

ΑΙΣΧΥΛΟΥ ΕΥΜΕΝΙΔΕΣ

Αρχαίο κείμενο και μετάφραση στα αγγλικά

The Eumenides is the final play of the *Oresteia*, in which Orestes, Apollo, and the Erinyes go before Athena and a jury consisting of the Athenians at the Areopagus (Rock of Ares, a flat rocky hill by the Athenian agora where the homicide court of Athens held its sessions), to decide whether Orestes' murder of his mother, Clytemnestra, makes him worthy of the torment they have inflicted upon him.

Summary

Orestes is tormented by the Erinyes, or Furies, chthonic deities that avenge patricide and matricide. He, at the instigation of his sister Electra and the god Apollo, has killed their mother Clytemnestra, who had killed their father, King Agamemnon, who had killed his daughter and Orestes's sister, Iphigenia. Orestes finds a refuge and a solace at the new temple of Apollo in Delphi, and the god, unable to deliver him from the Erinyes' unappeasable wrath, sends him along to Athens under the protection of Hermes, while he casts a drowsy spell upon the pursuing Erinyes in order to delay them.

Clytemnestra's ghost appears "exactly how or from where is uncertain . . . noteworthy is the poet's bold inventiveness in presenting her as a dream to a collection rather than to a single individual", to the sleeping Erinyes, urging them to continue hunting Orestes. "As the first of them begins to awake the ghost departs". The Erinyes' first appearance on stage is haunting: they hum in unison as they slowly wake up, and seek to find the scent of blood that will lead them to Orestes' tracks. Ancient tradition says that on the play's premiere this struck so much fear and anguish in the audience, that a pregnant woman named Neaira suffered a miscarriage and died on the spot.

The Erinyes' tracking down of Orestes in Athens is equally haunting: Orestes has clasped Athena's small statue in supplication, and the Erinyes close in on him by smelling the blood of his slain mother in the air. Once they do see him, they can also see rivulets of blood soaking the earth beneath his footsteps.

As they surround him, Athena intervenes and brings in eleven Athenians to join her in forming a jury to judge her suppliant. Apollo acts as attorney for Orestes, while the Erinyes act as advocates for the dead Clytemnestra. During the trial, Apollo convinces Athena that, in a marriage, the man is more important than the woman, by pointing out that Athena was born only of Zeus and without a mother. Athena votes last and casts her vote for acquittal; after being counted, the votes on each side are equal, thus acquitting Orestes as Athena had earlier announced that this would be the result of a tie. She then persuades the Erinyes to accept the verdict, and they eventually submit. Athena then renames them ***Eumenides*** (The Kindly Ones), and they will now be honored by the citizens of Athens and ensure the city's prosperity. Athena also declares that henceforth hung juries should result in the defendant being acquitted, as mercy should always take precedence over harshness.

ΑΙΣΧΥΛΟΣ, ΕΥΜΕΝΙΔΕΣ

ΑΙΣΧΥΛΟΣ, ΕΥΜΕΝΙΔΕΣ

Eumenides

By Aeschylus

Written 458 B.C.E

Translated by Herbert Weir Smyth

Dramatis Personae

THE PYTHIAN PRIESTESS

APOLLO

ORESTES

THE GHOST OF CLYTEMNESTRA

CHORUS OF FURIES

ATHENA

ATTENDANTS OF ATHENA

TWELVE ATHENIAN CITIZENS

Scene

Before the temple of APOLLO at Delphi. The PYTHIAN PRIESTESS enters and approaches the doors of the temple.

Εισαγωγή: Προλόγος
Εισαγωγή: Μουσική

Πυθιάς

πρῶτον μὲν εὐχῇ τῇδε πρεσβεύω θεῶν
 τὴν πρωτόμαντιν Γαῖαν· ἐκ δὲ τῆς Θέμιν,
 ἥ δὴ τὸ μητρὸς δευτέρα τόδ' ἔζετο
 μαντεῖον, ὡς λόγος τις· ἐν δὲ τῷ τρίτῳ
 λάχει, θελούσης, οὐδὲ πρὸς βίαν τινός,
 Τιτανὶς ἄλλη παῖς Χθονὸς καθέζετο,
 Φοίβη· δίδωσι δ' ἡ γενέθλιον δόσιν
 Φοίβῳ· τὸ Φοίβης δ' ὄνομ' ἔχει παρώννυμον.
 λιπὼν δὲ λίμνην Δηλίαν τε χοιράδα,
 κέλσας ἐπ' ἄκτὰς ναυπόρους τὰς Παλλάδος,
 ἐς τήνδε γαῖαν ἦλθε Παρνησοῦ θ' ἔδρας.
 πέμπουσι δ' αὐτὸν καὶ σεβίζουσιν μέγα
 κελευθοποιοὶ παῖδες Ἥφαιστου, χθόνα
 ἀνήμερον τιθέντες ἡμερωμένην.
 μολόντα δ' αὐτὸν κάρτα τιμαλφεῖ λεώς,
 Δελφός τε χώρας τῇσδε πρυμνήτης ἄναξ.
 τέχνης δέ νιν Ζεὺς ἔνθεον κτίσας φρένα
 ἵζει τέταρτον τοῖσδε μάντιν ἐν θρόνοις·
 Διὸς προφήτης δ' ἐστὶ Λοξίας πατρός.
 τούτους ἐν εὐχαῖς φροιμιάζομαι θεούς.
 Παλλὰς προναία δ' ἐν λόγοις πρεσβεύεται·
 σέβω δὲ νύμφας, ἔνθα Κωρυκίς πέτρα
 κοίλη, φίλορνις, δαιμόνων ἀναστροφῇ·
 Βρόμιος ἔχει τὸν χώρον, οὐδ' ἀμνημονῶ,

The Priestess of Pythian Apollo

- First, in this prayer of mine, I give the place of highest
 honor among the gods to the first prophet, Earth; and after
 her to Themis, for she was the second to take this oracular
 seat of her mother, as legend tells. And in the third
 5 allotment, with Themis' consent and not by force, [5]
 another Titan, child of Earth, Phoebe, took her seat here.
 She gave it as a birthday gift to Phoebus, who has his name
 from Phoebe. Leaving the lake¹ and ridge of Delos, he
 landed on Pallas' ship-frequented shores, [10] and came to
 10 this region and the dwelling places on Parnassus. The
 children of Hephaistos,² road-builders taming the wildness
 of the untamed land, escorted him with mighty reverence.
 And at his arrival, the people [15] and Delphus, helmsman
 and lord of this land, made a great celebration for him.
 15 Zeus inspired his heart with prophetic skill and established
 him as the fourth prophet on this throne; but Loxias is the
 spokesman of Zeus, his father.
 These are the gods I place in the beginning of my prayer.
 [20] And Pallas who stands before the temple³ is honored
 20 in my words; and I worship the Nymphs where the
 Corycian⁴ rock is hollow, the delight of birds and haunt of
 gods. Bromius has held the region —I do not forget him—
 ever since he, as a god, led the Bacchantes in war, [25] and
 contrived for Pentheus death as of a hunted hare. I call on

