

## ΑΙΣΧΥΛΟΥ ΠΕΡΣΑΙ

Αρχαίο κείμενο και μετάφραση στα αγγλικά

**Summary**

*The Persians* takes place in Susa (now in modern Iran), at the time one of the capitals of the Persian Empire, and opens with a chorus of old men of Susa, who are soon joined by the Queen Mother, Atossa, as they await news of her son King Xerxes' expedition against the Greeks. Expressing her anxiety and unease, Atossa narrates "what is probably the first dream sequence in European theatre." This is an unusual beginning for a tragedy by Aeschylus; normally the chorus would not appear until slightly later, after a speech by a minor character. An exhausted messenger arrives, who offers a graphic description of the Battle of Salamis and its gory outcome. He tells of the Persian defeat, the names of the Persian generals who have been killed, and that Xerxes had escaped and is returning. The climax of the messenger's speech is his rendition of the battle cry of the Greeks as they charged: "On, sons of Greece! Set free / Your fatherland, your children, wives, / Homes of your ancestors and temples of your gods! / Save all, or all is lost!" (401-405).

At the tomb of her dead husband Darius, Atossa asks the chorus to summon his ghost: "Some remedy he knows, perhaps, / Knows ruin's cure" they say. On learning of the Persian defeat, Darius condemns the hubris behind his son's decision to invade Greece. He particularly rebukes an impious Xerxes' decision to build a bridge over the Hellespont to expedite the Persian army's advance. Before departing, the ghost of Darius prophesies another Persian defeat at the Battle of Plataea (479 BCE): "Where the plain grows lush and green, / Where Asopus' stream plumps rich Boeotia's soil, / The mother of disasters awaits them there, / Reward for insolence, for scorning God." Xerxes finally arrives, dressed in torn robes ("grief swarms," the Queen says just before his arrival, "but worst of all it stings / to hear how my son, my prince, / wears tatters, rags" (845-849)) and reeling from his crushing defeat. The rest of the drama (908-1076) consists of the king alone with the chorus engaged in a lyrical *kommós* that laments the enormity of Persia's defeat.

ΑΙΣΧΥΛΟΣ, ΠΕΡΣΑΙ

**The Persians**

By Aeschylus

Written 472 B.C.E

Translated by Herbert Weir Smyth

**Dramatis Personae**

ATOSSA, widow of Darius and mother of XERXES

MESSENGER

GHOST OF DARIUS

XERXES

CHORUS OF PERSIAN ELDERS, who compose the Persian  
Council of State

**Scene**

Before the Council-Hall of the Persian Kings at Susa. The tomb  
of Darius the Great is visible. The time is 480 B.C., shortly after  
the battle of Salamis. The play opens with the CHORUS OF  
PERSIAN ELDERS singing its first choral lyric.

**Χορός**

Τάδε μὲν Περσῶν τῶν οἰχομένων  
 Ἑλλάδ' ἐς αἶαν πιστὰ καλεῖται,  
 καὶ τῶν ἀφνεῶν καὶ πολυχρύσων  
 ἐδράνων φύλακες, κατὰ πρεσβείαν  
 5 οὓς αὐτὸς ἄναξ Ξέρξης βασιλεὺς  
 Δαρειογενῆς  
 εἴλετο χώρας ἐφορεύειν.  
 ἀμφὶ δὲ νόστῳ τῷ βασιλείῳ  
 καὶ πολυχρύσου στρατιᾷς ἥδη  
 10 κακόμαντις ἄγαν ὀρσολοπεῖται  
 θυμὸς ἔσωθεν.  
 πᾶσα γὰρ ἰσχὺς Ἀσιατογενῆς  
 ὥχῳκε, νέον δ' ἄνδρα βαῦζει,  
 κοῦτε τις ἄγγελος οὔτε τις ἵππευς  
 15 ἄστὺ τὸ Περσῶν ἀφικνεῖται·  
 οἶτε τὸ Σούσων ἡδ' Ἀγβατάνων  
 καὶ τὸ παλαιὸν Κίσσιον ἕρκος  
 προλιπόντες ἔβαν, τοὶ μὲν ἐφ' ἵππων,  
 τοὶ δ' ἐπὶ ναῶν πεζοὶ τε βάδην  
 20 πολέμου στίφος παρέχοντες·  
 οἶος Ἀμίστρης ἡδ' Ἀρταφρένης  
 καὶ Μεγαβάτης ἡδ' Ἀστάσπης,  
 ταγοὶ Περσῶν,  
 βασιλῆς βασιλέως ὑποχοὶ μεγάλου,

**Chorus**

[1] Here we are, the faithful Council of the Persians, who have gone to the land of Hellas, we who serve as warders of the royal abode, rich in bountiful store of gold, [5] we whom Xerxes, our King, Darius' royal son, himself selected, by virtue of our rank and years, to be the guardians of his realm.

Yet as regards the return of our King and of his host, so richly decked out in gold, [10] the soul within my breast is distressed and presages disaster. For the whole populace of the Asian nation has come and murmurs against its youthful King, nor does any courier or horseman [15] arrive at the city of the Persians, who left behind them the walled defence of **Susa** and Agbatana and Cissa's ancient ramparts, and went forth, some on horseback, some in galleys, others on foot [20] presenting a dense array of war.

Such are Amistres and Artaphrenes and Megabates and Astaspes, marshals of the Persians; kings themselves, yet vassals of the Great King, [25] they press on, commanders of an

**25** σοῦνται, στρατιᾶς πολλῆς ἔφοροι,  
 τοξοδάμαντές τ' ἡδ' ἵπποβάται,  
 φοβεροὶ μὲν ἰδεῖν, δεινοὶ δὲ μάχην  
 ψυχῆς εὐτλήμονι δόξῃ.  
 Ἀρτεμβάρης θ' ἵππιοχάρμης  
**30** καὶ Μασίστρης, ὃ τε τοξοδάμας  
 ἐσθλὸς Ἴμαϊος, Φαρανδάκης θ',  
 ἵππων τ' ἐλατὴρ Σοσθάνης.  
 ἄλλους δ' ὁ μέγας καὶ πολυθρέμμων  
 Νεῖλος ἔπεμψεν· Σουσιस्कάνης,  
**35** Πηγασταγῶν Αἰγυπτογενῆς,  
 ὃ τε τῆς ἱερᾶς Μέμφιδος ἄρχων  
 μέγας Ἀρσάμης, τὰς τ' ὠγυγίους  
 Θήβας ἐφρέπων Ἀριόμαρδος,  
 καὶ ἐλειοβάται ναῶν ἐρέται  
**40** δεινοὶ πληθὸς τ' ἀνάριθμοι.  
 ἀβροδιαίτων δ' ἔπεται Λυδῶν  
 ὄχλος, οἳ τ' ἐπίπαν ἡπειρογενεὺς  
 κατέχουσιν ἔθνος, τοὺς Μητρογαθῆς  
 Ἀρκτεὺς τ' ἀγαθός, βασιλῆς δίοποι,  
**45** καὶ πολύχρυσοι Σάρδεις ἐπόχους  
 πολλοῖς ἄρμασιν ἐξορμῶσιν,  
 δίρρυμά τε καὶ τρίρρυμα τέλη,  
 φοβερὰν ὄψιν προσιδέσθαι.  
 στεῦται δ' ἱεροῦ Τμώλου πελάται

enormous host, skilled in archery and horsemanship, formidable  
 to look upon and fearful in battle through the valiant resolve of  
 their souls. Artembares, too, who fights from his chariot, [30]  
 and Masistres, and noble Imaeus, skilled with the bow, and  
 Pharandaces, and Sosthanes, who urges on his steeds.

Others in addition the mighty, fecund Nile sent forth —  
 Susiscanes, [35] Pegastagon of Egyptian lineage, mighty  
 Arsames, lord of sacred Memphis, Ariomardus, governor of  
 ancient Thebes, and the marsh-dwelling oarsmen, [40] well-  
 skilled and countless in number.

Behind them follows a throng of luxurious Lydians and  
 those<sup>1</sup> who hold in subjection all the people of the mainland,  
 whom Metrogathes and brave Arcteus, their regal commanders,  
 [45] and Sardis rich in gold sent forth, riding in many a chariot,  
 in ranks with three and four steeds abreast, a spectacle terrible  
 to behold.

They too who live by sacred Tmolus pledge themselves [50] to



**50** ζυγὸν ἀμφιβαλεῖν δούλιον Ἑλλάδι,  
 Μάρδων, Θάρυβις, λόγχης ἄκμονες,  
 καὶ ἀκοντισταὶ Μυσοί· Βαβυλῶν δ'  
 ἢ πολύχρυσος πάμμικτον ὄχλον  
 πέμπει σύρδην, ναῶν τ' ἐπόχους  
**55** καὶ τοξουλκῶ λήματι πιστούς·  
 τὸ μαχαιροφόρον τ' ἔθνος ἐκ πάσης  
 Ἀσίας ἔπεται  
 δειναῖς βασιλέως ὑπὸ πομπαῖς.  
 τοιόνδ' ἄνθος Περσίδος αἶας  
**60** οἵχεται ἀνδρῶν,  
 οὓς πέρι πᾶσα χθὼν Ἀσιῆτις  
 θρέψασα πόθῳ στένεται μαλερῶ,  
 τοκέες τ' ἄλοχοί θ' ἡμερολεγδόν·  
**65** πεπέρακεν μὲν ὁ περσέπτολις ἤδη  
 βασίλειος στρατὸς εἰς ἀν-  
 τίπορον γείτονα χώραν,  
 λινοδέσμῳ σχεδία πορθ-  
 μὸν ἀμείψας  
**70** Ἀθαμαντίδος Ἑλλάς,  
 πολύγομφον ὄδισμα  
 ζυγὸν ἀμφιβαλὼν αὐχένι πόντου.  
 πολυάνδρου δ' Ἀσίας θούριος ἄρχων  
 ἐπὶ πᾶσαν χθόνα ποιμα-  
**75** νόριον θεῖον ἐλαύνει

cast the yoke of slavery upon Hellas—Mardon, Tharybis, anvils of the lance, and the Mysians, hurlers of the javelin. Babylon, also, teeming with gold, sends a mixed host arrayed in a long line, both mariners borne in galleys [55] and those who rely on their skill in archery. The nation too which wears the sabre follows from every part of Asia in the fearful procession of the King.

Such are the warriors, the flower of the Persian land, [60] who have departed, and in fierce longing for them the whole land of Asia, their foster-nurse, laments, while parents and wives, as they count the days, shudder at the lengthening delay.

**1** A covert reference to the Ionians, kinsmen of the Athenians, who served under compulsion in the expedition against Greece.

[65] The royal army, dealing destruction to cities, has already passed to the neighboring land upon the facing shore, and this they did by crossing the Hellespont, [70] named for the daughter of Athamas, on a bridge of boats made fast with cables, thereby casting a tightly constructed roadway as a yoke upon the neck of the sea.

The fiery lord of populous Asia [75] is leading his wondrous warrior-flock against the whole earth in two divisions, on foot

διχόθεν, πεζονόμον τ' ἔκ  
 τε θαλάσσας,  
 ἔχυροῖσι πεποιθῶς  
 στυφελοῖς ἐφέταις, χρυ-  
**80** σογόνου γενεᾶς ἰσόθεος φῶς.  
 κυάνεον δ' ὄμμασι λεύσσω  
 φονίου δέργμα δράκοντος,  
 πολύχειρ καὶ πολυναύτας,  
 Σύριόν θ' ἄρμα διώκων,  
**85** ἐπάγει δουρικλύτοις ἄν-  
 δράσι τοξόδαμνον Ἄρη.  
 δόκιμος δ' οὔτις ὑποστάς  
 μεγάλῳ ῥεύματι φωτῶν  
 ἔχυροῖς ἔρκεσιν εἴργειν  
**90** ἄμαχον κῦμα θαλάσσας·  
 ἀπρόσοιστος γὰρ ὁ Περσᾶν  
 στρατὸς ἀλκίφρων τε λαός.  
 θεόθεν γὰρ κατὰ Μοῖρ'  
 ἐκράτησεν τὸ παλαι-  
**95** όν, ἐπέσκηψε δὲ Πέρσαις  
 πολέμους πυργοδαΐκτους  
 διέπειν ἵππιοχάρμας  
 τε κλόνους  
 πόλεων τ' ἀναστάσεις.  
**100** ἔμαθον δ' εὐρυπόροι-

and by the sea, putting his trust in his stalwart and stern commanders; he himself, [80] a god-like hero whose race is sprung from gold.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The hero Perseus, here regarded as the ancestor of Xerxes, and in l. 146 as giving his name to the whole Persian race, was the son of Zeus, who descended to Danae in a shower of gold.

With eyes flashing with the dark glare of a deadly dragon, attended by soldiers and mariners in great numbers, and speeding his Syrian chariot, [85] he leads against a people renowned for the spear a warlike host of archers. And there is no man skilled to withstand the mighty stream of men, and with strong barriers keep out the sea's invincible surge; [90] for Persia's host cannot be withstood, and her men are courageous. For by the will of the gods Fate has held sway [95] since ancient time, and has ordained for the Persians the pursuit of rampart-destroying war, the turmoil of fighting horsemen, and the storming of cities.

[100] And they have learned to look upon the precinct of the

ο θαλάσσας πολια-  
νομένας πνεύματι λάβρω  
ἔσορᾶν πόντιον ἄλσος,  
πίσυννοι λεπτοδόμοις πεί-  
**105** σμασι λα-  
οπόροις τε μαχαναῖς.  
δολόμητιν δ' ἀπάταν θεοῦ  
τίς ἀνὴρ θνατὸς ἀλύξει;  
τίς ὁ κραιπνῶ ποδὶ πῆδη-  
**110** μα τόδ' εὐπετῶς ἀνάσσω;  
φιλόφρων γὰρ παρασαίνει  
βροτὸν εἰς ἄρκυας Ἄτα,  
τόθεν οὐκ ἔστιν ὑπερθέν  
νιν ἄνατον ἐξαλύξαι.  
**115** ταῦτά μοι μελαγχίτων  
φρὴν ἀμύσσεται φόβῳ,  
ὁᾶ, Περσικοῦ στρατεύματος  
τοῦδε, μὴ πόλις πύθη-  
ται κένανδρον μέγ' ἄστν Σουσίδος,  
**120** καὶ τὸ Κισσίων πόλισμ'  
ἀντίδουπον ἄσεται,  
ὁᾶ, τοῦτ' ἔπος γυναικοπλη-  
θῆς ὄμιλος ἀπύων,  
**125** βυσσίοις δ' ἐν πέπλοις πέση λακίς.  
πᾶς γὰρ ἱππηλάτας

deep when the broad-wayed sea whitens to foam beneath the tempest's blast, trusting in their finely wrought [105] cables and their devices which give passage to their army. Yet the insidious guile of god—what mortal man can escape it? Who with agile foot can lightly overleap [110] and escape its toils?

For Delusion, with her fair appearance, lures men astray into her snares, from which it is not possible to escape without meeting with disaster.

[115] Therefore my heart is wrapped in gloom and is racked with fear for the Persian army lest the state learn that the mighty capital of Susa is empty of men.[120] Fearful I am too that as bands of women cry aloud “woe,” the Cissian stronghold will raise a resounding shout responsive to the beating of breasts, [125] and that there will be a tearing of fine linen robes.

For all the men-at-arms, those who urge on steeds and those



καὶ πεδοστιβῆς λεῶς  
 σμῆνος ὥς ἐκλέλοιπεν μελισ-  
 σᾶν σὺν ὀρχάμῳ στρατοῦ,  
**130** τὸν ἀμφίζευκτον ἐξαμείψας  
 ἀμφοτέρως ἄλιον  
 πρῶνα κοινὸν αἴας.  
 λέκτρα δ' ἀνδρῶν πόθῳ  
 πίμπλαται δακρύμασιν  
**135** Περσίδες δ' ἀβροπενθεῖς ἐκά-  
 στα πόθῳ φιλόνορι  
 τὸν αἰχμάεντα θοῦρον εὐνα-  
 τῆρ' ἀποπεμψαμένα  
 λείπεται μονόζυξ.  
**140** ἀλλ' ἄγε, Πέρσαι, τόδ' ἐνεζόμενοι  
 στέγος ἀρχαῖον,  
 φροντίδα κεδνὴν καὶ βαθύβουλον  
 θώμεθα, χρεῖα δὲ προσήκει,  
 πῶς ἄρα πράσσει Ξέρξης βασιλεὺς  
**145** Δαρειογενῆς,  
 τὸ πατρωνύμιον γένος ἡμέτερον·  
 πότερον τόξου ῥῦμα τὸ νικῶν,  
 ἢ δορικράνου  
 λόγχης ἰσχὺς κεκράτηκεν.  
**150** ἀλλ' ἦδε θεῶν ἴσον ὀφθαλμοῖς  
 φάος ὀρμᾶται μήτηρ βασιλέως,

who march along the plain, have left the city and gone forth, like bees in a swarm, together with the captain of the host. [130] They have crossed the headland, projecting into the sea and common to either continent, through which both shores are bridged.

And marriage-beds are filled with tears through longing for husbands; [135] each Persian woman has sent to the field her warlike and fiery consort, and now in grief and longing for her beloved lord, is left forsaken by her mate.

[140] But come, Persians, let us take our place on the steps of this ancient palace and devise some wise and deeply-pondered counsel—for need of this has come upon us—as to how Xerxes our King, [145] Darius' son, scion of our own race as his forefather's name declares, is faring. Is it the drawing of the bow that has triumphed, or is it the might of the sharp spear-head which has prevailed?

