τί φῆς, τί φῆς, ὃ ξέινε; μὴ ταύτης κλύε.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΟΓΟΣ

θανόντ' Ὅρεστην νῦν τε καὶ πάλαι λέγω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀπωλόμην δύστηνος, οὐδέν εἰµ' ἔτι.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

σὺ μὲν τὰ σαυτῆς πρᾶσσ', ἐμοὶ δὲ σὺ, ξένε, τάληθες εἰπέ, τῷ τρόπῳ διόλλυται;

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΟΓΟΣ

κἀπεμπόμην πρὸς ταῦτα καὶ τὸ πᾶν φράσω.

κεῖνος γὰρ ἔλθων εἰς τὸ κλεινὸν Ἑλλάδος πρόσχημι· ἀγῶνος Δελφικῶν ἄθλων χάριν, ὅτε ἤσθετ ἀνδρὸς ὀρθίων κηρυγμάτων δρόμον προκηρύζαντος, ὁ πρώτης κρίσις, εἰσῆλθε χαλκρός, πᾶσι τοῖς ἐκεί αὐτοῖς τὸν τρόπον διόλλυσαν, τὰ τέρματα νίκης ἔχων ἔξηλθε πάντωμι γέρας.

χώπως μὲν ἐν πολλοῖσι παῦρα σοι λέγω οὐκ οἴδα τοιοῦτοι ἀνδρός ἔργα καὶ κράτη· ἐν δ' ἵσθι· ὅσοιν γὰρ εἰσεκήρυξαν βραβής

1 ἰσθ' ὅσον γὰρ καὶ τοιοῦτοι ἀνδρός ἔργα καὶ κράτη· ἐν δ' ἵσθι· ὅσοιν γὰρ εἰσεκήρυξαν βραβής

1 τῇ φύσει MSS., Musgrave corr.
ELECTRA

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

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

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

ELECTRA
Me miserable! Now am I undone.

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

AGED SERVANT
I say again, Orestes is no more.

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

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

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

[δρόμων διαύλων πένταθλ' ἄνυμιζεται], 1
tούτων ἐνεγκὼν πάντα τάπυκια
ὦλβιζετ', Ἀργεῖος μὲν ἀνακαλούμενος,
ὕνομα δ' Ὅρέστης, τοῦ τὸ κλεινὸν Ἑλλάδος
'Αγαμέμνονος στράτευμ' ἀγείραντός ποτε.
καὶ ταῦτα μὲν τοιαῦθ': ὅταν δὲ τις θεῶν
βλάπτη, δύνατ' ἄν οὐδ' ἄν ἴσχύον φυγεῖν.
κεῖνος γὰρ ἄλλης ἡμέρας, ὅθ' ὑππικῶν
ἡν ἥλιον τέλλοντος ὁκύπουσ ἀγών,
eἰσῃθεὶς ὀλίγων ἀρματηλατῶν μέτα.
eἰς Ὑλίδης ξυγωτῶν ἀρμάτων ξεπουστάται:
κάκεινος ἐν τούτοις, Θεσσαλᾶς ἔχων
ὑπποὺς, ὤ πέμπτος: ἐκτος ὡς Ἀιτωλίας
ξαυθαίσι πῶλοις: ἐβδομος Μάγνης ἀνήρ:
ὁ δ' ὧγος λευκιππος, Αἰνιὰν γένος:
ἐνατος Ἀθηνῶν τῶν θεοδήμων ἄπο:
Βοιωτος ἄλλος, δέκατον ἐκπληρῶν ὄχου.
στάντες δ' ἵν' αὐτοὺς οἱ τεταγμένοι βραβῆς
κλήροις ἔπηλαν καὶ κατέστησαν δίφρους,
χαλκῆς υπ' αὐτὸς ἀπακτονύγγος ἔκαν: οἱ δ' ἄμα
ὑπποὺς ὁμοκλήσαντες ἠνίας χεροῖν
ἐσεῖσαν: ἐν δὲ πᾶς ἐμεστώθη δρόμος
κτύπου κροτητῶν ἀρμάτων κόνις δ' ἄνω
φορεθ': ὁμοῦ δὲ πάντες ἀναμεμωγμένου
φεῖδοντο κέντρων οὐδέν, ὅς ὑπερβάλλων
χνόας τις αὐτῶν καὶ φρυάγμαθ ἱππικά.
ὁμοὶ γὰρ ἀμφὶ νῦτα καὶ τροχῶν βάσεως
ἡφρυζου, εἰσέβαλλον ὑππικαὶ πνοαί.
κεῖνος δ' ὑπ' αὐτήν ἐσχάτην στήλην ἔχων

1 Jebb with most critics rejects the line and alters τούτων
in next line to ἄθλων.
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,
ἔχριμπτ᾽ ἀεὶ σύριγγα, δεξιόν δ᾽ ἀνεὶς
σειραῖον ἱππὸν εἶργε τὸν προσκείμενον.
καὶ πρὶν μὲν ὀρθοὶ πάντες ἐστασαν δίφροι
ἐπείτα δ᾽ Ἀινιάνος ἀνδρὸς ἀστομοι
πῶλοι βία φέρουσιν· ἐκ δ᾽ ὑποστροφῆς
tελεύντες ἐκτὸν ἐβδομοῦν τ᾽ ἦδη δρόμον
μέτωπα συμπαίουσι Βαρκαίοις ὁχοις:
καντεύθεν ἄλλος ἄλλον ἐξ ἐνὸς κακοῦ
ἐθραυε κανέππιτε, πᾶν δ᾽ ἐπιμπλατο
ναυαγίων Κρισαίον ἰππικῶν πέδον.
γνοὺς δ᾽ οὐξ Ὁδηνῶν δεινὸς ἡμιστρόφος
ἐξω παραστά κἀνακωχεύει παρεῖς
κλῦδων᾽ ἐφιππον ἐν μέσῳ κυκωμενον.
ηλαυνε δ᾽ ἔσχατος μὲν, ὑστέρας δ᾽ ἔχων
πῶλους Ὁρέστησ, τῷ τέλει πίστιν φέρων
ὀπως δ᾽ ὀρᾶ μόνον οὐ γέλελειμένον,
ὁξιν δ᾽ ὁπιν κέλαδον ἐνσεῖς ἀθαῖς
πῶλοις διόκει, καξισώσαντε ξυγά
ηλαυνετη, τότ᾽ ἄλλοις, ἄλλοθ᾽ ἄτερος
κάπα προβάλλων ἰππικῶν ὁχημάτων.
καὶ τοὺς μὲν ἄλλους πάντας ἀσφαλεῖς δρόμους
ἀρμαθ᾽ ὁ τλήμων ὀρθὸς ἐς ὀρθῶν διφρῶν
ἐπείτα λύων ἦμιαν ἀριστεράν
κάμπτωντοσ ἐπιπον λανθάνει στῆλην ἀκραν
παίσας· ἐθραυε δ᾽ ἄξοινος μέσας χυας
καξ ἀντύγων ὀλισθεν· ἐν δ᾽ ἐλισέται
τμητοῖς ἴμασι· του δὲ πίπτωνας πέδῳ
πῶλοι διεπάρησαν ἐς μέσον δρόμον,
στρατος δ᾽ ὁπως ὀρᾷ μν ἐκπεπτωκότα
dιφρῶν, ἀνολόλυξε τὸν νεανίαν,
οῖ᾽ ἔργα δράσας οἰα λαγχάνει κακά,
φορούμενοι πρὸς οὐδᾶς, ἄλλοτ᾽ οὐρανό
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 προφαίνουν, ἔσ τέ νιν διφρηλάται,
μόλις κατασχεθόντες ἵππικον δρόμον,
ἐλυσαν αἰματηρόν, ὡστε μηδένα
γνώναί φίλων ἱδόντ' ἂν ἄθλιον δέμας,
καὶ νιν πυρᾷ ναῦτες εὐθὺς ἐν βραχεὶ
χαλκῷ μέγιστον ἱππικὸν δρόμον ἔστι
τοιαῦτα σοι ταῦτ' ἔστιν, ὡς μὲν ἐν λόγῳ
ἀλγείαν, τοῖς δ' ἵδωσιν, οὔπερ εἴδομεν,
μέγιστα πάντων δὲν ὡς ὠπωτ' ἐγὼ κακῶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

φεῦ φεῦ: τὸ πᾶν δὴ δεσπόταισι τοῖς πάλαι
πρόρριζον, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἐφθαρται γένος.

ΚΑΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ὦ Ζεὺς, τί ταῦτα, πότερον εὐτυχῆ λέγω,
ἡ δεινὰ μὲν, κέρδη δε; λυπηρῶς δ' ἔχει,
eἰ τοῖς ἐμαυτῆς τὸν βίον σώζω κακοῖς.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

τί δ' ὡς ἀθυμεῖς, ὃ γόναι, τῷ νῦν λόγῳ;

ΚΑΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

δεινῶν τὸ τίκτειν ἐστίν: οὐδὲ γὰρ κακῶς
πάσχοντι μῖσος ὡς τέκη προσγίγνεται.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

μάτην ἀρ' ἠμεῖς, ὡς ὠικεῖν, ἥκομεν.

ΚΑΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

οὕτωι μάτην γε' πῶς γὰρ ἄν ματην λέγοις,
eἰ μοι θανόντως πίστ' ἔχοιν τεκμήρια
προσήλθης, ὡστὶς τῆς ἐμῆς ψυχῆς γεγώς,
μαστῶν ἀποστὰς καὶ τροφῆς ἐμῆς, φυγὰς
ἀπεξενοῦτο καὶ μ', ἔπει τῇσδε χθονὸς
ἐξῆλθεν, ὡς εἴδεν, ἐγκαλῶν δὲ μοι.
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

φόνους πατρόφους δείν' ἐπηπείλει τελείων;
ὡς ὁ πρόστατός ἔμε στεγάζειν ἢδ' ἀλλ' ὁ προστατών
χρόνος διήγη μ' αἰεν ὡς θανομένην.
νῦν δ'—ἡμέρα γὰρ τη̄δ' ἀπίλλαλγμα φόβου
πρὸς τη̄δ' ἐκείνου θ'. ἦδε γὰρ μείζων βλάβη
ξύνωκος ἦν μοι, τοῦμον ἐκπίνουσ' ἄει
ψυχῆς ἀκρατον ἀίμα—νῦν δ' ἐκηλά ποι
τῶν τη̄δ' ἀπειλῶν οὕνεχ' ἡμερεύσομεν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οঈμω τάλαινα: νῦν γὰρ οἰμowmentήμρα.
'Ορέστα, τὴν σὴν ξυμφοράν, ὅ θ' ὡδ' ἐχων
πρὸς τῆσδ' ὑβρίζει μητρός. ἀρ' ἔχει καλῶς;

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ
οὕτως σὺν κείνος δ' ὡς ἔχει καλῶς ἔχει.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἀκουε, Νέμεσι τοῖν θανόντος ἀρτίως.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ
ἡκουσεν ὧν δεῖ κἀπεκύρωσεν καλῶς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὑβρίζε: νῦν γὰρ εὐτυχοῦσα συγχάνεις.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ
οὕκουν 'Ορέστῆς καὶ σὺ παύσετον τάδε.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
πεπαύμεθ' ἡμεῖς, οὐχ ὅπως σὲ παύσομεν.

ΚΑΤΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ
πολλῶν ἦκοις, ὦ ξέν', ἄξιος τυχεῖν,
εἰ τῇνδ' ἔπαυσας τῆς πολυγλώσσου βοῆς.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ
οὐκοῦν ἄποστείχοιμ' ἂν, εἰ τάδ' εὐ κυρεῖ.
ELECTRA

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

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

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

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

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

ELECTRA
This is thine hour of victory; mock on.

CLYTEMNESTRA
Thou and Orestes then should silence me.

ELECTRA
We silence thee! We who are silent, both!

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

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

ΚΑΛΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

Ἀριστοτέλης: Ἐπείπερ οὔτ' ἐμοὶ κατὰξι ἄν
πράξειας οὔτε τοῦ πορεύσαντος ἕνου,
ἀλλ' εἰσιθ' εἴσω· τήνδε δ' ἐκτοθεν βοῶν
ἐα τὰ θ' αὐτῆς καὶ τὰ τῶν φίλων κακά.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀρ' ὑμῖν ὡς ἀλγοῦσα κώδυνωμένη
dεινώς δακρύσας κατ' ἡλικίων δοκεῖ
tὸν ὑάον ἢ δύστηρος ὡδ' ὀλωλότα;
ἀλλ' ἐγγελωσα φροῦδος· ὃ τάλατιν ἐγὼ.
"Ορέστα φιλταθ', ὡς μ' ἀπώλεσας θανῶν.
ἀποσπάσας γὰρ τῆς ἐμῆς οἷς ὑξεὶς φρενὸς
ἀλλ' εἴσιθ' εἴσω· τήνδε δ' ἐκτοθεν βοῶν
σὲ πατρὸς ἦξειν ζωτοῦ ποτε
κάμον ταλαίνης. νῦν δὲ ποί με χρὴ μολεῖν;
μόνη γάρ εἰμι, σοῦ τ' ἀπεστερημένη
καὶ πατρός. ἦδη δεῖ με δουλεύειν πάλιν
ἐν τοῖσιν ἐχθρότοισιν ἀνθρώπων ἐμοὶ
φονεύσαι πατρός. ἅρμα μοι καλῶς ἐχεῖ;
ἀλλ' οὗ τι μὴν ἐγώγει τοῦ λοιποῦ χρόνου
ξύνοικος, εἴσειμ' 1 ἀλλὰ τῇδε πρὸς πόλην
παρεῖσ' ἐμαυτὴν ἄφιλος αὐανῶ βίον.
πρὸς ταῦτα καινέτω τις, εἰ βαρύνεται,
tῶν ἔνδον ὄντων· ὡς χάρις μὲν, ἢν κτάνη,
λύπη δ', ἡν ξωτ' τοῦ βίου δ' οὐδεὶς πόθος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ποῦ ποτε κεραυνοὶ Διὸς ἢ ποῦ φαέθων
"Αλιος, εἰ ταῦτ' ἐφορῶντες κρύπτουσιν ἐκηλοῦ;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐ ε', αἰαὶ.

1 ἐσσοῦ MSS., Hermann corr.
ELECTRA

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

[Exeunt CLYTEMNESTRA and AGED SERVANT.

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

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

ELECTRA
Ah me! Ah me!
HAEKTPA

ὦ παῖ, τί δακρύεις;

μηδὲν μέγ᾽ αὕσης.

πῶς;

ei τῶν φανερῶς οἰχομένων
eis ᾿Αἴδαν ἑλπίδ᾽ υποίσεις, κατ᾽ ἐμὸν τακόμενας
μᾶλλον ἐπεμβάσει.

οἶδα γὰρ ἀνακτ᾽ ᾿Αμφιάρεων χρυσοδέτοις
ἐρκεσὶ κρυφθέντα γυναικῶν καὶ νῦν ὑπὸ γαίας

ἐ ἐ, ἰὼ.

πάμψυχος ἀνάσσει.

ἡτ᾽ ὅλοα γὰρ

ἐδάμη.
CHORUS
Daughter, why weepest thou?

ELECTRA
Woe!

CHORUS
Hush! No rash cry!

ELECTRA
Thou'lt be my death.

CHORUS
What meanest thou?

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

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

ELECTRA
Ah me!

CHORUS
A living soul he reigns.

ELECTRA
Ah woe!

CHORUS
Aye woe! for the murderess—

ELECTRA
Was slain.

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

ναί. 

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οἶδ᾽ οἶδ᾽. ἐφάνη γὰρ μέλετωρ ἀμφὶ τὸν ἐν πένθει. ἐμοὶ δ᾽ οὕτως ἔτ᾽ ἐσθ᾽. ὃς γὰρ ἔτ᾽ ἦν, 

φρούδος ἀναρπασθεῖς. 

ΧΌΡΟΣ 

δειλαία δειλαίων κυρεῖς. 

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

κάγῳ τοῦδ᾽ ἵστωρ, ὑπερίστωρ, 

πανσύρτῳ παμμήνῳ πολλῶν 

δεινῶν στυγνῶν τ᾿ αἴωνι.¹ 

ΧΟΡΟΣ

eἶδομεν ἄθρήνεις.² 

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

μὴ μὲ νυν μηκέτι 

παραγάγης, ἵν᾿ οὐ 

ΧΟΡΟΣ 

tί φῆς; 

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πάρεισιν ἐλπίδων ἐτὶ κοινοτόκων 

ἐυπατριδᾶν ἀρωγαῖ. 

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πᾶσι θνατοῖς ἐφ᾽ ἡμόρος. 

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἡ καὶ χαλάργοις ἐν ἀμῖλλαις 

οὕτως, ὡς κεῖνῳ δυστάνῳ, 

τμητοῖς ὅλκοις ἐγκύρσαι; 

ΧΟΡΟΣ 

ἀσκοπος ἀ λώβα. 

¹ ἀχέων MSS., Hermann corr. ² ἄθροεῖς MSS., Dindorf corr. 

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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!
πῶς γὰρ οὐκ; εἰ ξένος
άτερ ἐμὰν χερῶν
ΧΟΡΟΣ
παπαί.

κέκευθεν, οὕτε του τάφου ἀντιάσας
οὕτε γόων παρ’ ἡμῶν.

υφ’ ἡδονῆς τοι, φιλτάτη, διώκομαι
τὸ κόσμον μεθείσα σὺν τάχει μολεῖν;
φέρω γὰρ ἡδονὰς τε κανάπαυλαν ὅν
πάροιθεν εἰχες καὶ κατέστενες κακῶν

πόθεν δ᾽ ἂν εὑροῖς τῶν ἐμῶν σὺν πημάτων
ἀρηξιν, οἷς ἴασιν οὐκ ἐνεστ᾽ ἰδεῖν;

πάρεστ᾽ Ὀρέστης ἡμῖν, ἵσθι τοῦτ᾽ ἐμοῦ
cλύσος, ἐναργῶς, ὡσπερ εἰσορᾶς ἐμὲ.

ἀλλ᾽ ἢ μέμηνας, ὦ τάλαινα, καὶ τοῖς
σαυτῆς κακοῖσι καὶ τοῖς ἐμοῖς γελᾷς;

μὰ τὴν πατρῶν ἔστιαν, ἀλλ᾽ οὐχ ὑβρεί
cέγω τάδ’, ἀλλ᾽ ἐκεῖνον ὡς παρόντα νῦν.

οὐμοι τάλαινα: καὶ τίνος βροτῶν λόγον
τόνδ᾽ εἰσακούσασ᾽ ὡδε πιστεύεις ἄγαν;

ἐγὼ μὲν ἔξ ἐμοῖ τε κοῦκ ἀλλής, σαφῆ
σημεῖ ἱδοῦσα, τῷδε πιστεύου λόγῳ.
ELECTRA

Yea, in a strange land far away—

Alas!

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.

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

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

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

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

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

I trusted to none other than myself,
The clearest proof and evidence of my eyes.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
τίν’, ὦ τάλαιν’, ἔχουσα πίστιν; ἐς τί μοι βλέψασα θάλπει τῷ ἀνηκέστῳ πυρὶ;
ΧΡΤΣΩΘΕΜΙΣ
πρὸς νῦν θεῶν άκονσον, ὡς μαθοῦσά μου τὸ λοιπὸν ἢ φρονοῦσαν ἢ μωρὰν λέγης.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
σὺ δ’ οὖν λέγ’, εἰ σοι τῷ λόγῳ τις ἡδονή.
ΧΡΤΣΩΘΕΜΙΣ
καὶ δὴ λέγω σοι πάν ὅσον κατειδόμην. ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἦλθον πατρὸς ἀρχαῖον τάφον, ὅρῳ κολώνης ἐξ ἀκρας νεορύτους πηγὰς γάλακτος καὶ περιστεφῆ κύκλῳ πάντων ὅσ’, ἐστίν ἄνθεαν θήκην πατρός. ἰδοὺς δ’ ἐσχον θαῦμα, καὶ περισκοπῶ μή ποὺ τις ἡμῖν ἐγχρίμπῃ βροτῶν. ὃς δ’ ἐν γαλήνῃ πάντ’ εδερκόμην τόπον, τύμβου προσείρτου ἀσσον’ ἐσχάτης δ’ ὁρῶ πυρᾶς νεώρη βόστρυχον τετμημένον’ κευθὺς τάλαιν’ ὡς εἶδον, ἐμπαίει τί μοι ψυχῆς σύνιθες ὁμμα, φιλτάτου βροτῶν πάντων Ὀρέστου τοῦθ’ ὁρᾶν τεκμήριον καὶ χερσὶ βαστάσασα δυσφημῶ μὲν οὐ, χαρὰ δὲ πίμπλημ’ εὐθὺς ὅμμα δακρύων. καὶ νῦν θ’ ὀμοίως καὶ τότ’ ἐξεπίσταμαι μή του τόδ’ ἀγλαίσμα πλήν κείνον μολεῖν’ τῷ γὰρ προσήκει πλήν γ’ ἐμοῦ καὶ σοῦ τόδε; κάγῳ μὲν οὐκ ἐδρασα, τοῦτ’ ἐπίσταμαι, ὡς αὐ σὺν πῶς γὰρ; ἢ γε μηδὲ πρὸς θεοὺς ἔξεστ’ ἀκλαύστω τησ’ ἀποστῆναι στέγης; ἀλλ’ οὖδὲ μὲν δὴ μητρὸς οὔθ’ ὦ νοῦς φιλεῖ
ELECTRA

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

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

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

CHRYSOTHEMIS
I will, and tell thee all that I have seen.
As I approached our sire's ancestral tomb,
I noted that the barrow still was wet
With streams of milk, and round the monument
Garlands were wreathed of every flower that blows.
I marvelled much and peered around in dread
Of someone watching me; but when I found
That nothing stirred, nearer the tomb I crept;
And there upon the grave's edge lay a lock
Of hair fresh-severed; at the sight there flashed
A dear familiar image on my soul,
Orestes; 'twas a token and a sign
From him whom most of all the world I love.
I took it in my hands and not a sound
I uttered but my eyes o'erbrimmed for joy.
I knew, I knew it then as now, for sure:
This shining treasure could be none but his.
Who else could set it there save thee or me?
And 'twas not I assuredly, nor thou;
How couldst thou, when thou mayst not leave the house
Not e'en to sacrifice? Our mother then?
When did our mother's heart that way incline?
τοιαῦτα πράσσειν οὔτε δρῶσ' ἐλάνθαν' ἂν. 1 ἄλλ' ἔστ' Ὀρέστου ταῦτα τάπιτυμβια. 2 ἄλλ', ὃ φίλη, θάρσυνε· τοῖς αὐτοῖς τοῖς ὀυξ αὐτός αἰεὶ δαιμόνων παραστατεῖ.

νῦν ἢν τὰ πρόσθεν στυγνοί· ἢ δὲ νῦν ἵσως πολλῶν ὑπάρξει κύρος ἡμέρα καλῶν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

φεῦ, τής ἀνοίας ὡς σ' ἐπουκτίρω πάλαι.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

τί δ' ἔστιν; οὐ πρὸς ἡδονὴν λέγω τάδε;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐκ οἰσθ' ὅποι γῆς οὐδ' ὅποι γνώμης φέρει.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

πῶς δ' οὐκ ἐγὼ κάτοικ' ἢ γ' εἴδον ἐμφανῶς;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τέθνηκεν, ὦ τάλαινα, τἀκείνοι δέ σοι σωτὴρ' ἐρρει· μὴ δὲν εἰς κεῖνον γ' ὅρα.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

οἷμοι τάλαινα· τοῦ τάδ' ἥκουσας βροτῶν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τοῦ πλησίον παρόντος, ἷμίκ' ὀλλυτο.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

καὶ ποῦ ἑστὶν οὗτος; θαῦμα τοί μ' ὑπέρχεται.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

κατ' οἰκον, ἦδος οὐδ' ἦκτρ' δυσχερῆς.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

οἷμοι τάλαινα· τοῦ γὰρ ἀνθρώπων ποτ' ἡμι τὰ πολλὰ πατρὸς πρὸς τάφον κτερίσματα;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οἷμαι μάλιστ' ἐγὼ γε τοῦ τεθνηκὸς μνημεί' Ὀρέστοι ταῦτα προσθέιναι τίνα.

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

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

ELECTRA

Alas! I pity thy simplicity,
Fond sister.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Are not then my tidings glad?

ELECTRA

Thou knowest 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.
ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ὦ δυστυχής ἐγὼ δὲ σὺν χαρᾷ λόγους
tοιοῦσδ' ἠχουσ' ἐσπευδόν, οὐκ εἰδυν' ἄρα

ἈΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐτώς ἔχει σοι ταύτ' ἐὰν δὲ μοι πίθη,
tῆς νῦν παρούσης τημονῆς λύσεις βάρος.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἡ τοὺς θανόντας ἔξαναστήσω ποτὲ;

ἈΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ὅ γ᾽ εἶπον' οὐ yap ὧδ᾽ ἄφρων ἔφυν.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

τί γὰρ κελεύεις ὅν εὐγὸ φερέγγυος;

ἈΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τλῆναι σε δρῶσαν ἄν ἐγὼ παραίνέσω.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἀλλ' εἴ τις ὧν ἐγὼ φερέγγυος;

ἈΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὅρα, πόνου τοι χωρὶς οὐδὲν εὐτυχεῖ.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ὅρω. ξυναίσω πᾶν ὅσονπερ ἂν σθένω.
ELECTRA

CHRYSO THEMIS
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.

CHRYSO THEMIS
Wouldst have me raise the dead to life again?

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

CHRYSO THEMIS
What wouldst thou then that lies within my powers?

ELECTRA
Be bold to execute what I enjoin.

CHRYSO THEMIS
If it can profit, I will not refuse.

ELECTRA
Success, remember, is the meed of toil.

CHRYSO THEMIS
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,
ξ' ἔν τῇ ἀδελφὴ μὴ κατοκνήσεις κτανεῖν
Αἴγισθον' οὐδέν γάρ σε δεῖ κρύπτειν μ' ἔτι.
ποῦ γὰρ μενεῖς ῥάθυμος, εἰς τίν ἐλπίδιον
βλέψας' ἐτ' ὀρθὴν; ἢ πάρεστι μὲν στένειν
πλοῦτου πατρόφου κτῆσιν ἐστερημένην,
pάρεστι δ' ἄλγειν ἐς τοσόνδε τοῦ χρόνου
άλεκτρα γηράσκουσαν ἀνυμέναια τε.
καὶ τώνδε μέντοι μηκέτ' ἐλπίσῃς ὅπως
τεύξει ποτ' οὐ γὰρ δῷ' ἄβουλός ἐστ' ἀνὴρ
Αἴγισθος ὡστε σὸν ποτ' ἡ κάμον γένος
βλαστεῖν ἐᾶσαι, πημονὴν αὐτῷ σαφῆ.
ἀλλ' ἢν ἐπίστη τοὺς ἐμοὶ κατώ
θανόντως ὡστε τοῦ κασιγνήτου τὸ ἅμαδ
ἐπείτα δ', ὡσπερ ἐξέφυς, ἔλευθέρα
cαλεῖ τὸ λοιπὸν καὶ γάμων ἐπαξίων
teύξει· φιλεῖ γὰρ πρὸς τὰ χρηστὰ πᾶ σ ὄραν.
λόγων γε μὴν εὐκλείενοι ὅσην ὅσην
σαυτῇ τέ κἀκεῖν τοῖσιν προσβαλεῖς πεισθείησ'
τίς γὰρ ποτ' ἀστῶν ἡ ἐμοὶ ὅσην ὃ τοῖσιν
τοῦτο γὰρ πρὸς τὸ κασιγνήτω, φίλω,
ὡ τὸν πατρόφον οἶκον ἐξεσωσάτην,
ὡ τοῦτο ἐξερεῖ βροτῶν, τινῶν ἀργῶν
τοῖσιν τῷ πατρίδω ποτὲ ὑπὸ
ψυχῆς ἀφειδήσατε προούστητην φόνου·
tοῦτοι φιλεῖν χρή, τῶδε χρή πάντας σέβειν,
tῶδ' ἐν θ' ἑορταῖς ἐν τε πανδήμῳ σέβει,
τίμαν ἀπαντας οὐνεκ' ἀνδρείας χρεῶν.
τοιαῦτα τοι νῦ πᾶς τις ἐξερεῖ βροτῶν,
ξώσαιν θανοῦσαιν θ' ὡστε μὴ 'κλυπείν κλέος.
ἀλλ', ὡ φίλη, πείσθητί, συμπάνει πατρί,
σύγκαμπ' ἀδελφὸν, πᾶσαν ϕός κακῶν ἐμε,
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 ἥν αἰσχρῶν αἰσχρῶς τοῖς καλῶς πεφυκόσων.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις ἐστίν ἡ προμηθία καὶ τῷ λέγοντι καὶ κλύοντι σύμμαχος.
ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
καὶ πρὶν γε φωνεῖν, ὃ γυναίκες, εἰ φρενῶν ἐτύγχαν' αὐτὴ μὴ κακῶν, ἐσφάζετ' ἄν τὴν εὐλάβειαν, ὡσπερ οὐχὶ σῳδέται.
ποτ' γὰρ ποτ' ἐμβλέψασα τοιούτοις θράσος αὐτή θ' ὅπλιζε καμίν᾽ ὑπηρετεῖν καλεῖς; οὐκ εἰσοράς; γυνὴ μὲν οὐδ' ἄνηρ ἔφυς, σθένεις δ' ἐλασσὸν τῶν ἐναντίων χερί.
δαίμων δὲ τοῖς μὲν εὐτυχεῖ καὶ τῷ λέγοντι καλῆ ημέραν, ἡμῖν δ' ἀπορρεῖ κατὶ μηδὲν ἐρχεῖται.
τὰς οὖν τοιούτας ἀνδράς βουλεύουν ἐλεύν ἀλυτός ἀτης ἐξαπαλλαχθῆται; ὅρα κακῶς πράσσετε μή μείζω κακὰ κτησώμεθ', εἰ τις τούσδέν ἀκούσεται λόγους.
λύει γὰρ ἡμῖν οὐδὲν οὐδ' ἐπωφελεί βάζειν καλῇ λαβόντε ὑσκλεώς θανεῖν.
οὐ γὰρ θανεῖν ἀνθρώποις ἄμεινον οὐδὲ νοῦ σοφοῦ.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
πείθου: προνοίας οὐδὲν ἀνθρώποις ἔφυ κέρδος λαβείν ἀμείνον οὐδὲν νοού σοφοῦ.
ELECTRA

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

CHORUS

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

CHRYSOThEMIS

Before she spake, were not her mind perverse,
She had remembered caution, but she, friends,
Remembers not. (To ELECTRA.) What glamour
fooled thee thus
To take up arms thus boldly and enlist me?
Thou art a woman, see'st thou not? no man,
No match in battle for thine adversaries;
Their fortune rises with the flowing tide,
Ours ebbs and leaves us soon a stranded hulk;
Who then could hope to grapple with a foe
So mighty and escape without a fall?
Bethink thee, if thy speech were overheard,
We are like to change our evil plight for worse.
Small comfort or commodity to win
Glory and die an ignominious death!
Mere death were easy, but to crave for death
And be denied that last boon—there's the sting.
Nay, I entreat, before we wreak 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.
ξυρσοθεμίσ

φεῦ·

εἴθ᾽ ὥφελες τοιάδε τὴν γνώμην πατρὸς
θυσικοτος εἶναι· πᾶν γὰρ ἄν κατειργάσω.

χρυσοθεμίσ

ἀλλ᾽ ή φύσιν νε, τὸν δὲ νοοῦ ἥσσων τότε.

χρυσοθεμίσ

ἄσκει τοιαύτη νοῦν δὲ αἰώνος μένειν.

χρυσοθεμίσ

ὦς οὐχὶ συνδράσουσα νοθετεῖς τάδε.

χρυσοθεμίσ

εἰκὸς γὰρ ἐγχειροῦντα καὶ πράσσειν κακῶς.

χρυσοθεμίσ

ζηλῶ σε τοῦ νοοῦ, τῆς δὲ δειλίας στυγῶ.

χρυσοθεμίσ

ἄνέξομαι κλύουσα χῶταν εὖ λέγῃς.

χρυσοθεμίσ

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

χρυσοθεμίσ

μακρὸς τὸ κρῖναι ταῦτα χῶ λοιπὸς χρόνος.

χρυσοθεμίσ

ἀπελθε· σοι γὰρ ὥφελησίς οὐκ ἐνὶ.

χρυσοθεμίσ

ἐνεστίν· ἀλλὰ σοι μάθησίς οὐ πάρα.

χρυσοθεμίσ

ἐλθοῦσα μητρὶ ταῦτα πάντ᾽ ἐξειπε σῇ.
'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.

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

My temper was the same, my mind less ripe.

Study to keep the same mind all thy days.

This counsel means refusal of thine aid.

Yes, for misfortune dogs such enterprise.

I praise thy prudence, hate thy cowardice.

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

That trial thou wilt ne'er endure from me.

Who lives will see; time yet may prove thee wrong

Begone! in thee there is no power to aid.

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

Go to thy mother; tell it all to her.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
οὐδ᾽ αὖ τοσοῦτον ἔχος ἐχθαίρω σ᾽ ἐγὼ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἀλλ᾽ οὖν ἐπίστω γ᾽ οἱ μ᾽ ἄτιμίας ἄγεις.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ἄτιμίας μὲν οὖ, προμηθίας δὲ σοῦ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
τῷ σῷ δικαίῳ δῆτ᾽ ἐπισπέσθαι με δεῖ;

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ὅταν γὰρ εὐ φρονῆσ, τόθ᾽ ἥγησει σὺ νῦν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἡ δεινὸν εὐ λέγουσιν ἐξαμαρτάνειν.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
εἰρήκας ὁρθῶς ὅ σὺ πρόσκεισαι κακῷ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
τί δ᾽; οὐ δοκῶ σοι ταῦτα σὺν δίκῃ λέγειν;

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ἀλλ᾽ ἐστίν ἐνθὰ χὴ δίκῃ βλάβην φέρει.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
τοῦτοις ἐγὼ ζῆν τοῖς νόμοις οὐ βούλομαι.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ἀλλ᾽ εἰ ποήσεις ταῦτ᾽, ἐπαίνεσεις ἐμὲ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
καὶ μὴν ποῆσω γ᾽ οὖδὲν ἐκπλαγεῖσα σε.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
καὶ τοῦτ ἀληθές, οὖδὲ βουλεύσει πάλιν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
βουλῆς γὰρ οὖδέν ἐστὶν ἔχθιον κακῆς.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
φρονεῖν ἐοικας οὐδέν ὁν ἐγὼ λέγω.
ELECTRA

CHRYSOTHEMIS
My hatred of thee does not reach so far.

ELECTRA
Thou wouldst dishonour me; that much is sure.

CHRYSOTHEMIS
Dishonour? No, I seek to save thine honour.

ELECTRA
Am I to make thy rule of honour mine?

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

ELECTRA
Sound words; 'tis sad they are so misapplied.

CHRYSOTHEMIS
Thou hittest well the blot that is thine own.

ELECTRA
How? dost deny the plea I urge is just?

CHRYSOTHEMIS
No; but e'en justice sometimes worketh harm.

ELECTRA
I choose not to conform to such a rule.

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

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

CHRYSOTHEMIS
Is this thy last word? Wilt not be advised?

ELECTRA
No, naught is loathlier than ill advice.

CHRYSOTHEMIS
Thou seemest deaf to all that I can urge.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
πάλαι δέδοκται ταῦτα κοῦ νεωστί μοι.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
άπειμι τοίνυν' οὔτε γὰρ σὺ τὰμ' ἐπη
τολμᾶς ἐπαινεῖν οὔτ' ἐγὼ τοὺς σοὺς τρόπους.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
άλλ' εἰσιθ'. οὖ σοι μὴ μεθέψομαι ποτε,
οὐδ' ἢν σφόδρ' ἰμεῖρουσα τυνχάνης' ἐπεὶ
πολλῆς ἀνοίας καὶ τὸ θηρᾶσθαι κενά.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
άλλ' εἰ σεαυτῇ τυνχάνεις δοκοῦσα τι
φρονεῖν, φρόνει τοιαύθ'. ὅταν γὰρ ἐν κακοῖς
ηδη βεβήκης, τὰμ' ἐπαινέσεις ἐπη.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
τι τοὺς ἀνωθεν φρονιμωτάτους οἶωνους ἐσορόμενοι
τροφᾶς
κηδομένους ἀφ' ὁν τε βλάστωσιν ἀφ' ὃν τ' ὑνασιν
ἐὑρε
ωσι, τάδ' οὖκ ἐπ' ὅσα τελοῦμεν;
άλλ' ὃν τὰν Διὸς ἀστραπὰν
καὶ τὰν οὕρανίαν Θέμιν,
δαρὸν οὖκ ἀπόνητοι.

ὦ χθονία βροτοῖσι φάμα, κατὰ μοι βόασον οἰκτρὰν
ὄπα τοῖς ἔνερθ᾽ ᾿Ατρείδαις, ἀχόρευτ᾽ φέρουσ' ὀνείδη

ἄντ. α'

ὅτι σφὶν ἦδη τὰ μὲν ἐκ δόμων νοσεῖ δή,1 τὰ δὲ 1070
πρὸς τέκνων διπλῇ
φύλοποι οὐκέτ' ἔξισοῦται φιλοτασίω διαί-
τα: πρόδοτος δὲ μόνα σαλεύει

1 Triclinius adds δή.
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,
Ἡλέκτρα, τὸν ἀεὶ πατρὸς
dειλαία στενάχουσ', ὡπωσ
ά πάνυρτος ἀγάδων,
oὔτε τὶ τοῦ θανεῖν προμηθῆς τὸ τε μὴ βλέπειν
ἐτοίμα,
διδύμαν ἐλοῦσ' Ἐρινύν' τίς ἂν εὐπατρίς ὅδε βλάστησι τοῖς ὑπὸ τελεσίας
οὔδείς τῶν ἄγαθῶν γὰρ
ζῶν κακῶς εὐκλειαν αἰσχὺναi θέλει νόμυμος, ὡς παῖ παῖ.
ἀγάζοντον καί πάγκλαυτον αἰώνα καὶνὸν εἶλου,
tὸ μὴ καλὸν καθοπλίσασα, δύο φέρειν ἐν ἐνὶ λόγῳ,
σοφά τ᾽ ἀρίστα τε παῖς κεκλήσθαι. ϊ
ζῆνος μοι καθύπερθεν και πλούτω τεῶν ἕξω τῶν ὑπὸ ἑριπερθεν
χειρὶ καὶ πλούτω τεῶν ἕξω ὑπὸ ἑριπερθεν
νῦν ὑπὸ χείρα MSS., Musgrave corr.
ἐπεὶ σ᾽ ἐφηύρηκα μοίρᾳ μὲν ἐν ἐσθλά
βεβώσαν, ἀ δὲ μέγιστ' ἐβλαστε νόμιμα, τῶνδε
féρωμέναν
ἀριστα τὰ Ζηνός εὐσεβεία.
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
άρ' ὡς γυναῖκες, ὡς ὑπὸ χείρα MSS., Musgrave corr.
τι βουληθεῖσ πάρει;
ΧΟΡΟΣ
τι δ' ἐξερευνᾶς καὶ τι βουληθεῖσ πάρει;

1 The text is corrupt, and no plausible emendation has yet been suggested.
2 Hermann adds γὰρ metri gratia.
3 ὑπὸ χείρα MSS., Musgrave corr.
4 Διὰς MSS., Triclinius corr.
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  
By a base life his fair repute to stain.  
Such baseness thou didst scorn,  
Choosing, my child, to mourn with them that mourn.  
Wise and of daughters best——  
With double honours thou art doubly blest.

O may I see thee tower  
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?
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
Αἴγισθόν ἔνθ᾽ ὤκηκεν ἱστορῶ πάλαι.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἀλλ’ εὖ θ’ ἱκάνεις χῶ φράσας ἀξίμιος.
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
tίς οὖν ἂν ὑμῶν τοῖς ἐσω φράσειεν ἂν ἡμῶν ποθεῖνην κοινόποιν παρουσίαν;
ΧΟΡΟΣ
ηδ’, εἰ τὸν ἄγχιστόν γε κηρύσσειν χρεών.
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἰθ’, ὡ γύναι, δῆλωσον εἰςελθοῦσ’ ὅτι Ἑσεκῆς ματεύουσ’ ἀνδρες Ἀὐγισθόν τινες,
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οἷμοι τάλαιν’, σοῦ δὴ ποθ’ ἢς ἡκούσαμεν φήμης φέροντες ἐμφανῇ τεκμῆρια;
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
οὐκ οἶδα τὴν σὴν κληδὸν’ ἀλλά μοι γέρων Ὀρέστου Στρόφιος ἀγγεῖλαι πέρι.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
τί δ’ ἐστιν, ὦ ξέν’; ὡς μ’ ὑπέρχεται φόβος.
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
φέροντες αὐτοῦ σμικρὰ λείψαν ἐν βραχεί
τεύχει θανόντος, ὡς ὁρᾷς, κομίζομεν.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὁί τάλαινα, τοῦτ’ ἐκεῖν’ ἢδη σαφὲς πρόχειρον ἄχθος, ὡς ἐοίκε, δέρκομαι.
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
eἰπέρ τι κλαίεις τῶν Ὀρεστείων κακῶν,
tόδ’ ἄγγος ἴσθι σῶμα τοῦκείνου στέγον.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὦ ἡείνε, δὸς νῦν, πρὸς θεῶν, εἴπερ τόδε κέκευθεν αὐτὸν τεῦχος, εἰς χεῖρας λαβεῖν,
ORESTES
I seek and long have sought Aegisthus' home.

CHORUS
'Tis here; thy guide is nowise blameable.

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

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

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

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

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

ELECTRA
Ha!
What tidings, stranger? how I quake with dread!

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

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

ORESTES
If for Orestes thou art weeping, know
This brazen urn contains the dust of him.

ELECTRA
O if it hold his ashes, let me, friend,
O let me, let me take it in my hands.
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

δόθ', ἦτις ἔστι, προσφέροντες· οὐ γὰρ ὡς
ἐν δυσμενείᾳ γ' ὦς' ἐπαιτεῖται τάδε,
ἀλλ' ἥ φίλων τις ἤ προς αἴματος φύσιν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

δ' φιλτάτου μνημείου ἀνθρώπων ἐμοὶ
ψυχῆς Ὁρέστου λοιπόν, ὡς σ' ἀπ' ἐλπίδων
οὐχ ὀντερ ἐξέπεμπτον εἰσεδεξάμην.
νῦν μὲν γὰρ οὔδεν ἄντα βαστάζω χερῶν,
δόμουν δε σ', ὥ παῖ, λαμπρὸν ἐξέπεμψ' ἐγώ.
ὡς ὄφελον πάροιθεν ἐκλίπειν βίον,
πρὶν ἐς ξένην σε γαῖαν ἐκπέμψει χερῶν
κλέφσασα ταῖνδε κάνασσωσασθαι φῶνον,
ὅπως θανῶν ἐκεῖσθαι τῇ τόθ' ἡμέρα,
τύμβου πατρῴου κοινὸν εἰληχὼς μέρος.
νῦν δ' ἐκτὸς οἰκῶν κατι γῆς ἄλλης φυγὰς
κακῶς ἀπώλου, σῆς κασιγνήτης δίχα,
κούτ' ἐν φίλαισι χερσὶν ἡ τάλαυν ἐγὼ
λουτροῖς σ' ἐκόσμησ' οὔτε παμφλέκτου πυρὸς
ἀνειλόμην, ὡς εἰκός, ἄθλιον βάρος,
ἀλλ' ἐν ξέναισι χερσὶ κηδευθείς τάλας
σμικρὸς προσηκός, σμικρὸς κύτει.
οἴμοι τάλαινα τῆς ἐμῆς πάλαι τροφῆς
ἀνωφελῆτου, τῆν ἐγὼ θάμ' ἄμφι σοι
πόνοι γλυκεῖ παρέσχει, σοι προσηκός, ἀδελφή σοι προσηκός, ἀδελφή σοι προσηκός,
νῦν δ' ἐκλέλοιπε ταῦτ' ἐν ἡμέραν μί"
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,
Ἡλέκτρα

θανόντι σὺν σοί: πάντα γὰρ συναρπάσας θύελλ᾽ ὅπως βέβηκας. οἴχεται πατήρ: τέθνηκ᾽ ἐγὼ σοί· φροῦδος αὐτὸς εἰ θανῶν· γελῶσι δ᾽ ἔχθροι· μαίνεται δ᾽ ύφ᾽ ἡδονῆς μήτηρ ἀμήτωρ, ὡς ἐμοὶ σὺ πολλάκις φήμας λάθρα προύπεμπτες ὡς φανούμενος τιμωρός αὐτός. ἀλλὰ ταὐθ᾽ ὁ δυστυχὴς δαίμων ὁ σὸς τε κἂν ἐξαφείλετο, ὃς σ᾽ ὀδύτε μοι προὔπεμψεν ἀντὶ φιλτάτης μορφῆς σποδόν τε καὶ σκιαν ἀνωφελῆ. οἶμοι μοι.

ὦ δέμας οἰκτρόν. φεῦ φεῦ.