ἐξ οὔτε Βάκχαις ἐστρατήγησεν θεός,
 λαγὼ δίκην Πενθεῖ καταρράψας μόρον·
 Πλειστοῦ τε πηγὰς καὶ Ποσειδῶνος κράτος
 καλοῦσα καὶ τέλειον ὕψιστον Δία,
 ἔπειτα μάντις ἐς θρόνους καθίζάνω.
 καὶ νῦν τυχεῖν με τῶν πρὶν εἰσόδων μακρῶ
 ἄριστα δοῖεν· κεῖ παρ' Ἑλλήνων τινές,
 ἴτων πάλω λαχόντες, ὡς νομίζεται.
 μαντεύομαι γὰρ ὡς ἂν ἡγήται θεός.
 ἦ δεινὰ λέξαι, δεινὰ δ' ὀφθαλμοῖς δρακεῖν,
 πάλιν μ' ἔπεμψεν ἐκ δόμων τῶν Λοξίου,
 ὡς μήτε σωκεῖν μήτε μ' ἀκταίνειν βάσιν,
 τρέχω δὲ χερσίν, οὐ ποδωκεία σκελῶν·
 δεῖσασα γὰρ γραῦς οὐδέν, ἀντίπαις μὲν οὔν.
 ἐγὼ μὲν ἔρπω πρὸς πολυστεφῇ μυχόν·
 ὀρῶ δ' ἐπ' ὀμφαλῶ μὲν ἄνδρα θεομυσῇ
 ἔδραν ἔχοντα προστρόπαιον, αἵματι
 στάζοντα χεῖρας καὶ νεοσπαδὲς ξίφος
 ἔχοντ' ἐλαίας θ' ὑψιγέννητον κλάδον,
 λήγει μεγίστῳ σωφρόνως ἐστεμμένον,
 ἀργῆτι μαλλῶ· τῇδε γὰρ τρανῶς ἐρῶ.
 πρόσθεν δὲ τάνδρὸς τοῦδε θαυμαστὸς λόχος
 εὔδει γυναικῶν ἐν θρόνοισιν ἥμενος.
 οὔτοι γυναικάς, ἀλλὰ Γοργόνας λέγω,
 οὐδ' αὖτε Γοργείοισιν εἰκάσω τύποις.

25 the streams of Pleistus and the strength of Poseidon, and
 highest Zeus, the Fulfiller; and then I take my seat as
 prophetess upon my throne. And may they allow me now
 to have the best fortune, far better than on my previous
 entrances. [30] And if there are any from among the
 30 Hellenes here, let them enter, in turn, by lot, as is the
 custom. For I prophesy as the god leads. *She enters the
 temple and after a brief interval returns terror-stricken*

1 A circular lake in the island of Apollo's birth.

35 2 The Athenians, because Erichthonius, who was identified with
 Erechtheus, was the son of Hephaestus, who first fashioned axes.

3 The shrine of Pallas "before the temple," close to Delphi on the main
 road leading to the sanctuary of Apollo.

4 The Corycian cave, sacred to the Nymphs and Pan, has been
 identified with a grotto on the great plateau above Delphi.

40 Horrors to tell, horrors for my eyes to see, have sent me
 back from the house of Loxias, [35] so that I have no
 strength and I cannot walk upright. I am running on hands
 and knees, with no quickness in my limbs; for an old
 45 woman, overcome with fright, is nothing, or rather she is
 like a child. I was on my way to the inner shrine, decked
 with wreaths; I saw on the center-stone¹ a man defiled in
 the eyes of the gods, [40] occupying the seat of suppliants.
 His hands were dripping blood; he held a sword just

εἶδόν ποτ' ἤδη Φινέως γεγραμμένης
 δεῖπνον φερούσας· ἄπτεροί γε μὴν ἰδεῖν
 αὐται, μέλαιναι δ' ἐς τὸ πᾶν βδελύκτροποι·
 ῥέγκουσι δ' οὐ πλατοῖσι φυσιάμασιν·
 ἐκ δ' ὀμμάτων λείβουσι δυσφιλῇ λίβα·
 καὶ κόσμος οὔτε πρὸς θεῶν ἀγάλματα
 φέρειν δίκαιος οὔτ' ἐς ἀνθρώπων στέγας.
 τὸ φῦλον οὐκ ὅπωπα τῆσδ' ὀμιλίας
 οὐδ' ἦτις αἶα τοῦτ' ἐπεύχεται γένος
 τρέφουσ' ἀνατεῖ μὴ μεταστένειν πόνον.
 τάντεῦθεν ἤδη τῶνδε δεσπότη δόμων
 αὐτῷ μελέσθω Λοξία μεγασθενεῖ.
 ἰατρόμαντις δ' ἐστὶ καὶ τερασκόπος
 καὶ τοῖσιν ἄλλοις δωμάτων καθάρσιος.

50 drawn and an olive-branch, from the top of the tree,
 decorously crowned with a large tuft of wool, a shining
 fleece; for as to this I can speak clearly. [45] Before this man
 an extraordinary band of women slept, seated on thrones.
 No! Not women, but rather Gorgons I call them; and yet I
 55 cannot compare them to forms of Gorgons either. Once
 before I saw some creatures in a painting,² [50] carrying off
 the feast of Phineus; but these are wingless in appearance,
 black, altogether disgusting; they snore with repulsive
 breaths, they drip from their eyes hateful drops; their attire
 60 is not fit to bring either before the statues of the gods or
 into the homes of men. [55] I have never seen the tribe that
 produced this company, nor the land that boasts of rearing
 this brood with impunity and does not grieve for its labor
 afterwards. Let what is to come now be the concern of the
 master of this house, [60] powerful Loxias himself. He is a
 prophet of healing, a reader of portents, and for others a
 purifier of homes. *Exit*

¹ ὀμφαλός “navel” was the name given by the Delphians to a white stone (in Aeschylus' time placed in the inmost sanctuary of Apollo) , which they regarded as marking the exact center of the earth. Near the great altar of Apollo the French excavators of Delphi discovered a navel-stone. ὀμφαλός is sometimes used of Delphi itself.

² The Harpies.

Ἀπόλλων

οὗτοι προδώσω· διὰ τέλους δέ σοι φύλαξ
 ἐγγὺς παρεστώς καὶ πρόσω δ' ἀποστατῶν
 ἐχθροῖσι τοῖς σοῖς οὐ γενήσομαι πέπων.
 καὶ νῦν ἀλούσας τάσδε τὰς μάργους ὄρᾱς·
 ὕπνῳ πεσοῦσαι δ' αἱ κατάπτυστοι κόραι,
 γραῖαι παλαιαὶ παῖδες, αἷς οὐ μείγνυται
 θεῶν τις οὐδ' ἄνθρωπος οὐδὲ θήρ ποτε.
 κακῶν δ' ἕκατι κἀγένοντ', ἐπεὶ κακὸν
 σκότον νέμονται Τάρταρόν θ' ὑπὸ χθονός,
 μισήματ' ἀνδρῶν καὶ θεῶν Ὀλυμπίων.
 ὅμως δὲ φεῦγε μηδὲ μαλθακὸς γένη.
 ἐλῶσι γάρ σε καὶ δι' ἡπείρου μακρᾶς
 βιβῶντ' ἄν' αἰεὶ τὴν πλανοστιβῆ χθόνα
 ὑπὲρ τε πόντον καὶ περιρρύτας πόλεις.
 καὶ μὴ πρόκαμνε τόνδε βουκολούμενος
 πόνον· μολῶν δὲ Παλλάδος ποτὶ πτόλιν
 ἴζου παλαιὸν ἄγκαθεν λαβὼν βρέτας.
 κἀκεῖ δικαστὰς τῶνδε καὶ θελκτηρίους
 μύθους ἔχοντες μηχανὰς εὐρήσομεν,
 ὥστ' ἐς τὸ πᾶν σε τῶνδ' ἀπαλλάξαι πόνων·
 καὶ γὰρ κτανεῖν σ' ἔπεισα μητρῶον δέμας.

The interior of the temple is disclosed. Enter, from the inner sanctuary, Apollo, who takes his stand beside Orestes at the center-stone. Near the suppliant are the Furies asleep. Hermes in the background.

Apollo

No! I will not abandon you. Your guardian to the end, close
 65 by your side or far removed, [65] I will not be gentle to
 your enemies. So now you see these mad women
 overcome; these loathsome maidens have fallen asleep, old
 women, ancient children, with whom no god or man or
 70 beast ever mingles. [70] They were even born for evil, since
 they live in evil gloom and in Tartarus under the earth,
 creatures hateful to men and to the Olympian gods.
 Nevertheless, escape and do not be cowardly. [75] For as
 you go always over the earth that wanderers tread, they
 will drive you on, even across the wide mainland, beyond
 80 the sea and the island cities. Do not grow weary too soon,
 brooding on this labor, but when you have come to Pallas'
 city, sit down and hold in your arms her ancient image.
 [80] And there, with judges of your case and speeches of
 persuasive charm, we shall find means to release you
 completely from your labors. For I persuaded you to take
 your mother's life.