*Enter Atossa, richly dressed, on a chariot and attended by a numerous retinue*

[150] But look, here is a light like the eyes of the god, the mother

βασιλεια δ' ἐμή· προσπίτνω·  
καὶ προσφθόγγοις δὲ χρεῶν αὐτὴν  
πάντας μύθοισι προσαυδᾶν.

**155** ὦ βαθυζώνων ἄνασσα Περσίδων ὑπερτάτη,  
μητρὲς ἢ Ξέρξου γεραία, χαῖρε, Δαρείου γύναι·  
θεοῦ μὲν εὐνάτειρα Περσῶν, θεοῦ δὲ καὶ μήτηρ ἔφυς,  
εἴ τι μὴ daίμων παλαιὸς νῦν μεθέστηκε στρατῷ.

**Ἀτοσσα**

ταῦτα δὴ λιποῦσ' ἱκάνω χρυσεοστόλμους δόμους

**160** καὶ τὸ Δαρείου τε καμὸν κοινὸν εὐνατήριον.  
καμὲ καρδίαν ἀμύσσει φροντίς· ἐς δ' ὑμᾶς ἐρῶ  
μῦθον οὐδαμῶς ἐμαυτῆς οὔσ' ἀδείμαντος, φίλοι,  
μὴ μέγας πλοῦτος κονίσας οὔδας ἀντρέψῃ ποδὶ  
ὄλβον, ὃν Δαρεῖος ἦρεν οὐκ ἄνευ θεῶν τινος.

**165** ταῦτά μοι διπλῇ μέριμνα φραστός ἐστίν ἐν φρεσίν,  
μήτε χρημάτων ἀνάνδρων πλῆθος ἐν τιμῇ σέβειν  
μήτ' ἀχρημάτοισι λάμπειν φῶς ὅσον σθένος πάρα.  
ἔστι γὰρ πλοῦτός γ' ἀμεμφής, ἀμφὶ δ' ὀφθαλμῷ φόβος·  
ὄμμα γὰρ δόμων νομίζω δεσπότου παρουσίαν.

**170** πρὸς τάδ' ὥς οὕτως ἐχόντων τῶνδε, σύμβουλοι λόγου  
τοῦδέ μοι γένεσθε, Πέρσαι, γηραλέα πιστώματα·  
πάντα γὰρ τὰ κέδν' ἐν ὑμῖν ἐστὶ μοι βουλευματα.

of our king, my Queen. I bow low before her. It is fitting also  
that we all address her with words of salutation.

*The elders prostrate themselves and then rise to their feet. Their leader  
continues*

[155] O Queen, most exalted of Persia's deep-girdled women,  
venerable mother of Xerxes, wife of Darius, all hail! You were  
the consort of the Persian's god, and of another god the mother,  
that is, unless its former good fortune has now forsaken our  
host.

**Atossa**

For this very reason I have left the gold-decorated palace [160]  
and the chamber which belongs to Darius and myself, and have  
come here. My heart, too, is racked with anxiety, and to you, my  
friends, will I make a disclosure. For I am by no means free from  
apprehension that wealth, grown great, will, raising a cloud of  
dust upon the ground, trip up the prosperity which Darius  
raised not without the favor of some god. [165] It is for this  
reason that there is a double concern in my mind: neither to  
hold in honor vast wealth without men, and that the light of  
success does not shine, in proportion to their strength, on men  
without riches. Our wealth, at all events, is ample, but my  
anxiety is for the light, the salvation of the house, which I regard  
to be the presence of its lord. [170] Therefore, since things stand

**Χορός**

εὖ τόδ' ἴσθι, γῆς ἄνασσα τῆσδε, μή σε δις φράσαι  
 μήτ' ἔπος μήτ' ἔργον ὧν ἂν δύναμις ἡγεῖσθαι θέλη.  
**175** εὐμενεῖς γὰρ ὄντας ἡμᾶς τῶνδε συμβούλους καλεῖς.

**Ἀτοσσα**

πολλοῖς μὲν αἰεὶ νυκτέροις ὀνειράσιν  
 ξύνειμ', ἀφ' οὐπερ παῖς ἐμὸς στείλας στρατὸν  
 Ἰαόνων γῆν οἷχεται πέρσαι θέλων.  
 ἀλλ' οὔτι πω τοιόνδ' ἐναργὲς εἰδόμην  
**180** ὥς τῆς πάροιθεν εὐφρόνης· λέξω δέ σοι.

ἐδοξάτην μοι δύο γυναῖκ' εὐείμονε,  
 ἢ μὲν πέπλοισι Περσικοῖς ἡσκημένη,  
 ἢ δ' αὖτε Δωρικοῖσιν, εἰς ὄψιν μολεῖν,  
 μεγέθει τε τῶν νῦν ἐκπρεπεστάτα πολύ,  
**185** κάλλει τ' ἀμώμω, καὶ κασιγνήτα γένους  
 ταύτου· πάτραν δ' ἔναιον ἢ μὲν Ἑλλάδα  
 κλήρω λαχοῦσα γαῖαν, ἢ δὲ βάρβαρον.  
 τούτω στάσιν τιν', ὥς ἐγὼ δόκουν ὄραν,  
 τεύχειν ἐν ἀλλήλαισι· παῖς δ' ἐμὸς μαθὼν  
**190** κατεῖχε κάπρᾶννεν, ἄρμασιν δ' ὑπο  
 ζεύγνυσιν αὐτῷ καὶ λέπαδν' ἐπ' αὐχένων  
 τίθησι. χῆ μὲν τῇδ' ἐπυργούτο στολῇ  
 ἐν ἡνίασί τ' εἶχεν εὐαρκτον στόμα,  
 ἢ δ' ἐσφάδαζε, καὶ χεροῖν ἔντη δίφρου  
**195** διασπαράσσει καὶ ξυναρπάζει βίᾱ

as they do, lend me your counsel in this concern, Persians, my aged trusty servants. For all my hopes of good counsel depend on you.

**Chorus**

Be assured, our country's Queen, that you need not twice mention either word or deed regarding that in which it is possible for us to direct you. [175] For we whom you summon as counsellors in these matters are well disposed towards you and your interests.

**Atossa**

I have been haunted by a multitude of dreams at night since the time when my son, having despatched his army, departed with intent to lay waste the land of the Ionians. But never yet have I beheld so distinct a vision [180] as that of the last night. This I will describe to you. I dreamed that two women in beautiful clothes, one in Persian garb, the other in Dorian attire, appeared before my eyes; both far more striking in stature than are the women of our time, [185] flawless in beauty, sisters of the same family. As for the lands in which they dwelt, to one had been assigned by lot the land of Hellas, to the other that of the barbarians. The two, as I imagined it, seemed to provoke each other to a mutual feud, and my son, when he had become aware of this, [190] attempted to restrain and placate them. He yoked them both to his car and placed the collar-straps upon their necks. The one bore herself proudly in these trappings and kept



ἄνευ χαλινῶν καὶ ζυγὸν θραύει μέσον.  
 πίπτει δ' ἐμὸς παῖς, καὶ πατὴρ παρίσταται  
 Δαρεῖος οἰκτεῖρων σφε· τὸν δ' ὅπως ὄρᾳ  
 Ξέρξης, πέπλους ῥήγνυσιν ἀμφὶ σώματι.  
 καὶ ταῦτα μὲν δὴ νυκτὸς εἰσιδεῖν λέγω.  
 ἐπεὶ δ' ἀνέστην καὶ χεροῖν καλλιρρόου  
 ἔψαυσα πηγῆς, σὺν θυηπόλῳ χερὶ  
 βωμὸν προσέστην, ἀποτρόποισι δαίμοσιν  
 θέλουσα θῦσαι πέλανον, ὧν τέλη τάδε.

**205** ὄρῳ δὲ φεύγοντ' αἰετὸν πρὸς ἐσχάραν  
 Φοίβου· φόβῳ δ' ἄφθογγος ἐστάθην, φίλοι·  
 μεθύστερον δὲ κίρκον εἰσορῶ δρόμῳ  
 πτεροῖς ἐφορμαίνοντα καὶ χηλαῖς κάρα  
 τίλλονθ'· ὁ δ' οὐδὲν ἄλλο γ' ἢ πτήξας δέμας  
**210** παρεῖχε. ταῦτ' ἔμοιγε δείματ' εἰσιδεῖν,  
 ὑμῖν δ' ἀκούειν. εὖ γὰρ ἴστε, παῖς ἐμὸς  
 πράξας μὲν εὖ θαυμαστὸς ἂν γένοιτ' ἀνὴρ,  
 κακῶς δὲ πράξας, οὐχ ὑπεύθυνος πόλει,  
 σωθεῖς δ' ὁμοίως τῆσδε κοιρανεῖ χθονός.

#### Χορός

**215** οὐ σε βουλόμεσθα, μήτερ, οὐτ' ἄγαν φοβεῖν λόγοις  
 οὐτε θαρσύνειν. θεοὺς δὲ προστροπαῖς ἰκνουμένη,  
 εἴ τι φλαῦρον εἶδες, αἰτοῦ τῶνδ' ἀποτροπὴν τελεῖν,  
 τὰ δ' ἀγάθ' ἐκτελῇ γενέσθαι σοί τε καὶ τέκνοις σέθεν  
 καὶ πόλει φίλοις τε πᾶσι. δεῦτερον δὲ χρὴ χοᾶς

her mouth obedient to the rein. The other struggled and with her hands [195] tore apart the harness of the car; then, free of the curb, she dragged it violently along with her and snapped the yoke in two. My son was hurled to the ground and his father Darius stood by his side filled with pity. But Xerxes, when he caught sight of him, tore the garments covering his body.[200] Such was the vision I beheld in the night. But when I had risen and dipped my hands in the clear-flowing water of a spring, I drew near to an altar with incense in my hand, intending to make an offering of sacrificial cake to the divinities that avert evil, those to whom these rites are due. [205] But I saw an eagle fleeing for safety to the altar of Phoebus—and out of terror, my friends, I stood speechless. Thereupon I caught sight of a falcon rushing at full speed with outstretched wings and with his talons plucking at the head of the eagle, which did nothing but cower and [210] yielded its body to his foe. These are the terrors I beheld, terrors too for you to hear. Be assured that if my son should succeed, he would prove to be remarkable indeed, but if he fails, he does not have to answer to the state; if he returns safely, he will hold sway in this land as he did before.

#### Chorus

[215] Mother, we would neither alarm you unduly by our words nor raise your hopes too high. If, however, it is something inauspicious that you have seen, visit the gods with supplication and entreat them to avert the evil and to bring to pass what will



**220** Γῆ τε καὶ φθιτοῖς χέασθαι· πρευμενῶς δ' αἰτοῦ τάδε,  
σὸν πόσιν Δαρεῖον, ὄνπερ φῆς ἰδεῖν κατ' εὐφρόνην,  
ἐσθλά σοι πέμπειν τέκνω τε γῆς ἔνερθεν ἐς φάος,  
τᾶμπαλιν δὲ τῶνδε γαίᾳ κάτοχα μαυροῦσθαι σκότῳ.  
ταῦτα θυμόμαντις ὦν σοι πρευμενῶς παρήνεσα.

**225** εὖ δὲ πανταχῇ τελεῖν σοι τῶνδε κρίνομεν πέρι.

**Ἀτοσσα**

ἀλλὰ μὴν εὖνους γ' ὁ πρῶτος τῶνδ' ἐνυπνίων κριτῆς  
παιδὶ καὶ δόμοις ἐμοῖσι τήνδ' ἐκύρωσας φάτιν.  
ἐκτελοῖτο δὴ τὰ χρηστά· ταῦτα δ', ὡς ἐφίεσαι,

πάντα θήσομεν θεοῖσι τοῖς τ' ἔνερθε γῆς φίλοις,

**230** εὖτ' ἂν εἰς οἴκους μόλωμεν. κεῖνα δ' ἐκμαθεῖν θέλω,  
ὦ φίλοι, ποῦ τὰς Ἀθήνας φασὶν ἰδρῦσθαι χθονός.

**Χορός**

τῆλε πρὸς δυσμαῖς ἀνακτος Ἥλιου φθινασμάτων.

**Ἀτοσσα**

ἀλλὰ μὴν ἴμειρ' ἐμὸς παῖς τήνδε θηρᾶσαι πόλιν;

be beneficial to you, your children, the kingdom, and all else that you hold dear. Next, it is appropriate that you should [220] offer libations to Earth and the dead; and use auspicious words to address your husband Darius, whom you say you have seen in the night, and ask him to send into the light of day from beneath the earth blessings for you and your son; ask too that the reverse of this may be held in bondage beneath the earth and fade away in gloom. Such is the advice I, relying on my instincts, offer you with kind intent. [225] According to our interpretation of these portents, the issue will in all respects prove prosperous to you.

**Atossa**

You, its first interpreter, have indeed read the meaning of my dream with goodwill, at least, toward my son and house. May the outcome then prove beneficial! When I return to the palace, I will perform for the gods and my dear ones beneath the earth all those rites which you recommend. Meanwhile, my friends, I would like to learn [230] where Athens is located.

**Chorus**

Far from here, to the west where the last rays of our Lord the Sun set.

**Atossa**

Can it then really be that my son had the keen desire to make this city his prey?

**Χορός**

παῖσα γὰρ γένοιτ' ἂν Ἑλλὰς βασιλέως ὑπήκοος.

**Ἀτοσσα**

235 ὦδέ τις πάρεστιν αὐτοῖς ἀνδροπλήθεια στρατοῦ;

**Χορός**

καὶ στρατὸς τοιοῦτος, ἔρξας πολλὰ δὴ Μήδους κακά.

**Ἀτοσσα**

καὶ τί πρὸς τούτοισιν ἄλλο; πλοῦτος ἐξαρκῆς δόμοις;

**Χορός**

ἀργύρου πηγή τις αὐτοῖς ἐστι, θησαυρὸς χθονός.

**Ἀτοσσα**

πότ' ἔρα γὰρ τοξουλκὸς αἰχμὴ διὰ χερσὶν αὐτοῖς πρέπει;

**Χορός**

240 οὐδαμῶς· ἔγχη σταδαῖα καὶ φεράσπιδες σαγαί.

**Ἀτοσσα**

τίς δὲ ποιάνωρ ἔπεστι κἀπιδεσπόζει στρατῷ;

**Χορός**

οὔτινος δούλοι κέκληνται φωτὸς οὐδ' ὑπήκοοι.

**Chorus**

Yes, for then all Hellas would be subject to the King.

**Atossa**

[235] Does their army have such a multitude of men?

**Chorus**

Yes, it is an army of such magnitude that it has caused great disaster for the Medes.

**Atossa**

And what else have they besides? Do they have sufficient wealth in their homes?

**Chorus**

Of silver they possess a veritable fountain, a treasure chest in their soil.

**Atossa**

Is the bow-stretching arrow particularly suited to their hands?  
[240]

**Chorus**

Far from it; they have lances for close fight and shields that serve them for armor.

**Atossa**

And who is set over them as shepherd and is master of their host?

**Chorus**

Of no man are they called the slaves or vassals.

**Ἀτοσσα**

πῶς ἂν οὖν μένοιεν ἄνδρας πολεμίους ἐπήλυδας;

**Χορός**

ὥστε Δαρείου πολὺν τε καὶ καλὸν φθειραὶ στρατόν.

**Ἀτοσσα**

**245** δεινά τοι λέγεις ἰόντων τοῖς τεκοῦσι φροντίσαι.

**Χορός**

ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ δοκεῖν τάχ' εἶση πάντα νημερτῇ λόγον.  
τοῦδε γὰρ δράμημα φωτὸς Περσικὸν πρέπει μαθεῖν,  
καὶ φέρει σαφές τι πρᾶγος ἐσθλὸν ἢ κακὸν κλύειν.

**Ἄγγελος**

ὦ γῆς ἀπάσης Ἀσιάδος πολίσματα,

**250** ὦ Περσις αἶα καὶ πολὺς πλούτου λιμήν,

ὡς ἐν μιᾷ πληγῇ κατέφθαρται πολὺς  
ὄλβος, τὸ Περσῶν δ' ἄνθος οἴχεται πεσόν.

ὦμοι, κακὸν μὲν πρῶτον ἀγγέλλειν κακά·

ὅμως δ' ἀνάγκη πᾶν ἀναπτύξαι πάθος,

**255** Πέρσαι· στρατὸς γὰρ πᾶς ὄλωλε βαρβάρων.

**Χορός**

ἄνι' ἄνια κακὰ

νεόκοτα καὶ δαί'· αἰαῖ,

διαίνεσθε, Πέρσαι,

τόδ' ἄχος κλύοντες.

**Ἄγγελος**

**260** ὥς πάντα γ' ἔστ' ἐκεῖνα διαπεπραγμένα·

**Atossa**

How then can they withstand the attack of an invading foe?

**Chorus**

So well as to have destroyed Darius' great and courageous host.

**Atossa**

[245] In truth, your words have given the fathers and mothers of those who are now on their way there dire food for thought.

**Chorus**

No, rather I think that you will soon learn the truth of the matter. For here comes one who is beyond a doubt a Persian courier. He bears clear tidings of some issue, be it good or bad.

**Messenger**

O cities of all the land of Asia, [250] O realm of **Persia**, and bounteous haven of wealth, at a single stroke all your plenteous prosperity has been shattered, and the flower of the Persians has fallen and perished! Ah, it is a terrible task to be the first to deliver news of disaster. And yet, Persians, I must relate the entirety of the calamity [255] — the whole barbarian host is lost.

