

# ΑΙΣΧΥΛΟΥ ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

Αρχαίο κείμενο και μετάφραση στα αγγλικά

The play *Agamemnon* details the homecoming of Agamemnon, King of Argos, from the Trojan War. Waiting at home for him is his wife, Clytemnestra, who has been planning his murder, partly as revenge for the sacrifice of their daughter, Iphigenia, and partly because in the ten years of Agamemnon's absence Clytemnestra has entered into an adulterous relationship with Aegisthus, Agamemnon's cousin and the sole survivor of a dispossessed branch of the family, who is determined to regain the throne he believes should rightfully belong to him.

### Summary

The play opens to a servant on top of the house, reporting that he has been sleeping there "like a dog" (*kunos diken*) for a year, "for so rules the manly-willed heart of a woman" (that woman being Clytemnestra awaiting the return of her husband, who has arranged that mountaintop beacons give the signal when Troy has fallen). He laments the fortunes of the house, but promises to keep silent: "A huge ox has stepped onto my tongue." However, when Agamemnon returns, he brings with him Cassandra, an enslaved Trojan princess and priestess of Apollo, as his concubine, further angering Clytemnestra.

From the silence of the watchman the chorus begin with the great *parodos*, which as Kitto expressed it ['It lays down the intellectual foundation of the whole trilogy'], bears the weight of the trilogy . . . Through descriptions of the past, hopes and fears for the future, and statements of the present (which together constitute the narrative) this song develops a series of tensions.

The central action of the play is the *agon* between Clytemnestra and Agamemnon. She plays the loving, waiting wife and attempts to persuade Agamemnon to step on a purple (sometimes red) tapestry or carpet to walk into "his" palace as a true returning conqueror. The problem is that this would indicate hubris on Agamemnon's part, and he is reluctant. Eventually, for reasons that are still heavily debated, Clytemnestra does persuade Agamemnon to cross the purple tapestry to enter the *oikos*, the home.

While Clytemnestra and Agamemnon are offstage, Princess Cassandra, who had heretofore been silent, is suddenly possessed by the god Apollo and enters a tumultuous trance. Gradually her incoherent delirium starts making some sense and she engages in anguished discussion with the chorus whether she should enter the palace, knowing that she too will be murdered. Cassandra has been cursed by Apollo for rejecting his advances. He has given her clairvoyance so that she can foresee future events, but he has cursed her so that no one who hears her prophecies will believe them until it's too late. In Cassandra's soliloquy, she runs through many gruesome images of the history of the House of Atreus as if she had been a witness of them, and she eventually enters the palace, knowing that her fate is preordained and unavoidable. The chorus, in this play a group of the elders of Argos, are left bewildered and fearful, until they hear the death screams of Agamemnon and frantically debate on a course of action.

A platform is then rolled out displaying the butchered corpses of Agamemnon and Cassandra, along with Clytemnestra brandishing the bloodied axe, and defiantly explaining her action. Agamemnon was murdered in much the same way an animal is killed for sacrifice: with three blows, the last strike accompanied by a prayer to a god. She is soon joined by Aegisthus, now the king, strutting out and delivering an arrogant speech to the chorus, who nearly enter into a brawl with him and his guard. However, Clytemnestra halts the dispute, saying that "There is pain enough already. Let us not be bloody now." The play closes with the chorus reminding the usurpers that Orestes, the son of Agamemnon, will surely return to exact vengeance.

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**Agamemnon**

By Aeschylus

Translated by Herbert Weir Smyth

**Dramatis Personae**

A WATCHMAN

CHORUS OF ARGIVE ELDERS

CLYTEMNESTRA, wife of AGAMEMNON

A HERALD

AGAMEMNON, King of Argos

CASSANDRA, daughter of Priam, and slave of AGAMEMNON

AEGISTHUS, son of Thyestes, cousin of AGAMEMNON

Servants, Attendants, Soldiers

**Scene**

Before the palace of AGAMEMNON in Argos. In front of the palace there are statues of the gods, and altars prepared for sacrifice. It is night. On the roof of the palace can be discerned a WATCHMAN.

## ΦΥΛΑΞ

Θεοὺς μὲν αἰτῶ τῶνδ' ἀπαλλαγὴν πόνων,  
 φρουρᾶς ἐτείας μῆκος, ἦν κοιμώμενος  
 στέγαις Ἀτρειδῶν ἄγκαθεν, κυνὸς δίκην,  
 ἄστρον κάτοιδα νυκτέρων ὁμήγυριν,  
 καὶ τοὺς φέροντας χειῖμα καὶ θέρος βροτοῖς  
 λαμπροὺς δυνάστας, ἐμπρέποντας αἰθέρι  
 [ἀστέρας, ὅταν φθίνωσιν, ἀντολάς τε τῶν].  
 καὶ νῦν φυλάσσω λαμπάδος τὸ σύμβολον,  
 αὐγὴν πυρὸς φέρουσιν ἐκ Τροίας φάτιν  
**10** ἀλώσιμόν τε βάξιν· ὧδε γὰρ κρατεῖ  
 γυναικὸς ἀνδρόβουλον ἐλπίζον κέαρο.  
 εὖτ' ἂν δὲ νυκτίπλαγκτον ἔνδροσόν τ' ἔχων  
 εὐνήν ὀνείροις οὐκ ἐπισκοπούμενην  
 ἐμήν—φόβος γὰρ ἀνθ' ὕπνου παραστατεῖ,  
 τὸ μὴ βεβαίως βλέφαρα συμβαλεῖν ὕπνω—  
 ὅταν δ' αἰεῖν ἢ μινύρεσθαι δοκῶ,  
 ὕπνου τόδ' ἀντίμολπον ἐντέμνων ἄκος,  
 κλαίω τότε οἴκου τοῦδε συμφορὰν στένων  
 οὐχ ὥς τὰ πρόσθ' ἄριστα διαπονουμένου.  
**20** νῦν δ' εὐτυχὴς γένοιτ' ἀπαλλαγὴ πόνων  
 εὐαγγέλου φανέντος ὀρφναίου πυρός.  
 ὦ χαῖρε λαμπτήρ, νυκτὸς ἡμερήσιον  
 φάος πιφάυσκων καὶ χορῶν κατάστασιν  
 πολλῶν ἐν Ἀργεῖ, τῇσδε συμφορᾶς χάριν.

## WATCHMAN

[1] Release from this weary task of mine has been my plea to the gods throughout this long year's watch, in which, lying upon the palace roof of the Atreidae, upon my bent arm, like a dog, I have learned to know well the gathering of the night's stars, those radiant potentates conspicuous in the firmament, [5] bringers of winter and summer to mankind [the constellations, when they rise and set].

So now I am still watching for the signal-flame, the gleaming fire that is to bring news from Troy and [10] tidings of its capture. For thus commands my queen, woman in passionate heart and man in strength of purpose. And whenever I make here my bed, restless and dank with dew and unvisited by dreams—for instead of sleep fear stands ever by my side, [15] so that I cannot close my eyelids fast in sleep—and whenever I care to sing or hum (and thus apply an antidote of song to ward off drowsiness) , then my tears start forth, as I bewail the fortunes of this house of ours, not ordered for the best as in days gone by.

[20] But tonight may there come a happy release from my weary task! May the fire with its glad tidings flash through the gloom!

*The signal fire suddenly flashes out*

Oh welcome, you blaze in the night, a light as if of day, you harbinger of many a choral dance in Argos in thanksgiving for this glad event!



ιού ιού.

Ἀγαμέμνωνος γυναικὶ σημαίνω τορῶς  
 εὐνῆς ἐπαντείλασαν ὡς τάχος δόμοις  
 ὀλολυγμὸν εὐφημοῦντα τῇδε λαμπάδι  
 ἐπορθιάζειν, εἶπερ Ἴλιου πόλις  
**30** ἐάλωκεν, ὡς ὁ φρυκτὸς ἀγγέλλων πρέπει·  
 αὐτὸς τ' ἔγωγε φροῖμιον χορεύσομαι.  
 τὰ δεσποτῶν γὰρ εὖ πεσόντα θήσομαι  
 τρὶς ἕξ βαλούσης τῆσδέ μοι φρυκτωρίας.  
 γένοιτο δ' οὖν μολόντος εὐφιλῇ χέρα  
 ἄνακτος οἴκων τῇδε βαστάσαι χερί.  
 τὰ δ' ἄλλα σιγῶ· βοῦς ἐπὶ γλώσσει μέγας  
 βέβηκεν· οἶκος δ' αὐτός, εἰ φθογγὴν λάβοι,  
 σαφέστατ' ἂν λέξειεν· ὡς ἐκὼν ἐγὼ  
 μαθοῦσιν αὐδῶ κού μαθοῦσι λήθομαι.

### ΧΟΡΟΣ

**40** δέκατον μὲν ἔτος τόδ' ἐπεὶ Πριάμῳ  
 μέγας ἀντίδικος,  
 Μενέλαος ἄναξ ἡδ' Ἀγαμέμνων,  
 διθρόνου Διόθεν καὶ δισκήπτρου  
 τιμῆς ὀχυρὸν ζευγὸς Ἀτρεϊδῶν,  
 στόλον Ἀργείων χιλιοναύταν  
 τῇσδ' ἀπὸ χώρας  
 ἦραν, στρατιῶτιν ἀρωγάν,

[25] Hallo! Hallo! To Agamemnon's queen I thus cry aloud the signal to rise from her bed, and as quickly as she can to lift up in her palace halls a shout of joy in welcome of this fire, if the city of Ilium [30] truly is taken, as this beacon unmistakably announces. And I will make an overture with a dance upon my own account; for my lord's lucky roll I shall count to my own score, now that this beacon has thrown me triple six. Ah well, may the master of the house come home and may [35] I clasp his welcome hand in mine! For the rest I stay silent; a great ox stands upon my tongue<sup>1</sup>—yet the house itself, could it but speak, might tell a plain enough tale; since, for my part, by my own choice I have words for those who know, and to those who do not know, I've lost my memory.

*He descends by an inner stairway; attendants kindle fires at the altars placed in front of the palace. Enter the chorus of Argive Elders*

<sup>1</sup> A proverbial expression (of uncertain origin) for enforced silence; cf. fr. 176, "A key stands guard upon my tongue."

### Chorus

[40] This is now the tenth year since Priam's mighty adversary, king Menelaus, and with him king Agamemnon, the mighty pair of Atreus' sons, joined in honor of throne and sceptre by Zeus, [45] set forth from this land with an army of a thousand ships manned by Argives, a warrior force to champion their cause.

μέγαν ἐκ θυμοῦ κλάζοντες Ἄρη  
 τρόπον αἰγυπιῶν,  
 50 οἷτ' ἐκπατίοις ἄλγεσι παίδων  
 ὕπατοι λεχέων στροφοδινοῦνται  
 περύγων ἐρετμοῖσιν ἐρεσσόμενοι,  
 δεμνιοτήρη  
 πόνον ὀρταλίχων ὀλέσαντες·  
 ὕπατος δ' αἰὼν ἢ τις Ἀπόλλων  
 ἢ Πᾶν ἢ Ζεὺς οἰωνόθορον  
 γόον ὀξυβόαν τῶνδε μετοίκων  
 ὕστερόποινον  
 πέμπει παραβᾶσιν Ἐρινύν.  
 60 οὕτω δ' Ἀτρέως παῖδας ὁ κρείσσων  
 ἐπ' Ἀλεξάνδρῳ πέμπει ξένιος  
 Ζεὺς πολυάνορος ἀμφὶ γυναικός,  
 πολλὰ παλαίσματα καὶ γυιοβαρῇ,  
 γόνατος κονίαισιν ἐρειδομένου  
 διακναιομένης τ' ἐν προτελείοις  
 κάμακος, θήσων Δαναοῖσιν  
 Τρωσί θ' ὁμοίως. ἔστι δ' ὅπη νῦν  
 ἔστι· τελεῖται δ' ἐς τὸ πεπρωμένον·  
 οὐθ' ὑποκαίων οὐτ' ἐπιλείβων  
 70 οὔτε δακρύων ἀπύρων ἱερῶν  
 ὀργὰς ἀτενεῖς παραθέλξει.

Loud rang the battle-cry they uttered in their rage, just as eagles  
 scream which, [50] in lonely grief for their brood, rowing with the  
 oars of their wings, wheel high over their bed, because they have  
 lost the toil of guarding their nurslings' nest.

[55] But some one of the powers supreme—Apollo perhaps or Pan,  
 or Zeus—hears the shrill wailing scream of the clamorous birds,  
 these sojourners in his realm, and against the transgressors sends  
 vengeance at last though late.

[60] Even so Zeus, whose power is over all, Zeus, lord of host and  
 guest, sends against Alexander the sons of Atreus, that for the sake  
 of a woman with many husbands<sup>1</sup> he may inflict many and  
 wearying struggles (when the knee is pressed in the dust and [65]  
 the spear is splintered in the onset) on Danaans and on Trojans  
 alike.

The case now stands where it stands—it moves to fulfilment at its  
 destined end. Not by offerings burned in secret, not by secret  
 libations, [70] not by tears, shall man soften the stubborn wrath of  
 unsanctified sacrifices.<sup>2</sup>

ἡμεῖς δ' ἀτίται σαρκὶ παλαιᾷ  
 τῆς τότ' ἀρωγῆς ὑπολειφθέντες  
 μίμνομεν ἰσχὺν  
 ἰσόπαιδα νέμοντες ἐπὶ σκῆπτροις.  
 ὃ τε γὰρ νεαρὸς μυελὸς στέρνων  
 ἐντὸς ἀνάσσω  
 ἰσόπρεσβυς Ἄρης δ' οὐκ ἔνι χώρα,  
 τό θ' ὑπέργηρων φυλλάδος ἤδη  
**80** κατακαρφομένης τρίποδας μὲν ὁδοὺς  
 στείχει, παῖδός δ' οὐδὲν ἀρείων  
 ὄναρ ἡμερόφαντον ἀλαίνει.  
 σὺ δέ, Τυνδάρεω  
 θύγατερ, βασιλεία Κλυταίμηστρα,  
 τί χρέος; τί νέον; τί δ' ἐπαισθομένη,  
 τίνος ἀγγελίας  
 πειθοῖ περίπεμπτα θυοσκεῖς;  
 πάντων δὲ θεῶν τῶν ἀστυνόμων,  
 ὑπάτων, χθονίων,  
**90** τῶν τε θυραίων τῶν τ' ἀγοραίων,  
 βωμοὶ δώροισι φλέγονται·  
 ἄλλη δ' ἄλλοθεν οὐρανομήκης  
 λαμπὰς ἀνίσχει,  
 φαρμασσομένη χρίματος ἀγνοῦ  
 μαλακαῖς ἀδόλοισι παρηγορίαις,  
 πελάνῳ μυχόθεν βασιλείῳ.

But we, incapable of service by reason of our aged frame, discarded from that martial mustering of long ago, wait here at home, [75] supporting on our canes a strength like a child's.

For just as the vigor of youth, leaping up within the breast, is like that of old age, since the war-god is not in his place; so extreme age, its leaves [80] already withering, goes its way on triple feet, and, no better than a child, wanders a dream that is dreamed by day.

<sup>1</sup> Menelaus, Paris, Deiphobus.

<sup>2</sup> "Unsacred," literally "fireless," "that will not burn." A veiled reference either to the sacrifice of Iphigenia by Agamemnon and the wrath of Clytaemestra, or to Paris' violation of the laws of hospitality that provoked the anger of Zeus.

But, O daughter of Tyndareos, Queen Clytaemestra, [85] what has happened? What news do you have? On what intelligence and convinced by what report do you send about your messengers to command sacrifice? For all the gods our city worships, the gods supreme, the gods below, [90] the gods of the heavens and of the marketplace, have their altars ablaze with offerings.

Now here, now there, the flames rise high as heaven, yielding [95] to the soft and guileless persuasion of holy ointment, the sacrificial oil itself brought from the inner chambers of the palace.



τούτων λέξασ' ὅ τι καὶ δυνατόν  
 καὶ θέμις αἶνει  
 παιῶν τε γενοῦ τῆσδε μερίμνης,  
**100** ἦ νῦν τοτὲ μὲν κακόφρων τελέθει,  
 τοτὲ δ' ἐκ θυσιῶν ἀγάν' ἀμφαίνουσ'  
 ἐλπίς ἀμύνει φροντίδ' ἄπληστον  
 † τὴν θυμοφθόρον λύπης φρένα. †  
 κύριός εἰμι θροεῖν ὄδιον κράτος αἴσιον ἀνδρῶν **[στρ. α.]**  
 ἐντελέων· ἔτι γὰρ θεόθεν καταπνεύει  
 πειθῶ, μολπᾶν ἀλκάν, σύμφυτος αἰών·  
 ὅπως Ἀχαιῶν δίθρονον κράτος, Ἑλλάδος ἥβας  
**110** ξύμφρονα ταγάν,  
 πέμπει σὺν δορὶ καὶ χερὶ πράκτορι  
 θούριος ὄρνις Τευκρίδ' ἐπ' αἶαν,  
 οἰωνῶν βασιλεὺς βασιλεῦσι νεῶν ὁ κελαινός, ὃ τ' ἐξόπιν  
 ἀργᾶς,  
 φανέντες ἵκταρ μελάθρων χερὸς ἐκ δοριπάλτου  
 παμπρέπτοις ἐν ἔδραισι,  
 βοσκόμενοι λαγίναν, ἐρικύμονα φέρματα, γένναν,  
**120** βλαβέντα λοισθίων δρόμων.  
 αἶλινον αἶλινον εἶπέ, τὸ δ' εὖ νικάτω.

Of all this declare whatever you can and dare reveal, and be a healer  
 of my uneasy heart. [100] This now at one moment bodes ill, while  
 then again hope, shining with kindly light from the sacrifices, wards  
 off the biting care of the sorrow that gnaws my heart.

I have the power to proclaim the augury of triumph given on their  
 way [105] to princely men—since my age<sup>1</sup> still breathes Persuasion  
 upon me from the gods, the strength of song—how the twin-  
 throned command of the Achaeans, [110] the single-minded  
 captains of Hellas' youth, with avenging spear and arm against the  
 Teucric land, was sent off by the inspiring omen appearing to the  
 kings of the ships—kingly birds, [115] one black, one white of tail,  
 near the palace, on the spear-hand<sup>2</sup>, in a conspicuous place,  
 devouring a hare with offspring unborn [120] caught in the last  
 effort to escape.<sup>3</sup>  
 Sing the song of woe, the song of woe, but may the good prevail!

<sup>1</sup> σύμφυτος αἰών, literally “life that has grown with me,” “time of life,” here “old  
 age,” as the Scholiast takes it; cf. Mrs. Barbauld, “Life. We’ve been long together.”

<sup>2</sup> The right hand.

<sup>3</sup> The Scholiast, followed by Hermann and some others, takes λαγίναν γένναν as  
 a periphrasis for λαγῶν, with which βλαβέντα agrees (cp. πᾶσα γέννα ...  
 δώσων Eur. Tro. 531). With Hartung’s φέρματα, the meaning is “the brood of a  
 hare, the burden of her womb, thwarted of their final course.” λοισθίων δρόμων,



κεδνὸς δὲ στρατόμαντις ἰδὼν δύο λήμασι δισσοὺς [ἀντ. α.

Ἀτρεΐδας μαχίμους ἐδάη λαγοδαίτας

πομπούς τ' ἀρχάς· οὕτω δ' εἶπε τεράζων·

ἔχρόνῳ μὲν ἀγρεῖ Πριάμου πόλιν ἄδε κέλευθος,

πάντα δὲ πύργων

κτῆνη πρόσθε τὰ δημοπληθέα

**130** Μοῖρα λαπάξει πρὸς τὸ βίαιον·

οἶον μὴ τις ἄγα θεόθεν κνεφάσῃ προτυπὲν στόμιον μέγα

Τροίας

στρατωθέν· οἴκτῳ γὰρ ἐπίφθονος Ἄρτεμις ἀγνὰ

πτανοῖσιν κυσὶ πατρὸς

αὐτότοκον πρὸ λόχου μογερὰν πτάκα θυομένοισι·

στυγεῖ δὲ δεῖπνον αἰετῶν·

αἶλινον αἶλινον εἶπέ, τὸ δ' εὖ νικάτω.

**140** ὅσον περ εὐφρων ἂ καλὰ, [μεσφδ.

δρόσοις ἀέπτοις μαλερῶν λεόντων

πάντων τ' ἀγρονόμων φιλομάστοις

θηρῶν ὀβρικάλοισι τερπνὰ,

τούτων αἰτεῖ ξύμβολα κραῖναι,

δεξιὰ μὲν κατάμομφα δὲ φάσματα † στρουθῶν.

ἱήιον δὲ καλέω Παιᾶνα,

μὴ τινας ἀντιπνόους Δαναοῖς χρονίας ἐχενῆδας ἀπλοίας

**150** τεύξη, σπευδομένα θυσίαν ἑτέραν, ἄνομόν τιν', ἄδαιτον,

νεικέων τέκτονα σύμφυτον,

on this interpretation, has been thought to mean “their final course” (towards birth) or even their “future racings.”

Then the wise seer of the host, noticing how the two warlike sons of Atreus were two in temper, recognized the devourers of the hare as the leaders of the army, and [125] thus interpreted the portent and spoke: “In time those who here issue forth shall seize Priam's town, and fate shall violently ravage before its towered walls all the public store of cattle. [130] Only may no jealous god-sent wrath cast its shadow upon the embattled host, the mighty bit forged for Troy's mouth, and strike it before it reaches its goal! [135] For, in her pity, holy Artemis is angry at the winged hounds of her father, for they sacrifice a wretched timorous thing, together with her young, before she has brought them forth. An abomination to her is the eagles' feast.”

Sing the song of woe, the song of woe, but may the good prevail!

[140] “Although, O Lovely One, you are so gracious to the tender whelps of fierce lions, and take delight in the suckling young of every wild creature that roams the field, promise that the issue be brought to pass in accordance with these signs, portents [145] auspicious yet filled with ill. And I implore Paean<sup>1</sup>, the healer, that she may not raise adverse gales with long delay to stay the Danaan fleet from putting forth, [150] by urging another sacrifice, one that knows no law, unsuited for feast, worker of family strife, dissolving

οὐ δεισήνορα. μίμνει γὰρ φοβερὰ παλίνορτος  
οἰκονόμος δολία μνάμων μῆνις τεκνόποινος.<sup>1</sup>  
τοιιάδε Κάλχας ξὺν μεγάλοις ἀγαθοῖς ἀπέκλαγξεν  
μόρσιμ' ἀπ' ὀρνίθων ὀδίων οἴκοις βασιλείοις·  
τοῖς δ' ὁμόφωνον  
αἴλινον αἴλινον εἶπέ, τὸ δ' εὖ νικάτω.  
**160** Ζεὺς, ὅστις ποτ' ἐστίν, εἰ τόδ' αὖ- [στρ. β.  
τῷ φίλον κεκλημένω,  
τοῦτό νιν προσεννέπω.  
οὐκ ἔχω προσεικάσαι  
πάντ' ἐπισταθμώμενος  
πλήν Διός, εἰ τὸ μάταν ἀπὸ φροντίδος ἄχθος  
χρὴ βαλεῖν ἐτητύμω.  
οὐδ' ὅστις πάροιθεν ἦν μέγας, [ἀντ. β.  
παμμάχῳ θράσει βρύων,  
**170** οὐδὲ λέξεται πρὶν ὦν·  
ὅς δ' ἔπειτ' ἔφν, τρια-  
κτῆρος οἴχεται τυχών.  
Ζῆνα δέ τις προφρόνως ἐπινίκια κλάζων  
τεύξεται φρενῶν τὸ πᾶν,

wife's reverence for husband. For there abides wrath— [155]  
terrible, not to be suppressed, a treacherous guardian of the home, a  
wrath that never forgets and that exacts vengeance for a child.”  
Such utterances of doom, derived from auguries on the march,  
together with many blessings, did Calchas proclaim to the royal  
house; and in harmony with this,  
Sing the song of woe, the song of woe, but may the good prevail!

<sup>1</sup> Apollo; who is implored to divert his sister Artemis from accomplishing the evil part of the omen

[160] Zeus, whoever he may be,—if by this name it pleases him to  
be invoked, by this name I call to him—as I weigh all things in the  
balance, I have nothing to compare [165] save “Zeus,” if in truth I  
must cast aside this vain burden from my heart.

He<sup>1</sup> who once was mighty, swelling with insolence for every fight,  
[170] he shall not even be named as having ever existed; and he<sup>2</sup>  
who arose later, he has met his overthrower and is past and gone.  
But whoever willingly sings a victory song for Zeus, [175] he shall  
gain wisdom altogether,—

<sup>1</sup> Uranus.  
<sup>2</sup> Cronus.

τὸν φρονεῖν βροτοὺς ὁδῶ- **[στρ. γ.]**  
 σαντα, τὸν πάθει μάθος  
 θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν.  
 στάζει δ' ἀνθ' ὕπνου πρὸ καρδίας  
**180** μνησιπήμων πόνος· καὶ παρ' ἄ-  
 κοντας ἦλθε σωφρονεῖν.  
 δαιμόνων δέ που χάρις βίαιος  
 σέλμα σεμνὸν ἡμένων.  
 καὶ τόθ' ἡγεμῶν ὁ πρέ- **[ἀντ. γ.]**  
 σβυς νεῶν Ἀχαικῶν,  
 μάντιν οὔτινα ψέγων,  
 ἐμπαίοις τύχαισι συμπνέων,  
 εὖτ' ἀπλοία κεναγγεῖ βαρύν-  
 νοντ' Ἀχαικὸς λεώς,  
**190** Χαλκίδος πέραν ἔχων παλιρρό-  
 χθοις ἐν Αὐλίδος τόποις·  
 πνοαὶ δ' ἀπὸ Στρυμόνος μολοῦσαι **[στρ. δ.]**  
 κακόσχολοι, νήστιδες, δύσορμοι,  
 βροτῶν ἄλαι,  
 ναῶν <τε> καὶ πεισμάτων ἀφειδεῖς,  
 παλιμμήκη χρόνον τιθεῖσαι  
 τρίβῳ κατέξαινον ἄνθος Ἀργεί-  
 ων· ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ πικροῦ  
 χείματος ἄλλο μῆχαρ  
**200** βριθύτερον πρόμοισιν

Zeus, who sets mortals on the path to understanding, Zeus, who has established as a fixed law that “wisdom comes by suffering.” But even as trouble, bringing memory of pain, drips over the mind in sleep, [180] so wisdom comes to men, whether they want it or not. Harsh, it seems to me, is the grace of gods enthroned upon their awful seats.

So then the captain of the Achaean ships, the elder of the two— [185] holding no seer at fault, bending to the adverse blasts of fortune, when the Achaean folk, on the shore over against Chalcis [190] in the region where Aulis' tides surge to and fro, were very distressed by opposing winds and failing stores.