Ὀρέστης

ἄναξ Ἀπολλον, οἶσθα μὲν τὸ μὴ ᾽δικεῖν
ἐπεὶ δ' ἐπίστα, καὶ τὸ μὴ ᾽μελεῖν μάθε.
σθένος δὲ ποιεῖν εὖ φερέγγυον τὸ σόν.

Ἀπόλλων

μέμνησο, μὴ φόβος σε νικάτω φρένας.
σὺ δ', αὐτάδελφον αἶμα καὶ κοινοῦ πατρός,
Ἑρμῇ, φύλασσε· κάρτα δ' ὦν ἐπώνυμος
πομπαῖος ἴσθι, τόνδε ποιμαίνων ἐμὸν
ικέτην—σέβει τοι Ζεὺς τόδ' ἐκνόμων σέβας—
ὀρμώμενον βροτοῖσιν εὐπόμπῳ τύχῃ.

Κλυταιμήστρας Εἰδωλον

εὐδοίτ' ἄν, ὦή, καὶ καθευδουσῶν τί δεῖ;
ἐγὼ δ' ὑφ' ὑμῶν ὧδ' ἀπητιμασμένη
ἄλλοισιν ἐν νεκροῖσιν, ὧν μὲν ἔκτανον
ὄνειδος ἐν φθιτοῖσιν οὐκ ἐκλείπεται,
αἰσχροῦς δ' ἀλῶμαι· προυννέπω δ' ὑμῖν ὅτι
ἔχω μεγίστην αἰτίαν κείνων ὑπο·
παθοῦσα δ' οὕτω δεινὰ πρὸς τῶν φιλτάτων,
οὐδεὶς ὑπέρ μου δαιμόνων μηνίεται,
κατασφαγείσης πρὸς χερῶν μητροκτόνων.
ὁρᾶτε πληγὰς τάσδε καρδίας ὄθεν.
εὐδουσα γὰρ φρὴν ὄμμασιν λαμπρύνεται,
ἐν ἡμέρᾳ δὲ μοῖρ' ἀπρόσκοπος βροτῶν.

Orestes

85 Lord Apollo, you know how to do no wrong; [85] and,
since you know this, learn not to be neglectful also. For
your power to do good is assured.

Apollo

Remember, do not let fear overpower your heart. You,
Hermes, my blood brother, born of the same father, watch
90 over him; true to your name, [90] be his guide,¹ shepherding
this suppliant of mine—truly Zeus respects this right of
outlaws—as he is sped on towards mortals with the fortune
of a good escort. *Exit. Orestes departs escorted by Hermes. The
Ghost of Clytaemestra appears.*

1 Hermes is the guide of the living on their journeys; as he is also the
conductor of the souls of the dead to the nether world.

95

Ghost of Clytaemestra

Sleep on! Aha! Yet what need is there of sleepers? It is due
to you that I am thus dishonored among the other dead;
100 [95] because of those I killed the dead never cease to
reproach me, and I wander in disgrace. I tell you that I am
most greatly accused by them. And yet, although I have
suffered cruelly in this way from my nearest kin, [100] no
divine power is angry on my behalf, slaughtered as I have
105 been by the hands of a matricide. See these gashes in my

ἦ πολλὰ μὲν δὴ τῶν ἐμῶν ἐλείξατε,
 χοάς τ' αἰίνους, νηφάλια μειλίγματα,
 καὶ νυκτίσεμνα δεῖπν' ἐπ' ἐσχάρα πυρὸς
 ἔθυσον, ὥραν οὐδενὸς κοινήν θεῶν.
 καὶ πάντα ταῦτα λὰξ ὁρῶ πατούμενα.
 ὁ δ' ἐξαλύξας οἴχεται νεβροῦ δίκην,
 καὶ ταῦτα κούφως ἐκ μέσων ἀρκυστάτων
 ὥρουσεν ὑμῖν ἐγκατιλλώψας μέγα.
 ἀκούσαθ' ὡς ἔλεξα τῆς ἐμῆς περὶ
 ψυχῆς, φρονήσατ', ὦ κατὰ χθονὸς θεαί.
 ὄναρ γὰρ ὑμᾶς νῦν Κλυταιμῆστρα καλῶ.

Χορός

(μυγμός.)

Κλυταιμῆστρας Εἰδωλον

μύζοιτ' ἄν, ἀνὴρ δ' οἴχεται φεύγων πρόσω·
 φίλοι γὰρ εἰσιν οὐκ ἐμοῖς προσεικότες.

Χορός

(μυγμός.)

Κλυταιμῆστρας Εἰδωλον

ἄγαν ὑπνώσσεις κοῦ κατοικτίζεις πάθος·
 φονεὺς δ' Ὀρέστης τῆσδε μητρὸς οἴχεται.

Χορός

(ὦγμός.)

heart, and from where they came! For the sleeping mind
 has clear vision, but in the daytime the fate of mortals is
 unforeseeable. [105] Truly, you have lapped up many of
 my offerings — wineless libations, a sober appeasement;
 110 and I have sacrificed banquets in the solemn night upon a
 hearth of fire at an hour unshared by any god. I see all this
 trampled under foot. [110] But he has escaped and is gone,
 like a fawn; lightly indeed, from the middle of snares, he
 has rushed away mocking at you. Hear me, since I plead
 115 for my life, awake to consciousness, goddesses of the
 underworld! [115] For in a dream I, Clytaemestra, now
 invoke you.

Chorus

(whine) *The Chorus begins to move uneasily, uttering a whining sound.*

Ghost of Clytaemestra

Whine, if you will! But the man is gone, fled far away. For
 120 he has friends that are not like mine!

Chorus

(whine) [120] *The Chorus continues to whine.*

Ghost of Clytaemestra

You are too drowsy and do not pity my suffering. Orestes,
 the murderer of me, his mother, is gone!

Chorus

(moan) *The Chorus begins to moan*

Κλυταιμήστρας Εἶδωλον

ῥῆζεις, ὑπνώσσεις· οὐκ ἀναστήσῃ τάχος;
τί σοι πέπρωται πρᾶγμα πλὴν τεύχειν κακά;

Χορός

(ὦγμός.)

Κλυταιμήστρας Εἶδωλον

ὕπνος πόνος τε κύριοι συνωμόται
δεινῆς δρακαίνης ἐξεκήραναν μένος.

Χορός

(μυγμός διπλοῦς ὀξύς.)

λαβὲ λαβὲ λαβὲ λαβέ, φράζου.

Κλυταιμήστρας Εἶδωλον

ὄναρ διώκεις θῆρα, κλαγγαίνεις δ' ἄπερ
κύων μέριμναν οὔ ποτ' ἐκλείπων πόνου.
τί δρᾷς; ἀνίστω, μή σε νικάτω πόνος,
μηδ' ἀγνοήσῃς πῆμα μαλθαχθεῖς ὕπνω.
ἄλγησον ἥπαρ ἐνδίκους ὀνειδέσιν·
τοῖς σώφροσιν γὰρ ἀντίκεντρα γίννεται.
σὺ δ' αἵματηρὸν πνεῦμα' ἐπουρίσασα τῶ,
ἄτμῳ κατισχναίνουσα, νηδύος πυρί,
ἔπου, μάραινε δευτέροις διώγμασιν.