**Chorus**

Grievous, grievous disaster, strange and cruel. Alas, Persians, weep now that you hear of this calamity.

**Messenger**

[260] Yes, weep, for you hear that the whole army is utterly

αὐτὸς δ' ἀέλπτως νόστιμον βλέπω φάος.

**Χορός**

ἡ μακροβίωτος

ὅδε γέ τις αἰὼν ἐφάνθη

γεραιοῖς, ἀκούειν

**265** τόδε πῆμ' ἀελπτον.

**Ἄγγελος**

καὶ μὴν παρὼν γε κοῦ λόγους ἄλλων κλύων,

Πέρσαι, φράσαιμ' ἂν οἱ ἐπορσύνθη κακά.

**Χορός**

ὁτοτοτοῖ, μάταν

τὰ πολλὰ βέλεα παμμιγῇ

**270** γὰρ ἀπ' Ἀσίδος ἦλθε δά-

αν ἐφ' Ἑλλάδα χώραν.

**Ἄγγελος**

πλήθουσι νεκρῶν δυσπότης ἐφθαρμένων

Σαλαμῖνος ἀκταὶ πᾶς τε πρόσχωρος τόπος.

**Χορός**

ὁτοτοτοῖ, φίλων

**275** ἀλίδονα μέλεα πολυβαφῇ

κατθανόντα λέγεις φέρε-

σθαι πλάγκτ' ἐν διπλάκεσσιν.

**Ἄγγελος**

οὐδὲν γὰρ ἤρκει τόξα, πᾶς δ' ἀπώλλυτο

στρατὸς δαμασθεῖς ναῖοισιν ἐμβολαῖς

destroyed; and I myself unexpectedly behold the day of my return.

**Chorus**

The life which has been given to us elders is too long, for we have now heard [265] of this unexpected misery.

**Messenger**

Since I myself was present and did not merely hear what happened from the report of others, I can tell you exactly what kind of disaster was wrought.

**Chorus**

Alas, alas! In vain did our vast and variously armed host [270] go forth from the land of Asia against the hostile soil of Hellas.

**Messenger**

Full of the bodies of men who perished by a miserable fate are the shores of Salamis and all the neighboring coasts.

**Chorus**

Alas, alas! You say that the bodies of our loved ones, [275] battered by the brine and drenched, are tossing, washed back and forth among the reefs.

**Messenger**

Our bows were of no use, and the whole host has perished, overwhelmed when ship charged on ship. [280]



**Χορός**

280 ἴνζ' ἄποτμον Πέρσαις  
δυσαιανῇ βοᾶν  
δάοις, ὥς πάντα παγκάκως  
ἔφθισαν· αἰαῖ στρατοῦ φθαρέντος.

**Ἄγγελος**

ὦ πλεῖστον ἔχθος ὄνομα Σαλαμῖνος κλύειν.  
285 φεῦ, τῶν Ἀθηνῶν ὥς στένω μεμνημένος.

**Χορός**

στυγναί γ' Ἀθᾶναι δάοις·  
μεμνησθαί τοι πάρα  
ὥς πολλὰς Περσίδων μάταν  
ἔκτισαν εὐνίδας ἥδ' ἀνάνδρους.

**Ἀτοσσα**

290 σιγῶ πάλαι δύστηνος ἐκπεπληγμένη  
κακοῖς· ὑπερβάλλει γὰρ ἦδε συμφορὰ  
τὸ μήτε λέξαι μήτ' ἐρωτῆσαι πάθη.  
ὅμως δ' ἀνάγκη πημονὰς βροτοῖς φέρειν  
θεῶν διδόντων· πᾶν δ' ἀναπτύξας πάθος  
295 λέξον καταστάς, κεῖ στένεις κακοῖς ὅμως.

τίς οὐ τέθηκε, τίνα δὲ καὶ πενήθομεν  
τῶν ἀρχελείων, ὅστ' ἐπὶ σκηπτουχίᾳ  
ταχθεὶς ἀνάνδρον τάξιν ἡγήμου θανών;

**Ἄγγελος**

Ξέρξης μὲν αὐτὸς ζῇ τε καὶ βλέπει φάος.

**Chorus**

Raise a doleful and mournful wail for the Persians, the wretched Persians, since they have met with complete and utter ruin. Alas for the destruction of our host!

**Messenger**

O name of Salamis most odious to my ears! [285] Alas, how I groan when I recall the memory of Athens!

**Chorus**

Ah, hateful indeed is Athens to her foes. Now must we remember how many Persian women she has deprived of sons and husbands, lost all in vain. [290]

**Atossa**

Long have I kept silent in my misery, struck with dismay at our disaster; for this calamity is so great that it is not possible to say or even to ask about its extent. Nevertheless mortals must endure affliction when it is heaven-sent. [295] Compose yourself, and even though you groan at our loss, relate the sum of our disaster and speak out! Who is there that is not dead? Whom of our leaders must we bewail? Who, appointed to wield command, by death left his post empty, without its chief?

**Messenger**

Xerxes himself lives and beholds the light. [300]

**Ἀτοσσα**

300 ἔμοῖς μὲν εἶπας δώμασιν φάος μέγα  
καὶ λευκὸν ἡμαρ νυκτὸς ἐκ μελαγχίμου.

**Ἄγγελος**

Ἀρτεμβάρης δὲ μυρίας ἵππου βραβεὺς  
στύφλους παρ' ἄκτὰς θείνεται Σιληνίων.  
χῶ χιλίαρχος Δαδάκης πληγῇ δορὸς

305 πῆδημα κοῦφον ἐκ νεῶς ἀφήλατο·  
Τενάγων τ' ἀριστεὺς Βακτρίων ἰθαγενῆς  
θαλασσόπληκτον νῆσον Αἶαντος πολεῖ.

Λίλαιος, Ἀρσάμης τε κ' Ἀργήστης τρίτος,  
οἶδ' ἀμφὶ νῆσον τὴν πελειοθρέμμονα

310 δινούμενοι 'κύρισσον ἰσχυρὰν χθόνα·  
πηγαῖς τε Νείλου γειτονῶν Αἰγυπτίου  
Ἀρκετεὺς, Ἀδεύης, καὶ φερεσσάκης τρίτος  
Φαρνοῦχος, οἶδε ναὸς ἐκ μιᾶς πέσον.

Χρυσεὺς Μάταλλος μυριόνταρχος θανών,

315 ἵππου μελαίνης ἡγεμῶν τρισμυρίας,  
πυρρὰν ζαπληθῇ δάσκιον γενειάδα  
ἔτεγγ', ἀμείβων χρωῶτα πορφυρέα βαφῇ.  
καὶ Μᾶγος Ἀραβος, Ἀρτάβης τε Βάκτριος,  
σκληρᾶς μέτοικος γῆς, ἐκεῖ κατέφθιτο.

320 Ἀμιστρις Ἀμφιστρεὺς τε πολὺπονον δόρου  
νωμῶν, ὃ τ' ἐσθλὸς Ἀριόμαρδος Σάρδεσι  
πένθος παρασχών, Σεισάμης θ' ὁ Μύσιος,

**Atossa**

The words you utter bring a great light of joy into my house,  
and bright day after night wrapped in gloom.

**Messenger**

But Artembares, commander of ten thousand cavalrymen, is  
being battered now against Silenia's cruel shore. And Dadaces,  
leader of a thousand men, leapt, struck by a spear, [305] with a  
nimble bound from his ship. Tenagon, the true-born Bactrians'  
chieftain, is ranging now around the surf-beaten isle of Ajax.  
Lilaeus and Arsames, and, third, Argestes, [310] kept buffeting  
against its rugged shore, whirled around about the island,<sup>1</sup> the  
breeding-place of doves. Arcteus, too, who lived by the waters  
of the Egyptian Nile, Adeues, and Pharnuchus of the mighty  
shield—all these were hurled out of one ship. Matallus of  
**Chrysa**, commander of ten thousand, [315] leader of the Black  
Cavalry, thirty thousand strong, in death dyed red his thick and  
shaggy beard, changing its color with a deep crimson stain.  
Arabus, too, the Magian, perished there, and Bactrian Artabes, a  
settler now in a rugged land. [320] Amistris, and Amphistreus,  
wielder of a painful spear, and brave Ariomardus, whose death  
brought grief to **Sardis**, and Seisames the Mysian, and Tharybis,  
admiral of five times fifty ships, a Lyrnaean by descent, a man of  
physical beauty, [325] lies dead in a state of misery, no longer  
attended by good fortune.<sup>2</sup> Syennesis, also, the governor of the  
Cilicians, foremost in courage, he whose prowess did the foe

Θάρυβίς τε πεντήκοντα πεντάκις νεῶν  
 ταγός, γένος Λυρναῖος, εὐειδῆς ἀνὴρ,  
 325 κεῖται θανῶν δαίλαιος οὐ μάλ' εὐτυχῶς.  
 Συνέννεσίς τε πρῶτος εἰς εὐψυχίαν,  
 Κιλίκων ἑπαρχος, εἷς ἀνὴρ πλεῖστον πόνον  
 ἐχθροῖς παρασχών εὐκλεῶς ἀπώλετο.  
 τοσόνδε ταγῶν νῦν ὑπεμνήσθην πέρι.  
 330 πολλῶν παρόντων δ' ὀλίγ' ἀπαγγέλλω κακά.

#### Ἄτοσσα

αἰαῖ, κακῶν ὑψιστά δὴ κλύω τάδε,  
 αἴσχη τε Πέρσαις καὶ λιγέα κωκύματα.  
 ἀτὰρ φράσον μοι τοῦτ' ἀναστρέψας πάλιν·  
 πόσον δὲ πλήθος ἦν νεῶν Ἑλληνίδων,  
 335 ὥστ' ἀξιῶσαι Περσικῶ στρατεύματι  
 μάχην συνάψαι ναῖοισιν ἐμβολαῖς;

#### Ἄγγελος

πλήθους μὲν ἂν σάφ' ἴσθ' ἕκατι βάρβαρον  
 ναυσὶν κρατῆσαι. καὶ γὰρ Ἑλλήσιν μὲν ἦν  
 ὁ πᾶς ἀριθμὸς ἐς τριακάδας δέκα  
 340 ναῶν, δεκάς δ' ἦν τῶνδε χωρὶς ἔκκριτος·  
 Ἐέρξη δέ, καὶ γὰρ οἶδα, χιλιάς μὲν ἦν  
 ὧν ἦγε πλήθος, αἱ δ' ὑπέρκοποι τάχει  
 ἑκατὸν δις ἦσαν ἐπτά θ' ὧδ' ἔχει λόγος.  
 μή σοι δοκοῦμεν τῇδε λειφθῆναι μάχῃ;  
 345 ἀλλ' ὧδε δαίμων τις κατέφθειρε στρατόν,

most harm, found there a glorious death. Such were the leaders about whom I was making my report. [330] Although our losses were many, I announce but few.

1 According to the scholiast, Salamis is meant; according to Hermann, one of the small islands adjacent to Salamis.

2 The ironical phrase οὐ μάλ' εὐτυχῶς, which is contrasted with εὐειδῆς, probably refers to his unburied state. Cp. *Soph. Aj.* 1126.

#### Atossa

Alas! The words I hear put the very crown upon our woes; a disgrace to the Persians and cause for shrill lament. But retrace your tale and tell me this clearly: [335] how great was the number of the Greek ships which gave them confidence enough to go into battle with their armed prows against the Persian army?

#### Messenger

If numbers had been the only factor, be assured that the barbarians would have gained the victory with their fleet. For the whole number of the ships of Hellas amounted to ten times thirty, [340] and, in addition to these, there was a chosen squadron of ten. But Xerxes, this I know, had under his command a thousand, while those excelling in speed were twice a hundred, and seven more. This is the total of their respective numbers. Do you think that we were simply outnumbered in this contest? [345] No, it was some divine power that tipped the



τάλαντα βρίσας οὐκ ἰσορρόπῳ τύχῃ.  
θεοὶ πόλιν σῶζουσι Παλλάδος θεᾶς.

**Ἀτοσσα**

ἔτ' ἄρ' Ἀθηνῶν ἔστ' ἀπόρθητος πόλις;

**Ἄγγελος**

ἀνδρῶν γὰρ ὄντων ἕρκος ἐστὶν ἀσφαλές.

**Ἀτοσσα**

350 ἀρχὴ δὲ ναυσὶ συμβολῆς τίς ἦν, φράσον·  
τίνες κατῆρξαν, πότερον Ἑλλήνες, μάχης,  
ἢ παῖς ἐμός, πλήθει καταυχήσας νεῶν;

**Ἄγγελος**

ἦρξεν μέν, ὧ δέσποινα, τοῦ παντὸς κακοῦ  
φανείς ἀλάστωρ ἢ κακὸς δαίμων ποθέν.

355 ἀνὴρ γὰρ Ἑλλήν ἐξ Ἀθηναίων στρατοῦ  
ἐλθὼν ἔλεξε παιδὶ σὺ Ξέρξῃ τάδε,  
ὥς εἰ μελαίνης νυκτὸς ἵζεται κνέφας,

Ἑλλήνες οὐ μενοῖεν, ἀλλὰ σέλμασιν  
ναῶν ἐπανθορόντες ἄλλος ἄλλοσε

360 δρασμῷ κρυφαίῳ βίοτον ἐκσωσοίατο.  
ὁ δ' εὐθύς ὥς ἤκουσεν, οὐ ξυνεῖς δόλον

Ἑλλήνος ἀνδρὸς οὐδὲ τὸν θεῶν φθόνον,  
πᾶσιν προφωνεῖ τόνδε ναυάρχῳ λόγον,  
εὖτ' ἂν φλέγων ἀκτῖσιν ἥλιος χθόνα

365 λήξῃ, κνέφας δὲ τέμενος αἰθέρος λάβῃ,  
τάξαι νεῶν στίφος μὲν ἐν στοίχοις τρισὶν

scale of fortune with unequal weight and thus destroyed our  
host. The gods preserve the city of the goddess Pallas.

**Atossa**

Is then the city of Athens not yet despoiled?

**Messenger**

No, while her men still live, her ramparts are impregnable. [350]

**Atossa**

But the beginning of the encounter of the fleets, tell me about it.  
Who began the onset? Was it the Hellenes? Or my son, exulting  
in the multitude of his ships?

**Messenger**

My Queen, some destructive power or evil spirit, appearing  
from somewhere or other, caused the beginning of our utter  
rout. [355] A Hellene, from the Athenian host, came to your son  
Xerxes and told this tale: that, when the gloom of black night  
should set in, the Hellenes would not remain in place, but,  
springing upon the rowing benches of their ships, would seek,  
some here, some there, [360] to preserve their lives by stealthy  
flight. But Xerxes, when he heard this, comprehending neither  
the cleverness of the Greek nor that the gods grudged him  
success, straightway gave all his captains orders to this effect—  
that, when the sun had ceased to illumine the earth with his  
beams, [365] and darkness had covered the region of the sky,  
they should bring up in a tight group the main body of the fleet,  
disposed in triple line, to bar the exits and the sounding straits,



ἔκπλους φυλάσσειν καὶ πόρους ἀλιγρόθους,  
 ἄλλας δὲ κύκλῳ νῆσον Αἴαντος πέριξ·  
 ὥς εἰ μόρον φευξοίαθ' Ἑλλήνες κακόν,  
**370** ναυσὶν κρυφαίως δρασμὸν εὐρόντες τινά,  
 παῖσιν στέρεσθαι κρατὸς ἦν προκείμενον.  
 τοσαῦτ' ἔλεξε κάρθ' ὑπ' εὐθύμου φρενός·  
 οὐ γὰρ τὸ μέλλον ἐκ θεῶν ἠπίστατο.  
 οἱ δ' οὐκ ἀκόσμως, ἀλλὰ πειθάρχῳ φρενὶ  
**375** δεῖπνόν τ' ἐπορσύνοντο, ναυβάτης τ' ἀνὴρ  
 τροποῦτο κώπην σκαλμὸν ἀμφ' εὐήρετμον.  
 ἐπεὶ δὲ φέγγος ἡλίου κατέφθιτο  
 καὶ νύξ ἐπῆει, πᾶς ἀνὴρ κώπης ἄναξ  
 ἐς ναῦν ἐχώρει πᾶς θ' ὅπλων ἐπιστάτης·  
**380** τάξις δὲ τάξιν παρεκάλει νεῶς μακρᾶς·  
 πλέουσι δ' ὥς ἕκαστος ἦν τεταγμένος,  
 καὶ πάννυχτοι δὴ διάπλοον καθίστασαν  
 ναῶν ἄνακτες πάντα ναυτικὸν λεῶν.  
 καὶ νύξ ἐχώρει, κοῦ μάλ' Ἑλλήνων στρατὸς  
**385** κρυφαῖον ἔκπλουν οὐδαμῇ καθίστατο·  
 ἐπεὶ γε μέντοι λευκόπωλος ἡμέρα  
 πᾶσαν κατέσχε γαῖαν εὐφεγγῆς ἰδεῖν,  
 πρῶτον μὲν ἡχὴ κέλαδος Ἑλλήνων πάρα  
 μολπηδὸν ἠυφήμησεν, ὄρθιον δ' ἅμα  
**390** ἀντηλάλαξε νησιώτιδος πέτρας  
 ἡχώ· φόβος δὲ πᾶσι βαρβάροις παρῆν

and station other ships in a circle around the island of Ajax. He gave them a warning too that, should the Hellenes escape an evil doom, [370] finding by stealth some means of flight for their fleet, it had been decreed that every captain should lose his head. These commands he made with complete confidence of heart, since he knew not the issue intended by the gods. Our crews then, with no lack of order but with an obedient spirit, [375] prepared their evening meal, while each sailor looped his oar about its thole-pin so that it fitted well. But when the light of the sun had faded and night drew on, each master of an oar and each man versed in arms went on board. [380] The long galleys cheered each other, line by line; and they held their course as each captain had been ordered, and all through the night the commanders of the fleet kept their whole force cruising to and fro across the strait. Night began to wane, [385] yet the fleet of the Hellenes in no way attempted to put forth by stealth.