The breezes that blew from the Strymon, bringing harmful leisure, hunger, and tribulation of spirit in a cruel port, idle wandering of men, and sparing neither ship [195] nor cable, began, by doubling the season of their stay, to rub away and wither the flower of Argos;

and when the seer, pointing to Artemis as cause, proclaimed to the chieftains another remedy, [200] more oppressive even than the

μάντις ἔκλαγξεν  
 προφέρων Ἄρτεμιν, ὥστε χθόνα βάκτροις  
 ἐπικρούσαντας Ἀτρείδας  
 δάκρυ μὴ κατασχεῖν·  
 ἄναξ δ' ὁ πρέσβυς τόδ' εἶπε φωνῶν· [ἀντ. δ.  
 'βαρεῖα μὲν κῆρ τὸ μὴ πιθέσθαι,  
 βαρεῖα δ', εἰ  
 τέκνον δαΐξω, δόμων ἄγαλμα,  
 μαιίνων παρθενοσφάγοισιν  
**210** ῥεῖθροις πατρώους χέρας πέλας βω-  
 μοῦ. τί τῶνδ' ἄνευ κακῶν;  
 πῶς λιπόνους γένωμαι  
 ξυμμαχίας ἀμαρτών;  
 παυσανέμου γὰρ  
 θυσίας παρθενίου θ' αἵματος ὀργᾶ  
 περιόργως ἐπιθυμεῖν  
 θέμις. εὖ γὰρ εἴη.  
 ἐπεὶ δ' ἀνάγκας ἔδω λέπαδνον [στρ. ε.  
 φρενὸς πνέων δυσσεβῇ τροπαίαν  
**220** ἄναγνον, ἀνίερρον, τόθεν  
 τὸ παντότολμον φρονεῖν μετέγνω.  
 βροτοὺς θρασύνει γὰρ αἰσχρομήτις  
 τάλαινα παρακοπὰ πρωτοπήμων.  
 ἔτλα δ' οὖν θυτῆρ γενέσθαι  
 θυγατρός, γυναικοποιῶν

bitter storm, so that the sons of Atreus struck the ground with their canes and did not stifle their tears —

[205] Then the elder king spoke and said: "It is a hard fate to refuse obedience, and hard, if I must slay my child, the glory of my home, and at the altar-side stain [210] a father's hand with streams of virgin's blood.

Which of these courses is not filled with evil? How can I become a deserter to my fleet and fail my allies in arms? [215] For that they should with all too impassioned passion crave a sacrifice to lull the winds—even a virgin's blood—stands within their right. May all be for the best."

But when he had donned the yoke of Necessity, with veering of mind, [220] impious, unholy, unsanctified, from that moment he changed his intention and began to conceive that deed of uttermost audacity.

For wretched delusion, counsellor of ill, primal source of woe, makes mortals bold. So then he hardened his heart to sacrifice his daughter [225] so that he might further a war waged to avenge a woman,



πολέμων ἀρωγὰν  
καὶ προτέλεια νᾶων.  
λιτὰς δὲ καὶ κληδόνας πατρῶους [ἀντ. ε.  
παρ' οὐδὲν αἰῶ τε παρθένειον  
**230** ἔθεντο φιλόμαχοι βραβῆς.  
φράσεν δ' ἀόζοις πατήρ μετ' εὐχὰν  
δίκαν χιμαίρας ὑπερθε βωμοῦ  
πέπλοισι περιπετῇ παντὶ θυμῷ  
προνωπῇ λαβεῖν ἀέρδην,  
στόματός τε καλλιπρώρου  
φυλακᾷ κατασχεῖν  
φθόγγον ἀραῖον οἴκοις.  
βία χαλινῶν δ', ἀναύδω μένει, [στρ. ζ.  
κρόκου βαφὰς [δ'] ἐς πέδον χέουσα,  
**240** ἔβαλλ' ἕκαστον θυτή-  
ρων ἀπ' ὄμματος βέλει φιλοίκτω,  
πρέπουσα τῶς ἐν γραφαῖς, προσεννέπειν  
θέλουσ', ἐπεὶ πολλάκις  
πατὴρ κατ' ἀνδρῶνας εὐτραπέζους  
ἔμελψεν, ἀγνᾷ δ' ἀταύρωτος αὐδᾷ πατρός  
φίλου τρίτοσπονδον εὐποτμον  
παιῶνα φίλως ἐτίμα.  
τὰ δ' ἔνθεν οὐτ' εἶδον οὐτ' ἐννέπω· [ἀντ. ζ.  
τέχναι δὲ Κάλχαντος οὐκ ἄκραντοι.  
**250** Δίκη δὲ τοῖς μὲν παθοῦ-

and as an offering for the voyage of a fleet!

For her supplications, her cries of “Father,” and her virgin life, [230] the commanders in their eagerness for war cared nothing.

Her father, after a prayer, bade his ministers lay hold of her as, enwrapped in her robes, she lay fallen forward, [235] and with stout heart to raise her, as if she were a young goat, high above the altar; and with a gag upon her lovely mouth to hold back the shouted curse against her house—by the bit's strong and stifling might.

Then, as she shed to earth her saffron robe, she [240] struck each of her sacrificers with a glance from her eyes beseeching pity, looking as if in a picture, wishing she could speak; for she had often sung where men met at her father's hospitable table, [245] and with her virgin voice would lovingly honor her dear father's prayer for blessing at the third libation<sup>1</sup>—

<sup>1</sup> At the end of a banquet, libations were offered 1. to Zeus and Hera, or to the Olympian gods in general, 2. to the Heroes, 3. to Zeus, the Saviour; then came the paean, or song, after which the symposium began.

What happened next I did not see and do not tell. The art of Calchas was not unfulfilled.

[250] Justice inclines her scales so that wisdom comes at the price of

σιν μαθεῖν ἐπιρρέπει· τὸ μέλλον  
 ἐπεὶ γένοιτ' ἂν κλύοις· πρὸ χαιρέτω·  
 ἴσον δὲ τῷ προστένειν.  
 τορὸν γὰρ ἥξει σύνορθρον αὐγαῖς.  
 πέλοιτο δ' οὖν ἅ 'πὶ τούτοισιν εὖ πρᾶξις, ὥς  
 θέλει τόδ' ἄγχιστον Ἀπίας  
 γαίας μονόφρουρον ἔρκος.  
 – ἦκω σεβίζων σόν, Κλυταιμῆστρα, κράτος·  
 δίκη γὰρ ἐστὶ φωτὸς ἀρχηγοῦ τίειν  
**260** γυναικ' ἐρημωθέντος ἄρσενος θρόνου.  
 σὺ δ' εἴ τι κεδνὸν εἶτε μὴ πεπυσμένη  
 εὐαγγέλοισιν ἐλπίσιν θυηπολεῖς,  
 κλύοιμ' ἂν εὐφρων· οὐδὲ σιγῶση φθόνος.

#### ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ

εὐάγγελος μὲν, ὥσπερ ἡ παροιμία,  
 ἕως γένοιτο μητρὸς εὐφρόνης πάρα.  
 πεύση δὲ χάρμα μεῖζον ἐλπίδος κλύειν·  
 Πριάμου γὰρ ἠρήκασιν Ἀργεῖοι πόλιν.  
**Χο.** πῶς φήεις; πέφευγε τοῦπος ἐξ ἀπιστίας.  
**Κλ.** Τροίαν Ἀχαιῶν οὖσαν· ἦ τορῶς λέγω;

suffering. But the future, that you shall know when it occurs; till then, leave it be—it is just as someone weeping ahead of time. Clear it will come, together with the light of dawn.

#### *Enter Clytaemestra*

[255] But as for what shall follow, may the issue be happy, even as she wishes, our sole guardian here, the bulwark of the Apian land, who stands nearest to our lord.

I have come, Clytaemestra, in obedience to your royal authority; for it is fitting to do homage to the consort of a sovereign prince [260] when her husband's throne is empty. Now whether the news you have heard is good or ill, and you do make sacrifice with hopes that herald gladness, I wish to hear; yet, if you would keep silence, I make no complaint.

#### **Clytaemestra**

As herald of gladness, with the proverb, [265] may Dawn be born from her mother Night! You shall hear joyful news surpassing all your hopes—the Argives have taken Priam's town!

#### **Chorus**

What have you said? The meaning of your words has escaped me, so incredible they seemed.

#### **Clytaemestra**

I said that Troy is in the hands of the Achaeans. Is my meaning clear?

**270 Χο.** χαρά μ' ὑφέρπει δάκρυον ἐκκαλουμένη.

**Κλ.** εὖ γὰρ φρονουῖντος ὄμμα σοῦ κατηγορεῖ.

**Χο.** τί γὰρ τὸ πιστόν; ἔστι τῶνδ' ἐσσι τέκμαρ;

**Κλ.** ἔστιν· τί δ' οὐχί; μὴ δολώσαντος θεοῦ.

**Χο.** πότερα δ' ὀνείρων φάσματ' εὐπειθῇ σέβεις;

**Κλ.** οὐ δόξαν ἂν λάκοιμι βριζούσης φρενός.

**Χο.** ἀλλ' ἢ σ' ἐπίανέν τις ἄπτερος φάτις;

**Κλ.** παιδὸς νέας ὥς κάρτ' ἐμωμήσω φρένας.

**Χο.** ποίου χρόνου δὲ καὶ πεπόρθηται πόλις;

**Κλ.** τῆς νῦν τεκούσης φῶς τόδ' εὐφρόνης λέγω.

**280 Χο.** καὶ τίς τόδ' ἐξίκοιτ' ἂν ἀγγέλων τάχος;

**Κλ.** Ἥφαιστος Ἰδης λαμπρὸν ἐκπέμπων σέλας.  
φρυκτὸς δὲ φρυκτὸν δεῦρ' ἀπ' ἀγγάρου πυρὸς  
ἔπεμπεν· Ἰδὴ μὲν πρὸς Ἑρμαῖον λέπας

**Chorus**

[270] Joy steals over me, and it challenges my tears.

**Clytaemestra**

Sure enough, for your eye betrays your loyal heart.

**Chorus**

What then is the proof? Have you evidence of this?

**Clytaemestra**

I have, indeed; unless some god has played me false.

**Chorus**

Do you believe the persuasive visions of dreams?

**Clytaemestra**

[275] I would not heed the fancies of a slumbering brain.

**Chorus**

But can it be some pleasing rumor that has fed your hopes?

**Clytaemestra**

Truly you scorn my understanding as if it were a child's.

**Chorus**

But at what time was the city destroyed?

**Clytaemestra**

In the night, I say, that has but now given birth to this day here.

**Chorus**

[280] And what messenger could reach here with such speed?

**Clytaemestra**

Hephaestus, from Ida speeding forth his brilliant blaze. Beacon passed beacon on to us by courier-flame. Ida, to the Hermaean crag

Λήμνου· μέγαν δὲ πανὸν ἐκ νήσου τρίτον  
 Ἀθῶν αἶπος Ζηνὸς ἐξεδέξατο,  
 ὑπερτελής τε, πόντον ὥστε νωτίσαι  
 ἰχθῦς πορευτοῦ λαμπάδος πρὸς ἡδονήν,  
 πεύκη τὸ χρυσοφегγές, ὥς τις ἥλιος,  
 σέλας παραγγείλασα Μακίστου σκοπαῖς·  
**290** ὁ δ' οὔτι μέλλων οὐδ' ἀφρασμόνως ὕπνω  
 νικώμενος παρήκεν ἀγγέλου μέρος·  
 ἐκάς δὲ φρυκτοῦ φῶς ἐπ' Εὐρίπου ῥοὰς  
 Μεσσαπίου φύλαξι σημαίνει μολόν.  
 οἱ δ' ἀντέλαμψαν καὶ παρήγγειλαν πρόσω  
 γραίας ἐρείκης θωμὸν ἄψαντες πυρί.  
 σθένουσα λαμπὰς δ' οὐδέπω μαυρουμένη,  
 ὑπερθοροῦσα πεδίον Ἀσωποῦ, δίκην  
 φαιδρᾶς σελήνης, πρὸς Κιθαιρῶνος λέπας,  
 ἤγειρεν ἄλλην ἐκδοχὴν πομποῦ πυρός.  
**300** φάος δὲ τηλέπομπον οὐκ ἠναίνετο  
 φρουρά, πλέον καίουσα τῶν εἰρημένων,  
 λίμνην δ' ὑπὲρ Γοργῶπιν ἔσκηψεν φάος,  
 ὄρος τ' ἐπ' Αἰγίπλαγκτον ἐξικνούμενον  
 ὠτρυνε θεσμόν μὴ χατίζεσθαι πυρός.  
 πέμπουσι δ' ἀνδαίοντες ἀφθόνῳ μένει  
 φλογὸς μέγαν πώγωνα, καὶ Σαρωνικοῦ  
 πορθμοῦ κάτοπτον πρῶν' ὑπερβάλλειν πρόσω  
 φλέγουσαν· εἴτ' ἔσκηψεν, εὗτ' ἀφίκετο

in Lemnos; to the mighty blaze upon the island succeeded, third,  
 [285] the summit of Athos sacred to Zeus; and, soaring high aloft so  
 as to leap across the sea, the flame, travelling joyously onward in its  
 strength

\* the pinewood torch, its golden-beamed light, as another sun,  
 passing the message on to the watchtowers of Macistus.

[290] He, delaying not nor carelessly overcome by sleep, did not  
 neglect his part as messenger. Far over Euripus' stream came the  
 beacon-light and signalled to the watchmen on Messapion. They,  
 kindling a heap of [295] withered heather, lit up their answering  
 blaze and sped the message on. The flame, now gathering strength  
 and in no way dimmed, like a radiant moon overleaped the plain of  
 Asopus to Cithaeron's ridges, and roused another relay of missive  
 fire.

[300] Nor did the warders there disdain the far-flung light, but  
 made a blaze higher than their commands. Across Gorgopus' water  
 shot the light, reached the mount of Aegiplanctus, and urged the  
 ordinance of fire to make no delay.

[305] Kindling high with unstinted force a mighty beard of flame,  
 they sped it forward so that, as it blazed, it passed even the  
 headland that looks upon the Saronic gulf; until it swooped down  
 when it reached the lookout, near to our city, upon the peak of



Ἀραχναῖον αἶπος, ἀστυγείτονας σκοπᾶς·  
**310** κᾶπειτ' Ἀτρειδῶν ἐς τόδε σκῆπτει στέγος·  
 φάος τόδ' οὐκ ἄπαππον Ἰδαίου πυρός.

τοιοῖδε τοί μοι λαμπαδηφόρων νομοί,  
 ἄλλος παρ' ἄλλου διαδοχαῖς πληρούμενοι·  
 νικᾷ δ' ὁ πρῶτος καὶ τελευταῖος δραμῶν.  
 τέκμαρ τοιοῦτον σύμβολόν τε σοὶ λέγω  
 ἀνδρὸς παραγγείλαντος ἐκ Τροίας ἐμοί.

**Χο.** θεοῖς μὲν αὖθις, ὦ γύναι, προσεύξομαι.  
 λόγους δ' ἀκοῦσαι τούσδε κάποθαυμάσαι  
 διηνεκῶς θέλοιμ' ἂν ὡς λέγεις πάλιν.

**320 Κλ.** Τροίαν Ἀχαιοὶ τῇδ' ἔχουσ' ἐν ἡμέρᾳ.  
 οἶμαι βοὴν ἄμεικτον ἐν πόλει πρέπειν.  
 ὄξος τ' ἄλειφά τ' ἐγχέας ταῦτῳ κύτει  
 διχοστατοῦντ' ἂν οὐ φίλως † προσεννέποις.  
 καὶ τῶν ἀλόντων καὶ κρατησάντων δίχα  
 φθογγὰς ἀκούειν ἔστι συμφορᾶς διπλῆς.

οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἀμφὶ σώμασιν πεπτωκότες  
 ἀνδρῶν κασιγνήτων τε, καὶ φυταλμίων  
 παῖδες γερόντων, οὐκέτ' ἐξ ἐλευθέρου  
 δέξης ἀποιμῶζουσι φιλάτων μόρον·

**330** τοὺς δ' αὖτε νυκτίπλαγκτος ἐκ μάχης πόνος  
 νήσταις πρὸς ἀρίστοισιν ὧν ἔχει πόλις

Arachnaeus; and [310] next upon this roof of the Atreidae it leapt,

this very fire not undescended from the Idaean flame.

Such are the torch-bearers I have arranged, completing the course in succession one to the other; and the victor is he who ran both first and last.<sup>1</sup> [315] This is the kind of proof and token I give you, the message of my husband from Troy to me.

### Chorus

Lady, my prayers of thanksgiving to the gods I will offer soon. But as I would like to hear and satisfy my wonder at your tale straight through to the end, so may you tell it yet again.

<sup>1</sup> The light kindled on Mt. Ida is conceived as starting first and finishing last; the light from Mt. Arachnaeus, as starting last and finishing first.

### Clytaemestra

[320] This day the Achaeans hold Troy. Within the town there sounds loud, I believe, a clamor of voices which will not blend. Pour vinegar and oil into the same vessel and you will say that, as foes, they keep apart; so the cries of vanquished and victors greet the ear, [325] distinct as their fortunes are diverse. Those, flung upon the corpses of their husbands and their brothers, children upon the bodies of their aged fathers who gave them life, bewail from lips no longer free the death of their dearest ones, while these— [330] a night of restless toil after battle sets them down famished to break

τάσσει, πρὸς οὐδέν ἐν μέρει τεκμήριον,  
 ἀλλ' ὥς ἕκαστος ἔσπασεν τύχης πάλον.  
 ἐν αἰχμαλώτοις Τρωικοῖς οἰκήμασιν  
 ναίουσιν ἤδη, τῶν ὑπαιθρίων πάγων  
 δρόσων τ' ἀπαλλαχθέντες· ὥς δ' εὐδαίμονες  
 ἀφύλακτον εὐδήσουσι πᾶσαν εὐφρόνην.  
 εἰ δ' εὐσεβοῦσι τοὺς πολιισσοῦχους θεοὺς  
 τοὺς τῆς ἀλούσης γῆς θεῶν θ' ἰδρύματα,  
**340** οὐ τὰν ἐλόντες ἀνθαλοῖεν ἄν.  
 ἔρως δὲ μὴ τις πρότερον ἐμπίπτῃ στρατῷ  
 πορθεῖν ἢ μὴ χρή, κέρδεσιν νικωμένους.  
 δεῖ γὰρ πρὸς οἶκους νοστήμου σωτηρίας  
 κάμψαι διαύλου θάτερον κῶλον πάλιν·  
 θεοῖς δ' ἀναμπλάκητος εἰ μόλοι στρατός,  
 ἐγρηγορὸς τὸ πῆμα τῶν ὀλωλότων  
 γένοιτ' ἄν, εἰ πρόσπαιά πη τεύχοι κακά.  
 τοιαῦτά τοι γυναικὸς ἐξ ἐμοῦ κλύεις·  
 τὸ δ' εὖ κρατοίῃ, μὴ διχορρόπως ἰδεῖν.  
**350** πολλῶν γὰρ ἐσθλῶν τήνδ' ὄνησιν εἰλόμην.  
**Χο.** γύναι, κατ' ἄνδρα σῶφρον' εὐφρόνως λέγεις.  
 ἐγὼ δ' ἀκούσας πιστά σου τεκμήρια  
 θεοὺς προσειπεῖν αὖ παρασκευάζομαι.  
 χάρις γὰρ οὐκ ἄτιμος εἴργασται πόνων.  
 – ὦ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ καὶ νύξ φιλία  
 μεγάλων κόσμων κτεάτειρα,

their fast on such fare as the town affords; not faring according to rank, but as each man has drawn his lot by chance.

[335] And even now they are quartered in the captured Trojan homes, delivered from the frosts and dew of the naked sky, and like happy men will sleep all the night without a guard.

Now if they keep clear of guilt towards the gods of the town—those of the conquered land—and towards their shrines, [340] the captors shall not be made captives in their turn. Only may no mad impulse first assail the army, overmastered by greed, to pillage what they should not! For to win safe passage home they need to travel back the other length of their double course. [345] But even if, without having offended the gods, our troops should reach home, the grievous suffering of the dead might still remain awake—if no fresh disaster transpires. These are my woman's words; but may the good prevail clearly for all to see! [350] For, choosing thus, I have chosen the enjoyment of many a blessing.

### Chorus

Lady, you speak as wisely as a prudent man. And, for my part, now that I have listened to your certain proofs, I prepare to address due prayers of thanksgiving to the gods; for a success has been achieved that well repays the toil.

[355] Hail, sovereign Zeus, and you kindly Night, you who have

ἦτ' ἐπὶ Τροίας πύργοις ἔβαλες  
στεγανὸν δίκτυον, ὥς μήτε μέγαν  
μήτ' οὖν νεαρῶν τιν' ὑπερτελέσαι  
**360** μέγα δουλείας

γάγγαμον, ἄτης παναλώτου.  
Δία τοι ξένιον μέγαν αἰδοῦμαι  
τὸν τάδε πράξαντ', ἐπ' Ἀλεξάνδρῳ  
τείνοντα πάλαι τόξον, ὅπως ἂν  
μήτε πρὸ καιροῦ μήθ' ὑπὲρ ἄστρον  
βέλος ἡλίθιον σκήψειεν.

– Διὸς πλαγὰν ἔχουσιν εἰπεῖν, **[στορ. α.]**  
πάρεστιν τοῦτό γ' ἐξιχνεῦσαι.

ἔπραξεν ὥς ἔκρανεν. οὐκ ἔφα τις  
**370** θεοὺς βροτῶν ἀξιοῦσθαι μέλιν  
ὅσοις ἀθίκτων χάρις  
πατοῖθ'· ὁ δ' οὐκ εὐσεβής.

πέφανται δ' ἐγγονοῦσα τόλμη τῶν Ἄρη  
πνεόντων μεῖζον ἢ δικαίως,  
φλεόντων δωμάτων ὑπέρφεν  
ὑπὲρ τὸ βέλτιστον. ἔστω δ' ἀπή-  
μαντον, ὥστ' ἀπαρκεῖν

**380** εὖ πραπίδων λαχόντι.  
οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἔπαλξις  
πλούτου πρὸς κόρον ἀνδρὶ  
λακτίσαντι μέγαν Δίκας

given us great glory, you who cast your meshed snare upon the  
towered walls of Troy, so that neither old  
nor young could overleap [360] the huge enslaving net of all-  
conquering Destruction.

Great Zeus it is, lord of host and guest, whom I revere—he has  
brought this to pass. He long kept his bow bent against Alexander  
[365] until his bolt would neither fall short of the mark nor, flying  
beyond the stars, be launched in vain.

“The stroke of Zeus” they may call it; his hand can be traced there.  
As he determines, so he acts.

Someone said [370] that the gods do not trouble themselves to  
remember mortals who trample underfoot the grace of things not to  
be touched. But that man was impious!

Now it stands revealed! [375] The penalty for reckless crime is ruin  
when men breathe a spirit of pride above just measure, because  
their mansions teem with more abundance than is good for them.  
But let there be such wealth as brings no distress, enough to satisfy  
[380] a sensible man. For riches do not protect the man who in  
wantonness has kicked the mighty altar of Justice into obscurity.



βωμόν εἰς ἀφάνειαν.  
 βιάται δ' ἅ τάλαινα πειθῶ, **[ἀντ. α.]**  
 προβούλου παῖς ἄφερτος ἄτας.  
 ἄκος δὲ πᾶν μάταιον. οὐκ ἐκρύφθη,  
 πρέπει δέ, φῶς αἰνολαμπές, σίνος·  
**390** κακοῦ δὲ χαλκοῦ τρόπον  
 τρίβω τε καὶ προσβολαῖς  
 μελαμπαγῆς πέλει δικαιωθείς, ἐπεὶ  
 διώκει παῖς ποτανὸν ὄρνιν,  
 πόλει πρόστριμμα θεῖς ἄφερτον·  
 λιτᾶν δ' ἀκούει μὲν οὐτις θεῶν·  
 † τὸν δ' ἐπίστροφον τῶν[δε]  
 φῶτ' ἄδικον καθαιρεῖ.  
 οἶος καὶ Πάρις ἐλθὼν  
**400** ἐς δόμον τὸν Ἀτρειδᾶν  
 ἥσχυνε ξενίαν τράπε-  
 ζαν κλοπαῖσι γυναικός.  
 λιποῦσα δ' ἀστοῖσιν ἀσπίστορας **[στρ. β.]**  
 κλόνους λοχισμούς τε καὶ  
 ναυβάτας ὀπλισμούς,  
 ἄγουσά τ' ἀντίφερνον Ἰλίῳ φθορὰν  
 βεβάκει ῥίμφα διὰ  
 πυλᾶν ἄτλητα τλᾶσα· πολλὰ δ' ἔστενον  
 τόδ' ἐννέποντες δόμων προφήται·  
**410** ἰὼ ἰὼ δῶμα δῶμα καὶ πρόμοι,

[385] Perverse Temptation, the overmastering child of designing Destruction, drives men on; and every remedy is futile. His evil is not hidden; it shines forth, a baleful gleam.

[390] Like base metal beneath the touchstone's rub, when tested he shows the blackness of his grain (for he is like a child who chases a winged bird) [395] and upon his people he brings a taint against which there is no defence. No god listens to his prayers. The man associated with such deeds, him they destroy in his unrighteousness.

And such was Paris, who came [400] to the house of the sons of Atreus and dishonoured the hospitality of his host by stealing away a wedded wife.

[405] But she, bequeathing to her people the clang of shield and spear and army of fleets, and bringing to Ilium destruction in place of dowry, with light step she passed through the gates—daring a deed undareable.

Then loud wailed the seers of the house crying, [410] “Alas, alas, for



ἰὼ λέχος καὶ στίβοι φιλόνορες.  
 † πάρεστι σιγᾶς ἄτιμος † ἀλοΐδορος  
 ἄλιστος ἀφεμένων ἰδεῖν.  
 πόθῳ δ' ὑπερποντίας  
 φάσμα δόξει δόμων ἀνάσσειν.  
 εὐμόρφων δὲ κολοσσῶν  
 ἔχθεται χάρις ἀνδρὶ  
 ὁμμάτων δ' ἐν ἀχηνίαις  
 ἔρρει πᾶσ' Ἀφροδίτα.

**420** ὄνειρόφαντοι δὲ πειθήμονες [ἀντ. β.

πάρεϊσι δόξαι φέρου-  
 σαι χάριν ματαίαν.  
 μάταν γάρ, εὖτ' ἂν ἐς θιγᾶς δοκῶν ὄρᾳ,  
 παραλλάξασα διὰ  
 χερῶν βέβακεν ὄψις, οὐ μεθύστερον  
 πετροῖς ὀπαδοῦς' ὕπνου κελεύθοις.  
 τὰ μὲν κατ' οἴκους ἐφ' ἐστίας ἄχη  
 τάδ' ἐστὶ καὶ τῶνδ' ὑπερβατώτερα.  
 τὸ πᾶν δ' ἀπ' αἵας Ἑλλαδος συνορμένοις

**430** πένθεια τλησικάρδιος

δόμῳ 'ν ἐκάστου πρέπει.  
 πολλὰ γοῦν θιγγάνει πρὸς ἥπαρ·  
 οὐς μὲν γάρ <τις> ἔπεμψεν  
 οἶδεν, ἀντὶ δὲ φωτῶν  
 τεύχη καὶ σποδὸς εἰς ἐκά-

the home, the home, and for the princes! Alas for the husband's bed  
 and the impress of her form so dear! He sits apart in the anguish of  
 his grief, silent, dishonored but making no reproach. In his yearning  
 for her who sped beyond the sea, [415] a phantom will seem to be  
 lord of the house".