Χορός

ἔγειρ', ἔγειρε καὶ σὺ τήνδ', ἐγὼ δὲ σέ.
εὐδεις; ἀνίστω, κάπολακτίσας ὕπνον,

Ghost of Clytaemestra

You moan, you drowse — will you not get up at once? Is it
125 your destiny to do anything other than cause harm? [125]

Chorus

(moan) *The Chorus continues to moan.*

Ghost of Clytaemestra

Sleep and toil, effective conspirators, have destroyed the
force of the dreadful dragoness.

Chorus

With whining redoubled and intensified. Catch him! Catch
130 him! Catch him! Catch him! Look sharp! [130]

Ghost of Clytaemestra

In a dream you are hunting your prey, and are barking like
a dog that never leaves off its keenness for the work. What
are you doing? Get up; do not let fatigue overpower you,
and do not ignore my misery because you have been
135 softened by sleep. Sting your heart with merited
reproaches; [135] for reproach becomes a spur to the right-
minded. Send after him a gust of bloody breath, shrivel
him with the vapor, the fire from your guts, follow him,
wither him with fresh pursuit! *The Ghost of Clytaemestra*
disappears; the Furies, roused by their leader, awake one after the
other.

Chorus

Awake! Wake her up, as I wake you. [140] Still asleep? Get

ἰδώμεθ' εἴ τι τοῦδε φροϊμίου ματᾶ.
 ἰοῦ ἰοῦ πύπαξ. ἐπάθομεν, φίλοι, —
 ἦ πολλὰ δὴ παθοῦσα καὶ μάτην ἐγώ, —
 ἐπάθομεν πάθος δυσαχές, ὦ πόποι,
 ἄφερτον κακόν·
 ἐξ ἀρκύων πέπτωκεν οἷχεται θ' ὁ θήρ. —
 ὕπνω κρατηθεῖς ἄγραν ὤλεσα.
 ἰὼ παῖ Διός, ἐπὶ κλοπος πέλη, —
 νέος δὲ γραίας δαίμονας καθιππᾶσω, —
 τὸν ἰκέταν σέβων, ἄθεον ἄνδρα καὶ
 τοκεῦσιν πικρόν·
 τὸν μητραλοῖαν δ' ἐξέκλεψας ὦν θεός. —
 τί τῶνδ' ἔρει τις δικαίως ἔχειν;
 ἐμοὶ δ' ὄνειδος ἐξ ὀνειράτων μολὼν
 ἔτυψεν δίκαν διφρηλάτου
 μεσολαβεῖ κέντρῳ
 ὑπὸ φρένας, ὑπὸ λοβόν. —
 πάρεστι μαστίκτορος δαΐου δαμίου
 βαρὺ τὸ περίβαρυ κρύος ἔχειν.
 τοιαῦτα δρῶσιν οἱ νεώτεροι θεοί,
 κρατοῦντες τὸ πᾶν δίκας πλέον
 φονολιβῇ θρόνον
 περὶ πόδα, περὶ κάρα. —
 πάρεστι γὰς ὀμφαλὸν προσδρακεῖν αἱμάτων
 βλοσυρὸν ἀρόμενον ἄγος ἔχειν.

up, shake off sleep, let us see if any part of this beginning¹ is in vain.

145 ¹ The utterances of the Furies, as they rouse themselves to action, will be only a prelude to the fuller expression of their wrath. It is uncertain whether the first and second strophic groups were sung by single voices or by semi-choruses.

150 Oh, oh! Alas! We have suffered, friends.
 Indeed I have suffered much and all in vain. We have
 suffered very painfully, [145] oh! an unbearable evil. The
 beast has escaped from our nets and is gone. Overcome by
 sleep, I have lost my prey. Oh! Child of Zeus, you have
 155 become a thief—you, a youth, have ridden down old
 divinities— [150] by showing respect to your suppliant, a
 godless man and cruel to a parent; although you are a god,
 you have stolen away a man that killed his mother. What is
 160 there here that anyone shall call just? Reproach, coming to
 me in a dream, [155] struck me like a charioteer with goad
 held tight, under my heart, under my vitals. I can feel the
 cruel, the very cruel chill of the executioner's destroying
 scourge. [160] They do such things, the younger gods, who
 165 rule, wholly beyond justice, a throne dripping blood, about
 its foot, about its head. [165] I can see the center-stone of
 the earth defiled with a terrible pollution of blood.
 Although he is a prophet, he has stained his sanctuary with

ἐφεστίω δὲ μάντις ὦν μιάσματι
 μυχὸν ἐχράνατ' αὐτόσσυτος, αὐτόκλητος,
 παρὰ νόμον θεῶν βρότεια μὲν τίων,
 παλαιγενεῖς δὲ μοίρας φθίσας.
 κάμοί γε λυπρός, καὶ τὸν οὐκ ἐκλύσεται,
 ὑπὸ τε γᾶν φυγῶν οὐ ποτ' ἐλευθεροῦται.
 ποτιτρόπαιος ὦν δ' ἕτερον ἐν κάρῳ
 μιάστορ' ἐκ γένους πάσεται.

Ἀπόλλων

ἔξω, κελεύω, τῶνδε δωμάτων τάχος
 χωρεῖτ', ἀπαλλάσσεσθε μαντικῶν μυχῶν,
 μὴ καὶ λαβοῦσα πτηνὸν ἀργηστήν ὄφιν,
 χρυσηλάτου θώμιγγος ἐξορμώμενον,
 ἀνῆς ὑπ' ἄλγους μέλαν' ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων ἀφρόν,
 ἐμοῦσα θρόμβους οὓς ἀφείλκυσας φόνου.
 οὗτοι δόμοισι τοῖσδε χρίμπτεσθαι πρόπει·
 ἀλλ' οὐ καρανιστῆρες ὀφθαλμωρύχοι
 δίκαι σφαγαί τε σπέρματός τ' ἀποφθορᾶ
 παίδων κακοῦται χλοῦνις, ἢ δ' ἀκρωνία,
 λευσμός τε, καὶ μύζουσιν οἰκτισμὸν πολὺν

pollution at its hearth, at his own urging, at his own
 170 bidding; [170] against the law of the gods, he has honored
 mortal things and caused the ancient allotments to decay.
 And he brings distress to me too, but he shall not win his
 release; even if he escapes beneath the earth, he is never set
 175 free. [175] A suppliant, he will acquire another avenger
 from his family.¹

¹ As Agamemnon was slain by Clytaemestra and Clytaemestra by Orestes, so Orestes shall be slain by one of his own race. μιάστωρ is properly "polluter."

Enters from the inner sanctuary.

Apollo

180 Out, I order you! Go away from this house at once, leave
 my prophetic sanctuary, [180] so that you may not be
 struck by a winged glistening snake¹ shot forth from a
 golden bow-string, and painfully release black foam,
 vomiting the clots of blood you have drained from mortals.
 185 [185] It is not right for you to approach this house; no, your
 place is where the punishments are beheading, gouging out
 of eyes, cutting of throats, and where young men's virility
 is ruined by destruction of seed; where there is mutilation
 and stoning, and where those who are impaled beneath

ὑπὸ ῥάχιν παγέντες. ἄρ' ἀκούετε
οἷας ἐορτῆς ἔστ' ἀπόπτυστοι θεοῖς
στέργηθρ' ἔχουσαι; πᾶς δ' ὑφηγεῖται τρόπος
μορφῆς. Λέοντος ἄντρον αἵματορρόφου
οἰκεῖν τοιαύτας εἰκός, οὐ χρηστηρίοις
ἐν τοῖσδε πλησίοισι τρίβεσθαι μύσος.
χωρεῖτ' ἄνευ βοτῆρος αἰπολούμεναι.
ποιμνῆς τοιαύτης δ' οὔτις εὐφιλῆς θεῶν.

Χορός

ἄναξ Ἀπολλον, ἀντάκουσον ἐν μέρει.
αὐτὸς σὺ τούτων οὐ μεταίτιος πέλη,
ἀλλ' εἰς τὸ πᾶν ἔπραξας ὦν παναίτιος.