When, however, radiant Day with her white horses shone over all the land, a loud cheer like a song of triumph first rang out from the Hellenes, and, at the same instant, [390] clear from the island crags, an echo returned an answering cry. Terror fell on all the barbarians, balked of their purpose; for then the Hellenes chanted their solemn paean, not as in flight, but as men rushing

γνώμης ἀποσφαλεῖσιν· οὐ γὰρ ὡς φυγῇ  
 παιᾶν' ἐφύμνουν σεμνὸν Ἑλληνες τότε,  
 ἀλλ' ἐς μάχην ὀρμῶντες εὐψύχῳ θράσει·  
**395** σάλπιγξ δ' αὐτῇ πάντ' ἐκείν' ἐπέφλεγεν.  
 εὐθὺς δὲ κώπης ῥοθιάδος ξυνεμβολῇ  
 ἔπαισαν ἄλμην βρύχιον ἐκ κελεύματος,  
 θοῶς δὲ πάντες ἦσαν ἐκφανεῖς ἰδεῖν.  
 τὸ δεξιὸν μὲν πρῶτον εὐτάκτως κέρας  
**400** ἤγεῖτο κόσμῳ, δεύτερον δ' ὁ πᾶς στόλος  
 ἐπεξεχώρει, καὶ παρῇν ὁμοῦ κλύειν  
 πολλὴν βοήν, "ὦ παῖδες Ἑλλήνων ἴτε,  
 ἐλευθεροῦτε πατρίδ', ἐλευθεροῦτε δὲ  
 παιῖδας, γυναῖκας, θεῶν τέ πατρῶων ἔδη,  
**405** θήκας τε προγόνων· νῦν ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀγών."  
 καὶ μὴν παρ' ἡμῶν Περσίδος γλώσσης ῥόθος  
 ὑπηντίαζε, κοῦκέτ' ἦν μέλλειν ἀκμή.  
 εὐθὺς δὲ ναῦς ἐν νηὶ χαλκῇρη στόλον  
 ἔπαισεν· ἦρξε δ' ἐμβολῆς Ἑλληνικῇ  
**410** ναῦς, καποθραύει πάντα Φοινίσσης νεῶς  
 κόρυμβ', ἐπ' ἄλλην δ' ἄλλος ἠϋθυνεν δόρυ.  
 τὰ πρῶτα μὲν νυν ῥεῦμα Περσικοῦ στρατοῦ  
 ἀντεῖχεν· ὥς δὲ πλῆθος ἐν στενῷ νεῶν  
 ἦθροιστ' ἀρωγὴ δ' οὔτις ἀλλήλοις παρῇν,  
**415** αὐτοὶ δ' ὑφ' αὐτῶν ἐμβόλοις χαλκοστόμοις  
 παίοντ', ἔθραυον πάντα κωπήρη στόλον,

to the onset with the courage of gallant hearts.

[395] The trumpet with its blast set all their side afire, and  
 instantly, at the word of command, with the even stroke of  
 foaming oars they struck the briny deep. Swiftly they all came  
 clear into view. Their right wing, well marshalled, [400] led on  
 in orderly advance, next their whole army pressed on against us,  
 and at the same time a loud shout met our ears: "On, you men of  
 Hellas! Free your native land. Free your children, your wives,  
 the temples of your fathers' gods, [405] and the tombs of your  
 ancestors. Now you are fighting for all you have." Then from  
 our side arose in response the mingled clamor of Persian speech,  
 and straightaway the ships dashed together their bronze prows.

It was a ship of Hellas [410] that began the charge and chopped  
 off in its entirety the curved stern of a Phoenician boat. Each  
 captain drove his ship straight against some other ship. At first  
 the stream of the Persian army held its own. When, however,  
 the mass of our ships had been crowded in the narrows, and  
 none could render another aid, [415] and each crashed its bronze  
 prow against each of its own line, they splintered their whole  
 bank of oars. Then the Hellenic galleys, not heedless of their

Ἑλληνικαὶ τε νῆες οὐκ ἀφρασμόνως  
 κύκλω πέριξ ἔθεινον, ὑπτιοῦτο δὲ  
 σκάφη νεῶν, θάλασσα δ' οὐκέτ' ἦν ἰδεῖν,  
**420** ναυαγίων πλήθουσα καὶ φόνου βροτῶν.  
 ἀκταὶ δὲ νεκρῶν χοιράδες τ' ἐπλήθουν,  
 φυγῇ δ' ἀκόσμῳ πᾶσα ναῦς ἠρέσσετο,  
 ὅσαι περ ἦσαν βαρβάρου στρατεύματος.  
 τοὶ δ' ὥστε θύννους ἢ τιν' ἰχθύων βόλον  
**425** ἀγαῖσι κωπῶν θραύμασιν τ' ἐρειπίων  
 ἔπαιον, ἐρράχιζον· οἰμωγὴ δ' ὁμοῦ  
 κωκύμασιν κατεῖχε πελαγίαν ἅλα,  
 ἕως κελαινῆς νυκτὸς ὄμμ' ἀφείλετο.  
 κακῶν δὲ πλήθος, οὐδ' ἂν εἰ δέκ' ἤματα  
**430** στοιχηγοροῖην, οὐκ ἂν ἐκπλήσαιμί σοι.  
 εὖ γὰρ τόδ' ἴσθι, μηδ' ἄμ' ἡμέρα μιᾷ  
 πλήθος τοσουτὰριθμον ἀνθρώπων θανεῖν.  
**Ἀτοσσα**  
 αἰαῖ, κακῶν δὴ πέλαγος ἔρρωγεν μέγα  
 Πέρσαις τε καὶ πρόπαντι βαρβάρων γένει.  
**Ἄγγελος**  
**435** εὖ νυν τόδ' ἴσθι, μηδέπω μεσοῦν κακόν·  
 τοιάδ' ἐπ' αὐτοῖς ἦλθε συμφορὰ πάθους  
 ὥς τοῖσδε καὶ δις ἀντισηκῶσαι ῥοπῇ.  
**Ἀτοσσα**  
 καὶ τίς γένοιτ' ἂν τῆσδ' ἔτ' ἐχθίων τύχη;

chance, hemmed them in and battered them on every side. The hulls of our vessels rolled over, and the sea was hidden from our sight, [420] strewn as it was with wrecks and slaughtered men. The shores and reefs were crowded with our dead, and every ship that formed a part of the barbarian fleet plied its oars in disorderly flight. But, as if our men were tuna or some haul of fish, [425] the foe kept striking and hacking them with broken oars and fragments of wrecked ships. Groans and shrieks together filled the open sea until the face of black night hid the scene. But as for the full extent of our disasters, this, even if I had ten days in succession to do so, I could not describe to you. [430] However, you can be sure that so great a multitude of men never perished in a single day.

**Atossa**

Alas! In truth a vast sea of troubles has burst upon the Persians and the entire barbarian race. [435]

**Messenger**

Be assured of this, not even half of the disaster has as yet been told. A calamity so dreadful as to outweigh these ills twice over befell them.

**Atossa**

But what greater misfortune than this could have befallen them?



λέξον τίν' αὖ φῆς τήνδε συμφορὰν στρατῷ  
**440** ἐλθεῖν κακῶν ῥέπουσαν ἐς τὰ μάσσονα.

**Ἄγγελος**

Περσῶν ὅσοι περ ἦσαν ἀκμαῖοι φύσιν,  
 ψυχὴν τ' ἄριστοι κεὺγένειαν ἐκπρεπεῖς,  
 αὐτῷ τ' ἄνακτι πίστιν ἐν πρώτοις αἰεὶ,  
 τεθναῖσιν αἰσχροῶς δυσκλεεστάτῳ μόρῳ.

**Ἀτοσσα**

**445** οἱ γὰρ τάλαινα συμφορᾶς κακῆς, φίλοι.  
 ποίῳ μόρῳ δὲ τούσδε φῆς ὀλωλέναι;

**Ἄγγελος**

νῆσός τις ἔστι πρόσθε Σαλαμῖνος τόπων,  
 βαιά, δύσορμος ναυσίν, ἣν ὁ φιλόχορος  
 Πὰν ἐμβατεύει, ποντίας ἀκτῆς ἔπι.  
**450** ἐνταῦθα πέμπει τούσδ', ὅπως, ὅταν νεῶν  
 φθαρέντες ἐχθροὶ νῆσον ἐκσφζοίατο,  
 κτείνοιεν εὐχεῖρωτον Ἑλλήνων στρατόν,  
 φίλους δ' ὑπεκσφζοιεν ἐναλίων πόρων,  
 κακῶς τὸ μέλλον ἱστορῶν. ὥς γὰρ θεὸς  
**455** ναῶν ἔδωκε κῦδος Ἑλλησιν μάχης,  
 αὐθημερὸν φράξαντες εὐχάλκοις δέμας  
 ὅπλοισι ναῶν ἐξέθρῳσκον· ἀμφὶ δὲ  
 κυκλοῦντο πᾶσαν νῆσον, ὥστ' ἀμηχανεῖν  
 ὅποι τράποιντο. πολλὰ μὲν γὰρ ἐκ χερῶν  
**460** πέτροισιν ἠράσσοντο, τοξικῆς τ' ἄπο

Speak! What is this other disaster you say [440] came upon our force, sinking the scale to greater weight of ill?

**Messenger**

Those Persians who were in their life's prime, bravest in spirit, pre-eminent for noble birth, and always among the foremost in loyalty to the King himself— these have fallen ignobly by a most inglorious doom. [445]

**Atossa**

Ah, I am truly reduced to misery through this disaster! By what fate was it that you say they met their end?

**Messenger**

There is an island<sup>1</sup> lying before Salamis, a small one and dangerous anchorage for ships; its sea-washed shore is the haunt of Pan, who loves the dance. [450] There Xerxes dispatched these, his choicest troops, in order that when the Hellenic enemy, wrecked from their ships, should flee in search of safety to the island, they might slaughter their force, an easy prey, and rescue their comrades from the straits of the sea. Grievously did he misjudge the issue. For when some god [455] had given the glory to the Hellenes in the battle on the sea, on that same day, fencing their bodies in armor of bronze, they leapt from their ships and encircled the whole island, so that our men were at a loss which way to turn. Often they were struck by stones slung from their hands, [460] and arrows sped from the bow-string kept falling upon them and doing them harm. At last



θάμιγγος ἰοὶ προσπίτνοντές ὥλλυσαν·  
τέλος δ' ἐφορμηθέντες ἐξ ἑνὸς ῥόθου  
παίουςι, κρεοκοποῦσι δυστήνων μέλη,  
ἕως ἀπάντων ἐξαπέφθειραν βίον.

**465** Ξέρξης δ' ἀνώμωξεν κακῶν ὀρῶν βάθος·  
ἔδραν γὰρ εἶχε παντὸς εὐαγῆ στρατοῦ,  
ὑψηλὸν ὄχθον ἄγχι πελαγίας ἀλός·  
ῥήξας δὲ πέπλους κἀνακωκύσας λιγύ,  
πεζῶ παραγγείλας ἄφαρ στρατεύματι,  
**470** ἦρσ' ἀκόσμῳ ξὺν φυγῇ. τοιάνδε σοι  
πρὸς τῇ πάροιθε συμφορᾷ πάρα στένειν.

#### Ἀτοσσα

ὦ στυγνὲ δαῖμον, ὥς ἄρ' ἔψευσας φρενῶν  
Πέρσας· πικρὰν δὲ παῖς ἐμὸς τιμωρίαν  
κλεινῶν Ἀθηνῶν ἤϊρε, κοῦκ ἀπήρκεσαν  
**475** οὖς πρόσθε Μαραθῶν βαρβάρων ἀπώλεσεν·  
ὦν ἀντίποινα παῖς ἐμὸς πράξειν δοκῶν  
τοσόνδε πλῆθος πημάτων ἐπέσπασεν.  
σὺ δ' εἶπέ, νάων αἱ πεφεύγασιν μόρον,  
ποῦ τάσδ' ἔλειπες· οἶσθα σημῆναι τορῶς;

#### Ἄγγελος

**480** νάων γε ταγοὶ τῶν λελειμμένων σύδην  
κατ' οὖρον οὐκ εὐκοσμον αἶρονται φυγῇ·  
στρατὸς δ' ὁ λοιπὸς ἔν τε Βοιωτῶν χθονὶ

the Hellenes, charging with one shout, struck them and hacked to pieces the limbs of the poor wretches, until they had utterly quenched the life of all. [465] Xerxes groaned aloud when he beheld the extent of the disaster, for he occupied a seat commanding a clear view of the entire army—a lofty headland by the open sea. Tearing his robes and uttering a loud cry, he straightaway gave orders to his force on land [470] and dismissed them in disorderly flight. This, besides the one already told, is the disaster you must bewail.

**1** Psyttalea.

#### Atossa

O hateful divinity, how have you foiled the purpose of the Persians! Cruel was the vengeance which my son brought upon himself for his designs against illustrious Athens; the barbarians [475] whom Marathon destroyed were not enough. It was in an effort to exact retribution for them that my son has drawn upon himself so great a multitude of woes. But the ships that escaped destruction—tell me about them. Where did you leave them? Can you give a clear report?

#### Messenger

[480] The commanders of the ships which still remained fled with a rush in disorder wherever the wind bore them. As for the survivors of the army, they perished in Boeotian territory, some,

διώλλυθ', οἱ μὲν ἀμφὶ κρηναῖον γάνος  
 δίψη πονοῦντες, οἱ δ' ὑπ' ἄσθματος κενοὶ  
**485** διεκπερῶμεν ἔς τε Φωκέων χθόνα  
 καὶ Δωρίδ' αἶαν, Μηλιᾶ τε κόλπον, οὗ  
 Σπερχειὸς ἄρδει πεδίον εὐμενεῖ ποτῶ·  
 κἄντεῦθεν ἡμᾶς γῆς Ἀχαιίδος πέδον  
 καὶ Θεσσαλῶν πόλεις ὑπεσπανισμένους  
**490** βορᾶς ἐδέξαντ'· ἔνθα δὲ πλεῖστοι 'θάνον  
 δίψη τε λιμῶ τ'· ἀμφοτέρω γὰρ ἦν τάδε.  
 Μαγνητικὴν δὲ γαῖαν ἔς τε Μακεδόνων  
 χώραν ἀφικόμεσθ', ἐπ' Ἀξίου πόρον,  
 Βόλβης θ' ἔλειον δόνακα, Πάγγαιόν τ' ὄρος,  
**495** Ἡδωνίδ' αἶαν· νυκτὶ δ' ἐν ταύτῃ θεὸς  
 χειμῶν' ἄωρον ὤρσε, πηγνυσὶν δὲ πᾶν  
 ῥέεθρον ἀγνοῦ Στρυμόνος. θεοὺς δέ τις  
 τὸ πρὶν νομίζων οὐδαμοῦ τότε ἤρχετο  
 λιταῖσι, γαῖαν οὐρανόν τε προσκυνῶν.  
**500** ἐπεὶ δὲ πολλὰ θεοκλυτῶν ἐπαύσατο  
 στρατός, περᾶ κρυσταλλοπῆγα διὰ πόρον·  
 χῶστις μὲν ἡμῶν πρὶν σκεδασθῆναι θεοῦ  
 ἀκτῖνας ὥρμήθη, σεσωσμένος κυρεῖ.  
 φλέγων γὰρ αὐγαῖς λαμπρὸς ἡλίου κύκλος  
**505** μέσον πόρον διήκε, θερμαίνων φλογί.  
 πῖπτον δ' ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισιν· ἠτύχει δέ τοι  
 ὅστις τάχιστα πνεῦμ' ἀπέροξεν βίου.

faint from thirst, beside a refreshing spring, while some of us, exhausted and panting, [485] made our way to the land of the Phocians, to Doris and the Melian gulf, where the Spercheus waters the plain with kindly stream. Coming from there, badly in need of food, we received welcome in the Achaean land and [490] the cities of the Thessalians. There it was that many perished of thirst and hunger, for we were oppressed by both. And we came to the Magnesian land and to the country of the Macedonians, to the ford of the Axios and Bolbe's reedy marsh, and to Mount Pangaeus, [495] in the Edonian land. But on that night the god roused winter before its time and froze the stream of sacred Strymon from shore to shore. Many a man who before that had held the gods in no esteem, implored them then in supplication, doing obeisance to earth and heaven.

[500] But when our host had made an end of its fervent invocation of the gods, it ventured to pass across the ice-bound stream. And each of us who started on his way before the sun god dispersed his beams, found himself in safety, for the bright orb of the sun with its burning rays [505] heated the middle section and pierced it with its flames. One after another our men sank in, and fortunate indeed was he who perished soonest. The survivors, after making their way through Thrace with great

ὅσοι δὲ λοιποὶ καὶ τυχόν σωτηρίας,  
 Θρήκην περάσαντες μόγις πολλῶ πόνῳ,  
 510 ἤκουσιν ἐκφυγόντες, οὐ πολλοὶ τινες,  
 ἐφ' ἐστιοῦχον γαῖαν· ὥς στένειν πόλιν  
 Περσῶν, ποθοῦσαν φιλότατην ἡβὴν χθονός.  
 ταῦτ' ἔστ' ἀληθὴ· πολλὰ δ' ἐκλείπω λέγων  
 κακῶν ἃ Πέρσαις ἐγκατέσκηψεν θεός.