The grace of fair-formed statues is hateful to him; and in the hunger  
 of his eyes all loveliness is departed.

[420] Mournful apparitions come to him in dreams, bringing only  
 vain joy; for vainly, whenever in his imagination a man sees  
 delights, [425] straightaway the vision, slipping through his arms, is  
 gone, winging its flight along the paths of sleep. Such are the  
 sorrows at hearth and home, but here are sorrows surpassing these;  
 and at large, in every house of all who went forth together from the  
 land of Hellas, [430] unbearable grief is seen. Many things pierce the  
 heart. Each knows whom he sent forth. But to the home of each  
 come [435] urns and ashes<sup>1</sup>, not living men.

<sup>1</sup> This passage, in which war is compared to a gold-merchant, is charged with  
 double meanings: *ταλαντοῦχος*, "balance" and "scales of battle," *πυρωθέν* of  
 "purified" gold-dust and of the "burnt" bodies of the slain, *βαρύ*, "heavy" and  
 "grievous," *ἀντήνορος*, "the price of a man," and "instead of men," *λέβητας*,  
 "jars" and "funeral urns."

στου δόμους ἀφικνεῖται.  
 ὁ χρυσαμοιβὸς δ' Ἄρης σωμάτων **[ιστρ. γ.]**  
 καὶ ταλαντοῦχος ἐν μάχῃ δορὸς  
**440** πυρωθὲν ἐξ Ἰλίου  
 φίλοισι πέμπει βαρὺ  
 ψῆγμα δυσδάκρυτον, ἀντ-  
 ήνορος σποδοῦ γεμί-  
 ζων λέβητας εὐθέτους.  
 στένουσι δ' εὖ λέγοντες ἄν-  
 δρα τὸν μὲν ὡς μάχης ἴδρις,  
 τὸν δ' ἐν φοναῖς καλῶς πεσόντ'— 'ἀλ-  
 λοτρίας διαὶ γυναικός·  
 τάδε σιγὰ τις βαῦζει·  
**450** φθονερόν δ' ὑπ' ἄλγος ἔρπει  
 προδίκους Ἀτρεΐδαις.  
 οἱ δ' αὐτοῦ περὶ τεῖχος  
 θήκας Ἰλιάδος γᾶς  
 εὖμορφοι κατέχουσιν· ἐ-  
 χθρὰ δ' ἔχοντας ἔκρυψεν.  
 βαρεῖα δ' ἀστῶν φάτις ξὺν κότῳ· **[ἀντ. γ.]**  
 δημοκράτου δ' ἀρᾶς τίνει χρέος.  
 μένει δ' ἀκοῦσαί τί μοι  
**460** μέριμνα νυκτηρεφές.  
 τῶν πολυκτόνων γὰρ οὐκ  
 ἄσκοποι θεοί. κελαι-

Ares barter the bodies of men for gold; he holds his balance in the  
 contest of the spear; and [440] back from Ilium to their loved ones  
 he sends a heavy dust passed through his burning, a dust cried over  
 with plenteous tears, in place of men sending well made urns with  
 ashes.

[445] So they lament, praising now this one: "How skilled in battle!"  
 now that one: "Fallen nobly in the carnage," — "for another's wife—" —  
 some mutter in secret, and [450] grief charged with resentment  
 spreads stealthily against the sons of Atreus, champions in the  
 strife.

But there far from home, around the city's walls, those in their  
 beauty's bloom have graves in Ilium— [455] the enemy's soil has  
 covered its conquerors.

Dangerous is a people's voice charged with wrath—it acts as a curse  
 of publicly ratified doom.

[460] In anxious fear I wait to hear something shrouded still in  
 gloom. The gods are not blind to men with blood upon their hands.

ναὶ δ' Ἐρινύες χρόνῳ  
 τυχηρὸν ὄντ' ἄνευ δίκας  
 παλιντυχεῖ τριβᾶ βίου  
 τιθεῖσ' ἀμαυρόν, ἐν δ' αἴστοις  
 τελέθοντος οὔτις ἀλκά·  
 τὸ δ' ὑπερκόπως κλύειν εὖ  
 βαρὺ· βάλλεται γὰρ ὅσοις  
**470** Διόθεν κεραυνός.  
 κρίνω δ' ἄφθονον ὄλβον·  
 μήτ' εἶην πτολιπόρθης  
 μήτ' οὖν αὐτὸς ἀλοὺς ὑπ' ἄλ-  
 λων βίον κατίδοιμι.  
 – πυρὸς δ' ὑπ' εὐαγγέλου [ἐπωδ.  
 πόλιν διήκει θοὰ  
 βάξις· εἰ δ' ἐτήτυμος,  
 τίς οἶδεν, ἥ τι θεῖόν ἐστί πη ψύθος.  
 – τίς ὦδε παιδνὸς ἢ φρενῶν κεκομμένος,  
**480** φλογὸς παραγγέλμασιν  
 νέοις πυρωθέντα καρδίαν ἔπειτ'  
 ἀλλαγᾶ λόγου καμεῖν;  
 – γυναικὸς αἰχμᾶ πρόπει  
 πρὸ τοῦ φανέντος χάριν ξυναινέσαι.  
 πιθανὸς ἄγαν ὁ θῆλυς ὄρος ἐπινέμεται  
 ταχύπορος· ἀλλὰ ταχύμορον  
 γυναικογήρυτον ὀλλυται κλέος.

In the end the black Spirits of Vengeance bring to obscurity that one  
 who has prospered in unrighteousness and [465] wear down his  
 fortunes by reverse. Once a man is among the unseen, there is no  
 more help for him.

Glory in excess is fraught with peril; [470] the lofty peak is struck by  
 Zeus' thunderbolt. I choose prosperity unassailed by envy. May I  
 not be a sacker of cities, and may I not myself be despoiled and live  
 to see my own life in another's power!

**(One Elder)**

[475] Heralded by a beacon of good tidings a swift report has spread  
 throughout the town. Yet whether it is true, or some deception of  
 the gods, who knows?

**(A Second Elder)**

Who is so childish or so bereft of sense, [480] once he has let his  
 heart be fired by sudden news of a beacon fire, to despair if the  
 story changes?

**(A Third Elder)**

It is just like a woman's eager nature to yield assent to pleasing  
 news before yet the truth is clear.

**(A Fourth Elder)**

[485] Too credulous, a woman's mind has boundaries open to quick  
 encroachment; but quick to perish is rumor spread by a woman.

τάχ' εἰσόμεσθα λαμπάδων φαεσφόρων  
**490** φρυκτωριῶν τε καὶ πυρὸς παραλλαγὰς,  
 εἴτ' οὖν ἀληθεῖς, εἴτ' ὄνειράτων δίκην  
 τερπνὸν τόδ' ἐλθὼν φῶς ἐφήλωσεν φρένας.  
 κήρυκ' ἀπ' ἀκτῆς τόνδ' ὄρῳ κατάσκιον  
 κλάδοις ἐλαίας· μαρτυρεῖ δέ μοι κάσις  
 πηλοῦ ξύνουρος διψία κόνις τάδε,  
 ὥς οὐκ ἀναυδος οὗτος, οὐ δαίμων φλόγα  
 ὕλης ὀρείας σημανεῖ καπνῷ πυρός,  
 ἀλλ' ἢ τὸ χαίρειν μᾶλλον ἐκβάξει λέγων—  
 τὸν ἀντίον δὲ τοῖσδ' ἀποστέρῃ λόγον·  
**500** εὖ γὰρ πρὸς εὖ φανεῖσι προοσθήκη πέλοι.  
 — ὅστις τὰδ' ἄλλως τῇδ' ἐπεύχεται πόλει,  
 αὐτὸς φρενῶν καρποῖτο τὴν ἀμαρτίαν.

#### ΚΗΡΥΞ

ἰὼ πατρῶον οὐδας Ἀργείας χθονός,  
 δεκάτω σε φέγγει τῷδ' ἀφικόμεν ἔτους,  
 πολλῶν ῥαγείσων ἐλπίδων μιᾶς τυχών.  
 οὐ γάρ ποτ' ἠϋχουν τῇδ' ἐν Ἀργείᾳ χθονὶ  
 θανὼν μεθέξειν φιλτάτου τάφου μέρος.  
 νῦν χαῖρε μὲν χθών, χαῖρε δ' ἡλίου φάος,  
 ὕπατός τε χώρας Ζεὺς, ὁ Πύθιος τ' ἄναξ,  
**510** τόξοις ἰάπτων μηκέτ' εἰς ἡμᾶς βέλη·

#### (Leader Of The Chorus)

We shall soon know about this passing on of flaming lights [490] and beacon signals and fires, whether they perhaps are true or whether, dream-like, this light's glad coming has beguiled our senses. Look! I see approaching from the shore a herald crowned with boughs of olive. [495] The thirsty dust, consorting sister of the mud<sup>1</sup>, assures me that neither by pantomime nor by kindling a flame of mountain wood will he signal with smoke of fire. Either in plain words he will bid us to rejoice the more, or—but I have little love for the report opposite to this! [500] May still further good be added to the good that has appeared!

#### (ANOTHER ELDER)

Whoever makes this prayer with other intent toward the state, let him reap himself the fruit of his misguided purpose!

#### *Enter a Herald*

#### Herald

All hail, soil of Argos, land of my fathers! On this happy day in the tenth year I have come to you. [505] Many hopes have shattered, one only have I seen fulfilled; for I never dared to dream that here in this land of Argos I should die and have due portion of burial most dear to me. Now blessings on the land, blessings on the light of the sun, and blessed be Zeus, the land's Most High, and the Pythian lord; [510] and may he launch no more his shafts against us.



ἄλις παρὰ Σκάμανδρον ἦσθ' ἀνάρσιος,  
 νῦν δ' αὖτε σωτὴρ ἴσθι καὶ παιώνιος,  
 ἄναξ Ἀπολλων. τοὺς τ' ἀγωνίους θεοὺς  
 πάντας προσαυδῶ, τόν τ' ἐμὸν τιμάορον  
 Ἑρμῆν, φίλον κήρυκα, κηρύκων σέβας,  
 ἥρως τε τοὺς πέμψαντας, εὐμενεῖς πάλιν  
 στρατὸν δέχεσθαι τὸν λελειμμένον δορός.  
 ἰὼ μέλαθρα βασιλέων, φίλοι στέγαι,  
 σεμνοὶ τε θᾶκοι, δαίμονές τ' ἀντήλιοι,  
**520** εἴ που πάλαι, φαιδροῖσι τοισιδ' ὄμμασι  
 δέξασθε κόσμῳ βασιλέα πολλῷ χρόνῳ.  
 ἦκει γὰρ ὑμῖν φῶς ἐν εὐφρόνῃ φέρων  
 καὶ τοῖσδ' ἅπασιν κοινὸν Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ.  
 ἀλλ' εὖ νιν ἀσπάσασθε, καὶ γὰρ οὖν πρέπει,  
 Τροίαν κατασκάψαντα τοῦ δικηφόρου  
 Διὸς μακέλλῃ, τῇ κατείργασται πέδον.  
 βωμοὶ δ' αἴστοι καὶ θεῶν ἰδρύματα,  
 καὶ σπέρμα πάσης ἐξαπόλλυται χθονός.  
 τοιόνδε Τροίᾳ περιβαλὼν ζευκτήριον  
**530** ἄναξ Ἀτρεΐδης πρέσβυς, εὐδαίμων ἀνὴρ,  
 ἦκει, τίεσθαι δ' ἀξιώτατος βροτῶν  
 τῶν νῦν. Πάρις γὰρ οὔτε συντελὴς πόλις  
 ἐξεύχεται τὸ δρᾶμα τοῦ πάθους πλέον.  
 ὀφλὼν γὰρ ἀρπαγῆς τε καὶ κλοπῆς δίκην  
 τοῦ ῥυσίου θ' ἤμαρτε καὶ πανώλεθρον

Enough of your hostility did you display by Scamander's banks; but  
 now, in other mood, be our preserver and our healer, O lord Apollo.  
 And the gods gathered here, I greet them all; him, too, my own  
 patron, [515] Hermes, beloved herald, of heralds all revered; and the  
 heroes<sup>2</sup> who sped us forth, I pray that they may receive back in  
 kindness the remnant of the host which has escaped the spear.  
 Hail, halls of our kings, beloved roofs, and you august seats, and  
 you divinities that face the sun<sup>3</sup>, [520] if ever you did in days gone  
 by, now after long lapse of years, with gladness in your eyes receive  
 your king. For bearing light in darkness to you and to all assembled  
 here alike, he has returned—Agamemnon, our king. Oh greet him  
 well, as is right, [525] since he has uprooted Troy with the mattock  
 of Zeus the Avenger, with which her soil has been upturned.  
 Demolished are the altars and the shrines of her gods; and the seed  
 of her whole land has been wasted utterly. Upon the neck of Troy  
 he has cast such a yoke. [530] Now he has come home, our king,  
 Atreus' elder son, a man of happy fate, worthy of honor beyond all  
 living men. For neither Paris nor his partner city can boast that the  
 deed was greater than the suffering. Convicted for robbery and for  
 theft as well, [535] he has lost the plunder and has razed in utter  
 destruction his father's house and even the land. The sons of Priam  
 have paid a twofold penalty for their sins.

<sup>1</sup> His attire bears evidence of dust and mud. Cp. the description of Sir Walter  
 Blunt, "Stained with the variation of each soil Betwixt that Holmedon and this  
 seat of ours" (Henry IV.) .

**Χο.** πάλαι τὸ σιγᾶν φάρμακον βλάβης ἔχω.

Long since have I found silence an antidote to harm.

**Κη.** καὶ πῶς; ἀπόντων κοιράνων ἔτρεις τινάς;  
**550 Χο.** ὥς νῦν τὸ σὸν δῆ, καὶ θανεῖν πολλὴ χάρις.

**Κη.** εὖ γὰρ πέπρακται. ταῦτα δ' ἐν πολλῷ χρόνῳ  
 τὰ μὲν τις ἂν λέξειεν εὐπετῶς ἔχειν,  
 τὰ δ' αὖτε κἀπίμομφα. τίς δὲ πλήν θεῶν  
 ἅπαντ' ἀπήμων τὸν δι' αἰῶνος χρόνον;  
 μόχθους γὰρ εἰ λέγοιμι καὶ δυσουλίας,  
 σπαρνὰς παρήξεις καὶ κακοστρώτους—τί δ' οὐ  
 στένοντες, οὐ λαχόντες ἡματος μέρος;  
 τὰ δ' αὖτε χέρσω· καὶ προσῆν πλέον στύγος·  
 εὐναὶ γὰρ ἦσαν δηῖων πρὸς τείχεσιν,  
**560** ἐξ οὐρανοῦ δὲ κἀπὸ γῆς λειμωνίας  
 † δρόσοι κατεψάκαζον, ἔμπεδον σίνος  
 ἐσθημάτων, τιθέντες ἔνθηρον τρίχα.  
 χειμῶνα δ' εἰ λέγοι τις οἰωνοκτόνον,  
 οἶον παρεῖχ' ἄφερτον Ἰδαία χιών,  
 ἢ θάλλπος, εὖτε πόντος ἐν μεσημβριναῖς  
 κοίταις ἀκύμων νηνέμοις εὖδοι πεσών—  
 τί ταῦτα πενθεῖν δεῖ; παροίχεται πόνος·  
 παροίχεται δέ, τοῖσι μὲν τεθνηκόσιν  
 τὸ μήποτ' αὖθις μηδ' ἀναστῆναι μέλειν—  
**570** τί τοὺς ἀναλωθέντας ἐν ψήφῳ λέγειν,  
 τὸν ζῶντα δ' ἀλγεῖν χρὴ τύχης παλιγκότου;  
 καὶ πολλὰ χαίρειν ξυμφοραῖς καταξιῶ.  
 ἡμῖν δὲ τοῖς λοιποῖσιν Ἀργείων στρατοῦ

**Herald**

How so? Did you fear anyone when our princes were gone?

**Chorus**

[550] In such fear that now, in your own words, even death would be great joy.

**Herald**

Yes, all's well, well ended. Yet, of what occurred in the long years, one might well say that part fell out happily, and part in turn amiss. But who, unless he is a god, is free from suffering all his days? [555] For were I to recount our hardships and our wretched quarters, the scanty space and the sorry berths—what did we not have to complain of . . . <sup>1</sup>Then again, ashore, there was still worse to loathe; for we had to lie down close to the enemy's walls, [560] and the drizzling from the sky and the dews from the meadows distilled upon us, working constant destruction to our clothes and filling our hair with vermin. And if one were to tell of the wintry cold, past all enduring, when Ida's snow slew the birds; [565] or of the heat, when upon his waveless noonday couch, windless the sea sank to sleep—but why should we bewail all this? Our labor's past; past for the dead so that they will never care even to wake to life again. [570] Why should we count the number of the slain, or why should the living feel pain at their past harsh fortunes? Our misfortunes should, in my opinion, bid us a long farewell. For us, the remnant of the Argive host, the gain has the advantage and the loss does not



νικᾷ τὸ κέρδος, πῆμα δ' οὐκ ἀντιρρέπει·  
 ὥς κομπάσαι τῷ δ' εἰκὸς ἡλίου φάει  
 ὑπὲρ θαλάσσης καὶ χθονὸς ποτωμένοις·  
 'Τροίαν ἐλόντες δή ποτ' Ἀργείων στόλος  
 θεοῖς λάφυρα ταῦτα τοῖς καθ' Ἑλλάδα  
 δόμοις ἐπασσάλευσαν ἀρχαῖον γάνος.'  
**580** τοιαῦτα χρῆ κλύοντας εὐλογεῖν πόλιν  
 καὶ τοὺς στρατηγούς· καὶ χάρις τιμῆσεται  
 Διὸς τάδ' ἐκπράξασα. πάντ' ἔχεις λόγον.  
**Χο.** νικώμενος λόγοισιν οὐκ ἀναίνομαι·  
 ἀεὶ γὰρ ἦβη τοῖς γέρουσιν εὐμαθεῖν.  
 δόμοις δὲ ταῦτα καὶ Κλυταιμῆστρα μέλειν  
 εἰκὸς μάλιστα, σὺν δὲ πλουτίζειν ἐμέ.

**Κλ.** ἀνωλόλυξα μὲν πάλαι χαρᾶς ὕπο,  
 ὅτ' ἦλθ' ὁ πρῶτος νύχιος ἄγγελος πυρός,  
 φράζων ἄλωσιν Ἰλίου τ' ἀνάστασιν.

bear down the scale; [575] so that, as we speed over land and sea, it is fitting that we on this bright day make this boast:<sup>2</sup> "The Argive army, having taken Troy at last, has nailed up these spoils to be a glory for the gods throughout Hellas in their shrines from days of old." [580] Whoever hears the story of these deeds must extol the city and the leaders of her host; and the grace of Zeus that brought them to accomplishment shall receive its due measure of gratitude. There, you have heard all that I have to say.

<sup>1</sup> For λαχόντες in l. 557 numerous emendations have been proposed, e.g. κλαίοντες, λάσκοντες, χαλῶντες. ἡματός μέρος probably means "as our day's portion."

<sup>2</sup> Or "to this light of the sun."

### Chorus

Your words have proved me wrong. I do not deny it; for the old have ever enough youth to learn aright. [585] But these tidings should have most interest for the household and Clytaemestra, and at the same time enrich me.

*Enter Clytaemestra*

### Clytaemestra

I raised a shout of triumph in my joy long before this, when the first flaming messenger arrived by night, telling that Ilium was captured and overthrown. [590] Then there were some who chided me and



**590** καί τίς μ' ἐνίπτων εἶπε, 'φρυκτωρῶν διὰ  
 πεισθεῖσα Τροίαν νῦν πεπορθηῆσθαι δοκεῖς;  
 ἦ κάρτα πρὸς γυναικὸς αἵρεσθαι κέαρ.  
 λόγοις τοιούτοις πλαγκτὸς οὐς' ἐφαινόμην.  
 ὅμως δ' ἔθυον, καὶ γυναικεῖα νόμῳ  
 ὀλολυγμὸν ἄλλος ἄλλοθεν κατὰ πτόλιν  
 ἔλασκον εὐφημοῦντες ἐν θεῶν ἔδραις,  
 θυηφάγον κοιμῶντες εὐώδη φλόγα.  
 καὶ νῦν τὰ μάσσῳ μὲν τί δεῖ σέ μοι λέγειν;  
 ἄνακτος αὐτοῦ πάντα πεύσομαι λόγον.

**600** ὅπως δ' ἄριστα τὸν ἐμὸν αἰδοῖον πόσιν  
 σπεύσω πάλιν μολόντα δέξασθαι—τί γὰρ  
 γυναικὶ τούτου φέγγος ἥδιον δρακεῖν,  
 ἀπὸ στρατείας ἄνδρα σώσαντος θεοῦ  
 πύλας ἀνοῖξαι; —ταῦτ' ἀπάγγελον πόσει·  
 ἦκειν ὅπως τάχιστ' ἐράσμιον πόλει·  
 γυναικὰ πιστὴν δ' ἐν δόμοις εὖροι μολῶν  
 οἷανπερ οὖν ἔλειπε, δωμάτων κύνα,  
 ἐσθλὴν ἐκείνῳ, πολεμίαν τοῖς δύσφροσιν,  
 καὶ τᾶλλ' ὁμοίαν πάντα, σημαντήριον

**610** οὐδὲν διαφθείρασαν ἐν μήκει χρόνου.  
 οὐδ' οἶδα τέρψιν οὐδ' ἐπίψογον φάτιν  
 ἄλλου πρὸς ἄνδρὸς μᾶλλον ἢ χαλκοῦ βαφάς.  
**Κη.** τοιόσδ' ὁ κόμπος, τῆς ἀληθείας γέμων,  
 οὐκ αἰσχρὸς ὥς γυναικὶ γενναία λακεῖν.

said: "Are you so convinced by beacon-fires as to think that Troy has now been sacked? Truly, it is just like a woman to be elated in heart." By such taunts I was made to seem as if my wits were wandering. Nevertheless I still held on with my sacrifice, and throughout all the quarters of the city, according to their womanly custom, [595] they raised a shout of happy praise while in the shrines of the gods they lulled to rest the fragrant spice-fed flame. So now why should you rehearse to me the account at length? From the king himself I shall hear the whole tale; [600] but I should hasten to welcome my honored husband best on his return. For what joy is sweeter in a woman's eyes than to unbar the gates for her husband when God has spared him to return from war? Give this message to my husband: [605] let him come with all speed, his country's fond desire, come to find at home his wife faithful, even as he left her, a watchdog of his house, loyal to him, a foe to those who wish him ill; yes, for the rest, unchanged in every part; [610] in all this length of time never having broken any seal. Of pleasure from any other man or of scandalous repute I know no more than of dyeing bronze. *Exit*

#### Herald

A boast like this, loaded full with truth, does not shame the speech of a noble wife.

**Χο.** αὕτη μὲν οὕτως εἶπε μανθάνοντί σοι  
† τοροῖσιν ἐρμηνεῦσιν εὐπρεπῶς λόγον.  
σὺ δ' εἶπέ, κῆρυξ, Μενέλεων δὲ πεύθομαι,  
εἰ νόστιμός τε καὶ σεσφόμενος πάλιν  
ἦξει σὺν ὑμῖν, τῆσδε γῆς φίλον κράτος.

**620 Κη.** οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅπως λέξαιμι τὰ ψευδῇ καλὰ  
ἐς τὸν πολὺν φίλοισι καρποῦσθαι χρόνον.

**Χο.** πῶς δῆτ' ἂν εἰπὼν κεδνὰ τάληθῇ τύχοις;  
σχισθέντα δ' οὐκ εὐκρυπτα γίγνεται τάδε.

**Κη.** ἀνὴρ ἄφαντος ἐξ Ἀχαικοῦ στρατοῦ,  
αὐτός τε καὶ τὸ πλοῖον. οὐ ψευδῇ λέγω.

**Χο.** πότερον ἀναχθεῖς ἐμφανῶς ἐξ Ἰλίου,  
ἢ χειμα, κοινὸν ἄχθος, ἥρπασε στρατοῦ;

**Κη.** ἔκυρσας ὥστε τοξότης ἄκρος σκοποῦ·  
μακρὸν δὲ πῆμα συντόμως ἐφημίσω.

**630 Χο.** πότερα γὰρ αὐτοῦ ζῶντος ἢ τεθνηκότος  
φάτις πρὸς ἄλλων ναυτίλων ἐκλήζετο;

**Κη.** οὐκ οἶδεν οὐδεὶς ὥστ' ἀπαγγεῖλαι τορῶς,

### **Chorus**

[615] Thus has she spoken for your schooling, but speciously for those that can interpret right. But, Herald, say—I want to hear of Menelaus. Has he, our land's dear lord, travelled safe home and has he returned with you?

### **Herald**

[620] It would be impossible to report false news so fair that those I love should take pleasure for long.

### **Chorus**

Oh if only you could tell tidings true yet good! It is not easy to conceal when true and good are split apart.

### **Herald**

The prince was swept from the sight of the Achaean host, [625] himself, and his ship likewise. I speak no lies.

### **Chorus**

Did he put forth in sight of all from Ilium, or did a storm, distressing all in common, snatch him from the fleet?

### **Herald**

Like a master bowman you have hit the mark; a long tale of distress have you told in brief.

### **Chorus**

[630] Did the general voice of other voyagers bring news of him as alive or dead?

### **Herald**

None knows to give clear report of this—except only the Sun that

πλήν τοῦ τρέφοντος Ἡλίου χθονὸς φύσιν.

**Χο.** πῶς γὰρ λέγεις χειμῶνα ναυτικῷ στρατῷ  
ἐλθεῖν τελευτῆσαί τε δαιμόνων κότῳ;

**Κη.** εὐφημον ἦμαρ οὐ πρόπει κακαγγέλω  
γλώσση μιαίνειν· χωρὶς ἢ τιμὴ θεῶν.  
ὅταν δ' ἀπευκτὰ πῆματ' ἄγγελος πόλει  
στυγνῷ προσώπῳ πτωσίμου στρατοῦ φέρῃ,  
**640** πόλει μὲν ἔλκος ἐν τὸ δῆμιον τυχεῖν,  
πολλοὺς δὲ πολλῶν ἐξαγισθέντας δόμων  
ἄνδρας διπλῇ μάστιγι, τὴν Ἄρης φιλεῖ,  
δίλογχον ἄτην, φοινίαν ξυνωρίδα·  
τοιῶνδε μέντοι πημάτων σεσαγμένον  
πρέπει λέγειν παιᾶνα τόνδ' Ἑρινύων.  
σωτηρίων δὲ πραγμάτων εὐάγγελον  
ἦκοντα πρὸς χαίρουσαν εὐεστοῖ πόλιν—  
πῶς κεδνὰ τοῖς κακοῖσι συμμείξω, λέγων  
χειμῶν' Ἀχαιῶν οὐκ ἀμήνιτον θεοῖς;  
**650** ξυνώμοσαν γάρ, ὄντες ἔχθιστοι τὸ πρίν,  
πῦρ καὶ θάλασσα, καὶ τὰ πίστ' ἐδειξάτην  
φθείροντε τὸν δύστηνον Ἀργείων στρατόν·  
ἐν νυκτὶ δυσκύμαντα δ' ὠρώρει κακά.  
ναῦς γὰρ πρὸς ἀλλήλησι Θρηῖκαι πνοαὶ  
ῥηρικόν· αἱ δὲ κεροτυπούμεναι βία  
χειμῶνι τυφῷ σὺν ζάλῃ τ' ὀμβροκτύπῳ  
ᾤχοντ' ἄφαντοι, ποιμένος κακοῦ στρόβῳ.

fosters life upon the earth.