ὦ δεινότατας, οἴμοι μοι,

πεμφθεὶς κελεύθουσιν, φίλταθ᾽, ὡς μ᾽ ἀπώλεσας· ἀπώλεσας δήτ᾽, ὃ κασίγνητον κάρα. τοὐγὰρ σὺ δέξασθ᾽ ἐς τὸ σὸν τόδε στέγος, τὴν μηδὲν εἰς τὸ μηδὲν, ὡς σὺν σοὶ κάτω ναιό τὸ λοιπόν· καὶ γὰρ ἠμένι καὶ ἰδοὶ ἄνω, 

ΧΟΡΟΣ

θυντοῦ πέφυκας πατρός, Ἡλέκτρα, φρόνει, θυντὸς δ᾽ Ὀρέστης. ὥστε μὴ λιὰν στένε. πᾶσιν γὰρ ἠμένι τοῦτ᾽ ὀφείλεται παθεῖν. ὈΡΕΣΤΗΣ

φεῦ φεῦ. τί λέξω; ποῖ λόγων ἀμηχανῶν ἔλθω; κρατεῖν γὰρ οὐκέτι γλώσσης σθένω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τί δ᾽ ἔσχες ἀλγοῖς; πρὸς τί τοῦτ᾽ εἰπών κυρεῖς;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

Ἦ σοῦ τὸ κλειῖν ἐίδος 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’ ἄθλιως ἔχον.
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
οίμοι ταλαινὴς ἄρα τῆς ἰησδὲ συμφορᾶς.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὐ δὴ ποτ’, ὦ ξέν’, ἀμφ’ ἐμοὶ στένεις τάδε;
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ὅσσοις ἀτίμως καθέως ἐφθαρμένον.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὕτωι ποτ’ ἄλλην ἢ μὲ δυσφήμεις, ξένε.
ΟΤΕΣΤΗΣ
φεῦ τῆς ἀνύμφου δυσμόρου τε σῆς τροφῆς.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
τι δὴ ποτ’, ὦ ξέν’, ὦδ’ ἐπισκοπῶν στένεις;
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
όσοι ὅπερ ἡ δὴ τῶν ἐμῶν οὐδὲν κακῶν.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἐν τῷ διέγνως τοῦτο τῶν εἰρημένων;
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ὄρῶν σε πολλοῖς ἐμπρέπουσαν ἀλγεσίν.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
καὶ μὴν ὅρας γε παῦρα τῶν ἐμῶν κακῶν.
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
καὶ πῶς γένοιτʼ ἂν τῶν ἐμῶν ἔτ᾽ ἐχθίω βλέπειν;
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὀθούνεκ’ εἰμὶ τοῖς φονεύσι σύντροφος
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
τοῖς τοῦ; πόθεν τοῦτ’ ἐξεσήμημαις κακῶν;
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
τοῖς πατρὸς’ εἶτα τοῖσδε δουλεῖον βία.
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
τὶς γὰρ σ’ ἀνάγκη τῇδε προτρέπει βροτῶν;
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 καλεῖται, μητρὶ δὲ οὐδὲν ἐξισοῖ.
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
τί δρῶσα; πότερα χερσὶν ἡ λύμη βίου;
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
καὶ χερσὶ καὶ λύμαισι καὶ πᾶσιν κακοῖς.
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
οὐδ᾽ οὐπαρήξων οὐδ᾽ ὁ κωλύσων πάρα;
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὐ δὴθ᾽. ὃς ἦν γάρ μοι σὺ προὔθηκας σποδόν.
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ὁ δύσποτμ᾽, ὃς ὁρῶν σ᾽ ἐποικτίρω πάλαι.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
μόνος βροτῶν μοι ἔσθ᾽ ἐποικτίρας ποτέ.
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
μόνος γὰρ ἢκω τοῖς ἰσοίς ἀλγῶν κακοῖς.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὐ δὴ ποθ᾽ ἡμῖν ξυγγενὴς ἥκεις ποθέν;
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἐγὼ φράσαμι ἂν, εἰ τὸ τῶν δ᾽ εὔνους πάρα.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἀλλ᾽ ἐστίν εὐνουχία, ὡστε πρὸς πιστὰς ἐρείς.
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
μέθες τὸδ᾽ ἁγγος νῦν, ὡπως τὸ πᾶν μάθης.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
μὴ δὴτα πρὸς θεῶν τοῦτο μ᾽ ἐργάσῃ, ξένε.
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
πείθοι λέγοντι κοὐ ἀμαρτήσει ποτέ.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
μὴ, πρὸς γενείου, μὴ ἀξέλη τὰ φίλτατα.
ELECTRA

ELECTRA
My mother, not a mother save in name.

ORESTES
By blows or petty tyrannies or how?

ELECTRA
By blows and tyrannies of every kind.

ORESTES
And is there none to help or stay her hand?

ELECTRA
None; there was one, the man whose dust I hold.

ORESTES
Poor maid! my pity's stirred at sight of thee.

ELECTRA
Thou art the first who ever pitied me.

ORESTES
I am the first to feel a common woe.

ELECTRA
What, canst thou be some kinsman from afar?

ORESTES
If these are friends who hear us, I would answer.

ELECTRA
Yes, they are friends; thou needst not fear to speak

ORESTES
Give back this urn, and then I'll tell thee all.

ELECTRA
Ask not so hard a thing, good sir, I pray.

ORESTES
Do as I bid thee; thou shalt not repent it.

ELECTRA
O, I adjure thee, rob me not of that
The most I prize on earth.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΟΡΕΙΣΤΗΣ

οὐ φημὶ ἑάσειν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὁ τάλαντ ἐγὼ σέθεν,
'Ορέστα, τῆς σῆς εἰ στερήσομαι ταφῆς.

ΟΡΕΙΣΤΗΣ

εὐφημα φώνει—πρὸς δίκης γὰρ οὐ στένεις.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πῶς τὸν θανόντ᾽ ἀδελφὸν οὐ δίκη στένω;

ΟΡΕΙΣΤΗΣ

οὐ σοι προσήκει τήνδε προσφωνεῖν φάτιν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὔτως ἀτιμὸς εἰμὶ τοῦ τεθνηκότος;

ΟΡΕΙΣΤΗΣ

ἀτιμὸς οὐδενὸς σὺ· τούτο δ᾽ οὐχὶ σόν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

εἰπέρ γ᾽ 'Ορέστου σῶμα βαστάζω τόδε;

ΟΡΕΙΣΤΗΣ

ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ Ἰ'Ορέστου, πλὴν λόγῳ γ᾽ ἠσκήμενον.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ποῦ δ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἐκεῖνου τοῦ ταλαιπώρου τάφος;

ΟΡΕΙΣΤΗΣ

οὐκ ἔστιν τοῦ γὰρ ζῶντος οὐκ ἔστιν τάφος.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πῶς εἶπας, δ᾽ παί;

ΟΡΕΙΣΤΗΣ

ψευδός οὐδὲν ὃν λέγω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἡ ζῇ γὰρ ἀνήρ;

ΟΡΕΙΣΤΗΣ

εἰπέρ ἐμψυχός γ᾽ ἐγώ.
Ah! woe for thee, Orestes, woe is me,
If I am not to give thee burial.

Guard well thy lips; thou hast no right to mourn.

No right to mourn a brother who is dead!

To speak of him in this wise is not meet.

What, am I so dishonoured of the dead?

Of none dishonoured: this is not thy part.

Not if Orestes' ashes here I hold?

They are not his, though feigned to pass for his.

Where then is my unhappy brother's grave?

There is no grave; we bury not the quick.

What sayst thou, boy?

Nothing that is not true.

He lives?

As surely as I am alive.
ἩΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἡ γὰρ σὺ κεῖνος;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
tύμνες προσβλέψασά μου
σφραγίδα πατρός ἐκμαθ’ εἰ σαφῆ λέγω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ φίλτατον φῶς.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
φίλτατον, συμμαρτυρῶ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ φθέγμ’, ἀφίκοιν;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
μηκέτ’ ἄλλοθεν πῦθη,

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐξῶ σε χερσίν;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὡς τὰ λοίπ’ ἔχοις ἅει.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ φίλταται γυναῖκες, ὦ πολίτες,

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὁρῶμεν, ὦ παῖ, κἀπὶ συμφοράισι μοι
γεγηθὸς ἔρπει δάκρυον ὀμμάτων ἀπ’.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἰδὼ γοναί,

γοναί σωμάτων ἐμοὶ φιλτάτων,

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

πάρεσμεν. ἀλλὰ σιγ’ ἐχουσα πρόσμενε.
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

τί δ’ ἐστιν;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

σιγάν ἀμεινον, μή τις ἐνδοθεν κλύη.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ’ οὐ μὰ τὴν ἀδμήτον αἰὲν "Αρτεμιν,1
tόδε μὲν οὐ ποτ’ ἀξιώσω τρέσαι,
περισσοῦν ἄχθος ἐνδον
gυναικῶν ὃν αἰεὶ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

όρα γε μὲν δὴ κἂν γυναιξίν ὡς "Ἀρης
ἐνεστιν. εὖ δ’ ἔξοισθα πειραθεὶσά ποιν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὁτοτοτοῖ τοτοῖ,
ἀνέφελον ἐνέβαλες οὐ ποτε καταλύσιμον,
οὐδὲ ποτε λησόμενον ἄμετέρον
ὁδὴν ἐφι κακῶν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἐξοίδα, παϊ, ταῦτ’. ἀλλ’ ὅταν παρουσία
φράζῃ, τότ’ ἔργον τόνῳ μεμνῆσθαι χρεῶν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὁ πᾶς ἐμοὶ,
ὁ πᾶς ἂν πρέποι παρὼν ἐννέπειν
tάδε δίκα χρόνος;
μόλις γὰρ ἐσχον νῦν ἐλεύθερον στόμα.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ζύμμφημι κἀγὼ. τοιγαροῦν σφόζου τόδε.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τι δρόσα;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐ μή’ στι καιρὸς μὴ μακρὰν βούλου λέγειν.

1 ἀλλ’ οὐ τὰν τὰν "Αρτεμιν τὰν αἰὲν ἀδμήταν 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

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τίς οὖν ἂν ἄξιαν ἑν σοῦ πεφηνότος
μεταβάλοιτʼ ἂν ὧδε σιγὰν λόγων;
ἐπεὶ σε νῦν ἀφράστως
ἀέλπττως τ´ ἐσείδον.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τῶτ´ εἴδες, εὖτε θεοί μ´ ἐπώτρυναν μολείν

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἐφρασας ὑπερτέραν

τάς πάρος ἐῇ χάριτος, εἰ σε θεὸς ἐπόρισεν ἀμέτερα πρὸς μέλαθρα· δαιμόνιον αὐτὸ τίθημι ἑγώ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τὰ μὲν σ´ ὀκνῶ χαίρουσαν εἰργαθεῖν, τὰ δὲ

eπαξιώσας ὧδέ μοι φανῆν,

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τί μὴ ποήσω;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἢ κάρτα κἂν ἄλλοισι θυμοίμην ἰδών.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

η κάρτα κἂν ἄλλοισι θυμοίμην ἰδών.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ξυναινεῖς;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τί μὴν οὐ;

1 MSS. άτε, Jebb. corr. MSS. ἀτρυναν, Reiske corr.

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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?
ὦ φίλαι, ἔκλυν ἃν ἐγὼ οὐδ᾽ ἂν ἦλπισ᾽ αὐδάν,
οὐδ᾽ ἂν ἐσχον ὅρμαν ¹
ἀναυδῶν οὐδὲ σὺν βοᾷ κλύουσα,
τάλαινα. νῦν δ᾿ ἔχω σε: προυφάνης δὲ
φιλτάταν ἐχαν προσοψὶν,
ἀς ἐγὼ οὐδ᾽ ἂν ἐν κακοὶς λαθοίμαν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
τὰ μὲν περισσεύοντα τῶν λόγων ἄφες,
καὶ μήτε μήτηρ ὡς κακὴ δίδασκε με,
μήθ᾽ ὡς πατρῶν κτῆσιν Ἀγισθος δόμων
ἀντλεί, τὰ δ᾿ ἐκχεῖ, τὰ δὲ διασπείρει μάτην:
χρόνου γὰρ ἂν σοι καιρὸν ἐξείρηγοι λόγος.
ἀ δ᾿ ἄρμοσει μοι τῷ παρόντι νῦν χρόνῳ
σήμαιν, ὅπως ἐπανεντεῖ ἑκερυμμένοι
γελώντας ἐξθροῦσα παύσωμεν τῇ νῦν ὀδῷ.
ούτω δ᾿ ὁπως μήτηρ σε μὴ πιγνώσται
φαιδροὶ προσωπῷ νῦν ἐπελθόντοι δόμους:
ἀλλ′ ὅς ἐπ᾽ ἀτη τῇ μάτην λελειμένη
στέναζ᾽: ὅταν γὰρ ἐυτυχήσῳ, τότε
χαίρειν παρέσται καὶ γελᾶν ἐλευθέρως.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἀλλ᾽ ὃ κασίγνηθ᾽, ὦδ᾽ ὅπως καὶ σοί φίλου
καὶ τούμον ἐσται τῇδ᾽ ἐπεὶ τὰς ηδονὰς
πρὸς σοῦ λαβοῦσα κοῦκ ἐμὰς ἐκτησάμην,
κοῦδ᾽ ἂν σε λυπησάησα δεξαίμην βραχὺ
αὐτὴ μὲγ᾽ εὐρεῖν κέρδος: οὐ γὰρ ἂν καλῶς
ὑπηρετοῖν τῇ παρόντι δαίμονι.
ἀλλ᾽ ἂσθα μὲν ταυτὶνδε, πῶς γὰρ οὐ; κλύων
ὀθούνεκ' Ἀγισθος μὲν οὐ κατὰ στέγας,
μήτηρ δὲ ἐν οἴκοις: ἢν σὺ μὴ δείσῃς ποθ’ ὡς

¹ Arndt adds οὐδ᾽ ἂν. Blomfield reads ὅρμαν for ὅργαν of MSS.

1290

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
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μήτηρ δὲ ἐν οἴκοις: ἢν σὺ μὴ δείσῃς ποθ’ ὡς
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
γέλωτι τούμον φαιδρὸν ὄψεται κάρα.
μῖσός τε γὰρ παλαιὸν ἐντέτηκε μοι,
κατεί σέ ἐσείδουν, οὐ ποτ' ἐκλήσιον χαρὰ
dakrũrrapouςα: πῶς γὰρ ἄν λῃζαιμ' ἐγώ,
ήτις μιὰ σε τῇδ' ὀδό θανόντα τε
καὶ ξῶντ' ἐσείδουν; εἰργασάι δὲ μ' ἀσκοπαν'
δ' εἰ πατήρ μοι ἄν ἄν ἢκοιτο, μηκέτι ἄν
tέρας νομίζεσαι αὐτό, πιστεύειν δ' ὀράν.
ὅτ' οὖν τοιαύτην ἦμων ἐξήκεις ὁδόν,
ἀρχ' αὐτῶς ὡς σοι θυμῶς· ὡς ἑκὼ μόνῃ
οὐκ ἂν δυοῖν ἡμαρτον· ἢ γὰρ ἄν καλῶς
ἐσως' ἐμαντήν ἢ καλῶς ἀπωλόμην.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
σιγᾶν ἐπῆνεσ' ὡς ἐπ' ἐξόδῳ κλύω
tῶν ἐνδοθεῶν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
εἰσιτ', ὡ ξένοι,
ἄλλως τε καὶ φέροντες οἳ ἂν οὔτε τις
dόμων ἀπώσαιτ' οὔτ' ᾗ ἂν ἡσθεὶη λαβῶν.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ
ὁ πλεῖστα μῶροι καὶ φρενῶν τητῷμενοι,
póterα παρ' οὖν τοῦ βίου κήδεσθ' ἢτι
ἡ νοῦς ἐνεστιν οὕτως ἢμῶν ἔγγενῆς,
ὅτ' οὗ παρ' αὐτῶς, ἀλλ' ἡ ἐν αὐτοῖς κακοῖς
τοῖς μεγίστοις οὕτε οὐ γραφώσκετε;
ἀλλ' ἐν σταθμοῖσι τοῖς δ' ἐκνοῦν ἢμῶν
tὸ δρόμον εὐλάβειαν τῶν δρώμων τῶν ἀν
cαι νὰ ἄπαλλαξθεῖν τῶν μακρῶν λόγον
cαι τής ἀπλήστου τῆς δ' ὀράν χαρὰ βοῆς
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

εἰςω παρέλθεθ', ὡς τὸ μὲν μέλλει τακάντος ἐστ', ἂπηλλάχθαι δ' ἀκρή.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

πῶς οὖν ἔχει τάντεύθεν εἰσιόντι μοι;

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

καλῶς: ὑπάρχει γάρ σε μὴ γνώναι τινα.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἡγγείλας, ὡς ἐοικεν, ὡς τεθυηκότα.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

εἰς τῶν ἐν "Αίδου μάνθαν' ἐνθάδ' ὡν ἀνήρ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

χαίρουσιν οὖν τούτοισιν; ἢ τίνες λόγοι;

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

τελομένων εἴποιμ' ὡς δὲ νῦν ἔχει, καλῶς τὰ κεῖνων πάντα, καὶ τὰ μὴ καλῶς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τίς οὗτός ἐστ', ἀδελφέ; πρὸς θεῶν φράσον.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐχὶ ξυνίης;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐδέ γ' ἐς θυμόν φέρω.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐκ οἷσθ' ὅτι μ' ἑδωκας εἰς χέρας ποτε;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ποίῳ; τί φωνεῖς;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὗ τὸ Φωκέων πέδον ὑπεξεπεμφθην σῇ προμηθία χεροῖν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἡ κεῖνος οὗτος, ὦν ποτ' ἐκ πολλῶν ἐγὼ μόνον προσήφουν πιστὸν ἐν πατρὸς φόνῳ;
'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?
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὅδ᾽ ἐστί: μή μ᾽ ἔλεγχε πλείστως λόγοις.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὁ φίλτατον φῶς, ὁ μόνος σωτήρ δόμων Ἄγαμέμνονος, πῶς ἦλθες; ἦ σὺ κεῖνος εἶ, ὃς τόνδε κἂν ἐσωσάς ἐκ πολλῶν πόνων; ὃ φίλταται μὲν χεῖρες, ἦδιστον δ᾽ ἔχων ποδῶν ὑπηρέτημα, πῶς οὐτό πάλαι ξυνών μ᾽ ἐληθεῖς οὐδ᾽ ἐφαίνεσ, ἀλλά με λόγους ἀπώλλυς, ἐργ᾽ ἔχων ἦδιστ᾽ ἐμοί; χαῖρ᾽, ὁ πάτερ. πατέρα γὰρ εἰσορᾶν δοκῶ. χαῖρ᾽. ἴσθι δ᾽ ὡς μάλιστά σ᾽ ἀνθρώπων ἐγὼ ἥχθηρα καὶ κάθησο᾽ εὖν ἡμέρα μιᾷ.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

ἀρκεῖν δοκεῖ μοι. τοὺς γὰρ ἐν μέσῳ λόγους πολλαὶ κυκλοῦνται νύκτες ἡμέραι τ᾽ ἴσαι, αἱ ταῦτα σοι δείξουσι, Ἡλέκτρα, σαφῆ. σφῶν δ᾽ ἐννέπω γε τοῖν παρεστῶτοι ὅτι νῦν καιρὸς ἔρδειω. νῦν Κλυταιμνήστρα μόνη, νῦν οὔτις ἀνδρῶν ἐνδοῦν ἐἰ δ᾽ ἐφέξετον, φροντίζεθ᾽ ὡς τούτοις τε καὶ σοφωτέροις ἀλλοισι τούτων πλείστην μαχούμενοι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐκ ἂν μακρῶν ἐθ᾽ ἡμῖν σοὺ ἐν λόγοις, Πυλάδη, τόδ᾽ εἴη τούργον, ἀλλ᾽ ὅσον τάχος χωρεῖν ἐσώ, πατρὸς προσκύνασθ᾽ ἐθῆ θεῶν, ὅσοιπερ πρόπυλα ναίουσιν τάδε.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀναξ Ἀπολλοῦ, ἴλεως αὐτοῖν κλύε
ORESTES
'Tis he; let that suffice thee; ask no more.

ELECTRA
O happy day! O sole deliverer
Of Agamemnon's house, how cam'st thou hither?
Art thou indeed our saviour who redeemed
From endless woes my brother and myself?
O hands beloved, O messenger whose feet
Were bringers of glad tidings, how so long
Couldst thou be with me and remain unknown,
Stay me with feignèd fables and conceal
The truth that gave me life? Hail, father, hail!
For 'tis a father whom I seem to see.
Verily no man in the self-same day
Was hated so and so much loved as thou.

AGED SERVANT
Enough methinks; the tale 'twixt then and now—
Many revolving nights and days as many
Shall serve, Electra, to unfold it all.

(To ORESTES and PYLADES)
Why stand ye here! 'tis time for you to act,
Now Clytemnestra is alone; no man
Is now within; but, if ye stay your hand,
Not only with her house-carls will ye fight
But with a troop more numerous and more skilled.

ORESTES
Our business, Pylades, would seem to crave
No longer parley; let us instantly
Enter, but ere we enter first adore
The gods who keep the threshold of the house.

[ORESTES and PYLADES enter the palace.

ELECTRA
O King Apollo! lend a gracious ear
ἘΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ιν α Ν 7 Ὡ \
ἐμοῦ TE πρὸς τούτοις, ἥ TE πολλὰ δὴ
ap ὧν ἔχοιμι λιπαρεῖ προύστην χερί.

νῦν δ', ὦ Δύκει' Ἀπόλλον, εξ οίων ἓχω
αὐτῶ, προπίτων, λίσσομαι, γενοῦ πρόφρων
ημῖν ἄρωγὸς τῶν τῶν βουλευμάτων,
καὶ δείξον ἀνθρώποις τάπιτίμαι
τῆς δυσσεβείας οία δωροῦνται θεοὶ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

иде' ὅποι προνέμεται στρ.
tὸ δυσέριστον αἶμα φυσῶν Ἁρης.
βεβᾶσιν ἄρτι δωμάτων ὑπόστεγοι
μετάδρομοι κακῶν πανουργημάτων ἄφυκτοι κύνες,
ocrats οὐ μακρὰν ἑτ' ἄμμενει
tούμῳν φρενῶν άνείρον αἰωρούμενον.

παράγεται γὰρ ἐνέρων ἀντ.
dολιότους ἄρωγὸς εὗσσω στέγας,
ἀρχαιόπλουτα πατρὸς εἰς ἑδώλια,
νεακόννητων αἵμα χειροὶ ἔχων: Ὡ Μαίας δὲ παῖς
Ἐρμῆς σφ' ἀγεὶ δόλων σκότῳ
κρύψας πρὸς αὐτὸ τέρμα κοῦκετ' ἄμμενει.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὅ φίλταται γυναῖκες, ἄνδρες αὐτίκα στρ.
tελούσι τούργον ἀλλὰ σίγα πρόσμενε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ πώς δή; τί νῦν πράσσουσιν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἡ μὲν ἐς τάφον 1400
λέβητα κοσμεῖ, τῶ δ' ἐφέστατον πέλας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

σὺ δ' ἐκτὸς ἦξας 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.
E'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
E'en now she decks
The urn for burial and the pair stand by.

CHORUS
Why spedst thou forth?
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

Προφορήσουσ’ ὅπως

Δειγμαθεὶς ἡμᾶς μὴ λάθη μολὼν ἔσω.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

αἱ ἢ. ἤδε στέγαι

φίλων ἔρημοι, τῶν δ’ ἀπολλύστων πλέαι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

βοᾷ τις ἐνδον. οὐκ ἄκούετ’, ὦ φίλαι;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἤκουσ’ ἀνήκουστα δύστανος, ὦστε φρίξαι.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

οἴμοι τάλαιν’. Δειγμαθεῖ, ποῦ ποτ’ ὡν κυρεῖς;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἰδοὺ μάλ’ αὖ θροεῖ τίς.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ἄτοκος; οὐκ ἀκούετ’ ὦ φίλαι;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἦκουσ’. ἰὼ στέγαι φίλων ἔρημοι, τῶν δ’ ἀπολλύστων πλέαι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

βοᾷ τις ἐνδον. οὐκ ἄκούετ’, ὦ φίλαι;

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οἴμοι τάλαιν’. Δειγμαθεῖ, ποῦ ποτ’ ὡν κυρεῖς;

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ἦκουσ’. ἰὼ στέγαι φίλων ἔρημοι, τῶν δ’ ἀπολλύστων πλέαι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

βοᾷ τις ἐνδον. οὐκ ἄκούετ’, ὦ φίλαι;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἤκουσ’. ἰὼ στέγαι φίλων ἔρημοι, τῶν δ’ ἀπολλύστων πλέαι.
ELECTRA

To keep a watch for fear
Aegisthus should forestall us unawares.

CLYTEMNESTRA (within)
Woe! woe! O woeful house,
Of friends forsaken, full of murderers!

ELECTRA
Listen! a cry within—hear ye not, friends?

CHORUS
I heard and shuddered—oh, an awesome cry.

CLYTEMNESTRA
Ah woe is me! Aegisthus, where art thou?

ELECTRA
Hark; once again a wail.

CLYTEMNESTRA
O son, my son,
Have pity on thy mother!

ELECTRA
Thou hadst none
On him or on the father that begat him.

CHORUS
Unhappy realm and house,
The curse that dogged thee day by day
Is dying, dying fast.

CLYTEMNESTRA
I am stricken, ah!

ELECTRA
Strike, if thou canst, again.

CLYTEMNESTRA
Woe, woe is me once more!
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
eί γὰρ Αἰγίσθος θ' όμοι.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
tελοῦσ' ἀραί ζωσίν οἴ γάς ύπαι κείμενοι.
pαλίρρυτον γὰρ αἱμ' ύπεξαιροῦσι τῶν
κτανόντων οί πάλαι θανόντες.
καὶ μὴν πάρεισιν οἶδε' φοινία δὲ χεῖρ
στάξει θυηλῆς 'Αρεος, οὐδ' ἔχω ψέγειν.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
Ορέστα, πῶς κυρεῖτε;
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
τάν δόμοισι μὲν καλῶς, 'Απόλλων εἰ καλῶς ἐθέσπισεν.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
tέθνηκεν ἡ τάλαινα;
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
μηκέτ' ἐκφοβοῦ
μητρῷον ὡς σε λῆμ' ἀτιμάσει ποτὲ.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
παύσασθε: λεύσσω γὰρ Αἴγισθον ἐκ προδήλου.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὁ παῖδες, οὐκ ἄψορρον;
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
εἰσορᾶτε ποῦ τὸν ἄνδρ';
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἐφ' ἡμῖν οὕτος ἐκ προαστίου
χωρεῖ γεγηθῶς
ΧΟΡΟΣ
βάτε κατ' ἀντιθύρων ὅσον τάχιστα,
νῦν, τὰ πρὶν εὶθ 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.
Θάρσει: τελοῦμεν.

ἩΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἡ νοεῖς ἔπειγέ νυν.

ΟΡΕΣ'TΗΣ

καὶ δὴ βέβηκα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

d' ἠτός ἂν παυρά γ' ὡς ἥπιως ἐννέπειν

πρὸς ἄνδρα τόνδε συμφέροι, λαθραῖον ὡς

ὀρούσῃ πρὸς δίκας ἀγώνα.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

τίς οἴδειν ύμῶν ποὺ ποθ' οἱ Φωκῆς ξένοι,

οὕς φασ' Ὁρέστην ἥμιν ἀγγεῖλαι βίον

λελοιπόθ' ἐπικιούσιν ἐν ναυαγίοις;

σέ τοι, σὲ κρίνω, ναὶ σὲ, τὴν ἐν τῷ πάρος

χρόνῳ θρασείαν· ὡς μάλιστα σοὶ μέλειν

οἶμαι, μάλιστα δ' ἂν κατειδυῖαι φράσαι.

ἩΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἔξοιδα· πῶς γὰρ ὡς ὡξί; συμφορᾶς γὰρ ἂν

ἔξωθεν εἰην τῶν ἐμῶν τῆς φιλτάτης.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ποὺ δῆτ' ἂν εἶεν οἱ ξένοι; δίδασκέ με.

ἩΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐνδοῦ· φίλης γὰρ προξένου κατήνυσαν.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ἡ καὶ θανόντ' ἠγγεῖλαν ὡς ἐτητύμως;

ἩΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐκ; ἀλλὰ καπ' ἐδείξαν, οὐ λόγῳ μόνον.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

πάρεστ' ἄρ' ἥμιν ὡστε κάμψαν ἑαυτῷ.
ELECTRA

ORESTES

Fear not, we shall.

ELECTRA

Then speed thee on thy way.

ORESTES

See, I am gone.

ELECTRA

Leave what is here to me.

[Exeunt Orestes and Pylaides; Aegisthus approaches.

CHORUS

'Twere not amiss to breathe some soft words in his ear, That he may blindly rush into the lists of doom.

AEGISTHUS

Could any of you tell me where to find The Phocian strangers who, I hear, have brought News of Orestes midst the chariots wrecked? Thee, thee I question, thee, in former days So froward: it concerns thee most, methinks, And thou, as best informed, canst tell me best.

ELECTRA

I know for sure, else were I unconcerned In what has happened to my nearest kin.

AEGISTHUS

Where then are these newcomers? Tell me straight.

ELECTRA

Within; they've won their kindly hostess' heart.

AEGISTHUS

Did they in very truth report his death?

ELECTRA

They did; and more, they showed us the dead man.

AEGISTHUS

May I too view the body to make sure?
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πάρεστι δήτα, καὶ μᾶλ' ἀξιλός θέα.
ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ
η πολλὰ χαίρειν μ᾽ εἶπας οὐκ εἰωθότως.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
χαίροις ἂν, εἶ σοι χαρτὰ τυγχάνοι τάδε.
ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ
σιγὰν ἄνωγα κανάδεικνύναι πύλας
πᾶσιν Μυκηναίοισιν ἂργείοις θ' ὄρᾱν,
ὡς εἶ τις αὐτῶν ἐλπίσιν κεναῖς πάρος
ἐξήρετ' ἀνδρὸς τοῦδε, νῦν ὄρῶν νεκρῶν
στόμια δέχηται τὰμὰ μηδὲ πρὸς βίαιν
ἐμοῦ κολαστοῦ προστυχῶν φύση φρένας.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
καὶ δὴ τελεῖται τὰπ' ἐμοῦ· τῷ γὰρ χρόνῳ
νῦν ἔσχον, ὡστε συμφέρειν τοῖς κρείσσοσιν.
ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ
ὦ Ζεῦ, δέδορκα φάσμ᾽ ἄνευ φθόνου μὲν οὐ
πεπτωκός· εἰ δ' ἐπέστη νέμεσις, οὐ λέγω.
χαλὰτε πὰν κάλυμμ' ἀπ' ὀφθαλμῶν, ὅ ὅπως
τὸ συγγενές τοι κἀπ' ἐμοῦ θρήνων τύχῃ.
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
αὐτὸς σὺ βάσταξ'; οὐκ ἐμὸν τὸδ', ἀλλὰ σὸν,
tὸ ταῦθ' ὄρᾶν τε καὶ προσηγορεῖν φίλως.
ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ
ἀλλ' εὖ παραινεῖς κἀπιπείσομαι· σὺ δὲ,
eῖ που κατ' οἶκόν μοι Κλυταιμνήστρα, κάλει.
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
αὕτη πέλας σού· μηκέτ' ἄλλοσε σκόπει.
ELECTRA

ELECTRA
Thou mayst, but 'tis a gruesome spectacle.

AEGISTHUS
Thou givest me much joy against thy wont.

ELECTRA
I wish thee joy, if here is food for joy.

AEGISTHUS
Silence! attend! throw open wide the gate,
For all Mycenae, Argos all, to see.
If any heretofore was puffed with hopes
Of this pretender, now he sees him dead,
Let him in time accept my yoke, nor wait
Wisdom by chastisement to learn too late.

ELECTRA
My lesson's learnt already; time hath taught me
The wisdom of consenting with the strong.
(The scene opens showing a shrouded corpse with ORESTES
and PYLADES beside it.)

AEGISTHUS
O Zeus, I look upon this form laid low
By jealousy of Heaven, but if my words
Seem to thee overbold, be they unsaid.
Take from the face the face-cloth; I, as kin,
I too would pay my tribute of lament.

ORESTES
Lift it thyself; 'tis not for me but thee
To see and kindly greet what lieth here.

AEGISTHUS
Well said, so will I. (To ELECTRA.) If she be within
Go call me Clytemnestra, I would see her—

ORESTES
She is beside thee; look not otherwhere.
(AEGISTHUS lifts the face-cloth.)
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ
οἴμοι, τί λέυσσω;

ОРЕΣΤΗΣ
τίνα φοβεῖ; τίν’ ἄγκοεῖς;

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ
τίνων ποτ’ ἀνδρῶν ἐν μέσοις ἀρκυστάτοις
πέπτωχ’ ὁ τλήμων;

ОРЕΣΤΗΣ
οὗ γὰρ αἰσθάνει πάλαι
ξοντας ἰθανοῦσιν οὖνεκ’ ἀντανδᾶς ἰσα;

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ
οἴμοι, ἔννημα τοῦτος: οὗ γὰρ ἐσθ’ ὅπως
ξοι ὧν Ὀρέστης ἀσθ’ ὁ προσφωνῶν ἐμέ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
καὶ μάντις ὄν ἁριστος ἐσφάλλον πάλαι.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ
όλωλα δὴ δεῖλαιος. ἀλλὰ μοι πάρες
κἂν σμικρὸν εἰπεῖν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
μὴ πέρα λέγειν ἐὰν
πρὸς θεῶν, ἀδελφέ, μηδὲ μηκύνειν λόγους.
τί γὰρ βροτῶν ἐὰν σὺν κακοῖς μεμιγμένων
θυγκοειν ὁ μέλλων οὐ χρόνον κέρδος φέροι;
ἀλλ’ ὡς τάχιστα κτεῖνε καὶ κτανὼν πρόθεσιν,
ἄν τόδ’ ἐκότις ἐστι πτυχαναίνει,
ἀποπτοῦ ἰμων’ ὡς ἐμοὶ τὸδ’ ἐὰν κακῶν
μόνον γένοιτο τῶν πάλαι λυτήριον.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
χωροῖς ἂν εἴσω σὺν τάχει: λόγων γὰρ ὅν
νῦν ἐστὶν ἄγον, ἀλλ’ σῆς ψυχῆς πέρι.

1 ζῶν τοῖς MSS., Tyrwhitt corr.
ELECTRA

AEGISTHUS

O horror!

ORESTES

Why dost start? is the face strange?

AEGISTHUS

Who spread the net wherein, O woe is me,
I lie enmeshed?

ORESTES

Hast thou not learnt ere this
The dead of whom thou spakest are alive?

AEGISTHUS

Alas! I read thy riddle; 'tis none else
Than thou, Orestes, whom I now address.

ORESTES

A seer so wise, and yet befooled so long!

AEGISTHUS

O I am spoiled, undone! yet suffer me,
One little word.

ELECTRA

Brother, in heaven's name
Let him not speak a word or plead his cause.
When a poor wretch is in the toils of fate
What can a brief reprieve avail him? No,
Slay him outright and having slain him give
His corse to such grave-makers as is meet,
Far from our sight; for me no otherwise
Can he wipe out the memory of past wrongs.

ORESTES (to AEGISTHUS)

Quick, get thee in; the issue lies not now
In words; the case is tried and thou must die,
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

τί δ’ ἐς δομους ἁγεις με; πῶς, τότ’ εἰ καλὸν τούργον, σκότον δεὶ κοῦ πρόχειρος εἰ κτανεῖν;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

μὴ τάσσεις· χώρει δ’ ἐνθαπερ κατέκτανες πατέρα τὸν ἀμόν, ώς ἂν ἐν ταύτῳ θάνης,

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ἡ πᾶς’ ἀνάγκη τήνδε τὴν στέγην ἰδεῖν τά τ’ ὄντα καὶ μέλλοντα Πελοπιδῶν κακά;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τὰ γοῦν σ’ ἐγὼ σοι μάντις εἰμὶ τῶν’ ἀκρος.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ἀλλ’ οὗ πατρῶν τὴν τέχνην ἐκόμπασας.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

πόλλ’ ἀντιφωνεῖς, ἡ δ’ ὁδὸς βραδύνεται. ἀλλ’ ἐρφ’.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

υφηγοῦ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

σοὶ βαδιστέον πάρος.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ἡ μὴ φύγω σε;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

μὴ μὲν οὖν καθ’ ἡδονὴν θάνης’ φυλάξαι δεὶ με τοῦτο σοι πικρόν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ σπέρμ’ Ἀτρέως, ὡς πολλὰ παθὼν δι’ ἐλευθερίας μόλις ἔξηλθες τῇ νῦν ὅρμῃ τελεωθέν.
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.
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 Euboea, 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 Euboea 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
ΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΣ
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.
Iole, daughter of Eurytus, captive wife to Heracles
Captive Women.
Chorus of Trachinian Maidens.

Scene: Before the house of Heracles at Trachis.
ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΠΑ

Δόγος μέν ἔστ᾽ ἀρχαῖος ἀνθρώπων φανεῖς, ὡς οὐκ ἂν αἰῶν᾽ ἐκμάθοις βροτῶν, πρὶν ἂν θάνη τις, οὔτ᾽ εἰ χρηστὸς οὔτ᾽ εἰ τῷ κακός· ἐγὼ δὲ τὸν ἐμόν, καὶ πρὶν εἰς Ἀιδοῦ μολεῖν, ἔξοιδ᾽ ἐχούσα δυστυχῆ τε καὶ βαρὺν, ἢτις πατρὸς μὲν ἐν δόμοισιν Οἰνέως ναίουσ᾽ ἐτ᾽ ἐν Πλευρῶνι νυμφείων ὄκνον ἀλγιστὸν ἐσχον, εἰ τὶς Αἰτωλίς γυνη.

μνηστήρ γὰρ ἂν μοι ποταμός, ᾿Αχελώον λέγω, ὅς μ᾽ ἐν τρισὶν μορφαῖσιν ἐξῆτει πατρός, φοιτῶν ἑναργῆς ταῦρος, ἄλλοτ᾽ ἀιόλος δράκων ἐλκτός, ἄλλοτ᾽ ἀνδρείῳ κύτε βούπτρωρος· ἐκ δὲ δασκίου γενειάδος κρουνὸι διερραίνοντο κρηναίου ποτοῦ. τοιοῦδ᾽ ἐγὼ μνηστήρα προσδεδεγμένη δύστηνος αἰεὶ κατθανεῖν ἐπηυχόμην, πρὶν τῆς καίτης ἐμπελασθῆναι ποτε. χρόνῳ δ᾽ ἐν ὑστέρῳ μέν, ἀσμένῃ δὲ μοι, ὁ κλεινὸς ζήλε Ζηνὸς ᾿Αλκμήνης τε παῖς· ὅς εἰς ἀγῶνα τῷ ἕμπεπεσείμων μάχης ἐκλύεται με· καὶ τρόπον μὲν ἂν πόνων οὐκ ἂν διείποιμ᾽ οὐ γὰρ οἶδ᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ὅστις ἦν

1 ἐτ᾽ added by Erfurdt.
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 Alemena, good at need,
Grappled the monster and delivered me.
The circumstance and manner of that fight
I cannot tell, not knowing; whoso watched it,
Θακῶν ἀταρβῆς τῆς θέας, όδ᾽ ἄν λέγοι' ἐγὼ γὰρ ἡμῶν ἑκτεπληγμένη φόβῳ μή μοι τὸ κάλλος ἄλγος ἐξεύροι ποτὲ. τέλος δ᾽ ἐδήκε Ζεὺς ἀγώνιος καλῶς, εἰ δὴ καλῶς. λέχος γὰρ 'Ηρακλεῖ κριτῶν ξυστᾶσ' ἀεί τιν' ἐκ φόβου φόβου τρέφω, κείνου προκηραίνουσα: νῦξ γὰρ εἰσάγει καὶ νῦξ ἀπωθεὶ διαδεδεγμένη πόνον. καφύσαμεν δὴ παῖδας, οὓς κείνος ποτε, γῆτης ὅπως ἄροουν ἐκτοπον λαβόν, σπείρων μόνον προσείδε καξαμῶν ἀπαξ. τοιοῦτος αἰώνει εἰς δόμους τε κὰκ δόμουν αἰεὶ τὸν ἀνδρὴ ἐπεμπε λατρεύνοντά τῳ. νῦν δ᾽ ἡμῖκ ἀθλῶν τῶν ὑπερτελῆς ἐφυ, ἐνταῦθα δὴ μάλιστα ταρβήσασ' ἐχω. εξ ous γὰρ ἐκτα κείνων Ἰφίτου βιαν, ἡμεῖς μὲν ἐν Ἀραχίνι τῇδ᾽ ἀναστάτων ξένων παρ' ἀνδρὶ ναίομεν, κείνος δ᾽ ὅπου βέβηκεν οὐδεὶς οὐδείς. πλὴν ἐμοὶ πικρὰς ὑδάνασ αὐτοῦ προσβαλὼν ἀποίχεται. σχεδὸν δ᾽ ἐπίσταμαι τι πῆμ' ἔχοντά νυν χρόνων γὰρ οὐδ᾽ ἔμοι βαίων, ἀλλ' ἡμῖκ δέκα μήρας πρὸς ἄλλους πέντ᾽ ἀκηρυκτος μένει. καστὰν τὸ δεινὸν πῆμα: τοιαύτην ἐμοὶ δέλτου λυπῶν ἐστειχεν, τὴν ἐγὼ θαμὰ θεοῖς ἀρῶμαι πημοῦνς ἂτερ λαβεῖν.

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

δέσποινα Δηάνειρα, πολλὰ μὲν σ᾽ ἐγὼ κατεῖδον ἤδη παιδάκρυτ᾽ ὀδύρματα τὴν 'Ηράκλειου ἐξοδον γομένην, νῦν δ', εἰ δίκαιον τοὺς ἐλευθέρους φρενοῦν.
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
TPAXINIAI

γνώμαις δούλαις, κύρε χρή φράσαι τό σών· πῶς παισί μὲν τοσούδε πληθύνεις, ἀτὰρ ἀνδρὸς κατὰ ξήτησιν οὐ πέμπεις τινά, μάλιστα δὲ ὅπερ εἴκοσ "Τλλον, εἰ πατρὸς νέμου τιν' ὅραν τοῦ καλῶς πράσσειν δοκεῖν; ἐγγὺς δ' ὃδ' αὐτὸς ἀρτίπους θρώσκει δόμους, ὥστ' εἰ τὶ σοι πρὸς καιρὸν ἐννέπειν δοκῶ, πάρεστι χρῆσθαι τάνυδρι τοῖς τ' ἐμοῖς λόγοις. 60

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ὦ τέκνον, ὦ παῖ, κἀξ ἀγεννήτων ἄρα μῦθοι καλῶς πίπτουσιν' ήδε γὰρ γυνὴ δούλη μέν, εἰρήκεν δ' ἐλέυθερον λόγον.

ΤΛΔΟΣ

ποίον; δίδαξον, μήτερ, εἰ διδακτά μοι.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

σὲ πατρὸς οὕτω δαρὸν ἐξεκομένου τὸ μὴ πυθέσθαι ποῦ ἀλὸν τοῦ καλῶς πράσσειν, αἰσχύνη φέρειν.

ΤΛΔΟΣ

ἀλλ' οἶδα, μῦθοις εἰ τι πιστεύειν χρεών.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

καὶ ποῦ κλύεις νῦν, τέκνον, ἱδρύσθαι χθονός;

ΤΛΔΟΣ

τὸν μὲν παρελθὸν ἄροτόν ἐν μήκει χρόνου Λυδῇ γυναικί φασὶ νῦν λάτριν πονεῖν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

πᾶν τούνυν, εἰ καὶ τοῦτ' ἐτλη, κλύοι τὸς ἄν.

ΤΛΔΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἐξαφεῖται τοῦτ' ἀροτον εἰ μήκει κρόνου Λυδῇ γυναικί φασὶ νῦν λάτριν πονεῖν. 70

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ποῦ δὴτα νῦν ζών ἢ θανὼν ἀγγέλλεται;
Would lend her counsel to a free-born dame. Why, since thou art so rich in sons, not send One on the quest, and Hyllus most of all? Who could assist thee better, if he cares To ascertain the safety of his sire? And lo, I see him in the nick of time Approaching hotfoot. Wherefore, if I seem To speak in season, use my rede and him.

Enter HYLLUS.

DEIANIRA
My child, my boy! wise words in sooth may fall From humble lips. This woman is a slave, But her words breathe the spirit of the free.

HYLLUS
What, mother? tell me, if it may be told.

DEIANIRA
She said that never to have gone in search Of thy long absent father brings thee shame.

HYLLUS
Nay, but if rumour’s true, I know of him.

DEIANIRA
Where hast thou heard, my son, that he abides?

HYLLUS
Last season, so they say, the whole year through He served as bondsman to a Lydian dame.

DEIANIRA
Naught would surprise me if he sank so low.

HYLLUS
Well, that disgrace is over, so I hear.

DEIANIRA
Where is he now reported, living or dead?
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΤΑΛΟΣ
Εὐβοῖδα χώραν φασίν, Εὐρύτου πόλιν,
ἐπιστρατεύειν αὐτὸν ἢ μέλλειν ἔτι.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
ἀρ’ οἴσθα δῆτ’, ὃ τέκνον, ὡς ἐλευπέ μοι
μαντεῖα πιστὰ τῆς χώρας πέρι;

ΤΑΛΟΣ
τὰ ποία, μῆτερ; τὸν λόγον γὰρ ἀγνοῶ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
ὦς ἡ τελευτὴν τοῦ βίου μέλλει τελεῖν
ἡ τοῦτον ἀρας ἄθλον εἰς τὸ γ’ ύστερον
τῶν λοιπῶν ἡδὴ βίοτον εὐαίων’ ἐχειν.  
ἐν οὗν ῥοπῇ τοιᾶδε κειμένῳ, τέκνον,
οὔκ εἰ ξυνέρξουν, ἢνυκ’ ἡ σεσώσμεθα
[ἡ πίπτομεν σοῦ πατρὸς ἐξολολότος]
κείνου βίον σώσαντος, ἢ οἰχόμεσθ’ ἁμα;

ΤΑΛΟΣ
ἀλλ’ εἰμι, μῆτερ: εἰ δὲ θεσφάτων ἐγὼ
βάξιν κατῆδη τῶνδε, κἂν πάλαι παρῆ
νῦν δ’ ὁ ξυνήθης πότμος ὑμών ἐκά
πατρὸς ἡμᾶς προταρβείν οὐδὲ δειμαίνειν ἁγαν.
νῦν δ’ ὡς ξυνύμη, οὐδεν ἐλλείψω τὸ μή ὑ
πᾶσαν πυθέσθαι τῶνδ’ ἀλήθειαν πέρι.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
χώρει νυν, ὦ παῖ: καὶ γὰρ ἐστὲρῳ τὸ γ’ εὗ
πράσσειν, ἐπεὶ πῦθοτο, κέρδος ἐμπολά.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ὅν αἴόλα νῦν ἐναργομένα
τίκτει κατευνάζει τε, ἐπογιζόμενον
"Αλιον "Αλιον αἰτῶ
τοῦτο καρύζαι, τὸν Ἀλκμήνας πόθι μοι πόθι παῖς

1 εἰς τὸν ύστερον MSS., Reiske corr,
2 εἰ 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 chôrus.