Ἀπόλλων

πῶς δῆ; τοσοῦτο μῆκος ἔκτεινον λόγου.

Χορός

ἔχρησας ὥστε τὸν ξένον μητροκτονεῖν.

Ἀπόλλων

ἔχρησα ποινὰς τοῦ πατρὸς πρᾶξαι. τί μήν;

Χορός

κᾶπειθ' ὑπέστης αἵματος δέκτωρ νέου.

Ἀπόλλων

καὶ προστραπέσθαι τούσδ' ἐπέστελλον δόμους.

190 their spine moan long and piteously. [190] Do you hear
what sort of feast is your delight? You are detested by the
gods for it. The whole fashion of your form sets it forth.
Creatures like you should live in the den of a blood-
drinking lion, and not inflict pollution on all near you in
195 this oracular shrine. [195] Be gone, you goats without a
herdsman! No god loves such a flock.

Chorus

Lord Apollo, hear our reply in turn. You yourself are not
partially guilty of this deed; you alone have done it all, and
are wholly guilty. [200]

200 **Apollo**

What do you mean? Draw out the length of your speech
this much.

Chorus

Through your oracle, you directed the stranger to kill his
mother.

Apollo

Through my oracle, I directed him to exact vengeance for
his father. What of it?

Chorus

205 And then you agreed to take the fresh blood on yourself.

Apollo

And I ordered him to turn for expiation to this house. [205]

Χορός

καὶ τὰς προπομποὺς δῆτα τάσδε λοιδορεῖς;

Ἀπόλλων

οὐ γὰρ δόμοισι τοῖσδε πρόσφορον μολεῖν.

Χορός

ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἡμῖν τοῦτο προστεταγμένον.

Ἀπόλλων

τίς ἤδε τιμή; κόμπασον γέρας καλόν.

Χορός

τοὺς μητραλοίας ἐκ δόμων ἐλαύνομεν.

Ἀπόλλων

τί γὰρ γυναικὸς ἦτις ἄνδρα νοσφίση;

Χορός

οὐκ ἂν γένοιθ' ὅμαιμος αὐθέντης φόνος.

Ἀπόλλων

ἦ κάρτ' ἄτιμα καὶ παρ' οὐδὲν εἰργάσω

Ἥρας τελείας καὶ Διὸς πιστώματα.

Κύπρις δ' ἄτιμος τῷδ' ἀπέρριπται λόγῳ,

ὅθεν βροτοῖσι γίγνεται τὰ φίλτατα.

εὐνή γὰρ ἀνδρὶ καὶ γυναικὶ μόρσιμος

ὄρκου ὅτι μείζων τῇ δίκῃ φρουρουμένη.

εἰ τοῖσιν οὖν κτείνουσιν ἀλλήλους χαλᾶς

τὸ μὴ τίνεσθαι μηδ' ἐποπτεύειν κότῳ,

οὐ φημ' Ὀρέστην σ' ἐνδίκως ἀνδρηλατεῖν.

τὰ μὲν γὰρ οἶδα κάρτα σ' ἐνθυμουμένην,

Chorus

And do you then rebuke us, the ones who escorted him here?

Apollo

Yes, for you are not fit to approach this house.

Chorus

But this has been assigned to us—

Apollo

What is this office of yours? Boast of your fine privilege!

210 **Chorus**

We drive matricides from their homes. [210]

Apollo

But what about a wife who kills her husband?

Chorus

That would not be murder of a relative by blood.

215

¹ The arrow sped from Apollo's gold-wrought string is called a "winged glistening snake" because it stings like a serpent's bite. There is also a latent word-play: ὄφις "snake" suggests ἰός "snake's poison" which also means "arrow."

Apollo

220

Then truly you dishonor and bring to nothing the pledges of Hera, the Fulfiller, and Zeus.¹ Cypris too is cast aside, dishonored by this argument, [215] and from her come the dearest things for mortals. For marriage ordained by fate

τὰ δ' ἐμφανῶς πράσσουσιν ἡσυχαιτέραν.
δίκας δὲ Παλλὰς τῶνδ' ἐποπτεύσει θεά.

Χορός

τὸν ἄνδρ' ἐκεῖνον οὐ τι μὴ λίπω ποτέ.

Ἀπόλλων

σὺ δ' οὖν δίωκε καὶ πόνον πλείω τίθου.

Χορός

τιμὰς σὺ μὴ σύντεμνε τὰς ἐμὰς λόγῳ.

Ἀπόλλων

οὐδ' ἂν δεχοίμην ὥστ' ἔχειν τιμὰς σέθεν.

Χορός

μέγας γὰρ ἔμπας παρ Διὸς θρόνοις λέγῃ.

ἐγὼ δ', ἄγει γὰρ αἷμα μητρῶον, δίκας

μέτειμι τόνδε φῶτα κάκκυνηγετῶ.

Ἀπόλλων

ἐγὼ δ' ἀρήξω τὸν ἱκέτην τε ῥύσομαι·

δεινὴ γὰρ ἐν βροτοῖσι κὰν θεοῖς πέλει

τοῦ προστροπαίου μῆνις, εἰ προδῶ σφ' ἐκών.

for a man and a woman is greater than an oath and guarded by Justice. If, then, one should kill the other and you are so lenient as not to punish or visit them with anger, [220] I claim that you unjustly banish Orestes from his home. For I see you taking the one cause very much to heart, but clearly acting more leniently about the other. But the goddess Pallas will oversee the pleadings in this case.

Chorus

I will never, never leave that man! [225]

Apollo

Pursue him then and get more trouble for yourself.

Chorus

230 Do not cut short my privileges by your words.

Apollo

I would not take your privileges as a gift.

Chorus

No, for in any case you are called great at the throne of Zeus. But as for me—since a mother's blood leads me, [230] I will pursue my case against this man and I will hunt him down. *Exeunt.*

Apollo

And I will aid my suppliant and rescue him! For the wrath of the one who seeks purification is terrible among mortals and gods, if I intentionally abandon him.

Ὀρέστης

ἄνασσ' Ἀθάνᾳ, Λοξίου κελεύμασιν
 ἦκω, δέχου δὲ πρευμαενῶς ἀλάστορα,
 οὐ προστρόπαιον οὐδ' ἀφοίβαντον χέρα,
 ἀλλ' ἀμβλὺς ἤδη προστετριμμένος τε πρὸς
 ἄλλοισιν οἴκοις καὶ πορεύμασιν βροτῶν.
 ὅμοια χέρσον καὶ θάλασσαν ἐκπερῶν,
 σφάζων ἐφετμᾶς Λοξίου χρηστηρίους,
 πρόσσιμι δῶμα καὶ βρέτας τὸ σόν, θεά.
 αὐτοῦ φυλάσσω ἀναμένω τέλος δίκης.

Χορός

εἶεν· τόδ' ἐστὶ τάνδρ' ἐκφανὲς τέκμαρ.
 ἔπου δὲ μηνυτῆρος ἀφθέγκτου φραδαῖς.
 τετραυματισμένον γὰρ ὥς κύων νεβρὸν
 πρὸς αἷμα καὶ σταλαγμὸν ἐκματεύομεν.
 πολλοῖς δὲ μόχθοις ἀνδροκμήσι φυσιᾷ
 σπλάγχχνον· χθονὸς γὰρ πᾶς πεποίμανται τόπος,
 ὑπὲρ τε πόντον ἀπτέροις ποτήμασιν
 ἦλθον διώκουσ', οὐδὲν ὑστέρα νεώς.
 καὶ νῦν ὃδ' ἐνθάδ' ἐστὶ που καταπτακῶν.
 ὁσμὴ βροτείων αἱμάτων με προσγελαῖ.

Enters the Sanctuary.