#### Chorus

How then do you say [635] rose the storm by the wrath of the gods  
upon the naval host and passed away?

#### Herald

An auspicious day one should not mar with a tale of misfortune —  
the honor due to the gods keeps them apart.<sup>1</sup> When a messenger  
with gloomy countenance reports to a people dire disaster of its  
army's rout — [640] one common wound inflicted on the State, while  
from many a home many a victim is devoted to death by the two-  
handled whip beloved of Ares, destruction double-armed, a gory  
pair — when, I say, he is packed with woes like this, [645] he should  
sing the triumph-song of the Avenging Spirits.

But when one comes with glad news of deliverance to a city  
rejoicing in its happiness — how shall I mix fair with foul in telling of  
the storm, not unprovoked by the gods' wrath, that broke upon the  
Achaeans? [650] For fire and sea, beforehand bitterest of foes, swore  
alliance and as proof destroyed the unhappy Argive army. In the  
night-time arose the mischief from the cruel swells. Beneath blasts  
from Thrace ship dashed against ship; [655] and they, gored  
violently by the furious hurricane and rush of pelting rain, were  
swept out of sight by the whirling gust of an evil shepherd.<sup>2</sup>



ἐπεὶ δ' ἀνῆλθε λαμπρὸν ἡλίου φάος,  
ὀρῶμεν ἀνθοῦν πέλαγος Αἰγαῖον νεκροῖς  
**660** ἀνδρῶν Ἀχαιῶν ναυτικοῖς τ' ἐρειπίοις.  
ἡμᾶς γε μὲν δὴ ναῦν τ' ἀκήρατον σκάφος  
ἦτοι τις ἐξέκλεψεν ἢ 'ξητήσατο  
θεός τις, οὐκ ἄνθρωπος, οἶακος θιγών.  
τύχη δὲ σωτὴρ ναῦν θέλουσ' ἐφέζετο,  
ὥς μήτ' ἐν ὄρμῳ κύματος ζάλην ἔχειν  
μήτ' ἐξοκεῖλαι πρὸς κραταίλεων χθόνα.  
ἔπειτα δ' Αἰδὴν πόντιον πεφευγότες,  
λευκὸν κατ' ἡμαρ, οὐ πεποιθότες τύχη,  
ἐβουκολοῦμεν φροντίσιν νέον πάθος,  
**670** στρατοῦ καμόντος καὶ κακῶς σποδουμένου.  
καὶ νῦν ἐκείνων εἴ τις ἐστὶν ἐμπνέων,  
λέγουσιν ἡμᾶς ὥς ὀλωλότας, τί μῆν;  
ἡμεῖς τ' ἐκείνους ταῦτ' ἔχειν δοξάζομεν.  
γένοιτο δ' ὥς ἄριστα. Μενέλεων γὰρ οὖν  
.....  
πρῶτόν τε καὶ μάλιστα προσδόκα μέλειν·  
εἰ δ' οὖν τις ἀκτὺς ἡλίου νιν ἱστορεῖ  
χλωρόν τε καὶ βλέποντα, μηχαναῖς Διὸς  
οὔπω θέλοντος ἐξαναλῶσαι γένος,  
ἐλπίς τις αὐτὸν πρὸς δόμους ἥξειν πάλιν.  
**680** τοσαῦτ' ἀκούσας ἴσθι τάληθ' ἑκλῶν.

But when the radiant light of the sun rose we beheld the Aegean  
flowering with corpses [660] of Achaean men and wreckage of  
ships. Ourselves, however, and our ship, its hull unshattered, some  
power, divine not human, preserved by stealth or intercession,  
laying hand upon its helm; and Savior Fortune chose to sit aboard  
our craft [665] so that it should neither take in the swelling surf at  
anchorage nor drive upon a rock-bound coast. Then, having  
escaped death upon the deep, in the clear bright day, scarce  
crediting our fortune, we brooded in anxious thought over our late  
mischance, [670] our fleet distressed and sorely buffeted. So now, if  
any of them still draw the breath of life, they speak of us as lost—  
and why should they not? We think the same of them. But may all  
turn out for the best! For Menelaus, indeed; [675] first and foremost  
expect him to return. At least if some beam of the sun finds him  
alive and well, by the design of Zeus, who has not yet decided  
utterly to destroy the race, there is some hope that he will come  
home again. [680] Hearing so much, be assured that you hear the  
truth.

*Exit*

- 1 To the Olympian gods belong tales of good, to the Erinyes (l. 645) belong tales of misfortune. Some interpret the passage to mean that the honour due to the gods is to be kept apart from pollution through the recital of ills.
- 2 The “evil shepherd” is the storm that drives the ships, like sheep, from their course.



**Χο.** τίς ποτ' ὠνόμαξεν ᾧδ' [στρ. α.

ἔς τὸ πᾶν ἐτητύμως—

μή τις ὄντιν' οὐχ ὀρῶ-

μεν προνοί-

αῖσι τοῦ πεπρωμένου

γλῶσσαν ἐν τύχᾳ νέμων; —τὰν

δορίγαμβρον ἀμφινεικῇ

θ' Ἑλέναν; ἐπεὶ πρεπόντως

ἑλένας, ἑλάνδρος, ἑλέ-

**690** πτολις, ἐκ τῶν ἀβροπῆνων

προκαλυμμάτων ἔπλευσε

Ζεφύρου γίγαντος αὔρα,

πολύανδροί

τε φεράσπιδες κυναγοὶ

κατ' ἵχνος πλατᾶν ἄφαντον

κελσάντων Σιμόεντος

ἀκτὰς ἐπ' ἀεξιφύλλους

δι' ἔριν αἱματόεσαν.

Ἰλίῳ δὲ κῆδος ὀρθ- [ἀντ. α.

**700** ὠνυμον τελεσσίφρων

μῆνις ἤλασεν, τραπέ-

ζας ἀτί-

μωσιν ὑστέρω χρόνῳ

καὶ ξυνεστίου Διὸς πρᾶσ-

σομένα τὸ νυμφότιμον

### Chorus

Who can have given a name so altogether true—was it some power invisible guiding his tongue aright by forecasting of destiny?— [685] who named that bride of the spear and source of strife with the name of Helen? For, true to her name, a Hell she proved to ships, Hell to men, Hell to city, [690] when stepping forth from her delicate and costly-curtained bower, she sailed the sea before the breath of earth-born Zephyrus. And after her a goodly host of warrior [695] huntsmen followed on the oars' vanished track in pursuit of a quarry that had beached its boat on Simois' leafy banks—in a strife to end in blood.

To Ilium, its purpose fulfilling, [700] Wrath brought a marriage rightly named a mourning,<sup>1</sup> exacting in later time requital for the dishonor done to hospitality and to Zeus, the partaker of the hearth, [705] upon those who with loud voice celebrated the song in honor of the bride, even the bridegroom's kin to whom it fell that day to raise the marriage-hymn.

μέλος ἐκφάτως τίνοντας,  
 ὑμέναιον, ὃς τότ' ἐπέρ-  
 ρεπε γαμβροῖσιν αἰεῖδεν.  
 μεταμανθάνουσα δ' ὕμνον  
**710** Πριάμου πόλις γεραῖα  
 πολύθρηνον  
 μέγα που στένει κικλήσκουσ'  
 Ἄπαριν τὸν αἰνόλεκτρον,  
 παμπορθῇ πολύθρηνον  
 αἰῶν' ἀμφὶ πολιτᾶν  
 μέλεον αἶμ' ἀνατλᾶσα.

ἔθρεψεν δὲ λέοντος ἱ- **[στρ. β.**  
 νιν δόμοις ἀγάλακτον οὐ-  
 τως ἀνὴρ φιλόμαστον,  
**720** ἐν βιότου προτελείοις  
 ἄμερον, εὐφιλόπαιδα  
 καὶ γεραροῖς ἐπίχαρτον.  
 πολέα δ' ἔσκ' ἐν ἀγκάλαις  
 νεοτρόφου τέκνου δίκαν,  
 παιδρωπὸς ποτὶ χεῖρα σαί-  
 νων τε γαστρὸς ἀνάγκαις.  
 χρονισθεῖς δ' ἀπέδειξεν ἥ- **[ἀντ. β.**  
 θος τὸ πρὸς τοκέων· χάριν  
 γὰρ τροφεῦσιν ἀμείβων  
**730** μηλοφόνοισι μάταισιν

[710] But Priam's city has learned, in her old age, an altered strain, and now, I trust, wails a loud song, full of lamentation, calling Paris "evil-wed"; for she has born the burden of a life in which everything was destroyed, a life full of lamentation because of [715] the wretched slaughter of her sons.

1 κῆδος has a double sense: "marriage-alliance" and "sorrow."

Even so a man reared in his house a lion's whelp, robbed of its mother's milk yet still desiring the breast. Gentle it was [720] in the prelude of its life, kindly to children, and a delight to the old. Much did it get, held in arms like a nursling child, with its [725] bright eye turned toward his hand, and fawning under compulsion of its belly's need.

But brought to full growth by time it showed the nature it had from its parents. Unbidden, as payment for its fostering, [730] it prepared a feast with ruinous slaughter of the flocks; so that the house was

δαῖτ' ἀκέλευστος ἔτευξεν,  
 αἵματι δ' οἶκος ἐφύρθη,  
 ἄμαχον ἄλγος οἰκέταις,  
 μέγα σίνος πολυκτόνον.  
 ἐκ θεοῦ δ' ἱερεὺς τις ἄ-  
 τας δόμοις προσεθρέφθη.  
 πάραυτα δ' ἐλθεῖν ἐς Ἰλίου πόλιν [στρ. γ.  
 λέγοιμ' ἂν φρόνημα μὲν  
 740 νηνέμου γαλάνας,  
 ἀκασκαῖον <τ'> ἄγαλμα πλούτου,  
 μαλθακὸν ὀμμάτων βέλος,  
 δηξίθυμον ἔρωτος ἄνθος.  
 παρακλίνασ' ἐπέκρανεν  
 δὲ γάμου πικρὰς τελευτάς,  
 δύσεδρος καὶ δυσόμιλος  
 συμένα Πριαμίδαισιν,  
 πομπᾷ Διὸς ξενίου,  
 νυμφόκλαυτος Ἑρινύς.  
 750 παλαίφατος δ' ἐν βροτοῖς γέρων λόγος [ἀντ. γ.  
 τέτυκται, μέγαν τελε-  
 σθέντα φωτὸς ὄλβον  
 τεκνοῦσθαι μῆδ' ἄπαιδα θνήσκειν,  
 ἐκ δ' ἀγαθᾶς τύχας γένει  
 βλαστάνειν ἀκόρεστον οἰζύν.  
 δίχα δ' ἄλλων μονόφρων εἰ-

defiled with blood, and whose who lived there could not control  
 their anguish, and great was the carnage far and wide. [735] A priest  
 of ruin, by order of a god, it was reared in the house.

At first, I would say, there came to Ilium the spirit of unruffled  
 calm, [740] a delicate ornament of wealth, a darter of soft glances  
 from the eye, love's flower that stings the heart. Then, swerving  
 from her course, she brought [745] her marriage to a bitter end, sped  
 on to the children of Priam under escort of Zeus, the warder of host  
 and guest, ruining her sojourn and her companions, a vengeful Fury  
 who brought tears to brides.

[750] A venerable utterance proclaimed of old has been fashioned  
 among mankind: the prosperity of man, when it has come to full  
 growth, engenders offspring and does not die childless, [755] and  
 from his good fortune there springs up insatiable misery.

But I hold my own mind and think apart from other men. It is the

μί. τὸ δυσσεβὲς γὰρ ἔργον  
 μετὰ μὲν πλείονα τίκτει,  
 760 σφετέρῃ δ' εἰκότα γέννα.  
 οἴκων γὰρ εὐθυδίκων  
 καλλίπαις πότμος αἰεί.  
 φιλεῖ δὲ τίκτειν Ὕβρις [στρ. δ.  
 μὲν παλαιὰ νεά-  
 ζουσιν ἐν κακοῖς βροτῶν  
 Ὕβριν τότε ἢ τόθ', ὅτε τὸ κύριον μόλη  
 φάος τόκου, δαίμονά τ' ἔταν,  
 ἄμαχον ἀπόλεμον ἀνίερν,  
 Θράσος, μελαίνα μελάθροισιν Ἄτα,  
 770 εἰδομένα τοκεῦσιν.  
 Δίκα δὲ λάμπει μὲν ἐν [ἀντ. δ.  
 δυσκάπνοις δώμασιν,  
 τὸν τ' ἐναΐσιμον τίει [βίον].  
 τὰ χρυσόπαστα δ' ἔδεθλα σὺν πίνῳ χερῶν  
 παλιντρόποις ὄμμασι λιποῦσ',  
 ὅσια προσέβατο δύναμιν οὐ  
 780 σέβουσα πλούτου παράσημον αἶνῳ.  
 πᾶν δ' ἐπὶ τέρμα νωμᾶ.

– ἄγε, δῆ, βασιλεῦ, Τροίας πτολίπορθ',  
 Ἀτρεὺς γένεθλον,  
 πῶς σε προσείπω; πῶς σε σεβίξω

evil deed that afterwards begets more iniquity [760] like its own  
 breed; but when a house is righteous, the lot of its children is  
 blessed always.

But an old Hubris tends to bring forth [765] in evil men, sooner or  
 later, at the fated hour of birth, a young Hubris and that irresistible,  
 unconquerable, unholy spirit, Recklessness, [770] and for the  
 household black Curses, which resemble their parents.

But Righteousness shines in smoke-begrimed dwellings [775] and  
 esteems the virtuous man. From gilded mansions, where men's  
 hands are foul, she departs with averted eyes and makes her way to  
 pure homes; she does not worship the power [780] of wealth  
 stamped counterfeit by the praise of men, and she guides all things  
 to their proper end.

*Enter Agamemnon and Cassandra, in a chariot, with a numerous retinue*

All hail, my King, sacker of Troy, off-spring of Atreus! [785] How  
 shall I greet you? How shall I do you homage,



μήθ' ὑπεράρας μήθ' ὑποκάμψας  
καιρὸν χάριτος;  
πολλοὶ δὲ βροτῶν τὸ δοκεῖν εἶναι  
προτίουσι δίκην παραβάντες.

**790** τῷ δυσπραγοῦντί τ' ἐπιστενάχειν  
πᾶς τις ἐτοῖμος· δῆγμα δὲ λύπης  
οὐδὲν ἐφ' ἧπαρ προσικνεῖται·  
καὶ ξυχαίρουσιν ὁμοιοπρεπεῖς,  
ἀγέλαστα πρόσωπα βιαζόμενοι  
.....

ὅστις δ' ἀγαθὸς προβατογνώμων,  
οὐκ ἔστι λαθεῖν ὄμματα φωτός  
† τὰ δοκοῦντ' εὐφρονος ἐκ διανοίας  
ύδαρεῖ σαίνειν φιλότητι.  
σὺ δέ μοι τότε μὲν στέλλων στρατιὰν  
**800** Ἑλένης ἔνεκ', οὐ γάρ <σ> ἐπικεύσω,  
κάρτ' ἀπομούσως ἦσθα γεγραμμένος,  
οὐδ' εὖ πραπίδων οἶακα νέμων,  
θάρσος ἐκούσιον  
ἀνδράσι θνήσκουσι κομίζων.  
νῦν δ' οὐκ ἀπ' ἄκρας φρενὸς οὐδ' ἀφίλως  
εὐφρων πόνος εὖ τελέσασιν.  
γνώση δὲ χρόνῳ διαπευθόμενος  
τόν τε δικαίως καὶ τὸν ἀκαίρως  
πόλιν οἰκουροῦντα πολιτῶν.

not overshooting or running short of the due measure of courtesy?  
Many of mortal men put appearance before truth and thereby  
transgress the right.

[790] Every one is ready to heave a sigh over the unfortunate, but no  
sting of true sorrow reaches the heart; and in seeming sympathy  
they join in others' joy, forcing their faces into smiles.

[795] But whoever is a discerning shepherd of his flock cannot be  
deceived by men's eyes which, while they feign loyalty of heart,  
only fawn upon him with watery affection.<sup>1</sup>

Now in the past, when you marshaled the army in Helen's cause,  
[800] you were depicted in my eyes (for I will not hide it from  
you) most ungracefully and as not rightly guiding the helm of  
your mind in seeking through your sacrifices to bring courage to  
dying men.

[805] But now, from the depth of my heart and with no lack of love  
\*

their toil is joy to those who have won success. In course of time you  
shall learn by enquiry who of your people has been an honest, and  
who an unfitting guardian of the State.

<sup>1</sup> The figure is of wine much diluted.

## ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

810 πρῶτον μὲν Ἄργος καὶ θεοὺς ἐγχωρίους  
 δίκη προσειπεῖν, τοὺς ἔμοι μεταίτιους  
 νόστου δικαίων θ' ὧν ἐπραξάμην πόλιν  
 Πριάμου· δίκας γὰρ οὐκ ἀπὸ γλώσσης θεοὶ  
 κλύοντες ἀνδροθνήτας Ἰλιοφθόρους  
 εἰς αἵματηρόν τεῦχος οὐ διχορρόπως  
 ψήφους ἔθεντο· τῷ δ' ἐναντίῳ κύτει  
 ἐλπίς προσήει χειρὸς οὐ πληρουμένῃ.  
 καπνῷ δ' ἀλοῦσα νῦν ἔτ' εὖσημος πόλις.  
 ἄτης θύελλαι ζῶσι· συνθνήσκουσα δὲ  
 820 σποδὸς προπέμπει πίνοντας πλούτου πνοάς.  
 τούτων θεοῖσι χρὴ πολύμνηστον χάριν  
 τίνειν, ἐπεὶ περ χάρπαγὰς ὑπερκόπους  
 ἐπραξάμεσθα καὶ γυναικὸς οὐνεκα  
 πόλιν διημάθυνεν Ἀργεῖον δάκος,  
 ἵππου νεοσσός, ἀσπιδηφόρος λεώς,  
 πήδημ' ὀρούσας ἀμφὶ Πλειάδων δύσιν·  
 ὑπερθορὼν δὲ πύργον ὠμηστῆς λέων  
 ἄδην ἔλειξεν αἵματος τυραννικοῦ.  
 θεοῖς μὲν ἐξέτεινα φροῖμιον τόδε·  
 830 τὰ δ' ἐς τὸ σὸν φρόνημα, μέμνημαι κλυών,  
 καὶ φημὶ ταῦτά καὶ συνήγορόν μ' ἔχεις.  
 παύροις γὰρ ἀνδρῶν ἐστι συγγενὲς τόδε,  
 φίλον τὸν εὐτυχοῦντ' ἄνευ φθόνων σέβειν.

## Agamemnon

[810] Argos first, as is right and proper, I greet, and her local gods who have helped me to my safe return and to the justice I exacted from Priam's town. For listening to no pleadings by word of mouth,<sup>1</sup> without dissenting voice, they cast into the [815] bloody urn their ballots for the murderous destroying of Ilium; but to the urn of acquittal that no hand filled, Hope alone drew near. The smoke even now still declares the city's fall. Destruction's blasts still live, and [820] the embers, as they die, breathe forth rich fumes of wealth.

For this success we should render to the gods a return in ever-mindful gratitude, seeing that we have thrown round the city the toils of vengeance, and in a woman's cause it has been laid low by the fierce Argive beast, [825] brood of the horse,<sup>2</sup> a shield-armed folk, that launched its leap when the Pleiades waned. Vaulting over its towered walls, the ravening lion lapped up his fill of princely blood. For the gods then I have stretched out this prelude.

[830] But, touching your sentiments—which I heard and still bear in memory—I both agree and you have in me an advocate. For few there are among men in whom it is inborn to admire without envy a friend's good fortune.

δύσφρων γὰρ ἰὸς καρδίαν προσήμενος  
 ἄχθος διπλοῖζει τῷ πεπαμένῳ νόσον·  
 τοῖς τ' αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ πῆμασιν βαρύνεται  
 καὶ τὸν θυραῖον ὄλβον εἰσορῶν στένει.  
 εἰδὼς λέγοιμ' ἄν· εὖ γὰρ ἐξεπίσταμαι  
 ὁμιλίας κάτοπτρον, εἶδωλον σκιᾶς,  
**840** δοκοῦντας εἶναι κάρτα πρευμενεῖς ἐμοί.  
 μόνος δ' Ὀδυσσεύς, ὅσπερ οὐχ ἐκὼν ἔπλει,  
 ζευχθεὶς ἐτοῖμος ἦν ἐμοὶ σειραφόρος,  
 εἴτ' οὖν θανόντος εἴτε καὶ ζῶντος πέρι  
 λέγω. τὰ δ' ἄλλα πρὸς πόλιν τε καὶ θεοὺς  
 κοινούς ἀγῶνας θέντες ἐν πανηγύρει  
 βουλευσόμεσθα. καὶ τὸ μὲν καλῶς ἔχον  
 ὅπως χρονίζον εὖ μενεῖ βουλευτέον·  
 ὅτῳ δὲ καὶ δεῖ φαρμάκων παιωνίων,  
 ἦτοι κέαντες ἢ τεμόντες εὐφρόνως  
**850** πειρασόμεσθα πῇμ' ἀποστρέψαι νόσου.  
 νῦν δ' ἐς μέλαθρα καὶ δόμους ἐφρεστίους  
 ἐλθὼν θεοῖσι πρῶτα δεξιώσομαι,  
 οἷπερ πρόσω πέμψαντες ἤγαγον πάλιν.  
 νίκη δ' ἐπείπερ ἔσπετ' ἐμπέδως μένοι.

For the venom of malevolence settles upon the heart and [835]  
 doubles the burden of him who suffers from that plague: he is  
 himself weighed down by his own calamity, and groans to see  
 another's prosperity. From knowledge—for well I know the mirror  
 of companionship—I may call a shadow of a shade [840] those who  
 feigned exceeding loyalty to me.<sup>1</sup> Only Odysseus, the very man who  
 sailed against his will, once harnessed, proved my zealous yoke-  
 fellow. This I affirm of him whether he is alive or dead.

But, for the rest, in what concerns the State and public worship,  
 [845] we shall appoint open debates and consider. Where all goes  
 well, we must take counsel so that it may long endure; but  
 whenever there is need of healing remedy, we will by kind  
 appliance of cautery or the knife [850] endeavor to avert the  
 mischief of the disease.

And now I will pass to my palace halls and to my household hearth,  
 and first of all pay greeting to the gods. They who sent me forth  
 have brought me home again. May victory, now that it has attended  
 me, remain ever with me constant to the end!

*He descends from his chariot; enter Clytaemestra, attended by  
 maidservants carrying purple tapestries*

<sup>1</sup> “Not hearing pleadings from the tongue”—as if the Greeks and Trojans were  
 waging war in words before a human court—but with divine insight of the true  
 merits of the case.

<sup>2</sup> The wooden horse.



ΚΛ. ἄνδρες πολῖται, πρέσβος Ἀργείων τόδε,  
 οὐκ αἰσχυνοῦμαι τοὺς φιλόνορας τρόπους  
 λέξαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς· ἐν χρόνῳ δ' ἀποφθίνει  
 τὸ τάρβος ἀνθρώποισιν. οὐκ ἄλλων πάρα  
 μαθοῦς', ἐμαυτῆς δύσφορον λέξω βίον  
 860 τοσόνδ' ὅσον περ οὗτος ἦν ὑπ' Ἰλίῳ.  
 τὸ μὲν γυναιῖκα πρῶτον ἄρσενος δίχα  
 ἦσθαι δόμοις ἔρημον ἔκπαγλον κακόν,  
 πολλὰς κλύουσιν κληδόνας παλιγκότους·  
 καὶ τὸν μὲν ἥκειν, τὸν δ' ἐπεσφέρειν κακοῦ  
 κάκιον ἄλλο, πῆμα λάσκοντας δόμοις.  
 καὶ τραυμάτων μὲν εἰ τόσων ἐτύγχανεν  
 ἀνὴρ ὅδ', ὥς πρὸς οἶκον ὠχετεύετο  
 φάτις, τέτρηται δικτύου πλέω λέγειν.  
 εἰ δ' ἦν τεθνηκώς, ὥς ἐπλήθυνον λόγοι,  
 870 τρισώματός τ' ἄν, Γηρυὼν ὁ δεύτερος,  
 [πολλὴν ἄνωθεν, τὴν κάτω γὰρ οὐ λέγω,]  
 χθονὸς τρίμοιρον χλαῖναν ἐξηύχει λαβεῖν,  
 ἅπαξ ἐκάστῳ κατθανὼν μορφώματι.  
 τοιῶνδ' ἕκατι κληδόνων παλιγκότων  
 πολλὰς ἄνωθεν ἀρτάνας ἐμῆς δέξης  
 ἔλυσαν ἄλλοι πρὸς βίαν λελημμένης.  
 ἐκ τῶνδ' εἰ παῖς ἐνθάδ' οὐ παραστατεῖ,  
 ἐμῶν τε καὶ σῶν κύριος πιστωμάτων,

<sup>3</sup> This version takes ὁμιλίας κάτοπτρον to mean that companionship shows the true character of a man's associates. An alternative rendering takes κάτοπτρον in a disparaging sense—the semblance as opposed to reality—and makes κάτοπτρον, εἶδωλον and δοκοῦντας in apposition.

### Clytaemestra

[855] Citizens of Argos, you Elders present here, I shall not be ashamed to confess in your presence my fondness for my husband—with time diffidence dies away in humans. Untaught by others, I can tell of my own weary life [860] all the long while my husband was beneath Ilium's walls. First and foremost, it is a terrible evil for a wife to sit forlorn at home, severed from her husband, always hearing many malignant rumors, and for one messenger after another [865] to come bearing tidings of disaster, each worse than the last, and cry them to the household. And as for wounds, had my husband received so many as rumor kept pouring into the house, no net would have been pierced so full of holes as he. Or if he had died as often as reports claimed, [870] then truly he might have had three bodies, a second Geryon,<sup>1</sup> and have boasted of having taken on him a triple cloak of earth [ample that above, of that below I speak not], one death for each different shape. Because of such malignant tales as these, [875] many times others have had to loose the high-hung halter from my neck, held in its strong grip. It is for this reason, in fact, that our boy, Orestes, does not stand here beside me, as he should—he in whom rest the pledges of my love and yours.