CHORUS
Child of star-bespangled Night,
Born as she dies,
Laid to rest in a blaze of light,
Tell me, Sun-god, O tell me, where
Tarries the child of Alemena fair;

Exit hyllus.
ναιεῖ ποτ', ὦ λαμπρᾷ στεροπᾷ φλεγέθων,
ἡ ποντίας αὐλώνος ἡ δισσαίων ἄπειροι κλιθεῖς,
eἰπ', ὦ κρατιστεύων κατ' ὁμμα.

ποθουμένα γὰρ φρενὶ πυνθάνομαι ἀντ. α'
tὰν ἀμφινεικῇ Δημάνειραν ἀεί,
oῖά τιν' ἄθλιον ὅρνυ,
oὐποτ' εὐνάξευν ἀδακρύτων βλεφάρων πόθουν, ἀλλ' εὐμναστὸν ἀνδρὸς δεῖμα τρέφουσαν ὅδοι ἐνθυμίως εὐνὰς ἀνανυντοῖσι τρύχεσθαι, κακὰν δύστανον ἐλπίζουσαν αἰσιαν.

στρ. β′
πολλὰ γὰρ ὅστ' ἀκάμαντος ἡ νότον ἡ βορέα τις κύματ' ἀν εὐρεῖ πόντῳ ἐπίοντα τ' ἴδοι,
oῦτο δὲ τὸν Καδμογενή στρέφει,1 τὸ δ' αὐξεῖ,
βιώτον πολύπονον ὀσπερ πέλαγος Κρήσιον. ἀλλὰ τις θεῶν αἰέν ἀναμπλάκητον "Αιδα σφε δόμων ἐρύκει.

ἀντ. β′
ὡν ἐπιμεμφομένα σ' αἰδοία2 μέν, ἀντία δ' οἴσω.
φαμὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἀποτρέψων ἐλπίδα τὰν ἀγαθὰν χρῆναι σ' ἀνάλγητα γὰρ οὐδ' ὁ πάντα κραῖνων βασιλεὺς ἐπέβαλε θνατοῖς Κρονίδας.
ἀλλ' ἐπὶ πήμα καὶ χαρὰ πᾶσι κυκλοῦσιν, οἷον ἄρκτου στροφάδες κέλευθοι.

μένει γὰρ οὐτ' αἴόλα
νὔξ βροτοῖς οὔτε κῆρες

1 τρέφει MSS., Reiske corr.
2 ἁδεῖα MSS., Musgrave corr.
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.

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.

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.
οὔτε πλοῦτος, ἀλλὰ ἀφαρ
βέβακε, τῷ δὲ ἐπέρχεται
χαίρειν τε καὶ στέρεσθαι.
Ὃ καὶ σὲ τὰν ἀνασαν ἐλπίσιν λέγω
τάδ' αἰὲν ἑσχειν· ἐπεὶ τίς ὁδὲ
tέκνουσι Ζήν' ἀβουλον εἶδεν;

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

πεπυσμένη μέν, ὃς ἅπεικάσαι, πάρει
πάθημα τούμον· ὃς δ' ἐγὼ θυμοθορῶ,
μὴ τ' ἐκμάθουσα παθοῦσα νῦν τ' ἀπειρος εἶ.
τὸ γὰρ νεᾶξον εὐν τοιοῦσε βόσκεται
χάρουσιν αὐτοῦ, καὶ νῦν ὦ θάλπτος θεοῦ
οὐδ' ὄμβρος οὐδὲ πνευμάτων οὐδὲν κλονεῖ,
ἀλλ' ἠδοιαὶς ἁμοχθὸν ἔξαίρει βίον
ἐς τοῦθ' ἔφος τίς ἀντὶ παρθένου γυνη
κληθῇ λάβῃ τ' ἐν νυκτί φροντίδων μέρος,
ητοὶ πρὸς ἀνδρὸς ἢ τέκνων φοβούμενη.
τότ' ἀν τις εἰς ἱδοίατο, τὴν αὐτοῦ σκοπῶν
πρᾶξιν, κακοίσων οἷς ἐγὼ βαρύνομαι.
πάθη μὲν οὖν ὅδ' ἐγὼ ἡγοῦ ἐκλαυσάμην·
ἐν δ', οἴον οὔπω πρόσθεν, αὐτίκ' ἐξερῶ.
οὖν γὰρ ἥμοι τὴν τελευταίαν ἀναξ
ὁρματ' ἀπ' οἶκον 'Ἡρακλῆς, τότ' ἐν δόμοις
λείπει παλαιὰν δέλτον ἐγγεγραμμένην
ἐπιθήμαθ', ἄμοι πρόσθεν οὐκ ἐτλη ποτὲ,
πολλοὺς ἀγώνας ἐξιών, οὔπω φράσαι,
ἀλλ' ὃς τι δράσων εἴρπε καὶ θανούμενος.
νῦν δ' ὃς ἐτ' οὐκ θὰν εἴπε μὲν λέχοις ὥς τι
χρείῃ μ', ἐλέσθαι κτῆσιν, εἴπε δ' ἢν τέκνοις

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TRACHINIAE

If perchance to-day thou art sad,
Then another man is glad.
Gains with losses alternate;
Naught is constant in one state:
Ponder this, my Queen, nor let
Carking care thy spirit fret.
Tell me hast thou ever known
Zeus unmindful of his own?

DEIANIRA

Doubtless ye must have heard of my distress,
And therefore come; but how my heart is racked
Ye cannot know—pray God ye ne'er may know it
By suffering!

'Like to us, the tender plant
Is reared and nurtured in some garden close;
Nor heat, nor rain, nor any breath of air
Vexes it, but unruffled, unperturbed,
It buds and blossoms in sequestered bliss;
So fare we till the maid is called a wife
And finds her married portion in the night—
Dread terror for her husband or her child.
Only the woman who by trial knows
The cares of wedlock knows what I endure.
Many have been my sorrows in the past,
But now of one, the 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,
μοῖραν πατρῴας γῆς διαιρετὸν νέμοι, 
χρόνον προτάξας ὡς τρίμηνον ἆμικα 
χώρας ἀπειθή κανιαύσιον βεβώς, 
tοτ' ἢ θανεῖν χρεῖη σφε τῶδε τῷ χρόνῳ 
ἡ τοῦθ' ὑπεκδραμόντα τοῦ χρόνου τέλος 
τὸ λοιπὸν ἔδηξ ἀλυπήτῳ βίῳ.
τοιαῦτ' ἐφραζε πρὸς θεῶν εἰμαρμένα 
τῶν Ἡρακλείων ἐκτελεύσσαι πόνον, 
ὁς τὴν παλαιὰν φηγὸν αὐδήσαι ποτε 
Δωδώνι δισσοῦν ἐκ Πελειάδων ἐφή.
καὶ τῶν ναμέρτεια συμβαίνει χρόνου 
τοῦ νῦν παρόντος, ὡς τελεσθήναι χρεών.
ὡσθ' ἤδεως εὐδοκοῦσαν ἐκτελεῦσαν ἐμὲ 
φόβῳ, φίλαι, τραβοῦσαν, εἴ με χρὴ 
πάντων ἁρώστου φωτὸς ἔστερημένην.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
εὐφημίαν νῦν ἵσχ' ἐπεὶ καταστεφῇ 
στείχονθ' ὁρῶ τιν' ἄνδρα πρὸς χαρὰν λόγων.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
δέσποινα Δηάνειρα, πρῶτος ἀγγέλων 
ὄκνου σε λύσω· τῶν γὰρ Ἀλκμήνης τόκου 
καὶ ζώντ' ἐπίστω καὶ κρατοῦντα κἀκ μάχης 
ἀγοντ' ἀπαρχὰς θεοῖσι τοῖς ἐγχωρίοις.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
τίν' εἰπας, ὦ γεραιέ, τῶν μοι λόγον;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
τάχ' ἐς δόμους σοὺς τῶν πολύζηλου τῶν 
ἡξειν φανέντα σὺν κράτει νικηφόρῳ.
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 1
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
Alemena's son is living; o'er his foes
Victorious he is bringing home the spoils,
To offer firstfruits to his country's gods.

DEIANIRA
Old man, what dost thou tell me?

MESSENGER
That anon
Thou shalt behold in presence, at thy gate,
Illustrious, crowned with victory, thy lord.

1 The Peleads were the priestesses of Dodona who interpreted the rustling of the oak or the cooing of the sacred doves and their name in folk etymology was identified with peleiai, doves.
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
καὶ τοῦ τόδ᾽ ἀστῶν ἢ ξένων μαθῶν λέγεις;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
ἐν βουθερεὶ λειμῶνι πρὸς πολλοὺς θροεῖ
Λίχας ὁ κήρυξ ταῦτα. τοῦδ᾽ ἐγὼ κλύων
ἀπῆξε, ὅπως τοι πρῶτος ἀγγείλας τάδε
πρὸς σοῦ τι κερδάναιμι καὶ κτώµην χάριν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
αὐτὸς δὲ πῶς ἀπεστιν, εἴπερ εὐτυχεῖ;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
οὐκ εὐμαρεία χρώμενος πολλή, γύναι.
κύκλῳ γὰρ αὐτὸν Μηλιεὺς ἀπασ λεώς
καρπίει παραστάς, οὐδ᾽ ἔχει βήμαν πρόσω.
τὸ γὰρ ποθοῦν ἐκαστὸς ἐκμαθεῖν ἐγὼ κλύων
οὐκ ἂν μεθεῖτο, πρὶν καθ᾽ ἡδονὴν κλύειν.
οὗτως ἐκεῖνος οὐχ ἔκων, ἐκουσὶ δὲ
ξύνεστιν ὅψει δ᾽ αὐτὸν αὐτίκ᾽ ἐμφανῆ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
ὦ Ζεῦ, τὸν Οἴτην ἄτομον ὅς λειμῶν᾽ ἔχεις,
ἐδωκας ἡμῖν ἀλλὰ σὺν χρώμῳ χαράν.
φωνῆσατ᾽, ὦ γυναῖκες, αἳ τ᾽ εἰσώ στέγης
αἳ τ᾽ ἐκτὸς αὐλῆς, ὡς ἄελπτον ὅμοι ἔμοι
φήμης ἀνασχὸν τῆς νῦν καρποῦμεθα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἀνοιλολυξάτω 2 δόμοις ἐφεστίοις
ἀλαλαγαῖς ἀ 3 μελλόνυμφος, ἐν δὲ
κοινῶς ἀρσένων ἵπτω
κλαγγὰ τὸν εὐφαρέτραν
'Απόλλων προστάταιν ὅμοι δὲ

1 M. L. Garle's ἐκπλῆσαι is the likeliest emendation of a probably corrupt line.
2 ἀνοιλολυξάτω MSS., Burges corr. 3 ὅ MSS., Erfurdt corr.
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!
ΠΑΙΑΝΑ ΠΑΙἈΝ’ ἀνἀγετ’, ὡ παρθένοι, 
βοάτε τὰν ὀμόσπορον
'Αρτεμὶν Ὀρτυγίαν
ἐλαφαβόλου ἀμφίπυρον,
γείτονάς τε Νύμφας.
ἀείρομαι οὔτ' ἀπώσομαι
τὸν αὐλόν, ὡ τύραννε τὰς ἐμᾶς φρενός.
ἰδοὺ μ’ ἀναταράσσει,
εὔοι μ’,
ὁ κισσὸς ἀρτι βακχιὰν
ὑποστρέφον ἀμφίπυρον. ὦ Ὡ Παιὰν.
ὃ δ’, ὡ φίλα γύναι,
τάδ’ ἀντὶπροφα δὴ σοι
βλέπειν πάρεστ’ ἐναργη.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
ὁρῶ, φίλαι γυναῖκες, οὔτε μ’ ὀμματος
φρουράν παρῆλθε, τόνδε μὴ λεύσοσειν στόλον
χαίρειν δὲ τὸν κήρυκα προννέπω, χρόνῳ
πολλῷ φανέντα, χαρτὸν εἰ τι καὶ φέρεις.

ΛΙΧΑΣ
ὦν ἀνδρῶν, πρῶθ’ ἃ πρῶτα βούλομαι
δίδαξον, εἰ ζῶνθ’ Ἡρακλῆ προσδέξομαι.
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.

Evoé!
The thyrsus, see,
Calls me; I must away
To join the Bacchic rout,
With Maenads dance and shout,
Once more the paean raise;
For, lady, here,
In presence clear,
My joy takes shape and stands before thy gaze.

DEIANIRA.
Kind friends, I see, nor have my wistful eyes
Failed to perceive this company's approach—
Hail to thee, herald, if indeed thou bring'st
News that will gladden me, though long delayed.

Enter Lichas with captive women.

LICHAS
Yea, lady, glad is our return and glad
Thy greeting, as befits the deed achieved.
He who speeds well a welcome fair deserves.

DEIANIRA
First tell me what I first would learn, best friend,
Shall I embrace my Heracles alive?
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΔΙΧΑΣ
ἐγώγέ τοι σφ' ἐλεύπον ἵσχύοντά τε καὶ ζωντα καὶ θᾶλλοντα κοῦ νόσῳ βαρύν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
ποῦ γῆς; πατρώας εἴτε βαρβάρου; λέγε.

ΔΙΧΑΣ
ἀκτῆ τις ἔστ' Ἕβοις, ἐνθ' ὀρίζεται βωμούς τελη τ' ἔγκαρπα Κηναιῷ Δι'].

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
εὐκταῖα φαίνων ἣ ἀπὸ μαντείας τινὸς;

ΔΙΧΑΣ
εὐχαίς ὥθ' ἦρει τῶν ἀνάστατον δορὶ χώραν γυναικῶν ὃν ὀρᾶς ἐν ὁμμασίν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
αὗται δὲ, πρὸς θεῶν, τοῦ ποτ' εἰσὶ καὶ τίνες; οἰκτραὶ γὰρ, εἰ μὴ ἕμφυροι κλέπτουσί με.

ΔΙΧΑΣ
ταῦτας ἐκείνος Ἕβρυτου πέρσας πόλιν ἐξεῖλθ' αὐτῷ κτήμα καὶ θεοῖς κριτῶν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
ἡ κατὶ ταῦτῃ τῇ πόλει τὸν ἄσκοπον χρόνον βεβὼς ἣν ἡμερῶν ἀνήριθμον;

ΔΙΧΑΣ
οὐκ, ἀλλὰ τῶν μὲν πλείστων ἐν Λυδοῖς χρόνον κατεῖχεὐ, ὡς φησ' αὐτός, οὐκ ἐλεύθερος, ἀλλ' ἐμποληθεὶς τοῦ λόγου δ' οὐ χρῆ φθόνον, γύναι, προσεῖναι, Ζεὺς ὅ τοῦ πράκτῳρ φανῆ. κεῖνος δὲ πραθεὶς Ὀμφάλῃ τῇ βαρβάρῳ ἐνιαυτὸν ἐξέπλησεν, ὡς αὐτὸς λέγει.
Surely; I left him both alive and hale,
In lusty strength and sound in every limb.

Where? upon Greek soil, tell me, or abroad?

Upon a headland in Euboea, where
He marks out altars to Cenaean Zeus,
And dedicates the fertile lands around.

In payment of some former vow, or warned
By oracles?

'Tis for a vow he made
When he went forth to conquer and despoil
Oechalia of these women whom thou see'st.

O tell me who these captives are and whose;
So piteous, to judge them by their plight.

He chose them for himself and for the gods,
When he had sacked the town of Eurytus.

Was it to take that city he delayed
All those interminable, countless days?

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 Omphalē,
The barbarous queen. So grievous was the sting.
χούτως ἐδήχθη τούτο τούνειδος λαβὼν ὥσθ᾽ ὄρκον αὐτῷ προσβαλὼν διώμοσεν, ἦ μὴν τὸν ἀγχιστήρα τοῦδε τοῦ πάθους ἐν παιδὶ καὶ γυναικὶ δουλώσειν ἐτι. κοὐχ ἡλίωσε τοῦπος, ἀλλ᾽ ὅθ᾽ ἁγνὸς ἦ, στρατὸν λαβὼν ἐπακτὸν ἔρχεται πόλιν τὴν Εὐρυτείαν. τόνδε γὰρ μεταίτιον μόνον βροτῶν ἐφασκε τούτῳ εἶναι πάθους: ὃς αὐτὸν ἐλθὼν᾽ ἐσ δόμους ἐφέστιον, ξένον παλαιὸν ὄντα, πολλὰ μὲν λόγους ἐπερρόθησε, πολλὰ δ᾽ ἀτηρὰ φρενὶ, λέγων κληρίνῃ, ὃς ἂν ἀφικτ᾽ ἤχων βέλη τῶν δικήν λείποντο πρὸς τὸξον κρίσιν, φωνεῖ δὲ δοῦλος ἂνδρὸς ὅς ἀδελθεύρου ἀδένιτο: δεῖπνους ἣ ἣνι᾽ ἄν ὀμήνες, ἔρριφεν ἐκτὸς αὐτῶν. διὸ ἤχουν χόλου, ὃς ἰκετ᾽ αὐθίς Ἰφιτῶν Τιρυνθίαν πρὸς κλιτῦν, ὑπποὺς νομάδος ἐξίχυσσόκοπτων, τότ᾽ ἄλλος αὐτὸν ὄμμα, θατέρα δὲ νοῦν ἤχοντ᾽, ἀπ᾽ ἀκρας ἦκε πυργώδους πλακός. ἔργου δ᾽ ἐκατὶ τοῦδε μηνίσας ἀναξ ὃ τῶν ἀπάντων Ζεὺς πατὴρ Ὀλύμπιος πρατόν πολεμίος νῦν ἐξελέφθησαν οὐδ᾽ ἴνα σχεῖτο, ὃδούνεκ αὐτῶν μοῦνον ἀνθρώπων δόλῳ ἐκτείνεν εἰ γὰρ ἐμφανῶς ἠμύνατο, Ζεὺς τᾶν συνέγνων ἐν δίκη χειρομένων: ὕβριν γὰρ ὁ στέργοσιν οὐδὲ δαίμονες. κεῖνοι δ᾽ ὑπερχλίοντες ἐκ γλώσσης κακῆς αὐτὸι μὲν Ἁρδου πάντες εἰσ᾽ οἴκητορες, πόλις δὲ δούλῃ τάσδε δ᾽ ἀστερεῖ ἐσορᾶς ἐξ ὀλβίων ἀξηλόν εὑρόσαι βίον χωροῦσι πρὸς σὲ: ταῦτα γὰρ πόσις τε σὸς 278
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
ἐφεῖτ', ἐγὼ δὲ πιστῶς ὄν κεῖμο τελῶ. αὐτὸν δ' ἐκείνουν, εὑτ' ἀν ἄγνα θύματα ἐπέβη πατρίῳς Ζηνὶ τῆς ἀλώσεως, φρόνει νῦν ὃς ἥξοντα; τούτῳ γὰρ λόγῳ πολλοῦ καλῶς λεχθέντος ἥδιστον κλύειν. 290

ΧΟΡΟΣ
άνασσα, νῦν σοι τέρψις ἐμφανῆς κυρεῖ, τῶν μὲν παρόντων, τὰ δὲ πεπυσμένη λόγο.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
πῶς δ' οὐκ ἐγὼ χαῖρομ᾽ ἂν, ἀνδρὸς εὔτυχῆς κλύουσα πράξεν τῆνδε, πανδίκῳ φρενί; πολλή στ' ἀνάγκη τῇδε τούτῳ συντερέχειν. ὃμως δ' ἔμεστι τούσιν εὖ σκοποουμένοις ταρβείν τὸν εὖ πράσσοντα, μὴ σφαλῇ ποτε. ἐμοὶ γὰρ οἷκτος δεινὸς εἰσέβη, φίλαι, ταῦτας ὑπόν τοῦ ἐντεταγμένως ἐπὶ ἐνενής χώρας ἀοίκους ἀπάτητα τ' ἀλωμένας, αἰ πρὶν μὲν ἦσαν ἐξ ἐλευθέρῶν ἰσως ἀνδρῶν, τανῦν δὲ δοῦλον ἵσχουσιν βίον. ὦ Ζεῦ τροπαίε, μὴ ποτ' εἰσίδοιμι σε πρὸς τούμον οὔτω σπέρμα χαρῆσαντά ποι, μηδ', εἰ τι δράσεις, τῆς γάρ γε ἡ γένος ἐτι. οὔτως ἐγὼ δέδωκεν εὐθὺς ὑπό τοῦ μεκατον, μὴ δ᾽ εἰ νεανίδων; ἀνανδρὸς ἂ τεκνοῦσα 1; πρὸς μὲν γὰρ φύσιν πάντων ἀπειρος τοῦδε, γενναία δὲ τις. Λίχα, τίνος ποτ' ἐστιν ἡ ἐνενή βροτῶν; τίς ἡ τεκνοῦσα, τίς δ' ὁ φιτύσας πατήρ; ἐξειπτ' ἐπεῖ νῦν τοῦδε πλεῖστον ὄφτασα βλέπουσ', ὁσφερ καὶ φρονεῖν οἴδεν μόνη. 300

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 iolè)

Say, who art thou, most miserable girl,
Mother or maid? To judge thee by thy looks
Thou hast full warrant of virginity,
Yea and of high birth. Lichas, who is she?
Who was her father, and her mother? Speak.
Her most of all I pity, for she shows
Alone the sense of her calamity.
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΔΙΧΑΣ

τί δ’ οἶδ’ ἐγώ, τί δ’ ἂν με καὶ κρίνοις; ἵσως γέννημα τῶν ἐκείθεν οὐκ ἐν ύστάτοις.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

μὴ τῶν τυράννων; Εὐρύτου σπορά τις ἦν;

ΔΙΧΑΣ

οὐκ οἶδ’ καὶ γὰρ οὐδ’ ἀνιστόρουν μακράν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

οὐδ’ ὄνομα πρὸς τοῦ τῶν ξυνεμπόρων ἐχεις;

ΔΙΧΑΣ

ἡκίστα: συγῆ τούμον ἔργον ἤμυντον.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

εἶπ’, ὃ τάλαιν’, ἀλλ’ ἦμῖν ἐκ σαυτῆς, ἐπεὶ καὶ ξυμφορά τοι μὴ εἴδεναι σὲ γ’ ἦτις εἰ.

ΔΙΧΑΣ

οὐ τάρα τῷ γε πρόσθεν οὐδὲν ἐξ ἴσου χρόνω διήσει 1 γλῶσσαν, ἦτις οὐδαμὰ προὐφηνεν οὔτε μείζον’ οὔτ’ ἐλάσσονα, ἀλλ’ αἰὲν ἀδινοὺσα συμφοράς βάρος δακρυρροεῖ δύστηνος, ἐξ 2 ὅτου πάτραν διήμερον λέλοιπεν. ἣ δὲ τοι τύχῃ κακή μὲν αὐτῇ γ’, ἀλλὰ συγγνώμην ἐχει.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἡ’ δ’ οὖν ἐισθω, καὶ πορευέσθω στέγας οὕτως ὅπως ἤδη, μηδὲ πρὸς κακοῖς τοῖς οὖσιν ἀλλην 3 πρὸς γ’ ἐμοῦ λύπην λάβη; 4 ἀλὶς γὰρ ἡ παροῦσα. πρὸς δὲ δῶματα χωρῶμεν ἡ δὴ πάντες, ὡς σὺ θ’ οἱ θελείς σπεύδησι, ἐγὼ τε τάύδου ἐξαρκὴ τιθῶ.

1 διήσει MSS., Wakefield corr.
2 οὖσι λύπην MSS., F. W. Schmidt corr.
3 λάβη MSS., Blaydes corr.
TRACHINIAE

LICHAS
How should I know? Why question me? Perchance
She was of noblest lineage in that land.

DEIANIRA
What, of their kings? Had Eurytus a daughter?

LICHAS
I know not, did not question her at length.

DEIANIRA
Did'st thou not even learn her name from one
Of her companions?

LICHAS
No, I had my work
To do, and had no time for questioning.

DEIANIRA
Then speak to me and tell me who thou art,
Poor maid; it grieves me truly not to know.

LICHAS
Well, if she opens now her lips, 'twill be
Unlike her former self, for hitherto
She hath not uttered word or syllable;
But still in travail with her heavy grief
She weeps and stays not weeping since she left
Her wind-swept home. 'Tis sad and ill for her,
This melancholy, yet 'tis natural.

DEIANIRA
Leave her in peace and let her pass within,
As is her humour. Heaven forbid that I
Should add another to her present pains,
Enough God knows. Now let us all go in,
That thou may'st start at once upon thy way.
And I make all things ready in the house.

[Exeunt LICHAS and CAPTIVES.]
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

αὐτοῦ γε πρῶτον βαίνειν ἀμμεύνασ', ὡς ἀληθεὶς ἄνευ τῶν, οὕστιν τὰ θ' ἀγείς ἐσω, ὃν τ' οὐδέν εἰσήκουσας εἰκοῦσις ἄ δει' τούτων ἔχω γὰρ πάντ' ἑπιστήμην ἐγώ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

τί δ' ἔστι; τοῦ με τήνδ' ἐφίστασαι βάσιν;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

σταθεῖσ' ἀκούσον καὶ γὰρ οὐδὲ τὸν πάρος μῦθον μάθῃς ἃς ἔσω, ὥν τ' οὐδὲν εἰσήκουσας, οὐδὲ νῦν δοκῶ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

πότερον ἐκείνους δήτα δεῦρ' ἀλλοι πάλιν καλώμεν, ἡ μοι ταίσδε τ' ἐξειπέειν θέλεις;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

σοί ταίσδε τ' οὐδὲν εἱργεται, τούτους δ' ἔα.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

καὶ δὴ βεβᾶσι, χω λόγος σημαίνετω.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἀνὴρ ὃδ' οὐδὲν ὃν ἐλεξεν ἀρτίως φωνεὶ δίκης ἐς ὀρθόν, ἀλλ' ἡ νῦν κακὸς ἡ πρόσθεν οὐ δίκαιος ἀγγελος παρῆν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

τί φῆς; σαφῶς μοι φράζε πάν ὅσον νοεῖς. ἄ μεν γὰρ ἐξειρήκας ἀγνοία μ' ἐχει.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

τούτου λέγουσθ' τάνδρος εἰςκουσ' ἐγώ, πολλῶν παρόντων μαρτύρων, ὡς τῆς κόρης ταύτης ἐκατε keinos Εὐρυτοῦν θ' ἐλοι τῆν θ' ὑψιτυργον Οἰχαλίαν, ἔρως δὲ νυν μόνος θεῶν θέλειεν αἰχμάσαι τάδε,
TRACHINIAE

MESSERERG
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?

MESSERERG
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?

MESSERERG
With thee and these ; the rest are well away.

DEIANIRA
See, they are gone ; proceed then with thy tale.

MESSERERG
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.

MESSERERG
'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
οὐ τὰπὶ Λυδοῖς οὐδ᾽ ὑπ᾽ Ὁμφάλῃ πόνων
λατρεύματ' οὐδ᾽ ὁ ῥιπτὸς Ἰφίτου μόρος·
ὅν νῦν παρώσας οὐτος ἐμπαλιν λέγει.
ἀλλ᾽ ἦν' οὐκ ἐπειθὲ τὸν φυτοσπόρον
τὴν παἰδά δοῦναί, κρύφιον ὡς ἔχοι λέχος,
ἔγκλημα μικρὸν αἰτιαν θ' ἐτοιμάσας
ἐπιστρατεύει πατρίδα τὴν ταύτης, ἐν ἧν
τὸν Εὐρυτοῦ τόνδ᾽ εἰπε δεσπόζειν θρόνων,
kτείνει τ᾽ ἄνακτα πατέρα τήσδε καὶ πόλιν
ἐπερσε. καὶ νῦν, ὡς όρᾶς, ἦκει δόμους
ὡς τούσδε πέμπτοιν οὐκ ἀφροντιστώς, γύναι,
οὐδ᾽ ὥστε δύσλην· μηδὲ προσδόκα τόδε·
οὐδ᾽ εἰκός, εἴπερ ἐντεθέρμανταί πόθω.
ἐδοξὲν οὖν μοι πρὸς σὲ δηλώσαι τὸ πᾶν,
δέσπου', ὁ τούδε τυχχάνω μαθῶν πάρα.
καὶ ταύτα πολλοὶ πρὸς μέσῃ Τραχινίων
ἄγορα συνεξήκουον ὡςαύτως ἐμοί,
ὡςτ᾽ ἐξελέγχειν· εἰ δὲ μὴ λέγω φίλα,
οὖχ ἤδομαι, τὸ δ᾽ ὀρθῶν ἐξείρηχ᾽ ὁμώς.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
οἴμοι τάλαινα, ποῦ ποτ᾽ εἰμὶ πράγματος;
τῶν εἰσδέδεγμαι πημονὴν ὑπόστεγον
λαθραῖον; ὦ δύστην ἄρ᾽ ἀνώνυμος
πέφυκεν, ὡςπερ οὐσίς ἐφάνειν,
ἔδοξεν οὖν τὰ τάλαινα, ποῦ ποτ᾽ εἰμὶ πράγματος;
As bondsman under Lydian Omphalē,
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 swore?

MESSENGER
Nay, she hath name and fame, a princess born,
Iolē, 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 χρὴ ποεῖν, γυναῖκες; ὡς ἐγὼ λόγοις
toῖς νῦν παροῦσιν ἐκπεπληγμένη κυρῶ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
πεῦθον μολοῦσα τάνδρος, ὡς τάχ᾽ ἂν σαφῆ
λέξειν, εἳ νῦν πρὸς βίαν κρίνειν θέλουσ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
ἀλλ᾽ εἴμι καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἀπὸ γνώμης λέγεις.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
ἡμεῖς δὲ προσμένωμεν; ἢ τί χρὴ ποεῖν;

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
μένων, ὡς ὅ′ ἀνὴρ οὐκ ἐμῶν ὑπὸ ἀγγέλων,
ἀλλ᾽ αὐτόκλητος ἐκ δόμων πορεύεται.

ΔΙΧΑΣ
τί χρὴ, γυναῖ, μολοῦσας θρακείς λέγειν;
δίδαξον, ὡς ἐρποντος, ὡς ὁρᾶς, ἐμὴν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
ὡς ἐκ ταχείας σὺν ἄντο ὑπὸ ἀγγέλων
ἀνάσεις, πρὸς ἡμᾶς καννεύσασθαι λόγους.

ΔΙΧΑΣ
ἀλλ᾽ εἴ τι χρῆσεις ἱστορεῖν, πάρεμ᾽ ἐγώ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
ἡ καὶ τὸ πιστὸν τῆς ἀληθείας νέμεις;

ΔΙΧΑΣ
ἔστω μέγας Ζεὺς, ἵνα ἐξείδος κυρῶ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
τίς ἡ γυνὴ δὴτ ἐστὶν ἣν ἥκεις ἄγων;

ΔΙΧΑΣ
Ἐὔβοιος ὅν ἀπὸ ἔβλαστεν οὐκ ἔχω λέγειν.

1 εἰσοφας 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.
ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
οὗτος, βλέψ γώδε, πρὸς τίν' ἐννέπειν δοκεῖς;
ΛΙΧΑΣ
σὺ δ᾽ εἰς τί δή με τούτ' ἐρωτήσας ἔχεις;
ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
tόλμησον εἰπεῖν, εἰ φρονεῖς, ὁ σ᾽ ἱστορῶ.
ΛΙΧΑΣ
πρὸς τὴν κρατοῦσαν Δηάνειραν, Οἰνέως
cόρην δάμαρτά θ᾽ Ἡρακλέους, εἰ μὴ κυρῶ
λεύσσων μάταια, δεσπότιν τε τὴν ἐμὴν.
ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
tοῦτ' αὐτ' ἔρχησον, τοῦτό σου μαθεῖν λέγεις
dεσποιναν εἶναι τήνδε σήν;
ΛΙΧΑΣ
dίκαια γάρ.
ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
tί δήτα; ποίαν ἀξιοῖς δοῦναι δίκην,
ἵνα εὑρεθῆς ἐς τήνδε μὴ δίκαιος ὦν;
ΛΙΧΑΣ
πῶς μὴ δίκαιος; τί ποτε ποικίλας ἔχεις;
ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
οὐδέν; σὺ μέντοι κάρτα τοῦτο δρῶν κυρεῖς.
ΛΙΧΑΣ
ἀπείμω. μῶρος δ' ἡ πάλαι κλύων σέθεν.
ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
οὐ, πρὶν γ' ἄν εἰπης ἱστορούμενος βραχὺ.
ΛΙΧΑΣ
λέγ', εἰ τι χρήζεις; καὶ γὰρ οὐ σιγηλὸς εἰ.
ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
τὴν αἰχμάλωτον, ἴνα ἐπεμψας ἐς δόμους,
κάτοικθα δήποι;
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?
ΛΙΧΑΣ

φημὶ· πρὸς τὶ δ᾽ ἱστορεῖς;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

οὐκ οὖν σὺ ταῦτην, ἢν ὑπ’ ἀγνοίας ὀρᾶς,

Ἰόλην ἐφασκεῖς Εὐρύτου σπορὰν ἀγείν;

ΑΙΧΑΣ

ποίοις ἐν ἀνθρώποις; τίς πόθεν μολὼν

σοὶ μαρτυρῆσει ταῦτ’ ἐμοῦ κλύειν πάρα; ¹

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

πολλοῖσιν ἀστῶν· ἐν μέσῃ Τραχινίων

ἀγορὰ πολύς σοι ταῦτά γ᾽ εἰσήκουσ’ ὁχλος.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

κλύειν γ᾽ ἐφασκον· ταῦτο δ᾽ οὐχὶ γίγνεται
dόκησιν εἰπεῖν καξικριβῶσαι λόγον.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ποιαν δόκησιν; οὐκ ἐπώμοτος λέγων
dάμαρτ’ ἐφασκεῖς Ἡρακλεὶ ταῦτην ἀγείν;

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἐγὼ δάμαρτα; πρὸς θεῶν, φράσον, φίλη
dέσποινα, τόνδε τίς ποτ᾽ ἐστὶν ὁ ξένος.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ὅς σοῦ παρὼν ἤκουσεν, ὡς ταῦτης πόθω

πόλις δαμείη πᾶσα, κοῦχ ἡ Λυδία

πέρσειν αὐτήν, ἀλλ’ ὁ τῆς ἐρως φανεῖς.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἀνθρωπος, ὃ δέσποινα, ἀποστήτω· τὸ γὰρ

νοσοῦντι ληρεῖν ἀνδρὸς οὐχὶ σώφρονος.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

μῆ, πρὸς σε τοῦ κατ’ ἀκρον Οὐταῖον νάπος

Διὸς 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 Iole, 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 hurls his bolts
On Oeta's wooded heights, hold nothing back;
οὐ γὰρ γυναικὶ τοὺς λόγους ἐρεῖς κακὴν ὁὐδ᾽ ἦτις οὐ κάτοικε τὰνθρώπων, ὅτι χαίρειν πέφυκεν οὐχὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἀεὶ.

"Ερωτεί μὲν μὲν υἱὸν ὅστις ἀντανίσταται πρὸκτης ὅπως ἐς χεῖρας, οὐ καλῶς φρονεῖ· οὗτος γὰρ ἄρχει καὶ θεῶν ὅπως θέλει, κάμον γένος ὅπως δ᾽ οὐ χάτερας οἶας γ᾽ ἐμοῖ; ὥστε εἰ τί τῶμῳ τ᾽ ἀνδρὶ τῇ δε τῇ νόσῳ ληφθέντι μεμπτός εἰμι, κάρτα μαίνομαι, ἢ τῇ δε τῇ γυναικὶ τῇ μετανία τοῦ μηδὲν αἰσχροῦ μηδ᾽ ἐμοὶ κακοῦ τινος. οὐκ ἔστι ταῦτ᾽ ἀλλὰ εἰ μὲν ἐκ κείνου μαθῶν ψευδεῖ, μάθησιν οὐ καλὴν ἐμοὶ κακὸς. εἰ δ᾽ αὐτὸς αὐτὸν ὅπως παιδεύεις, ὅταν θέλης γενέσθαι χρηστὸς, ὅφθησεν κακὸς. ἀλλὰ εἰπὲ πῶς ὡς ἐλευθέρως ψευδεῖ καλεῖσθαι κῇρ πρὸσεστίν οὐ καλῆ. ὅπως δὲ λήσεις, οὐδὲ τοῦτο γίγνεται· πολλοὶ γὰρ ὅτι δεῦς εἶρηκας, οὗ φράσουσ᾽ ἐμοὶ κεῖ μὲν δέδοικας, οὐ χαίρεις τῆς ἀνωτέρας. τοῦ μηδὲν αἰσχροῦ μηδ᾽ ἐμοὶ κακὸς. οὐκ ἔστι τοῦτο· ἀλλὰ τοῦτο γίγνεται· πολλοὶ γ᾽ ἐμοὶ λόγον κακὸν ἠνέγκατ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ὄνειδος· ἥδε τῃδὲ ἀν εἰ κάρτ᾽ ἐντακείη τῷ φιλεῖν, ἐπεὶ σφ᾽ ἐγὼ ἐκ τοῦμ᾽ ἐρυθράς κἄλυπτον τῷ τὸν βίον διώλεσεν, καὶ γῆν πατρῶν οὐχὶ ἐκούσα δύσμορος ἐπερεσε καδούλωσεν, ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν θέλω κατ᾽ οὐρον· σοὶ δ᾽ ἐγὼ φράζω φράζω κακὸν πρὸς ἄλλον εἶναι, πρὸς δ᾽ ἐμ᾽ ἐμ᾽ ἐμοὶ
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 λεγούσῃ χρηστά, κοῦ μέμψει χρόνῳ
gυναικί τήδε κατ' ἐμοῦ κτήσει χάριν.

ΑΙΧΑΣ

άλλ', ὦ φίλη δέσποιν', ἔπει σε μανθάνω
θυνητήν φρονοῦσαν θυνητὰ κοῦκ ἀγνώμονα,
pάν σοι φράσω τάληθες ούδὲ κρύψομαι.
ἔστιν γὰρ οὔτως ὁστερ οὔτος ἐννέτει.
ταύτης ο δεινός ἵμερός ποθ' Ἡρακλῆ
διήλθε, καὶ τήδε' εἰνέχ' ἡ πολύφθορος
καθηρέθη πατρόδες Οἰχαλία δόρει.
καὶ ταύτα, δεὶ γὰρ καὶ τὸ πρὸς κεῖνου λέγειν,
οὔτ' εἶπε κρύπτειν οὔτ' ἀπηρνήθη ποτέ,
άλλ' αὐτὸς, ὦ δέσποινα, δειμαίνω τὸ σὸν
μὴ στέρνον ἀλγύνομι τοῖσδε τοῖσ λόγοις,
ημαρτον, εἰ τε τήνδ' ἀμαρτίαν νέμεις.
ἔπει γε μὲν δὴ πάντ' ἐπιστασαί λόγου,
κεῖνοι τε καὶ σὴν ἐξί ίσου κοινὴν χάριν
καὶ στέργε τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ βοῦλον λόγους,
οὔτ' εἶπας ἐς τήνδ', ἐμπέδως εἰρηκέναι:
ὡς τάλλ' ἐκεῖνος πάντ' ἀριστεύων χερῶν
τοὺ τήνδ' ἠρωτος εἰς ἀπανθ' ἡσσων ἐφυ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

άλλ' ὀδε καὶ φρονοῦμεν ὡστε ταύτα δράν,
κοῦτοι νόσον γ' ἔπακτον ἐξαρούμεθα,
θεοὶς δυσμαχοῦντες. ἀλλ' ἐνώ στέγης
χωρῶμεν, ὡς λόγουν τ' ἐπιστολὰς φέρησ,
ἀ τ' ἀντὶ δῶρων δῶρα χρή προσαμοσίαι,
καὶ ταύτ' ἀγγείς. κενὸν γὰρ οὐ δίκαια σε
χωρεῖν προσελθόνθ' ὀδε 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.

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μέγα τι σθένος ἃ Κύπρις ἐκφέρεται νίκας ἀεί. καὶ τὰ μὲν θεῶν παρέβαν, καὶ ὅπως Κρονίδαν ἀπάτασεν οὐ λέγω, οὔτε τὸν ἐννυχον "Αιδαν ἡ Ποσειδάωνα τινάκτορα γαίας· ἄλλ' ἐπὶ τάνδ᾽ ἄρ' ἀκοίτων τίνες ἀμφίγυοι κατέβαν πρὸ γάμων, τίνες πάμπληκτα παγκόνιτά τ' ἐξήλθον ἀεθλ' ἀγώνων;

ὁ μὲν ἦν ποταμοῦ σθένος, υψίκερω τετραόρου φάσμα ταῦρου, Ἀχελώος ἀπ' Οἰνιαδᾶν, ὁ δὲ Βακχίας ἀπὸ Ἡλθε παλίντονα Θήβας τόξα καὶ λόγχας ρόπαλον τε τινάσσων, παῖς Δίως· οὐ τὸτ' ἀολλεῖς ἱσαν ἐς μέσον ἱέμενοι λεχέων· μόνα δ' εὐλεκτρος ἐν μέσῳ Κύπρις ῥαβδονόμει ξυνοῦσα.

τὸτ' ἦν χερός, ἦν δὲ τόξων πάταγος, ταυρείων τ' ἀνάμυγδα κεράτων· ἦν δ' ἀμφύπλεκτοι κλίμακες, ἦν δὲ μετώπων ὀλόεντα πλήγματα, καὶ στόνος ἀμφότεροι.
TRACHINIAE

CHORUS (Str.)

Many a trophy of war the Cyprian bears away;
To tell of the triumphs she wins o'er gods I may not stay,
How the Olympian King and the Lord of the realms of night,
Yea, and the Shaker of Earth, Poseidon, owns her might.

Fitter theme for my song the well-matched champion pair,
Rivals who entered the lists to win the hand of the fair.
Dread the strife, and the sky with dust of battle was full.

(Ans.)

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.
ΠΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ἄ δ᾽ εὔωπις ἄβρα
τηλαυγεῖ παρ᾽ ὁχθω
ἡστο, τὸν δὲ προσμένουσ᾽ ἀκοίταν.
ἀγὼν δὲ μαργᾶ' 1 μὲν οῖα φράζω" τὸ δ᾽ ἀμφινείκητον ὁμμα νύμφας
ἐλεινὸν ἀμμένει,
κατὸ ματρὸς ἄφαρ βέβακεν,
ὡστε πόρτις ἐρήμα.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἡμος, φίλαι, κατ᾽ οἰκον ὁ Ξένος θρετεὶ
taῖς αἰχμαλώτοις παισὶν ὡς ἐπ᾽ ἠξόδῳ,
τήμος θυραῖος ἤλθον ὡς ὑμᾶς λάθρα,
tὰ μὲν φράσουσα χερσὶν ἀτεχνησάμενη,
tὰ δ᾽ οἰα πάσχω συγκαταισκοιμενή.
κόρην γάρ, οἶμαι δ᾽ οὐκέτ', ἀλλ᾽ ἐξευμένη,
pαρεισδεδεγμαι φόρτον ὡστε ναυτίλος,
λωβητὸν ἐμπόλλημα τῆς ἐμῆς φρενὸς.
καὶ νῦν δ᾽ οὖσαι μάνομεν μιᾶς ὑπὸ
χλαίνης υπαγκάλισμα. τοιαδ᾽ Ἡρακλῆς,
ο πιστὸς ἠμῶν κἀγαθὸς καλοῦμενος,
οἰκοῦρ' αὐτεπίρυφε τοῦ μακροῦ χρόνου.
ἐγὼ δὲ θυμοῦσαι μεν οὐκ ἐπίσταμαι
νοσοῦντι κείψει πεπόλλα τῇ δὲ τῇ νόσῳ,
tὸ δ᾽ αὖ ἐξουσιών τῇ δ᾽ ὁμοῦ τὸς ἀν γυνῆ
dύνατο, κοινωνοῦσα τῶν αὐτῶν γάμων;
ὄρω γὰρ ἤβην τὴν μὲν ἐρπουσαν πρόσω,
tὴν δὲ φὴνοσαν' δυν ἀφαρπάζον φιλεῖ
ὁθαλμὸς ἀνθοῦς, τῶν δ᾽ ὑπεκτρέπει πόδα.
ταῦτ' οὖν φοβοῦμαι μὴ πόσις μὲν Ἡρακλῆς
ἐμὸς καληται, τῆς νεοτέρας δ᾽ ἀνήρ.