### Χορός

515 ὦ δυσπρόνητε δαῖμον, ὥς ἄγαν βαρὺς  
 ποδοῖν ἐνήλου παντὶ Περσικῶ γένει.

### Ἀτοσσα

οἱ γὰρ τάλαινα διαπεπραγμένου στρατοῦ·  
 ὦ νυκτὸς ὄψις ἐμφανὴς ἐνυπνίων,  
 ὥς κάρτα μοι σαφῶς ἐδήλωσας κακά.  
 520 ὑμεῖς δὲ φάυλως αὐτ' ἄγαν ἐκρίνατε.  
 ὅμως δ', ἐπειδὴ τῇδ' ἐκύρωσεν φάτις  
 ὑμῶν, θεοῖς μὲν πρῶτον εὐξασθαι θέλω·  
 ἔπειτα Γῇ τε καὶ φθιτοῖς δωρήματα  
 ἥξω λαβοῦσα πέλανον ἐξ οἴκων ἐμῶν,—  
 525 ἐπίσταμαι μὲν ὥς ἐπ' ἐξειργασμένοις,  
 ἀλλ' ἐς τὸ λοιπὸν εἴ τι δὴ λῶρον πέλοι.  
 ὑμᾶς δὲ χρὴ 'πὶ τοῖσδε τοῖς πεπραγμένοις  
 πιστοῖσι πιστὰ συμφέρειν βουλευμάτα·  
 καὶ παῖδ', ἐάν περ δεῦρ' ἐμοῦ πρόσθεν μόλη,  
 530 παρηγορεῖτε, καὶ προπέμπετε' ἐς δόμους,

hardship, [510] —and few they were indeed—escaped to the safety of the land of their homes; now the city of the Persians may make lament in regret for the beloved youth of the land. What I say is true, yet much remains untold of the ills launched by Heaven upon the Persians.

### Exit

### Chorus

[515] O unearthly power, source of our cruel distress, with what crushing weight have you fallen upon the whole Persian race!

### Atossa

How the utter destruction of our host distresses me! O vivid vision of my dreams at night, how clearly did you signify misfortune to me! [520] And all too lightly did you in turn interpret it. However, since your explanation determined thus, first of all I wish to offer prayers to the gods, and then I will return after I have brought from the palace a sacrificial cake as a gift to Earth and the dead. [525] I know indeed that it is for what cannot be undone, yet I do this in the hope that something more auspicious may come to pass in the future. But you should confer faithfully with the faithful counsellors in view of what has befallen. And as for my son, if he should come here before I return, [530] comfort him and escort him to the palace, so that he will not inflict on himself some further ill to crown those already



μή καί τι πρὸς κακοῖσι προσθῆται κακόν.

**Χορός**

ὦ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ, νῦν <γάρ> Περσῶν  
τῶν μεγαλάρχων καὶ πολυάνδρων  
στρατιὰν ὀλέσας

**535** ἄστνυ τὸ Σούσων ἡδ' Ἀγβατάνων  
πένθει δνοφερῷ κατέκρυψας·  
πολλαὶ δ' ἀταλαῖς χερσὶ καλύπτρας  
κατερεικόμεναι

διαμυδαλέοις δάκρυσιν κόλπους

**540** τέγγουσ', ἄλγους μετέχουσιναι.  
αἱ δ' ἀβρόγοοι Περσίδες ἀνδρῶν  
ποθέουσαι ἰδεῖν ἀρτιζυγίαν,  
λέκτρων εὐνάς ἀβροχίτωνας,  
χλιδανῆς ἥβης τέρψιν, ἀφείσαι,

**545** πενθοῦσι γόοις ἀκορεστοτάτοις.  
κἀγὼ δὲ μόρον τῶν οἰχομένων  
αἴρω δοκίμως πολυπενθῆ.  
νῦν γὰρ δὴ πρόπασα μὲν στένει γαῖ'  
Ἀσιὰς ἐκκενουμένα.

**550** Ξέρξης μὲν ἄγαγεν, ποποῖ,  
Ξέρξης δ' ἀπώλεσεν, τοτοῖ,  
Ξέρξης δὲ πάντ' ἐπέσπε δυσφρόνως  
βαρίδεσσι ποντίαις.  
τίπτε Δαρεῖος μὲν οὐ-

ours.

*Exit*

**Chorus**

O sovereign Zeus, by destroying the army of the haughty and multitudinous Persians, [535] you have shrouded in the gloom of grief the city of Susa and of Agbatana! Many a woman, who has a share in this sorrow, tears her veil with tender hands [540] and moistens with drenching tears the robe covering her bosom. And the Persian wives, indulging in soft wailing through longing to behold their lords and abandoning the daintily wrought coverlets of their couches, the delight of their youth, [545] mourn with complainings that know no end. So I too sustain the truly woeful fate of those who are gone.

For now in truth the whole land of Asia, decimated, moans: [550] Xerxes led forth (woe!) , Xerxes laid low (woe!) , Xerxes disposed all things imprudently with his sea-going vessels. Why then was Darius [555] in his time so unscathed by disaster, he who was ruler of archers, to the men of Susa a



555 τω τότε ἄβλαβῆς ἐπῆν  
τόξαρχος πολιῆταις,  
Σουσίδαις φίλος ἄκτωρ;  
πεζούς τε γὰρ καὶ θαλασσίους  
λινόπτεροι κυανώπιδες  
560 νᾶες μὲν ἄγαγον, ποποῖ,  
νᾶες δ' ἀπώλεσαν, τοτοῖ,  
νᾶες πανωλέθροισιν ἐμβολαῖς,  
αἶ τ' Ἰαόνων χέρες.  
τυτθὰ δ' ἐκφυγεῖν ἄνακτ'  
565 αὐτὸν εἰσακούομεν  
Θρηῆκης ἄμ πεδιήρεις  
δυσχίμους τε κελεύθους.  
τοῖ δ' ἄρα πρωτόμοιροι, φεῦ,  
λειφθέντες πρὸς ἀνάγκας, ἡέ,  
570 ἀκτὰς ἀμφὶ Κυχρείας, ὁᾶ,  
<σύρονται> στένε καὶ δακνά-  
ζου, βαρὺ δ' ἀμβόασον  
οὐράνι' ἄχη, ὁᾶ·  
τεῖνε δὲ δυσβάυκτον  
575 βοᾶτιν τάλαιναν αὐδάν.  
γναπτόμενοι δὲ δίνῃ, φεῦ,  
σκύλλονται πρὸς ἀναύδων, ἡέ,  
παίδων τᾶς ἀμιάντου, ὁᾶ.  
πενθεῖ δ' ἄνδρα δόμος στερη-

beloved leader?

For infantry and seamen both, the ships, dark-eyed<sup>1</sup> and linen-winged, [560] led forth (woe!) , the ships laid them low (woe!) , the ships, under the deadly impact of the foe and by the hands of Ionians. [565] The King himself, as we learn, has barely made his escape over the wintry paths which traverse the plains of Thrace.

<sup>1</sup> The great eye that was often painted on each bow made a Greek ship seem a thing of life. Cp. *Aesch. Supp.* 716.

And they who were first to meet their doom (alas!) , left behind by dire necessity (alas!) , [570] are swept along the Cychrean strand (woe!) . Groan and gnash your teeth; in grievous strain shout forth our woes till they reach the heavens (alas!) , raise high [575] your wailing clamor in cries of misery. Lacerated by the swirling waters (alas!) they are gnawed (alas!) by the voiceless children of the undefiled sea (alas!) . The home, bereaved of his presence, laments its head; [580] and parents, bereft of their children, in their old age bewail their heaven- sent woes (alas!) , now that they learn the full measure of their afflictions.

580 θείς τοκέες τ' ἄπαιδες  
 δαιμόνι' ἄχη, ὁᾶ,  
 δυρόμενοι γέροντες  
 τὸ πᾶν δὴ κλύουσιν ἄλγος.

τοὶ δ' ἀνὰ γᾶν Ἀσίαν δὴν  
 585 οὐκέτι περσονομοῦνται,  
 οὐδ' ἔτι δασμοφοροῦσιν  
 δεσποσύνοισιν ἀνάγκαις,  
 οὐδ' ἐς γᾶν προπίτνοντες  
 ἄζονται· βασιλεία

590 γὰρ διόλωλεν ἰσχύς.  
 οὐδ' ἔτι γλῶσσα βροτοῖσιν  
 ἐν φυλακαῖς· λέλυται γὰρ  
 λαὸς ἐλεύθερα βάζειν,  
 ὥς ἐλύθη ζυγὸν ἀλκᾶς.

595 αἶμαχθεῖσα δ' ἄρουραν  
 Αἴαντος περικλύστα  
 νᾶσος ἔχει τὰ Περσᾶν.

#### Ἄτοσσα

φίλοι, κακῶν μὲν ὅστις ἔμπειρος κυρεῖ,  
 ἐπίσταται βροτοῖσιν ὥς ὅταν κλύδων  
 600 κακῶν ἐπέλθῃ πάντα δειμαίνειν φιλεῖ·  
 ὅταν δ' ὁ δαίμων εὐροῇ, πεποιθέναι  
 τὸν αὐτὸν αἰεὶ δαίμον' οὐριεῖν τύχην.  
 ἐμοὶ γὰρ ἤδη πάντα μὲν φόβου πλέα

Not now for long will those who dwell throughout the length  
 and breadth of Asia [585] abide under the sway of the Persians,  
 nor will they pay further tribute at the compulsion of their lord,  
 nor will they prostrate themselves to the earth and do him  
 reverence; [590] for the royal power has perished utterly.

No longer will men keep a curb upon their tongues; for the  
 people are set free to utter their thoughts at will, now that the  
 yoke of power has been broken. [595] The blood-stained soil of  
 Ajax' sea-washed isle holds all that once was Persia.

*Enter Atossa*

#### Atossa

My friends, whoever has experience of misery knows that when  
 a sea [600] of troubles comes upon mortal men, they view all  
 things with alarm; but when fortune flows with prosperous tide,  
 they believe that this same fortune will forever bring them  
 success. Now in my case everything seems full of dread; before

ἐν ὄμμασιν τὰνταῖα φαίνεται θεῶν,  
**605** βοᾷ δ' ἐν ὥσιν κέλαδος οὐ παιώνιος·  
 τοῖα κακῶν ἔκπληξις ἐκφοβεῖ φρένας.  
 τοιγὰρ κέλευθον τήνδ' ἄνευ τ' ὀχημάτων  
 χλιδῆς τε τῆς πάροιθεν ἐκ δόμων πάλιν  
 ἔστειλα, παιδὸς πατρὶ προεμμενέας χοᾶς  
**610** φέρουσ', ἅπερ νεκροῖσι μελικτήρια,  
 βοός τ' ἀφ' ἀγνῆς λευκὸν εὖποτον γάλα,  
 τῆς τ' ἀνθεμουργοῦ στάγμα, παμφαῆς μέλι,  
 λιβάσιν ὕδρηλαῖς παρθένου πηγῆς μέτα,  
 ἀκήρατόν τε μητρὸς ἀγρίας ἄπο  
**615** ποτὸν παλαιᾶς ἀμπέλου γάνος τόδε·  
 τῆς τ' αἰὲν ἐν φύλλοισι θαλλούσης βίον  
 ξανθῆς ἐλαίας καρπὸς εὐώδης πάρα,  
 ἄνθη τε πλεκτά, παμφόρου γαίας τέκνα·  
 ἀλλ' ὦ φίλοι, χοαῖσι ταῖσδε νερτέρων  
**620** ὕμνους ἐπευφημεῖτε, τὸν τε δαίμονα  
 Δαρεῖον ἀνακαλεῖσθε, γαπότους δ' ἐγὼ  
 τιμὰς προπέμψω τάσδε νερτέροις θεοῖς.  
**Χορός**  
 βασιλεια γύναι, πρέσβος Πέρσαις,  
 σύ τε πέμπε χοᾶς θαλάμους ὑπὸ γῆς,  
**625** ἡμεῖς θ' ὕμνοις αἰτησόμεθα  
 φθιμένων πομποῦς  
 εὐφρονας εἶναι κατὰ γαίας.

my eyes appears the enmity of the gods, [605] and in my ears  
 there rings a sound that has no note of joy; such is my  
 consternation at the evil tidings which terrify my soul. It is for  
 this reason that I have come here from the palace once again,  
 without my chariot and my former pomp, and bring, as  
 propitiatory libations for the father of my son, [610] offerings  
 that soothe the dead, both white milk, pleasant to drink, from an  
 unblemished cow, and bright honey, distillation wrought from  
 blossoms by the bee, together with lustral water from a virgin  
 spring; [615] and from a rustic source, this unmixed draught, the  
 quickening juice of an ancient vine. Here too is the fragrant fruit  
 of the pale-green olive that lives the entirety of its life in  
 luxuriant foliage; and garlanded flowers, produce of the  
 bounteous earth. But come, my friends, [620] chant solemn  
 songs as I make these libations to the dead, and summon forth  
 the divine spirit of Darius, while I convey, in honor of the gods,  
 these offerings for the earth to drink.

### Chorus

Royal lady, august queen of the Persians, pour these libations  
 down to the chambers of the earth, [625] while we, in solemn  
 chant, beseech the guides of the dead beneath the earth to be  
 gracious to our prayers.

ἀλλά, χθόνιοι δαίμονες ἀγνοί,  
 Γῆ τε καὶ Ἑρμῇ, βασιλεῦ τ' ἐνέρων,  
**630** πέμψατ' ἔνερθεν ψυχὴν ἐς φῶς·  
 εἰ γάρ τι κακῶν ἄκος οἶδε πλέον,  
 μόνος ἂν θνητῶν πέρας εἴποι.  
 ἦ ῥ' αἶμι μου μακαρίτας  
 ἰσοδαίμων βασιλεὺς  
**635** βάρβαρ' ἀσαφηνῇ  
 ἰέντος τὰ παναίοι' αἰ-  
 ανῇ δύσθροα βάγματ', ἦ  
 παντάλαν' ἄχη διαβοάσω;  
 νέρθεν ἄρα κλύει μου;  
**640** ἀλλὰ σύ μοι Γᾶ τε καὶ ἄλλοι  
 χθονίων ἀγεμόνες  
 δαίμονα μεγαυχῇ  
 ἰόντ' αἰνέσατ' ἐκ δόμων,  
 Περσᾶν Σουσιγενῇ θεόν·  
**645** πέμπετε δ' ἄνω οἶον οὐπῶ  
 Περσὶς αἶ' ἐκάλυψεν.  
 ἦ φίλος ἀνὴρ, φίλος ὄχθος·  
 φίλα γὰρ κέκευθεν ἦθη.  
 Αἰδωνεύς δ' ἀναπομ-  
**650** πὸς ἀνείης, Αἰδωνεύς,  
 θεῖον ἀνάκτορα Δαριᾶνα. ἦέ.  
 οὐδὲ γὰρ ἄνδρας ποτ' ἀπώλλυ

O holy divinities of the nether world, Earth and Hermes, and you, Lord of the dead, [630] send up to the light the spirit from below; for if, beyond our prayers, he knows any further remedy for our distress, he alone of mortals can declare how to bring it to accomplishment.

Does our sainted and godlike king hear me as I utter, [635] in obscure barbaric speech, my dismal and dolorous cries? Or must I shout aloud the utter misery of my anguish so that it pierces the earth? Does he hear me from below?

[640] O Earth, and you other rulers of those who dwell in the nether world, ensure, I implore, that the glorious spirit, the god of the Persians, whom Susa bore, may quit his abode. [645] Send to the upper world him the likes of whom the Persian earth has never entombed.

Beloved indeed was the hero, beloved is his burial mound; beloved are the qualities that lie buried there. O Aidoneus, [650] Aidoneus, who convey shades to the upper air, permit our divine lord Darius to come forth!

For since he did not ever cause the destruction of his people by



πολεμοφθόροιςιν ἄταις,  
 θεομήστωρ δ' ἐκικλή-  
**655** σκετο Πέρσαις, θεομήστωρ δ'  
 ἔσκεν, ἐπεὶ στρατὸν εὖ ποδούχει. ἦέ.  
 βαλήν, ἀρχαῖος βαλήν,  
 ἴθι, ἰκοῦ.  
 ἔλθ' ἐπ' ἄκρον κόρυμβον ὄχθου,  
**660** κροκόβαπτον ποδὸς εὐμαριν ἀείρων,  
 βασιλείου τιάρας  
 φάλαρον πιφαύσκων.  
 βάσκε πάτερ ἄκακε Δαριάν, οἶ.  
 ὅπως αἰανῇ κλύης  
**665** νέα τ' ἄχη,  
 δέσποτα δεσπότης φάνηθι.  
 Στυγία γάρ τις ἐπ' ἀχλὺς πεπόταται:  
 νεολαία γὰρ ἦδη  
**670** κατὰ πᾶσ' ὄλωλεν.  
 βάσκε πάτερ ἄκακε Δαριάν, οἶ.  
 αἰαῖ αἰαῖ.  
 ὦ πολὺ κλαυτε φίλοισι θανών,  
**675** τί τάδε δυνάτα δυνάτα  
 περὶ τᾷ σᾷ δίδυμα [ διαγόεν ] ἀμάρτια;†  
 πᾶσαι γὰρ τᾷδ'  
 ἐξέφθινται τρὶςκαλμοι  
**680** νᾶες ἄναες ἄναες.

senseless and ruinous wars, he bore the name of divine counsellor [655] to the Persians; and a divine counsellor he was, since he guided his people well.