ὥς χρῆν, Ὀρέστης· μηδὲ θαυμάσης τόδε.  
**880** τρέφει γὰρ αὐτὸν εὐμενὴς δορύξενος  
 Στροφίος ὁ Φωκεύς, ἀμφίλεκτα πῆματα  
 ἔμοι προφωνῶν, τὸν θ' ὑπ' Ἰλίῳ σέθεν  
 κίνδυνον, εἴ τε δημόθρους ἀναρχία  
 βουλὴν καταρρίψειεν, ὥς τε σύγγονον  
 βροτοῖσι τὸν πεσόντα λακτίσαι πλέον.  
 τοιάδε μέντοι σκῆψις οὐ δόλον φέρει.  
 ἔμοιγε μὲν δὴ κλαυμάτων ἐπίσσυτοι  
 πηγαὶ κατεσβήκασιν, οὐδ' ἔνι σταγῶν.  
 ἐν ὀψικοῖτοισι δ' ὄμμασιν βλάβας ἔχω  
**890** τὰς ἀμφί σοι κλαίουσα λαμπτηρουχίας  
 ἀτμηλήτους αἰέν. ἐν δ' ὀνειράσιν  
 λεπταῖς ὑπαὶ κώνωπος ἐξηγειρόμην  
 ῥιπαῖσι θωύσσοντος, ἀμφί σοι πάθη  
 ὀρῶσα πλείω τοῦ ξυνεύδοντος χρόνου.  
 νῦν ταῦτα πάντα τλᾶσ', ἀπενθήτῳ φρενὶ  
 λέγοιμ' ἂν ἄνδρα τόνδε τῶν σταθμῶν κύνα,  
 σωτῆρα ναὸς πρότονον, ὑψηλῆς στέγης  
 στῦλον ποδῆρη, μονογενὲς τέκνον πατρί,  
 καὶ γῆν φανείσαν ναυτίλοις παρ' ἐλπίδα,  
**900** κάλλιστον ἡμᾶρ εἰσιδεῖν ἐκ χερίματος,  
 ὁδοιπόρῳ διψῶντι πηγαῖον ῥέος.  
 τερπνὸν δὲ τὰναγκαῖον ἐκφυγεῖν ἅπαν.  
 τοιοῖσδ' ἐτοίμιν ἀξιῶ προσφθέγμασιν.

Nor should you think this strange. [880] For he is in the protecting care of our well-intentioned ally, Strophius of Phocis, who warned me of trouble on two scores—your own peril beneath Ilium's walls, and then the chance that the people in clamorous revolt might overturn the Council, as it is natural [885] for men to trample all the more upon the fallen. Truly such an excuse supports no guile.

<sup>1</sup> Geryon, a monster (here called “three-bodied,” but ordinarily “three-headed”) whose oxen were driven away from Spain by Heracles.

As for myself, the welling fountains of my tears are utterly dried up—not a drop remains. In night-long vigils my eyes are sore [890] with weeping for the beacon-lights set for you but always neglected. The faint whirl of the buzzing gnat often waked me from dreams in which I beheld more disasters to you than the time of sleep could have compassed. [895] But now, having born all this, my heart freed from its anxiety, I would hail my husband here as the watchdog of the fold, the savior forestay of the ship, firm-based pillar of the lofty roof, only-begotten son of a father, or land glimpsed by men at sea beyond their hope, [900] dawn most fair to look upon after storm, the gushing stream to thirsty wayfarer—sweet is it to escape all stress of need. Such truly are the greetings of which I deem him worthy.

φθόνος δ' ἀπέστω. πολλὰ γὰρ τὰ πρὶν κακὰ  
 ἤνειχόμεσθα. νῦν δέ μοι, φίλον κάρα,  
 ἔκβαιν' ἀπήνης τῆσδε, μὴ χαμαὶ τιθεὶς  
 τὸν σὸν πόδ', ὦναξ, Ἰλίου πορθήτορα.  
 δμωαί, τί μέλλεθ', αἷς ἐπέσταλται τέλος  
 πέδον κελεύθου στορνύναι πετάσμασιν;  
**910** εὐθὺς γενέσθω πορφυρόστρωτος πόρος  
 ἐς δῶμ' ἀελπτον ὥς ἂν ἡγῆται Δίκη.  
 τὰ δ' ἄλλα φροντὶς οὐχ ὕπνω νικωμένη  
 θήσει-δικαίως σὺν θεοῖς εἰμαρμένα.

**Αγ.** Λήδας γένεθλον, δωμάτων ἐμῶν φύλαξ,  
 ἀπουσία μὲν εἶπας εἰκότως ἐμῇ·  
 μακρὰν γὰρ ἐξέτεινας· ἀλλ' ἐναισίμως  
 αἰνεῖν, παρ' ἄλλων χρὴ τόδ' ἔρχεσθαι γέρας.  
 καὶ τᾶλλα μὴ γυναικὸς ἐν τρόποις ἐμὲ  
 ἄβρυνε, μηδὲ βαρβάρου φωτὸς δίκην  
**920** χαμαιπετὲς βόαμα προσχάνης ἐμοί,  
 μηδ' εἵμασι στρώσας' ἐπίφθονον πόρον  
 τίθει· θεοὺς τοι τοῖσδε τιμαλφεῖν χρεών·  
 ἐν ποικίλοις δὲ θνητὸν ὄντα κάλλεσιν  
 βαίνειν ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐδαμῶς ἄνευ φόβου.  
 λέγω κατ' ἄνδρα, μὴ θεόν, σέβειν ἐμέ.  
 χωρὶς ποδοψήστρων τε καὶ τῶν ποικίλων  
 κληδῶν αὐτεῖ· καὶ τὸ μὴ κακῶς φρονεῖν

But let envy<sup>1</sup> be far removed, since many were the ills [905] we endured before. And now, I pray you, my dear lord, dismount from your car, but do not set on common earth the foot, my King, that has trampled upon Ilium. *To her attendants* Why this loitering, women, to whom I have assigned the task to strew with tapestries the place where he shall go? [910] Quick! With purple let his path be strewn, that Justice may usher him into a home he never hoped to see. The rest my unslumbering vigilance shall order duly, if it please god, even as is ordained.

<sup>1</sup> By her fulsome address Clytaemestra invites, while seeming to deprecate, the envy of the gods.

### Agamemnon

Offspring of Leda, guardian of my house, [915] your speech fits well with my absence; for you have drawn it out to ample length. But becoming praise—this prize should rightly proceed from other lips. For the rest, pamper me not as if I were a woman, nor, like some barbarian,<sup>1</sup> [920] grovel before me with widemouthed acclaim; and do not draw down envy upon my path by strewing it with tapestries. It is the gods we must honor thus; but it is not possible for a mortal to tread upon embroidered fineries without fear. [925] I tell you to revere me not as a god, but as a man. Footmats and embroideries sound diverse in the voice of Rumor; to think no folly

θεοῦ μέγιστον δῶρον. ὀλβίσαι δὲ χρὴ  
βίον τελευτήσαντ' ἐν εὐεστοῖ φίλῃ.

930 εἰ πάντα δ' ὥς πράσσοιμ' ἄν, εὐθαρσῆς ἐγώ.

Κλ. καὶ μὴν τόδ' εἰπὲ μὴ παρὰ γνώμην ἐμοί.

Αγ. γνώμην μὲν ἴσθι μὴ διαφθεροῦντ' ἐμέ.

Κλ. ἡὔξω θεοῖς δείσας ἄν ὧδ' ἔρδειν τάδε;

Αγ. εἴπερ τις, εἰδὼς γ' εὖ τόδ' ἐξεῖπον τέλος.

Κλ. τί δ' ἄν δοκεῖ σοι Πρίαμος, εἰ τάδ' ἥνυσεν;

Αγ. ἐν ποικίλοις ἄν κάρτα μοι βῆναι δοκεῖ.

Κλ. μὴ νυν τὸν ἀνθρώπειον αἰδεσθῆς ψόγον.

Αγ. φήμη γε μέντοι δημόθρους μέγα σθένει.

Κλ. ὁ δ' ἀφθόνητός γ' οὐκ ἐπίζηλος πέλει.

940 Αγ. οὗτοι γυναικός ἐστιν ἰμείρειν μάχης.

is the best gift of the gods. Only when man's life comes to its end in prosperity dare we pronounce him happy; [930] and if I may act in all things as I do now, I have good confidence.

**Clytaemestra**

Come now, tell me this, in accordance with your mind.

**Agamemnon**

Purpose! Be assured that I shall not corrupt my mind.

**Clytaemestra**

You would in fear have vowed to the gods to act thus.

**Agamemnon**

If someone with full knowledge had pronounced this word.

**Clytaemestra**

[935] What do you suppose that Priam would have done, if he had achieved your triumph?

**Agamemnon**

He would have set foot upon the embroideries, I certainly believe.

**Clytaemestra**

Then do not be be ashamed of mortal reproach.

**Agamemnon**

And yet a people's voice is a mighty power.

**Clytaemestra**

True, yet he who is unenvied is unenviable.

**Agamemnon**

[940] Surely it is not woman's part to long for fighting.



**Κλ.** τοῖς δ' ὀλβίοις γε καὶ τὸ νικᾶσθαι πρέπει.

**Αγ.** ἦ καὶ σὺ νίκην τήνδε δῆριος τίεις;

**Κλ.** πιθοῦ· κρατεῖς μέντοι παρεῖς ἐκὼν ἐμοί.

**Αγ.** ἀλλ' εἰ δοκεῖ σοι ταῦθ', ὑπαί τις ἀρβύλας  
λύοι τάχος, πρόδουλον ἔμβασιν ποδός.

καὶ τοῖσδ' ἐμβαίνονθ' ἀλουργέσιν θεῶν  
μή τις πρόσωθεν ὄμματος βάλοι φθόνος.

πολλὴ γὰρ αἰδῶς δωματοφθορεῖν ποσὶν  
φύροντα πλοῦτον ἀργυρωνήτους θ' ὑφάς.

**950** τούτων μὲν οὕτω· τὴν ξένην δὲ πρϋμενῶς

τήνδ' ἐσκόμιζε· τὸν κρατοῦντα μαλθακῶς

θεὸς πρόσωθεν εὐμενῶς προσδέρεται.

ἐκὼν γὰρ οὐδεὶς δουλίῳ χρῆται ζυγῶ.

αὕτη δὲ πολλῶν χρημάτων ἐξαίρετον

ἄνθος, στρατοῦ δώρημ', ἐμοὶ ξυνέσπετο.

ἐπεὶ δ' ἀκούειν σοῦ κατέστραμμαι τάδε,

εἴμ' ἐς δόμων μέλαθρα πορφύρας πατῶν.

**Κλ.** ἔστιν θάλασσα—τίς δέ νιν κατασβέσει; —

τρέφουσα πολλῆς πορφύρας ἰσάργυρον

**960** κηκίδα παγκαίνιστον, εἰμάτων βαφάς.

οἶκος δ' ὑπάρχει τῶνδε σὺν θεοῖς, ἄναξ,

**Clytaemestra**

True, but it is right for the happy victor to yield the victory.

**Agamemnon**

What? is this the kind of victory in strife that you prize?

**Clytaemestra**

Oh yield! Yet of your own free will entrust the victory to me.

<sup>1</sup> Some take this to mean: "Nor, as if I were a barbaric chieftain, grovel to me."

**Agamemnon**

Well, if you will have your way, [945] quick, let some one loose my sandals, which, slavelike, serve the treading of my foot! As I walk upon these purple vestments may I not be struck from afar by any glance of the gods' jealous eye. A terrible shame it is for one's foot to mar the resources of the house by wasting wealth and costly woven work. [950] So much for this. This foreign girl receive into the house with kindness. A god from afar looks graciously upon a gentle master; for no one freely takes the yoke of slavery. But she, [955] the choicest flower of rich treasure, has followed in my train, my army's gift. Since I have been forced to obey you and must listen to you in this, I will tread upon a purple pathway as I pass to my palace halls.

**Clytaemestra**

There is the sea (and who shall drain it dry?) producing stain of abundant purple, costly as silver [960] and ever fresh, with which to dye our clothes; and of these our house, through the gods, has



ἔχειν· πένεσθαι δ' οὐκ ἐπίσταται δόμος.  
 πολλῶν πατησμών δ' εἰμάτων ἄν ηὔξāμην,  
 δόμοισι προυνεχθέντος ἐν χρηστηρίοις,  
 ψυχῆς κόμιστρα τῆσδε μηχανωμένη.  
 ῥίζης γὰρ οὔσης φυλλὰς ἵκετ' ἐς δόμους,  
 σκιὰν ὑπερτεínaσα σειρίου κυνός.  
 καὶ σοῦ μολόντος δωματῖτιν ἐστίαν,  
 θάλπος μὲν ἐν χειμῶνι σημαίνει μολόν·  
**970** ὅταν δὲ τεύχη Ζεὺς ἀπ' ὄμφακος πικρᾶς  
 οἶνον, τότ' ἤδη ψῦχος ἐν δόμοις πέλει,  
 ἀνδρὸς τελείου δῶμ' ἐπιστρωφωμένου.  
 Ζεῦ Ζεῦ τέλειε, τὰς ἐμὰς εὐχὰς τέλει·  
 μέλοι δέ τοι σοὶ τῶνπερ ἄν μέλλης τελεῖν.

**Χο.** τίπτε μοι τόδ' ἐμπέδως [στρ. α.

δεῖμα προστατήριον  
 καρδίας τερασκόπου  
 πωτᾶται,  
 μαντιπολεῖ δ' ἀκέλευστος ἄμισθος αἰοιδά,  
**980** οὐδ' ἀποπτύσαι δίκαν  
 δυσκρίτων ὄνειράτων  
 θάρσος εὐπειθὲς ἴ-  
 ζει φρενὸς φίλον θρόνον;  
 χρόνος δ' ἔπει  
 πρυμνησίων ξυνεμβολαῖς

ample store; it knows no poverty. Vestments enough I would have devoted to be trampled underfoot had it been so ordered in the seat of oracles [965] when I was devising a ransom for your life. For if the root still lives, leaves come again to the house and spread their over-reaching shade against the scorching dog star; so, now that you have come to hearth and home, you show that warmth has come in wintertime; [970] and again, when Zeus makes wine from the bitter grape,<sup>1</sup> then immediately there is coolness in the house when its rightful lord occupies his halls.

*As Agamemnon enters the palace*

O Zeus, Zeus, you who bring things to fulfilment, fulfill my prayers!  
 May you see to that which you mean to fulfill!

*Exit*

<sup>1</sup> That is, when the summer heat is ripening the grapes.

### Chorus

[975] Why does this terror so persistently hover standing before my prophetic soul? Why does my song, unbidden and unfed, chant strains of augury? Why does assuring confidence not sit on my heart's throne [980] and spurn the terror like an uninterpretable dream? But Time has collected the sands of the shore upon the cables cast thereon [985] when the shipborn army sped forth for Ilium.<sup>1</sup>

ψαμμίας ἀκάτα † παρή-  
 βησεν, εὖθ' ὑπ' Ἴλιον  
 ὦρτο ναυβάτας στρατός.  
 πεύθομαι δ' ἀπ' ὀμμάτων [ἀντ. α.  
 νόστον, αὐτόμαρτυς ὦν·  
**990** τὸν δ' ἄνευ λύρας ὅμως  
 ὕμνωδεῖ  
 θρῆνον Ἑρινύος αὐτοδίδακτος ἔσωθεν  
 θυμός, οὐ τὸ πᾶν ἔχων  
 ἐλπίδος φίλον θράσος.  
 σπλάγχνα δ' οὗτοι ματά-  
 ζει, πρὸς ἐνδίκους φρεσὶν  
 τελεσφόροις  
 δίναις κυκλούμενον κέαρ.  
 εὖχομαι δ' ἐξ ἐμᾶς  
 ἐλπίδος ψύθη πεσεῖν  
**1000** ἐς τὸ μὴ τελεσφόρον.  
 μάλα † γάρ τοι τᾶς πολλᾶς † [στρ. β.  
 ὑγείας ἀκόρεστον  
 τέρμα. νόσος γὰρ  
 γείτων ὁμότοιχος ἐρείδει,  
 καὶ πότμος εὐθυπορῶν  
 .....  
 ἀνδρὸς ἔπαισεν ἄφαντον ἔρμα.  
 καὶ πρὸ μέν τι χρημάτων

<sup>1</sup> The sense of the Greek passage (of which no entirely satisfactory emendation has been offered) is that so much time has passed since the fleet, under Agamemnon's command, was detained at Aulis by the wrath of Artemis, that Calchas' prophecy of evil, if true, would have been fulfilled long ago.

Of their coming home I learn with my own eyes and need no other witness. [990] Yet still my soul within me, self-inspired, intones the lyreless dirge of the avenging spirit, and cannot wholly win its customary confidence of hope.

[995] Not for nothing is my bosom disquieted as my heart throbs against my justly fearful breast in eddying tides that warn of some event. But I pray that my expectation may fall out false [1000] and not come to fulfilment.

[1001] Truly blooming health does not rest content within its due bounds; for disease ever presses close against it, its neighbor with a common wall.<sup>1</sup>

[1005] So human fortune, when holding onward in straight course strikes upon a hidden reef. And yet, if with a well-measured throw,

κτησίῳ ὄκνος βαλὼν  
**1010** σφενδόνας ἀπ' εὐμέτρου—  
 οὐκ ἔδω πρόπας δόμος  
 πλησμονᾶς γέμων ἄγαν,  
 οὐδ' ἐπόντισε σκάφος.  
 πολλά τοι δόσις ἐκ Διὸς ἀμφιλα-  
 φής τε καὶ ἐξ ἀλόκων ἐπετειᾶν  
 νῆστιν ὤλεσεν νόσον,  
 τὸ δ' ἐπὶ γᾶν πεσὼν ἄπαξ **[ἀντ. β.]**  
**1020** θανάσιμον πρόπαρ ἀνδρὸς  
 μέλαν αἷμα τίς ἂν  
 πάλιν ἀγκαλέσαιτ' ἐπαείδων;  
 οὐδὲ τὸν ὀρθοδαῆ  
 τῶν φθιμένων ἀνάγειν  
 Ζεὺς ἀπέπαυσεν ἐπ' ἀβλαβείᾳ.  
 εἰ δὲ μὴ τεταγμένα  
 μοῖρα μοῖραν ἐκ θεῶν  
 εἶργε μὴ πλεον φέρειν,  
 προφθάσασα καρδία  
 γλῶσσαν ἂν τάδ' ἐξέχει.  
**1030** νῦν δ' ὑπὸ σκότῳ βρέμει  
 θυμαλγῆς τε καὶ οὐδὲν ἐπελπομέ-  
 να ποτὲ καίριον ἐκτολυπεύσειν  
 ζωπυρουμένας φρενός.

caution heaves overboard [1010] a portion of the gathered wealth, the whole house, with woe overladen, does not founder nor engulf the hull.<sup>2</sup> Truly the generous gift from Zeus, [1015] rich and derived from yearly furrows, makes an end of the plague of famine.

<sup>1</sup> Abounding health, ignoring its limitations, is separated from disease only by a slight dividing line. The suppressed thought is that remedies, if applied at the right time, may save the body.

<sup>2</sup> The house of Agamemnon, full of calamity, is likened to an overloaded ship, which will founder if some part of its freight is not jettisoned. By confusion of the symbol and the thing signified, δόμος is boldly said to “sink its hull.”

But a man's blood, once it has first fallen by murder to earth [1020] in a dark tide—who by magic spell shall call it back? Even he<sup>1</sup> who possessed the skill to raise from the dead—did not Zeus make an end of him as warning? [1025] And unless one fate ordained of the gods restrains another fate from winning the advantage, my heart would outstrip my tongue and pour forth its fears<sup>2</sup>; [1030] but, as it is, it mutters only in the dark, distressed and hopeless ever to unravel anything in time when my soul's aflame.

<sup>1</sup> Aesculapius, who was blasted by the thunderbolt of Zeus for this offence.

<sup>2</sup> The further expression of their forebodings is checked by the desperate hope that since divine forces sometimes clash, the evil destiny of Agamemnon may yet be averted by a superior fate, which they dimly apprehend will ordain his deliverance from the consequences of his shedding the blood of Iphigenia.

**Κλ.** εἴσω κομίζου καὶ σύ, Κασσάνδραν λέγω·  
 ἐπεὶ σ' ἔθηκε Ζεὺς ἀμηνίτως δόμοις  
 κοινωνὸν εἶναι χερνίβων, πολλῶν μέτα  
 δούλων σταθεῖσαν κτησίου βωμοῦ πέλας,  
 ἔκβαιν' ἀπήνης τῆσδε, μηδ' ὑπερφρόνει.  
**1040** καὶ παῖδα γάρ τοι φασὶν Ἀλκμήνης ποτε  
 πραθέντα τλῆναι, † δουλίας μάζης βία.  
 εἰ δ' οὖν ἀνάγκη τῆσδ' ἐπιρρέποι τύχης,  
 ἀρχαιοπλούτων δεσποτῶν πολλὴ χάρις.  
 οἱ δ' οὐ ποτ' ἐλπίσαντες ἤμυσαν καλῶς,  
 ὥμοί τε δούλοις πάντα καὶ πέρα σταθμῶν.  
 ἔχεις παρ' ἡμῶν οἴαπερ νομίζεται.  
**Χο.** σοὶ τοι λέγουσα παύεται σαφῆ λόγον.  
 ἐντὸς δ' ἀλοῦσα μορσίμων ἀγρευμάτων  
 πείθοι' ἄν, εἰ πείθοι'· ἀπειθοίης δ' ἴσως.  
**1050 Κλ.** ἀλλ' εἵπερ ἐστὶ μὴ χελιδόνος δίκην  
 ἀγνώτα φωνὴν βάρβαρον κεκτημένη,  
 ἔσω φρενῶν λέγουσα πείθω νιν λόγῳ.  
**Χο.** ἔπου. τὰ λῶστα τῶν παρεστώτων λέγει.  
 πείθου λιποῦσα τόνδ' ἀμαξήρη θρόνον.

*Enter Clytaemestra*

### **Clytaemestra**

[1035] Get inside, you too, Cassandra<sup>1</sup>; since not unkindly has Zeus appointed you to share the holy water of a house where you may take your stand, with many another slave, at the altar of the god who guards its wealth. Get down from the car and do not be too proud; [1040] for even Alcmena's son<sup>2</sup>, men say, once endured to be sold and eat the bread of slavery. But if such fortune should of necessity fall to the lot of any, there is good cause for thankfulness in having masters of ancient wealth; for they who, beyond their hope, have reaped a rich harvest of possessions, [1045] are cruel to their slaves in every way, even exceeding due measure. You have from us such usage as custom warrants.

### **Chorus**

It is to you she has been speaking and clearly. Since you are in the toils of destiny, perhaps you will obey, if you are so inclined; but perhaps you will not.

### **Clytaemestra**

[1050] Well, if her language is not strange and foreign, even as a swallow's, I must speak within her comprehension and move her to comply.

### **Chorus**

Go with her. With things as they now stand, she gives you the best. Do as she bids and leave your seat in the car.



**Κλ.** οὔτοι θυραία τῇδ' ἐμοὶ σχολὴ πάρα  
 τρίβειν· τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἐστίας μεσομφάλου  
 ἔστηκεν ἤδη μῆλα πρὸς σφαγὰς πάρος.  
 [ὥς οὔποτ' ἐλπίσασι τήνδ' ἔξειν χάριν.]

σὺ δ' εἴ τι δράσεις τῶνδε, μὴ σχολὴν τίθει.  
**1060** εἰ δ' ἄξυνήμων οὔσα μὴ δέχη λόγον—  
 σὺ δ' ἀντὶ φωνῆς φράζε καρβάνω χερί.

**Χο.** ἐρμηνέως ἔοικεν ἡ ξένη τοροῦ  
 δεῖσθαι. τρόπος δὲ θηρὸς ὥς νεαίρετον.

**Κλ.** ἡ μαίνεται γέ καὶ κακῶν κλύει φρενῶν,  
 ἥτις λιποῦσα μὲν πόλιν νεαίρετον  
 ἦκει, χαλινὸν δ' οὐκ ἐπίσταται φέρειν  
 πρὶν αἱματηρὸν ἐξαφρίζεσθαι μένος.  
 οὐ μὴν πλέω ῥίψας' ἀτιμασθήσομαι.

**Χο.** ἐγὼ δ', ἐποικτίρω γάρ, οὐ θυμώσομαι.  
**1070** ἴθ', ὦ τάλαινα, τόνδ' ἐρημώσας' ὄχον,  
 εἴκουσ' ἀνάγκη τῇδε καίνισον ζυγόν.

### Clytaemestra

[1055] I have no time to waste with this woman here outside; for already the victims stand by the central hearth awaiting the sacrifice—a joy we never expected to be ours. As for you, if you will take any part, make no delay. [1060] But if, failing to understand, you do not catch my meaning, then, instead of speech, make a sign with your barbarian hand.

### Chorus

It is an interpreter and a plain one that the stranger seems to need. She bears herself like a wild creature newly captured.

### Clytaemestra

No, she is mad and listens to her wild mood, [1065] since she has come here from a newly captured city, and does not know how to tolerate the bit until she has foamed away her fretfulness in blood. No! I will waste no more words upon her to be insulted thus.

### Exit

### Chorus

But I will not be angry, since I pity her. [1070] Come, unhappy one, leave the car; yield to necessity and take upon you this novel yoke.

<sup>1</sup> I have retained the ordinary form of the name in Greek and English.

<sup>2</sup> Heracles, because of his murder of Iphitus, was sold as a slave to Omphale, queen of Lydia.

**ΚΑΣΣΑΝΔΡΑ**

ὁτοτοτοτοῖ πόποι δᾶ. [στρ. α.]

ὦπολλον ὦπολλον.

**Χο.** τί ταῦτ' ἀνωτότυξας ἀμφὶ Λοξίου;  
οὐ γὰρ τοιοῦτος ὥστε θρηνητοῦ τυχεῖν.

**Κα.** ὁτοτοτοτοῖ πόποι δᾶ. [ἀντ. α.]

ὦπολλον ὦπολλον.

**Χο.** ἥδ' αὖτε δυσφημοῦσα τὸν θεὸν καλεῖ  
οὐδὲν προσήκοντ' ἐν γόοις παραστατεῖν.

**1080 Κα.** Ἀπολλον· Ἀπολλον· [στρ. β.]

ἀγνιᾶτ', ἀπόλλων ἐμός.

ἀπώλεσας γὰρ οὐ μόλις τὸ δεύτερον.

**Χο.** χρήσειν ἔοικεν ἀμφὶ τῶν αὐτῆς κακῶν.  
μένει τὸ θεῖον δουλία περ ἐν φρενί.

**Κα.** Ἀπολλον· Ἀπολλον· [ἀντ. β.]

ἀγνιᾶτ', ἀπόλλων ἐμός.

ἂ ποῖ ποτ' ἤγαγές με; πρὸς ποίαν στέγην;

**Cassandra**

Woe, woe, woe! O Apollo, O Apollo!

**Chorus**

Wherefore your cry of “woe” in Loxias' name? [1075] He is not the kind of god that has to do with mourners.

**Cassandra**

Woe, woe, woe! O Apollo, O Apollo!

**Chorus**

Once more with ill-omened words she cries to the god who should not be present at times of lamentation.