1 ἐγὼ δὲ μάτηρ of MSS. is clearly corrupt. Jebb suggests, but does not print, ἀγὼν δὲ μαργᾶ.
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.
ἀλλʼ οὐ γάρ, ὅσπερ εἶπον, ὄργανειν καλὸν γυναῖκα νοῦν ἔχουσαν· ἢ δὲ ἔχω, φίλαι, λυτήριον λόφημα, τῇ ὑμῖν φράσω. ἦν μοι παλαιὸν δῶρον ἀρχαῖον ποτὲ θηρός, λέβητι χαλκέῳ κεκρυμμένον, δὲ παῖς ἔτʼ οὐσα τὸν δασυστέρνου παρὰ Νέσσου φθίνουτος ἐκ φοινῶν ἀνειλόμην, ὅς τὸν βαθύρροον ποταμὸν Εὐνυν προτοὺς μισθοῦν τῷ ξύλῳ χερσάν, οὕτε πομπίμοις κῶπαις ἔρεσσουν οὕτε λαίφεσιν νεώς. ὅς κἄμε, τὸν πατρὸν ἤμικα στόλον ξύν Πρακλεῖ τὸ πρῶτον εὕνεστομήν, φέρον ἐπ’ ὀμοίως, ἤμίκ’ ἡ μέσω πόρῳ, γανεὶ ματαίας χερσίν ἐκ δ’ ἡμῶν εὐμβάρειας εὐθὺς ἐπιθρέπας χεροῖν ἴκεν κομήτην ἰών· ἐς δὲ πλεύμωνας στέρνων διερροίξησεν, ἐκθυνήσκων δ’ ὁ θήρ τοσοῦτον εἴπε· παῖ γέροντος Οἰνέως, τοσόνδ’ ἀνήσει τῶν ἐμῶν, ἐὰν πίθη, πορθμοῖς, ὠδούνεχ’ υστάτην σ’ ἐπεμψ’ ἐγώ· ἐὰν γὰρ ἀμφίθρεπτον αἶμα τῶν ἐμῶν σφαγῶν ἐνεγκη χερσίν, ἦ μελαχρόλους ἐβαφέων ἰοὺς θρέμμα Λερναιᾶς ὕδρας, ἐσται φρενὸς σοι τοῦτο κηλητήριον τῆς Πρακλείας, ὡςτε μότιν εἰσιδῶν στερξεὶ γυναῖκα κεῖνος ἀντὶ σοῦ πλέον. τούτ’ ἐννοῆσα’, δ’ ὁ φίλαι, δόμοις γὰρ ἦν κεῖνον θαυμάκος ἐγκεκλημένον καλῶς, χυτῶνα τὸν’ ἐβαψα, προσβαλοῦσ’ ὅσα ξών κεῖνος εἴπε· και πεπείρανται τάδε.

1 λύπημα 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
κακάς δὲ τόλμας μητ’ ἐπισταίμην ἐγὼ μητ’ ἐκμάθοιμι, τάς τε τολμώσας στυγῶ· φίλτροις δ’ ἐὰν πὼς τήν ὑπερβαλόμεθα τὴν παίδα καὶ θέλκροισε τοῖς ἑφ’ Ἡρακλεῖ, μεμηχάνηται τούργον, εὐ τι μὴ δοκῶ πράσσειν μάταιον’ εἰ δὲ μή, πεπαύσομαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἀλλ’ εἰ τις ἐστὶ πίστις ἐν τοῖς δρωμένοις, δοκεῖς παρ’ ἡμῖν οὐ βεβουλεύον.  

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
οὔτως ἔχει γ’ ἡ πίστις, ὡς τὸ μὲν δοκεῖν ἐνεστὶ, πείρα δ’ οὐ προσωμήλησά πως.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἀλλ’ εἰδέναι χρῆ δρώσαν, ὡς οὐδ’ εἰ δοκεῖς ἢχειν, ἔχοις ἄν γνῶμα, μὴ πειρωμένη.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
ἀλλ’ αὐτίκ’ εἰσόμεσθα, τόνδε γὰρ βλέπω θυραίον ἡδη· διὰ τάχους δ’ ἐλεύσεται. μόνον παρ’ ὑμῶν εὐ στεγωμέθεν’ ὡς σκότῳ κάν αἰσχρὰ πράσσης, οὔποτ’ αἰσχύνη πεσεῖ.

ΛΙΧΑΣ
τι χρῆ ποεῖν; σήμαινε, τέκνον Οἰνέως, ὡς ἐσμὲν ἡδη τῷ μακρῷ χρόνῳ βραδεῖς.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
ἀλλ’ αὐτὰ δὴ σοι ταῦτα καὶ πράσσω, Λίχα, ἐως σὺ ταῖς ἐσωθεὶν ἣγορῶ ἔξεαις, ὅπως φέρης μοι τόνδε ταναύφη πέπλον, δόρυμ’ ἐκεῖνω ταύδρι τῆς ἐμῆς χρόνης. διδοὺς δὲ τόνδε φράξ’ ὅπως μὴ δεῖς βροτῶν κείνου πάρουθεν ἀμφιδύτεται χροῖ, μηδ’ ὀψετάι νῦν μὴ ἄει φέγγος ἥλιον.
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,
μήθ᾽ ἐρκοῦ, εἰρήν μῆτ᾽ ἐφέστιον σέλας,
πρὶν κεῖνος αὐτὸν φανερὸς ἐμφανῶς σταθεὶς
deίξῃ θεοῖσιν ἥμερα ταυροσφάγῳ.
οὔτω γὰρ ηὕσαμην, εἰ ποτ᾽ αὐτὸν ἐς δόμους
ίδοιμι σωθέντ᾽ ἢ κλύοιμι πανδίκως,
στελείν χιτῶνι τῶν καὶ φανεῖν θεοῖς
θυτῆρα καινῷ καινὸν ἐν πεπλώματι.
καὶ τῶν ἀποίσεις σήμ᾽, ὃ κεῖνος εὖμαθὲς
σφραγίδος ἐρκεὶ τῶν ἐπὸν μαθήσεται. 1
ἀλλ᾽ ἔρπε, καὶ φύλασσε πρῶτα μὲν νόμον,
tὸ μὴ πιθυμεῖν πομπὸς ὃν περισσοὶ δρῶν
ἐπειδ᾽ ὅπως ἄν ἡ χάρις κεῖνον τέ σοι
κάμον ἐκκενθήσεται ἐξ ἀπλῆς διπλῆς faνῆ.

ΔΙΧΑΣ
ἀλλ᾽ εὔπερ Ἐρμοῦ τήνδε πομπεύω τέχνην
βέβαιον, οὐ τι μὴ σφαλῶ γ᾽ ἐν σοὶ ποτε,
tὸ μὴ οὐ τὸ ἄγγος ὡς ἔχει δεῖξαι φέρων,
λόγων τε πίστιν ὃς ἐφαρμὸσαι. 2

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
στείχοις ἂν ἦδη καὶ γὰρ ἐξεπιστασαι
tά γ᾽ ἐν δόμοισιν ὃς ἔχοντα τυγχάνει.

ΔΙΧΑΣ
ἐπίσταμαι τε καὶ φράσω σεσωμένα.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
ἀλλ᾽ οἴσθα μὲν δὴ καὶ τὰ τῆς ξένης ὁρῶν
προσδέγματ᾽, αὐτὴν ὡς ἐδεξάμην φίλως.

ΔΙΧΑΣ
ὡστ᾽ ἐκπλαγῆναι τοῦμον ἡδονῇ κέαρ.

1 ἐπ᾽ ὦμα θήσεται MSS., Billerbeck corr.
2 ἐχεῖς MSS., Wunder corr.
Till he stand forth in sight of all arrayed
For gods to see it, at some solemn feast.
For I had vowed, if ever I should see
Or hear for certain of his safe return,
To invest him in this newly-woven robe,
And so present him duly to the gods,
A votary for the sacrifice new-dight.
And as a token point him out this seal,
The impress of my signet-ring, that he
Will surely recognise.

Now go thy way,
And heed the rule of messengers, nor let
Thy zeal outrun thy orders, but so act
That thou may'st win a double meed of thanks
For service rendered both to him and me.

LICHAS
Call me no master of the mystery
Of Hermes, if in ought I trip or fail—
Deliver not this casket as it is,
And add in attestation of the gift
Thy very words.

DEIANIRA
Thou may'st be going now.
How things are in the house thou know'st full well.

LICHAS
I know, and will report all safe and sound.

DEIANIRA
And thou canst tell him of the captive maid—
How kindly I received and welcomed her.

LICHAS
Yea, I was filled with wonder and delight.
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

τί δήτ᾽ ἂν ἀλλο γ᾽ ἐννέποις; δέδοικα γὰρ
μὴ πρῶ λέγοις ἂν τὸν πόθον τὸν ἐξ ἐμοῦ;
πρὶν εἰδέναι τάκειθεν εἰ ποθούμεθα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὁ ναύλοχα καὶ πετραῖα
θερμὰ λουτρὰ καὶ πάγους
Οἵτας παραναἰτάτοντες, οὐ τε μέσσαν Μηλίδα πάρ
λίμναν
χρυσαλακάτου τ᾽ ἀκτὰν κόρας,
ἐνθ᾽ Ἑλλάνων ἄνγορα
Πυλάτιδες κλέονται·

ὁ καλλιβόας τάχ᾽ ὑμῖν
αύλος οὐκ ἀναρσίαν
ἀχῶν καναχὰν ἐπάνεισιν, ἀλλὰ θείας ἀντίλυρον
μούσας.

ὁ γὰρ Διὸς Ἀλκμήνας κόρος
σοῦται πάσας ἀρετὰς
λάφυρ᾽ ἔχων ἐπ᾽ οἶκους·

δυκαιδεκάμηνον ἀμμένουσαι
δυοκαιδεκάμηνον ἀμμένουσαι
τάλαιναν δυστάλαινα καρδίαν
πάγκλαυτος αἰὲν ὥλλυτο'

ἀφίκοιτ᾽ ἀφίκοιτο: μὴ σταίη
πολύκωπον ὄχημα ναὸς αὐτῷ,
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, νασιώτων ἑστίαν ἀμείψας, ἐνθα κλήζεται θυτήρ· οἴκειν μόλοι πανίμερος, 
tὰς πειθοὺς παγχρίστων συγκραθεὶς ἐπὶ προφάσει φάροις.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
γυναῖκες, ὣς δέδοικα μὴ περαιτίρω πεπραγμέν' ἡ μοι πάνθ' ὅσ' ἀρτίως ἐδρων.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
τί δ' ἐστι, Δηάνειρα, τέκνου Οἰνέως;

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
οὐκ οἴδ' ἀθυμῶ δ', εἰ φανήσομαι τάχα κακόν μέγ' ἐκπράξασ' ἀπ' ἐλπίδοις καλῆς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
οὐ δὴ τι τῶν σῶν Ἡρακλεί Δωρημάτων;

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
μάλιστα γ', ὡστε μῆποτ' ἀν προθυμιαν ἀδηλον ἔργον τῳ παρανέσαι λαβεῖν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
διδάξον, εἰ διδακτῶν, ἐξ ὅτου φοβεῖ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ
τοιοῦτον ἐκβέβηκεν οἷον· ἥν φράσω, γυναῖκες, ὑμᾶς ἡμῖν μάθεις ἢ γαρ τὸν ἐνδυτήρα πέπλον ἀρτίως ἐξέχρισε, ἀργής οἷος εὐέρος πόκος, τούτ' ἡφάνισται διάβορον πρὸς οὐδενὸς τῶν ἐνδυτῶν, ἀλλ' ἐδεστὸν ἐξ αὑτοῦ φθίνει,

1 πανίμερος MSS., Mudge corr.
2 θηρός MSS., Haupt corr.
3 ὑμῖν MSS., Jebb corr.
4 ἀργηὴτ'. . . πόκῳ MSS., Lobeck corr.
Where to Zeus, his vows all paid,  
Sacrifices he hath made.  
May the magic mantle fire  
All his heart with fond desire,  
Speed him to his true love's arms  
Captive to her subtle charms.

Enter Deianira.

Deianira
Maidens, I fear I have been over bold  
And ill advised in all I did of late.

Chorus
What mean'st thou, Deianira, Oeneus' child.

Deianira
I know not, but I tremble lest deceived  
By fond hopes I have wrought a grievous harm.

Chorus
Thou speak'st not of thy gift to Heracles?

Deianira
'Tis so; and I would henceforth counsel none  
To act in haste, unless the issue's clear.

Chorus
Tell, if thou may'st, the cause of thy alarm.

Deianira
My friends, a thing has come to pass, so strange  
That, if I tell it, you will deem you hear  
A miracle. The flock of wool wherewith  
E'en now I smeared the festal robe ('twas plucked  
From a white fleece) has disappeared, untouched  
By aught within the house, but self-consumed
καὶ ἡ κατ’ ἄκρας σπιλάδος· ὡς δ’ εἰδῆς ἅπαν, ἡ τοῦτ’ ἐπράξθη, μείζον’ ἐκτενῶ λόγον. ἔγω γὰρ ὅν ὁ θήρ με Κένταυρος, ποιῶν πλευράν πικρά γλωχίν, προνυδίδαξατο παρῆκα θεσμῶν οὐδεν, ἀλλ’ ἐσωζόμην χαλκῆς ὅπως δύσιτπτον ἐκ δέλτου γραφήν. καὶ μοι τάδ’ ἦν πρόρρητα καὶ τοιαῦτ’ ἐδρων· τὸ φάρμακον τοῦτ’ ἀπυρον ἀκτίνος τ’ ἀεὶ θερμῆς ἀθεκτον ἐν μυχοίσ σωζεῖν ἐμε, ἐως νυν ἀρτίκρηστον ἀρμόσαιμι ποι. κάδρων τοιαυτα. νῦν δ’, ὅτ’ ἦν ἐργαστέον, ἔχρισα μὲν κατ’ οἶκον ἐν δόμοισ κρυφῆ μαλλω, σπάσασα κτησίου βοτοῦ λάχνην, κάθηκα συμπτύξασ’ ἀλαμπὲς ἡλίου κούλῳ ξυγάστρῳ δῶρον, ῥωσπερ εἴδετε. εἰσω δ’ ἀποστειχουσα δέρκομαι φάτιν ἄφραστον, ἀξύμβλητον ἀνθρώπῳ μαθεῖν. τὸ γὰρ κάταγμα τυχάνω βίψασά πως τῆς οἰός, φ’ προύχριων, ἐν μέσην φλόγα, ἀκτίν’ ἐς ἡλιῶτιν· ὡς δ’ ἐθάλπετο, ρεὶ πάν ἄθικτον καὶ κατέφηκται χθονί, μορφή μάλιστ’ εἰκαστον ὅστε πρίονος ἐκβρῶματ’ ἀν βλέψειας ἐν τομῇ ἔξωλοι. τοιοῦδε κεῖται προπετές· ἐκ δὲ γῆς, ὅθεν προῦκειτ’, ἀναζέουσι θρομβώδεις ἄφροι, γλαυκῆς ὀπώρας ὅστε πίονος ποτοῦ χυθέντος εἰς γῆν Βακχίας ἀπ’ ἀμπέλου. ὡστ’ οὐκ ἔχω τάλανα ποι θρόμης πέσω ὀρῶ δὲ μ’ ἐργον δεινὸν ἐξειργασμένην. πόθεν γὰρ ἂν ποτ’, ἀντί τοῦ θυρήσκων ὁ θήρ ἐμοι παρέσχε νυσιαν, ἢς ἐθνησα’ ύπερ; οὐκ ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ τοῦ 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 upwelled,
As when the spilth of Bacchus, from the grapes
New pressed and purple, on the ground is poured.
Thus I for trouble know not where to turn,
And only see a fearful thing I have done.
Why should the dying Centaur then have shown
Regard for me, the author of his death?
Impossible! no, he was cozening me,
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

χρήζων ἐθελγέ μ’. ὃν ἐγὼ μεθύστερον, ὅτ’ οὐκέτ’ ἀρκεί, τὴν μάθησιν ἄρνυμαι. μόνῃ γὰρ αὐτὸν, εἴ τι μὴ ψευσθήσομαι γνώμης, ἐγὼ δύστηνος ἐξαποφθερώ· τὸν γὰρ βαλόντ’ ἀτρακτον οἴδα καὶ θεόν Χείρωνα πημήναντα, χώνυπερ ἀν θύγη, φθείρει τὰ πάντα κνώδαλ’. ἐκ δὲ τοῦδ’ ὅδε σφαγών διελθῶν ἱδος αἰματος μέλας πῶς οὐκ ὀλεί καὶ τόνδε; δόξη γοῦν ἐμῆ. καλτοι δέδοκται, κεῖνος εἰ σφαλῆσεται, ταύτῃ σὺν ὅρμῃ κἀκε συνθανεῖν ἁμα’ δὲν γὰρ κακῶς κλύουσαν οὐκ ἀνασχέτον, ἢ τις προτιμᾶ μὴ κακῇ πεφυκέναι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

tαρβεῖν μὲν ἔργα δείν’ ἀναγκαίως ἐχει, τὴν δ’ ἐλπίδ’ οὐ χρή τῆς τύχης κρίνειν πάρος.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

οὐκ ἔστων ἐν τοῖς μη καλοῖς βουλεύμασιν οὐδ’ ἐλπίς, ἢ τις καὶ θράσος τι προξενεῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ’ ἀμφι τοῖς σφαλεϊσι μη ʼξ ἐκουσίας ὅργη πέπειρα, τῆς σε τυγχάνειν πρέπει.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

tοιαύτα δ’ ἀν λέξειν οὐχ ὁ τοῦ κακοῦ κοινωνός, ἀλλ’ φ’ μηδέν ἐστ’ οἰκείοι βαρύ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

σιγάν ἂν ἀρμόζοι σε τὸν πλείω λόγον, εἰ μη τι λέξεις παιδ’ τῷ σαυτῆς’ ἐπεὶ πάρεστι, μαστηρ πατρὸς ὃς πρὶν φιλετο.

ΤΔΛΟΣ

ὁ μήτερ, ὡς ἂν ἐκ τριῳν σ’ ἐν εἰλόμην, ἢ μηκέτ’ εἶναι ξώσαν, ἢ σεσοσμένην

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And sought, through me, his slayer to undo.
Too late, too late, when knowledge naught avails,
My eyes are opened. I alone am doomed,
(Unless my fears prove false) to slay my lord.
I know the shaft that slew the Centaur scathed
E’en Cheiron, though a god, and any beast
It touches dies. So the black venomed gore
That from the wound of Nessus oozed must slay
Likewise my lord. Thus I, alas, must think.
Howbeit I am resolved, if fall he must,
The selfsame stroke of fate shall end my days.
What woman noble born would dare live on
Dishonoured when her fair repute is gone?

CHORUS
’Tis true dread perils threaten; yet ’twere well
To cherish hope till the event be known.

DEIANIRA
They who have counselled ill cannot admit
One ray of hope to fortify their soul.

CHORUS
Men will not look severely on an act
Unwittingly committed, as was thine.

DEIANIRA
With a good conscience one might urge this plea
Which ill becomes a partner in the crime.

CHORUS
’Twere better to refrain from further speech,
Unless thou wouldst address thy son; for he
Who went to seek his father is at hand.

Enter HYLLUS.

HYLLUS
Mother, I would that of three wishes one
Were granted me—that thou wert lying dead,
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ἄλλου κεκλῆσθαι μητέρ’, ἢ λόφους φρένας 
τῶν νῦν παρουσῶν τῶν ἀμείψασθαί ποθεν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

tί δ' ἐστίν, ὅ παϊ, πρὸς γ' ἐμοῦ στυγούμενον;

ΤΑΛΩΣ

tὸν ἄνδρα τὸν σὸν ἵσθι, τὸν δ' ἐμὸν λέγω 
πατέρα, κατακτείνασα τῇ δ' ἐν ἡμέρᾳ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ὁμοι, τίν' ἐξήνεγκας, ὡ τέκνον, λόγον;

ΤΑΛΩΣ

διὸν οὐχ οἶνον τε μὴ οὐ τελεσθήμεν οὗ τὸ γὰρ 
φανθὲν τίς ἀν δύναι τ' ἀν ἀγένητον ποείν;

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

πῶς εἶπας, ὅ παϊ; τοῦ παρ' ἄνθρώπων μαθῶν 
ἀξηλον οὕτως ἔργον εἰργάσθαι με φῆς;

ΤΑΛΩΣ

αὐτὸς βαρείαν ξυμφορὰν ἐν ὁμμασιν 
πατρὸς δεδορκὼς κοὐ κατὰ γλῶσσαν κλύων.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ποῦ δ' ἐμπελάζεις τἀνδρὶ καὶ παρίστασαι;

ΤΑΛΩΣ

eὶ χρὴ μαθεῖν σε, πάντα δὴ φωνεῖν χρεών. 
οὐθ' εἴρπε κλεινήν Εὐρύτου πέρσας πόλιν, 
νίκης ἄγων τροπαία κάκροθίναι, 
ἀκτή τις ἀμφίκλυστος Εὐβοίας ἄκρων 
Κήναιόν ἐστων, ἐνθ' ἐνθ' πατρόφω Διὶ 
βωμοὺς ὀρίζει τεμενίαν τε φυλλάδα, 
οὐ νῦν τὰ πρῶτ' ἐστιν ἀσμενοι πόθω. 
μέλλοντι δ' αὐτῷ πολυθύτους τεύχειν σφαγὰς 
κήρυκε ὡς οἰκῶν ἱκετ' οἰκείον Λίχας, 
τὸ σὸν φέρων δώρημα, θανάσιμον πέπλον.
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

δι' κείνος ἐνδύσει, ὡς σὺ προξεφίεσο, ταυροκτονεῖ μὲν δώδεκ' ἐντελεῖς ἐχὼν λείαις ἀπαρχὴν βοῦς· ἀτὰρ τὰ πάνθ᾽ ὀμοῦ ἐκατόν προσήγῃ συμμυγή βοσκήματα. καὶ πρῶτα μὲν δείλαιος ἄλεος φρενί, κόσμῳ τὲ χαίρων καὶ στολῇ, κατηύχετο· ὅπως δὲ σεμνῶν ὅργην ἐδαίετο φλὸξ αἴματηρὰ κἀπὸ πιείρας δρυός, ἱδρῶς ἀνήει χρωτί, καὶ προσπτύσσεται πλευραίσιν ἀρτίκολλος, ὡστε τέκτωνος, χιτῶν ἀπαν κατ᾽ ἄρθρον· ἕλθε δ᾽ ὄστέων ἀδαγμός ἀντίσπαστος· εἶτα φοινίας ἑχθράς ἑχίδνης ἰὸς ὡς ἐδαίνυτο. ἐνταῦθα δὴ ἑρῴσε τὸν δυσδίμονα Δίχαν, τὸν οὐδὲν αἴτιον τοῦ σοῦ κακοῦ, ποίαις ἑνέγκοι τόδε μηχαναῖς πέπλον· ὁ δ᾽ οὐδὲν εἰδὼς δύσμορος τὸ σὸν μόνης δώρημ᾽ ἔλεξεν, ὡσπερ ἦν ἐσταλμένων. κάκεινος ὡς ἦκουσε καὶ διώδυνος σπαραγμὸς αὐτοῦ πλευμόνων ἀνθήψατο, μάρφας ποδὸς νυ, ἄρθρον ἦ λυγίζεται, ῥυπτεὶ πρὸς ἀμφικλυστὸν ἐκ πόνου πέτραν ἀνθήπος ὑπ΄ ἐλευκόν μυελόν ἐκράινε, κατὰ τροκτὰς διασπαρέντος ἀματός θ᾽ ὀμοῦ. ἀπασ δ᾽ ἀνηφήμησεν οἴμωγη λεώς, τοῦ μὲν νοσοῦντος, τοῦ δὲ διαπεμπραγμένου· κοῦδεὶς ἐτόλμα τάνδρος ἀντίον μολεῖν. ἐσπάτο γὰρ πέδουν καὶ μετάρσιος, βοῶν, ἴος ἀμφὶ δ᾽ ἐκτύπου πέτραι, Λοκρῶν τ᾽ ὀρειοὶ πρῶνες Ἑυβοιας τ᾽ ἀκραί.
Thy gift, the fatal robe; he put it on
According to thy precept; then began
His sacrifice with twice six faultless bulls,
The firstfruits of the booty; but in all
A hundred victims at the altar bled.
At first, poor wretch, with joyous air serene,
Proud of the pomp and ceremony, he prayed;
But when the blood-red flame began to blaze
From the high altars and the resinous pine,
A sweat broke out upon him; and the coat
Stuck to his side, and clung to every limb,
Glued, as it were, by some skilled artisan.
A pricking pain began to rack his bones.
Soon the fell venom of the hydra dire
Worked inward and devoured him. Thereupon
He called for Lichas, who, poor witless wretch,
Had in thy guilt no part or lot, demanding
Who hatched the plot and why he had brought the robe.
The youth unwitting said it was thy gift,
Thine only, and delivered as 'twas sent.
While yet he listened a convulsive spasm
Shot through his lungs. He caught him by the foot,
Just at the ankle joint, and hurled him full
Against a rock out-jutting from the foam:
His skull was crushed to fragments, and his hair
Bedaubed with blood and flecked with scattered brains.
A cry of horror from the crowd arose
At sight of one distraught and one struck dead;
And no man dared to face him, for the pain
Now dragged him down, now made him leap in air,
While with his yells and screams the rocks resound
From Loerian headlands to Euboean capes.
ἐπεὶ δ᾽ ἀπείπτε, πολλὰ μὲν τάλας χθονὶ ῥίπτων ἔαυτὸν, πολλὰ δ᾽ οἴμωγῇ βοῶν, τὸ δυσπάρευνον λέκτρον ἐνδατούμενος σοῦ τῆς ταλαίνης, καὶ τὸν Οἶνεως γάμον οἴου κατακτήσατο λυμαντὴ βίου, τὸτ᾽ ἐκ προσέδρου λυγνύος διάστροφον ὀφθαλμοῦ ἄρας εἴδε μ᾽ ἐν πολλῷ στρατῷ δακρυρροοῦντα, καὶ μὲ προσβλέψις καλεὶ· ὁ παῖ, πρόσελθέ, µη φύγῃς τοῦ μακρὸν κακῶν, µηδ᾽ εἰ σε χρῆ θανόντι συνθανείν ἐμοί· ἀλλ᾽ ἄρον ἐξῶ, καὶ μάλιστα μὲν µε θῆς ἐνταυθ᾽ ὅπου µε µή τις ὤψεται βροτῶν· εἰ δ᾽ οὐκτὸν ὁσχος, ἀλλὰ µ᾽ ἐκ γε τῇς γῆς πόρθμευσον ὡς τάχιστα, µηδ᾽ αὐτοῦ θάνω. τοσαῦτ᾽ ἐπισκήψαντος, ἐν µέσῳ σκάφει θέντες σφε πρὸς γῆν τῆν ἑκέλσαμεν µῶς βρυχώμενον ὀπὰσµοὶς· καὶ µυν αὐτικὰ ἥξων, ἐσοψεθ᾽ ἡ τεθυκυτὴ ἀρτίως. τοιαῦτα, µήτερ, πατρὶ βουλεύσας ἐµῷ καὶ δρῶσ᾽ ἐξανθῆ, ὥστε σε ποίνιμος Δίκη τίσαιτ᾽ Ἐρινύς τ᾽. εἰ θῆς δ᾽ ἐπεύχομαι θῆς δ', ἐπεύχανθ᾽, ἔµετοι τὴν θῆς σὺ προὺσα έμετοι κὴτείνασ', ὅποιον ἄνυλον οὐκ ὅψει ποτῆ. 

ΧΟΡΟΣ
τί σιγ' ἀφέρπεις; οὐ κάτοιςθ᾽ οἴονεικα ξυνηγορεῖς σιγῶσα τῷ κατηγόρῳ;

ΤΑΛΟΣ
ἔατ᾽ ἀφέρπειν· οὐρὸς ὀφθαλμῶν ἐμῶν αὐτῇ γένοιτ᾽ ἅπωθὲν ἐρπούση καλός. ὅγκον γὰρ ἄλλως ὀνόματος τί δεί τρέφειν
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,
μητρώον, ἦτις μηδὲν ὡς τεκοῦσα ἑρᾷ;
ἀλλ' ἐρπέτω χαίρουσα· τὴν δὲ τέρψιν ἴδι
τῶμε δίδωσι πατρί, τῆν' αὐτῇ λάβοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ίδ' οἶν, ὦ παῖδες, προσέμιξεν ἀφαρ στρ. α'.
τούπος τὸ θεοπρόπον ἡμῖν τὰς παλαιφάτου προνοίας,
ὁ τ' ἐλακεν, ὅποτε τελεύμηνος ἐκφέροι
dωδέκατος ἀροτός, ἀναδοχὰν τελείων πόνων
το Διὸς αὐτόπαιδε καὶ τάδ' ὀρθώς
ἐμπεδα κατουρίζει. πῶς γάρ ἄν ὁ μή λεύσσων
ἔτι ποτ' ἐτ' ἐπίπονον πόνων' ἕχοι θανὸν λα-
tρεῖαν;

ei γάρ σφε Κενταύρου φονία νεφέλα

χρείει δολοποίος ἀνάγκα
πλευρά, προστακέντος ιοῦ,
ὅν τέκετο θάνατος, ἔτρεφε ἀἰώλος δράκων,
πῶς ἄδ' ἄν ἄελιον ἐτερον ἡ τανῦν ἴδοι,
δεινοτάτῳ μὲν υδρας προστετακὼ
φάσματι; μελαγχαίτα δ' ἄμμιγα νιν αἰκίζει
Νέσσου ὑποφόνια δολιόμυθα κέντρ' ἐπιζέσαντα.

στρ. β'

ἂν ἄδ' ἀ τλάμων ἄκονος μεγάλαν προσρῶσα
dόμωσι βλάβαν νέων
ἀışıσουσαν ἑράμων τὰ μὲν αὐτὰ προσέβαλε, τὰ
δ' ἀπ' ἀλλόθρου.

1 Gleditsch inserts πόνων. 2 ἔτεκε MSS., Lobeck corr.
3 νέόσουθον θ' ὑποφόνια δολιομῦθα MSS., Gleditsch corr.
4 ἀışıσουσαν MSS., Nauck corr. 5 ὦ τ' MSS., Blaydes corr.
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
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?

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,
All innocent, knew naught:
Only the curse to void, I ween,
Of a new bride she sought.
γνώμας μολόντ’ ὠλεθρίαις συναλλαγαῖς
ἡ ποι ὁλοὰ στένει,
ἡ ποι ἁδινῶν χλωρᾶν
τέγγει δακρύων ἁχναν.
ἀ δ’ ἐρχομένα μοῖρα προφαίνει δολίαν
καὶ μεγάλαν ἅταν.

ἄντ. β’
ἐρρογεν παγὰ δακρύων’ κέχυται νόσος, ὕ πόποι,
οὗν ἀναραῖον
οὕπω Ἡρακλέους ἠ ἁγακλειτὼν ἐπέμολε πάθος
οἰκτίσαι.
ἰδ’ κελαινὰ λόγχα προμάχου δορός,
ἄ τότε θοὰν νύμфаν
ἀγαγες ἀπ’ αἰπεινᾶς
τάνδ’ Οἰχαλίαν αἰχμᾶ;
ἀ δ’ ἀμφίπολος Κύπρις ἀνανδός φανερὰ
τῶν ἐφήνη πράκτωρ.

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ α’
πότερον ἐγὼ μάταιος, ἡ κλῶν τινὸς
οὐκτον δι’ οὐκων ἁρτίως ὀρμωμένον;
τί φημι;

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ β’
ἡχεὶ τις οὐκ ἄσημον, ἀλλὰ δυστυχῆ
κωκυτῶν εἴσω, καὶ τι καίνιξει στέγη.

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ

ξύνες δὲ
τῆν ὅς κατηφής καὶ συνωφρυωμένη
χωρεὶ πρὸς ἡμᾶς γραῖα σημανοῦσά τι.

1 Ἡρακλέους is clearly a gloss, and the true reading must remain conjectural.
2 ἁθῆς MSS., Blaydes corr.
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!
ΤΡAXINIIAI

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

ὁ παῖδες, ὡς ἄρ᾽ ἡμὶν οὐ σμικρῶν κακῶν ἦρξεν τὸ δῶρον Ἡρακλεῖ τὸ πόμπιμον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
tί δ', ὦ γεραιά, καινοποιηθέν λέγεις;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

βέβηκε Δηάνειρα τὴν πανυστάτην ὁδῶν ἀπασῶν ἐξ ἀκινῆτου ποδὸς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐ δὴ ποθ' ὡς θανοῦσα;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

πάντ' ἀκήκοας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
tέθυηκεν ἡ τάλαινα;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

δεύτερον κλύεις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
tάλαιν' ὀλεθρία: τίνι τρόπῳ θανεῖν σφε φῆς;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

σχετλιώτατα γε πρὸς πρᾶξιν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
eἰπὲ τῷ μόρῳ,

γύναι, ξυντρέχει.

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

αὐτὴν διηύτωσε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
tίς θυμὸς ἢ τίνες νόσοι τὰνδ' αἰχμᾶ 1 βέλεος κακοῦ ξυνείλε; πῶς ἐμήσατο πρὸς θανάτῳ θάνατον ἀνύσασα μόνα;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

στονόεντος εὖ τομῆς σιδάρου.

1 αἰχμᾶ 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.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἐπείδες, ὦ ματαία, τάνδε τὴν ὑβριν;
ΤΡΟΦΟΣ
ἐπείδουν, ώς δὴ πλησία παραστάτως.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
tίς ἦν; πώς; φέρʾ εἰπέ.
ΤΡΟΦΟΣ
αὐτὴ πρὸς αὐτῆς χειροποιεῖται τάδε.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
tί φωνεῖς;
ΤΡΟΦΟΣ
σαφηνή.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἐτεκεν ἐτεκε δὴ μεγάλαν
ἀ νεόρτος ἅδε νύμφα
dόμοισι τοῖσδ᾽ ἐρινύν.
ΤΡΟΦΟΣ
ἀγαν γεʼ μᾶλλον δʼ, εἰ παροῦσα πλησία
ἐλευσσές οἰ ἐδρασε, κάρτ’ ἄν θετισας.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
καὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἐτλὴ τις χεὶρ γυναικεία κτίσαι;
ΤΡΟΦΟΣ
dεινῶς γεʼ πεῦσει δ’, ὡστε μαρτυρεῖν ἐμοί.
ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἦλθε δωμάτων εἶσον κόμη
καὶ παῖδ’ ἐν αὐλαις εἰδε κοίλα δέμνια
στορυόνθ’, ὡπως ἄφορρον ἄντων πατρί,
κρύψασ’ ἐαυτὴν ἐνθὰ μὴ τις εἰσίδοι,
βρυχᾶτο μὲν βωμοῖσι προσπίπτοντος ὅτι
γένους’ ἔρημου, ’κλαίε δ’ ὀργάνων ὅτου
φαύσευν οἷς ἔχρητο δειλαία πάρος:
ἀλλή δὲ καλλῆ 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,
εἴ τον φίλων βλέψειν οἰκετῶν δέμας, ἐκλαίειν ἡ δύστηνος εἰσορωμένη, αὐτὴ τὸν αὐτῆς δαίμον’ ἀνακαλουμένη καὶ τὰς ἀπαίδας ἐς τὸ λοιπὸν ὁυσίας. ἐπεὶ δὲ τῶν ἐληξεν, ἐξαίφνησαν σφ’ ὁρῶ τὸν Ἡράκλειον θάλαμον εἰσορωμένην. κάγω λαβραῖον ὀμμ’ ἐπεσκιασμένη φρούρουν. ὁρῶ δὲ τὴν γυναικά δεμνίοις τοῖς Ἡρακλείοις στρωτὰ βάλλουσαν φάρη. ὅπως δ’ ἐτέλεσε τοῦτ’, ἐπενθοροῦσ’ ἰῶν καθέξετ’ ἐν μάστοις εὐνατριῶσ, καὶ δακρύων ῥήξασα θερμὰ νάματα ἐλεξεν. ὁ λέχη τε καὶ νυμφεὶ’ ἐμά, τὸ λοιπὸν ἅδη χαίρεθ’, ὡς ἐμ’ οὕποτε δέξεσθ’ ἐτ’ ἐν κοίταις ταῖοῦ εὐνατριᾶν. τοσαῦτα φωνήσασα συντόφῳ χερὶ λύει τὸν αὐτῆς πέπλον, ἣ χρυσῆλάτος προύκειτο μαστῶν περουνίς, ἐκ δ’ ἐλώπισεν πλευρὰν ἀπασαν ὀλένην τ’ εὐώνυμον. κάγω δρομαία βασ’, ὀσονπερ ἐσθενον, τῷ παιδὶ φράζω τῆς τεχνωμένης τάδε. καὶ ὁ τὸ κείσε δευρό τ’ ἐξορμῶμεθα, ὀρῶμεν αὐτὴν ἀμφιπλῆγι φασγάνω πλευρὰν ύφ’ ἦπαρ καὶ φρένας πεπληγμένην. ἱδὼν δ’ ὁ παῖς φομωξεν. ἐγνω γὰρ τάλας τούργουν κατ’ ὀργὴν ὡς εφάψειεν τόδε, ὡς ἐκδιδαχθεῖσ τῶν κατ’ οὐκον ὀυνεκα ἀκουσα προς τοῦ θηρὸς ἐξεξειν τάδε. κανταῦθ’ ὁ παῖς δύστηνος οὐτ’ ὀδυρμάτων.

1 The line is corrupt. The translation follows Jebb’s conjecture, καὶ τῆς ἐπ’ ἄλλοις ἐς τὸ λοιπὸν ὀυσίας.
2 ὁ 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 spēal, 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:
ἐλείπετ' οὐδέν, ἀμφί νυν γιούμενος, 
οὔτ' ἀμφιπίπτων στόμασι, ἀλλὰ πλευρόθεν 
πλευρὰν παρεὶς ἐκείνο τὸλλ' ἀναστένων, 
ὡς νυν' ματαιώς αἰτία βάλοι κακή, 
κλαίων ὀθούνεκ' ἐκ δυνὸν ἐσοιθ' ἄμα, 
πατρὸς τ' ἐκείνης τ', ὦρφανισμένος βίον. 
τοιαύτα τάνθάδ' εστίν' ὡστ' εἰ τίς δύο 
ἡ καὶ τι πλείους ἡμέρας λογίζεται, 
μάταιός εστίν' οὖ γὰρ ἐσθ' ἡ γ' αὖριον, 
πρὶν εὗ πάθη τις τὴν παροῦσαν ἡμέραν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
πότερα πρότερον ἐπιστένω, 
πότερα μέλεα 2 περαιτέρω, 
δύσκριτ' ἐμουγε δυστάνῳ.

τάδε μὲν ἔχομεν ὄραν δόμοις, 
τάδε δὲ μένομεν ἐπ' ἐλπίσιν 
κοινὰ δ' ἐχειν τε καὶ μέλλειν.

εἰθ' ἀνεμόσσα τις 
γένοιτ' ἐπουροσ ἐστιώτις αὕρα, 
ὡς μ' ἀποκισεκεν ἐκ τῶν ὁπώς 
τῶν Δίον ἀλκιμον γόνον 
μὴ ταρβαλέα θάνοιμι 
μοῦν εἰσιδοῦσ' ἄφαφ'. 
ἐπεὶ ἐν δυσαπαλλάκτοις ὀδύναις 
χωρεῖν πρὸ δόμων λέγουσιν 
ἀπετόν τι θαῦμα.

ἀγχοῦ δ' ἀρα κού μακράν 
προύκλαιον, ὀξὺφωνος ὡς ἀγδόν.

1 καὶ πλείους τις MSS., Dindorf corr. 
2 τέλεα MSS., Musgrave corr. 
3 δίος 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,
ΤΡΑΞΙΝΙΑΙ

ξένων γὰρ ἐξόμιλος ἦδε τις βάσις.
πὰ δ᾽ αὐ φορεῖ νυν; ὡς φίλον
προκηδομέναι βαρεῖαν
ἀψοφον φέρει βάσιν.
αἰαῖ, ὡδ᾽ ἀναύδατος φέρεται.
τί χρὴ θανόντα νυν ἢ καθ᾽
ὕπνον οὖντα κρίναι;

ΤΑΛΟΣ
οἴμοι ἐγὼ σοῦ,
πάτερ, οἴμοι ἐγὼ σοῦ μέλεος.
τί πάθω; τί δὲ μήσομαι; οἴμοι.

ΠΡΕΣΒΤΣ
σίγα, τέκνου, μὴ κινήσῃς
ἀγρίαν ὄδυνην πατρὸς ὁμόφρονος·
ζῇ γὰρ προπετής· ἀλλ᾽ ἵσχε δακῶν
στόμα σόν.

ΤΑΛΟΣ
πῶς φής, γέρον; ἢ ζῇ;

ΠΡΕΣΒΤΣ
οὐ μὴ ᾿ξεγερεῖς τὸν ὕπνῳ κάτοχον
κάκκωστής κάναστής
φοιτάδα δεινήν
νόσον, ὦ τέκνον.

ΤΑΛΟΣ
ἀλλ᾽ ἐπὶ μοι μελέως
βάρος ἀπλετον· ἐμμέμονεν φρήν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ
ὦ Ζεῦ,
ποῖ γὰς ᾿ηκω; παρὰ τοῖσι βροτῶν
κεῖμαι πεπονημένος ἀλλήκτοις
ὄδυναις; οἴμοι μοι ¹ ἐγὼ τλάμων
ἡ δ᾽ αὐ μιαρὰ 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

ΠΡΕΣΒΤΣ

ἀρ’ ἐξήδη σ’ ὅσου ἢν κέρδος
σιγῇ κεύθειν καὶ μὴ σκεδάσαι
τῶν ἀπὸ κρατὸς
βλεφάρων θ’ ὑπνον;

ΤΑΛΟΣ

οὐ γὰρ ἔχοι πῶς ἂν
στέρξαιμι κακὸν τὸδε λεύσσων.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὁ Κηναία κρητῖς βωμῶν,
ἱερῶν οἵαν οἵων ἐπὶ μοι
μελέω χάριν ἡμύσως ὁ Ζεῦ.
οίαν μ’ ἀρ’ ἔθου λώβαν, οίαν
ἡν μὴ ποτ’ ἐγὼ προσιδεῖν ὁ τάλας
ὄφελον ὅσσοις, τὸδ’ ἀκήλητον
μανίας αὖθες καταδερχήματι.
τίς γὰρ ἄοιδός, τίς ὁ χειροτέχνης
ἰατορίας, ὅς τῆν ἁτ’ ἁτην
χωρίς Ζηνὸς κατακηλήσει;
θαύμ’ ἂν πόρρωθεν ἰδοίμην.

ἐ’ ἐ’,
ἐάτε μ’, ἐάτε με δύσμορον ὑστατον,
ἐάθ’ ὑστατον εὐνάσθαι. 1

πὰ πὰ μου ψαύεις; ποὶ κλίνεις;
ἀπολείψ μ’, ἀπολείψ.
ἀνατέτροφας ὁ τι καὶ μύση.
ἡπταὶ μου, τοτοτοῖ, ἥδ’ αὖθ’ ἐρπτεί. πόθεν ἐστ’, ω 1
πάντων Ἐλλάνων ἀδικώτατοι ἀνέρες, ὃς δὴ

1 ἐάτε με δύσταν εὐνάσαι MSS., Wunder corr.
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 'scaped this frenzied rage
No incantation can assuage.
Where is the charmer, where the leech,
Whose art a remedy could teach,
Save Zeus alone? If one could tell
Of such a wizard, 'twere a miracle.

O leave me, let me lie
In my last agony!

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!
πολλὰ μὲν ἐν πόντῳ κατά τε δρία πάντα καθαίρων ὥλεκόμαν ὁ τάλας, καὶ νῦν ἐπὶ τῶδε νοσοῦντι οὐ πῦρ, οὐκ ἐγχὸς τοὺς ὀνήσιμον οὐκ ἐπιτρέψει;

𝑒 ἐ, ἀντ. α' οὐδ' ἀπαράξαι κράτα βία 1 θέλει μολὼν τοῦ στυγέρον; φεῦ φεῦ.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕ

ὁ παῖ τοῦ δ' ἀνδρός, τοῦργον τόδε μεῖζον ἀνήκει ἢ κατ' ἐμὰν ῥώμαν· σοὶ δὲ σύλλαβε. σοι γὰρ ἐτοίμα ἐς πλέον η δι' ἐμοὺ σφύξειν. 2

ΤΑΛΟΣ

μαύρῳ μὲν ἐγγωγε, λαθίπονον δ' ὅδυναν οὔτ' ἐνδοθεν οὔτε θύραθεν ἐστι μοι ἐξανύσαι βιότον· τοιαύτα νέμει Ζεὺς.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὁ παῖ, πού ποτ' εἴ; τάδε με τάδε με στρ. γ' πρόσλαβε κονφίςας. ε ἐ, ἰδ' δαιμόν.

θρόσκει δ' αὖ, θρόσκει δειλαία ἀντ. β' διολοῦσ' ἡμᾶς ἀποτίβατος ἀγρία νόσος.

ὁ Παλλᾶς Παλλᾶς, τόδε μ' αὖ λωβάται. ἰδ' παῖ, τὸν φύτορ' οἰκτίρας, ἀνεπιφθονον ἐφυσον ἐγχος, παῖσον ἐμᾶς ὑπὸ κλῆδος· ἀκοῦ δ' ἄχος, ὁ μ' ἐχόλωσεν σὰ μάτηρ ἄθεος, τὰν ὃδ' ἐπίδοιμα πεσοῦσαν αὐτῶς, ὃδ' αὗτως ὃς μ' ὠλεσεν. ὁ γλυκὺς" Αἰδας, 10-

1 βἰου MSS., Wakefield corr.
2 σοὶ τε γὰρ ὃμα ἐμπλευ MSS., Jebb corr.
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!
ὁ Δίος αὐθαίμων, εὕνασον εὕνασον μ’ ἀκυπέτα μόρῳ τὸν μέλεον φθίσας.

Χόρος
κλύουσ’ ἐφρίξα τάσδε συμφοράς, φίλαι, ἀνακτος, οίας οἴος ὅν ἑλαύνεται.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ
ὁ πολλὰ δὴ καὶ θερμὰ κοῦ λόγῳ ¹ κακὰ καὶ χερῶ καὶ νότοιοι μοχθήςας ἐγὼ· κούπτω τοιοῦτον οὔτ’ ἀκοιτίς ἦ Δίος προῦθηκεν οὔθ’ ὁ στυγμὸς Εὐρυσθεὺς ἐμοὶ, οἰον τόδ’ ἦ δολώπις Οἰνέως κόρη καθήψεν ὦμοις τοῖς ἐμοὶς Ἐρυνύων ὕφαντόν ἀμφίβληστρον, ὃ διόλλυμαι. πλευράσι γὰρ προσμαχθὲν ἐκ μὲν ἐσχάτας βέβροκε σάρκας, πλεύμονος ᾗ ἀρτηρίας ῥοφεὶ ἔνυκοικοὺς, ἐκ δὲ χλωρὸν αἰμά μοι πέπωκεν ἥδη, καὶ διέϕδηραι δέμας τὸ πᾶν, ἀφράστῳ τῇδε χειρωθεὶς πέδη, κοῦ ταῦτα λόγχη πεδιάς, οὔθ’ ὁ γηγενής στρατὸς Γιγάντων οὔτε θῆρειος βλα, οὔθ’ Ἑλλὰς οὔτ’ ἀγλωσσὸς οὔθ’ ὡσην ἐγὼ γαῖαν καθαίρων ικόμην, ἔδρασε πώ· γυνή δέ, θῆλυς φῦσα ² κοῦκ ἀνδρὸς φύσιν, μόνη με δὴ καθείλε φασγάνου δίχα. ὁ παῖ, γενοῦ μοι παῖς ἐτήτυμος γεγώ, καὶ μὴ τὸ μητρὸς ὄνομα πρεσβεύσῃς πλέων. δός μοι χερῶν σαῖν αὐτὸς ἐξ οἰκοῦ λαβῶν ἐς χειρὰ τὴν τεκοῦσαν, ὦσ εἰδῶ σάφα εἰ τούμον ἀλγεῖς μάλλον ἡ κεῖσθαι ὅρων λαβητὸν ἐδοῦ ἐν δίκῃ κακοῦμεν. ἵθ’, ὡ τέκνον, τόλμησον· οἰκτιρόν τε με ³

1 καὶ λόγφ MSS., Bothe corr. ² oδσα MSS., Nauck corr.