King, our king of old, come forth, draw near! Rise to the barrow's topmost point, [660] lift your saffron-dyed sandal, display the crest of your royal tiara! Come forth, O blameless father Darius.

That you may hear [665] pitiable and unheard-of sorrows, O Lord of our lord, appear! For a gloom, like that of Styx, hovers over us, since all the youth of the land [670] is now utterly destroyed. Come forth, O blameless father Darius!

Alas, alas! You whose death your friends bewailed with bitter tears, [675] why, my king, my king, why is it that our land has lost all its three-tiered galleys, [680] ships that are no more, no more?

*The ghost of Darius rises from his tomb*

**Εἶδωλον Δαρείου**

ὦ πιστὰ πιστῶν ἡλικές θ' ἥβης ἐμῆς  
 Πέρσαι γεραιοί, τίνα πόλις πονεῖ πόνον;  
 στένει, κέκοπται, καὶ χαράσσεται πέδον.  
 λεύσσων δ' ἄκοιτιν τὴν ἐμὴν τάφου πέλας  
**685** ταρβῶ, χοὰς δὲ πρευμαμένης ἐδεξάμην.  
 ὑμεῖς δὲ θρηνεῖτ' ἐγγὺς ἐστῶτες τάφου  
 καὶ ψυχαγωγοῖς ὀρθιάζοντες γόοις  
 οἰκτρῶς καλεῖσθέ μ'· ἐστὶ δ' οὐκ εὐέξοδον,  
 ἄλλως τε πάντως χοὶ κατὰ χθονὸς θεοὶ  
**690** λαβεῖν ἀμείνους εἰσὶν ἢ μεθιέναι.  
 ὅμως δ' ἐκείνοις ἐνδυναστεύσας ἐγὼ  
 ἦκω. τάχυνε δ' ὥς ἄμεμπτος ὦ χρόνου.  
 τί ἐστι Πέρσαις νεοχμὸν ἐμβριθὲς κακόν:

**Χορός**

σέβομαι μὲν προσιδέσθαι,  
**695** σέβομαι δ' ἀντία λέξαι  
 σέθεν ἀρχαίῳ περὶ τάρβει.

**Δαρεῖος**

ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ κάτωθεν ἦλθον σοῖς γόοις πεπεισμένος,  
 μή τι μακιστῆρα μῦθον, ἀλλὰ σύντομον λέγων  
 εἰπέ καὶ πέραινε πάντα, τὴν ἐμὴν αἰδῶ μεθεῖς.

**Χορός**

**700** δέμαί μὲν χαρίσασθαι,  
 δέμαί δ' ἀντία φάσθαι,

**Ghost of Darius**

O most faithful of the faithful, comrades of my youth, aged  
 Persians, what is it that is troubling the state? The earth groans  
 and is furrowed by the stamp of men. As I behold my wife by  
 my tomb, [685] I feel alarm, and I accept her libations in kindly  
 mood; while you, standing near my tomb, make lament, and  
 with shrill cries that summon the spirits of the dead, invoke me  
 piteously. Not easy is the path out of the tomb, for this reason  
 above all, that the gods beneath the earth [690] are readier to  
 seize than to release. Nevertheless, since I have obtained  
 dominion among them, I have come. But make haste, so that I  
 may not incur blame regarding the time of my sojourn. What is  
 this unexpected ill that weighs the Persians down?

**Chorus**

I shrink in awe from gazing upon you. [695] I shrink in awe  
 from speaking in your presence by reason of my former dread of  
 you.

**Darius**

Since, in compliance with your moanings, I have come from the  
 world below, lay aside your awe of me; make your tale not long,  
 but brief; speak out and deliver your story in its entirety.

**Chorus**

[700] I fear to do your bidding; I fear to speak in your presence

λέξας δύσλεκτα φίλοισιν.

**Δαρειός**

ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ δέος παλαιὸν σοὶ φρενῶν ἀνθίσταται,  
τῶν ἐμῶν λέκτρων γεραῖα ξύννομ' εὐγενὲς γύναι,  
705 κλαυμάτων λήξασα τῶνδε καὶ γόων σαφές τί μοι  
λέξον· ἀνθρώπεια δ' ἄν τοι πῆματ' ἂν τύχοι βροτοῖς.  
πολλὰ μὲν γὰρ ἐκ θαλάσσης, πολλὰ δ' ἐκ χέρσου κακὰ  
γίγνεται θνητοῖς, ὁ μᾶσσων βίος ἦν ταθῇ, πρόσω.

**Ἀτοσσα**

ὦ βροτῶν πάντων ὑπερσχὼν ὄλβον εὐτυχεῖ πότμῳ  
710 ὥς ἕως τ' ἔλευσες αὐγὰς ἡλίου ζηλωτὸς ὦν  
βίοντον εὐαίωνα Πέρσαις ὥς θεὸς διήγαγες,  
νῦν τέ σε ζηλῶ θανόντα, πρὶν κακῶν ἰδεῖν βάθος.  
πάντα γάρ, Δαρεῖ' ἀκούσῃ μῦθον ἐν βραχεῖ χρόνῳ.  
διαπεπόρθηται τὰ Περσῶν πράγμαθ', ὥς εἰπεῖν ἔπος.

**Δαρειός**

715 τίνι τρόπῳ; λοιμοῦ τις ἦλθε σκηπτὸς ἢ στάσις πόλει;

**Ἀτοσσα**

οὐδαμῶς· ἀλλ' ἀμφ' Ἀθήνας πᾶς κατέφθαρται στρατός.

**Δαρειός**

τίς δ' ἐμῶν ἐκεῖσε παίδων ἐστρατηλάτει; φράσον.

and deliver to those I love news hard to utter.

**Darius**

Since dread long ingrained in your mind restrains you, [705]  
cease, noble woman, venerable partner of my bed, from your  
tears and laments, speak to me with all frankness. Afflictions  
ordained for human life must, we know, befall mankind. For  
many calamities from the sea, many from the land, arise to  
mortal men if their span of life is extended far.

**Atossa**

O you who in prosperity surpassed all mortal men by your  
happy destiny, [710] since, so long as you gazed upon the beams  
of the sun, you lived a life of felicity, envied of all, in Persian  
eyes a god, so now too I consider you fortunate in that you died  
before you beheld the depth of our calamities. The whole tale, O  
Darius, you will hear in brief space of time: the power of **Persia**  
is ruined almost utterly.

**Darius**

[715] How did it happen? Did some stroke of pestilence or  
factional strife come upon the State?

**Atossa**

Neither; but near Athens our whole host has been brought to  
ruin.

**Darius**

Tell me, what son of mine led our army there?

**Ἀτοσσα**

θούριος Ξέρξης, κενώσας πᾶσαν ἡπείρου πλάκα.

**Δαρεῖος**

πεζὸς ἢ ναύτης δὲ πεῖραν τήνδ' ἐμώρανεν τάλας;

**Ἀτοσσα**

720 ἀμφοτέρω· διπλοῦν μέτωπον ἦν δυοῖν στρατευμάτοιιν.

**Δαρεῖος**

πῶς δὲ καὶ στρατὸς τοσόσδε πεζὸς ἦνυσεν περᾶν;

**Ἀτοσσα**

μηχαναῖς ἔζευξεν Ἑλλης πορθμόν, ὥστ' ἔχειν πόρον.

**Δαρεῖος**

καὶ τόδ' ἐξέπραξεν, ὥστε Βόσπορον κλῆσαι μέγαν·

**Ἀτοσσα**

ᾧδ' ἔχει γνώμης δέ πού τις δαιμόνων ξυνήψατο.

**Δαρεῖος**

725 φεῦ, μέγας τις ἦλθε δαίμων, ὥστε μὴ φρονεῖν καλῶς.

**Ἀτοσσα**

ὥς ἰδεῖν τέλος πάρεστιν οἶον ἦνυσεν κακόν.

**Atossa**

Impetuous Xerxes, depopulating the whole surface of the continent.

**Darius**

Was it by land or sea that he made this mad expedition, the reckless man?

**Atossa**

[720] By both. There was a twofold front of double armies.

**Darius**

But how was it that so vast a land force won a passage to the farther shore?

**Atossa**

By a clever device he yoked the Hellespont so as to gain a passage.

**Darius**

What! Did he succeed in closing the mighty Bosphorus?

**Atossa**

Yes indeed. One of the divine powers must have assisted him in his purpose.

**Darius**

[725] Alas! Some mighty power came upon him so that he was not able to think clearly.

**Atossa**

Yes, since we can see the outcome, what ruin he wrought.



**Δαρείος**

καὶ τί δὴ πράξασιν αὐτοῖς ὧδ' ἐπιστενάζετε;

**Ἄτοσσα**

ναυτικὸς στρατὸς κακωθεὶς πεζὸν ὤλεσε στρατόν.

**Δαρείος**

ὧδε παμπήδην δὲ λαὸς πᾶς κατέφθαρται δορί;

**Ἄτοσσα**

730 πρὸς τὰδ' ὥς Σούσων μὲν ἄστυ πᾶν κενανδρίαν στένει.

**Δαρείος**

ὦ πόποι κεδνῆς ἀρωγῆς κάπικουρίας στρατοῦ.

**Ἄτοσσα**

Βακτριῶν δ' ἔρρει πανώλης δῆμος, οὐδέ τις γέρων.

**Δαρείος**

ὦ μέλεος, οἶαν ἄρ' ἦβην ξυμμάχων ἀπώλεσεν.

**Ἄτοσσα**

μονάδα δὲ Ξέρξην ἔρημόν φασιν οὐ πολλῶν μέτα—

**Δαρείος**

735 πῶς τε δὴ καὶ ποῖ τελευτᾶν; ἔστι τις σωτηρία;

**Ἄτοσσα**

ἄσμενον μολεῖν γέφυραν γαῖν δυοῖν ζευκτηρίαν.

**Darius**

And how then did they fare that you now lament them?

**Atossa**

Disaster to the naval force brought ruin to the force on land.

**Darius**

And did the whole army utterly perish by the spear?

**Atossa**

[730] Yes, and it is for this reason that the whole city of Susa groans at its desolation.

**Darius**

Alas for the loss of our warriors' valiant force and defence!

**Atossa**

And the host of the Bactrians is lost, wholly destroyed: not even an old man is left.

**Darius**

Unhappy man, since he has brought to ruin the youth of our allies.

**Atossa**

But Xerxes, alone and forlorn, with scanty train, they say —

**Darius**

[735] Met his end, how, tell me, and where? Of his safety is there any hope?

**Atossa**

To his joy he reached the bridge yoking the two continents.

**Δαρείος**

καὶ πρὸς ἡπειρον σεσῶσθαι τήνδε, τοῦτ' ἐτήτυμον;

**Ἄτοσσα**

ναί· λόγος κρατεῖ σαφηνῆς τοῦτό γ', οὐδ' ἔνι στάσις.

**Δαρείος**

φεῦ, ταχεῖά γ' ἦλθε χρησμῶν πρᾶξις, ἐς δὲ παῖδ' ἐμὸν

**740** Ζεὺς ἀπέσκηψεν τελευτὴν θεσφάτων· ἐγὼ δέ που

διὰ μακροῦ χρόνου τάδ' ἠὔχουν ἐκτελευτήσιν θεοῦς·

ἀλλ' ὅταν σπεύδῃ τις αὐτός, χῶ θεὸς συνάπτεται.

νῦν κακῶν ἔοικε πηγὴ πᾶσιν ἠρύρῃσθαι φίλοις.

παῖς δ' ἐμὸς τάδ' οὐ κατειδῶς ἤνυσεν νέφ' θράσει·

**745** ὅστις Ἑλλήσποντον ἱρὸν δοῦλον ὥς δεσμώμασιν

ἤλπισε σχήσιν ῥέοντα, Βόσπορον ῥόον θεοῦ·

καὶ πόρον μετερρύθμιζε, καὶ πέδαις σφυρηλάτοις

περιβαλὼν πολλὴν κέλευθον ἤνυσεν πολλῶ στρατῷ,

θνητὸς ὢν θεῶν τε πάντων ᾤετ', οὐκ εὐβουλία,

**750** καὶ Ποσειδῶνος κρατήσιν. πῶς τάδ' οὐ νόσος φρενῶν

εἶχε παῖδ' ἐμὸν; δέδοικα μὴ πολὺς πλούτου πόνος

οὐμὸς ἀνθρώποις γένηται τοῦ φθάσαντος ἀρπαγῆ.

**Darius**

And reached our continent in safety? Is this certain?

**Atossa**

Yes, a proven report establishes this. Doubt there is none.

**Darius**

Alas! The fulfilment of the oracles has indeed come swiftly, and

it is my son upon whom [740] Zeus has caused their issue to

descend. Yet I was confident that, only after long lapse of time,

the gods would in some way bring them to accomplishment;

nevertheless, when man hastens to his own undoing, the god

too participates with him. A fountain of misfortune has now, I

think, been discovered for all I love. A son of mine it was who,

in his ignorance, brought these things to pass through youthful

recklessness; [745] for he conceived the hope that he could by

shackles, as if it were a slave, restrain the current of the sacred

Hellespont, the Bosphorus, a stream divine; he set himself to

fashion a roadway of a new type, and, by casting upon it

hammer-wrought fetters, made a spacious causeway for his

mighty host. Mortal though he was, he thought in his folly that

he would gain the mastery of all the gods, [750] yes, even over

Poseidon. Must this not have been a disease of the soul that

possessed my son? I fear that the plenteous treasure amassed by

my toil may become the prey of the spoiler.

**Ἀτοσσα**

ταῦτά τοι κακοῖς ὁμιλῶν ἀνδράσιν διδάσκεται  
 θούριος Ξέρξης· λέγουσι δ' ὥς σὺ μὲν μέγαν τέκνοις  
 755 πλοῦτον ἐκτήσω ξὺν αἰχμῇ, τὸν δ' ἀνανδρίας ὑπο  
 ἔνδον αἰχμάζειν, πατρῶον δ' ὄλβον οὐδὲν αὐξάνειν.  
 τοιάδ' ἐξ ἀνδρῶν ὀνειδή πολλάκις κλύων κακῶν  
 τήνδ' ἐβούλευσεν κέλευθον καὶ στρατεύμ' ἐφ' Ἑλλάδα.

**Δαρεῖος**

τοιγάρ σφιν ἔργον ἐστὶν ἐξειργασμένον  
 760 μέγιστον, αἰμίνηστον, οἷον οὐδέπω  
 τόδ' ἄστν Σούσων ἐξεκείνωσεν πεσόν,  
 ἐξ οὔτε τιμὴν Ζεὺς ἀναξ τήνδ' ὥπασεν,  
 ἔν' ἄνδρ' ἀπάσης Ἀσίδος μηλοτρόφου  
 ταγεῖν, ἔχοντα σκῆπτρον εὐθυνητήριον.  
 765 Μῆδος γὰρ ἦν ὁ πρῶτος ἡγεμὼν στρατοῦ·  
 ἄλλος δ' ἐκείνου παῖς τόδ' ἔργον ἥνυσεν·  
 φρένες γὰρ αὐτοῦ θυμὸν ῥακοστροφούν.  
 τρίτος δ' ἀπ' αὐτοῦ Κῦρος, εὐδαίμων ἀνὴρ,  
 ἄρξας ἔθηκε πᾶσιν εἰρήνην φίλοις·  
 770 Λυδῶν δὲ λαὸν καὶ Φρυγῶν ἐκτήσατο,  
 Ἰωνίαν τε πᾶσαν ἥλασεν βία.  
 θεὸς γὰρ οὐκ ἤχθηρεν, ὥς εὐφρων ἔφν.  
 Κύρου δὲ παῖς τέταρτος ἠῦθνε στρατόν.  
 πέμπτος δὲ Μάρδος ἦρξεν, αἰσχύνῃ πάτρα  
 775 θρόνοισί τ' ἀρχαίοισι· τὸν δὲ σὺν δόλῳ

**Atossa**

This lesson impetuous Xerxes learned through conversation with evil men. For they kept telling him that, whereas you [755] won plentiful treasure for your children by your spear, he, on his part, through lack of manly spirit, played the warrior at home and did not increase his father's wealth. Hearing such taunts many a time from evil counsellors, he planned this expedition and army against Hellas.

**Darius**

Therefore a calamity [760] dreadful and unforgettable has been caused by him, a desolating calamity such as never before befell this city of Susa since our Lord Zeus first ordained that one ruler should bear sway over all Asia with its flocks and wield the sceptre of its government. [765] For Medus was first to be the leader of its host; and another, his son, completed his work since wisdom ruled his spirit. Third, after him, Cyrus, blessed in good fortune, came to the throne and established peace for all his people. [770] The Lydians and Phrygians he won to his rule, and the whole of Ionia he subdued by force; for he won the favor of the gods through his right-mindedness. Fourth in succession, the son of Cyrus ruled the host. Fifth in the list, Mardus came to power, a disgrace to his native land [775] and to the ancient throne; but he was slain in his palace by the guile of noble Artaphrenes, with the help of friends whose duty this was. [Sixth came Maraphis, and seventh Artaphrenes.<sup>1</sup>] And I in turn



Ἀρταφρένης ἔκτεινεν ἐσθλὸς ἐν δόμοις,  
 ξὺν ἀνδράσιν φίλοισιν, οἷς τόδ' ἦν χρέος.  
 [ἔκτος δὲ Μάραφισ, ἔβδομος δ' Ἀρταφρένης.]  
 κἀγὼ πάλου τ' ἔκυρσα τοῦπερ ἤθελον,  
 780 κἀπεστράτευσα πολλὰ σὺν πολλῶ στρατῶ.  
 ἀλλ' οὐ κακὸν τοσόνδε προσέβαλον πόλει.  
 Ξέρξης δ' ἐμὸς παῖς ὦν νέος νέα φρονεῖ,  
 κοῦ μνημονεύει τὰς ἐμὰς ἐπιστολάς·  
 εὖ γὰρ σαφῶς τόδ' ἴστ', ἐμοὶ ξυνήλικες,  
 785 ἅπαντες ἡμεῖς, οἱ κράτη τάδ' ἔσχομεν,  
 οὐκ ἂν φανεῖμεν πῆματ' ἔρξαντες τόσα.