**Cassandra**

[1080] Apollo, Apollo! God of the Ways,<sup>1</sup> my destroyer! For you have destroyed me—and utterly—this second time.<sup>2</sup>

**Chorus**

I think that she is about to prophesy about her own miseries. The divine gift still abides even in the soul of one enslaved.

<sup>1</sup> Cassandra sees an image of Apollo, the protector on journeys, close to the door leading to the street (ἀγνιά) .

<sup>2</sup> Ἀπόλλων is here derived from Ἀπόλλυμι, “destroy”—nomen omen. The god had “destroyed” her the first time in making vain his gift of prophecy (1209 ff.) ; whereby she became the object of derision in Troy.

**Cassandra**

[1085] Apollo, Apollo! God of the Ways, my destroyer! Ah, what way is this that you have brought me! To what a house!

**Χο.** πρὸς τὴν Ἀτρειδῶν· εἰ σὺ μὴ τόδ' ἐννοεῖς,  
ἐγὼ λέγω σοι· καὶ τὰδ' οὐκ ἐρεῖς ψύθῃ.

**1090 Κα.** μισόθεον μὲν οὖν· πολλὰ συνίστορα, [στρ. γ.  
αὐτόφωνα, † κακὰ καρτάναι †  
ἀνδρὸς σφαγεῖον καὶ πέδον ῥαντήριον.

**Χο.** ἔοικεν εὖρις ἢ ξένη κυνὸς δίκην  
εἶναι, ματεύει δ' ὧν ἀνευρήσει φόνον.

**Κα.** μαρτυρίοισι γὰρ τοῖσδ' ἐπιπείθομαι· [ἀντ. γ.  
κλαιόμενα τὰδε βρέφη σφαγὰς  
ὀπτάς τε σάρκας πρὸς πατρὸς βεβρωμένας.

**Χο.** † ἢ μὴν κλέος σοῦ μαντικὸν πεπυσμένοι  
ἤμεν· προφήτας δ' οὐτίνας ματεύομεν.

**1100 Κα.** ἰὼ πόποι, τί ποτε μῆδεται; [στρ. δ.  
τί τόδε νέον ἄχος μέγα;  
μέγ' ἐν δόμοισι τοῖσδε μῆδεται κακόν,  
ἄφερτον φίλοισιν, δυσίατον· ἀλκὰ δ'  
ἐκὰς ἀποστατεῖ.

**Χο.** τούτων αἰδρὶς εἰμι τῶν μαντευμάτων.  
ἐκεῖνα δ' ἔγνω· πᾶσα γὰρ πόλις βοᾷ.

### Chorus

To that of Atreus' sons. If you do not perceive this, I'll tell it to you.  
And you shall not say that it is untrue.

### Cassandra

[1090] No, no, rather to a god-hating house, a house that knows  
many a horrible butchery of kin, a slaughter-house of men and a  
floor swimming with blood.

### Chorus

The stranger seems keen-scented as a hound; she is on the trail  
where she will discover blood.

### Cassandra

[1095] Here is the evidence in which I put my trust! Behold those  
babies bewailing their own butchery and their roasted flesh eaten  
by their father!

### Chorus

Your fame to read the future had reached our ears; but we have no  
need of prophets here.

### Cassandra

[1100] Alas, what can she be planning<sup>1</sup>? What is this fresh woe she  
contrives here within, what monstrous, monstrous horror, beyond  
love's enduring, beyond all remedy? And help<sup>2</sup> stands far away!

### Chorus

[1105] These prophesyings pass my comprehension; but those I  
understood—the whole city rings with them.

**Κα.** ἰὼ τάλαινα, τόδε γὰρ τελεῖς; [**ἀντ. δ.**

τὸν ὀμοδέμνιον πόσιν

λουτροῖσι φαιδρύνασα—πῶς φράσω τέλος;

**1110** τάχος γὰρ τόδ' ἔσται· προτείνει δὲ χεῖρ ἐκ  
χερὸς ὀρεγομένα.

**Χο.** οὐπω ξυνῆκα· νῦν γὰρ ἐξ αἰνιγμάτων  
ἐπαργέμοισι θεσφάτοις ἀμηχανῶ.

**Κα.** ἔ, παπαῖ παπαῖ, τί τόδε φαίνεται; [**στρ. ε.**  
ἧ δίκτυόν τί γ' Αἰδου.

ἀλλ' ἄρκυς ἢ ξύνευνος, ἢ ξυναιτία

φόνου. στάσις δ' ἀκόρετος γένει  
κατολολυξάτω θύματος λευσίμου.

**Χο.** ποῖαν Ἑρινὺν τήνδε δώμασιν κέλη

**1120** ἐπορθιάζειν; οὐ με φαιδρύνει λόγος.

ἐπὶ δὲ καρδίαν ἔδραμε κροκοβαφῆς

σταγών, ἅτε καὶ δορὶ πτωσίμοις

ξυνανύτει βίου δύντος ἀνγαῖς.

ταχεῖα δ' ἅτα πέλει.

<sup>1</sup> A play on the name Κλυταιμῆστρα (μήδομαι) .

<sup>2</sup> Menelaus (cp. l. 674) or Orestes.

### Cassandra

Ah, damned woman, will you do this thing? Your husband, the partner of your bed, when you have cheered him with the bath, will you—how shall I tell the end? [1110] Soon it will be done. Now this hand, now that, she stretches forth!

### Chorus

Not yet do I comprehend; for now, after riddles, I am bewildered by dark oracles.

### Cassandra

Ah! Ah! What apparition is this? [1115] Is it a net of death? No, it is a snare that shares his bed, that shares the guilt of murder. Let the fatal pack, insatiable against the race, raise a shout of jubilation over a victim accursed!<sup>1</sup>

### Chorus

What Spirit of Vengeance is this that you bid [1120] raise its voice over this house? Your words do not cheer me. Back to my heart surge the drops of my pallid blood, even as when they drip from a mortal wound, ebbing away as life's beams sink low; and death comes speedily.

<sup>1</sup> Literally “fit for stoning.”



**Κα.** ἃ ἃ, ἰδοὺ ἰδοὺ· ἄπεχε τῆς βοῦς [ἀντ. ε.  
τὸν ταῦρον· ἐν πέπλοισιν  
μελαγκέρω λαβοῦσα μηχανήματι  
τύπτει· πίτνει δ' <έν> ἐνύδρῳ τεύχει.  
δολοφόνου λέβητος τύχαν σοι λέγω.

**1130 Χο.** οὐ κομπάσαιμ' ἂν θεσφάτων γνώμων ἄκρος  
εἶναι, κακῶ δέ τῳ προσεικάζω τάδε.  
ἀπὸ δὲ θεσφάτων τίς ἀγαθὰ φάτις  
βροτοῖς τέλλεται; κακῶν γὰρ διαὶ  
πολυεπεῖς τέχναι θεσπιῶδοι  
φόβον φέρουσιν μαθεῖν.

**Κα.** ἰὼ ἰὼ ταλαίνας κακόποτμοι τύχαι· [στρ. ζ.  
τὸ γὰρ ἐμὸν θροῶ πάθος ἐπεγχεάσα.  
ποῖ δή με δεῦρο τὴν τάλαιναν ἤγαγες;  
οὐδὲν ποτ' εἰ μὴ ξυνθανομένην. τί γάρ;

**1140 Χο.** φρενομανῆς τις εἶ θεοφόρητος, ἀμ-  
φὶ δ' αὐτᾶς θροεῖς  
νόμον ἄνομον, οἷά τις ξουθὰ  
ἀκόρετος βοᾶς, φεῦ, φιλοίκτοις φρεσὶν  
Ἴτυν Ἴτυν στένουσ' ἀμφιθαλῇ κακοῖς  
ἀηδῶν βίον.

**Κα.** ἰὼ ἰὼ λιγείας μόρον ἀηδόνο· [ἀντ. ζ.  
πτεροφόρον γὰρ οἱ περὶ δέμας βάλλοντο  
θεοὶ γλυκύν τ' ἀγῶνα κλαυμάτων ἄτερ·  
ἐμοὶ δὲ μίμνει σχισμὸς ἀμφήκει δορί.

### Cassandra

[1125] Ah, ah, see there, see there! Keep the bull from his mate! She has caught him in the robe and gores him with the crafty device of her black horn! He falls in a vessel of water! It is of doom wrought by guile in a murderous bath that I am telling you.

### Chorus

[1130] I cannot boast that I am a keen judge of prophecies; but these, I think, spell some evil. But from prophecies what word of good ever comes to mortals? Through terms of evil their wordy arts [1135] bring men to know fear chanted in prophetic strains.

### Cassandra

Alas, alas, the sorrow of my ill-starred doom! For it is my own affliction, crowning the cup, that I bewail. Ah, to what end did you bring me here, unhappy as I am? For nothing except to die—and not alone. What else?

### Chorus

[1140] Frenzied in soul you are, by some god possessed, and you wail in wild strains your own fate, like that brown bird that never ceases making lament (ah me!) , and in the misery of her heart moans Itys, Itys, [1145] throughout all her days abounding in sorrow, the nightingale.

### Cassandra

Ah, fate of the clear-voiced nightingale! The gods clothed her in a winged form and gave to her a sweet life without tears<sup>1</sup>. But for me waits destruction by the two-edged sword.

**1150 Χο.** πόθεν ἐπισσύτους θεοφόρους [τ'] ἔχεις  
ματαίους δῦας;

τὰ δ' ἐπίφοβα δυσφάτω κλαγγᾷ  
μελοτυπεῖς ὁμοῦ τ' ὀρθίοις ἐν νόμοις.  
πόθεν ὄρους ἔχεις θεσπεσίας ὁδοῦ  
κακορρήμονας;

**Κα.** ἰὼ γάμοι, γάμοι Πάριδος, [στορ. η].  
ὀλέθριοι φίλων.

ἰὼ Σκαμάνδρου πάτριον ποτόν.  
τότε μὲν ἀμφὶ σὰς αἰόνας τάλαιν'  
ἡνυτόμαν τροφαῖς·

**1160** νῦν δ' ἀμφὶ Κωκυτόν τε κἀχερουσίους  
ὄχθους ἔοικα θεσπιωδῆσιν τάχα.

**Χο.** τί τόδε τορὸν ἄγαν ἔπος ἐφημίσω;  
νεογνὸς ἂν αἴων μάθοι.

πέπληγμαι δ' ὑπ' αὖ δῆγματι φοινίῳ  
δυσάλγεϊ τύχῃ μινυρὰ θρεομένης,  
θραύματ' ἐμοὶ κλύειν.

**Κα.** ἰὼ πόνοι πόνοι πόλεος [ἀντ. η].  
ὀλομένης τὸ πᾶν.

ἰὼ πρόπυργοι θυσίαι πατρὸς  
πολυκανεῖς βοτῶν ποιονόμων· ἄκος δ'

**1170** οὐδὲν ἐπήρκεσαν  
τὸ μὴ πόλιν μὲν ὥσπερ οὖν ἐχρῆν παθεῖν,  
ἐγὼ δὲ θερμόνους τάχ' ἐν πέδῳ βαλῶ.

### Chorus

[1150] From where come these vain pangs of prophecy that assail you? And why do you mold to melody these terrors with dismal cries blended with piercing strains? How do you know the bounds of the path of your [1155] ill-boding prophecy?

<sup>1</sup> The wailing (l. 1144) of the bird is unconscious (Schol.) .

### Cassandra

Ah, the marriage, the marriage of Paris, that destroyed his friends! Ah me, Scamander, my native stream! Upon your banks in bygone days, unhappy maid, was I nurtured with fostering care; [1160] but now by Cocytus and the banks of Acheron, I think, I soon must chant my prophecies.

### Chorus

What words are these you utter, words all too plain? A new-born child hearing them could understand. I am smitten with a deadly pain, while, [1165] by reason of your cruel fortune, you cry aloud your pitiful moans that break my heart to hear.

### Cassandra

O the sufferings, the sufferings of my city utterly destroyed! Alas, the sacrifices my father offered, the many pasturing cattle slain to save its towers! [1170] Yet they provided no remedy to save the city from suffering even as it has; and I, my soul on fire, must soon fall to the ground.

**Χο.** ἐπόμενα προτέροισι τάδ' ἐφημίσω.  
καί τις σε κακοφρονῶν τίθη-  
σι δαίμων ὑπερβαρῆς ἐμπίτνων  
μελίζειν πάθη γοερὰ θανατοφόρα.  
τέρμα δ' ἀμηχανῶ.

**Κα.** καὶ μὴν ὁ χρησμὸς οὐκέτ' ἐκ καλυμμάτων  
ἔσται δεδορκῶς νεογάμου νύμφης δίκην·  
**1180** λαμπρὸς δ' ἔοικεν ἡλίου πρὸς ἀντολὰς  
πνέων ἐσάξειν, ὥστε κύματος δίκην  
κλύζειν πρὸς αὐγὰς, τοῦδε πήματος πολὺ  
μεῖζον· φρενώσω δ' οὐκέτ' ἐξ αἰνιγμάτων.  
καὶ μαρτυρεῖτε συνδρόμῳ ἵχνος κακῶν  
ρίνηλατούσῃ τῶν πάλαι πεπραγμένων.  
τὴν γὰρ στέγην τήνδ' οὐποτ' ἐκλείπει χορὸς  
σύμφθογγος οὐκ εὐφωνος· οὐ γὰρ εὖ λέγει.  
καὶ μὴν πεπωκῶς γ', ὡς θρασύνεσθαι πλέον,  
βρότειον αἶμα κῶμος ἐν δόμοις μένει,  
**1190** δύσπεμπτος ἔξω, συγγόνων Ἐρινύων.  
ὑμνοῦσι δ' ὕμνον δώμασιν προσήμεναι  
πρώταρχον ἄτης· ἐν μέρει δ' ἀπέπτυσαν  
εὐνὰς ἀδελφοῦ τῷ πατοῦντι δυσμενεῖς.  
ἤμαρτον, ἢ κυρῶ τι τοξότης τις ὥς;  
ἢ ψευδόμαντις εἰμι θυροκόπος φλέδων;  
ἐκμαρτύρησον προουμόσας τό μ' εἰδέναι  
λόγῳ παλαιὰς τῶνδ' ἁμαρτίας δόμων.

### Chorus

Your present speech chimes with your former strain. [1175] Surely some malignant spirit, falling upon you with heavy swoop, moves you to chant your piteous woes fraught with death. But the end I am helpless to discover.

### Cassandra

And now, no more shall my prophecy peer forth from behind a veil like a new-wedded bride; but [1180] it will rush upon me clear as a fresh wind blowing against the sun's uprising so as to dash against its rays, like a wave, a woe far mightier than mine. No more by riddles will I instruct you. And bear me witness, as, running close behind, [1185] I scent the track of crimes done long ago. For from this roof never departs a choir chanting in unison, but singing no harmonious tune; for it tells not of good. And so, gorged on human blood, so as to be the more emboldened, a revel-rout of kindred Furies haunts the house, [1190] hard to be drive away. Lodged within its halls they chant their chant, the primal sin; and, each in turn, they spurn with loathing a brother's bed, for they bitterly spurn the one who defiled it.<sup>1</sup> Have I missed the mark, or, like a true archer, do I strike my quarry? [1195] Or am I prophet of lies, a door-to-door babbler? Bear witness upon your oath that I know the deeds of sin, ancient in story, of this house.

**Χο.** καὶ πῶς ἂν ὄρκου πῆγμα, γενναίως παγέν,  
 παιώνιον γένοιτο; θαυμάζω δέ σου,  
**1200** πόντου πέραν τραφεῖσαν ἀλλόθρου πόλιν  
 κυρεῖν λέγουσαν, ὥσπερ εἰ παρεστάτεις.  
**Κα.** μάντις μ' Ἀπόλλων τῶδ' ἐπέστησεν τέλει.  
**Χο.** μῶν καὶ θεός περ ἰμέρῳ πεπληγμένος;  
**Κα.** προτοῦ μὲν αἰδῶς ἦν ἐμοὶ λέγειν τάδε.  
**Χο.** ἀβρύνεται γὰρ πᾶς τις εὖ πράσσων πλέον.  
**Κα.** ἀλλ' ἦν παλαιστῆς κάρτ' ἐμοὶ πνέων χάριν.  
**Χο.** ἦ καὶ τέκνων εἰς ἔργον ἤλθετον νόμῳ;  
**Κα.** ξυναινέσασα Λοξίαν ἐψευσάμην.  
**Χο.** ἤδη τέχναισιν ἐνθέοις ἤρημένη;

**Chorus**

How could an oath, a pledge although given in honor, effect any cure? Yet I marvel at you that, [1200] though bred beyond the sea, you speak truth of a foreign city, even as if you had been present there.

<sup>1</sup> Thyestes' corruption of Aerope, wife of his brother Atreus.

**Cassandra**

The seer Apollo appointed me to this office.

**Chorus**

[1204] Can it be that he, a god, was smitten with desire?

**Cassandra**

[1203] Before now I was ashamed to speak of this.

**Chorus**

[1205] In prosperity all take on airs.

**Cassandra**

Oh, but he struggled to win me, breathing ardent love for me.

**Chorus**

Did you in due course come to the rite of marriage?

**Cassandra**

I consented to Loxias but broke my word.

**Chorus**

[1210] Were you already possessed by the art inspired of the god?



**1210 Κα.** ἤδη πολίταις πάντ' ἐθέσπιζον πάθη.

**Χο.** πῶς δῆτ' ἄνατος ἦσθα Λοξίου κότῳ;

**Κα.** ἔπειθον οὐδέν' οὐδέν, ὥς τάδ' ἤμπλακον.

**Χο.** ἡμῖν γε μὲν δὴ πιστὰ θεσπίζειν δοκεῖς.

**Κα.** ἰοὺ ἰοῦ, ὦ ὦ κακά.

ὕπ' αὖ με δεινὸς ὀρθομαντείας πόνος  
στροβεῖ ταράσσω φροιμίῳις .....

ὀρᾶτε τούσδε τοὺς δόμοις ἐφημένους  
νέους, ὀνειρώων προσφερεῖς μορφώμασιν;  
παῖδες θανόντες ὥσπερ εἰ πρὸς τῶν φίλων,

**1220** χεῖρας κρεῶν πλήθοντες οἰκείας βορᾶς·  
σὺν ἐντέροις τε σπλάγχν', ἐποίκτιστον γέμος,  
πρέπουσ' ἔχοντες, ὧν πατὴρ ἐγεύσατο.

ἐκ τῶνδε ποινὰς φημι βουλεύειν τινά,  
λέοντ' ἀναλκιν, ἐν λέχει στρωφώμενον  
οἰκουρόν, οἴμοι, τῷ μολόντι δεσπότη-  
ἐμῷ· φέρειν γὰρ χρὴ τὸ δούλιον ζυγόν·  
νεῶν τ' ἄπαρχος Ἰλίου τ' ἀναστάτης  
οὐκ οἶδεν οἷα γλῶσσα, μισητῆς κυνὸς  
λεῖξασα κάκτείνας φαιδρὸν οὖς δίκην,

**1230** ἄτης λαθραίου τεύξεται κακῇ τύχῃ.

τοιᾶδε τόλμα· θῆλυς ἄρσενος φονεύς·  
ἔστιν—τί νιν καλοῦσα δυσφιλὲς δάκος  
τύχοιμ' ἄν; ἀμφίσβαιναν, ἣ Σκύλλαν τινὰ  
οἰκοῦσαν ἐν πέτραισι, ναυτίλων βλάβην,

**Cassandra**

Already I prophesied to my countrymen all their disasters.

**Chorus**

How came it then that you were unharmed by Loxias' wrath?

**Cassandra**

Ever since that fault I could persuade no one of anything.

**Chorus**

And yet to us at least the prophecies you utter seem true enough.

**Cassandra**

Ah, ah! Oh, oh, the agony! [1215] Once more the dreadful throes of true prophecy whirl and distract me with their ill-boding onset. Do you see them there—sitting before the house—young creatures like phantoms of dreams? Children, they seem, slaughtered by their own kindred, [1220] their hands full of the meat of their own flesh; they are clear to my sight, holding their vitals and their inward parts (piteous burden!) , which their father tasted. For this cause I tell you that a strengthless lion, wallowing in his bed, plots vengeance, [1225] a watchman waiting (ah me!) for my master's coming home—yes, my master, for I must bear the yoke of slavery. The commander of the fleet and the overthrower of Ilium little knows what deeds shall be brought to evil accomplishment by the hateful hound, whose tongue licked his hand, who stretched forth her ears in gladness, [1230] like treacherous Ate. Such boldness has she, a woman to slay a man. What odious monster shall I fitly call her? An Amphisbaena<sup>1</sup>? Or a Scylla, tenanting the rocks, a pest to

† θύουσαν Αἰδου μητέρ' † ἄσπονδόν τ' Ἄρη  
 φίλοις πνέουσας; ὥς δ' ἐπωλολύξατο  
 ἡ παντότολμος, ὥσπερ ἐν μάχης τροπῇ.  
 δοκεῖ δὲ χαίρειν νοστήμῳ σωτηρίᾳ.  
 καὶ τῶνδ' ὅμοιον εἴ τι μὴ πείθω· τί γάρ;  
**1240** τὸ μέλλον ἦξει. καὶ σύ μ' ἐν τάχει παρῶν  
 ἄγαν γ' ἀληθόμαντιν οἰκτίρας ἐρεῖς.  
**Χο.** τὴν μὲν Θυέστου δαῖτα παιδείων κρεῶν  
 ξυνῆκα καὶ πέφρικα, καὶ φόβος μ' ἔχει  
 κλύοντ' ἀληθῶς οὐδὲν ἐξηκασμένα.  
 τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἀκούσας ἐκ δρόμου πεσὼν τρέχω.  
**Κα.** Ἀγαμέμνονός σέ φημ' ἐπόψεσθαι μόρον.  
**Χο.** εὐφημον, ὦ τάλαινα, κοίμησον στόμα.  
**Κα.** ἀλλ' οὔτι παιῶν τῷδ' ἐπιστατεῖ λόγῳ.  
**Χο.** οὐκ, εἴπερ ἔσται γ'· ἀλλὰ μὴ γένοιτό πως.

mariners, [1235] a raging, devil's mother, breathing relentless war against her husband? And how the all-daring woman raised a shout of triumph, as when the battle turns, the while she feigned to joy at his safe return! And yet, it is all one, whether or not I am believed. What does it matter? [1240] What is to come, will come. And soon you, yourself present here, shall with great pity pronounce me all too true a prophetess.

<sup>1</sup> Amphisbaena, a fabulous snake “moving both ways,” backwards and forwards. Tennyson's “an amphisbaena, each end a sting,” reproduces Pliny's description.

### Chorus

Thyestes' banquet on his children's flesh I understood, and I tremble. Terror possesses me as I hear the truth, nothing fashioned out of falsehood to resemble truth. [1245] But as for the rest I heard I am thrown off the track.

### Cassandra

I say you shall look upon Agamemnon dead.

### Chorus

To words propitious, miserable girl, lull your speech.

### Cassandra

Over what I tell no healing god presides.

### Chorus

No, if it is to be; but may it not be so!

**1250 Κα.** σὺ μὲν κατεύχη, τοῖς δ' ἀποκτείνειν μέλει.

**Χο.** τίνος πρὸς ἀνδρὸς τοῦτ' ἄχος πορσύνεται;

**Κα.** ἡ κάρτα χρησμών παρεκόπη ἐμῶν ἄρα.

**Χο.** τοῦ γὰρ τελοῦντος οὐ ξυνῆκα μηχανήν.

**Κα.** καὶ μὴν ἄγαν γ' Ἑλλήν' ἐπίσταμαι φάτιν.

**Χο.** καὶ γὰρ τὰ πυθόκραντα· δυσμαθῇ δ' ὅμως.

**Κα.** παπαῖ, οἶον τὸ πῦρ· ἐπέρχεται δέ μοι.

ὁτοτοῖ, Λύκει' Ἀπολλων, οἱ ἐγὼ ἐγώ.

αὕτη δίπους λέαινα συγκοιμωμένη

λύκῳ, λέοντος εὐγενοῦς ἀπουσία,

**1260** κτενεῖ με τὴν τάλαιναν· ὥς δὲ φάρμακον

τεύχουσα κάμου μισθὸν ἐνθήσει ποτῶ·

ἐπεύχεται, θήγουσα φωτὶ φάσγανον,

ἐμῆς ἀγωγῆς ἀντιτείσεσθαι φόνον.

τί δῆτ' ἐμαυτῆς καταγέλωτ' ἔχω τάδε,

καὶ σκῆπτρα καὶ μαντεῖα περὶ δέρη στέφη;

σὲ μὲν πρὸ μοίρας τῆς ἐμῆς διαφθερῶ.

**Cassandra**

[1250] You do but pray; their business is to slay.

**Chorus**

What man is he that contrived this wickedness?

**Cassandra**

Surely you must have missed the meaning of my prophecies.

**Chorus**

I do not understand the scheme of him who is to do the deed.

**Cassandra**

And yet all too well I understand the Greek language.

**Chorus**

[1255] So too do the Pythian oracles; yet they are hard to understand.

**Cassandra**

Oh, oh! What fire! It comes upon me! Woe, woe! Lycean Apollo! Ah me, ah me! This two-footed lioness, who mates with a wolf in the absence of the noble lion, [1260] will slay me, miserable as I am. Brewing as it were a drug, she vows that with her wrath she will mix requital for me too, while she whets her sword against her husband, to take murderous vengeance for bringing me here. Why then do I bear these mockeries of myself, [1265] this wand, these prophetic chaplets on my neck?