1050 1060 1070

340
TRACHINIAE

Brother of Zeus, kind Death, be now my friend;
Lay me to rest and swift deliverance send.

CHORUS
I shudder, friends, to hear this woful plaint.
How great a hero, and how ill bestead!

HERACLES
Many and grievous, not in name alone,
The toils and burdens of these hands, these loins.
Yet trial like to this was never set me
By Heaven’s Queen or grim Eurystheus’ hate,
Such as the child of Oeneus, false and fair,
Hath fastened on my back, this hellish net
She wove to snare me, in whose coils I die.
It hugs me close, it eats into my flesh,
It sucks the channels of my breath, hath drained
My life-blood, and my whole frame wastes and withers,
Fast locked in these unutterable bonds.
And this my fall no warrior’s lance hath wrought
Nor Giant’s earth-born brood, nor savage beast,
Nor Grecian nor barbarian, nor the lands
Whither I fared to rid them of their pests;
No, but a woman, weak as all her sex,
Hath quelled me, single-handed and unarmed.
Son, show thyself thy father’s son in deed,
Mine, not thy mother’s—mother in name alone.
Hale her thyself, hand her thyself to me,
The wretch, that when she meets her righteous doom
I may make trial which sight moves thee more,
A mother’s or a father’s agony.
For pity’s sake shrink not; to see me thus
πολλοίσιν οἰκτρῶν, ὡστὶς ὡστε παρθένος βέβρυχα κλαίον, καὶ τὸν ἄνδρα φαίνη πρόσθ' ἰδεῖν δεδρακότα, ἁλλ' ἀστένακτος αἰὲν εἰπόμην κακοῖς. νῦν δ' ἐκ τοιούτου θῆλνυς ηὑρημαι τάλας. καὶ νῦν προσελθὼν στὴθι πλησίον πατρός, σκέψαι θ' ὅποιας ταῦτα συμφορᾶς ὑπο πέτονθα: δὲξὼ γὰρ τάδ' ἐκ καλυμμάτων. ἰδοὺ, θεᾶσθε πάντες ἀθλιον δέμας, ὀράτε τὸν δύστην, ὡς οἰκτρῶς ἕχω. αἰαῖ, ἃ τάλας, ἐθαλπεν ἀτης σπασμὸς ἀρτίως ὅδ' αὐ, διηξε πλευρῶν, ὡν' ἀγύμναστόν μ' ἔαν ἑοικεν ἡ τάλαινα διάβορος νόσος. ὅναξ ᾿Αἴδη, δέξαι μ', ὃ Διὸς ἀκτίς, παῖσον, ἐνσεισφον, ὅναξ, ἐγκατάσκηψαν βέλος, πάτερ, κεραυνοῦ: δαίνυμαι γὰρ αὐτ' πάλιν, Ἰυνθηκεν, ἐξωρμηκειν. ὃ χέρες χέρες, ὃ νῦμα καὶ στέρον', ὃ φίλοι βραχίονας, ὑμεῖς δὲ κεῖνοι δὴ καθεστὰθ', ἰ ποτὲ Νερέας ἐνοικον, βουκόλων ἀλαστορα λέοντ', ἀπλατον θρέμμα καπροσήγορον, βία κατειργάσασθε, Δερναλαν θ' ὑδραν, διηξε πλευρῶν, ὡν' ἁμακοντα μῦχαν διάβορος νόσος. ὃ τον θῆρα, τὸν θ' ὑπὸ θρόνονς ᾿Αἰδον τρίκρανον σκύλακ', ἀπρόσμαχον τέρας, δεινῆς ᾿Εχίδνης θρέμμα, τὸν τε χρυσόν χρυσόν χρυσόν, ὑβριστὴν ἀνόμον, ὑπέροχον βίαν, ᾿Ερυμάνθιόν τε θῆρα, τὸν τε νῆρα, τὸν θ' ὑπὸ θρόνονς ᾿Αἰδον τρίκρανον σκύλακ', ἀπρόσμαχον τέρας, δεινῆς ᾿Εχίδνης θρέμμα, τὸν τε χρυσόν χρυσόν χρυσόν, ὑβριστὴν ἀνόμον, ὑπέροχον βίαν, ᾿Ερυμάνθιόν τε θῆρα, τὸν τε νῆρα, τὸν θ' ὑπὸ θρόνονς ᾿Αἰδον τρίκρανον σκύλακ', ἀπρόσμαχον τέρας, δεινῆς ᾿Εχίδνης θρέμμα, τὸν τε χρυσόν χρυσόν χρυσόν, ὑβριστὴν ἀνόμον, ὑπέροχον βίαν, ᾿Ερυμάνθιόν τε θῆρα, τὸν τε νῆρα, τὸν θ' ὑπὸ θρόνονς ᾿Αἰδον τρίκρανον σκύλακ', ἀπρόσμαχον τέρας, δεινῆς ᾿Εχίδνης θρέμμα, τὸν τε χρυσόν χρυσόν χρυσόν, ὑβριστὴν ἀνόμον, ὑπέροχον βίαν, ᾿Ερυμάνθιόν τε θῆρα, τὸν τε νῆρα, τὸν θ' ὑπὸ θρόνονς ᾿Αἰδον τρίκρανον σκύλακ', ἀπρόσμαχον τέρας, δεινῆς ᾿Εχίδνης θρέμμα, τὸν τε χρυσόν χρυσόν χρυσόν, ὑβριστὴν ἀνόμον, ὑπέροχον βίαν, ᾿Ερυμάνθιόν τε θῆρα, τὸν τε νῆρα, τὸν θ' ὑπὸ θρόνονς
(‘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 whate’er befell me with a smile. 
And now—’tis I who play the woman now. 
Come closer, stand beside me; see, my son, 
To what a pass ill fate hath brought thy sire. 
Lo, I will lift the veil; look all of you 
On this poor maimèd body, and declare 
Was ever wretch so piteous as I. 
Ah me! 
Again the deadly spasm; it shoots and burns 
Through all my vitals. Will it never end, 
This struggle with the never-dying worm? 
Lord of the Dead, receive me! 
Smite me, O fire of Zeus! 
Hurl, Father, on my head thy crashing bolt! 
Again it burgeons, blossoms, blazes forth, 
The all-consuming plague. 

O hands, my hands, 
Arms, breast and shoulders, once all puissant, 
Are ye the same whose thews of old subdued 
The scourge of herdsmen in his savage lair, 
The Nemean lion, a beast untamable; 
Slew the Lenaean 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.
νῦν δ' ὁδ' ἀναρθρος καὶ κατερρακωμένος
tυφλῆς ὑπ' ἄτης ἐκπετόρθημαί τάλας,
ὁ τῆς ἀρίστης μητρὸς ὄνομασμένος,
ὁ τού κατ' ἀστρα Ζηνὸς αὐδηθεὶς γόνος,
ἀλλ' εὗ γέ τοι τόδ' ἰστε, κἂν τὸ μηδὲν ὡ
κἂν μηδὲν ἔρπω, τὴν γε δράσασαν τάδε
χειρώσομαι κἂκ τῶνδε: προσμόλοι μόνον,
ὡ' ἐκδιδαχθη λᾶσιν ἀγγέλλειν ὅτι
καὶ ξῶν κακούς γε καὶ θανῶν ἐτισάμην.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ὡ τλῆμον Ἑλλάς, πένθος οἶον εἰσορῶ
ἐξουσαν, ἀνδρὸς τοῦδε γ' εἰ σφαλῆσεται.

ΤΑΔΟΣ
ἐπεὶ παρέσχεσ αὐτηφωνῆσαι, πάτερ,
συγήν παρασχῶν κλῆθι μου, νοσῶν ὄμως.
αὐτήσομαι γάρ σ' δ' ὄν δίκαια τυγχάνειν,
ὅσ' μοι σεαυτόν, μή τοσοῦτον ὡς δάκνει
θυμῷ δύσοργον: οὐ γὰρ ἀν γνοίης ἐν ὁς
χαίρειν προδυμεὶ κἂν ὁτοις ἀλγεῖς μάτην.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ
εἰπὼν ὃ χρήζεις λῆξον' ὡς ἐγὼ νοσῶν
οὐδὲν ξυνίῃ μ' ὃς σὺ ποικίλλεις πάλαι.

ΤΑΔΟΣ
τῆς μητρὸς ἥκω τῆς ἐμῆς φράσων ἐν ὁς
νῦν ἐστίν ὁς θ' ἡμαρτεν οὐχ ἑκουσία.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ
ὡ παγκάκιστε, καὶ παρεμνήσω γάρ ἀν
τῆς πατροφόντου μητρός, ὡς κλῦειν ἐμὲ;

ΤΑΔΟΣ
ἐχει γάρ οὔτως ὡστε μὴ σιγὰν 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

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ἄλλῳ οὖν μὲν δὴ τοῖς γ’ ἐφ’ ἡμέραν ἐρεῖς.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

λέγ’, εὐλαβοῦ δὲ μὴ φανῆς κακὸς γεγώς.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

λέγω· τέθνηκεν ἀρτίως νεοσφαγής.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

πρὸς τοῦ; τέρας τοι διὰ κακῶν ἐθέσπισας.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

αὐτῇ πρὸς αὐτής, οὖδενός πρὸς ἐκτόπου.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οἴμοι· πρὶν ὡς χρῆν σφ’ ἐξ ἐμῆς θανεῖν χερός;

ΥΛΛΟΣ

κἂν σοῦ στραφείη θυμός, εἰ τὸ πᾶν μάθοις.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

δεινοῦ λόγου κατῆρξας; εἰπὲ δ’ ἢ νοεῖς.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ἄπαν τὸ χρῆμ’; ήμαρτε χρηστὰ μωμένη.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

χρῆστ’, ὦ κάκιστε, πατέρα σὸν κτείνασα δρᾶ;

ΥΛΛΟΣ

στέργηµα γὰρ δοκοῦσα προσβαλεῖν σέθεν ἀπῆµπλαχ’, ὡς προσείδε τοὺς ένδον γάμους.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

καὶ τίς τοσοῦτος φαρµακεὺς Τραχιίων;

ΥΛΛΟΣ

Νέσσος πᾶλαι Κένταυρος ἐξέπεισεν ὦν τοῖς φίλτρῳ τὸν σὸν ἕκμηναί πόθον.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ιὸν ἵον δύστηνος, οὐχομαί τάλας· ὀλωλ’ ὀλωλα, φέγγος ὑκετ’ ἐστὶ μοι.
And of her deeds this day, as thou wilt own.

Speak, but I fear thy speech will prove thee base.

Hear then. She is dead, slain but an hour agone.

By whom? this portent likes me not; 'tis strange.

By her own hand, none other, was she slain.

Out on her! she hath baulked my just revenge.

E'en thou wouldst soften if thou knewest all.

A wondrous prologue! make thy meaning plain.

The sum is this: she erred with good intent.

"Good," say'st thou, wretch? Was it good to slay thy sire?

Nay, when she saw thy new bride, she devised
A charm to win thee back, but was misled.

Could Trachis boast a wizard of such might?

The Centaur Nessus taught her long ago
How to enkindle in thy heart love's flame.

Alas, alas! I am undone, undone,
The light of day has left me; now I see
οἴμοι, φρονῶ δὴ ξυμφορᾶς ἵν' ἐσταμεν. ἵθ', δὲ τέκνου, πατήρ γὰρ οὐκέτ' ἐστὶ σοι
cάλει τὸ πᾶν μοι σπέρμα σῶν ὀμαμόνων,
cάλει δὲ τὴν τάλαιναν Ἀλκμῆνην, Διὸς
μάτην ἀκοίτων, ὡς τελευταίαν ἐμοῦ
φήμην πύθησθε θεσφάτων ὅσ' οἴδ' ἐγώ.

ΥΔΑΟΣ
ἀλλ' οὔτε μήτηρ ἐνθάδ', ἀλλ' ἐπακτία
Τίρυνθι συμβέβηκεν ὡστ' ἐχειν ἐδραν.
παίδων δὲ τοὺς μὲν ξυλλαβοῦσ' αὐτῇ τρέφει,
toὺς δ' ἄν τὸ Ὀμῆνας ἀστυ ναίοντας μάθοις:
ήμεις δ' ὧσοι πάρεσμεν, εἰ τι χρή, πάτερ,
πράσσειν, κλύοντες εξυπηρετήσωμεν.

ὙΡΑΚΛΗΣ
σὺ δ' οὖν ἄκουε τοὔργον: ἐξήκεις δ' ἵνα
φανεῖς ὁποίος ὡν ἄνηρ ἐμὸς καλεί.
ἐμοὶ γὰρ ἤν πρόφαντον ἐκ πατρὸς πάλαι,
tῶν ἐμπνεόντων ἡμῶν, ὅτι ἐμὸς θανεῖν ὑπὸ,
ἀλλ' ὡς τοὺς "Αἰδον φθίμενοι οἰκήτωρ πέλοι.
οὔ δ' οὖν ὁ θήρ Κένταυρος, ὥς τὸ θεῖον ἤν
πρόφαντον, οὔτω ξυλλαβοῦσ' ἐκτείνειν θανών.
φανὸς δ' ἐγὼ τούτους συμβαίνοι μ' ἐστὶ οὐκ
μαντεῖα καὶ ναίον, τοῖς πάλαι ξυνήγορα,
ἀ τῶν ὀρείων καὶ χαμαικοίτων ἐγὼ
Σελλῶν ἐσελθὼν ἄλσος εἰσεγράψαμην
πρὸς τὴν πατρίδας καὶ πολυγλώσσου δρυός,
ἡ μοι χρόνῳ τὸ ξυλλαβαίος καὶ παρόντι νῦν
έφασκε μόχθων τὸν ἐφεστώτων ἐμὸ
λύσιν τελειόσθαι, καθόκουν πρᾶξειν καλῶς.
tὸ δ' ἤν ἀρ' οὔδεν ἄλλο πλὴν θανεῖν ἐμέ.
τοῖς γὰρ θανοῦσι μὸχθος οὐ προσηγύγεται.

1 πρὸς 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
Alemena, 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 propheey.
'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

ταύτ’ οὖν ἐπειδὴ λαμπρὰ συμβαίνει, τέκνον, δεῖ σ’ αὖ γενέσθαι τόδε τάνδρι σύμμαχον καὶ μὴ πιμεῖναι, τούμον δὲ νικήσαι στόμα, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸν εἰκαθόντα συμπράσσειν, νόμον κάλλιστον ἐξευρόντα, πειθαρχεῖν πατρί.

ΤΑΔΟΣ

ἀλλ’ ὁ πάτερ, ταρβῶ μὲν εἰς λόγου στάσιν τοιάνδ’ ἐπελθῶν, πείσομαι ὅ’ ἄ σοι δοκεῖ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἐμβάλλε χείρα δεξιὰν πρώτιστά μοι.

ΤΑΔΟΣ

ὦς πρὸς τί πίστιν τήν γάν ἐπιστρέφεις; ἡ πρόδοτειν, κοῦδὲν ἀντειρήσεται.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὖ θάσσον οὐσεις μηδ’ ἀπιστήσεις ἐμοί; Καὶ τὸ δράσειν; καὶ τόδ’ ἐκτελεῖν.

ΤΑΔΟΣ

ὁμως Δίως νυν τοῦ με φύσαντος κάρα, οὐ θᾶσσον οἴσεις μηδ’ ἀπιστήσεις ἐμοί; οὐ μὴ λάβω: δράσω γάρ: εὔχομαι δ’ οὕσθ.”

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

εἶ δ’ ἑκτὸς ἔλθοις, πημονὰς εὔχοις λαβεῖν.

ΤΑΔΟΣ

οὐ μὴ λάβω: δράσω γάρ: εὔχομαι δ’ οὕσθ’ οὖν τὸν Οὐτής Ζηνὸς ὕψιστον πάγον;
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
οἶδ᾽, ὡς θυτήρ γε πολλὰ δὴ σταθεῖς ἄνω.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ
ἐνταῦθά νυν χρὴ τούμον ἐξάραντά σε
σῶμ᾽ αὐτόχειρα καὶ ξὺν οἷς χρήζεις φίλων.
πολλὴν μὲν ὑλὴν τῆς βαθυρρίξου δρυὸς
κείραντα, πολλὸν δ᾽ ἄρσεν ἐκτεμόνθ᾽ ὁμοῦ
ἄγριον ἔλαιον, σῶμα τούμον ἐμβαλεῖν,
καὶ πευκίνης λαβόντα λαμπάδος σέλας
πρῆσαι. γόου δὲ μηδὲν εἰσίτω δάκρυν,
ἀλλ᾽ ἀστένακτος ὥς ἐίπερ εἶ ἑπεὶ τοῦδ᾽ ἀνδρός,
ἐρξον εἰ δὲ μὴ, μενὸς ὁ ἐγὼ καὶ νέρθεν ὃν ἀραιὸς εἰσαι βαρὺς.

ΤΑΛΟΣ
οἴμοι, πάτερ, τί δ᾽ εἶπας; οἰά μ᾽ εἰργασαί.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ
ὁποῖα δραστεῖ εἰστίν· εἰ δὲ μὴ, πατρῶς
ἄλλου γενοῦ του μηδ᾽ ἐμὸς κληθῆς ἐτί.

ΤΑΛΟΣ
οἴμοι μάλ᾽ αὕθις, οἰά μ᾽ ἐκκαλεῖ, πάτερ,
φονέα γενέσθαι καὶ παλαμναῖον σέθεν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ
οὐ δὴτ᾽ ἐγωγ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ὃν ἐχω παιώνιον
καὶ μούνον ἰατῆρα τῶν ἐμῶν κακῶν.

ΤΑΛΟΣ
καὶ πῶς ὑπαίθων σῶμ ἂν ἰώμην τὸ σῶν;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ
ἀλλ᾽ εἰ φοβεῖ πρὸς τοῦτο, τάλλα γ᾽ ἐργασαί.

ΤΑΛΟΣ
φορᾶς γε τοι φθόνησις οὐ γενὴσεται.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ
ἡ καὶ πυρᾶς πλήρωμα τῆς εἰρημένης;
TRACHINIAE

HYLLUS
Yea, I have climbed it oft to sacrifice.

HERACLES
Thither thyself, thou with what friends thou wilt, Must carry me. From the deep-rooted oak Lop many a branch, and many a faggot hew From the wild-olive’s lusty stock, and lay me Upon the pyre. Kindle a torch of pine, And fire it. Not a tear or wail or moan! Unweeping, 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

ΤΑΛΟΣ

ὅσον γ' ἄν αὐτὸς μὴ ποτιψαύων χερῶιν, τὰ δ' ἄλλα πράξω κού καμεῖ τούμον μέρος.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἀλλ' ἀρκέσει καὶ ταῦτα. πρόσνειμαι δέ μοι χάριν βραχείαν πρὸς μακροίς ἀλλοις διδούς.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

eἰ καὶ μακρὰ κάρτ' ἐστίν, ἐργασθῆσεται.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

tὴν Εὐρυτείαν οἶσθα δῆτα παρθένου;

ΤΑΛΟΣ

Ἰόλην ἐλέξας, ὡς γ' ἐπεικάζειν ἐμέ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἐγνως. τοσοῦτον δή σ' ἐπισκῆτω, τέκνοις ταύτην ἐμῶν θανόντος, εἴπερ εὔσεβεῖν βούλει, πατρώων ὤρκιον μεμνήμενος, προσθοῦ δάμαρτα, μηδε ἀπιστῇς πατρί. μηδ' ἄλλος ἀνδρῶν τοῖς ἐμοῖς πλευροῖς ὁμοί κλιθείσαν αὐτὴν ἀντί σοῦ λάβῃ 1 ποτὲ, ἀλλ' αὐτός, ὡ παῖ, τούτο κηδεύσαν λέχος. πείθου. τὸ γάρ τοι μεγάλα πιστεύσαντ' ἐμοὶ σμικροῖς ἀπιστεῖν τὴν πάρος συγχεῖ χάριν.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

οἴμοι. τὸ μὲν νοσοῦντι θυμοῦσθαι κακόν, τὸ δ' ὡδ' ὀραν προνούντα τίς ποτ' ἀν φέροι;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὡς ἐργασείων συνδεῖν ὃν λέγω θροείς.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

τίς γὰρ ποθ', ἢ μοι μητρὶ μὲν θανεῖν μόνη μεταίτιος σοὶ τ' αὐθίς ὡς ἔχεις ἔχειν,

1 λάβῃ MSS., Elmsley corr.
So that I light it not with my own hands; All else I will perform and do my part.

That will suffice. But add one other boon, A little one, to crown the great ones given.

It shall be granted, be it ne'er so great.

Thou know'st the maiden, child of Eurytus?

Methinks thou meanest Iolē.

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.

Ah me! 'tis ill to quarrel with one sick— But who could bear to see him in this mind?

Thy murmuring augurs disobedience.

What her, the sole cause of my mother's death, And worse, the cause of this thy grievous plight!
ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

τίς ταύτ’ ἂν, ὡς μὴ ἥξ ἀλαστόρων νοσοῖ, ἐλοιτο; κρείσσον κἀμέ γ’, δ’ πάτερ, θανείν ἥ τοῖσιν ἐχθίστοισι συνναίειν ὁμοῦ.

ἩΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἀνὴρ ὠδ’, ὡς ἑοικεῖν, οὐ νεμεῖν ἐμοὶ φθίνοντι μοῖραν· ἀλλὰ τοῖς θεῶν ἢ ἁμεῖ σ’ ἀπιστήσαντα τοῖς ἐμοῖς λόγοις.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

ἀμοῖ, τάχ’, ὡς ἑοικας, ὡς νοσεῖς φράσεις.

ἭΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐ γὰρ μ’ ἀπ’ εὐνασθέντος ἐκκινεῖς κακοῦ.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

δείλαιοις, ὡς ες πολλὰ τάπορεῖν ἔχω.

ἭΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐ γὰρ δικαιοῖς τοῦ φυτεύσαντος κλύειν.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

ἀλλ’ ἐκδιδαχθῶ δῆτα δυσσεβεῖν, πάτερ;

ἭΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐ δυσσέβεια, τοῦμὸν εἰ τέρψεις κέαρ.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

πράσσειν ἄνωγας οὖν με πανδίκως τάδε;

ἭΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἐγωγε’ τούτων μάρτυρας καλῶ θεοῦς.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

τοιγὰρ ποήσω κοὐκ ἀπώσομαι, τὸ σὸν θεοῖσι δεικνυ έργον’ οὐ γὰρ ἄν ποτε κακὸς φανεῖν σοί γε πιστεύσασ, πάτερ.

ἩΡΑΚΛΗΣ

καλῶς τελευτᾶς, κατὶ τοῖσδε τὴν χάριν ταχεῖαν, δ’ παῖ, πρόσθες, ὡς πρὶν ἐμπεσεῖν ὁπαραγμὸν ἢ τὶν’ οἴστρον, ἐς πυρὰν με θῆς.
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.

The boy, it seems, is not inclined to heed
A father's dying prayer; but heaven's curse
Awaits full sure a disobedient son.

I fear thy frenzy soon will show itself.

Yea, for thou wakenest my pain that slept.

O what a coil of dread perplexities!

Because thou wilt not deign to heed thy sire.

What, must I learn impiety from thee?

'Tis piety to glad a father's heart.

I have thy warrant then for what I do?

I call the gods to witness it is just.

Then I consent and hesitate no more.
Let heaven attest this act of thine, for I
Cannot be blamed for filial piety.

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: παῦλά τοι κακῶν αὐτῆ, τελευτὴ τούδε τάνδρος ὑστάτη.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὐδὲν εἰργεῖ σοι τελειοῦσθαι τάδε, ἐπεὶ κελεύεις κάξαναγκάζεις, πάτερ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἀγε νυν, πρίν τήν ἀνακινήσαι νόσον, ὃ ψυχὴ σκληρά, χάλυβος λιθοκόλλητον στόμιον παρέχουσ', ἀνάπαυε βοήν, ὡς ἐπίχαρτον τελέουσ' ἀκοὐσιον ἔργων.

ΤΑΛΟΣ

αἰρετ', ὁπαδοί, μεγάλην μὲν ἐμοὶ τούτων θέμενοι συγγνωμοσύνην, μεγάλην δὲ θεῶν ἀγνομοσύνην εἰδότες ἔργων τῶν πρασσομένων, οὶ φύσαντες καὶ κληξύμενοι πατέρεσ τοιαῦτ' ἐφορῶσι πάθη. τὰ μὲν οὖν μέλλουσ' οὐδεὶς ἐφορά, τὰ δὲ νῦν ἐστῶτ' οἰκτρὰ μὲν ἡμῖν, αἰσχρὰ δ' ἐκείνοις, χαλεπώτατα δ' οὖν ἀνδρῶν πάντων τῷ τήνδ' ἀτην ὑπέχοντι.

λείπου μηδὲ σύ, παρθέν', ἀπ' οἶκων, μεγάλους μὲν ἰδοῦσα νέους θανάτους, πολλὰ δὲ πάματα καὶ καινοπαθῆ, κοῦδέν τούτων ὡς τι μὴ Ζεύς.
(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

ΟΔΗΣΕΤΣ
ΧΟΡΟΣ
ΣΚΟΠΟΣ ὡς ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ
ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ
DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ODYSSEUS.
NEOPTOLEMUS.
PHILOCTETES.
SAILOR (disguised as Merchant Captain).
HERACLES.
CHORUS, Scyrian sailors of Neoptolemus' Crew.

SCENE: Rocky Coast on the Island of Lemnos.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

᾽Ακτή μὲν ἦδε τῆς περιρρύτου χθονὸς
Δήμουν, βροτοῖς ἀστιπτος οὐδ᾽ οἰκουμένη,
ἔνθ', ὥς κρατίστου πατρὸς Ἐλλήνων τραφεῖς
᾽Αχιλλέως παῖ Νεοπτόλεμε, τὸν Μηλιὰ
Ποιαντος νῦν ἔξεδοθηκ' ἐγώ ποτε,
ταχθεὶς τόδ' ἔρδειν τῶν ἀνασσόντων ὑπο,
νόσῳ καταστάξοντα διαβόρφ πόδα:
"Οτ' οὔτε λοιβῆς ἡμῖν οὔτε θυμάτων
παρὴν ἐκήλοις προσθυγείν, ἀλλ' ἀγρίαις
κατειχ' ὧν τὰν στρατόπεδον δυσφημίαις,
βοῶν, στενάξων. ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν τί δεῖ
λέγειν; ἀκμὴ γὰρ οὐ μακρῶν ἡμῖν λόγων,
μὴ καὶ μάθη μ' ἣκοντα κακχέω τὸ πᾶν
σόφισμα, τὸ νῦν αὐτίς αἰρήσειν δοκῶ.
ἀλλ' ἐργόν ἢδη σὸν τὰ λοιφ' ὑπηρετεῖν
σκοπεῖν θ' ὅπου 'στ' ἐνταύθα δίστομος πέτρα
tοιάδ', ἵν' ἐν ψύχει μὲν ἡλίου διπλῆ
πάρεστιν ἐνθάκησις, ἐν θέρει δ' ὑπνὸν
d' ἀμφυτρῆτος αὐλίου πέμπει πνοή.
βαιῶν δ' ἐνερθήν ἐξ ἀριστερᾶς τάχ' ἄν
ἰδοις ποτὸν κρημάιον, εἶτερ ἐστὶ σῶν.
ἀ μοι προσελθῶν σίγα σήμαιν' εἴτ' ἐκεί
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,
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

χώρον τὸν αὐτὸν ἐτʼ εἰτʼ ἀλλη κυρεῖ, ὡς τὰ πίλοιτα τῶν λόγων σὺ μὲν κλύης, ἑγὼ δὲ φράζω, κοινὰ δʼ εξ ἀμφοῖν ἥγη.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἀναξ Ὄδυσσεῦ, τοῦργον οὐ μακρὰν λέγεις; δοκῶ γὰρ οἶον εἶπας ἀντικροὶ εἰσορᾶν.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
ἀνωθεν ἡ κάτωθεν; οὐ γὰρ ἐννοῶ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟ疠ΜΟΣ
τὸδʼ εξύπερθε καὶ στίβου γ’ υδεῖς κτύπος.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
ἄνωθεν ἢ κάτωθεν; οὐ yap ἐννοῶ. ἢ

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
τόδʼ ἐξύπερθε' καὶ στίβου γ’ οὐδεὶς κτύπος.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
ὁρῶ κενὴν οἴκησιν ἀνθρώπων δίχα. —:

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
τὰ δʼ ἀλλʼ ἔρημα, κοινὸν ἑσθʼ υπόστεγον;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
κείνου τὸ θησαύρισµα σηµαίνεις τόδε.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ιού ιοῦ· καὶ ταῦτα γ’ ἀλλα θάλπεται

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
ἀνὴρ κατοίκει τοῦσι τῷς τόπους σαφῶς; καστ’ οὐχ ἔκας πον’ πῶς γὰρ ἀν νοσῶν ἀνήρ

1 πρὸς αὐτὸν MSS., Blaydes corr.
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
κὼλον παλαιὰ κηρὶ προσβαίη μακράν; ἀλλ᾽ ἢ π᾽ ὲ φορβῆς νόστον ἐξελήλυθεν ἢ φύλλον εἰ τι νώδυνον κάτοιδε που.
πον οὐν παρόντα πέμψων εἰς κατασκοπήν, μὴ καὶ λάθη με προσπεσών ὡς μᾶλλον ἂν ἐλοιτῶ μ᾽ ἢ τοὺς πάντας Ἄργειος λαβεῖν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀλλ᾽ ἐρχεταὶ τε καὶ φυλάξεται στίβος. σὺ δ᾽, εἰ τι χρήζεις, φράζε δευτέρῳ λόγῳ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

κῶλον παλαιᾷ κηρὶ προσβαίη μακράν; ἀλλ᾽ ἢ π᾽ ὲ φορβῆς νόστον ἐξελήλυθεν ἢ φύλλον εἰ τι νώδυνον κάτοιδε που.
πον οὐν παρόντα πέμψων εἰς κατασκοπήν, μὴ καὶ λάθη με προσπεσών ὡς μᾶλλον ἂν ἐλοιτῶ μ᾽ ἢ τοὺς πάντας Ἄργειος λαβεῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ᾽ ἐρχεταὶ τε καὶ φυλάξεται στίβος. σὺ δ᾽, εἰ τι χρήζεις, φράζε δευτέρῳ λόγῳ.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

᾽Αχιλλέως παῖ, δεῖ σ᾽ ἐφ᾽ οἷς ἐλήλυθας γενναῖον εἶναι, μὴ μόνον τῷ σώματι, ἀλλ᾽ ἢν τι καινὸν ὄν πρὶν οὐκ ἂκικοας κλύης, ὑπουργεῖν, ὡς ὑπηρέτης πάρει.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τι δήτ᾽ ἀνώγας; -

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

τὴν Φιλοκτήτου σε δεῖ ψυχὴν ὅπως δόλοισιν ἐκκλέψεις λέγων. ὅταν σ᾽ ἐρωτᾷ τις τε καὶ πόθειν πάρει, λέγειν, ᾿Αχιλλέως παῖς· τὸδ᾽ οὐχὶ κλεπτέον πλεῖς δ᾽ ὡς πρὸς οἶκον, ἐκλιπὼν τὸ ναυτικὸν στράτευμ᾽ ᾿Αχαιῶν, ἐκλιπὼν τὸ ναυτικὸν στράτευμ᾽ ᾿Αχαιῶν, ἐκλιπὼν τὸ ναυτικὸν στράτευμ᾽ ᾿Αχαιῶν, ἐκλιπὼν τὸ ναυτικὸν στράτευμ᾽ ᾿Αχαιῶν, ἐκλιπὼν τὸ ναυτικὸν στράτευμ᾽ ᾿Αχαιῶν,

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.

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

tούτω γὰρ οὐδέν μ᾽ ἀλγυνεῖς. εἰ δ᾽ ἐργάσεις μὴ ταῦτα, λύπην πᾶσιν Ἀργείοις βαλεῖς.
eἰ γὰρ τὰ τούδε τόξα μὴ ληφθῆσεται, οὐκ ἔστι πέρσαι σοι τὸ Δαρδάνου πέδων.
ὡς δ᾽ ἐστ᾽ ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐχί, σοὶ δ᾽ ὤμιλία πρὸς τούδε πιστῆ καὶ βέβαιος, ἐκμαθεῖ.
σὺ μὲν πέπλευκας ὧτ᾽ ἐνορκοὶ οὐδενὶ ὧτ᾽ ἐξ ἀνάγκης οὔτε τοῦ πρῶτον στόλου ἐμοὶ δὲ τούτων οὐδέν ἐστ᾽ ἀρνήσιμον.
ὡσ᾽ εἰ μὲ τόξων ἐγκρατῆς αἰσθηθῆσεται, ὀλωλα καὶ καὶ προσδιαφθερῶ χυνών.
ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὸ τοῦτο δεῖ σοφισθῆναι, κλοπεὺς ὅπως γενήσει τῶν ἀνικήτων ὁπλῶν.
ἐξοίδα; παῖ, φύσει σε μὴ πεφυκότα τοιαῦτα φωνεῖν μηδὲ τεχνᾶσθαι κακᾶ.
ἀλλ᾽ ἕδυ γὰρ τι κτήμα τῆς νίκης λαβεῖν, τόλμα: δίκαιοι δ᾽ αὖθις ἐκφανούμεθα.
νῦν δ᾽ εἰς ἀναίδες ἡμέρας μέρος βραχὺ- δός μοι σεαντόν, κατὰ τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον κέκλησο πάντων εὐσεβεστάτος βροτῶν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἐγὼ μὲν οὓς ἂν τῶν λόγων ἀλγῶ κλύων, Δαερτίου παῖ, τούδε καὶ πράσσειν στυγῶ· ἐφυν γὰρ οὐδὲν ἐκ τέχνης πράσσει κακῆς, ότ᾽ αὐτὸς οὔθ᾽, ὡς φασίν, οὐκφύσας ἐμέ. ἀλλ᾽ εἰμ᾽ ἐτοίμος πρὸς βίαν τὸν ἄνδρ᾽ ἀγείν καὶ μὴ δόλοισιν οὐ γὰρ ἐξ ἕως ποδὸς ἡμᾶς τοσοῦτοι πρὸς βίαν χειρώσεται. περμθεῖς γε μὲντοι σοὶ εἰσαγωγήτης ὁκνῶ προδότης καλεσθαί: βούλομαι δ᾽ ἀναξ, καλὸς δρῶν εξαμαρτεῖν μᾶλλον ἡ νικᾶν κακῶς.

1 τούτων 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

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἐσθλοῦ πατρὸς παι, καυτὸς ὃν νέος ποτὲ γλῶσσαν μεν ἄργον, χειρα δ’ εἶχον ἐργατιν’

νὸν δ’ εἰς ἔλεγχον ἐξιών ὃρῳ βροτοῖς τὴν γλῶσσαν, οὐκὶ τάργα, πάνθ’ ᾶγουμένην.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί μ’ οὖν ἄνωγας ἀλλο πλὴν ψευδή λέγειν;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

λέγω σ’ ἐγὼ δόλῳ Φιλοκτήτην λαβεῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί δ’ ἐν δόλῳ δεῖ μᾶλλον ἢ πείσαντ’ ἄγειν;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

οὐ μὴ πίθηται πρὸς βίαν δ’ οὐκ ἂν λάβοις.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὕτως ἔχει τι δεινὸν ἰσχύος θράσος;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἰούς γ’ ἀφύκτους καὶ προπέμποντας φόνων.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ ἄρ’ ἐκεῖνο γ’ οὐδὲ προσμίξαί θρασύ;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

οὐ, μὴ δόλῳ λαβόντα γ’, ὡς ἐγὼ λέγω.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ αἰσχρῶν ἤγει δήτα τὸ ψευδὴ λέγειν;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

οὐκ, εἰ τὸ σωθῆναί γε τὸ ψεῦδος φέρει.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

πῶς οὖν βλέπων τις ταῦτα τολμήσει λακείν; 110

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ὅταν τι δρᾶς εἰς κέρδος, οὐκ ὅκνειν πρέπει.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

κέρδος δ’ ἐμοὶ τί τοῦτον ἐς Τροίαν μολεῖν;
PHILOCTETES

ODYSSEUS
Son of a gallant sire, I too in youth
Was slow of tongue and forward with my hand;
But I have learnt by trial of mankind
M mightier than deeds of puissance is the tongue.

NEOPTOLEMUS
It comes to this that thou would'st have me lie.

ODYSSEUS
Entangle Philoctetes by deceit.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Why not persuade him rather than deceive?

ODYSSEUS
Persuasion’s vain, and force of no avail.

NEOPTOLEMUS
What arms hath he of such miraculous might?

ODYSSEUS
Unerring arrows, tipp’d with instant death.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Might not a bold man come to grips with him?

ODYSSEUS
No, as I told thee, guile alone avails.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Thou deem’st it, then, no shame to tell a lie?

ODYSSEUS
Not if success depends upon a lie.

NEOPTOLEMUS
To utter falsehoods I should blush for shame.

ODYSSEUS
If thou wouldst profit thou must have no qualms.

NEOPTOLEMUS
What gain to me, should he be brought to Troy?
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
αἱρεῖ τὰ τόξα ταῦτα τὴν Τροίαν μόνα.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
οὐκ ἄρ’ ὁ πέρσων, ὡς ἐφάσκετ', εἰμ' ἐγώ;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
οὔτ' ἂν σὺ κείνων χωρὶς οὔτ' ἐκεῖνα σοῦ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
θηρατε' οὖν γίγνοιτ' ἂν, εὖπερ ὁδ' ἔχει.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
(ὡς τοῦτο γ' ἔρξας δύο φέρει δωμήματα.)

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ποίω; μαθῶν γὰρ οὐκ ἂν ἄρνοίμην τὸ δρᾶν.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
σοφός τ' ἂν αὐτὸς κἀγαθὸς κεκλή' ἄμα.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἐπ' ἁπάσαν αἰσχύνην ἀφείς.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
ἢ μνημονεύεις οὖν ἂ σοι παρήνεσα;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἡ μνημονεύεις οὖν ἂ σοι παρήνεσα;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
σοφ' ἵσθ', ἐπ' ἐπείπερ εἰσάπαξ συνήνεσα.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
σὺ μὲν μένων νυν' κείνων ἐνθάδ' ἐκδέχου,

ἐγὼ δ' ἀπειμή, μὴ κατοπτευθό παρὼν,

καὶ τὸν σκοπὸν πρὸς ναῦν ἀποστελῶ πάλιν,

καὶ δεύρ', εὖν μοι τοῦ χρόνου δοκήτε τι
cataσχολάξειν, αὖθις ἐκπέμψω πάλιν
tοῦτον τὸν χρῶνα ναυτὶς μορφὴν δολώσας, ὡς ἂν ἄγνοια προσήθ'-

οὐ δήτα, τέκνων, ποικίλως αὐδωμένου-

δέχομαι τὰ συμφέροντα τῶν ἦς ἄρτ᾽ ἔγω,

ἐγὼ δὲ πρὸς ναῦν εἰμι, σοι παρεῖς τάδε.
PHILOCTETES

ODYSSEUS
Without these arms Troy-town cannot be sacked.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Ye told me I should take it. Was that false?

ODYSSEUS
Not thou apart from these nor these from thee.

NEOPTOLEMUS
The quarry’s worth the chase, if this be so.

ODYSSEUS
Know that success a double meed shall win.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Make plain this twofold prize and I’ll essay.

ODYSSEUS
Thou wilt be hailed as wise no less than brave.

NEOPTOLEMUS
I’ll do it—here’s my hand—and risk the shame.

ODYSSEUS
Good. My instructions—thou rememberest them?

NEOPTOLEMUS
I have consented; trust me for the rest.

ODYSSEUS
Stay here then and await his coming, whilst,
Lest I should be espied, I go away
And send back to the ship our sentinel;
But if ye seem to dally overmuch,
He shall return, the same man, but disguised
Past recognition, as a sailor clad.
When he accosts thee, mark each word, my son,
To catch the hid significance, for he
Will speak in riddles. This I leave to thee
And seek the vessel. Hermes aid us both,
Who sent us on our way, the God of cunning,
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

'Ἐρμῆς δ' ὁ πέμπων δόλιος ἡγήσαιτο νῷν Ἕρμης δ' ὁ πέμπων δόλιος ἡγήσαιτο νῷν Ἕρμης δ' ὁ πέμπων δόλιος ἡγήσαιτο νῷν Ἕρμης δ' ὁ πέμπων δόλιος ἡγήσαιτο νῷν Ἕρμης δ' ὁ πέμπων δόλιος ἡγήσαιτο νῷν Ἕρμης δ' ὁ πέμπων δόλιος ἡγήσαιτο νῷν Ἕρμης δ' ὁ πέμπων δόλιος ἡγήσαιτο νῷν Ἕρμης δ' ὁ πέμπων δόλιος ἡγήσαιτο νῷν Ἕρμης δ' ὁ πέμπων δόλιος ἡγήσαιτο νῷν Ἕρμης δ' ὁ πέμπων δόλιος ἡγήσαιτο νῷν Ἕρμης δ' ὁ πέμπων δόλιος ἡγήσαιτο νῷν Ἕρμης δ' ὁ πέμπων δόλιος ἡγήσαιτο νῷν Ἕρμης δ' ὁ πέμπων δόλιος ἡγήσαιτο νῷν Ἕρμης δ' ὁ πέμπων δόλιος ἡγήσαιτο νῷν Ἕρμης δ' ὁ πέμπων δόλιος ἡγήσαιτο νῷν Ἕρμης δ' ὁ πέμπων δόλιος ἡγήσαιτο νῷν Ἕρμης δ' ὁ πέμπων δόλιος ἡγήσαιτο νῷν Ἀθήνα Πολιάσι, ἦ σφέξει μ' ἀεί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί χρή τί χρή με, δέσποτ', ἐν ἔναν ἔνον στέγειν ἢ τί λέγειν πρὸς ἄνδρ' ὑπόπταν;

φράζε μοι. τέχνα γὰρ
tέχνας ἐτέρας προὔχει καὶ γνώμα παρ' ὅτῳ τὸ θεῖον

Διὸς σκῆπτρον ἀνάσσεται.

σε δ', ὦ τέκνον, τὸδ' ἐλήλυθεν

πᾶν κράτος ὁγύγιον. τὸ μοι ἔννεπε
tί σοι χρεών ὑπουργεῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

νῦν μέν, ἵσως γὰρ τόπον ἐσχατιαίς ἐν προσιδεῖν ἐθέλεις οὐτινὰ κεῖταί,

δέρκου θαρσῶν: ὅπόταν δὲ μόλῃ
dεινὸς ὀδίτης, τῶνδ' οὐκ 1 μελάθρων

πρὸς ἐμὴν αἰεί χεῖρα προχωρῶν

πειρῶ τὸ παρὸν θεραπεύειν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μέλον πάλαι μέλημά μοι λέγεις, ἄναξ, ἀντ. α' φρουρεῖν ὅμι. ἐπὶ σῷ μάλιστα καἰρῷ

νῦν δὲ μοι λέγ', αὐλάς

ποίας ἐνεδρος ναίει
cαι χώρον τίν' ἔχει. τὸ γάρ μοι

μαθεῖν οὐκ ἀποκαίριον,

μὴ προσπέσον μὲ λάθῃ ποθέν·
tίς τόπος ή τίς ἔδρα; τίν' ἔχει στίβον,

ἐναυλον ή θυραῖον;

1 ἐκ MSS., Jebb corr.
And she who never failed me yet, my queen,  
Athenè Polias, queen of victory!

[Exit odysseus.

Enter chorus of scyrian sailors.

chorus (Str. 1)  
What, O my master, what must I conceal  
And what reveal,  
In a strange land a stranger, by what wile  
His shrewd suspects beguile?  
Instruct me; for his art all art excels  
With whom there dwells  
The sovereignty of Zeus, the Kingly Crown  
That hath to thee come down,  
My son, by immemorial right divine;  
Such skill is thine;  
So teach me, master, how I best may speed  
Thy present need.

Neoptolemus  
First to find his lair, no doubt,  
Ye are keen; so boldly scout.  
When the wild man ye have spied  
Who within this cave doth bide,  
Watch the motions of my hand,  
Prompt to act as I command.

chorus (Ant. 1)  
Now, as at all times, Prince, I gladly heed,  
And serve thy need.  
But first to learn his common haunts t’were well;  
I pray thee tell,  
Lest he should light upon me unaware,  
His track, his lair.  
Say, if within his den he will be found,  
Or roaming round.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οἶκον μὲν ορᾶς τόνδ᾽ ἀμφίθυρον
πετρίνης κοίτης.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ποῦ γὰρ ὁ τλῆμων αὐτὸς ἀπεστίν;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

δῆλον ἐμοὶ γ᾽ ὡς φορβῆς χρείας
στίβον ὅγμευει τῇδε 1 πέλας ποιεῖν,
ταύτῃ γὰρ ἐχεῖν βιοτῆς αὐτὸν
λόγος ἐστὶ φύσιν, θηροβολοῦντα
πτηνοῖς ἱοὶ στυγερὸν στυγερῶς,
οὐδὲ τιν᾽ αὐτῷ

παιώνα κακῶν ἐπινωμᾶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οἰκτίρω νυν ἐγώγ᾽, ὅπως,
μή του κηδομένου βροτῶν
μηδὲ ξυντροφὸν ὧμι᾽ ἔχων,
δύστανος, μόνος ἀεὶ,
νοσεῖ μὲν νόσον ἀγρίαν,
ἀλύει δ᾽ ἐπί παντὶ τῷ
χρείας ἱσταμένῳ. πῶς ποτὲ πῶς δύσμορος ἀν-

τέχει;

ὦ δύστανα γένη βροτῶν,
οἷς μὴ μέτριος αἰών.