#### Χορός

τί οὖν, ἄναξ Δαρεῖε, ποῖ καταστρέφεις  
 λόγων τελευτήν; πῶς ἂν ἐκ τούτων ἔτι  
 πράσσοιμεν ὡς ἄριστα Περσικὸς λεῶς;

#### Δαρεῖος

790 εἰ μὴ στρατεύοισθ' ἐς τὸν Ἑλλήνων τόπον,  
 μηδ' εἰ στράτευμα πλεῖον τὸ Μηδικόν.  
 αὐτὴ γὰρ ἡ γῆ ξύμμαχος κείνοις πέλει.

#### Χορός

πῶς τοῦτ' ἔλεξας, τίνι τρόπῳ δὲ συμμαχεῖ;

attained the lot I desired, [780] and many a campaign I made with a valiant force; but disaster so dire as this I brought not upon the state. Yet Xerxes my son, youth that he is, has the mind of youth and does not remember my injunctions. Be sure of this, my age-mates: [785] all of us who have held this sovereign power cannot be shown to have wrought ruin as great as this.

1 This interpolated or corrupt verse possibly comes from a variant list of the conspirators against the Smerdis (in l. 774 called Mardus), whom the Magian rebels planned to put in the place of the real prince of that name, who was slain by his brother Cambyses. The name Maraphis does not occur elsewhere in connection with this event, and neither he nor Artaphrenes was ever king. Herodotus names Intaphernes as the chief conspirator against the false Smerdis.

#### Chorus

What then, O king Darius? What is the intention of your words? How, after this reverse, may we, the people of **Persia**, best prosper in time to come?

#### Darius

[790] If you do not take the field against the Hellenes' land, even if the forces of the Medes outnumber theirs. The land itself is their ally.

#### Chorus

What do you mean? In what way "their ally"?



**Δαρείος**

κτείνουσα λιμῶ τοὺς ὑπερπόλλους ἄγαν.

**Χορός**

795 ἄλλ' εὐσταλῇ τοι λεκτὸν ἀροῦμεν στόλον.

**Δαρείος**

ἄλλ' οὐδ' ὁ μείνας νῦν ἐν Ἑλλάδος τόποις  
στρατὸς κυρήσει νοστίμου σωτηρίας.

**Χορός**

πῶς εἶπας; οὐ γὰρ πᾶν στράτευμα βαρβάρων  
περὰ τὸν Ἑλλης πορθμὸν Εὐρώπης ἄπο;

**Δαρείος**

800 παῦροι γε πολλῶν, εἴ τι πιστεῦσαι θεῶν  
χρὴ θεσφάτοισιν, ἐς τὰ νῦν πεπραγμένα  
βλέψαντα· συμβαίνει γὰρ οὐ τὰ μέν, τὰ δ' οὐ.  
κεῖπερ τάδ' ἐστί, πλήθος ἔκκριτον στρατοῦ  
λείπει κενᾶισιν ἐλπίσιν πεπεισμένος.

805 μίμνουσι δ' ἔνθα πεδίον Ἀσωπὸς ῥοαῖς  
ἄρδει, φίλον πιάσμα Βοιωτῶν χθονί·  
οὐ σφιν κακῶν ὕψιστ' ἐπαμμένει παθεῖν,  
ὕβρεως ἄποινα καθέων φρονημάτων·  
οἱ γῆν μολόντες Ἑλλάδ' οὐ θεῶν βρέτη

810 ἡδοῦντο συλᾶν οὐδὲ πιμπράναι νεώς·  
βωμοὶ δ' αἰστοὶ, δαιμόνων θ' ἰδρύματα  
πρόρριζα φύρδην ἐξανέστραπται βάθρων.  
τοιγὰρ κακῶς δρᾶσαντες οὐκ ἐλάσσονα

**Darius**

It wastes with famine an enemy force which is too large.

**Chorus**

[795] But we will dispatch a force of select and easily managed troops.

**Darius**

Not even the host which now remains in **Hellas** will be able to return to safety.

**Chorus**

How is that? Will not the whole barbarian army cross from Europe over the Hellespont?

**Darius**

[800] Few indeed out of many, if it is right to put any faith in the oracles of Heaven, with regard to what has just been brought to pass; for they are fulfilled, not just some, while others fail. And if this is truth, it is through persuasion of vain hopes that he is leaving behind a body of picked troops. [805] They are now lingering where the plain is watered by the stream of Asopus which nourishes Boeotia's fields. Here they will meet their crowning disaster in requital for their presumptuous pride and impious thoughts. For, on reaching the land of Hellas, [810] restrained by no religious awe, they ravaged the images of the gods and set fire to their temples. Altars have been destroyed, statues of the gods have been thrown from their bases in utter ruin and confusion. Therefore, since they wrought such evil, evil

πάσχουσι, τὰ δὲ μέλλουσι, κούδέπω κακῶν  
**815** κρηνὶς ἀπέσβηκ' ἄλλ' ἔτ' ἐκπιδύεται.  
 τόσος γὰρ ἔσται πέλανος αἵματοσφαγῆς  
 πρὸς γῇ Πλαταιῶν Δωρίδος λόγχης ὑπο-  
 θῖνες νεκρῶν δὲ καὶ τριτοσπόρῳ γονῇ  
 ἄφωνα σηματοῦσιν ὄμμασιν βροτῶν  
**820** ὥς οὐχ ὑπέρφεν θνητὸν ὄντα χρὴ φρονεῖν.  
 ὕβρις γὰρ ἐξανθοῦς' ἐκάρπωσεν στάχυν  
 ἄτης, ὅθεν πάγκλαυτον ἐξαμᾶ θέρος.  
 τοιαῦθ' ὁρῶντες τῶνδε τὰπιτίμια  
 μέμνησθ' Ἀθηνῶν Ἑλλάδος τε, μηδέ τις  
**825** ὑπερφρονήσας τὸν παρόντα δαίμονα  
 ἄλλων ἐρασθεὶς ὄλβον ἐκχέη μέγαν.  
 Ζεὺς τοι κολαστὴς τῶν ὑπερκόμπων ἄγαν  
 φρονημάτων ἔπεστιν, εὐθυνος βαρὺς.  
 πρὸς ταῦτ' ἐκεῖνον, σωφρονεῖν κεχρημένον,  
**830** πινύσκειτ' εὐλόγοισι νουθετήμασιν,  
 λῆξαι θεοβλαβοῦνθ' ὑπερκόμπῳ θράσει.  
 σὺ δ', ὦ γεραιὰ μητερ ἢ Ξέρξου φίλη,  
 ἐλθοῦς' ἐς οἶκους κόσμον ὅστις εὐπρεπὴς  
 λαβοῦς' ὑπαντίαζε παιδί. πάντα γὰρ  
**835** κακῶν ὑπ' ἄλγους λακίδες ἀμφὶ σώματι  
 στημορραγοῦσι ποικίλων ἐσθημάτων.  
 ἀλλ' αὐτὸν εὐφρόνως σὺ πρᾶννον λόγοις·  
 μόνης γὰρ οἶδα, σοῦ κλύων ἀνέξεται.

they suffer in no less measure; and other evils are still in store:  
 [815] the spring of their woes is not yet quenched, but it still  
 wells forth. For so great will be the mass of clotted gore spilled  
 by the Dorian lance upon Plataean soil that heaps of dead will  
 reveal, even to the third generation, a voiceless record for the  
 eyes of men [820] that mortal man should not vaunt himself  
 excessively. For presumptuous pride, when it has matured,  
 bears as its fruit a crop of calamity, from which it reaps an  
 abundant harvest of tears. Bear in mind that such are the  
 penalties for deeds like these, and hold Athens and Hellas in  
 your memory. Let no one of you, [825] through disdain of  
 present fortune and lust for more, squander his abundant  
 wealth. Zeus, in truth, is a chastiser of overweening pride and  
 corrects with heavy hand. Therefore, now that my son has been  
 warned to be prudent by the voice of God, [830] instruct him  
 with admonitions of reason to cease from drawing the  
 punishment of Heaven on himself by his vaunting rashness.  
 And as for you, beloved and venerable mother of Xerxes,  
 withdraw to the palace and bring from there clothing which is  
 suitable for him, and prepare to meet your son. For [835]  
 through grief at his misfortunes, the embroidered apparel which  
 he was wearing has been torn into tattered shreds. Soothe him  
 with words of kindness; for it is to your voice alone, I know, that  
 he will listen. As for me, I depart to the darkness beneath the  
 earth. [840] Farewell, Elders, and despite your troubles, rejoice

ἐγὼ δ' ἄπειμι γῆς ὑπὸ ζόφον κάτω.

**840** ὑμεῖς δέ, πρέσβεις, χαίρετ', ἐν κακοῖς ὅμως  
 ψυχῇ διδόντες ἡδονὴν καθ' ἡμέραν,  
 ὥς τοῖς θανούσι πλοῦτος οὐδὲν ὠφελεῖ.

**Χορός**

ἦ πολλὰ καὶ παρόντα καὶ μέλλοντ' ἔτι  
 ἤλγησ' ἀκούσας βαρβάροισι πῆματα.

**Ἀτοσσα**

**845** ὦ δαῖμον, ὥς με πόλλ' ἐσέρχεται κακὰ  
 ἄλγη, μάλιστα δ' ἦδε συμφορὰ δάκνει,  
 ἀτιμίαν γε παιδὸς ἀμφὶ σώματι  
 ἐσθημάτων κλύουσιν, ἦ νιν ἀμπέχει.  
 ἀλλ' εἶμι, καὶ λαβοῦσα κόσμον ἐκ δόμων  
**850** ὑπαντιάζειν παιδί μου πειράσομαι.  
 οὐ γὰρ τὰ φίλτατ' ἐν κακοῖς προδώσομεν.

**Χορός**

ὦ πόποι ἦ μεγάλας ἀγαθὰς τε πο-  
 λισσονόμου βιοτᾶς ἐπεκύρσαμεν,  
 εὖθ' ὁ γηραιὸς

**855** πανταρκῆς ἀκάκας

ἄμαχος βασιλεὺς

ἰσόθεος Δαρεῖος ἄρχε χώρας.

πρῶτα μὲν εὐδοκίμους στρατιάς ἀπε-  
 φαινόμεθ', ἡδὲ νομίσματα πύργινα

**860** πάντ' ἐπηύθυνε,

while each day is yours; for wealth does not profit the dead at all.

*The ghost of Darius descends*

**Chorus**

I grieve as I hear the many misfortunes that are now, and are yet to be, the lot of the barbarians.

**Atossa**

[845] O God! How much grief assails me! But most of all this sorrow wounds me, to hear of the shameful clothes which are now worn by my son. But I will depart, and when I have brought appropriate garments from the palace, [850] I will make attempt to meet my son; for I will not forsake him whom I love so well in his affliction.

*Exit*

**Chorus**

Oh yes, it was in truth a glorious and good life under civil government that we enjoyed so long as our aged [855] and all-powerful king, who did no wrong and did not favor war, god-like Darius, ruled the realm. In the first place we showed to the world armies worthy of our fame, and civil institutions, like towers in strength, [860] regulated all the state; and our return



νόστοι δ' ἐκ πολέμων  
 ἀπόνους ἀπαθείς  
 <ἀνέρας> εὖ πράσσοντας ἄγον οἴκους.  
 ὅσας δ' εἶλε πόλεις πόρον  
**865** οὐ διαβὰς Ἄλυος ποταμοῖο,  
 οὐδ' ἀφ' ἐστίας συθείς,  
 οἶαι Στρυμονίου πελά-  
 γους Ἀχελώιδες εἰσὶ πάροικοι  
**870** Θρηκίων ἐπαύλων,  
 λίμνας τ' ἔκτοθεν αἱ κατὰ  
 χέρσον ἐληλαμέναι πέρι πύργον  
 τοῦδ' ἄνακτος ἄιον,  
**875** Ἑλλας τ' ἀμφὶ πόρον πλατὺν  
 εὐχόμεναι, μυχία τε Προποντίς,  
 καὶ στόμωμα Πόντου·  
 νᾶσοί θ' αἱ κατὰ πρῶν'  
**880** ἄλιον περὶ κλυστοι  
 τᾶδε γὰρ προσήμεναι  
 οἶα Λέσβος ἐλαι-  
 όφυτός τε Σάμος, Χίος  
 ἠδὲ Πάρος, Νάξος, Μύκο-  
**885** νος, Τήνω τε συνάπτουσ'  
 Ἄνδρος ἀγχιγείτων,  
 καὶ τὰς ἀγχιάλους  
 ἐκράτνε μεσάκτους,

from war brought back our men, unworn and unsuffering, to happy homes.

And what a number of cities he captured!— [865] without crossing the stream of Halys or even stirring from his own hearth: such as the Acheloan<sup>1</sup> cities on the Strymonian sea which is located beside [870] the Thracian settlements.

<sup>1</sup> If “Acheloan” is used, as some report, only of fresh water, the poet may have in mind the pile-dwellings of the Paeonians on Lake Prasias (mentioned by **Hdt. 5.16**); if “Acheloan” includes also salt water, the reference may be to the islands off Thrace—Imbros, Thasos, and Samothrace.

And those outside the lake, the cities on the mainland, surrounded with a rampart, obeyed him as their king; [875] those, too, that boast to be on both sides of the broad Hellespont and Propontis, deeply-recessed, and the outlet of Pontus.

The sea-washed islands, also, off the projecting arm [880] of the sea, lying close to this land of ours, such as Lesbos, and olive-planted Samos, Chios and Paros, Naxos, Mykonos, [885] and Andros which lies adjacent to Tenos.



890 Λῆμνον, Ἰκάρου θ' ἔδος,  
καὶ Ῥόδον ἠδὲ Κνίδον  
Κυπρίας τε πόλεις, Πάφον,  
ἠδὲ Σόλους, Σαλαμῖνά τε,  
895 τὰς νῦν ματρόπολις τῶνδ'  
αἰτία στεναγμῶν.

καὶ τὰς εὐκτεάνους κατὰ  
κλῆρον Ἰαόνιον πολυάνδρους  
900 Ἑλλάνων ἐκράτει σφετέραις φρεσίν.  
ἀκάματον δὲ παρῆν σθένος  
ἀνδρῶν τευχηστήρων  
παμμίκτων τ' ἐπικούρων.  
νῦν δ' οὐκ ἀμφιλόγως  
905 θεότρεπτα τάδ' αὖ  
φέρομεν πολέμοισι  
δμαθέντες μεγάλως  
πλαγαῖσι ποντίαισιν.

### Ξέρξης

ἰώ,  
δύστηνος ἐγὼ στυγερᾶς μοίρας  
910 τῆσδε κυρήσας ἀτεκμαρτοτάτης,  
ὡς ὠμοφρόνως δαίμων ἐνέβη  
Περσῶν γενεᾷ· τί πάθω τλήμων;  
λέλυται γὰρ ἐμοὶ γυίων ῥώμη

And he held under his sway the sea-girt islands midway  
between the continents, [890] Lemnos, and the settlement of  
Icarus, and Rhodes, and Cnidos, and the Cyprian cities Paphos,  
Soli, and Salamis, [895] whose mother-city is now the cause of  
our lament.

And the rich and populous cities of the Hellenes in the Ionian  
heritage [900] he controlled by his own will; and at his  
command he had an unwearied strength of men-at-arms and of  
allies from every nation. But now, [905] worsted completely in  
war through disasters on the sea, we endure this change of  
fortune no doubt from the hand of god.

*Enter Xerxes in tattered robes, and attended by a scanty retinue*

### Xerxes

Alas, wretched am I who have met this cruel doom [910] which  
did not give the faintest sign of its coming! In what savage  
mood has Fortune trampled upon the Persian race? What misery  
is yet in store for me, unhappy wretch? The strength of my

τήνδ' ἡλικίαν ἐσιδόντ' ἀστῶν.

915 εἴθ' ὄφελεν, Ζεῦ, καμὲ μετ' ἀνδρῶν

τῶν οἰχομένων

θανάτου κατὰ μοῖρα καλύψαι.

### Χορός

ὅτοτοῖ, βασιλεῦ, στρατιᾶς ἀγαθῆς

καὶ περσονόμου τιμῆς μεγάλης,

920 κόσμου τ' ἀνδρῶν,

οὓς νῦν δαίμων ἐπέκειρεν.

γὰρ δ' αἰάζει τὰν ἐγγαίαν

ἦβαν Ξέρξα κταμένην Ἰδίου

σάκτορι Περσᾶν. ἀδοβάται γὰρ

925 πολλοὶ φῶτες, χώρας ἄνθος,

τοξοδάμαντες, πάνυ ταρφύς τις

μυριάς ἀνδρῶν, ἐξέφθινται.