*Breaking her wand, she throws it and the other insignia of her prophetic office upon the ground, and tramples them underfoot.*

You at least I will destroy before I die myself. To destruction with



ἴτ' ἐς φθόρον· πεσόντα γ' ὦδ' ἀμείβομαι.  
 ἄλλην τιν' Ἄτην ἀντ' ἐμοῦ πλουτίζετε.  
 ἰδοὺ δ', Ἀπόλλων αὐτὸς ἐκδύων ἐμὲ  
**1270** χρηστηρίαν ἐσθῆτ', ἐποπτεύσας δέ με  
 κὰν τοῖσδε κόσμοις καταγελωμένην † μετὰ  
 φίλων ὑπ' ἐχθρῶν οὐ διχορρόπως μάτην.  
 κακουμένη δέ, φοιτὰς ὡς ἀγύρτρια,  
 πτωχὸς τάλαινα λιμοθνῆς ἥνεσχόμην·  
 καὶ νῦν ὁ μάντις μάντιν ἐκπράξας ἐμὲ  
 ἀπήγαγ' ἐς τοιάσδε θανασίμους τύχας.  
 βωμοῦ πατρῷου δ' ἀντ' ἐπίξηνον μένει,  
 θερμῷ κοπείσης φοίνιον προσφάγματι.  
 οὐ μὴν ἄτιμοί γ' ἐκ θεῶν τεθνήξομεν.  
**1280** ἦξει γὰρ ἡμῶν ἄλλος αὖ τιμάορος,  
 μητροκτόνον φίτυμα, ποινάτωρ πατρός·  
 φυγὰς δ' ἀλήτης τῆσδε γῆς ἀπόξενος  
 κάτεισιν, ἄτας τάσδε θριγκώσων φίλοις·  
 ὁμώμοται γὰρ ὄρκος ἐκ θεῶν μέγας,  
 ἄξιν νιν ὑπτίασμα κειμένου πατρός.  
 τί δῆτ' ἐγὼ κάτοικτος ὦδ' ἀναστένω;  
 ἐπεὶ τὸ πρῶτον εἶδον Ἰλίου πόλιν  
 πράξασαν ὡς ἔπραξεν, οἳ δ' εἶλον πόλιν  
 οὕτως ἀπαλλάσσουσιν ἐν θεῶν κρίσει.  
**1290** ἰοῦσα πράξω· τλήσομαι τὸ κατθανεῖν.  
 Αἶδου πύλας δὲ τάσδ' ἐγὼ προσεννέπω·

you! And fallen there, thus do I repay you. Enrich with doom some other in my place. Look, Apollo himself is stripping me [1270] of my prophetic garb—he that saw me mocked to bitter scorn, even in this bravery, by friends turned foes, with one accord, in vain—but, like some vagrant mountebank, called “beggar,” “wretch,” “starveling,” I bore it all. [1275] And now the prophet, having undone me, his prophetess, has brought me to this lethal pass. Instead of my father's altar a block awaits me, where I am to be butchered in a hot and bloody sacrifice. Yet, we shall not die unavenged by the gods; [1280] for there shall come in turn another, our avenger, a scion of the race, to slay his mother and exact requital for his sire; an exile, a wanderer, a stranger from this land, he shall return to put the coping-stone upon these unspeakable iniquities of his house. For the gods have sworn a mighty oath [1285] that his slain father's outstretched corpse shall bring him home. Why then thus raise my voice in pitiful lament? Since first I saw the city of Ilium fare what it has fared, while her captors, by the gods' sentence, are coming to such an end, [1290] I will go in and meet my fate. I will dare to die. This door I greet as the gates of Death.



ἐπεύχομαι δὲ καιρίας πληγῆς τυχεῖν,  
ὥς ἀσφάδαστος, αἱμάτων εὐθνησίμων  
ἀπορρυνέντων, ὄμμα συμβάλω τόδε.

**Χο.** ὦ πολλὰ μὲν τάλαινα, πολλὰ δ' αὖ σοφὴ  
γύναι, μακρὰν ἔτεινας. εἰ δ' ἐτητύμως  
μόρον τὸν αὐτῆς οἶσθα, πῶς θεηλάτου  
βοὸς δίκην πρὸς βωμὸν εὐτόλμως πατεῖς;

**Κα.** οὐκ ἔστ' ἄλυξις, οὐ, ξένοι, † χρόνῳ πλέω.

**1300 Χο.** ὁ δ' ὕστατός γε τοῦ χρόνου πρεσβεύεται.

**Κα.** ἥκει τόδ' ἡμαρ· σμικρὰ κερδανῶ φυγῇ.

**Χο.** ἀλλ' ἴσθι τλήμων οὐσ' ἀπ' εὐτόλμου φρενός.

**Κα.** οὐδεὶς ἀκούει ταῦτα τῶν εὐδαιμόνων.

**Χο.** ἀλλ' εὐκλεῶς τοι κατθανεῖν χάρις βροτῶ.

**Κα.** ἰὼ πάτερ σοῦ σῶν τε γενναίων τέκνων.

**Χο.** τί δ' ἐστὶ χρεῖμα; τίς σ' ἀποστρέφει φόβος;

And I pray that, dealt a mortal stroke, without a struggle, my life-  
blood ebbing away in easy death, I may close these eyes.

**Chorus**

[1295] O woman, pitiful exceedingly and exceeding wise, long has  
been your speech. But if, in truth, you have knowledge of your own  
death, how can you step with calm courage to the altar like an ox,  
driven by the god?

**Cassandra**

There is no escape; no, my friends, there is none any more.<sup>1</sup>

**Chorus**

[1300] Yet he that is last has the advantage in respect of time.

**Cassandra**

The day has come; flight would profit me but little.

**Chorus**

Well, be assured, you brave suffering with a courageous spirit.

**Cassandra**

None who is happy is commended thus.

**Chorus**

Yet surely to die nobly is a blessing for mortals.

**Cassandra**

[1305] Alas for you, my father and for your noble children!

*She starts back in horror*

**Chorus**

What ails you? What terror turns you back?

**Κα.** φεῦ φεῦ.

**Χο.** τί τοῦτ' ἔφευξας; εἴ τι μὴ φρενῶν στύγος.

**Κα.** φόνον δόμοι πνέουσιν αἵματοσταγῇ.

**1310 Χο.** καὶ πῶς; τόδ' ὄξει θυμάτων ἐφροσίων.

**Κα.** ὅμοιος ἀτμός ὥσπερ ἐκ τάφου πρέπει.

**Χο.** οὐ Σύριον ἀγλαίσμα δώμασιν λέγεις;

**Κα.** ἀλλ' εἶμι κὰν δόμοισι κωκύσους' ἐμὴν

Ἀγαμέμνονός τε μοῖραν. ἀρκείτω βίος.

ἰὼ ξένοι.

οὔτοι δυσοίζω, θάμνον ὡς ὄρνις, φόβῳ

ἄλλως· θανούσῃ μαρτυρεῖτέ μοι τόδε,

ὅταν γυνὴ γυναικὸς ἀντ' ἐμοῦ θάνῃ,

ἀνὴρ τε δυσδάμαρτος ἀντ' ἀνδρὸς πέσῃ.

**1320** ἐπιξενοῦμαι ταῦτα δ' ὡς θανουμένη.

**Χο.** ὦ τλήμον, οἰκτίρω σε θεσφάτου μόρου.

**Κα.** ἅπαξ ἔτ' εἰπεῖν ῥῆσιν, ἣ θρῆνον θέλω

ἐμὸν τὸν αὐτῆς. ἡλίου δ' ἐπεύχομαι

πρὸς ὕστατον φῶς τοῖς ἐμοῖς τιμαόροις

**Cassandra**

Alas, alas!

**Chorus**

Why do you cry “alas”? Unless perhaps there is some horror in your soul.

**Cassandra**

This house stinks of blood-dripping slaughter.

**Chorus**

[1310] And what of that? It is just the savor of victims at the hearth.

**Cassandra**

It is like a breath from a charnel-house.

**Chorus**

You are not speaking of proud Syrian incense for the house.

**Cassandra**

Nay, I will go to bewail also within the palace my own and Agamemnon's fate. Enough of life! [1315] Alas, my friends, not with vain terror do I shrink, as a bird that fears a bush. After I am dead, bear witness for me of this—when for me, a woman, another woman shall be slain, and for an ill-wedded man another man shall fall. [1320] I claim this favor from you now that my hour is come.

**Chorus**

Poor woman, I pity you for your death foretold.

**Cassandra**

Yet once more I would like to speak, but not a dirge. I pray to the sun, in presence of his latest light, that my enemies<sup>2</sup> may at the same

ἐχθροὺς φόνευσιν τὴν ἐμὴν τίνειν ὁμοῦ,  
 δούλης θανούσης, εὐμαροῦς χειρώματος.  
 ἰὼ βρότεια πράγματ'· εὐτυχοῦντα μὲν  
 σκιᾶ τις ἂν πρέψειεν· εἰ δὲ δυστυχοῖ,  
 βολαῖς ὑγρώσσω σπόγγος ὤλεσεν γραφήν.  
**1330** καὶ ταῦτ' ἐκείνων μάλλον οἰκτίρω πολὺ.

**Χο.** τὸ μὲν εὖ πράσσειν ἀκόρεστον ἔφυ  
 πᾶσι βροτοῖσιν· δακτυλοδείκτων δ'  
 οὐτις ἀπειπὼν εἵργει μελάθρων,  
 μηκέτ' ἐσέλθης, τάδε φωνῶν.  
 καὶ τῷδε πόλιν μὲν ἐλεῖν ἔδοσαν  
 μάκαρες Πριάμου·  
 θεοτίμητος δ' οἴκαδ' ἰκάνει·  
 νῦν δ' εἰ προτέρων αἶμ' ἀποτεῖσει  
 καὶ τοῖσι θανοῦσι θανῶν ἄλλων  
**1340** ποινὰς θανάτων ἐπικρανεῖ,  
 τίς τᾶν εὐξαιτο βροτῶν ἀσινεῖ  
 δαίμονι φῦναι τὰδ' ἀκούων;

time pay to my avengers a bloody penalty for [1325] slaughtering a slave, an easy prey. Alas for human fortune! When prosperous, a mere shadow can overturn it<sup>3</sup>; if misfortune strikes, the dash of a wet sponge blots out the drawing. [1330] And this last I deem far more pitiable than that.

*Enters the palace*

- <sup>1</sup> Auratus read χρόνου πλέων : “more than that of time,” “save for time.”  
<sup>2</sup> Of this corrupt passage no emendation yet made commends itself irresistibly. The translation is based on the reading ἐχθροὺς φόνευσιν τοὺς ἐμούς, where φόνευσιν is due to Bothe, the rest to J. Pearson.  
<sup>3</sup> Some editors, altering the passage to σκιᾶ τις ἂν πρέψειεν, “one may liken it to a shadow,” understand “shadow” either literally or as a “sketch.”

### Chorus

It is the nature of all human kind to be unsatisfied with prosperity. From stately halls none bars it with warning voice that utters the words “Enter no more.” [1335] So the Blessed Ones have granted to our prince to capture Priam's town; and, divinely-honored, he returns to his home. Yet if he now must pay the penalty for the blood shed by others before him, and by dying for the dead [1340] he is to bring to pass retribution of other deaths<sup>1</sup>, what mortal man, on hearing this, can boast that he was born with scatheless destiny?

*A shriek is heard from within*

**Αγ.** ὦ μοι, πέπληγμαι καιρίαν πληγὴν ἔσω.  
**Χο.** σῖγα· τίς πληγὴν αὐτεῖ καιρίως οὐτασμένος;  
**Αγ.** ὦ μοι μάλ' αὖθις, δευτέραν πεπληγμένος.  
**Χο.** τοῦργον εἰργάσθαι δοκεῖ μοι βασιλέως οἰμώγμασιν.  
 ἀλλὰ κοινωσώμεθ', ἣν πῶς, ἀσφαλῇ βουλεύματα.

1. ἐγὼ μὲν ὑμῖν τὴν ἐμὴν γνώμην λέγω,  
 πρὸς δῶμα δεῦρ' ἀστοῖσι κηρύσσειν βοήν.  
 1350 2. ἐμοὶ δ' ὅπως τάχιστα γ' ἐμπεσεῖν δοκεῖ  
 καὶ πρᾶγμ' ἐλέγχειν σὺν νεορρῦτῳ ξίφει.  
 3. καὶ γὰρ τοιοῦτου γνώματος κοινωνὸς ὦν  
 ψηφίζομαί τι δρᾶν· τὸ μὴ μέλλειν δ' ἀκμή.  
 4. ὁρᾶν πάρεστι· φροιμιάζονται γὰρ ὥς,  
 τυραννίδος σημεία πράσσοντες πόλει.  
 5. χρονίζομεν γὰρ. οἱ δὲ τῆς μελλοῦς κλέος  
 πέδοι πατοῦντες οὐ καθεύδουσιν χερί.  
 6. οὐκ οἶδα βουλῆς ἥστινος τυχὼν λέγω.

<sup>1</sup> If Agamemnon is now to pay the price for his father's killing of Thyestes' children, and by his own death is to atone for his slaying of Iphigenia, and is thus to bring about requital consisting in yet other deaths (Clytaemestra and Aegisthus) .

### Agamemnon

Alas! I am struck deep with a mortal blow!

### Chorus

Silence! Who is this that cries out, wounded by a mortal blow?

### Agamemnon

[1345] And once again, alas! I am struck by a second blow.

### Chorus

The deed is done, it seems—to judge by the groans of the king. But come, let us take counsel together if there is perhaps some safe plan of action.

*The members of the Chorus deliver their opinion on the course to be taken*  
 —I tell you my advice: summon the townsfolk to bring rescue here to the palace.

[1350] —To my thinking we must burst in and charge them with the deed while the sword is still dripping in their hands.

—I, too, am for taking part in some such plan, and vote for action of some sort. It is no time to keep on delaying.

—It is plain. Their opening act [1355] marks a plan to set up a tyranny in the State.

—Yes, because we are wasting time, while they, trampling underfoot that famous name, Delay, allow their hands no slumber.

—I know not what plan I could hit on to propose. It is the doer's



τοῦ δρῶντός ἐστι καὶ τὸ βουλευῆσαι πέρι.

**1360 7.** καγὼ τοιοῦτός εἰμ', ἐπεὶ δυσμηχανῶ  
λόγοισι τὸν θανόντ' ἀνιστάναι πάλιν.

**8.** ἦ καὶ βίον τείνοντες ὧδ' ὑπέιζομεν  
δόμων καταισχυντῆρσι τοῖσδ' ἡγουμένοις;

**9.** ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀνεκτόν, ἀλλὰ κατθανεῖν κρατεῖ·  
πεπαιτέρα γὰρ μοῖρα τῆς τυραννίδος.

**10.** ἦ γὰρ τεκμηρίοισιν ἐξ οἰωγμάτων  
μαντευσόμεσθα τάνδρὸς ὡς ὀλωλότος;

**11.** σάφ' εἰδότας χρὴ τῶνδε θυμοῦσθαι πέρι·  
τὸ γὰρ τοπάζειν τοῦ σάφ' εἰδέναι δίχα.

**1370 12.** ταύτην ἐπαινεῖν πάντοθεν πληθύνομαι,  
τρανῶς Ἀτρεΐδην † εἰδέναι κυροῦνθ' ὅπως.

**Κλ.** πολλῶν πάροιθεν καιρίως εἰρημένων  
τάναντί' εἰπεῖν οὐκ ἐπαισχυνθήσομαι.  
πῶς γὰρ τις ἐχθροῖς ἐχθρὰ πορσύνων, φίλοις  
δοκοῦσιν εἶναι, πημονῆς ἀρκύστατ' ἂν  
φράξειεν ὕψος κρεῖσσον ἐκπηδήματος;  
ἐμοὶ δ' ἀγὼν ὅδ' οὐκ ἀφρόντιστος πάλαι·  
νείκης παλαιᾷς ἦλθε, σὺν χρόνῳ γε μήν·  
ἔστηκα δ' ἔνθ' ἔπαισ' ἐπ' ἐξειργασμένοις.

**1380** οὕτω δ' ἔπραξα—καὶ τὰδ' οὐκ ἀρνήσομαι—

part likewise to do the planning.

[1360] —I too am of this mind, for I know no way to bring the dead back to life by mere words.

—What! To prolong our lives shall we thus submit to the rule of those defilers of the house?

—No, it is not to be endured. No, death would be better, [1365] for that would be a milder lot than tyranny.

—And shall we, upon the evidence of mere groans, divine that our lord is dead?

—We should be sure of the facts before we indulge our wrath. For surmise differs from assurance.

[1370] —I am supported on all sides to approve this course—that we get clear assurance how it stands with Atreus' son.

*The bodies of Agamemnon and Cassandra are disclosed; the queen stands by their side*

### Clytaemestra

Much have I said before to serve my need and I shall feel no shame to contradict it now. For how else could one, devising hate against a hated foe [1375] who bears the semblance of a friend, fence the snares of ruin too high to be overleaped? This is the contest of an ancient feud, pondered by me of old, and it has come, however long delayed. I stand where I dealt the blow; my purpose is achieved.

[1380] Thus have I done the deed; deny it I will not. Round him, as

ὥς μήτε φεύγειν μήτ' ἀμύνεσθαι μόρον.  
 ἄπειρον ἀμφίβληστρον, ὥσπερ ἰχθύων,  
 περιστιχίζω, πλοῦτον εἵματος κακόν,  
 παίω δέ νιν δῖς· κὰν δυοῖν οἰμωγμάτοιν  
 μεθήκεν αὐτοῦ κῶλα· καὶ πεπτωκότι  
 τρίτην ἐπενδίδωμι, τοῦ κατὰ χθονός,  
 Αἰδου, νεκρῶν σωτήρος, εὐκταίαν χάριν.  
 οὕτω τὸν αὐτοῦ θυμὸν ὀρμαίνει πεσών,  
 κάκφυσιῶν ὀξεῖαν αἵματος σφαγὴν  
**1390** βάλλει μ' ἐρεμνῇ ψακάδι φοινίας δρόσου,  
 χαίρουσαν οὐδὲν ἦσσαν ἢ διοςδότῳ  
 γάνει σπορητὸς κάλυκος ἐν λοχεύμασιν.  
 ὥς ᾧδ' ἐχόντων, πρέσβος Ἀργείων τόδε,  
 χαίροιτ' ἄν, εἰ χαίροιτ', ἐγὼ δ' ἐπεύχομαι.  
 εἰ δ' ἦν πρεπόντων ὥστ' ἐπισπένδειν νεκρῷ,  
 τῷδ' ἄν δικαίως ἦν, ὑπερδίκως μὲν οὖν·  
 τοσόνδε κρατῆρ' ἐν δόμοις κακῶν ὅδε  
 πλήσας ἀραίων αὐτὸς ἐκπίνει μολών.  
**Χο.** θαυμάζομέν σου γλῶσσαν, ὡς θρασύστομος,  
**1400** ἥτις τοιόνδ' ἐπ' ἀνδρὶ κομπάζεις λόγον.  
**Κλ.** πειρᾶσθέ μου γυναικὸς ὡς ἀφράσμονος·  
 ἐγὼ δ' ἀτρέστῳ καρδίᾳ πρὸς εἰδότας  
 λέγω—σὺ δ' αἰνεῖν εἴτε με ψέγειν θέλεις  
 ὁμοιον—οὗτός ἐστιν Ἀγαμέμνων, ἐμὸς  
 πόσις, νεκρὸς δὲ τῇσδε δεξιᾷς χερσός,

if to catch a haul of fish, I cast an impassable net—fatal wealth of robe—so that he should neither escape nor ward off doom. Twice I struck him, and with two groans [1385] his limbs relaxed. Once he had fallen, I dealt him yet a third stroke to grace my prayer to the infernal Zeus, the savior of the dead. Fallen thus, he gasped away his life, and as he breathed forth quick spurts of blood, [1390] he struck me with dark drops of gory dew; while I rejoiced no less than the sown earth is gladdened in heaven's refreshing rain at the birthtime of the flower buds.

Since then the case stands thus, old men of Argos, rejoice, if you would rejoice; as for me, I glory in the deed. [1395] And had it been a fitting act to pour libations on the corpse, over him this would have been done justly, more than justly. With so many accursed lies has he filled the mixing-bowl in his own house, and now he has come home and himself drained it to the dregs.

#### Chorus

We are shocked at your tongue, how bold-mouthed you are, [1400] that over your husband you can utter such a boastful speech.

#### Clytaemestra

You are testing me as if I were a witless woman. But my heart does not quail, and I say to you who know it well—and whether you wish to praise or to blame me, it is all one—here is Agamemnon, [1405] my husband, now a corpse, the work of this right hand, a just

ἔργον δικαίας τέκτονος. τάδ' ὦδ' ἔχει.

**Χο.** τί κακόν, ὦ γύναι, [στρ. α]

χθονοτρεφές ἐδανὸν ἢ ποτὸν  
πασαμένα ῥυτᾶς ἐξ ἀλὸς ὄρμενον  
τόδ' ἐπέθου θύος, δημοθρόους τ' ἀράς;

**1410** ἀπέδικες ἀπέταμες, ἀπόπολις δ' ἔση,  
μῖσος ὄβριμον ἀστοῖς.

**Κλ.** νῦν μὲν δικάζεις ἐκ πόλεως φυγὴν ἐμοί,  
καὶ μῖσος ἀστῶν δημόθρους τ' ἔχειν ἀράς,  
οὐδὲν τότ' ἀνδρὶ τῷδ' ἐναντίον φέρων,  
ὃς οὐ προτιμῶν, ὥσπερ εἰ βοτοῦ μόρον,  
μήλων φλεόντων εὐπόκοις νομεύμασιν,  
ἔθυσεν αὐτοῦ παῖδα, φιλτάτην ἐμοί  
ὦδιν', ἐπωδὸν Θρηκίων ἀημάτων.

οὐ τοῦτον ἐκ γῆς τῆσδε χρῆν σ' ἀνδρηλατεῖν,  
**1420** μiasμάτων ἄποινα; ἐπήκοος δ' ἐμῶν  
ἔργων δικαστῆς τραχὺς εἶ. λέγω δέ σοι  
τοιαῦτ' ἀπειλεῖν, ὥς παρεσκευασμένη  
σ' ἐκ τῶν ὁμοίων χειρὶ νικήσαντ' ἐμοῦ  
ἄρχειν· ἐὰν δὲ τοῦμπαλιν κραίνῃ θεός,  
γνώση διδαχθεὶς ὁππότε γοῦν τὸ σωφρονεῖν.

**Χο.** μεγαλόμητις εἶ, [ἀντ.

περίφρονα δ' ἔλακες, ὥσπερ οὖν  
φονολιβεῖ τύχα φρὴν ἐπιμαίνεται·  
λίβος ἐπ' ὁμμάτων αἵματος ἐμπρέπει·

workman. So stands the case.

**Chorus**

Woman, what poisonous herb nourished by the earth have you tasted, what potion drawn from the flowing sea, that you have taken upon yourself this maddened rage and the loud curses voiced by the public? [1410] You have cast him off; you have cut him off; and out from the land shall you be cast, a burden of hatred to your people.

**Clytaemestra**

It's now that you would doom me to exile from the land, to the hatred of my people and the execration of the public voice; though then you had nothing to urge against him that lies here. And yet he, [1415] valuing no more than if it had been a beast that perished—though sheep were plenty in his fleecy folds—he sacrificed his own child, she whom I bore with dearest travail, to charm the blasts of Thrace. Is it not he whom you should have banished from this land [1420] in requital for his polluting deed? No! When you arraign what I have done, you are a stern judge. Well, I warn you: threaten me thus on the understanding that I am prepared, conditions equal, to let you lord it over me if you shall vanquish me by force. But if a god shall bring the contrary to pass, [1425] you shall learn discretion though taught the lesson late.

**Chorus**

You are proud of spirit, and your speech is overbearing. Even as your mind is maddened by your deed of blood, upon your face a



ἄντιτον ἔτι σε χρή στερομένην φίλων

**1430** τύμμα τύμματι τεῖσαι.

**Κλ.** καὶ τήνδ' ἀκούεις ὀρκίων ἐμῶν θέμιν·

μὰ τὴν τέλειον τῆς ἐμῆς παιδὸς Δίκην,

Ἄτην Ἑρινύν θ', αἴσι τόνδ' ἔσφαξ' ἐγώ,

οὐ μοι Φόβου μέλαθρον ἐλπίς ἐμπατεῖ,

ἕως ἂν αἶθη πῦρ ἐφ' ἐστίας ἐμῆς

Αἴγισθος, ὥς τὸ πρόσθεν εὖ φρονῶν ἐμοί.

οὗτος γὰρ ἡμῖν ἄσπις οὐ σμικρὰ θράσους.

.....

κεῖται, γυναικὸς τῆσδε λυμαντήριος,

Χρυσίδων μείλιγμα τῶν ὑπ' Ἰλίῳ·

**1440** ἢ τ' αἰχμάλωτος ἦδε καὶ τερασκόπος

καὶ κοινόλεκτρος τοῦδε, θεσφατηλόγος

πιστὴ ξύνευνος, ναυτίλων δὲ σελμάτων

ἰσοτριβῆς. ἄτιμα δ' οὐκ ἐπραξάτην.

ὁ μὲν γὰρ οὕτως, ἡ δέ τοι κύκνου δίκην

τὸν ὕστατον μέλψασα θανάσιμον γόνον

κεῖται † φιλήτως τοῦδ', ἐμοὶ δ' ἐπήγαγεν

εὐνῆς παροψώνημα τῆς ἐμῆς χλιδῆς.

**Χο.** φεῦ, τίς ἂν ἐν τάχει, μὴ περιώδυνος, [**στρ. α.**

μηδὲ δεμνιοτήρης,

**1450** μόλοι τὸν ἀεὶ φέρουσ' ἐν ἡμῖν

Μοῖρ' ἀτέλευτον ὕπνον, δαμέντος

φύλακος εὐμενεστάτου [καὶ]

stain of blood shows full plain to behold. Bereft of all honor, forsaken of your friends, [1430] you shall hereafter atone for stroke with stroke.

#### Clytaemestra

Listen then to this too, this the righteous sanction on my oath: by Justice, exacted for my child, by Ate, by the Avenging Spirit, to whom I sacrificed that man, hope does not tread for me the halls of fear, [1435] so long as the fire upon my hearth is kindled by Aegisthus, loyal in heart to me as in days gone by. For he is no slight shield of confidence to me. Here lies the man who did me wrong, plaything of each Chryseis at Ilium; [1440] and here she lies, his captive, and augress, and concubine, his oracular faithful whore, yet equally familiar with the seamen's benches. The pair has met no undeserved fate. For he lies thus; while she, who, like a swan, [1445] has sung her last lament in death, lies here, his beloved; but to me she has brought for my bed an added relish of delight.

#### Chorus

Alas! Ah that some fate, free from excess of suffering, nor yet with lingering bed of pain, [1450] might come full soon and bring to us everlasting and endless sleep, now that our most gracious guardian has been laid low,



πολέα τλάντος γυναικὸς διαί; πρὸς γυναι-  
κὸς δ' ἀπέφθισεν βίον.

– ἰὼ ἰὼ παράνους Ἑλένα [ἐφυμν. α  
μία τὰς πολλάς, τὰς πάνυ πολλάς  
ψυχὰς ὀλέσας' ὑπὸ Τροίᾳ,  
νῦν τελέαν πολύμναστον ἐπηνθίσω  
**1460** δι' αἶμ' ἀνιπτον ἥτις ἦν τότε ἐν δόμοις  
ἔρις ἐρίδματος, ἀνδρὸς οἰζύς.

**Κλ.** μηδὲν θανάτου μοῖραν ἐπεύχου  
τοῖσδε βαρυνθείς·

μηδ' εἰς Ἑλένην κότον ἐκτρέψης,  
ὥς ἀνδρολέτειρ', ὥς μία πολλῶν  
ἀνδρῶν ψυχὰς Δαναῶν ὀλέσας'  
ἄξυστατον ἄλγος ἔπραξε.

**Χο.** δαῖμον, ὃς ἐμπίτνεις δώμασι καὶ διφυί- [ἀντ. α.  
οισι Τανταλίδαισιν,

**1470** κράτος <τ'> ἰσόψυχον ἐκ γυναικῶν  
καρδιόδηκτον ἐμοὶ κρατύνεις,  
ἐπὶ δὲ σώματος δίκαν [μοι]  
κόρακος ἐχθροῦ σταθεὶς ἐννόμως ὕμνον ὕ-  
μνεῖν ἐπεύχεαι <κακόν>.