οὗτος πρωτογόνων ἴσως

οἶκων οὐδενὸς ὑστέρος,
πάντων ἄμμορος ἐν βίῳ
κεῖται μοῦνος ἀπ᾽ ἄλλων,

1 τόνδε MSS., Blaydes corr.
2 θυντῶν MSS., Lachmann corr.
PHILOCTETES

NEOPTOLEMUS

See you that two-mouthed cavern? There
His rocky dwelling-place.

CHORUS

And where
Is the sad inmate of the grot?

NEOPTOLEMUS

I doubt not somewhere near the spot,
Gone forth in search of daily food,
Dragging his steps through wold or wood;
For so, 'tis said, by toilsome pains
A painful sustenance he gains,
Shooting whatever living thing
Comes within reach of his dread bow.
The years go by and never bring
A leach to heal his woe.

CHORUS

O how piteous thy lot, (Str. 2)
Luckless man, by man forgot;
None thy solitude to share,
None to tend with loving care;
Plagued and stricken by disease,
Never knowing hour of ease,
Facing death each moment, how
Hast, poor wretch, endured till now?
O the crooked ways of heaven!
Hapless men to whom are given
Lots so changeful, so uneven.

He who with the best might vie, (Ant. 2)
Of our Grecian chivalry.
On a desert island left,
Perishes, of all bereft;
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

στικτῶν ἢ λασίων μετὰ θηρῶν, ἐν τ’ ὄδύναις ὁμοῦ 
λιμῷ τ’ οἰκτρός, ἀνήκεστα μεριμνήματ’ ἐχων ὁρεί-
α, δ’ ἀθυρόστομος.

’Αχώ τηλεφανής πικραῖς
οἰμωγαῖς ὑπακούει;?

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐδὲν τούτων θαυμαστὸν ἐμοῖ:
θεία γάρ, εἰτερ κάγῳ τι φρονῶ,
καὶ τὰ παθήματα κεῖνα πρὸς αὐτὸν 
τῆς ὠμόφρονος Χρύσης ἐπέβη,
καὶ νῦν ἄ πονεῖ δίχα κηδεμόνων,
οὐκ ἐσθ’ ὡς οὐ θεῶν τὸν μελέτῃ 
τοῦ μὴ πρότερον τὸν ἐπὶ Τροία 
τεῖναι τὰ θεῶν ἀμάχητα βέλη,
πρὶν ὅδ’ ἐξῆκοι χρόνοις, ὥς λέγεται 
χρήματι σφ’ ὑπὸ τῶν δαμῶν.

ΧΌΡΟΣ

εὔστομ’ ἔχε, παι.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί τόδε;

ΧΌΡΟΣ

προμφάνη κτύπος

φωτὸς σύντροφος ὡς τευρομένου του,3

ἡ που τῇδ’ ἡ τῇδε τόπων.

βάλλει βάλλει μ’ ἐστήμα

φθογγά του στίβον κατ’ ἀνάγκαν 

ἐρποντος, οὐδέ με λάθει 

βαρεία τηλόθεν αὐδὰ τρυσάνωρ’ διάσημα γὰρ 

θρηνέι.

1 βαραία δ’ MSS., Mekler corr.
2 πικρᾶς οἰμωγαῖς ὑπόκειται MSS., Blaydes corr.
3 του added by Porson.
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 Chrysè¹ 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,

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
λέγ᾽ ὦ τι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

φρουτίδας νέας.

ὡς οὐκ ἔξεδρος, ἀλλ᾽ ἔντοπος ἀνήρ,
οὐ μολπὰν σύριγγος ἔχων,
ὡς ποιμὴν ἀγροβότας, ἀλλ᾽ ἦ ποι πταίων ὑπ᾽ ἀνάγκας
βοᾷ τηλωτὸν ἰώάν,
ἡ ναὸς ἄξενον αὐγάξων ὀρμοῦ προβοᾷ τι γὰρ δεινὸν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἰὼ ξένοι,

τίνες ποτ᾽ ἐς γῆν τήνδε κὰκ ποιας πάτρας
κατέσχετ' οὔτ' εὔορμον οὔτ' οἰκουμένην;
ποιας ἢν ἕξεσαν πατρίδος ἢ γένους ποτὲ τύχων ἢν εἰπὼν;
σχῆμα μὲν γὰρ Ἑλλάδος
στολῆς ὑπάρχει προσφιλεστάτης ἐμοὶ:

 omega 

φωνῆς δ᾽ ἀκούσσαι βούλομαι: καὶ μὴ μ᾽ ὄκνῳ
dei sa ntes ἐκπλαγῆτ' ἀπηγριωμένον,
ἀλλ᾽ ἄκοιτάσαντες ἄνδρα δύστηνον, μόνον,
ἐρημοὶ δὲ κάφιλοι κακοῦμενον,

 ϕωνῆσατ', εἰπερ άς φίλοι προσήκετε,
ἀλλ᾽ ἀνταμείψασθ᾽: οὐ γὰρ εἴκος οὔτ' ἐμὲ

 ψυχομενον MSS., Dindorf corr.

 ύμων ἀμαρτεῖν τοῦτό γ᾽ οὐθ᾽ ύμᾶς ἐμοῦ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ᾽, ὦ ξέν', ὦσθι τοῦτο πρῶτον, οὔνεκα
"Ἐλληνες ἐσμεν" τοῦτο γὰρ βούλει μαθεῖν.

1 πάτρας ἢν ύμᾶς MSS., Dindorf corr.
2 καλοῦμενον MSS., Brunck corr.
PHILOCTETES

CHORUS
Bethink thee, Prince. (Ant. 3)

NEOPTOLEMUS
Of what?

CHORUS
Some fresh device;
For now the man approaches very near.
This is no shepherd-swain who homeward hies,
No melody of pastoral pipe I hear;
But as he stumbles 'mid the jagged stones
He rends the air with far resounding 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

πῶς εἶπας; οὐ γὰρ δὴ σὺ γ᾽ ἦσθα ναυβάτης ἡμῖν κατ᾽ ἀρχὴν τοῦ πρὸς Ἴλιον στόλου.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἐγὼ γένος μὲν εἶμι τῆς περιρρύτου Σκύρου πλέο ὃ ἐς οἶκον αὐδῶμαι δὲ παῖς Ἀχιλλέως, Νεοπτόλεμος. οἶσθα δὴ τὸ πᾶν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὅ τις αὐτοῦ πάλης Ὀλυμπίου ὁ πάπας, ὅ φίλης χθονός, ὅ τοῦ γέροντος θρέμμα Λυκομήδους, τίνι στόλῳ προσέσχες τήνδε γῆν πόθεν πλέων;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἐξ Ἰλίου τοι δὴ τανῦν γε ναυστολῶ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐδ᾽ ὄνομ᾽ ἄρ᾽ οὐδὲ τῶν ἐμῶν κακῶν κλέος ἥσθου ποτ᾽ οὐδέν, οἷς ἐγὼ διωλλύμην;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὡς μηδὲν εἰδότ᾽ ἵσθι μ᾽ ὧν ἀνιστορεῖς.

1 ἢρ 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.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ὦ πόλλ᾽ ἐγὼ μοχθηρός, ὦ πυκρὸς θεοῖς,
οὐ μηδὲ κληδῶν ὂδ᾽ ἔχοντος οὐκαδὲ
μηδ᾽ Ἐλλάδος γῆς μηδαμοῦ διήλθέ ποι.
ἀλλ᾽ οἱ μὲν ἐκβαλόντες ἀνοσίως ἐμὲ
γελῶσι σῦ᾽ ἔχοντες, ἢ δ᾽ ἐμὴ νόσος
ἀεὶ τέθηλε κατὶ μεῖζον ἐρχεται.

ὦ τέκνοι, ὦ παῖ πατρὸς ἐξ ἀχιλλεώς,
οὐ εἶμ᾽ ἐγὼ σοὶ κεῖνοι, ὅπνεας ἰσως
τῶν Ἡρακλείων ὄντα δεσπότην ὄπλων,
ὁ τοῦ Ποιάντος παῖς Φιλοκτῆτης, ὅπνεας
διότι στρατηγοὶ χῶ Κεφαλλήνων ἀναξ
ἐρριθαν αἰαχρῶς ὡδ᾽ ἐρημον, ἀγρίᾳ
νόσῳ καταφθίνοντα, τῆς ἀνδροφθόρου
πληγεντ᾽ ἔχειν ἄγριῳ χαράγματι·

ξὺν ἡ 7) μ᾽ ἐκεῖνοι, παῖ, προθέντε ἐνθάδε
ὥχονθ᾽ ἔρημον, ἡνίκ᾽ ἐκ τῆς ποντίας
Χρύσης κατέσχον δεύρο ναυβάτῃ στόλῳ.
τότ᾽ ἀσμενοὶ μ᾽ ὡς εἶδον ἐκ πολλοῦ σάλου
εὔδον ἐπ᾽ ἀκτῆς ἐν κατηρεφεῖ πέτρᾳ,
λιπόντες ὥχονθ᾽, οἷα φωτὶ δυσμόρῳ
ῥάκῃ προθέντες βαιὰ καὶ τι καὶ βορᾶς
ἐπωφέλημα σμικρόν, αὐτοῖς τύχοι.

σὺ δή, τέκνοι, ποιάν ἡ ἀνάστασιν δοκεῖς
αὐτῶν βεβοτόν ἔξ ὑπνοι στῆναι τότε;
ποί᾽ ἔκδακρύσαι, ποί᾽ ἀποιμῶξαι κακά;
ὁρῶντα μὲν ναῦς, ἡς ἔχουν ἐναυστόλουν,
πάσας βεβόσας, ἄνδρα δ᾽ οὐδέν ἐντοπον,
οὐχ ὄστις ἀρκέσευν οὐδ᾽ ὄστις νόσου
κάμνοντι συλλάβοιτο· πάντα δὲ σκοπῶν
ηῷρισκον οὐδέν πλήν ἀνιᾶσθαι παρόν,
τούτου δὲ πολλὴν εὐμάρειαν, ὅ τέκνοι.
O what a heaven-forsaken wretch am I,
Of whose disastrous plight no rumour yet
Hath reached my home or any Grecian land!
But they, the godless knaves who cast me forth,
Laugh and are mute. My malady the while
Rankles, and daily grows from bad to worse.
O boy, O son sprung from Achilles' loins,
I am that man, of whom thou mayst have heard,
Heritor of the bow of Heracles,
The son of Poeas, Philoctetes, whom
The Atridae and the Cephallenian prince
Cast forth thus shamelessly, a derelict,
Plague-stricken, wasting slowly, marked for death
By a man-slaying serpent's venomous fangs.
Thus plagued, my son, they left me here, what time
Their fleet from sea-girt 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.
ό μὲν χρόνος δὴ διὰ χρόνου προύβαινε μοι, καὶ δει τι βαιαδ' τη' ὑπὸ στέγη μόνον διακονεῖσθαι. γαστρὶ μὲν τὰ σύμφορα τόξον τόδ' ἐξηύρισκε, τὰς ὑποπτέρους βάλλεις πελεῖς, πρὸς δὲ τούθ', ὃ μοι βάλοι νευροσπαδής ἀτράκτος, αὐτός ἄν τάλας εἰλυόμην, δύστηνον ἐξέλκων πόδα, πρὸς τοῦτ' ἄν' εἴ τ' ἔδει τι καὶ ποτὸν λαβεῖν, καὶ ποὺ πάγου χυθέντος, ΟΛΑ χείματι, ξύλον τι θραύσας, ταῦτ' ἄν εξηύρησαν τάλας ἐμηχανώμην· εἴτα πῦρ ἄν οὐ παρῆν, ἀλλ' ἐν πέτρους πέτρουν έκτρίβων μόλις ἐνομίζεις γὰρ οὐν στέγη πυρὸς μέτα πάντ' ἐκπορεύει πλήν τὸ μή νοσεῖν ἐμέ. φέρ', ὃ τέκνων νῦν καὶ τοῦ τῆς νῆσου μάθης. 290

ταῦτ' πελάζει ναυβάτης οὐδεὶς ἑ ἑκὼν· οὔ γάρ τις ὅρμος ἐστιν οὐδ' ὅποι πλέων ἐξεμπολήσει κέρδος ἣ καὶ χείματι, οὐ γάρ τις ὅρμος ἐστίν οὐδ' ὅποι πλέων ἐξεμπολήσει κέρδος ἢ καὶ χείματι, ὀὔκ ἐνθάδ' ὃ τοῖσι σώφροσι βροτῶν. τάχ' οὖν τις άκων ἐσχῆ; πολλὰ γὰρ τὰδε ἐν τῷ μακρῷ γένοιτ' ἄν ἀνθρώπων χρόνων, οὔτοι μ', ὅταν μόλωσίν, ὃ τέκνων, ὅταν μόλωσίν, ὃ τέκνων, λόγοις ἐλεοῦσιν μὲν, καὶ ποὺ τι καὶ βορᾶς μέρος προσέδοσαν οἰκτίραντες ή τινα στολήν· ἐκεῖνο δ' οὐδεὶς, ἦνίκ' ἄν μυσθῶ, θέλει, σώσαι μ' ἐς οἴκους, ἀλλ' ἀπόλλυμαι τάλας ἐστίν τόδ' ἦδη δέκατον ἐν λιμῷ τὲ καὶ κακοῖσι βόσκων τὴν ἀδηφάγον νῦσον. τοιαῦτ' 'Ατρεΐδαί μ' ἢ τ' 'Οὐνοσεῖσ βία, ὃ παῖ, δεδράκας', ὃ γ' 'Ολύμπιοι θεοὶ δοξίν ποτ' αὐτοῖς ἀντίποιου ἐμοὶ 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

ἔοικα κάγῳ τοῖς ἀφιγμένοις ἦσα
ξένοις ἐποικίσθησαν σε, Ποίαντος τέκνον.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἐγὼ δὲ καυτός τοῦσδε μάρτυς ἐν λόγοις,
ὡς εἰσ' ἀλήθεις οἶδα, συντυχών κακῶν
ἀνδρῶν Ἀτρείδῶν τῆς τ' Ὀδυσσέως βίας.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἡ γάρ τι καὶ σὺ τοῖς πανωλέθροις ἔχεις
ἐγκλημ' Ἀτρείδαις, ὡστε θυμοῦσθαι παθῶν;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

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ὡς εἰσ' ἀλήθεις οἶδα, συντυχών κακῶν
ἀνδρῶν Ἀτρείδῶν τῆς τ' Ὀδυσσέως βίας.
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.

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ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οἴμαι μὲν ἀρκεῖν σοί γε καὶ τὰ σ’, ὁ τάλας, ἀλγήμαθ’, ὥστε μὴ τὰ τῶν πέλας στένειν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὁ ρθῶς ἔλεξας· τοιγαροῦν τὸ σὸν φράσον αὖθις πάλιν μοι πρᾶγμ’, ὅτω σ’ ἐνύβρισαν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ηλθὸν με νηὶ ποικίλοστόλῳ μέτα διὸς τ’ Ὀδυσσεύς χῶ τροφεὺς τοῦμοῦ πατρός, λέγοντες, εἴτ’ ἀληθεὶς εἴτ’ ἄρ’ οὖν μάτην, ὡς οὐ θέμις γύγνοιτ’, ἐπεὶ κατέφθιτο πατὴρ ἐμὸς, τὰ πέργαμ’ ἄλλον ἦ μ’ ἔλειν. ταῦτ’, ὦ ἔξεν’, οὕτως ἐννέποντες οὐ πολὺν χρόνον μ’ ἐπέσχετο μη με ναυστολεῖν ταχῦ, μάλιστα μὲν ὅτ’ τοῦ θανόντος ἵμερος, ὁπῶς ἴδοιμ’ ἄθαπτον’ οὐ γὰρ εἰδόμην: ἐπειτ’ μὲν τοῖς χῶ λόγος καλὸς προσήν, εἰ τάπι Τροίᾳ πέργαμ’ αἰρήσομι’ ἱμέρω. ἦν δ’ ἡμαρ ἡδῆ δεύτερον πλέοντι μοι, κάνγῳ πικρῶν Σίγιειον οὐρίῳ πλάτη κατηγομένη· καὶ μ’ εὐθὺς ἐν κύκλῳ στρατὸς ἐκβάντα πᾶς ἡςπάξετ’, ὁμούντες βλέπειν τὸν οὐκέτ’ ὅντα ξώντ’ Ἀχιλλέα πάλιν. κεῖνος μὲν οὖν ἐκεῖτ’. ἐγὼ δ’ ὁ δύσμορος ἐπεὶ ἀδάκρυσα κεῖνον, οὐ μακρῷ χρόνῳ ἔλθὼν ‘Ατρείδας πρὸς φίλους, ὡς εἰκός ἦν, τὰ θ’ ὅπλ’ ἀπήτουν τοῦ πατρὸς τὰ τ’ ἄλλ’ ὅς’ ἦ. οἱ δ’ εἶπον, οἶμοι, τλημονέστατον λόγον οὕτως ἐπέρμ’ Ἀχιλλέως, τάλλα μὲν πάρεστὶ σοι πατρῷ εἴλεσθαι, τῶν δ’ ὅπλων κεῖνων ἄνηρ ἄλλος 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,
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
κάγω δακρύσας εὐθὺς ἐξανίσταμαι ὃ ἅρη βαρείᾳ, καὶ καταλγήςας λέγω·
ὁ σχέτιν, ἦ τολμήσατ' ἀντ' ἐμοῦ των
doύναι τα γίγη τάμα, πρὶν μαθεῖν ἐμοῦ;
ὁ δ' εἶπ' Ὀδυσσεύς, πλησίον γὰρ ὄν κυρεῖ,
ναί, παί, δεδώκασ' ἐνδίκως οὔτοι τάδε·
ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτ' ἐσωσα κάκεινον παρών.
κάγω χολωθεὶς εὐθὺς ἡρασθον κακοῖς
tοῖς πᾶσιν, οὔδεν ἐνδεὲς ποιοῦμενος,
eἰ τάμα κεῖνος ὁπλ' ἀφαιρήσοιτο με.
ὁ δ' εἶπ' ἄντι ἤκων, καίπερ οὗ δύσοργος ὄν,
δηχθεὶς πρὸς ἀξίκουσεν ἡμείς ἡμείς:
οὐκ ἦσθ' ἡμεῖς, ἀλλ' ὑπῆσθ' ἦν' οὗ σ' ἐδει·
cαὶ ταῦτ', ἔπειδη καὶ λέγεις ὑπαυγούμενον,
οὐ μὴν ἄν τὴν Σκύρον ἐκπλεύσῃς ἑκατὸν.
τοιαῦτ' ἀκούσας καξιοειδισθεὶς κακὰ
πλέω πρὸς οἴκους, ρθανεῖς ὑπαυγούμενος
πρὸς τοῦ κακίστου κακίστων Ὀδυσσέως,
κοῦκ αἰτιῶμαι κεῖνον ὡς τούς ἐν τέλει·
πολις γὰρ ἑστὶ πᾶσα τῶν ἡγουμένων
στρατός τε σύμπας· οἱ δ' ἀκοσμοῦντες βροτῶν
διδασκάλων λόγοις γίγνονται κακοὶ.
λόγος λέεικται πάσι· ὁ δ' Ἀτρείδας στυγον
ἐμοὶ θ' ὑμῶν καὶ θεοῖς εἶν ἀδύνατον.
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 choleric, challenged thus direct,
Stung to the quick by my retort, replied:
“Thou wast not with us, a malingerer thou!
Take this for answer to thy blustering boasts:
To Scyros with these arms thou ne’er shalt sail.”
Thus flouted and abused I left the host,
And now am sailing homewards, robbed by him,
Odysseus, the base villain, basely born.
Yet is he less to blame than those who rule;
For like a commonwealth each armed host
Perforce is subject to authority,
And all the lawless doings in the world
Spring from ill teaching. All my tale is told.
But whoso hates the Atridae, as do I,
May he find Heaven, no less than me, his friend!

CHORUS

O mother Earth, enthronèd on the hills, (Str.)
Mother of Zeus himself, who feedest all;
From thee Pactolus draws his brimming rills,
His golden sands; Mother, to thee I call,

1 According to the tradition that Ovid followed (Met. 13. 284) Odysseus rescued the body and arms of Achilles from the fray.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ὅτ᾽ ἐς τὸν ᾿Ατρειδᾶν ὑβρις πᾶσ' ἐχώρει, ὦτε τὰ πάτρια τεύχεα παρεδίδοσαν, ἵνα μάκαιρα ταυροκτόνων λευττων ἐφεδρε, τῷ Δαρτίον, σέβας ὑπέρτατον.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ἐχουντες, ὦς ἐοικε, σύμβολον σάφες λύπης πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ὦ ξένου, πεπλεύκατε, καὶ μοι προσάδεθ ὡστε γυγνωσκειν ὅτι ταῦτ᾽ ἐξ ᾿Ατρειδῶν ἔργα κακό Ὀδυσσέως, ἐξοιδα γάρ μν παντὸς ἀν λόγον κακοῦ γλώσσῃ θυγόντα καὶ πανουργίας, ἂφ' ἂς μηδὲν δίκαιον ἐς τέλος μέλλοι ποεῖν. ἀλλ᾽ οὐ τι τοῦτο θαυμ᾽ ἐμοίγ᾽, αλλ᾽ εἰ παρῶν Αἰας ὁ μεῖξων ταῦθ' ὅρων ἦμείχετο.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ ἐν ἐτι ξδών, ὦ ξέν᾽· οὐ γάρ ἀν ποτε ξώντθος γ' ἐκείνου ταῦτ᾽ ἐσυλήθην ἐγώ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

πῶς εἴπας; ἀλλ᾽ ἡ χούτος οἰχεταί θανῶν;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὡς μηκέτ᾽ ὄντα κεῖνον ἐν φάει Ῥοεί...

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

οἴμοι τάλας. ἀλλ᾽ οὐχ ο ´Τυδέως γόνος οὐδ᾽ οὐμπολίτος Σισύφου Λαερτίῳ, οὐ μή θάνων᾽ τοῦσδε γάρ μή ξην ἐδει.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐ δῆτ᾽· ἐπίστω τοῦτο γ᾽· ἀλλὰ καὶ μέγα θάλλοντες εἰςι νῦν ἐν Ῥ αργείων στρατῷ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

τί δ᾽; οὐ παλαιὸς κάγαθὸς φίλος τ᾽ ἐμός,
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 raving by thee assuaged,)
What time the tyrants to Laertes' son
The guerdon gave, those arms his sire had won.

PHILOCTETES

Good sirs, ye bring me as a talisman,
A common grief; a plaint attuned to mine.
Full well I recognise in this your tale
The Atridae and Odysseus. He, I warrant,
Would have a hand and lend his tongue to abet
Any conspiracy, any deep-laid plot,
If he could compass some dishonest end.
This is not wonderful; but was indeed
The greater Ajax by, to see and brook it?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Ajax, my friend, was dead; had he been living
They would not thus have robbed me and despoiled.

PHILOCTETES

What say'st thou, boy? is he too dead and gone?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Yea he hath left the light.

PHILOCTETES

Alas, alas!
But not the son of Tydeus, nor the son
Named of Laertes, bred of Sisyphus;
They die not who should never have been born.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Not they indeed, I warrant; they live on,
And in the Argive host are mighty men.

PHILOCTETES

And what of him, my good old friend and true,
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

Νέστωρ ὁ Πύλιος, ἔστιν; οὗτος γὰρ τὰ γε κεῖνων κάκ᾽ ἐξήρυκε, βουλεύων σοφά.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

κεῖνὸς γε πράσσει νῦν κακῶς, ἐπεὶ θανῶν Ἀντίλοχος αὐτῷ φροῦδος, ὃς παρῆν, γόνος.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οἶμοι, δὺ αὐτῶδ᾽ ἀνδρὶ ἐλέξας, ὃ̣ν ἐγὼ Ἰκιστ᾽ ἢ ἡθέλησ᾽ ὀλωλότοιν κλύειν.

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ΦΙΟΝΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

σοφὸς παλαιστῆς κεῖνὸς; ἀλλὰ χαὶ σοφαὶ γνώμαι, Φιλοκτὴτ', ἐμποδίζονται θαμά.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

φέρ᾽ εἰπὲ πρὸς θεῶν, ποῦ γὰρ ἦν ἐνταὐθά σοι Πάτροκλος, ὃς σοῦ πατρὸς ἦν τὰ φίλτατα;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

χοῦτος τεθνηκὼς ἴνα λόγῳ δέ σ᾽ ἐν βραχεῖ τοῦτ᾽ ἐκδιδάξω, πόλεμος οὐδέν ἄνδρ᾽ ἕκων αἱρεῖ πονηρὸν, ἀλλὰ τοὺς χρηστοὺς ἄει.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ξυμμαρτυρῶ σοι καὶ κατ᾽ αὐτὸ τοῦτό γε ἀναξίου μὲν φωτὸς ἐξερήσομαι, γλώσσῃ δὲ δεινοῦ καὶ δοφοῦ, τί νῦν κυρεῖ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ποίου δὲ τοῦτον πλῆν γ᾽ Ὄδυσσεώς ἐρεῖς;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὗ τοῦτον εἴπον, ἀλλὰ Θερσίτης τις ἴν, ὃς οὐκ ἂν εἴλετ᾽ εἰςάπαξ εἰπεῖν, ὅπου μηδεὶς ἐφ᾽ ὑπὸ τοῦτον οἰσθ' εἰ ξόν κυρεῖ.

1 αὐτῶς δεῖν ἐλέξας MSS., Jebb corr.
PHILOCTETES

The Pylian Nestor, lives he not? for he
Oft by his wisdom checked their ill designs.

NEOPTOLEMUS

He is not what he once was, since he lost
His best belovèd son, Antilochus.

PHILOCTETES

Alas! thou tell'st me of a double loss,
The two men whom of all I least could spare.
Ah me! What hope is there when two such men
Are taken and Odysseus lives, whose death
Instead of theirs thou hadst by rights announced?

NEOPTOLEMUS

A cunning gamester, but the cunningest,
O Philoctetes, are full often thrown.

PHILOCTETES

But tell me, prithee, where was he the while,
Patroclus, once thy father's bosom friend?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Dead like the rest, for this in sooth is true:
War never slays an evil man by choice,
But still the good.

PHILOCTETES

In that I'll bear thee out.
By the same token, I would ask of one,
A worthless wight, but shrewd and glib of tongue.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Thou mean'st Odysseus, surely?

PHILOCTETES

-Not of him
I asked, but of Thersites, one whose tongue
Was ever wagging most when wanted least,
An empty babbler. Know'st thou if he lives?
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ ἐίδον αὐτοῖν, ἡσθόμην δ᾽ εἶτ᾽ ὄντα νυν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἑμελλ᾽· ἐπει διδύμῳ πω κακόν γ᾽ ἀπώλετο,
ἀλλ᾽ εὖ περιστέλλουσιν αὐτὰ δαίμονες,
καὶ πως τὰ μὲν πανούργα καὶ παλιντριβῆ
χαίρουσʼ ἀναστρέφουντες εξ Ἡλίου, τὰ δὲ
δίκαια καὶ τὰ χρήστ᾽ ἀποστέλλουσʹ ἀεὶ.

ποῦ χρὴ τίθεσθαι ταῦτα, ποῦ δ᾽ αἰνεῖν, ὅταν
τὰ θεῖ᾽ ἐπαινῶν τοὺς θεοὺς εὔρω κακούς;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἐγὼ μὲν, ὥ γενέθλον Οὐταίου πατρός,
τὸ λοιπὸν ἡδὴ τηλόθεν τὸ τ᾽ Ὕλων
καὶ τοὺς Ἀτρείδας εἰσορῶν φυλάξομαι
ὅτι δ᾽ ὁ χαῖρων τὰ γάθος μεῖζον σθένει
cαποφθίνει τὰ χρηστὰ καὶ δειλὸς κρατεῖ,
tοῦτοις ἐγὼ τοὺς ἀνδρας ὁστο στέρξω ποτε·
ἀλλ᾽ ἡ πετραία Σκῦρος ἐξαρκοῦσά μοι
ἔσται τὸ λοιπὸν, ὡστε τέρπεσθαι δόμῳ.

νῦν δ᾽ εἰμι πρὸς ναῦν καὶ σύ, Ποίαντος τέκνον,
χαῖρ᾽ ὡς μέγιστα, χαῖρε· καὶ σε δαίμονες
νόσου μεταστήσειαν, ὡς αὐτὸς θέλεις.

ἡμεῖς δ᾽ ἴωμεν, ἡσπηνικ ἂν θεός
πλοῦν ἡμὶν εἴκῃ, τηνικαῦθ᾽ ὁρμώμεθα.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἡδῆ, τέκνου, στέλλεσθε;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

καὶρὸς γὰρ καλεῖ
πλοῦν μὴ ἥστροπτον μᾶλλον ἢ ἱγγύθεν σκοπεῖν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

πρὸς νῦν σε πατρὸς πρὸς τε μητρὸς, δ᾽ τέκνον,
πρὸς τ᾽ εἴ τί σοι κατ᾽ οἰκόν ἐστὶ 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

ικήτης ικνοῦμαι, μὴ λέπης μ’ οὕτω μόνον, ἐρημοῦν ἐν κακοῖσι τοῖσδ’ οἶοις ὅρας ὀσοῦι τ’ ἐξηκουσάς ἐνναίοντά με· ἀλλ’ ἐν παρέργῳ θοῦ με. δυσχέρεια μέν, ἔξοιδα, πολλή τοῦτο τοῦ φορήματος· ὁμως δὲ τλῆθι· τοίσι γενναίοισι τοι τό τ’ αἱσχρὸν ἐχθρὸν καὶ τὸ χρηστὸν εὐκλεές. σοι δ’ ἐκλιπόντι τοῦτ’ ὅνειδος οὐ καλὸν, δράσαντι δ’, ὡ παί, πλείστον εὐκλείας γέρας, ἐὰν μῶλον ἴω χῶν πρὸς Οὐταίαν χθόνα. ἑθ’ ἡμέρας τοι μόχθος αὐχ ὅλης μιᾶς. τὸλμησον, ἐμβαλοῦ μ’ ὅπ’ ἥλεις ἄγων, εἰς ἀντλίαν, εἰς πρῷραν, εἰς πρύμνην, ὅποι ἧκιστα μέλλω τοὺς ξυνόντας ἠλγυνεῖν. νεῦσον, πρὸς αὐτοῦ Ζηνὸς ἱκεσίου, τέκνον; πείσθητι· προσπίτνω σε γόνασι, καίπερ ὅν ἀκράτωρ ὁ τλήμων, χωλός. ἀλλὰ μὴ μ’ ἄφης ἐρημοῦν οὕτω χωρίς ἀνθρώπων στίβου, ἀλλ’ ἐκορετὰ οὐκ οὐκ έσωσόν μ’ ἄγων ἐπὶ τὰ Χαλκώδοντος Εὐβοίας σταθμὰ· κάκειθεν οὐ μοι μακρὸς εἰς Οἰτήν στόλος. Τραχυνίαν τε δειράδα καὶ τὸν εὐροον Σπερχείον ἔσται· πατρὶ μ’ ώς δεῖξης φίλω, ὅπερ ἐκ παλαιὸν ἐξ’ οὗτοι δέδοικ’ ἐγὼ μή μοι βεβήκης. πολλὰ γὰρ τοῖς ἰγμένοις ἐστελλὼν αὐτὸν ἱκεσίους πέμπων λιτάς· αὐτόστολον πέμψαντά μ’ ἐκσωσάι δόμους. ἀλλ’ ἐκ τεθνηκέν ἐκ τῶν διακόνων, ὅς εἰκός, οἶμαι, τοῦμον ἐν σμικρὸν μέρος ποιούμενοι τὸν οὐκαδ’ ἱπτειγον στόλου, νῦν δ’, εἰς σὲ γὰρ πομπὸν τε καυτὸν ἀγγελον 500

1 δειράδα MSS., Toup corr. Jebb reads δειράδ’ ἢδ’ ἐς εὐρουν.
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
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ἦκω, σὺ σῶσον, σὺ μ' ἐλέησον, εἰσορὼν ὡς πάντα δεινὰ κἀκιδων ὡς βροτοῖς κεῖνα παθεῖν μὲν εὖ, παθεῖν δὲ θάτερα. χρὴ δ' ἐκτὸς ὅντα πημάτων τὰ δεῖν' ὅραν, χῶταν τις εὖ ξῇ, τηνικαῦτα τὸν βίον σκοπεῖν μάλιστα, μὴ διαφθαρεὶς λάθη.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οίκτιρ', ἀναξε. πολλῶν ἔλεγεν δυσμόστων πόνων ἄθλ', οἶα μηδεὶς τῶν ἐμῶν τύχοι φίλων. εἰ δὲ πικροῖς, ἀναξε, ἐχθεις ᾿Ατρείδας, ἐγώ μέν, τὸ κείνων κακὸν τῷ δέ κέρδος μετατιθέμενος, ἐνθαπερ ἐπιμέμονεν, ἐπ' εὐστόλου ταχείας νεὼς πορεύσαμι ἂν ἐς δόμους, τὰν θεῶν νέμεσιν ἐκφυγόν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὁρα σὺ μὴ νῦν μέν τις εὐχερής παρῆς, ὅταν δὲ πλησθῇς τῆς νόσου ξυνουσίας, τὸτ' οὐκεθ' αὐτὸς τοῖς λόγοις τοῦτοις φανῆς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἡκιστα. τοὺτ' οὐκ ἐσθ' ὁπόσι ποτ' εἰς ἐμὲ τοῦνειδος ἐξεις ἐνδίκως ονειδίσαι.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' αἴσχρα μέντοι σοῦ γέ μ' ἐνδεέστερον ξένω φαύνήναι πρὸς τὸ καίριον πονεῖν. ἀλλ' εἰ δοκεῖ, πλέωμεν, ὁρμᾶσθω ταχὺς. χῇ ναῦς γὰρ ἄξει κοῦκ ἀπαρνηθήσεται. μόνον θεοὶ σφόξουεν ἐκ τε τῆς δέ γῆς ημᾶς ὅποι τ' ἐνθεόν βουλοίμεσθα πλεῖν.
PHILOCTETES

And saviour, I appeal; save, pity me,
Seeing upon how slippery a place
Fortune for mortals and misfortune stand.
Therefore the man that lives at ease should look
For rocks ahead, and when he prospers most
Watch lest he suffer shipwreck unawares.

CHORUS

Pity, my chief! (Ant.)
Pity a tale of agonizing grief!
Pray God no friend
Of mine may ever come to such an end!
O pity him!
I know thou hatest, prince, the Atridae grim;
Turn to his gain
The villainy they plotted for his bane.
O take him home!
With him let our brave vessel cleave the foam;
There would he be;
Thus from the dread Avengers shall we flee.

NEOPTOLEMUS

See that your present kindness be not
A passing mood, lest after, when ye come
In closer contact with his malady,
Ye falter and belie these promises.

CHORUS

No, I shall ne'er be open to such charge.

NEOPTOLEMUS

’Twere shame indeed should I less zealous prove
Than thou to help a stranger in his need.
So, if you please, we’ll sail; let him aboard;
Our ship methinks will not refuse her aid.
Only may heaven convey us from this shore
Safe to the haven whither we would sail!
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ὦ φίλτατον. μὲν ἦμαρ, ἥδιστος δ᾽ ἀνήρ, φίλοι δὲ ναῦται, πῶς ἄν ὑμῖν ἐμφανῆς ἔργῳ γενοίμην, ὡς μ᾽ ἔθεσθε προσφιλῇ; ἱωμεν, ὦ παῖ, προσκύσαντε τὴν ἔσω ἀοικον εἰσοίκησιν, ὡς με καὶ μάθης ἄφ᾽ ὃν διέξων ὡς τ᾽ ἐφυν εὐκάρδιοι. οἴμαι γὰρ οὐδ᾽ ἄν ἄρμασιν μόνην θέαν ἄλλον λαβόντα πλῆν ἐμοῦ τλήναι τάδε· ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἀνάγκη προὔμαθον στέργειν κακά.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἐπίσχετον, μάθωμεν· ἄνδρε γὰρ δύο, ὦ μὲν νεὼς σῆς ναυβάτης, ὦ δ᾽ ἀλλόθρους, χωρεῖτον, ὧν μαθόντες αὐθίς εἰσίτου.

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

Ἅχιλλέως παῖ, τόνδε τὸν ξυνέμπορον, ὃς ἦν νεὼς σῆς σὺν δυοῖν ἄλλοιν φύλαξ, ἐκέλευσ᾽ ἐμοὶ σε ποῦ κυρῶν εἴης φράσαι, ἐπείπερ ἀντέκυρσα, δοξάζων μὲν οὔ, τύχῃ δὲ πῶς πρὸς ταῦτον ὅμμασιν πέδον. πλέων γὰρ ός ναύκληρος οὐ πολλῷ στόλῳ ἕκλευσ᾽ Ἱλίου πρὸς οἶκον ἐς τὴν εὐβωτρυν Πεπάρθον, ὡς ἥκουσα τοὺς ναυτας ὅτι σοὶ πάντες εἶεν συνεναστοληκότες, ἐδοξέ μοι μὴ σήγα, πρὶν φράσαιμι σοι, τῶν πλούν ποείσθαι, προστυχόντι τῶν ἱσων. οὐδὲν σὺ που κάτοισθα τῶν σαυτοῦ πέρι, ἀ τοῖσιν Ὅριοισιν ἀμφὶ σοῦ νέα βουλεύματ ἐστί, κοῦ μόνον βουλεύματα, ἀλλ᾽ ἔργα δρόμεν, οὐκέτ᾽ ἔξαργούμενα.
O gladdest day, O dearest, dearest friend,
And ye, kind sailors, would that I could prove
By acts my heartfelt gratitude! My son,
Let us be going, but before I go
Salute this homeless home, that thou mayst learn
How hard my life, how great my hardihood.
I think scarce any other man than I,
Had he but seen it once, could have endured;
But I was schooled by hard necessity.

[NEOPTOLEMUS is about to enter the cave with him.]

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

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 tell me where thou might’st be found.
For I, the captain of a single craft,
Was on my way from Ilium, homeward bound,
To 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, προσφιλὴς μενεὶ· φράσον δ’ ἀπερ, γ’ ἐλέξας, ὡς μάθω τί μοι νεώτερον βούλευμ’ ἀπ’ Ἀργείων ἡχεὺς.

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

φροῦδοι διώκοντες σε ναυτικῷ στόλῳ Φοῖνιξ ὁ πρέσβυς ο’ τε Θησέως κόροι.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὡς ἐκ βίας μ’ ἄξοντες ἢ λόγοις πάλιν;

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

οὐκ οἶδ’· ἀκούσας δ’ ἀγγελὸς πάρειμί σοι.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἡ ταῦτα δὴ Φοῖνιξ τε χοί ἐξουσιασθάται σύνω καθ’ ὀρμήν δρόσιν Ἀτρειδῶν χάριν;

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

ὡς ταῦτ’ ἐπίστω δρώμεν’, οὐ μέλλοντ’ ἐτι.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

πῶς οὖν Ὀδυσσεὺς πρὸς τάδ’ οὐκ αὐτάγγελος πλείω τιν ἐτοιμοῖς; ἡ φόβος τις εἰργῇ νυν;

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

κεῖνός γ’ ἐπ` ἄλλου ἀνδρ’ ὁ Τυδέως τε παῖς ἐστέλλον, ἢνίκ’ ἐξαιτηγόμην ἑγὼ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

πρὸς ποίον αὗ τόνδ’ αὐτός οὐδυσσεὺς ἐπλεῖ;

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

ἡν δὴ τισ—ἀλλὰ τόνδε μοι πρωτὸν φράσον τίς ἐστίν· ἂν λέγης δὲ μὴ φώνει μέγα.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὕτ’ ἐσθ’ ὁ κλεινὸς σοι Φιλοκτήτης, ξένε.
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’ ἐρη τὰ πλείον’, ἀλλ’ ὅσον τάχος ἐκπλει σεαυτὸν ξυλλαβῶν ἐκ τῆς δε γῆς.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
τί φησιν, ὦ παί; τί μὲ κατὰ σκότον ποτὲ διεμπολᾶ λόγοισι πρὸς σ’ ὁ ναυβάτης;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
οὐκ οἴδα πω τί φησιν· δεῖ δ’ αὐτὸν λέγειν εἰς φῶς ὃ λέξει, πρὸς σὲ κάμε τούς δε τε.

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ
ὁ σπέρμ’ Ἀχιλλέως, μὴ με διαβάλης στρατῷ λέγονθ’ ἃ μὴ δεί· πόλη ἐγὼ κείνων ὕπο δρῶν ἀντιπάσχω χρηστά τ’, ο’ ἀνήρ πένης.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἐγὼ εἰ μ’ Ἀτρείδαις δυσμένης· οὗτος δὲ μοι φίλος μέγιστος, οὖν εἰ Ἀτρείδας στυγεῖ. δει δή σ’ ἐμοιῆς ἐλθόντα προσφιλῆ, λόγων χρύφα πρὸς ἡμᾶς μηδέν’ ὃν ακῆκας.

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ
όρα τί· ποιεῖς, παί;>

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
σκοπῶ κἀγὼ πάλαι.

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ
σὲ θήσομαι τῶνδ’ αἴτιον.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ποιοῦ λέγων.

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ
λέγω. τ’ τοῦτον ἀνδρὲ τῶ ‘’ωπερ κλύεις, ὁ Τυδέως παῖς ἐ’ ὁ ’Ὀδυσσέως βία, διώμοιτο πλέουσιν ὣ μὴν ὣ λόγῳ πείσαντες ἄξειν ὣ πρὸς ᾿ἰσχύος κράτος.
Stop not for further questioning! Remove! Fly with all speed thou mayest from this land.

What says he, boy? What does he whisper thee, As though I were a piece of merchandise.

I know not yet, but he shall tell his tale Aloud, for thee and me and these to hear.

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. 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.

Take heed, boy, what thou'rt asking.

I have heeded.

Then thou must bear the consequence.

Say on.

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᾽ ᾿Αχαιοὶ πάντες ἦκοιον σαφῶς Ὁδυσσέως λέγοντος: οὔτος γὰρ πλέον τὸ θάρσος εἶχε θατέρου δράσειν τάδε.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τίνος δ᾽ ᾿Ατρείδαι τοῦδ᾽ ἀγαίν οὔτῳ χρόνῳ τοσῶδ᾽ ἔπεστρέφοντο πράγματο πάλιν, ὅν ἢ εἶχον ὤν ἡ χρόνον ἐκβεβληκότες; τίς ο πόθος αὐτούς ἤκει; ᾿Η θεῶν βλα καὶ νέμεσις, οὔπερ ἐργὰ ἀμύνουσιν κακά;

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

ἐγὼ σε τοῦτ', ἵσως γὰρ οὐκ ἀκήκοας, πάν ἐκδιδάξω. μάντις ἦν τις εὐγενής; Πριάμου μὲν υἱὸς, ὄνομα δ᾽ ἱππομάζετο ᾿Ελευσος, ὅν οὔτος νυκτὸς ἔκελθῳν μόνοις, ὅ πᾶν ἀκούοιν αἰσχρὰ καὶ λωβῆτ᾽ ἐπὶ ὁδὸν Ὁδυσσέως εἴλε: δέσμιον τ᾿ ἄγων ἐδειξἐ; ᾿Αχαιοὶς ἐσ μέσον, θήραν καλήν ὅς δὴ τά τ᾽ ἄλλα αὐτοῦσι πάντ᾽ ἐθέσπισεν καὶ τάπλ Τροία πέργαμ᾽ ὡς οὐ μὴ ποτε πέρσοιεν, εἰ μὴ τόνδε πείσαντες λόγῳ ἀγοιντοῦ νήσου τῆς ἔφ᾽ ἃς ναίει ταῦν. καὶ ταῦθ᾽ ὅτως ἦκονος, ὁ Δαέρτου τόκος τὸν μάντιν εἰπόντ᾽, εὐθέως ὑπέσχετο τὸν ἄνδρ᾽ ᾿Αχαιοὶς τόνδε δηλώσειν ἀγωνόιοτο μὲν μάλιστο ἐκούσιον λαβῶν, εἰ μὴ θέλοι δ᾽ ἄκοντα καὶ τούτων κάρα τέμνειν ἐφεῖτο τῷ θέλοντι μὴ τυχὼν. ἦκουσας, ὅ παῖ, πάντα: τὸ σπεύδειν δὲ σοι καὐτῷ παραινῷ κεῖ τινος κηδεὶ πέρι.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

οἴμοι τάλας: ᾿Η κεῖνος, ᾿Η πᾶσα βλάβη, ἐμ᾽ εἰς ᾿Αχαιοὺς ὁμοσεῖν πείσας στελεῖν;
PHILOCTETES

This by Odysseus plainly was professed
In presence of the host; for he, more bold
Than his co-partner, staked his credit on it.