235 *The scene changes to Athens, before the temple of Athena. Enter Hermes with Orestes, who embraces the ancient image of the goddess.*

Orestes

240 Lady Athena, at Loxias' command I have come. [235] Receive kindly an accursed wretch, not one who seeks purification, or with unclean hand, but with my guilt's edge already blunted and worn away at other homes and in the travelled paths of men. Going over land and sea alike, [240] keeping the commands of Loxias' oracle, I now approach your house and image, goddess. Here I will keep watch and await the result of my trial.

245 *The Furies enter dispersedly, hunting Orestes' trail by scent.*

Chorus

Aha! This is a clear sign of the man. [245] Follow the hints of a voiceless informer. For as a hound tracks a wounded fawn, so we track him by the drops of blood. My lungs pant from many tiring struggles, for I have roamed over the whole earth, and I have come over the sea in wingless flight, [250] pursuing him, no slower than a ship. And now he is here somewhere, cowering. The smell of human blood

ὄρα ὄρα μάλ' αὖ,
 λεύσσετε πάντα, μὴ
 λάθῃ φύγδα βὰς
 [ό] ματροφόνος ἀτίτας.
 ὁ δ' αὖτέ γ' [οὖν] ἀλκὰν ἔχων
 περὶ βρέτει πλεχθεὶς θεᾶς ἀμβρότου
 ὑπόδικος θέλει γενέσθαι χρεῶν.
 τὸ δ' οὐ πάρεστιν· αἶμα μητρῶν χαμαὶ
 δυσαγκόμιστον, παπαῖ,
 τὸ διερὸν πέδοι χύμενον οἴχεται.
 ἀλλ' ἀντιδοῦναι δεῖ σ' ἀπὸ ζῶντος ῥοφεῖν
 ἐρυθρὸν ἐκ μελέων πέλανον· ἀπὸ δὲ σοῦ
 φεροίμαν βοσκὰν πώματος δυσπότου·
 καὶ ζῶντά σ' ἰσχνάνασ' ἀπάξομαι κάτω,
 ἀντίποιν' ὥς τίνης ματροφόνου δῦας.
 ὄψει δὲ κεῖ τις ἄλλος ἤλιτεν βροτῶν
 ἢ θεὸν ἢ ξένον
 τιν' ἀσεβῶν ἢ τοκέας φίλους,
 ἔχονθ' ἕκαστον τῆς δίκης ἐπάξια.
 μέγας γὰρ Ἄιδης ἐστὶν εὖθυνος βροτῶν
 ἔνερθε χθονός,
 δελτογράφῳ δὲ πάντ' ἐπωπᾶ φρενί.

gives me a smiling welcome.

255

¹ In connection with marriage, Hera was τελεία, as Zeus was τέλειος; and the adjective applies also to him here. The ancients derived τέλειος (of marriage) from τέλος meaning "rite," "consummation." Inasmuch as τέλος often has the sense "supreme authority," "full power," some modern scholars hold that Hera τελεία is Hera the Queen, Hera the Wife.

260

Look! Look again! Look everywhere, so that the matricide will not escape by secret flight, with his debt unpaid! [255]

265

Yes, here he is again with a defense; his arms twisted around the image of the immortal goddess, he wishes to be tried for his debt.¹ [260]

But that is not possible; a mother's blood upon the earth is hard to recover—alas, the liquid poured on the ground is gone.

270

But you must allow me in return to suck the red blood from your living limbs. [265] May I feed on you—a gruesome drink!

I will wither you alive and drag you down, so that you pay atonement for your murdered mother's agony.

275

And you will see any other mortal who has sinned by not honoring a god or a stranger [270] or dear parents, each having a just punishment.

For Hades is mighty in holding mortals to account under

Ὀρέστης

ἐγὼ διδαχθεὶς ἐν κακοῖς ἐπίσταμαι
πολλοὺς καθαρμούς, καὶ λέγειν ὅπου δίκη
σιγᾶν θ' ὁμοίως· ἐν δὲ τῷδε πράγματι
φωνεῖν ἐτάχθην πρὸς σοφοῦ διδασκάλου.
βρίζει γὰρ αἷμα καὶ μαραίνεται χερὸς,
μητροκτόνον μίasma δ' ἔκπλυτον πέλει·
ποταίνιον γὰρ ὃν πρὸς ἐστία θεοῦ
Φοίβου καθαρμοῖς ἤλαθ' ἡχοκτόνοις.
πολὺς δέ μοι γένοιτ' ἂν ἐξ ἀρχῆς λόγος,
ὅσοις προσῆλθον ἀβλαβεῖ ξυνουσία.
[χρόνος καθαιρεῖ πάντα γηράσκων ὁμοῦ.]
καὶ νῦν ἀφ' ἀγνοῦ στόματος εὐφήμως καλῶ
χώρας ἄνασσαν τῆσδ' Ἀθηναίαν ἐμοὶ
μολεῖν ἀρωγόν· κτήσεται δ' ἄνευ δορὸς
αὐτόν τε καὶ γῆν καὶ τὸν Ἀργεῖον λεῶν
πιστὸν δικαίως ἐς τὸ πᾶν τε σύμμαχον.
ἀλλ' εἴτε χώρας ἐν τόποις Λιβυστικοῖς,
Τρίτωνος ἀμφὶ χεῦμα γενεθλίου πόρου,
τίθησιν ὀρθὸν ἢ κατηρεφῇ πόδα,
φίλοις ἀρήγουσ', εἴτε Φλεγραῖαν πλάκα
θρασὺς ταγοῦχος ὡς ἀνὴρ ἐπισκοπεῖ,
ἔλθοι—κλύει δὲ καὶ πρόσωθεν ὦν θεός—
ὅπως γένοιτο τῶνδ' ἐμοὶ λυτήριος.

the earth, and he observes all things and within his mind
inscribes them. [275]

¹ The reading *χερῶν* seems to mean “deed of violence.”

280 **Orestes**

Taught by misery, I know many purification rituals, and I
know where it is right to speak and equally to be silent;
and in this case, I have been ordered to speak by a wise
teacher. For the blood is slumbering and fading from my
285 hand, [280] the pollution of matricide is washed away;
while it was still fresh, it was driven away at the hearth of
the god Phoebus by purifying sacrifices of swine. It would
be a long story to tell from the beginning, how many
people I have visited, with no harm from association with
290 me. [285] [Time purges all things, aging with them.]

So now with a pure mouth I piously invoke Athena, lady of
this land, to come to my aid. Without the spear, she will
win me and my land and the Argive people [290] as
faithful and true allies for all time. But whether in some
295 region of the Libyan land, near the waters of Triton, her
native stream, she is in action or at rest,¹ aiding those
whom she loves, or whether, like a bold marshal, she is
surveying the Phlegraean ² plain, [295] oh, let her come—as
a goddess, she hears even from far away—to be my

Χορός

οὔτοι σ' Ἀπόλλων οὐδ' Ἀθηναίας σθένος
 ῥύσαιτ' ἂν ὥστε μὴ οὐ παρημελημένον
 ἔρρειν, τὸ χαίρειν μὴ μαθόνθ' ὅπου φρενῶν,
 ἀναίματον βόσκημα δαιμόνων, σκιάν.
 οὐδ' ἀντιφωνεῖς, ἀλλ' ἀποπτύεις λόγους,
 ἔμοι τραφεῖς τε καὶ καθιερωμένος;
 καὶ ζῶν με δαίσεις οὐδὲ πρὸς βωμῷ σφαγεῖς·
 ὕμνον δ' ἀκούσῃ τόνδε δέσμιον σέθεν.
 ἄγε δὴ καὶ χορὸν ἄψωμεν, ἐπεὶ
 μοῦσαν στυγεράν
 ἀποφαίνεσθαι δεδόκηκεν,
 λέξαι τε λάχῃ τὰ κατ' ἀνθρώπους
 ὥς ἐπινωμᾷ στάσις ἀμά.
 εὐθυδίκαιοι δ' οἴομεθ' εἶναι·
 τὸν μὲν καθαρὰς χεῖρας προνέμοντ'
 οὔτις ἐφέρει μῆνις ἀφ' ἡμῶν,
 ἀσινῆς δ' αἰῶνα διοιχνεῖ·
 ὅστις δ' ἀλιτῶν ὥσπερ ὄδ' ἀνήρ
 χεῖρας φονίας ἐπικρύπτει,
 μάρτυρες ὀρθαὶ τοῖσι θανοῦσιν
 παραγινόμεναι πράκτορες αἵματος
 αὐτῷ τελέως ἐφάνημεν.
 μᾶτερ ἅ μ' ἔτικτες, ὦ μᾶτερ

deliverer from distress!