**Κλ.** νῦν δ' ὠρθωσας στόματος γνώμην,  
τὸν τριπάχυντον  
δαίμονα γέννης τῆσδε κικλήσκων.  
ἐκ τοῦ γὰρ ἔρως αἵματολοιχὸς

who in a woman's cause had much endured and by a woman's  
hand has lost his life.

[1455] O mad Helen, who did yourself alone destroy these many  
lives, these lives exceeding many, beneath the walls of Troy. Now  
you have bedecked yourself with your final crown, that shall long  
last in memory, [1460] because of blood not to be washed away.  
Truly in those days strife, an affliction that has subdued its lord,  
dwelt in the house.

### Clytaemestra

Do not burden yourself with thoughts such as these, nor invoke  
upon yourself the fate of death. Nor yet turn your wrath upon  
Helen, [1465] and deem her a slayer of men, as if she alone had  
destroyed many a Danaan life and had wrought anguish past all  
cure.

### Chorus

O Fiend who falls upon this house and Tantalus' two descendants,<sup>1</sup>  
[1470] you who by the hands of women exert a rule matching their  
temper, a rule bitter to my soul! Perched over his body like a hateful  
raven, in hoarse notes she chants her song of triumph.

<sup>1</sup> Agamemnon and Menelaus.

### Clytaemestra

[1475] Now you have corrected the judgment of your lips in that  
you name the thrice-gorged Fiend of this race. For by him the lust

νεῖρα τρέφεται· πρὶν καταλῆξαι  
**1480** τὸ παλαιὸν ἄχος, νέος ἰχώρ.

**Χο.** ἡ μέγαν οἴκοις τοῖσδε **[στορ. β.]**

δαίμονα καὶ βαρύμηνιν αἰνεῖς,  
 φεῦ φεῦ, κακὸν αἶνον  
 ἀτηρᾶς τύχας ἀκόρεστον·

ἰὼ ἰὴ διαὶ Διὸς  
 παναιτίου πανεργέτα·

τί γὰρ βροτοῖς ἄνευ Διὸς τελεῖται;  
 τί τῶνδ' οὐ θεόκραντόν ἐστιν;

– ἰὼ ἰὼ βασιλεῦ βασιλεῦ, **[ἐφθυμν. β.]**

**1490** πῶς σε δακρύσω;  
 φρενὸς ἐκ φιλίας τί ποτ' εἶπω;  
 κεῖσαι δ' ἀράχνης ἐν ὑφάσματι τῷδ'  
 ἀσεβεῖ θανάτῳ βίον ἐκπνέων,  
 ὦμοι μοι, κοίταν τάνδ' ἀνελεύθερον  
 δολίῳ μόρῳ δαμείς <δάμαρτος>  
 ἐκ χερὸς ἀμφιτόμῳ βελέμνῳ.

**Κλ.** αὐχεῖς εἶναι τόδε τοῦργον ἐμόν·  
 μὴ δ' ἐπιλεχθῆς

Ἀγαμεμνονίαν εἶναί μ' ἄλοχον.

**1500** φανταζόμενος δὲ γυναικὶ νεκροῦ  
 τοῦδ' ὁ παλαιὸς δριμύς ἀλάστωρ  
 Ἀτρέως χαλεποῦ θοινατῆρος  
 τόνδ' ἀπέτεισεν,

for lapping blood is fostered in the mouth; so before [1480] the ancient wound is healed, fresh blood is spilled.

### Chorus

Truly you speak of a mighty Fiend, haunting the house, and heavy in his wrath (alas, alas!) —an evil tale of catastrophic fate insatiate; [1485] woe, woe, done by will of Zeus, author of all, worker of all! For what is brought to pass for mortal men save by will of Zeus? What herein is not wrought of god?

Alas, alas, my King, my King, [1490] how shall I bewail you? How voice my heartfelt love for you? To lie in this spider's web, breathing forth your life in an impious death! Ah me, to lie on this ignoble bed, struck down in treacherous death wrought [1495] by a weapon of double edge wielded by the hand of your own wife!

### Clytaemestra

Do you affirm this deed is mine? Do not imagine that I am Agamemnon's spouse. [1500] A phantom resembling that corpse's wife, the ancient bitter evil spirit of Atreus, that grim banqueter, has offered him in payment, sacrificing a full-grown victim in vengeance for those slain babes.

τέλεον νεαροῖς ἐπιθύσας.

**Χο.** ὥς μὲν ἀναίτιος εἶ [**ἀντ. β.**

τοῦδε φόνου τίς ὁ μαρτυρήσων;

πῶ πῶ; πατρόθεν δὲ

συλλήπτωρ γένοιτ' ἂν ἀλάστωρ.

βιάζεται δ' ὁμοσπόροις

**1510** ἐπιρροαῖσιν αἱμάτων

μέλας Ἄρης, ὅποι δίκαν προβαίνων

πάχνα κουροβόρῳ παρέξει.

– ἰὼ ἰὼ βασιλεῦ βασιλεῦ, [**ἐφυμν. β.**

πῶς σε δακρύσω;

φρενὸς ἐκ φιλίας τί ποτ' εἶπω;

κεῖσαι δ' ἀράχνης ἐν ὑφάσματι τῷδ'

ἀσεβεῖ θανάτῳ βίον ἐκπνέων,

ῶμοι μοι, κοίταν τάνδ' ἀνελεύθερον

δολίῳ μόρῳ δαμείς <δάμαρτος>

**1520** ἐκ χειρὸς ἀμφιτόμῳ βελέμνῳ.

**Κλ.** [οὔτ' ἀνελεύθερον οἶμαι θάνατον

τῷδε γενέσθαι.]

οὐδὲ γὰρ οὗτος δολίαν ἄτην

οἴκοισιν ἔθηκ';

ἀλλ' ἐμὸν ἐκ τοῦδ' ἔρνος ἀερθέν,

† τὴν πολύκλαυτόν τ' Ἰφιγενείαν,

ἄξια δράσας, ἄξια πάσχων,

μηδὲν ἐν Αἴδου μεγαλαυχεῖτω,

### Chorus

[1505] That you are innocent of this murder—who will bear you witness? How could anyone do so? And yet the evil genius of his father might well be your accomplice. By force [1510] amid streams of kindred blood black Havoc presses on to where he shall grant vengeance for the gore of children served for meat.

Alas, alas, my King, my King, how shall I bewail you? [1515] How voice my heartfelt love for you? To lie in this spider's web, breathing forth your life in impious death! Alas, to lie on this ignoble bed, struck down in treacherous death [1520] wrought by a weapon of double edge wielded by your own wife's hand!

### Clytaemestra

[Neither do I think he met an ignoble death.] And did he not himself by treachery bring ruin on his house? [1525] Yet, as he has suffered—worthy prize of worthy deed—for what he did to my sweet flower, shoot sprung from him, the sore-wept Iphigenia, let him make no great boasts in the halls of Hades, since with death dealt him by the sword he has paid for what he first began.

Ξιφοδηλήτω

θανάτω τείσας ἄπερ ἔρξεν.

**1530 Χο.** ἀμηχανῶ φροντίδος στερηθεῖς **[στρ. γ.**

εὐπάλαμον μέριμναν

ὅπα τράπωμαι, πίτνοντος οἴκου.

δέδοικα δ' ὄμβρου κτύπον δομοσφαλῇ

τὸν αἵματηρόν. ψακὰς δὲ λήγει;

δίκην [δ'] ἐπ' ἄλλο πρᾶγμα θηγάνει βλάβης

πρὸς ἄλλαις θηγάναισι Μοῖρα.

– ἰὼ γὰ γὰ, εἴθ' ἔμ' ἐδέξω, **[ἐφ. γ.**

πρὶν τόνδ' ἐπιδεῖν ἀργυροτοίχου

**1540** δροίτης κατέχοντα χάμευναν.

τίς ὁ θάψων νιν; τίς ὁ θρηνήσων;

ἦ σὺ τόδ' ἔρξαι τλήσῃ, κτείνας'

ἄνδρα τὸν αὐτῆς ἀποκωκῦσαι,

ψυχῇ τ' ἄχαριν χάριν ἀντ' ἔργων

μεγάλων ἀδίκως ἐπικρᾶναι;

– τίς δ' ἐπιτύμβιος αἶνον ἐπ' ἀνδρὶ θείῳ

σὺν δακρύοις ἰάπτων

**1550** ἀληθείᾳ φρενῶν πονήσει;

**Κλ.** οὐ σὲ προσήκει τὸ μέλημ' ἀλέγειν

τοῦτο· πρὸς ἡμῶν

κάππεσε, κάτθανε, καὶ καταθάψομεν

οὐχ ὑπὸ κλαυθμῶν τῶν ἐξ οἴκων,

ἀλλ' Ἰφιγένειά νιν ἀσπασίως

### Chorus

[1530] Bereft of any ready expedient of thought, I am bewildered where to turn now that the house is tottering. I fear the beating storm of bloody rain that shakes the house; no longer does it descend in drops. [1535] Yet on other whetstones Destiny is sharpening justice for another evil deed.

O Earth, Earth, if only you had taken me to yourself before ever I had lived to see my lord [1540] occupying a lowly bed of a silver-sided bath! Who shall bury him? Who shall lament him? Will you harden your heart to do this—you who have slain your own husband—to lament for him [1545] and crown your unholy work with an uncharitable gift to his spirit, atoning for your monstrous deeds? And who, as with tears he utters praise over the hero's grave, [1550] shall sorrow in sincerity of heart?

### Clytaemestra

To care for that duty is no concern of yours. By our hands down he fell, down to death, and down below shall we bury him—but not with wailings from his household. [1555] No! Iphigenia, his



θυγάτηρ, ὥς χρή,  
πατέρ' ἀντιάσασα πρὸς ὠκύπορον  
πόρθμευμ' ἀχέων  
περὶ χεῖρε βαλοῦσα φιλήσει.

**1560 Χο.** ὄνειδος ἦκει τόδ' ἀντ' ὀνειδούς, [ἀντ. γ.  
δύσμαχα δ' ἐστὶ κρῖναι.

φέρει φέροντ', ἐκτίνει δ' ὁ καίνων.  
μῖμνει δὲ μῖμνοντος ἐν θρόνῳ Διὸς  
παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα· θέσμιον γάρ.  
τίς ἂν γονὰν ἀραῖον ἐκβάλοι δόμων;  
κεκόλληται γένος πρὸς ἅτα.

**Κλ.** ἐς τόνδ' ἐνέβη σὺν ἀληθείᾳ  
χρησμός. ἐγὼ δ' οὖν  
ἐθέλω δαίμονι τῷ Πλεισθενιδᾷ  
**1570** ὄρκους θεμένῃ τάδε μὲν στέργειν,  
δύσκλητά περ ὄνθ'· ὁ δὲ λοιπόν, ἰόντ'  
ἐκ τῶνδε δόμων ἄλλην γενεὰν  
τρίβειν θανάτοις αὐθένταισι·  
κτεάνων δὲ μέρος  
βαιὸν ἐχούσῃ πᾶν ἀπόχρη μοι,  
μανίας μελάθρων  
ἀλληλοφόνους ἀφελούσῃ.

daughter, as is due, shall meet her father lovingly at the swift-flowing ford of sorrows, and shall fling her arms around him and kiss him.

### Chorus

[1560] Reproach thus meets reproach in turn—hard is the struggle to decide. The spoiler is despoiled, the slayer pays penalty. Yet, while Zeus remains on his throne, it remains true that to him who does it shall be done; for it is law. [1565] Who can cast from out the house the seed of the curse? The race is bound fast in calamity.

### Clytaemestra

Upon this divine deliverance have you rightly touched. As for me, however, I am willing to make a sworn compact with the Fiend of the house of Pleisthenes<sup>1</sup> [1570] that I will be content with what is done, hard to endure though it is. Henceforth he shall leave this house and bring tribulation upon some other race by murder of kin. A small part of the wealth is fully enough for me, if I may but rid these halls [1575] of the frenzy of mutual murder.

<sup>1</sup> The Pleisthenidae, here apparently a synonym of Atreidae, take their name from Pleisthenes, of whom Porphyry in his Questions says that he was the son of Atreus and the real father of Agamemnon and Menelaus; and that, as he died young, without having achieved any distinction, his sons were brought up by their grandfather and hence called **Atreidae**.

## ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ὦ φέγγος εὖφρον ἡμέρας δικηφόρου.  
 φαίην ἂν ἤδη νῦν βροτῶν τιμαόρους  
 θεοὺς ἄνωθεν γῆς ἐποπτεύειν ἄχῃ,  
**1580** ἰδὼν ὑφαντοῖς ἐν πέπλοις Ἑρινύων  
 τὸν ἄνδρα τόνδε κείμενον, φίλως ἐμοί,  
 χερὸς πατρώας ἐκτίνοντα μηχανάς.  
 Ἄτρεὺς γὰρ ἄρχων τῆσδε γῆς, τούτου πατήρ,  
 πατέρα Θυέστην τὸν ἐμόν, ὡς τορῶς φράσαι,  
 αὐτοῦ δ' ἀδελφόν, ἀμφίλεκτος ὦν κράτει,  
 ἠνδρηλάτησεν ἐκ πόλεως τε καὶ δόμων.  
 καὶ προστρόπαιος ἐστίας μολὼν πάλιν  
 τλήμων Θυέστης μοῖραν ἠὔρετ' ἀσφαλῇ,  
 τὸ μὴ θανὼν πατρῶον αἰμάξαι πέδον  
**1590** αὐτός· ξένια δὲ τοῦδε δύσθεος πατὴρ  
 Ἄτρεὺς, προθύμως μᾶλλον ἢ φίλως πατρὶ  
 τώμῳ, κρεουργὸν ἤμαρ εὐθύμως ἄγειν  
 δοκῶν, παρέσχε δαῖτα παιδείων κρεῶν.  
 τὰ μὲν ποδήρη καὶ χερῶν ἄκρους κτένας  
 ἔθρουπτ' ἄνωθεν ἀνδρακάς καθημένους  
 ἄσῃμ'· ὁ δ' αὐτῶν αὐτίκ' ἀγνοίᾳ λαβὼν  
 ἔσθαι βορὰν ἄσωτον, ὡς ὀρᾶς, γένει.  
 κᾶπειτ' ἐπιγνοὺς ἔργον οὐ καταΐσιον  
 ὦμωξεν, ἀμπίπτει δ' ἀπὸ σφαγῆν ἐρῶν,

*Enter Aegisthus with armed retainers*

## Aegisthus

Hail gracious light of the day of retribution! At last the hour has come when I can say that the gods who avenge mortal men look down from on high upon the crimes of earth. [1580] Now that, to my joy, I behold this man lying here in a robe spun by the Avenging Spirits and making full payment for the deeds contrived in craft by his father's hand. For Atreus, lord of this land, this man's father, challenged in his sovereignty, drove forth, from city and from home, Thyestes, who (to speak it clearly) was my father [1585] and his own brother. And when he had come back as a suppliant to his hearth, unhappy Thyestes secured such safety for his lot as not himself to suffer death and stain with his blood his native soil. [1590] But Atreus, the godless father of this slain man, with welcome more hearty than kind, on the pretence that he was cheerfully celebrating a happy day by serving meat, served up to my father as entertainment a banquet of his own children's flesh. [1595] The toes and fingers he broke off  
 < \* > sitting apart.<sup>1</sup> And when all unwittingly my father had quickly taken servings that he did not recognize, he ate a meal which, as you see, has proved fatal to his race. Now, discovering his unhallowed deed, he uttered a great cry, reeled back, vomiting forth the slaughtered flesh,

**1600** μόρον δ' ἄφερτον Πελοπίδαις ἐπεύχεται,  
 λάκτισμα δείπνου ξυνδίκως τιθεὶς ἀρᾶ,  
 οὕτως ὀλέσθαι πᾶν τὸ Πλεισθένους γένος.  
 ἐκ τῶνδ' ἐτοίμω πεσόντα τόνδ' ἰδεῖν πάρα.  
 καὶ γὰρ δίκαιος τοῦδε τοῦ φόνου ῥαφεύς.  
 τρίτον γὰρ ὄντα μ' ἔλιπε, καὶ θλίψατο πατρὶ  
 συνεξελαύνει τυτθὸν ὄντ' ἐν σπαραγάνοις·  
 τραφέντα δ' αὖθις ἡ δίκη κατήγαγεν,  
 καὶ τοῦδε τάνδρ' ἡψάμην θυραῖος ὦν,  
 πᾶσαν ξυνάψας μηχανὴν δυσβουλίας.

**1610** οὕτω καλὸν δὴ καὶ τὸ κατθανεῖν ἐμοί,  
 ἰδόντα τοῦτον τῆς δίκης ἐν ἔρκεσιν.

**Χο.** Αἰγισθ', ὑβρίζειν ἐν κακοῖσιν οὐ σέβω.  
 σὺ δ' ἄνδρα τόνδε φῆς ἐκὼν κατακτανεῖν,  
 μόνος δ' ἐποικτον τόνδε βουλευῆσαι φόνον;  
 οὐ φημ' ἀλύξιν ἐν δίκῃ τὸ σὸν κάρα  
 δημορριφεῖς, σάφ' ἴσθι, λευσίμους ἀράς.

**Αἰ.** σὺ ταῦτα φωνεῖς νερτέρᾳ προσήμενος  
 κώπη, κρατούντων τῶν ἐπὶ ζυγῷ δορός;  
 γνῶση γέροντων ὥς διδάσκεισθαι βαρὺ

and invoked [1600] an unbearable curse upon the line of Pelops, kicking the banquet table to aid his curse, “thus perish all the race of Pleisthenes!” This is the reason that you see this man fallen here. I am he who planned this murder and with justice. For together with my hapless father he drove me out, [1605] me his third child, as yet a baby in swaddling-clothes. But grown to manhood, justice has brought me back again. Exile though I was, I laid my hand upon my enemy, compassing every device of cunning to his ruin. [1610] So even death would be sweet to me now that I behold him in justice's net.

### Chorus

Aegisthus, excessive triumph amid distress I do not honor. You say that of your own intent you slew this man and did alone plot this pitiful murder. [1615] I tell you in the hour of justice that you yourself, be sure of that, will not escape the people's curses and death by stoning at their hand.

<sup>1</sup> The sense of the lacuna may have been: “and **over them** he placed the other parts. This dish my father, **sitting apart**, received as his share.”

### Aegisthus

You speak like that, you who sit at the lower oar when those upon the higher bench control the ship?<sup>1</sup> Old as you are, you shall learn



**1620** τῷ τηλικούτῳ, σωφρονεῖν εἰρημένον.

δεσμοὶ δὲ καὶ τὸ γῆρας αἶ τε νήστιδες

δύαι διδάσκειν ἐξοχώταται φρενῶν

ἰατρομάντεις. οὐχ ὀρᾶς ὀρῶν τάδε;

πρὸς κέντρα μὴ λάκτιζε, μὴ παίσας μογῆς.

**Χο.** γύναι, σὺ τοὺς ἤκοντας ἐκ μάχης νέον—

οἰκουρὸς εὐνήν <τ'> ἀνδρὸς αἰσχύνουσ' ἅμα,

ἀνδρὶ στρατηγῷ τόνδ' ἐβούλευσας μόρον;

**Αἰ.** καὶ ταῦτα τᾶπη κλαυμάτων ἀρχηγενῇ.

Ὅρφεϊ δὲ γλῶσσαν τὴν ἐναντίαν ἔχεις.

**1630** ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἦγε πάντα που φθογγῆς χαρᾶ,

σὺ δ' ἐξορίνας νηπίοις ὑλάγμασιν

ἄξη· κρατηθεὶς δ' ἡμερώτερος φανῇ.

**Χο.** ὥς δὴ σύ μοι τύραννος Ἀργείων ἔση,

ὃς οὐκ, ἐπειδὴ τῷδ' ἐβούλευσας μόρον,

δραῖσαι τόδ' ἔργον οὐκ ἔτλης αὐτοκτόνως.

**Αἰ.** τὸ γὰρ δολῶσαι πρὸς γυναικὸς ἦν σαφῶς,

ἐγὼ δ' ὑποπτος ἐχθρὸς ἦ παλαιγενής.

ἐκ τῶν δὲ τοῦδε χρημάτων πειράσομαι

ἄρχειν πολιτῶν· τὸν δὲ μὴ πειθάνορα

**1640** ζεύξω βαρεῖαις, οὔτι μὴ σειραφόρον

κριθῶντα πῶλον· ἀλλ' ὁ δυσφιλῆς σκότῳ

λιμὸς ξύνοικος μαλθακόν σφ' ἐπόψεται.

how bitter it is [1620] at your age to be schooled when prudence is the lesson set before you. Bonds and the pangs of hunger are far the best doctors of the spirit when it comes to instructing the old. Do you have eyes and lack understanding? Do not kick against the goads lest you strike to your own hurt.

#### Chorus

[1625] Woman that you are! Skulking at home and awaiting the return of the men from war, all the while defiling a hero's bed, did you contrive this death against a warrior chief?

#### Aegisthus

These words of yours likewise shall prove a source of tears. The tongue of Orpheus is quite the opposite of yours. [1630] He led all things by the rapture of his voice; but you, who have stirred our wrath by your silly yelping, shall be led off yourself. You will appear tamer when put down by force.

#### Chorus

As if you would ever truly be my master here in Argos, you who did contrive our king's death, and [1635] then had not the courage to do this deed of murder with your own hand!

#### Aegisthus

Because to ensnare him was clearly the woman's part; I was suspect as his enemy of old. However, with his gold I shall endeavor to control the people; and whoever is unruly, [1640] him I'll yoke with a heavy collar, and in truth he shall be no well-fed trace-horse!<sup>2</sup> No! Loathsome hunger that houses with darkness shall see him gentle.



**Χο.** τί δὴ τὸν ἄνδρα τόνδ' ἀπὸ ψυχῆς κακῆς  
οὐκ αὐτὸς ἠνάριζες, ἀλλὰ σὺν γυνή  
χώρας μίασμα καὶ θεῶν ἐγχωρίων  
ἔκτεινε; Ὅρέστης ἄρα που βλέπει φάος,  
ὅπως κατελθὼν δεῦρο πρευμαενεῖ τύχη  
ἀμφοῖν γένηται τοῖνδε παγκρατῆς φονεύς;  
**Αἰ.** ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ δοκεῖς τάδ' ἔρδειν καὶ λέγειν, γνώση τάχα·  
**1650** εἷα δὴ, φίλοι λοχῖται, τοῦργον οὐχ ἑκάς τόδε.  
**Χο.** εἷα δὴ, ξίφος πρόκωπον πᾶς τις εὐτρεπιζέτω.  
**Αἰ.** ἀλλὰ κὰγὼ μὴν πρόκωπος οὐκ ἀναίνομαι θανεῖν.  
**Χο.** δεχομένοις λέγεις θανεῖν σε· τὴν τύχην δ' αἰρούμεθα.

### Chorus

Why then, in the baseness of your soul, did you not kill him yourself, but leave his slaying to a woman, [1645] a plague to her country and her country's gods? Oh, does Orestes perhaps still behold the light, that, with favoring fortune, he may come home and be the slayer of this pair with victory complete?

<sup>1</sup> In a bireme, the rowers on the lower tier were called θαλαμίται ; those on the upper tier, ζευγῖται.

<sup>2</sup> The trace-horse bore no collar, and was harnessed by the side of the pair under the yoke.

### Aegisthus

Oh well, since you plan to act and speak like that, you shall be taught a lesson soon. [1650] On guard, my trusty guardsmen, your work lies close to hand.

### Chorus

On guard then! Let every one make ready his sword with hand on hilt.

### Aegisthus

My hand too is laid on my sword hilt, and I do not shrink from death.

### Chorus

"Death for yourself," you say. We hail the omen. We welcome fortune's test.

**Κλ.** μηδαμῶς, ὦ φίλτατ' ἀνδρῶν, ἄλλα δράσωμεν κακά.  
 ἀλλὰ καὶ τάδ' ἐξαμῆσαι πολλὰ δύστηνον θέρος·  
 πημονῆς δ' ἄλις γ' ὑπάρχει· μηδὲν αἱματώμεθα.  
 στείχετ' αἰδοῖοι γέροντες πρὸς δόμους, πεπρωμένοις  
 πρὶν παθεῖν εἴξαντες· ἄρκεῖν χρή τάδ' ὥς ἐπράξαμεν.  
 εἰ δέ τοι μόχθων γένοιτο τῶνδ' ἄλις, δεχοίμεθ' ἄν,  
**1660** δαίμονος χηλῇ βαρεῖα δυστυχῶς πεπληγμένοι.  
 ὧδ' ἔχει λόγος γυναικός, εἴ τις ἀξιοῖ μαθεῖν.

**Αι.** ἀλλὰ τούσδε μοι ματαίαν γλῶσσαν ὧδ' ἀπανθίσαι  
 κάκβαλεῖν ἔπη τοιαῦτα δαίμονος πειρωμένους,  
 σώφρονος γνώμης δ' ἀμαρτεῖν τὸν κρατοῦντ' <ἀρνούμενους>.

**Χο.** οὐκ ἂν Ἀργείων τόδ' εἴη, φῶτα προσσαίνειν κακόν.

**Αι.** ἀλλ' ἐγὼ σ' ἐν ὑστέrais ἡμέραις μέτειμ' ἔτι.

**Χο.** οὐκ, ἐὰν δαίμων Ὀρέστην δεῦρ' ἀπευθύνη μολεῖν.

**Αι.** οἶδ' ἐγὼ φεύγοντας ἄνδρας ἐλπίδας σιτουμένους.

### **Clytaemestra**

No, my dearest, let us work no further ills. [1655] Even these are many to reap, a wretched harvest. Of woe we have enough; let us have no bloodshed. Venerable elders, go back to your homes, and yield in time to destiny before you come to harm. What we did had to be done. But should this trouble prove enough, we will accept it, [1660] sorely battered as we are by the heavy hand of fate. Such is a woman's counsel, if any care to learn from it.

### **Aegisthus**

But to think that these men should let their wanton tongues thus blossom into speech against me and cast about such insults, putting their fortune to the test! To reject wise counsel and insult their master!

### **Chorus**

[1665] It would not be like men of Argos to cringe before a man as low as you.

### **Aegisthus**

Ha! I will visit you with vengeance yet in days to come.

### **Chorus**

Not if fate shall guide Orestes to return home.

### **Aegisthus**

From my own experience I know that exiles feed on hope.

ΑΙΣΧΥΛΟΣ, ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

**Χο.** πρᾶσσε, πιαίνου, μιαίνων τὴν δίκην, ἐπεὶ πάρα.

**1670 Αι.** ἴσθι μοι δώσων ἄποινα τῇσδε μωρίας χάριν.

**Χο.** κόμπασον θαρσῶν, ἀλέκτωρ ὥστε θηλείας πέλας.

**Κλ.** μὴ προτιμήσης ματαίων τῶνδ' ὑλαγμάτων· <ἐγὼ>  
καὶ σὺ θήσομεν κρατοῦντε τῶνδε δωμάτων <καλῶς>.

**Chorus**

Keep on, grow fat, polluting justice, since you can.

**Aegisthus**

[1670] Know that you shall atone to me for your insolent folly.

**Chorus**

Brag in your bravery like a cock beside his hen.

**Clytaemestra**

Do no care for their idle yelpings. I and you will be masters of this house and order it aright.

THE END