αἰαῖ αἰαῖ κεδνᾶς ἀλκᾶς.

Ἀσία δὲ χθών, βασιλεῦ γαίας,

930 αἰνῶς αἰνῶς

ἐπὶ γόνυ κέκλιται.

### Ξέρξης

ὄδ' ἐγώ, οἰοῖ, αἰακτὸς

μέλεος γέννα γὰρ τε πατρώα

κακὸν ἄρ' ἐγενόμαν.

### Χορός

935 πρόσφθογγόν σοι νόστου τὰν

limbs is loosened as I look upon this aged group of citizens.

[915] Ah, Zeus, I wish that the doom of death had buried me,

too, together with the men who have been laid low!

### Chorus

Alas, my king, for our noble army, for the high honor of Persia's rule, [920] and for the splendor of the men now cut off by Fate!

The land bewails her native youth, slaughtered for Xerxes, who has crowded Hades with Persian slain. [925] Many warriors, masters of the bow, our country's pride, a great multitude of men, have perished. Alas, alas, for our trusty defence! The land of Asia, the leading power of the earth, [930] has piteously, yes piteously, been bowed to her knees.

### Xerxes

Behold me, alas, a fitting subject for lamentation, born a source of ruin to my race and fatherland.

### Chorus

[935] As a greeting for your return home I will lift up an ill-

κακοφάτιδα βοάν,  
κακομέλετον ἰάν  
Μαριανδυνοῦ θρηνητῆρος  
πέμψω πέμψω,  
**940** πολύδακρυν ἰαχάν.

**Ξέρξης**

ἴετ' αἰανῇ [καὶ] πάνδυρτον  
δύσθροον αὐδάν. δαίμων γὰρ ὅδ' αὖ  
μετάτροπος ἐπ' ἐμοί.

**Χορός**

ἦσω τοι τὰν πάνδυρτον,  
**945** σὰ πάθη τε σέβων  
άλιτυπά τε βάρη,  
πόλεως γέννας πενθητῆρος·  
<κλάγξω> κλάγξω  
δὲ γόον ἀρίδακρυν.

**Ξέρξης**

**950** Ἰάνων γὰρ ἀπηύρα,  
Ἰάνων ναύφρακτος  
ἄρης ἑτεραλκῆς  
νυχίαν πλάκα κερσάμενος  
δυσδαίμονά τ' ἀκτάν.

**Χορός**

**955** οἰοιοῖ βόα καὶ πάντ' ἐκπεύθου.—  
ποῦ δὲ φίλων ἄλλος ὄχλος,

omened cry of woe, the voice, versed in lamentation, of a  
Mariandynian mourner, [940] a wail attended by many a tear.

**Xerxes**

Utter a strain of lamentation, plaintive and discordant. For  
Fortune has now veered and turned against me.

**Chorus**

I will indeed utter the song of lamentation [945] in  
commemoration of your sufferings and of our strongly-manned  
ships, buffeted by waves; the plaintive strain of our land which  
mourns its sons. And I will cry aloud in lamentation, shedding  
many a tear.

**Xerxes**

[950] Yes, for the Ionian naval force, turning the tide of battle,  
swept them away, the Ionian host, ravaging the dark sea and the  
shore of doom.

**Chorus**

[955] Woe! woe! cry aloud, learn about the whole disaster.

ποῦ δέ σοι παραστάται,  
οἶος ἦν Φαρανδάκης,  
Σούσας, Πελάγων, [καὶ] Δοτάμας, ἡδ' Ἀ-  
960 γδαβάτας, Ψάμμης, Σουσισκάνης τ'  
Ἀγβάτανα λιπών;

**Ξέρξης**

ὀλοοὺς ἀπέλειπον  
Τυρίας ἐκ ναὸς  
ἔρροντας ἐπ' ἀκταῖς  
965 Σαλαμινιάσι στυφελοῦ  
θείνοντας ἐπ' ἀκτᾶς.

**Χορός**

οἰοιοῖ, <βόα>· ποῦ σοι Φαρνοῦχος  
Ἀριόμαρδος τ' ἀγαθός,  
ποῦ δέ Σευάλκης ἄναξ,  
970 ἡ Λίλαιος εὐπάτωρ,  
Μέμφης, Θάρυβις, καὶ Μασίστρας,  
Ἀρτεμβάρης τ' ἡδ' Ὑσταίχμας;  
τάδε σ' ἐπανερόμαν.

**Ξέρξης**

ἰὼ ἰὼ μοί μοι  
975 τὰς ὠγυγίους κατιδόντες  
στυγνὰς Ἀθάνας πάντες ἐνὶ πιτύλῳ,  
ἐῆ ἐῆ, τλάμονες ἀσπαίρουσι χέρσῳ.

Where is the rest of the multitude of your comrades? Where are those who stood by your side, such as Pharandaces, Susas, Pelagon, Dotamas, and [960] Agdabatas, Psammis, and Susiscanes of Agbatana?

**Xerxes**

By the shores of Salamis, dashing against its rugged shore, [965] I left them, fallen in death from a Tyrian ship.

**Chorus**

Woe! woe! cry aloud! Where is your beloved Pharnuchus, and the courageous Ariomardus? Where is prince Seualces, [970] or Lilaëus of noble lineage, Memphis, Tharybis and Masistras, Artembares and Hystaechmas? This I ask you.

**Xerxes**

Woe, woe is me! [975] They beheld ancient and hateful Athens and with one convulsive struggle (alas, alas!) poor wretches, they lie gasping on the shore.



**Χορός**

ἦ καὶ τὸν Περσᾶν αὐτοῦ  
τὸν σὸν πιστὸν πάντ' ὀφθαλμὸν  
980 μυρία μυρία πεμπαστὰν  
Βατανώχου παῖδ' Ἄλπιστον

\*

τοῦ Σησάμα τοῦ Μεγαβάτα,  
Πάρθον τε μέγαν τ' Οἰβάρην  
ἔλιπες ἔλιπες;  
985 ὦ ὦ <ὦ> δάων.  
Πέρσαις ἀγαυοῖς κακὰ πρόκακα λέγεις.

**Ξέρξης**

<ὶὼ ἰὼ> δῆτα  
ἱγγ' ἀγαθῶν ἐτάρων μοι [ὑπομιμνήσκεις]  
990 <κινεῖς> ἄλαστα στυγνὰ πρόκακα λέγων.  
βοᾷ βοᾷ <μοι> μελέων ἔντοσθεν ἦτορ.

**Χορός**

καὶ μὴν ἄλλους γε ποθοῦμεν,  
Μάρδων ἀνδρῶν μυριοταγὸν  
Ξάνθιν ἄρειόν τ' Ἀγχάρην,  
995 Δίαξιν τ' ἠδ' Ἀρσάκην  
ἱππιάνакτας,  
Κηδαδάταν καὶ Λυθίμναν  
Τόλμον τ' αἰχμᾶς ἀκόρεστον.

**Chorus**

Did you really lose your trusty eye<sup>1</sup> there, that which [980] counted tens upon tens of thousands of the Persians, Batanochus' son Alpistus . . . son of Sesames, Megabates' son, Parthos and mighty Oebares, did you leave these behind? [985] Alas, alas, the unhappy men! You speak of woe, surpassing woe, for noble Persians.

<sup>1</sup> The Persian kings had in their service officers called their "eyes" and "ears," charged to make report of what they saw and heard.

**Xerxes**

In truth you stir yearning in me for my gallant comrades [990] when you tell me of woe, surpassing woe, hateful and unforgettable. The heart within me cries out aloud for the wretched ones.

**Chorus**

And yet there are others too whom we miss: Xanthis, commander of a myriad Mardian men, and warlike Anchares, [995] Diaexis, too, and Arsaces, captains of the horse, Cegdadatas and Lythimnas, and Tolmus, insatiate in war. I marvel, [1000] that they do not follow behind around your wheeled tent.

**Ξέρξης**

ἔταφον ἔταφον,

**1000** οὐκ ἀμφὶ σκηναῖς

τροχηλάτοισιν ὅπιθεν [δ'] ἐπομένους.

βεβᾶσι γὰρ τοίπερ ἀγρέται στρατοῦ.

**Χορός**

βεβᾶσιν, οἶ, νώνυμοι.

**Ξέρξης**

ἰὴ ἰή, ἰὼ ἰώ.

**Χορός**

**1005** ἰὼ ἰώ, δαίμονες,

ἔθεθ' ἄελπτον κακὸν

διαπρέπον, οἶον δέδορκεν Ἄτα.

**Ξέρξης**

πεπλήγμεθ' οἷα δι' αἰῶνος τύχα·

**Χορός**

πεπλήγμεθ'· εὐδηλα γάρ·

**Ξέρξης**

**1010** νέα νέα δύα δύα.

**Χορός**

κύρσαντες οὐκ εὐτυχῶς

Ἰάνων ναυβατᾶν.

δυσπόλεμον δὴ γένος τὸ Περσᾶν.

**Ξέρξης**

πῶς δ' οὐ; στρατὸν μὲν τοσοῦ-

**Xerxes**

Gone are they who were leaders of the host.

**Chorus**

Gone, alas, ingloriously.

**Xerxes**

Alas, alas!

**Chorus**

[1005] Alas, alas, you powers divine, you brought ruin upon us, unexpected, unmistakable to see, as is the glance of calamity.

**Xerxes**

We have been stricken by misfortune such as will endure for ages.

**Chorus**

We have been stricken; it is abundantly clear.

**Xerxes**

[1010] By strange woe, strange woe!

**Chorus**

It was with bad luck that we encountered Ionia's mariners. Unfortunate in war, indeed, is Persia's race.

**Xerxes**

How true it is. In the loss of so great an army [1015] I have

1015 τον τάλας πέπληγμαι.

**Χορός**

τί δ' οὔκ; ὄλωλεν μέγας τὰ Περσᾶν.

**Ξέρξης**

ὄρᾱς τὸ λοιπὸν τόδε τᾶς ἐμᾶς στολᾶς;

**Χορός**

ὄρῳ ὄρῳ.

**Ξέρξης**

1020 τόνδε τ' οἰστοδέγμονα—

**Χορός**

τί τόδε λέγεις σεσωσμένον;

**Ξέρξης**

θησαυρὸν βελέεσιν;

**Χορός**

βαίᾳ γ' ὥς ἀπὸ πολλῶν.

**Ξέρξης**

ἐσπανίσμεθ' ἀρωγῶν.

**Χορός**

1025 Ἴάνων λαὸς οὐ φυγαίχμας.

**Ξέρξης**

ἀγανόρειος· κατεῖ-

δον δὲ πῆμ' ἄελπτον.

**Χορός**

τραπέντα ναύφρακτον ἐρεῖς ὄμιλον;

indeed been dealt a blow, wretched as I am.

**Chorus**

What that belonged to Persia, unfortunate one, has not been destroyed?

**Xerxes**

Do you see this remnant of my royal robe?

**Chorus**

Yes, I do indeed.

**Xerxes**

[1020] And this quiver—

**Chorus**

What is this you say has been saved?

**Xerxes**

Treasury for shafts?

**Chorus**

Truly a small remnant from an ample store.

**Xerxes**

We have been deprived of defenders.

**Chorus**

[1025] Ionia's people shrink not from the spear.

**Xerxes**

They are a war-like people. I have lived to behold a calamity I never expected.

**Chorus**

Are you speaking of the routed multitude which manned your

**Ξέρξης**

**1030** πέπλον δ' ἐπέρρηξ' ἐπὶ συμφορᾷ κακοῦ.

**Χορός**

παπαῖ παπαῖ.

**Ξέρξης**

καὶ πλέον ἢ παπαῖ μὲν οὖν.

**Χορός**

δίδυμα γάρ ἐστι καὶ τριπλᾶ—

**Ξέρξης**

λυπρὰ, χάρματα δ' ἐχθοῖς.

**Χορός**

**1035** καὶ σθένος γ' ἐκολούσθη—

**Ξέρξης**

γυμνός εἰμι προπομπῶν.

**Χορός**

φίλων ἄταισι ποντίαισιν·

**Ξέρξης**

δίαινε διάινε πῆμα· πρὸς δόμους δ' ἴθι.

**Χορός**

αἰαῖ αἰαῖ, δὺα δὺα.

**Ξέρξης**

**1040** βόα νυν ἀντίδουπά μοι.

**Χορός**

δόσιν κακὰν κακῶν κακοῖς.

ships?

**Xerxes**

[1030] And I rent my robe at the disastrous event.

**Chorus**

Alas, alas!

**Xerxes**

No, far worse than alas.

**Chorus**

Yes, for twofold and threefold—

**Xerxes**

Pain to us, but exultation to our enemies

**Chorus**

[1035] Yes, and our strength has been maimed.

**Xerxes**

I am stripped of my escort.

**Chorus**

By the disasters of your comrades upon the sea.

**Xerxes**

Weep, weep over our calamity, and depart to your homes.

**Chorus**

Alas, alas, woe, woe!

**Xerxes**

[1040] Cry aloud now in response to me.

**Chorus**

A wretched offering from the wretched to the wretched.



**Ξέρξης**

ἴυζε μέλος ὁμοῦ τιθεῖς.

**Χορός**

ὀτοτοτοτοῖ.

βαρεῖά γ' ἄδε συμφορά.

**1045** οἷ μάλα καὶ τόδ' ἀλγῶ.

**Ξέρξης**

ἔρεσσ' ἔρεσσε καὶ στέναζ' ἐμὴν χάριν.

**Χορός**

διαίνομαι γοεδνὸς ὦν.

**Ξέρξης**

βόα νυν ἀντίδουπά μοι.

**Χορός**

μέλειν πάρεστι, δέσποτα.

**Ξέρξης**

**1050** ἐπορθίαζέ νυν γόοις.

**Χορός**

ὀτοτοτοτοῖ.

μέλαινα δ' ἀμμεμείξεται,

οἷ, στονόεσσα πλαγά.

**Ξέρξης**

καὶ στέρν' ἄρασσε κἀπιβόα τὸ Μύσιον.

**Χορός**

**1055** ἄνι' ἄνια.

**Xerxes**

Cry out, tuning your strain to mine.

**Chorus**

Oh, oh! That which has happened is grievous indeed. [1045]

Alas, for I too share in your sorrow.

**Xerxes**

Strike, strike, and groan for my sake.

**Chorus**

I weep in lamentation!

**Xerxes**

Now cry aloud in response to me.

**Chorus**

This care, my lord, is mine.

**Xerxes**

[1050] Lift up your voice now in lamentation.

**Chorus**

Oh, oh! And with our wailing, alas, will be mingled bruising blows and shrieks of pain.

**Xerxes**

Beat your breast too, and raise the Mysian wail.

**Chorus**

[1055] Anguish, anguish!

**Ξέρξης**

καί μοι γενείου πέρθε λευκήρη τρίχα.

**Χορός**

ἄπριγδ' ἄπριγδα μάλα γοεδνά.

**Ξέρξης**

αὐτεῖ δ' ὀξύ.

**Χορός**

καὶ τάδ' ἔρξω.

**Ξέρξης**

1060 πέπλον δ' ἔρεικε κολπίαν ἀκμῇ χερῶν.

**Χορός**

ἄνι' ἄνια.

**Ξέρξης**

καὶ ψάλλ' ἔθειραν καὶ κατοίκτισαι στρατόν.

**Χορός**

ἄπριγδ' ἄπριγδα μάλα γοεδνά.

**Ξέρξης**

διαίνου δ' ὅσσε.

**Χορός**

1065 τέγγομαί τοι.

**Ξέρξης**

βόα νυν ἀντίδουπά μοι.

**Χορός**

οἰοῖ οἰοῖ.

**Xerxes**

And tear, I beg of you, the white hair from your beard.

**Chorus**

With clenched nails, with clenched nails, with loud wailing.

**Xerxes**

And utter shrill cries.

**Chorus**

This too I will do.

**Xerxes**

[1060] And with your fingers tear the robe which drapes you.

**Chorus**

Anguish, anguish!

**Xerxes**

Pluck out your locks, and lament our host.

**Chorus**

With clenched nails, with clenched nails, with loud wailing.

**Xerxes**

Let tears moisten your eyes.

**Chorus**

[1065] I am drenched with tears.

**Xerxes**

Cry aloud now in response to me.

**Chorus**

Alas, alas!

**Ξέρξης**

αἰακτὸς ἐς δόμους κίε.

**Χορός**

1070 ἰὼ ἰὼ, [Περσὶς αἶα δύσβατος].

**Ξέρξης**

ἰὼὰ δὴ κατ' ἄστν.

**Χορός**

ἰὼὰ δῆτα, ναὶ ναί.

**Ξέρξης**

γοᾶσθ' ἀβροβάται.

**Χορός**

ἰὼ ἰὼ, Περσὶς αἶα δύσβατος.

**Ξέρξης**

ἰὴ ἰὴ τρισκάλμοισιν,

1075 ἰὴ ἰή, βάρισιν ὀλόμενοι.

**Χορός**

πέμψω τοί σε δυσθρόοις γόοις.

**Xerxes**

With sounds of wailing go to your homes.

**Chorus**

[1070] Alas, alas!

**Xerxes**

Alas! through the city.

**Chorus**

Alas, indeed!

**Xerxes**

Pour forth your wails as you move along with soft steps.

**Chorus**

Alas, alas, O Persian land, grievous now to walk upon!

**Xerxes**

Ah me! [1075] Those that perished in three-tiered galleys, ah me!

**Chorus**

I will escort you with dismal sounds of woe.

*Exeunt omnes*

**THE END**