- 300 ¹ Literally, “she places her foot upright or covered over.” The poet may have in mind statues of the goddess: ὀρθόν referring to upright posture, κατηρεφῇ to her long garment falling over her foot when she was represented as sitting.
- 305 ² The scene of the battle of the Gods and Giants, in which Athena slew Enceladus.

Chorus

- No, neither Apollo nor Athena's strength can save you from perishing abandoned, [300] not knowing where joy is in your heart—a bloodless victim of the gods below, a shadow. You do not answer, but scorn my words, you who are fattened and consecrated to me? Living, you will be my feast, not slain at an altar; [305] now you will hear this hymn, a spell to bind you. Come now, let us also join the dance, since we are resolved to display our hated song and to declare our allotted office, how our party directs the affairs of men. [310] We claim to be just and upright. No wrath from us will come stealthily to the one who holds out clean hands, and he will go through life unharmed; [315] but whoever sins, as this man has, and hides his blood-stained hands, as avengers of bloodshed we appear against him to the end, presenting ourselves as upright witnesses for the dead. [320]

Νύξ, ἀλαοῖσι καὶ δεδορκόσιν
 ποινάν, κλυθ'. ὁ Λατοῦς γὰρ ἱ-
 νίς μ' ἄτιμον τίθησιν
 τόνδ' ἀφαιρούμενος
 πτῶκα, ματρῶν ἄ-
 γνισμα κύριον φόνου.
 ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ τεθυμένῳ
 τόδε μέλος, παρακοπά,
 παραφορὰ φρενοδαλῆς,
 ὕμνος ἐξ Ἑρινύων,
 δέσμιος φρενῶν, ἀφόρ-
 μικτος, αὐτὸν βροτοῖς.
 τοῦτο γὰρ λάχος διανταία
 Μοῖρ' ἐπέκλωσεν ἐμπέδως ἔχειν,
 θνατῶν τοῖσιν αὐτουργίαι
 συμπέσωσιν μάταιοι,
 τοῖς ὁμαρτεῖν, ὄφρ' ἂν
 γὰν ὑπέλθῃ· θανῶν δ'
 οὐκ ἄγαν ἐλεύθερος.
 ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ τεθυμένῳ
 τόδε μέλος, παρακοπά,
 παραφορὰ φρενοδαλῆς,
 ὕμνος ἐξ Ἑρινύων,
 δέσμιος φρενῶν, ἀφόρ-
 μικτος, αὐτὸν βροτοῖς.

O mother Night, hear me, mother who gave birth to me as
 a retribution for the blind and the seeing. For Leto's son
 dishonors me by snatching away this cowering wretch,
 325 [325] a proper expiation for his mother's blood.

This is our song over the sacrificial victim—frenzied,
 maddened, destroying the mind, [330] the Furies' hymn, a
 330 spell to bind the soul, not tuned to the lyre, withering the
 life of mortals.

For this is the office that relentless Fate spun for us to hold
 335 securely: [335] when rash murders of kin come upon
 mortals, we pursue them until they go under the earth; and
 after death, they have no great freedom. [340]

340

This is our song over the sacrificial victim—frenzied,
 maddened, destroying the mind, the Furies' hymn, a spell
 to bind the soul, not tuned to the lyre, withering the life of
 345 mortals. [345]

γιγνομέναισι λάχη τάδ' ἐφ' ἀμὶν ἐκράνθη·
 ἀθανάτων δ' ἀπέχειν χέρας, οὐδέ τις ἐστί
 συνδαίτωρ μετάκοινος·
 παλλεύκων δὲ πέπλων ἀπόμοιρος ἄκληρος ἐτύχθην
 -υ-υ-υ-

<δωμάτων γὰρ εἰλόμαν
 ἀνατροπὰς, ὅταν Ἄρης
 τιθασὸς ὦν φίλον ἔλη.
 ἐπὶ τὸν ᾧδ' ἰέμεναι
 κρατερόν ὄνθ' ὅμως ἀμαν-
 ροῦμεν ὑφ' αἵματος νέου.>
 σπεύδομεν αἶδ' ἀφελεῖν τινὰ τάσδε μερίμνας,
 θεῶν δ' ἀτέλειαν ἐμαῖς μελέταις ἐπικραίνειν,
 μηδ' εἰς ἄγκρισιν ἐλθεῖν·
 Ζεὺς δ' αἰμοस्ताγὲς ἀξιόμισον ἔθνος τόδε λέσχας
 ἄς ἀπηξιώσατο.
 <δωμάτων γὰρ εἰλόμαν
 ἀνατροπὰς, ὅταν Ἄρης
 τιθασὸς ὦν φίλον ἔλη.
 ἐπὶ τὸν ᾧδ' ἰέμεναι
 κρατερόν ὄνθ' ὅμως ἀμαν-
 ροῦμεν ὑφ' αἵματος νέου.>
 δόξαί τ' ἀνδρῶν καὶ μάλ' ὑπ' αἰθέρι σεμναὶ
 τακόμεναι κατὰ γᾶν μινύθουσιν ἄτιμοι
 ἀμετέραις ἐφόδοις μελανείμοσιν, ὀρχη-

This office was ordained for us at birth; but the immortal
 350 gods must hold back their hands from us, nor does any of
 them share a feast in common with us; [350] and I have
 neither lot nor portion of pure white ceremonial robes <
 *>

354 For I have chosen the overthrow of houses, whenever
 355 violence raised in the home seizes someone near and dear.
 [355] So speeding after this man, we weaken him, even
 though he is strong, because of the fresh blood.

We are eager to take these cares away from another, [360]
 and to establish for the gods exemption from my concerns,
 360 so that it will not come to trial; for Zeus has considered us,
 a blood-dripping, hateful band, unworthy of his council.
 [365]

365
 367 <For I have chosen the overthrow of houses, whenever
 354a violence raised in the home seizes someone near and dear.
 355a [355a] Speeding after this man, we weaken him, even
 356a though he is strong, because of the fresh blood.>

357a
 358a And men's thoughts, very proud under the sky, waste
 359a away and dwindle in dishonor beneath the earth, at our
 368 attack in black robes [370] and the vindictive dance of our
 feet.

370

σμοῖς τ' ἐπιφθόνοις ποδός.
 <μάλα γὰρ οὖν ἀλομένα
 ἀνέκαθεν βαρυπεσῇ
 καταφέρω ποδὸς ἀκμάν,
 σφαλερὰ <καὶ> τανυδρόμοις
 κῶλα, δύσφορον ἄταν.>
 πίπτων δ' οὐκ οἶδεν τόδ' ὑπ' ἄφρονι λύμα·
 τοῖον [γὰρ] ἐπὶ κνέφας ἀνδρὶ μύσος πεπόταται,
 καὶ δνοφεράν τιν' ἀχλὺν κατὰ δώματος αὐδᾶ-
 ται πολύστονος φάτις.
 <μάλα γὰρ οὖν ἀλομένα
 ἀνέκαθεν βαρυπεσῇ
 καταφέρω ποδὸς ἀκμάν,
 σφαλερὰ καὶ τανυδρόμοις
 κῶλα, δύσφορον ἄταν.>
 μένει γάρ. εὐμήχανοί
 τε καὶ τέλειοι, κακῶν
 τε μνήμονες σεμναὶ
 καὶ δυσπαρήγοροι βροτοῖς,
 ἄτιμ' ἀτίετα διόμεναι
 λάχη θεῶν διχοστατοῦντ' ἀνηλίω
 λάμπᾳ, δυσοδοπαίπαλα
 δερκομένοισι καὶ δυσομμάτοις ὁμῶς.
 τίς οὖν τάδ' οὐχ ἄζεται
 τε καὶ δέδοικεν βροτῶν,

For surely with a great leap from above I bring down the
 heavily falling force of my foot, my limbs that trip even
 swift runners [375] —unendurable ruin.