NEOPTOLEMUS

But wherefore now, after the lapse of years
Should the Atridae be concerned about
A man they had abandoned and forgot?
Was it compassion touched them, 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 ὅδε καὶ "Ἄδου θανὼν πρὸς φῶς ἀνελθεῖν, ὡστερ οὐκεῖνοι πατήρ. Ἔμπορος οὐκ οἶδ' ἑγὼ ταῦτ'. ἀλλ' ἑγὼ μὲν εἶμ' ἐπὶ ναῦν, σφῶν δ' ὁπως ἀριστα συμφέροι θεος. ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ οὔκουν τάδ', ὦ παῖ, δεινά, τὸν Δαερτίου ἐµ' ἐλπίσαι ποτ' ἀν λόγοις μαλθακοῖς δεῖξαι νεὼς ἄγοντ' ἐν Ἀργείους μέσους; οὐ' θάσσουν ἀν τῆς πλείστου ἐχθρίστης ἐμοι κλύοιμ' ἐξίδυση, ἢ μ' ἐθηκεν ὥδ' ἀπονυ. ἀλλ' ἐστ' ἐκεῖνῳ πάντα λεκτά, πάντα δὲ τολμητά· καὶ νῦν οἶδ' ὥθουνειχ' ἴσεται. ἀλλ', ὦ τέκνου, χωρᾷς, ὡς ἕμας πολὺ πέλαγος ὁρίζῃ τῆς Ὀδυσσεώς νεώς. ἦσαν ἦ τοι καίριος σπουδὴ πόνου λήξαντος υπὼν κανάπαυλαν ἡγαγεν' ΝΕΟΠΟΔΕΜΟΣ οὐκοῦν ἐπειδὰν πνεῦμα τοὐκ πρῷρας ἀνή, τότε στελοῦμεν· νῦν γὰρ ἀντιοστατεῖ. ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ ἀεὶ καλὸς πλοῦς ἐσθ', ὅταν φεύγῃς κακά. ΝΕΟΠΟΔΕΜΟΣ οὐκ, ἀλλὰ κάκεινοις ταῦτ' ἐναντία. ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ οὐκ ἐστ' λῃσταῖς πνεῦμ' ἐναντιούμενοι, ὅταν παρῇ κλέψαι τι χάρπάσαι βία. ΝΕΟΠΟΔΕΜΟΣ ἀλλ' εἰ δοκεῖ, χωρῶμεν, ἐνδοθεν λαβῶν ὅτου σε χρεία καὶ πόθος μάλιστ' ἐχει.
PHILOCTETES

As soon by prayers shall I be brought again
From death, as was his father,¹ to the light.

SAILOR

That's not for me to say, I must be going
To join my ship. Farewell, and may the gods
Be with you both and order all things well.

PHILOCTETES

What say'st thou, boy? That he, Laertes' son,
Should think to wheedle me aboard his ship,
And make a show of me to the Greek host!
Is it not monstrous? Sooner would I heed
My mortal foe, the snake that crippled me.
But he—no word, no practice is too vile
For him to stick at. He will come for sure.
Haste thee, my son, and put a many leagues
Of ocean 'twixt Odysseus and our ship.
Bestir ye! Who in season labours best,
His labours ended, has the sweetest rest.

NEOPTOLEMUS

All in good time; soon as the headwind drops
We will weigh anchor; now 'tis in our teeth.

PHILOCTETES

To those who fly from ill all winds are fair.

NEOPTOLEMUS

But this wind's contrary for them no less.

PHILOCTETES

For pirates no wind's adverse, when there's chance
Of pillaging or robbery under arms.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Well, as thou will'st, we'll sail; but from the cave
Take anything thou needest or dost prize.

¹ Sisyphus, the reputed father of Odysseus, ordered his wife to leave his body unburied and so obtained leave from Pluto to return to earth in order to punish her impiety.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ἀλλ᾽ ἔστιν ὧν δεῖ, καίπερ οὐ πολλῶν ἄπο.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

tί τοῦθ᾽ ὃ μὴ νεώς γε τῆς ἐμῆς ἔπι;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

φύλλον τί μοι πάρεστιν, ὃ μάλιστ᾽ ἀεὶ
κοιμῶ τόδ᾽ ἐλκος, ὡστε πραύνειν πάνυ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ᾽ ἐκφερ᾽ αὐτό. τί γὰρ ἔτ′ ἄλλ᾽ ἐρᾶς λαβεῖν;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

(εἰ μοι τι τόξων τῶν ἀπημελημένων)

(παρερρύηκεν, ὡσ λύπω μή τῷ λαβεῖν)

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

η ταῦτα γὰρ τὰ κλεινὰ τὸς ἀν νῦν ἔχεις;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ταῦτ᾽, οὔ γὰρ ἀλλ᾽ ἔστ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἃ βαστάζω χερῶν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀρ′ ἔστιν ὡστε κάγχυθεν θέαν λαβεῖν
καὶ βαστάσαι με προσκύνσαι θ᾽ ὡσπερ θεῶν;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

σοί γ᾽, ὁ τέκνοι, καὶ τοῦτο κάλλο τῶν ἐμῶν
ὅποιον ἂν σοι ξυμφέρῃ γενήσεται.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

καὶ μὴν ἐρῶ γε, τὸν δ᾽ ἐρωθ᾽ οὕτως ἐχω·
ei μοι θέμις, θέλοιμ᾽ ἂν. ei de μῆ, πάρες.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ὁσιά τε φωνεῖς ἐστι τ᾽, ὃ τέκνοι, θέμις,
ὅς γ᾽ ἡλίου τὸδ᾽ εἰσορᾶν ἐμοὶ φάος
μόνος δέδωκας, ὃς χθόν᾽ Οἰταίαν ἰδεῖν,
ὅς πατέρα πρέσβυν, ὃς φίλους, ὃς 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,
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἐχθρῶν μὴ ἐνερθεὶν ὁντ᾽ ἀνέστησας πέρα.
θάρσει, παρέσται ταῦτα σοι καὶ θυγαγόνας
καὶ ὄντι δούναι καὶ κεῖσεμενθάναι βροτῶν
ἀρετῆς ἔκατι τῶν ἐπιψαῦσαι μόνον
ἐνεργητῶν γὰρ κατὸς αὐτ᾽ ἐκτησάμην.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ ἄχθομαι σ᾽ ἵδών τε καὶ λαβὼν φίλον
ὅστις γὰρ εὖ δρᾶν εὐ παθῶν ἐπίσταται,
παντὸς γένοιτ᾽ ἂν κτήματος κρείσσων φίλος.
χωρὶς ἂν εἴσω.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

καὶ σε γ᾽ εἰσάξω τὸ γὰρ
νοσοῦν ποθεὶ σε ἐξυμπαραστάτην λαβεῖν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

λόγῳ μὲν ἐξήκουσ᾽, ὡμοίως γὰρ σοὶ ὁμοίως,
τὸν πελάταν λέκτρων ποτὲ τῶν Διὸς
κατὰ δρομάδ᾽ ἀμπελοῦσα δέσμιον ὡς ἐβαλεν¹ παγ-
κρατῆς Κρόνου παῖς.

Γάλλον δ᾽ οὐτίμ᾽ ἐγὼ γ᾽ οἶδα κλύων οὐδ᾽ ἐσιδών
μοῖρα τοῦ ἐχθροῦν συντυχοῦντα
θυατῶν, ὃς οὐτ᾽ ἐρξαὶ τιν᾽ οὐ τι δνοσφίς,
ἀλλὰ ὰσοὶ δεῖ ὀσοὶ ἀνήρ,
ἀλληληθῆ ὁδ᾽ ἀναξίως,
τόδε τοι θαῦμα μ᾽ ἔχει,
πῶς ποτὲ πῶς ποτ᾽ ἀμφιπλάκτων ῥοθίων μόνος
κλύων,
πῶς ἀρα πανδάκρυτον οὕτω βιώταν κατέσχεν.

ἵν᾽ αὐτὸς ἔναν πρόσουρος, οὐκ ἔχων βάσιν,
οὐδὲ τιν᾽ ἐγχώρων κακογείτονα.

¹ 'Ιξίονα κατ᾽ ἀμπελοῦσα δεὶ δρομάδα δέσμιον ὡς ἐλαβ᾽' ὁ MSS.,
Schneidewin corr. ² οὔτε 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  (Str. 1)
Of one who dared the bed of Zeus assail.
Him to the wheel that never stays its round
Of torture, the great son of Kronos bound.

But, save of him alone,
To me no sadder fate is known
Than of this saddest wight,
Or by report or sight:
Poor innocent who here to death art done!

He robbed or wronged none
I marvel how thus desolate, all forlorn,
These long long years of anguish he hath borne,
Hearing the breakers gride the cold grey stones,

 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' ὄστονον ἀντίτυπον βαρυβρῶτ' ἀποκλαύσειν αἵματηρὸν:
ὅς τὰν θερμοτάταν αἰμάδα κηκιομέναν ἐλκέων ἐνθήρου ποδὸς ἦπιοισι φύλλοις κατευνάσειεν, εἰ τις ἐμπέσοι,
φορβάδος ἐκ γαίας ἐλών ἐπιτε γὰρ ἄλλοτ' ἀλλαχὰ τότ' ἂν εἰλυόμενος
παῖς ἄτερ ὅς φίλας τιθήνας θεοὶ εὐμάρει υπάρχοι πόρον, ἀνίκ' ἐξανείη δακέθυμος ἄτα:

στρ. β'

οὐ φορβάν ἵερᾶς γᾶς σπόρον, οὐκ ἄλλων αἵρεν τῶν νεμόμεσθ' ἀνέρες ἀλφησταί, πλὴν εἰς ὁκυβόλοις εἰ ποτε τόξων πτανοῖς ἤ λίθοις ἀνύσειε γαστρὶ φορβάν.
ὡ μελέα ψυχά,
ὅς μηδ' οἰνοχύτου πώματος ήσθη δεκέτει χρόνῳ, λεύσσων δ' ὅπου γνοίη στατὸν εἰς ὑδωρ, ἀεὶ προσενώμα.

ἀντ. β'

νῦν δ' ἀνδρῶν ἀγαθῶν παιδὸς ὑπαντήσας εὐδαίμων ἀνύσει καὶ μέγας ἐκ κείνων: ὅς νῦν ποντοπόρῳ δούρατι, πλήθει πολλῶν μηνῶν, πακρίαν ἄγει πρὸς αὐλὰν Μαλιάδων νυμφᾶν.
Σπερχειοῦ τε ὄχθας, ἵν' ὁ χάλκασπις ἀνήρ θεοῖς πλάθει πατρὸς ὑπὲρ ὄχθας, ὅτας ὑπὲρ ὄχθας.

1 πᾶς 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.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
έρπ᾽, εἰ θέλεις. τί δὴ ποθ᾽ ὥδ᾽ εξ οὐδενὸς λόγου σιωπᾷς καὶ πόλεμηκτος ὥδ᾽ ἐχει;
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἀἀ, ἀἀ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
τί δ᾽ ἐστιν;
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οὐδὲν δεινὸν ἄλλ᾽ ἵθ᾽, ὦ τέκνον.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
μῶν ἀλγός ἵσχες τῆς παρεστώσης νόσου;
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οὐ δὴ τ᾽ ἐγωγ᾽, ἄλλ᾽ ἄρτι κουφίζειν δοκῶ. ὦ θεοὶ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
τί τούς θεοὺς ὧδ᾽ ἀναστένων καλεῖς;
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
σωτῆρας αὐτοὺς ἕπλους θ᾽ ἡμῖν μολεῖν. ἀἀ, ἀἀ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
τί ποτε πέπονθας; οὐκ ἐρεῖς, ἄλλ᾽ ὥδ᾽ ἐσεὶ σιγηλός; ἐν κακῷ δὲ τῷ φαίνει κυρῶν.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἀπόλωλα, τέκνον, κοὐ δυνήσοι κακὸν κρύψαι παρ᾽ ὑμῖν, ἀτταταῖ. διέρχεται. 

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

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
τί δ᾽ ἔστιν οὕτω νεοχμὸν ἐξαίφνης, ὅτου
tοσήνδ᾽ ἰυγὴν καὶ στόνον σαυτοῦ ποεῖ;
οἰσθ', ὦ τέκνον;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οἰσθ', ὦ παί;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
τί δ᾽ ἔστιν;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
οὐκ οἶδα.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
πώς οὐκ οἰσθα; παππαπαππαπαπαῖ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
dεινόν γε τοὐπίδαγμα τοῦ νοσήματος.
δεινόν γὰρ οὐδὲ ῥητόν' ἀλλ' οἴκτιρέ με.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
tί δῆτα δράσω;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
μὴ με ταρβήσας προδῆς
ήκει γὰρ αὐτὴ διὰ χρόνου πλάνοις ἵσως
ὡς ἔξεππλήσθη.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἰῶ ἰῶ δύστηνε σὺ,
dύστηνε δῆτα διὰ πόνων πάντων φανεῖς.
βούλει λάβωμαι δῆτα καὶ θίγω τί σου;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
μὴ δῆτα τοῦτό γ', ἀλλὰ μοι τὰ τόξ' ἐλῶν
tάδ', ὡσπερ ἦτον μ' ἀρτίως, ἔως ἀνή

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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 τοῦτο τῆς νόσου τὸ νῦν παρόν, σοφὸς αὐτά καὶ φύλασσε. λαμβάνει γὰρ οὖν ὑπνὸς μ', ὅταν περ τὸ κακὸν ἐξῆ οὔτος· κοῦκ ἐστὶ λήξαι πρότερον ἀλλ' ἐὰν χρεῶν ἐκεῖνον εὔδειν. ἣν δὲ τῶδε τῷ χρόνῳ μόλωσ' ἐκεῖνοι, πρὸς θεῶν ἐφιέμαι ἐκόντα μηδ' ἀκούτα μηδὲ τῷ τῆχυν κεῖνοι μεθεῖν ταῦτα, μὴ σαυτὸν θ' ἄμα καὶ ὅντα σαυτοῦ πρόστροπον, κτέινας γένη.

ΝΕΟΠΟΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
θάρσει προνοίας οὕνεκ'. οὐ δοθήσεται πλὴν σοὶ τε κάμοι. ἐξιν πάρον δὲ πρόσφερε.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ιδοὺ δέχω, παῖ. τὸν φθόνον δὲ πρὸσκυνον μή σοι γενέσθαι πολύτοπον αὐτὰ μηδ' ὅπως ἐμοί τε καὶ τῷ πρόσθ' ἐμοὶ κεκτημένῳ.

ΝΕΟΠΟΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὦ θεοί, γένοιτο ταῦτα νῦν' γένοιτο δὲ πλοῦς οὐρίος τε κενταλῆς ὅποι ποτὲ θεῶς δικαιοί χῶ στόλος πορσύνεται.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀλλ' οὖν δέδοικα μή ἀτέλεστ' εὐχή, τέκνον.1 στάξει γὰρ αὐτὸν φοίνιον τόδ' ἐκ βυθοῦ κηκίον αἷμα, καὶ τι προσδοκόν νέον.

παπαί, φεῦ.

παπαὶ μάλ', ὦ ποὺς, οἶα μ' ἐργάσει κακά. προσέρπει, προσέχεται τόδ' ἐγγύς. οὐμοι μοι τάλας. ἔχετε το πρᾶγμα· μὴ φύγητε μηδαμῇ. ἀταταί.

1 ἀλλὰ δέδοικ', ὦ παῖ, μή μ' ἀτελῆς εὐχή MSS. The text is a combination of Triclinius and Jebb.
PHILOCTETES

The spasm that now disables me is gone,
Keep it and guard it well; for when the fit
Passes, a drowsiness comes over me;
And sleep's the only medicine that gives ease.
So let me slumber undisturbed, and if
They come the while, I charge thee, boy, by heaven,
Let them not have it, yield not up the bow,
Willing or nilling, or by force or fraud;
Lest thou should'st prove a double murderer,
And slay thyself and me thy suppliant.

NEOPTOLEMUS

I will be vigilant, fear not; none shall have it
But thou and I alone; so give it to me.
Good luck attend it!

PHILOCTETES

Take it then, my son,
But first propitiate the Jealous God,
Lest it should prove to thee a bane, as erst
To me and to its former lord it proved.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Heaven grant this prayer to both of us, and grant
A fair and prosperous voyage whitherso'er
Our destined course is set and heaven ordains!

PHILOCTETES

Alas, my son! I fear thy prayers are vain;
For once again upwelling from the wound
The black blood trickles auguring a relapse.
Out, out upon thee, damnèd foot! Alack!
What plague hast yet in store for me? Alack!
It prowls, it stalks amain, ready to spring.
Woe! Now, ye know my torture, leave me not!
Ah me! Ah me!
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ο ξένε Κεφαλλήν, εἴθε σου διαμπερές
στέρνον ἔχουτ' ἀλγήσις ἥδε. φεῦ, παπαί,
pαπαὶ μάλ' αὖθις. ὦ διπλοὶ στρατηλάται,
'Αγάμεμνον, ο Μενέλαι, πῶς ἂν ἄντ᾽ ἐμοῦ
tὸν ἴσον χρόνον τρέφοντε τήνυδε τὴν νόσον;
ἰῶ μοι.

ὁ Θάνατε Θάνατε, πῶς ἂεί καλούμενος
οὕτω κατ᾽ ἡμαρ, οὐ δύνα μολείν ποτε;
ὁ τέκνον ὃ γενναῖον, ἀλλὰ συλλαβὼν
τῷ Λημνίῳ τῷ δ᾽ ἀνακαλομένῳ πυρὶ
ἐμπρησον, ὃ γενναῖε. κἀγὼ τοῦ ποτε
tὸν τοῦ Διὸς παιὸν ἀντὶ τῶν όπλων,
ἀ νῦν σὺ σφάζεις, τοῦτ᾿ ἐπηξίωσα δρᾶν.
tί φής, παῖ;
tί φής; τί συγάς; ποῦ ποτ᾽ ὂν, τέκνον, κυρεῖς;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἀλγῶ πάλαι δὴ τὰπὶ σοὶ στένων κακά.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἀλλ᾽, ὃ τέκνον, καὶ θάρσος ἵσχ. ὃς ἦδε μοι
ὁξεία φοιτᾷ καὶ ταχεῖ ἀπέρχεται.
ἀλλ᾽ ἀντιάξω, μή με καταλίπῃς μόνον.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
θάρσει, μενοῦμεν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἡ μενεδς;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
σαφὼς φρόνει.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οὐ μὴν σ' ἐνορκὸν γ' ἀξιώθεσθαι, τέκνον.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ὡς οὐ θέμες γ' ἐμοῦστι σοῦ μολεῖν ἀτερ.

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Would God, O Cepallenian, through thy breast
This spasm might pass and hold thee in its grip!
Woe's me and woe once more! Ye generals twain,
Menelaus, Agamemnon, might this worm
Devour your vitals no less time than mine!
O Death, Death, Death! how is it that invoked
Day after day, thou wilt not heed my call?
Boy, noble boy, of thy nobility
I pray thee take and in those Lemnian flames
Consume me, welcome now to me as when
I dared to do it for the son of Zeus,
And won for meed the bow thy bearest now.
Speak! answer! why thus absent, O my son?

NEOPTOLEMUS
My heart was heavy, musing on thy woes.

PHILOCTETES
Nay, be of better cheer, my son; this pain,
As in its onset sudden, so departs.
Only, I pray thee, leave me not alone.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Take heart; we'll stay.

PHILOCTETES
Thou wilt?

NEOPTOLEMUS
In sooth I will.

PHILOCTETES
It were not meet to bind thee with an oath.

NEOPTOLEMUS
I am bound in honour not to leave thee here.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἐμβάλλε χειρὸς πίστιν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἐμβάλλω μενεῖν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἐκεῖσε νῦν μ’, ἐκεῖσε

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ποὶ λέγεις;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἀνω
tί παραφρονεῖσ αὖ; τί τὸν ἄνω λεύσσεις κύκλον;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
μέθες μέθες με.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ποὶ μεθῶ;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
μέθες ποτέ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
οὐ φημι ἕάσειν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἀπὸ μ’ ὀλείς, ἣν προσθίγης.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
καὶ δὴ μεθίημ’, εἰ τι ἕνεκαν φρονεῖς.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ὡ γαία, δέξαι θανάσιμον μ’ ὀπως ἔχω τὸ γὰρ κακὸν τὸ δ’ ὑπέκει & ὑπῳθίθαι μ’ εἰ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
tὸν ἄνδρ’ ἐνεκεν ὑπνὸς οὐ μακρὸν χρόνον.
ἐξευν’ κάρα γὰρ ὑπτιάζεται τὸδε
ἱδρὼς γε τοῖ νυν πᾶν καταστάξει δέμας,

1 μεθήμε: τι δὴ MSS., Hermann corr.
Thy hand upon it.

Here’s my hand in pledge.

Then yonder, let me yonder—

Whither then?

Up higher—

Art thou wandering once again?
Why starest at the firmament on high?

Let me go.

Whither?

Let me go, I say.

Thou shalt not.

Touch me not, ’twould be my death.

Well, I release thee. Thou art calmer now.

Take me, O Earth, a dying man, so near
His end with sickness that he cannot stand.

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' ἄκρου τις παρέρρωγεν ποδὸς αἴμορραγής φλέψ. ἀλλ' εάσωμεν, φίλοι, ἐκῆλον αὐτόν, ὥς ἄν εἰς ὑπ' ὕπνον πέσῃ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

"Ὑπνε δ' ἀλγέων, ὡ, ἀλγέου ἐλπίζω. εὐαίων εὐαιῶν, ἐναίων εὐαίων, ὑπνόω." ὑπνοῦμεν πράσσειν; καρδια τοῦ πάντων γνώμαν ἐλπίζω. ποιλυ τι πολύ γάρ κράτος ἀνυπνεί.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' ὅδε μὲν κλύει οὐδέν, ἐγὼ δ' ὁ ὡρὸς οὕνεκα θηραν τήνδ' ἀλίως ἐχομεν τόξων, διάχα τοὺδε πλέοντες. τοῦτο γὰρ ὁ στέφανος, τοῦτον θεὸς εἶπε κομίζειν. κομπεῖν δ' ἐστ' ἀτελῆ σὺν ψεύδεσιν εἰσεχρών ὡνείδως.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλά ὥσπερ καθὼς μὲν ἡμείς ὄψεσθαι. ἀντ. ὅν δ' ἄν ἀμειβῃ μ' ἀθωις, βαιαν μοι, βαιαν, ὥ τεκνον, πέμπε λόγων φάμαν.

1 εὐαίως MSS., Hermann corr.
2 ποί δέ βάσει, πῶς δέ μοι τὰντεῦθεν MSS., Jebb corr.

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PHILOCTETES

And from an artery in his wounded foot
The black blood spurts. So let us leave him, friends
In peace and quiet till he fall asleep.

CHORUS

Sleep immune of cares, (Str.)
Sleep that knows not cumber,
Breathe thy softest airs,
Prince of painless slumber!
O'er his eyes 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, (Ant.)
Look thou to what is near,
And, when thou mak'st reply,
Low breathe it in my ear:
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὡς πάντων ἐν νόσῳ εὐδρακῆς
ὕπνος ἅπασος λεύσσειν.

ἀλλ’ ὅτι δύνα μάκιστον
κεῖνο δὴ μοι κεῖνο λάθρα
ἐξιδοῦ ὅπα πράξεις.
οἰσθα γὰρ ἂν ἔναν αὐδώμαι,
εἰ ταῦταν τούτων γνώμαν ἱσχεις,
μᾶλα τοι ἄπορα πυκνοῖς ἐνίδειν πάθη.

οὐρὸς τοι, τέκνοι, οὐρος:
ἀνὴρ δ’ ἀνόμματος οὐδ’ ἔχων
ἀρωγαν ἐκτέταται νύχιος,
(ἀλείης ὕπνοις ἐσθλός,)
οὐ χερός, οὐ ποδός, οὐ τινος ἀρχων,
ἀλλὰ τις ὡς Ἀιδα παρακείμενος.
ὀρα, βλέπ’ εἰ καίρια
φθέγγει τὸ δ’ ἀλώσιμον
ἐμὰ φροντίδι, παῖ,
πόνος ὁ μὴ φοβῶν κράτιστος.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

συγὰν κελεύω μηδ’ ἀφεστάναι φρενῶν·
κινεῖ γὰρ ἀνὴρ ὅμως κανάγει κάρα.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὁ φέγγος ὕπνοι διάδοχον τὸ τ’ ἐλπίδων
ἀπιστον οἰκούρημα τῶν τῶν ξένων.

οὐ γὰρ ποτ’, ὃ παῖ, τοῦτ’ ἂν ἔξηύχησ’ ἐγώ,
τλήναι σ’ ἐλευθὸς ὅδε τὰμὰ πήματα
μεῖναι παρόντα καὶ ξυνωφελοῦντα μοι.

οὐκον Ἀτρείδαι τοῦτ’ ἔτλησαν εὐφόρως
οὕτως ἐνεγκεῖν, ἁγαθοὶ στρατηλάται.

1 ἵν or ὅν MSS., Hermann corr.
2 εὐφόρως MSS., Brunck corr.
PHILOCTETES

Sleepless the sick man’s sleep,
    Quick-eared to catch each sound;
His eyes, though closed, yet keep
    Sharp watch around.

Wherefore explore in stealth, my son,
How what thou dost may best be done.
If thy plan be still the same,
What it is I need not name,
Plain to one who looks before
Are his troubles vast and sore.

The breeze sets fair, sets fair, my son,
    And there outstretched he lies
As one who hath nor ears nor eyes.
(How good to sleep i’ the sun !)
Of hand or foot, no motion has he, none
    More than the dead who in Earth’s bosom rest.
Then look, my son, look that thou utterest
Sane counsels. If a plain man might advise
Thy wisdom, the discreetest way is best.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Silence, and keep your wits; his eyes begin
To open and he raises now his head.

PHILOCTETES

O sweet to wake to the broad day and find,
What least I hoped, my kindly guardians by.
For this, my son, I never had presumed
To hope, that thou would’st thus compassionately
Wait to attend my woes and minister.
The Atridae, those brave captains never showed
Courage to bear them patiently. But thou
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀλλ' εὐγενῆς γὰρ ἡ φύσις κἀξ εὐγενῶν, 
δ' τέκνου, ἤ σή, πάντα ταύτ' ἐν εὐχερεί 
ἔθου, βοής τε καὶ δυσσύμμαχος γέμων.
καὶ νῦν ἐπειδὴ τούδε τοῦ κακοῦ δοκεῖ 
λήθη τις εἶναι κάναπαυλα δή, τέκνου, 
σὺ μ' αὐτὸς ἄρον, σὺ με κατάστησον, τέκνου, 
ἐφ' ἤνικ' ἂν κόπος μ' ἀπαλλάξῃ ποτὲ, 
ὀρμώμεθ' ἐς ναῦν μηδ' ἐπίσχωμεν τὸ πλεῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΟΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' ὦδομαι μὲν σ' εἰσιδὼν παρ' ἐλπίδα 
ἀνώδυνον βλέποντα καὶ τὸν ναῦ πλεῖν ἐτι.
(ὡς οὔκετ' οὔτος γὰρ τὰ συμβόλαια σου 
πρὸς τὰς παρούσας ξυομφοράς ἐφαίνετο, 
νῦν δ' αἴρεσαντόν' ἐι δε σοι μᾶλλον φίλον, 
ο섰οι σ' οὔτε τού πόνου γὰρ οὔκ ὄκνοι, 
ἐπεὶ ποιεῖτο τούτω σοί τ' ἐδοξ' ἐμοί τε δρᾶν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

αἰνῶ τάδ', ὦ παῖ, καὶ 'έπαιρ', ὡσπερ νοεῖς 
τούτους δ' ἔασον, μὴ βαρυνθῶσιν κακῇ 
ὀσμῇ πρὸ τοῦ δέοντος οὐπι νη' γὰρ 
ἀλλ' πόνοι τούτωσι συναίειν ἐμοί.

ΝΕΟΠΟΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἔσται τάδ'. ἀλλ' ἵστω τε κατοῦτος ἀντέχου.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

θάρσει' τό τοι σύνηθες ὀρθώσει μ' ἔθος.

ΝΕΟΠΟΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

παπαῖ' τί δ' ἦτ' ἀν δραμ' ἐγὼ τούνευνδε γε; 

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

τί δ' ἐστιν, ὦ παῖ; ποι' ποτ' ἐξέβης λόγῳ; 

ΝΕΟΠΟΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ οὐδ' ὅποι χρή τάπορον τρέπειν ἐπος.
By nature noble as by birth, my son,
Mad’st light of all the sores to eye and ear,
And nostrils, that my malady inflicts.
But now at last, ’twould seem, a lull has come,
A respite and oblivion of my ills;
Raise me thyself, boy, set me on my feet,
That, when the attack has wholly spent itself,
We may aboard and instantly set sail.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Right glad am I to see thee breathing still,
Alive, beyond all hope, and freed from pain;
For to appearance thou didst bear the seal
And signature of death. Now raise thyself,
Or if thou choosest, these shall carry thee;
Such service will they readily perform,
Since thou and I alike are thus resolved.

PHILOCTETES
I thank thee, son, and, if it pleaseth thee,
Raise me thyself and spare thy men this task,
Lest they be sickened with my fetidness
Before the time; they’ll have enough to bear
With me for messmate when we are aboard.

NEOPTOLEMUS
So be it; now, stand up, lay hold of me.

PHILOCTETES
Fear not, long use and wont has taught me how.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Ye Gods! What now remains for me to do?

PHILOCTETES
What is it, my son, what mean these whirling words?

NEOPTOLEMUS
I speak perplexly, know not how to speak.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
άπορεῖς δὲ τοῦ σὺ; μὴ λέγ᾽, ὦ τέκνον, τάδε.

ΝΕΟΠΟΔΕΜΟΣ
ἀλλ᾽ εὐθάδ᾽ ἦδη τοῦδε τοῦ πάθους κυρῶ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οὐ δὴ σε δυσχέρεια τοῦ νοσήματος ἔπεισεν οὕστε μὴ μ᾽ ἂγειν ναύτην ἔτι;

ΝΕΟΠΟΔΕΜΟΣ
ἀπαντα δυσχέρεια, τὴν αὐτοῦ φύσιν ὅταν λυπῶν τις δρὰ τὰ μὴ προσεικότα.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲν ἔξω τοῦ φυτεύσαντος σὺ γε δρὰς οὐδὲ φωνεῖς, ἐσθλὸν ἄνδρ᾽ ἐπωφελῶν.

ΝΕΟΠΟΔΕΜΟΣ
αἰσχρὸς φανοῦμαι· τοῦτ᾽ ἀνιῶμαι πάλαι.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οὐκούν ἐν οἷς δρᾷς· ἐν οἷς δ᾽ αὐδᾶς ὀκνῶ.

ΝΕΟΠΟΔΕΜΟΣ
ὁ Ζεῦ, τί δράσω; δεύτερον ληφθῶ κακός, κρύπτων θ᾽ ἀ μὴ δεῖ καὶ λέγων αἰσχιστ᾽ ἐπῶν;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἀνὴρ ὅδ᾽, εἰ μὴ γρῶ κακός γυνῶν ἐφῖν, προδοὺς μ᾽ έσοικε κάκλιπων τῶν πλοῦν στελεῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΟΔΕΜΟΣ
λυπῶν μὲν οὐκ ἑγὼς ἀνυπηρῶς δὲ μὴ πέμπω σε μᾶλλον, τοῦτ᾽ ἀνιῶμαι πάλαι.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
τί ποτε λέγεις, ὦ τέκνον; ὡς οὐ μανθάνω.

ΝΕΟΠΟΔΕΜΟΣ
οὐδὲν σε κρύψω· δεῖ γὰρ ἐς Τροίαν σε πλεῖν πρὸς τοὺς Ἀχαιοὺς καὶ τὸν Ἀτρειδῶν στόλον.
PHILOCTETES

PHILOCTETES
What can perplex thee? say not so, my son.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Too deep involved, I cannot otherwise.

PHILOCTETES
What! the offensiveness of my complaint
Will stay thee now from taking me aboard?

NEOPTOLEMUS
All is offensive when a man is false
To his true self and, knowing right, does wrong.

PHILOCTETES
But thou dost naught in word or deed to shame
Thy birth in succouring a worthy man.

NEOPTOLEMUS
I shall be proved a rogue; this tortures me.

PHILOCTETES
Not in thy deeds—thy words do give me pause.

NEOPTOLEMUS
God help me now! Must I appear twice base,
Hide what I should not and my shame reveal?

PHILOCTETES
The youth, if I misjudge him not, intends
To play me false and leave me stranded here.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Leave thee? Not so, but what will irk thee more,
Convey thee hence. ’Tis this that tortures me.

PHILOCTETES
Thy words are dark, I cannot catch their drift.

NEOPTOLEMUS
I will be plain and round with thee. To Troy
Thou sailest, to the Atridae and the host.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

οἶμοι, τί εἶπας;

ΝΕΟΠΟΣΙΛΕΜΟΣ

μὴ στέναξε, πρὶν μάθησ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ποίον μάθημα; τί με νοεῖς δρᾶσαί ποτε;

ΝΕΟΠΟΣΙΛΕΜΟΣ

σώσαι κακοῦ μὲν πρῶτα τοῦδ', ἐπείτα δὲ
ξύν σοι τὰ Τροίας πεδία πορθῆσαι μολὼν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

καὶ ταύτ' ἀληθῆ δράν νοεῖς;

ΝΕΟΠΟΣΙΛΕΜΟΣ

πολλή κρατεῖ

tούτων ἀνάγκη, καὶ σὺ μὴ θυμοῦ κλύων.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ἀπόλωλα τλήμων, προδέδομαι. τί μ', ὦ ξένε,

ΝΕΟΠΟΣΙΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀπόδοσ ως τάχος τὰ τόξα μοι.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ἀπόδος, οὐχ οἷόν τε τῶν γὰρ ἐν τέλει κλύειν
τὸ τ' ἐνδικών με καὶ τὸ συμφέρον ποεῖ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ὁ πῦρ σὺ καὶ πᾶν δείμα καὶ πανουργίας

dεινῆς τέχνημ' ἐχθιστον, οὐά μ' εἰργάσω,

1 μὴ μ' ἀφέλης MSS., Elmsley corr.
Alas! What say'st thou?

Murmur not but hear me—

Hear me, quoth he! what wilt thou do with me?

First from this misery rescue thee, and then,
With thee to aid me, ravage Ilium.

Wilt thou indeed do this?

Necessity
Leaves me no choice; so take it not amiss.

Me miserable! I am undone, betrayed
How hast thou used me, sir! I charge thee straight
Give back my bow!

That cannot be, for I
By policy and duty both am bound
To obey my chiefs.

Thou fire, thou utter monster,
Abhorred masterpiece of knavery,
How hast thou served me, cheated me, abused?
Art not ashamed to look on me, thou wretch,
Thy suppliant, thy bedesman? Robbing me
Of this my bow thou robbest me of life.
Restore it, I beseech thee, O my son,
Oh, an thou lov'st me, give me back my bow;
Rob me not, by thy gods I pray, of life!
ὦμοι τάλας. ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ προσφωνεῖ μ᾽ ἐτι, ἀλλ᾽ ὡς μεθήσων μήποθ', ὡδ᾽ ὀρᾷ πάλιν. ὁ λιμένες, ὁ προβλήτες, ὁ ἕμνουσίαι θηρῶν ὅρείων, ὁ καταρρώγες πέτραι, ὑμῖν τάδ', οὐ γὰρ ἄλλον οἴδ᾽ ὅτω λέγω, ἀνακλάομαι παροῦσι τοῖς εἰωθόσιν, οὗ ἔργ' ὁ παῖς μ' ἔδρασεν οὐξ ᾿Αχιλλέως· ὃμόσας ἀπάξειν οἶκαδ', ἐς Τροίαν μ' ἤγει προσθεῖς τε χεῖρα δεδιάνι τὰ τόξα μου ἱερὰ λαβὼν τοῖς εἰωθόσιν, οὗ ἔργ' ὁ παῖς ἦν ὁ ᾿Αχιλλέως· ὃς ἄνδρ᾽ ἐλὼν ἰσχυρόν ἐκ βίας μ᾽ ἤγει, καὶ τοῖς ᾿Αργείοις φήνασθαι θέλει· ὡς ἄνδρ᾽ ἐλὼν ἰσχυρόν ἐκ βίας μ᾽ ἤγει, κοῦκ οὐδ᾽ ἐναίρων νεκρὸν ἢ καπνοῦ σκιαῖ, εἰδὼλον ἄλλως· οὐ γὰρ ἄν σθένον τά γε εἰλέν μ᾽ ἐπεὶ οὐδ᾽ ἦν ὡδ᾽ ἔχοντ', εἰ μὴ δόλῳ· νῦν ὁ ἦπατήμαι δύσμορος. τί χρή με δρᾶν; καὶ τοῖσιν φήσῃ θέλει· ὡς ἄνδρ᾽ ἐλὼν ἰσχυρόν ἐκ βίας μ᾽ ἤγει, κοῦκ οὐδ᾽ ἐναίρων νεκρὸν ἢ καπνοῦ σκιαῖ, εἰδὼλον ἄλλως· οὐ γὰρ ἄν σθένον τά γε εἰλέν μ᾽ ἐπεὶ οὐδ᾽ ἦν ὡδ᾽ ἔχοντ', εἰ μὴ δόλῳ· νῦν ὁ ἦπατήμαι δύσμορος. τί χρή με δρᾶν; 940

950

τί φής; σιωπᾶς; οὐδὲν εἰμ᾽ ὁ δύσμορος. ὁ σχῆμα πέτρας δίπυλον, αὖθις αὖ πάλιν εἰσεμι πρὸς σὲ ψιλός, οὐκ ἔχον τροφῆν· ἀλλ᾽ αὐανοῦμαι τῷδ᾽ ἐν αὐλίῳ μόνος, οὐ πτηνὸν ὄρνιν οὐδὲ θῆρ᾽ ὀρειβάτην τόξοις ἐναίρων τοισίδ', ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὸς τάλας θανῶν παρέξω δαίθ' ὑφ᾽ ὃν ἐφερβόμην; καὶ μ᾽ οὕς ἐθήρων πρόσθε θηράσουσι νῦν· φόνου φόνον δὲ ρύσιον τίσω· τάλας πρὸς τοῦ δοκοῦντος οὐδὲν εἰδέναι κάκων. ὅλοιο—μή πω, πρὶν μάθοιμ εἰ καὶ πάλιν ῥγῶμην μετοίσεις· εἰ δὲ μή, θάνοις κακῶς. 960

444
Ah me! he turns away, he will not speak; His silence says he will not give it back. Ye creeks, ye promontories, dens and lairs Of mountain beasts, ye cliffs precipitous, To you—none else will heed me—I appeal, On you, familiars of my woes, I call; Hear what I suffer from Achilles' son! He swore to bring me home again, and now To Troy he takes me; on his plighted troth I gave, he keeps my bow, the sacred bow That erst to Zeus-born Heracles belonged, To flout it 'fore the Argive host as his; He takes me hence his prisoner, as if His arm had captured some great warrior, And sees not he is slaying a dead man, A shade, a wraith, an unsubstantial ghost; For in my strength he had not ta'en me, no, Nor as I am, disabled, save by guile. But now, entrapped, ah whither shall I turn? Have pity, give me, give me back my bow! Be once again thy true self, even now. What answer? None. O woe is me, I am lost! O cave with double mouth, to thee I turn; Stripped of my arms and lacking means of life, Here shall I wither in this lonely cell. No bird of air, no beast of the upland wold Yon bow shall slay, but dying I shall make A feast for those who fed me when alive, A quarry for the creatures I pursued, My blood for their blood shed. And this I owe To one who seemed a child in innocence. My curse upon thee—nay I will forbear, Till first I hear whether thou wilt repent Or not; if no, die blasted by my curse!
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ
τί δρῶμεν; ἐν σοὶ καὶ τὸ πλεῖν ἡμᾶς, ἀναξ, ἤδη στὶ καὶ τοῖς τούδε προσχωρεῖν λόγοις.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἐμοὶ μὲν οἶκτος δεινὸς ἐμπέπτωκέ τις τοῦδ᾽ ἀνδρὸς οὐ νῦν πρῶτοι, ἄλλα καὶ πάλαι.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἐλέησον, ὃ παῖ, πρὸς θεῶν, καὶ μὴ παρῆς σαυτοῦ βροτοὶς ὅνειδος, ἐκκλέψας ἐμὲ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
οἴμοι, τί δράσω; μή ποτ' ὄφελον λιπεῖν τὴν Σκύρον' οὕτω τοῖς παροῦσιν ἀχθομαι.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οὐκ εἰ κακὸς σύ, πρὸς κακῶν δ᾽ ἀνδρῶν μαθὼν ἔοικας ἥκειν αἰσχρά' νῦν δ᾽ ἄλλοισι δοὺς οἷς εἰκὸς ἐκπλει, τὰμά μοι μεθεῖς ὅπλα.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
τί δρῶμεν, ἀνδρεῖς;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
ὡς κάκιστ᾽ ἀνδρῶν, τί δράς; οὐκ εἰ μεθεῖς τὰ τόξα ταῦτ᾽ ἐμοὶ πάλιν;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οἴμοι, τις ἀνήρ; ἅρ' Ὁδυσσέως κλύω;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
Ὅδυσσέως, σάφ' ἵσθ', ἐμοῦ γ', ὃν εἰσορᾶς.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οἴμοι· πέπραμαι κατόλωλ᾽· ὦ οὗ ἢν ἁρα ὁ ξυλλαβὼν με κάποιουσφίσας ὅπλων.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
ἔγώ, σάφ' ἵσθ', οὐκ ἄλλος· ὀμολογῷ τάδε.
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
Seyros, 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?

ODYSSSEUS appears suddenly from behind the cave.

ODYSSSEUS
Wretch, what art thou at?
Back with thee, sirrah! give the bow to me—

PHILOCTETES
Ah who is here? Is that Odysseus' voice?

ODYSSSEUS
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.

ODYSSSEUS
I and no other. I avow 'twas I.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἀπόδος, ἄφες μοι, παῖ, τὰ τόξα.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
τούτο μὲν,
oūδ᾽ ἦν θέλη, δράσει πτοτ᾽ ἂλλα καὶ σὲ δὲι
στείχειν ἂμ᾽ αὐτοῖς, ἤ βία στελοῦσ᾽ σε.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἐμ᾽, ὦ κακῶν κάκιστε καὶ τολμήσατε,
oίδ᾽ ἐκ βίας ἄξουσιν;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
ἡν μὴ ἐρπης ἐκών.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ὦ Δημνία χθὼν καὶ τὸ παγκρατέω σέλας
Ἡφαιστότευκτων, ταῦτα δῆτ᾽ ἀνασχετά,
eἰ μ᾽ οὔτος ἐκ τῶν σῶν ἀπάξιοντες 

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
Zeús ἐσθ᾽, ἵν᾽ εἰδῆς, Zeús, ὁ τῆσδε γῆς κρατῶν,
Zeús, ὦ δεδοκται ταῦθ᾽· ὑπηρετῶ δ᾽ ἐγώ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ὦ μῖσος, οἷα κἀξανευρίσκεις λέγειν'
θεοὺς προτείνων τοὺς θεοὺς ψευδεῖς τίθης.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
οὔκ, ἀλλ᾽ ἀληθεῖς. ἡ δ᾽ ὁδὸς πορευτέα.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οὔ φημ᾽.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
ἐγὼ δὲ φημὶ. πειστέον τάδε.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οἵ μοι τάλας. ἦμᾶς μὲν ὡς δούλους σαφῶς
πατὴρ ἄρ᾽ εξέφυσεν οὐδ᾽ ἐλευθέρους.
PHILOCTETES

PHILOCTETES
Give back my bow, son, give it.

ODYSSEUS
That he shall not,
E'en if he would; and what is more, thou with it
Must go, or these shall drag thee hence by force.

PHILOCTETES
Thou brazen-faced villain, shall thy knaves
Drag me by force?

ODYSSEUS
Yea, if thou'lt not consent.

PHILOCTETES
O Lemnian land, O all-subduing fires
Lit by Hephaestus, will ye suffer it,
That yonder man should hale me from your realm?

ODYSSEUS
'Tis Zeus, I tell thee, Zeus who rules this land,
Zeus thus ordains; I am his minister.

PHILOCTETES
O monstrous fiend, what pleas thou canst invent!
Gods thou invokest and wouldst make them liars.

ODYSSEUS
Nay, they are true. But thou must march with us.

PHILOCTETES
Never!

ODYSSEUS
But I say yes; consent thou must.

PHILOCTETES
Oh I was born to sorrow, so it seems;
No free man but a slave my sire begot.

1 Lemnos was the island on which Hephaestus fell when hurled from heaven (II. i. 593) and Moschylus on the east coast seems to have been an active volcano in historic times.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

οὐκ, ἀλλ᾽ ὀμοίους τοὺς ἀρίστοισιν, μεθ᾽ ὄν
Τροίαν σ᾽ ἔλειν δεὶ καὶ κατασκάψαι βία.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐδέποτε γ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ἦν χρῆ με πᾶν παθεῖν κακόν,
ἐως ἃν ἦ μοι γῆς τὸ δί αὐτοῖν ναν βάθρον.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

τι δ᾽ ἐργασείεις;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

κράτ᾽ ἐμὸν τὸδ᾽ αὐτίκα
πέτρα πέτρας ἀνώθεν αἰμάξω πεσὼν.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ξυλάβετον αὐτόν. μὴ 'πι τὸδ᾽ ἐστο τάδε.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὁ κεῖρες, οία πάσχετ' ἐν χρείᾳ φίλης
νευρᾶς, ὑπ᾽ ἀνδρός τοῦδε συνθηρώμεναι.

οὐδὲν ὑγιὲς μηδ᾽ ἔλευθερον φροῦν, οὐ
ἄν υπηλῖθες, ὡς μ᾽ ἐθηράσω, λαβὼν
πρόβλημα σαυτοῦ παίδα τοῦδ᾽ ἀγνωτ' ἐμοί,
ἀνάξιον μὲν σοῦ, κατάξιον δ᾽ ἐμοῦ,

ὅς οὐδὲν ἠδεί πλὴν τὸ προσταχθὲν ποεῖν,
δήλος δὲ καὶ νῦν ἐστιν ἀλγείνως φέρων
οἷς τ᾽ αὐτοῖς ἐξήματεν οἷς τ᾽ ἐγώ ἐποθον.

ἄλλ᾽ ἡ κακὴ σὴ διὰ μυχῶν βλέπων ἱεροῦ
ἀλλ᾽ οὐ γὰρ οὐδὲν θεοὶ νέμουσιν ἡδύ μοι,
PHILOCTETES

ODYNSEUS
Nay, but a peer of paladins, ordained
To storm proud Troy and lay it in the dust.

PHILOCTETES
Never! not even in my utmost need,
Whilst under me I feel this steep of rock.

ODYNSEUS
What would'st thou do?

PHILOCTETES
Leap from the crags above
And dash my brains out on the crags below—

ODYNSEUS
Lay hold of him, seize either arm, prevent him!

PHILOCTETES
Oh hands, how ill ye fare, made prisoners
By that man, all for lack of my good bow.
Thou very churl, corrupt in heart and soul,
How hast thou circumvented me again,
Making this stranger boy thy stalking horse,
Fit mate for me, too good for thine ally,
Thy tool who merely did as he was bidden,
And even now is plainly penitent
Both for his error and the wrong to me.
But thou, like some vile prompter in the dark,
Wast ever by to give the cue, and though
Unapt and loth, he learnt thy villainy.
And now thou think'st to bind me hand and foot,
Monster, and take me from this shore whereon
Thou erst did'st cast me, friendless, homeless, lorn,
A living corpse.

I curse thee; when have I
Not cursed thee these long years? But since the Gods
Grant nothing sweet to me, thou livest on
Exultant; and to me, with endless woes
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

σὺ μὲν γέγηθας ζῶν, ἐγὼ δὲ ἀλγύνομαι
tοῦτ᾽ αὖθ᾽, ὡς ἐν ζωί σὺν κακοῖς πολλοῖς τάλας,
γελώμενος πρὸς σοῦ τε καὶ τῶν Ἀτρέως
dιπλῶν στρατηγῶν, οἷς σὺ ταῦθ᾽ ὑπηρετεῖς.
καίτοι σὺ μὲν κλοπῆ τε καὶ κάναγκη γυγεὶσ
ἐπλείσι ἀμ᾽ αὐτοῖς, ἐμὲ δὲ τὸν πανάλθιον,
ἐκόντα πλεύσανθ᾽ ἐπτὰ ναυοί ναυβάτην,
ἄτιμον ἔβαλον, ὡς σὺ φῆς, κείνοι δὲ σὲ.
καὶ νῦν τί μ᾽ ἀγετε; τί μ᾽ ἀπάγεσθε; τοῦ χάριν;
δι᾽ αὐτῆ γὰρ ἂν σοι πρὸσφασισ ἐκβάλεῖν ἐμε.
κακῶς ὁλοίσθ᾽ ὑλεῖσθε δ᾽ ἡδικηκότες
tὸν ἄνδρα τὸν, θεοῖσιν εἰ δίκης μέλει.
ἐξοίδα δ᾽ ὡς μέλει γ᾽ ἐπεὶ οὐπτὸτ᾽ ἀν στόλον
ἐπλεύσανθ᾽ ἀν τόν ἑινεκ’ ἄνδρος ἄθλιον,
εἰ μὴ τι κέντρον θείου ἔρημα ἐμοῦ,
ἄλλ᾽, ὡς πατρόφα γῆ θεο ἐπόψιοι,
τίσασθε τίσασθε δ᾽ ἀλλὰ τῷ χρόνῳ ποτὲ
ζύμπαντα μὴ ἀνοίκτες, εἰ τι καὶ οἰκτίρετε
ὡς ἐν ζῶ μὲν οἰκτρῶς, εἰ δ᾽ ἴδοιμ ὠλωλότας
tούτους, δοκοίμ ἂν τής ὕσσον πεφευγέναι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

βαρὺς τε καὶ βαρεῖαν ο ἔποιος φάτιν
tῆν δ᾽ εἶπ᾽, Ὀδυσσέα, κούχ ὑπείκουσαν κακοῖς.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΩΣ

πόλλ᾽ ἂν λέγειν ἔχοιμι πρὸς τὰ τοῦτ᾽ ἔπη,

1 ἐξεστ᾽ ἐμοῦ MSS., Pierson and Gernhard corr.
Encompassed, life itself is misery;
Mocked as I am by thee and the two sons
Of Atreus whose abettor now thou art.
Thou of constraint and by a stratagem
Wert forced to join their flag and sail with them; ¹
I with my seven ships volunteered, and yet
(O miserable me!) I was cast forth
In scorn—by them thou say'st, they say by thee.
And now why seize, why hale me to your ships,
Me who am naught, dead long ago to you?
How can I serve you? Heaven-abhorred wretch
Am I not lame and noisome now as then?
How will ye render, if I sail with you,
Burnt sacrifices and drink-offerings?
That was the pretext when ye cast me forth.
My curse upon you for your wrongs to me,
And, if the gods are just, ye shall be cursed.
And they are just, I know it; never else
Would ye have sailed for such a wretch as I,
But that they pricked your heart to think of me.
My native land, ye ever-watchful gods,
Your vengeance, vengeance sure though it tarry long,
Fall on them all, if aught you pity me;
And I am piteous. Yet could I behold
Their ruin, I should half forget my plague.

CHORUS
His mood is bitter, bitter his reply
To thee, Odysseus; suffering tames him not.

ODYSSEUS
Much could I answer, did the time permit;

¹ Odysseus to escape service feigned madness but was detected by Palamedes, who laid the infant Telemachus in front of the plough which he was driving with a yoked ox and ass.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

εἴ μοι παρείκοι· νῦν δ’ εὖς κρατῶ λόγου.
οὗ γὰρ τοιοῦτων δεῖ, τοιοῦτός εἰμ’ ἐγώ.
χῶπον δικαίων κἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν κρίσις,
οὐκ ἂν λάβοις μοι μᾶλλον οὐδέν’ εὐσεβῆ.
νικᾶν γε μέντοι πανταχοῦ χρῆζων ἔφιν,
πλὴν εἰς σὲ· νῦν δὲ σοί γ’ ἐκὼν ἐκστήσομαι.
ἄφετε γὰρ αὐτὸν μηδὲ προσψαύσητ’ ἐτι,
ἔατε μύμνειν. οὐδὲ σοῦ προσχρηξομεν,
τά γ’ ὅπλ’ ἔχοντες ταῦτ’, ἐπεὶ πάρεστι μὲν
Τεῦκρος παρ’ ἡμῖν, τήνδ’ ἐπιστήμην ἔχων,
ἐγώ θ’, δς οἶμαι σοῦ κάκιον οὐδέν ἄν
τούτων κρατύνειν, μηδ’ ἐπιθύνειν χερί.
τί δῆτα σοῦ δεῖ; χαῖρε τὴν Λῆμνον πατῶν
ἡμεῖς δ’ ἴωμεν, καὶ τάχ’ ἄν τὸ σὸν γέρας
τιμὴν ἐμοὶ νείμειεν, ἣν σὲ χρῆν ἔχειν.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

μή μ’ ἀντιφώνει μηδέν, ὡς στείχοντα δή.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

οἴμοι· τί δράσω δύσμορος; σὺ τοῖς ἐμοῖς
οπλοῖσι κοσμηθεὶς ἐν ᾿Αργείοις φανεῖ;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

χώρει σὺ· μὴ πρόσλευσόσε, γενναῖος περ ὃν,
ἡμῶν ὅπως μὴ τὴν τύχην διαφθειρεῖς.
PHILOCTETES

One word must now suffice. I am a man
Who can adapt his humour to the hour.
When justice and plain-dealing are required,
Ye will not find a man more scrupulous.
My one concern is ever to prevail—
Save in thy case; to thee right willingly
I will give way. (To sailors) Unhand him, let him
go!
He may stay here.

(To PHILOCTETES)

We have no need of thee,
Having thy bow, for Teucer will be there
A master archer, and myself who boast
That I can draw a bow with hand as firm
And point it with as true an eye as thine.
What use for thee then? Lemnos shall be thine.
Sole Monarch, hail! Go, pace thy bounds at peace;
We leave thee. This thy prize methinks will earn
For me the honour that were rightly thine.

PHILOCTETES

Unhappy wretch, what can I do? Shalt thou
Strut like a popinjay in arms of mine?

ODYSSEUS

Bandy no more words; I am going now.

PHILOCTETES

Son of Achilles, wilt thou leave me thus,
Thou too in silence, deaf to my appeal?

ODYSSEUS

(To NEOPTOLEMUS)

Away! and look not on him lest thou mar
Our stroke of fortune by thy quixotry.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

η καὶ πρὸς ὑμῶν ὡς ἔρημος, ὦ ἔνιοι, λειψάνα τὸν καῦκ ἐποικιστεῖτε με; ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὗτος καὶ πρὸς ὑμῶν ναυκράτωρ ὦ παῖς. ὄσον ὑμών λέγη σοι, ταῦτα σοι χήμεις φαμέν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ακούσομαι μὲν ὡς ἔφυν οὐκτοῦ πλέως πρὸς τοῦδ'. ὦ σοι, ἐπειδὴ ὅτι, ὥστε ὑμῶν τοσοῦτον εἰς ὑμῶν τὰ ἑκ νεώς στείλωσιν ναυταῖς καὶ θεοῖς εὐξόμεθα. χοῦτος νῦν ἀν φρόνησιν ἐν τούτῳ λάβοι λάον τῷ ἐμῷ. νῦ μὲν οὖν ὥστε εὐμάθειον, ύμεῖς δ', ὅταν καλῶμεν, οὐμίσθαι ταχεῖς.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὁ κοῖλος πέτρας γύαλον στρ. α' θερμὸν καὶ παγετῶδες, ὥς σ᾽ οὐκ ἔμελλον ἄρ᾽, ὦ τάλας,

λείψειν οὐδέποτ᾽, ἀλλὰ μου καὶ δυνάσκοντι συνεῦσθε. ὧμοι μοι μοι.

ὁ πληρέστατος αὐλον λύπασ τᾶς ἀπ᾽ ἐμοῦ τάλαν, τίτπτ' αὐτοί μοι το κατ᾽ ἅμαρ ἐσται; στοῦ ποτε τεῦξος συνούκου καὶ τιπένθεν ἐλπίδος; πέλεια δ᾽ ἀνω πτωκάδες ὀξύτονον διὰ ταῦτα ταῦτα ἐλωσίν ὡσὺς τὸ 'ἰσχώ;][]  

ΧΟΡΟΣ

σὺ τοι σὺ τοι κατηξίωσας, ὦ βαρύποτε, κοὺς 1 εἶναι ἀπελευθέρωσεν ὑμῶν πτωκάδες ἀπὸ τοῦτον διὰ ταῦτα ταῦτα ἐλωσίν ὡσὺς τοῦ γὰρ ἐπικυρίων MSS., Erfurdt, Heath, Jebb corr.
Ye also, friends, will ye abandon me
And show no pity for my sad estate?

This stripling is our captain, and whate'er
He says, we say the same; his word is law.

I know I shall be twitted by my chief
As weak and tender-hearted; but what odds?
If our friend wills it, tarry here until
Our crew have made all tight and yare, and we
Have offered prayers, as fitting. He the while
Perchance may come to a better mind and melt.
So we will hasten forward, he and I,
And ye, make haste to follow when we call.

[Exeunt Odysseus and Neoptolemus.

O cavern'd rock, my cell

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.

'Tis thou hast willed it thus, infatuate,
Thou art the author of thy sad estate;
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

άλλοθεν ἔχει τύχᾳ τὰδ᾽ ἀπὸ μείζονος,
εὐτέ γε παρὸν φρονῆσαι
τοῦ λάφωνος δαιμόνος εἶλον τὸ κάκιον αἰνεῖν.]

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ τλάμων τλάμων ἀρ' ἐγὼ ἀντ. α
καὶ μόχθω λωβατός, ὃς ἦδη μετ' οὐδενὸς ύστερον
ἀνδρῶν εἰσοπτίσω τάλας ναίων ἐνθάδ' ὀλούμαι,
οὐ φορβὰν ἐτὶ προσφέρων,
οὐ πτανῶν ἀπ' ἐμῶν ὅπλων
κραταίαις μετὰ χερσὶν
κρυπτά τ' ἐπὶ δολερᾶς ὑπέδυ φρενός·
ἰδοίμαν δὲ νῦν,
τὸν τάδε μησάμενον, τὸν ἰσον χρόνον
ἐμὰς λαχόντ' ἀνίας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πότμος, πότμος σε δαιμόνων τάδ’,
οὐδὲ σὲ γε δόλος,
ἐσχεν ύπὸ χείρος ἀμᾶς.2 στυγερὰν ἔχε
δύσιπτεμον ἁρᾶν ἐπ' ἀλλοις.
καὶ γὰρ ἐμοὶ τούτο μέλει, μὴ φιλότητ' ἀπώσῃ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οἱμοὶ μοι, καὶ πολιᾶς
πόντον θυνὸς ἐφήμενος
ἐγγελα, χερὶ πάλλων
τὰν ἐμᾶν μελέου τροφὰν,
τὰν οὐδείς ποτ' ἐβάστασεν.
ὦ τόξον φίλον, ὦ φίλων
χειρῶν ἐκβεβιασμένον,

1 ἔλειν MSS., Hermann corr.
2 ἐσχ' ύπὸ χείρος ἐμᾶς MSS., Bergk corr.
PHILOCTETES

Nor to some higher force canst thou assign
Thy woes, but, when free choice was thine,
The good thou did'st reject,
The worse elect.

PHILOCTETES

Ah wretched, wretched then am I, (Ant. 1)
Consumed with utter misery,
Doomed for all time to linger on.
Without one friend, one comrade, one,
   To aid me till I die.
No more my arrows fleet
   Shall win my daily meat;
Poor unsuspecting fool,
A base intriguer's tool,
By his forged legend caught!
Wretch who my ruin wrought,
Would I might see him pine
Long years like me in agony like mine!

CHORUS

By destiny, 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 ποὺ ἐλεινὼν ὅρᾶς, φρένας εἰ τινὰς ἔχεις; τὸν Ἡράκλειον ἀρθμὸν ὃδε σοι
οὐκέτι χρησόμενον τὸ μεθύστερον, ἄλλου δ᾽ ἐν μεταλλαγῇ
πολυμηχάνου ἀνδρὸς ἐρέσσει,
ὀρῶν μὲν αἴσχρας ἀπάτας, στυγνὸν δὲ φῶτ᾽ ἐχθρο-
δοσόν,
μυρὶ, ἀπ᾽ αἰσχρῶν ἀνατέλλουθ᾽, ὃς ἐφ᾽ ἡμῖν κάκ᾽
ἐμήσατ', ὦ Ζεῦ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀνδρὸς τοι τὰ μὲν ἐνδικ᾽ αἰέν ἔπιτεῖν,
εἶπόντος δὲ μὴ φθονερὰν ἐξῶσαι γλώσσας ὀδύναν.
κεῖνος δ᾽ εἰς ἀπὸ πολλῶν τάχθεις τῶν ἐφήμοσυνά
κοινών ἡνυσεν ἐς φίλους ἀρωγάν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὅ πταναὶ θήραι χαροπῶν τ' ἀντ. β'
ἐθυμ θηρῶν, οὔς ὅδ᾽ ἔχει
χῶρος οὐρειβώτας,
μικέτ᾽ ἀπ᾽ αὐλίων φύγα
πηδάτ᾽ 3 οὐ γὰρ ἔχω χεροῖν
τὰν πρόσθεν βέλεων ἀλκάν,
ὁ δύστανος ἐγὼ τανῦν,
ἀλλ᾽ ἀνέδην, ὃ δὲ χῶρος ἅρ᾽ ὀυκέτι
φοβητὸς οὐκέθ᾽ ὑμῖν, 4
ἐρπετε. νῦν καλὸν
ἀντίφονον κορέσαι στόμα πρὸς χάριν

1 Ὀδυσσεύς MSS., Dindorf corr.
2 τὸ μὲν εὖ δίκαιον MSS., Arndt corr.
3 φυγὰ μ᾽ οὐκέτ᾽ ἀπ᾽ αὐλίων | πελᾶτ᾽ MSS., Jebb corr.
4 ὅδε χῶρος ἐρύκεται | οὐκέτι φοβητὸς υμῖν 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.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἐμᾶς σαρκὸς αἰόλας:
ἀπὸ γὰρ βίον αὐτίκα λείψω.
πόθεν γὰρ ἐσται βιοτά; τίς ὠδ’ ἐν αὐραίς τρέφεται,
μηκέτι μηδενὸς κρατύνουν ὅσα πέμπει βιώδωρος
αιά;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πρὸς θεῶν, εἰ τί σέβει ξένον, πέλασσον,
εὖνοια πᾶσα πελάταυ:
ἀλλὰ γυνώθ', εὖ γυνώθ' ἐπι σοὶ 1
κῆρα τάνδ' ἀποφεύγειν.
οἴκτρα γὰρ βόσκειν, ἀδαὶς δ'
ἐχειν μυρίου ἁχθος, δ' ἔννοικεί.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

πάλιν πάλιν παλαιὸν ἀλγημ’ ὑπέμνασας, ὦ
λωστε τῶν πρὶν ἐντόπων.
τί μ’ ὀλεσας; τί μ’ εἰργασαι;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί τοῦτ’ ἐλεξας;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

eἰ σὺ τὰν ἐμοὶ στυγερὰν
Τρῳάδα γὰν μ’ ἠλπίσας ἄξειν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

tόδε γὰρ νοῦ κράτιστον.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀπὸ νῦν με λείπετ’ ἡδη.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

φίλα μοι, φίλα ταῦτα παρῆγγειλας ἐκόντι τε
πράσσειν.

ιωμεν ἱωμεν
ναὸς ἵν’ ἠμῖν τέτακται.

1 ὅτι σοι 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.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
μή, πρὸς ἀραίου Διός, ἑλθης, ικετεύω.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
μετρίας.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οἴ, πρὸς θεῶν.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
τί θρείως;
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
αἰαὶ αἰαὶ, δαίμων δαίμων:
ἀπόλωλ' ὁ τάλας:
ὀ ποῦς ποῦς, τί σ' ἐν βίω
τεύξω τῷ μετόπιν τάλας;
ὦ ξένοι, ἐλθετ' ἐπῆλυδες αὐθίνοι.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
τί ρέξοντες ἀλλοκότῳ
γνώμα τῶν πάρος; ὦν προύφαινες;
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οὐτοί νεμεσητοί,
ἄλυοντα χειμερίῳ
λῦτα καὶ παρὰ νοῦν θρείων.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
βὰθι νυν, ὦ τάλαν, ὡς σε κελεύομεν.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οὔδέποτ' οὔδέποτ', ἵσθι τὸδ' ἐμπέδον,
οὔδ' εἰ πυρφόρος ἀστεροπητής
βροντάς αὐγαῖς μ' εἶσι φλογίζων.
ἐφείτω 'Ἰλιον ο' θ' ὑπ' ἐκείνῳ
πάντες ὅσοι τὸδ' ἐτλάσαν ἐμοῦ ποδὸς ἅρθρον
ἀπώσαι.
przedsiębiorst, ὦ ξένοι, ἐν γε μοι εὔχος ὀρέξατε.
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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 Blurs 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.

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ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ποίον ἐρεῖς τόδ', ἔπος;
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ξύφος, εἰ ποθεν,
ἡ γέννην ἡ βελέων τι προπέμψατε.
ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὁς τίνα δὴ ἰέξης παλάμαν ποτέ;
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

χρῶτ' ἀπὸ πάντα καὶ ἄρθρα τέμω χερί.

φονᾶ φονᾶ νόος ἦδη.
ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί ποτε;
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

πατέρα ματεύων.
ΧΟΡΟΣ

ποί γᾶς;
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ἐς' Ἀιδών

οὐ γάρ ἐστ' ἐν φάει γ' ἐτι.

ὁ πόλις, ὁ πατρία,

πῶς ἂν εἰσίδουι ἀθλιός σ' ἄνηρ,

ὁς γε σὰν λιπῶν ἵεραν

λιβάδ' ἔχθροις ἔβαιν Δαναόις

ἀρωγός' ἐτ' οὐδὲν εἰμι.
ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἐγὼ μὲν ἦδη καὶ πάλαι νεώς ὅμοι

στείχων ἄν ἦ σοι τῆς ἐμῆς, εἴ μὴ πέλας

'Οδυσσέα στείχοντα τὸν τ' Ἀχιλλέως

γόνων πρὸς ἡμᾶς δεῦρ' ἱόντ' ἐλεύσομεν.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

οὐκ ἂν φράσειας ἤμητιν' ἀν παλιντροπος
κέλευθον ἔρπεις ὅδε 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 ὃς' ἐξήματον ἐν τῷ πρὶν χρόνῳ.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
dεινόν γε φωνεῖς· ἢ δ' ἀμαρτία τίς ἢν;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἡν σοὶ πιθόμενος τῷ τε σύμπαντι στρατῷ

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
ἐπραξας ἐργον ποῖον δὲν οὐ σοι πρέπον;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἀπάταισιν αἰσχραῖς ἄνδρα καὶ δόλοις ἐλών.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
tοὺν ποῖον; ὡμοι· μῶν τι βουλεύει νέον;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
νέον μὲν οὐδέν, τῷ δὲ Ποιαντος τόκῳ,

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
tί χρήμα δράσεις; ὃς μ' ὑπῆλθέ τις φόβος.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
παρ' οὕπερ ἐλαβον τάδε τα τόξ', αὖθις πάλιν

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
ὁ Ζεὺς, τί λέξεις; οὐ τί που δοῦναι νοεῖς;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
αἰσχρῶς γὰρ αὐτὰ κοὐ δίκη λαβὼν ἔχω.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
πρὸς θεῶν, πότερα δὴ κερτομῶν λέγεις τάδε;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ei κερτόμησίς ἐστὶ τάληθη λέγειν.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
tί φής, 'Αχιλλέως παι; τίν' εἰρηκας λόγουν;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
dίς ταῦτα βούλει καὶ τρὶς ἀναπολείν μ' ἔπη;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
ἀρχήν κλύειν ἂν οὐδ' ἀπαξ ἐβουλόμην.
PHILOCTETES

NEOPTOLEMUS
I come to expiate all former wrongs.

ODYSSEUS
A strange reply. What wrong did’st thou commit?

NEOPTOLEMUS
When in obedience to the host and thee—

ODYSSEUS
Prithee, what did’st thou that 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.
ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

εὖ νῦν ἐπίστω πάντ' ἀκηκὼς λόγον. 124

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἔστιν τις, ἔστιν ὃς σε κωλύσει τὸ δρᾶν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί φής; τίς ἔσται μ' οὐπικωλύσων τάδε;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἐξήκει Ἀχαιῶν λαός, ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἑγό.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

σοφὸς πεφυκὼς οὐδὲν ἐξαινάς σοφόν.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

σὺ δ' οὔτε φωνεῖς οὔτε δρασεῖσις σοφά.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' εἰ δίκαια, τῶν σοφῶν κρείσσω τάδε.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

καὶ πῶς δίκαιον, ἃ γ' ἔλαβες βουλαὶς ἐμαῖς,

πάλιν μεθεῖναι ταῦτα;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τὴν ἁμαρτίαν

αἰσχρὰν ἁμαρτὼν πειράσωμαι.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

στρατὸν δ' Ἀχαιῶν οὐ φοβέι, πράσσων τάδε; 125

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ξὺν τῷ δικαίῳ τὸν σὸν οὐ ταρβῶ φόβον.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

[ξὺν τῷ δικαίῳ χειρ ἐμῇ σ' ἀναγκᾶσει.] 1

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὔδε τοι σῇ χειρὶ πείθομαι τὸ δρᾶν.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

οὗ τάρα Τρωσίν, ἀλλὰ σοὶ μαχούμεθα.

1 Hermann pointed out that a verse is here missing. The line in the text (one of Jebb's suggestions) with the same beginning would explain the omission.
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

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἳτω τὸ μέλλον.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

χεῖρα δεξιὰν ὄρας
κάπης ἐπιψαύουσαν;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλὰ κάμε τοι
tαῦτον τὸδ’ ὅψει δρῶντα κού μέλλοντ’ ἔτι.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

καίτοι σ’ ἐάσω· τῷ ὁ δὲ σύμπαντι στρατῷ
λέξω τάδ’ ἐλθὼν, ὃς σε τιμωρήσεται.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἐσωφρόνησας· κἂν τὰ λοιφ’ οὕτω φρονῆς,
ἲσως ἄν ἐκτὸς κλαυμάτων ἔχοις πόδα.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

σὺ δ’, ὁ Ποιάντος παῖ, Φιλοκτήτην λέγω,
ἔξελθ’, ἀμείψας τάσδε πετρήρεις στέγας.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

tις αὖ παρ’ ἄντροις θόρυβος ἵσταται βοῆς;
tί μὲ ἐκκαλεῖσθε; τοῦ κεχρημένοι, ξένου;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

θάρσει’ λόγους δ’ ἀκουσον οὕς ἥκω φέρων.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

dέδοικ’ ἐγώγε· καὶ τὰ πρὶν γὰρ ἐκ λόγων
καλῶν κακῶς ἐπραξα, σοὶς πεισθείς λόγοις.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὗκον ἐνεστί καὶ μεταγυνώναι πάλιν;

1 ἐστὶ MSS., Weeklein 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 mislike the look of it. Are ye come
As heralds of new woes to crown the old?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Take heart and listen to the news I bring.

PHILOCTETES

I am afraid. Thou camest once before;
I trusted thy fair words and ill I sped,

NEOPTOLEMUS

May not a man repent him?
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

τοιοῦτος· ἦσθα τοῖς λόγοις χῶτε μου
tὰ τὸξ’ ἐκλεπτεῖς, πιστῶς, ἀτηρὸς λάθρα.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ’ οὐ τι μὴν νῦν· βούλομαι δὲ σου κλύειν,
πότερα δέδοκται σοι μένουτ᾽ καρτερεῖν
ἡ πλεῖν μεθ’ ἦμὸν;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

παῦε, μὴ λέξης πέρα·
mάτην γὰρ ἂν εἴπῃς γε πάντ’ εἰρήσεται.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὕτω δέδοκται; ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

καὶ πέρα γ’ ἵσθ’ ἡ λέγω.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ’ ἤθελον μὲν σε πεισθῆναι λόγοις
ἐμοῖσιν· εἰ δὲ μὴ τι πρὸς καιρὸν λέγων
κυρῶ, πέπαυμαι.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

πάντα γὰρ φράσεις μάτην.
oὐ γὰρ ποτ’ εὗνον τὴν ἐμὴν κτήσει φρένα,
ὅστις γ’ ἐμοῦ δόλοισι τὸν βίον λαβὼν
ἀπεστέρηκας, κάτα νουθετεῖς ἐμὲ
ἐλθὼν, ἀρίστου πατρὸς αἴσχιστον γεγώς.
ὁλοισθ’ Ἀτρείδαι μὲν μάλιστ’ ἐπειτὰ δὲ
ὁ Λαρτίου παῖς καὶ σὺ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

μὴ ἐπένεγκα πέρα·
δέχου δὲ χειρὸς ἐξ ἐμῆς βέλη τάδε.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

πῶς εἶπας; ἄρα δεύτερον δολούμεθα.
PHILOCTETES

PHILOCTETES
Such thou wast,
No less fair-spoken, when thou wert about
To steal my bow, black treachery in thy heart.

NEOPTOLEMUS
But now another man, who fain would learn
Whether thou still persistest to stay here,
Or wilt embark with us.

PHILOCTETES
Stop, say no more!
All that thou sayest will be wasted breath.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Art resolute?

PHILOCTETES
More resolute than words can tell.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Well, I would gladly have persuaded thee
By argument, but if thou wilt not heed,
Why, I have done.

PHILOCTETES
Thou needs must speak in vain.
How canst thou win me o’er to friendliness,
Thou who didst rob me of my life by fraud,
And then dost come to counsel me? Base son
Of noblest sire! Perdition on you all;
The Atridae first, Odysseus then, and thee!

NEOPTOLEMUS
Forbear thy curses. Take from me thy bow.

PHILOCTETES
What say’st thou? Am I tricked a second time?
Ο ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
απώμοσ' ἄγνων Ζηνὸς υψίστου σέβας.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ὦ φίλτατ' εἰπὼν, εἴ λέγεις ἐτήτυμα.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
tοῦργον παρέσται φανερῶν ἀλλὰ δεξιὰν
προτεινε χεῖρα, καὶ κράτει τῶν σῶν ὁπλῶν.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
ἐγὼ δ' ἀπαυδῶ γ', φ' θεοὶ ξυνίστορες,
ὑπέρ τ' Ἀτρειδῶν τοῦ τε σύμπαντος στρατοῦ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
tέκνον, τίνος φώνημα, μὸν Ὄδυσσέως,
ἐπησθόμην;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
σάφ' ἴσθιν καὶ πέλας γ' ὀρᾶς,
ὅς σ' ἐς τὰ Τροίας πεδί ἀποστελῶ βία,
ἐάν τ' Ἀχιλλέως παῖς ἐάν τε μή θέλῃ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ἀλλ' οὐ τι χαίρω τι, ἦν τόδ' ὀρθωθῇ βέλος.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἀ, μηδαμῶς, μή, πρὸς θεῶν, μεθής βέλος.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
μέθες με, πρὸς θεῶν, χεῖρα, φίλτατον τέκνον.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
οὐκ ἂν μεθείην.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
φεῦ' τί μ' ἀνδρα πολέμων ἐχθρόν 
τ' ἀφείλου μὴ κτανεῖν τόξοις ἐμοῖς;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἀλλ' οὐτ' ἐμοὶ τοῦτ' ἐστὶν οὕτε 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.]
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀλλ᾽ οὖν τοσοῦτόν γ᾽ ἴσθι, τοὺς πρῶτους στρατοῦ, τοὺς τῶν ᾿Αχαιῶν ψευδοκήρυκας, κακοὺς ὑντας πρὸς αἰχμῆν, ἐν δὲ τοῖς λόγοις θρασεῖς.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

εἶεν· τὰ μὲν δὴ τὸς ἔχεις, κοὐκ ἐσθ᾽ ὅτον ὅργην ἔχοις ἀν οὐδὲ μέμψιν εἰς ἐμέ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

εὔμφημην τὴν φύσιν δ᾽ ἐδείξας, ὦ τέκνον, εξ ἧς ἔβλαστε, οὐχὶ Σισύφου πατρός, ἀλλ᾽ ἐξ ᾿Αχιλλέως, ὃς μετὰ ξώντων ὅτ᾽ ἦν ἥκοι' ἀριστα, νῦν δὲ τῶν τεθνηκότων.

ΝΕΟΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἥσθην πατέρα τὸν ἀμὸν εὐλογοῦντά σε αὐτὸν τ᾽ ἐμ᾽· δὲν δὲ σου τυχεῖν ἐφίεμαι, ἀκουσον. ἀνθρώποις τὰς μὲν ἐκ θεῶν βύτυς δοθείδας ἔστ᾽ ἀναγκαῖον φέρειν· ὅσοι δ᾽ ἐκουσίουσιν ἐγκαίνει ταῦτα πλαίσι, ὅσπερ σύ, τούτως ὑπερ συγγράμμην ἔχειν δίκαιον ἐστιν οὔτ᾽ ἐποικτύροι τινά. συ δ᾽ ἠγρίωσαι, κοὔτε σύμβουλον δέχει, ἀν τε νουθετῇ τις εὐνοία λέγων, στυγεῖς, πολέμουν δυσμενῆ ὧτ᾽ ἡγούμενος. ὀμως δὲ λέξων. Ζήνα δ᾽ ὅρκιον καλῶ· καὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἑπίστω καὶ γράφουν φρενῶν ἐσω. συ γὰρ νοσεῖς τόδ᾽ ἀλγος ἐκ θείας τύχης, Χρύσης πελασθείς φυλακος, ὃς τὸν ἀκαλυφὴ σηκὸν φυλάσσει κρύφιος οἰκουρων ὃς· καὶ παῦλαν ὅσθι τήδε μὴ ποτ᾽ ἀν τυχεῖν νόσου βαρείας, ἐως ἀν αὐτὸς ἔλιος ταῦτη μὲν αἰρή, τῆδε δ᾽ αὖ δύνη πάλιν, πρὶν ἀν τὰ Τροίας πεδὴ ἔκκων αὐτὸς μόλης,
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.

So be it. The bow is thine again, and now
Thou hast no grief or quarrel against me.

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.

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 Chrysé's roofless shrine,
Thou didst insult her tutelary snake.
For this sin wast thou stricken, and no relief
Canst win from thy affliction, whilst the sun
Shall run from East to West his daily course,
Before of thy free will thou com'st to Troy.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

καὶ τοῖν παρ᾽ ἡμῖν ἐντυχὼν Ἀσκληπιδίδαιν
νόσου μαλαχθῆς τήσες, καὶ τὰ πέργαμα
ξύν τοῖς τοξοῖς ξύν τ᾽ ἐμοὶ πέρσας φανῆς.
ἀνὴρ γὰρ ἡμῖν ἐστὶν ἐκ Τροίας ἀλόης;
"Ελευς ἀριστόμαντι, ὃς λέγει σαφῶς
ὡς δεῖ γενέσθαι ταῦτα: καὶ πρὸς τοῖς ἐμοὶ πέρσας φανῆς.
ταῦτ᾽ ὧν ἐπεὶ κάτοισθα, συγχώρει θέλων.
καλὴ γὰρ ἡ πίκτησις, Ἑλλήνων ἕνα
κριθέν᾽ ἄριστον τοῦτο μὲν παιωνίας
πλέον κλέος ὑπέρτατον λαβεῖν.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ στυγνὸς αἰών, τί με, τί δῆτ᾽ ἔχεις ἄνω
βλέποντα κοὐκ ἀφῆκας εἰς Ἀἰδοῦ μολεῖν;
οὔμοι, τί δράσω; πῶς ἀπιστήσῃς λόγοις
τοῖς τοῦδ᾽, ὃς εὔνους ὃν ἐμοὶ παρῆγες;
ἀλλ᾽ εἰκάθω δῆτ᾽, εἰτα πῶς ὁ δύσμορος
ἐὶς φῶς ταῦτ᾽ ἔρξεις εἰς τῷ προσήγορος;
πῶς, ὃ τὰ πάντ᾽ ἱδόντες ἀμφ᾽ ἐμοὶ κύκλοι,
ταῦτ᾽ ἐξανασχῆσεσθε, τοῖσιν Ἀτρέως
πως τῷ πανώλει παιδὶ τῷ Λαερτίου;
οὐ γὰρ με τὰλγος τῶν παρελθόντων δάκνει,
ἀλλ᾽ οία χρῆ παθεῖν με πρὸς τοὺς ἐμοὶ κύκλοι,
καὶ σοῦ δ᾽ ἐγὼγε θαυμάσας ἔχω τόδε.
χρῆν γὰρ σε μὴν 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,
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ ἤμας τ’ ἀπείργειν, ο’ γέ σου καθύβρισαν, πατρός γέρας συλώντες, εἶτα τοῖς δυστήνωσιν, ἵματις κατάκε σόλης τόδε; μὴ δὴ, τέκνοι, ἀλλ’ ἃ μοι ἔπεκμοσας, πέμψων πρὸς ὀίκους καύτος ἐν Σκύρῳ μένων ἕα κακῶς αὐτοὺς ἀπὸλλυσθαι κακοῦς. χούτω διπλῆς μὲν εξ ἐμοὶ κτῆσει χάριν, διπλῆς δὲ πατρός, κοὐ κακοὺς ἐποφελῶν δόξεις ὅμοιος τοῖς κακοῖς περικενάι.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ λέγεις μὲν εὐκότ, ἀλλ’ ὅμως σε βούλομαι θεοῖς τε πιστεύσαντα τοῖς τ’ ἐμοἰς λόγοις φίλου μετ’ ἀνδρὸς τοῦτο πέλειν τής ἔκπλειν χθοῦν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ Ἱ πρὸς τὰ Τροίας πεδία καὶ τὸν Ἀτρέως ἄγιαστον νῦν τῶν δυστήμφρον ποδί; ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ πρὸς τοὺς μὲν ὡς σε πεῦκαν τής τ’ ἐμοὶς λόγοις φίλου μετ’ ἀνδρὸς τοῦτο πέλειν τής ἔκπλειν χθοῦν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ ὡ δεινὸν αἴνον αἰνέσας, τί φής ποτε; ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ ἃ σοί τε κἀμοὶ λῷστε τελούμενα. ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ καὶ ταῦτα λέξας οὐ κατασκέυας θεοῦς;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ πῶς γάρ τις αἰσχύνοιτ ἢν ὕφελῶν φίλος; 1 1. 1365: [ο’ τὸν ἄθλιον Ἀἴανθ’ ὅλων σοῦ πατρός ὑστερον δίκη Ὅδυσσεϊς ἐκρίναν.] These lines, clearly an interpolation, have been omitted. 2 ὕφελομένος MSS., Buttman corr.

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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.
ΦΙΛΟΧΩΤΗΣ

ΦΙΛΟΧΩΤΗΣ
λέγεις δ᾽ Ἀτρείδαις ὅφελος ἢ π’ ἐμοὶ τόδε;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
σοι ποι, φίλοις γ’ ὅν, χώ λόγος τοιόσδε μου.

ΦΙΛΟΧΩΤΗΣ
πῶς, ὃς γε τοῖς ἐχθροῖσι μ’ ἐκδούναι θέλεις;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ὡς τᾶν, διδάσκου μὴ θρασύνεσθαι κάκοις.

ΦΙΛΟΧΩΤΗΣ
ἀλεὶς με, γυνώσκω σε, τοίσδε τοῖς λόγοις.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
οὐκοιν ἑγωγε. φημὶ δ’ οὐ σε μανθάνειν.

ΦΙΛΟΧΩΤΗΣ
ἔγω οὐκ Ἀτρείδας ἐκβαλόντας οἶδά με;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἀλλ’ ἐκβαλόντες εἰ πάλιν σώσουσ’ ὄρα.

ΦΙΛΟΧΩΤΗΣ
οὐδέποθ’ ἐκόντα γ’ ὡστε τὴν Τροίαν ἰδεῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
τί δῆτ’ ἂν ἡμεῖς δρόμειν, εἰ σε γ’ ἐν λόγοις
πείσειν δυνησόμεσθα μηδὲν ὃν λέγω;
ὡς ράστ’ ἐμοὶ μὲν τῶν λόγων λήξαι, σε δὲ
ζῆν, ὥσπερ ἂν ἢδης ζῆς, ἀνευ σωτηρίας.

ΦΙΛΟΧΩΤΗΣ
ἐὰ με πάσχειν ταῦθ᾽ ἃπερ παθεῖν με δεῖ:
ἀ δ’ ἱμεσάς μοι δεξιάς ἐμῆς θυγών,
πέμπειν πρὸς οἶκους, ταῦτά μοι πρᾶξον, τέκνου,
καὶ μὴ βράδυνε μηδ’ ἐπιμνησθῆς ἑτὶ
Τροίας: ἀλις γάρ μοι τεθρήνηται γόοις.
PHILOCTETES

PHILOCTETES
Help for the sons of Atreus, or for me?
NEOPTOLEMUS
For thee, as these my words attest, thy friend.
PHILOCTETES
A friend, when thou would'st hand me to my foes?
NEOPTOLEMUS
O let not suffering make thee truculent.
PHILOCTETES
I know thou would'st undo me pleading thus.
NEOPTOLEMUS
Not I, but thou thyself, who wilt not learn.
PHILOCTETES
Do I not know the Atridae cast me forth?
NEOPTOLEMUS
'Tis true, but now they would deliver thee.
PHILOCTETES
Not with my will, if first I must to Troy.
NEOPTOLEMUS
What must I do, if all persuasion fails
To make thee budge an inch? 'Twere easier
To cease from words and leave thee here to live,
As thou hast lived, a hopeless castaway.
PHILOCTETES
Well, let me dree my weird; but thou, my son,
Perform the promise made with clasp of hands,
Take me straight home, and talk no more of Troy.
My cup of lamentations I have drained.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

εἰ δοκεῖ, στείχωμεν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

-wage γενναιον είρηκώς ἐποσ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀντέρειδε νῦν βάσιν σὴν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

εἰς ὅσον γ᾽ ἐγὼ σθένω.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

αἰτίαν δὲ πῶς ᾽Αχαιῶν φεύξομαι;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

μὴ φροντίσῃς.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί γάρ, ἐὰν πορθῶσι χώραν τὴν ἐμὴν;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

ἐγὼ παρὼν τίνα προσωφέλησιν ἔρξεις;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

βέλεσι τοῖς Ἡρακλέους

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΣ

πῶς λέγεις;

ΣΤΕΙΧΗΣ ΠΡΟΣΚΥΣΑΣ ΧΘΩΝΑ.

ὙΡΑΚΛΗΣ

μὴπο γε, πρὶν ἀν τῶν ἡμετέρων
ἀῖς μύθων, παῖ Ποίαντος:

ΦΑΣΚΕΙΝ ὅ αὐδὴν τὴν Ὁρακλέους

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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,
ἀκοῇ τε κλύειν λεύσσειν τ᾽ ὦψιν. τὴν σὴν δ᾽ ἤκω χάριν οὕρανιας ἔδρας προλιπὼν, τὰ Διὸς τε φράσσων βουλεύματά σοι κατερητύσων θ᾽ ὄδὸν ἢν στέλλειν, σὺ δὲ ἐμῶν μύθων ἐπάκουσον.

καὶ πρῶτα μὲν σοι τὰς ἐμὰς λέξως, ὅσους ποιῆσας καὶ διεξέλθων πόνους ἀθάνατον ἁρετὴν ἔσχον, ὡς πάρεσθ᾽ ὁρᾶν. καὶ σοί, σάφ᾽ ὅθ᾽ ὅτι, τοῦτ᾽ ὁφείλεται παθεῖν, ἐκ τῶν πόνων τῶν ἐν αὐτῶν πάνω ἡθεῖα θέσθαι βίον. ἐλθὼν δὲ σὺν τῷ δ’ ἀνδρὶ πρὸς τὸ Τραυκὸν πόλισμα, πρῶτον μὲν νόσου παύσει λυγρᾶς, ἁρετὴ τε πρῶτος ἐκκριθεὶς στρατεύματος, Πάριν μὲν, ὃς τῶν ἀνθίζεις κακῶν ἐφι, τόξοισι τοῖς ἐμοῖσι νοσφιεῖς βίου, πέρσεις τε Τροίαν, σκῦλα τ᾽ εἰς μέλαθρα σὰ πέμψεις, ἀριστεῖ ἐκλαβὼν στρατεύματος, Ἀχιλλέως τέκνον, παρήνεσ᾽ οὔτε γὰρ σὺ τοῦτ᾽ ἄτερ σθένεις ἑλεῖν τὸ Τροίας πεδίον οὔθ οὗτος σέθεν. ἀλλ᾽ ὡς λέοντε συννόμω φυλάσσετον ἐκ τῶν ἄνθρωπων τοῖς ἐμοῖς αὐτὴν χρεών.
PHILOCTETES

His the voice that thrills thine ears.
'Tis for thy sake I have come,
Leaving my Olympian home.
Mandate from high Zeus I bring
To forbid thy journeying:
Hear the will of heaven's King.

But first I'll mind thee of my own career,
How, having laboured hugely and endured,
I won immortal glory, as thou seest.
Know that thy fortune like to mine shall be,
Through suffering to glorify thy life.
Go with yon man to Ilium. There first
Thou shalt be healed 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 Poeas and the Oetaean halls.
But of the spoils, whate'er the host assigns thee,
Bring to my pyre, as tribute to my bow,
a tithe.

I have a message too for thee,
Son of Achilles. Thou without his aid
Can'st not take Troy, nor he apart from thine;
But like two lions together on the prowl,
Either the other guards.

To cure thy wounds
Asclepius, the healer, will I send
To Troas; for a second time Troy towers
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

τόξοις ἁλῶναι. τούτο δ᾽ ἐννοεῖθ', ὅταν
πορθῆτε γαῖαν, εὐσεβεῖν τὰ πρὸς θεοὺς;
ὡς τὰλλα πάντα δεύτερ' ἤγείται πατήρ
Ζεύς: οὐ γὰρ εὐσεβεία συνθνήσκει βροτοῖς·
kαὶ ξῶσι καὶ θάνωσιν, οὐκ ἀπόλλυται.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὁ φθέγμα ποθεινὸν ἐμοὶ πέμψας
χρόνιός τε φανεῖς,
oὐκ ἀπιθήσοω τοῖς σοῖς σοῖς μύθοις.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

κάγῳ γυώμην ταύτη τίθεμαι.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

μὴ νῦν χρόνιοι μέλλετε πρᾶσσειν·
καίρος καὶ πλοῦς
οὐδ᾽ ἐπείγει γὰρ κατὰ πρύμνην.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

φέρε νῦν στείχων χώραν καλέσω.
χαῖρ', ὃ μέλαθρον ἔμμφροουρον ἐμοὶ,
νῦμφαι τ᾽ ἐνυδροὶ λειμωνιάδες,
καὶ κτύπος ἄρσην πόντου προβολῆς,
οὐ πολλάκι δὴ τούμον ἐτέγχθη
κρᾶτ᾽ ἐνδόμυχον πληγαῖσι, νότου,
πολλὰ δὲ φωνῆς τῆς ἡμετέρας
Ἑρμαῖον ὁ ὄρος παρέπεμψεν ἐμοὶ
στόνον ἀντίτυπον χειμαξομένῳ.

νῦν δ᾽, ὦ κρῆναι Λύκιόν τε ποτόν,
λείπομεν ἡμᾶς, λείπομεν ἤδη
δόξης οὐ ποτε τῆς 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.
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

χαίρ᾽, ὦ Δήμιοι πέδον ἀμφίαλον,
καὶ μ’ εὐπλοία πέμψον ἀμέμπτως,
ἐνθ’ ἡ μεγάλη Μοῖρα κομίζει
γνώμη τε φίλων χῶ πανδαμάτωρ
daίμων, ὃς ταῦτ’ ἐπέκρανεν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

χωρῶμεν δὴ πάντες ἀολλεῖς,
νύμφαις ἁλίαισιν ἐπευξάμενοι
νόστου σωτῆρας ἱκέσθαι.

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PHILOCTETES

Sea-girt Lemnos, hear my prayer,
Bid thy guest a voyage fair
Speed him to the land where he,
Borne by mighty Destiny,
And the god at whose decree
All was ordered, fain would be.

CHORUS

Let us to the Sea Nymphs pray
To waft us on our Troy-ward way.
Mariners, attend my call;
Let us voyage, one and all.

END OF VOL. II.
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