But, as he falls, he does not know it, because of his
 375 senseless folly; pollution hovers over the man in such
 darkness, and mournful rumor speaks of a dark mist over
 his house. [380]

<For surely with a great leap from above I bring down the
 heavily falling force of my foot, my limbs that trip even
 380 swift runners [375a] —unendurable ruin.>

372α

373α

374α

375α

376α

381

For it remains. We are skilled in plotting, powerful in
 execution, and we remember evil deeds; we are revered
 and hard for mortals to appease, pursuing our allotted
 385 office which is without rights, without honor, [385]
 separated from the gods in sunless light—our office that
 makes the path rough for seeing and dim-sighted alike.

What mortal, then, does not stand in awe and dread of this,
 390 [390] when he hears from me the law ordained by Fate,

ἐμοῦ κλύων θεσμὸν
τὸν μοιρόκραντον ἐκ θεῶν
δοθέντα τέλεον; ἔτι δέ μοι
<μένει> γέρας παλαιόν, οὐδ' ἀτιμίας
κύρω, καίπερ ὑπὸ χθόνα
τάξιν ἔχουσα καὶ δυσήλιον κνέφας.

Ἀθηνᾶ

πρόσωθεν ἐξήκουσα κληδόνος βοήν
ἀπὸ Σκαμάνδρου γῆν καταφθατουμένην,
ἦν δῆτ' Ἀχαιῶν ἄκτορές τε καὶ πρόμοι,
τῶν αἰχμαλώτων χρημάτων λάχος μέγα,
ἔνειμαν αὐτόπρεμνον εἰς τὸ πᾶν ἐμοί,
ἐξαίρετον δώρημα Θησέως τόκοις·
ἐνθεν διώκουσ' ἦλθον ἄτρυτον πόδα,
πετρῶν ἄτερ ῥοιβδοῦσα κόλπον αἰγίδος.
[πῶλοις ἀκμαίοις τόνδ' ἐπιζεύξασ' ὄχον]
καινὴν δ' ὀρώσα τήνδ' ὁμιλίαν χθονὸς
ταρβῶ μὲν οὐδέν, θαῦμα δ' ὄμμασιν πάρα.
τίνες ποτ' ἐστέ; πᾶσι δ' ἐς κοινὸν λέγω·
βρέτας τε τοῦμὸν τῶδ' ἐφημένῳ ξένῳ,
ὕμᾱς θ' ὁμοίας οὐδενὶ σπαρτῶν γένει,
οὔτ' ἐν θεαῖσι πρὸς θεῶν ὀρωμένας
οὔτ' οὖν βροτείοις ἐμφερεῖς μορφώμασιν.
λέγειν δ' ἄμομφον ὄντα τοὺς πέλας κακῶς

given by the gods for perfect fulfilment? My ancient
privilege still remains, I do not meet with dishonor, [395]
although I have my place under the earth and in sunless
darkness.

395

Enter Athena, wearing the aegis.

Athena

From afar I heard the call of a summons, from the
Scamander, while I was taking possession of the land,
400 which the leaders and chiefs of the Achaeans assigned to
me, a great portion of the spoil their spears had won, [400]
to be wholly mine forever, a choice gift to Theseus' sons.¹
From there I have come, urging on my tireless foot, without
wings rustling the folds of my aegis, [yoking this chariot to
405 colts in their prime.] ² [405] As I see this strange company
of visitors to my land, I am not afraid, but it is a wonder to
my eyes. Who in the world are you? I address you all in
common—this stranger sitting at my image, and you, who
are like no race of creatures ever born, [410] neither seen by
410 gods among goddesses nor resembling mortal forms. But it
is far from just to speak ill of one's neighbor who is
blameless, and Right stands aloof.

πρόσω δικαίων ἢδ' ἀποστατεῖ θέμις.

Χορός

πεύση τὰ πάντα συντόμως, Διὸς κόρη.

ἡμεῖς γὰρ ἐσμεν Νυκτὸς αἰανῇ τέκνα.

Ἄρα δ' ἐν οἴκοις γῆς ὑπαὶ κεκλήμεθα.

Ἀθηνᾶ

γένος μὲν οἶδα κληδόνας τ' ἐπωνύμους.

Χορός

τιμὰς γε μὲν δὴ τὰς ἐμὰς πεύση τάχα.

Ἀθηνᾶ

μάθοιμ' ἄν, εἰ λέγοι τις ἐμφανῇ λόγον.

Χορός

βροτοκτονοῦντας ἐκ δόμων ἐλαύνομεν.

Ἀθηνᾶ

καὶ τῷ κτανόντι ποῦ τὸ τέρμα τῆς φυγῆς;

Χορός

ὅπου τὸ χαίρειν μηδαμοῦ νομίζεται.

Ἀθηνᾶ

ἦ καὶ τοιαύτας τῷδ' ἐπιρροῖζεῖς φυγὰς;

Χορός

φονεὺς γὰρ εἶναι μητρὸς ἠξιώσατο.

Chorus

Daughter of Zeus, you will hear it all in brief. [415] We are the eternal children of Night. We are called Curses in our homes beneath the earth.

Athena

I now know your family and the names by which you are called.

Chorus

You will soon learn my office.

Athena

I shall understand, if someone would tell the story clearly. [420]

Chorus

We drive murderers from their homes.

Athena

And where is the end of flight for the killer?

Chorus

Where joy is absent and unknown.³

Athena

And would you drive this man with your shrieks to such flight? 425

Chorus

Yes, for he thought it right to be his mother's murderer. [425]

Ἀθηνᾶ

ἄλλαις ἀνάγκαις, ἢ τινος τρέων κότον;

Χορός

ποῦ γὰρ τοσοῦτο κέντρον ὡς μητροκτονεῖν;

Ἀθηνᾶ

δυοῖν παρόντοιν ἡμῖς λόγου πάρα.

Χορός

ἀλλ' ὄρκον οὐ δέξαιτ' ἄν, οὐ δοῦναι θέλοι.

Ἀθηνᾶ

κλύειν δίκαιος μᾶλλον ἢ προᾶσαι θέλεις.

Χορός

πῶς δὴ; δίδαξον· τῶν σοφῶν γὰρ οὐ πένη.

Ἀθηνᾶ

ὄρκοις τὰ μὴ δίκαια μὴ νικᾶν λέγω.

Χορός

ἀλλ' ἐξέλεγχε, κρῖνε δ' εὐθειᾶν δίκην.

Ἀθηνᾶ

ἢ καπ' ἐμοὶ τρέποιτ' ἄν αἰτίας τέλος;

Χορός

πῶς δ' οὐ; σέβουσαί γ' ἀξίαν καπ' ἀξίων.

Athena

Through other compulsions, or in fear of someone's wrath?

Chorus

Where is there a spur so keen as to compel the murder of a mother?

Athena

Two parties are present; only half the case is heard.

Chorus

430 But he will not receive an oath nor does he want to give one.

Athena

You want to be called just rather than to act justly. [430]

Chorus

How so? Teach me. For you are not poor in subtleties.

Athena

I say that oaths must not win victory for injustice.

Chorus

Well then, question him, and make a straight judgment.

Athena

435 Then would you turn over the decision of the charge to me?

Chorus

How not?—since we honor you because you are worthy and of worthy parentage. [435]

Ἀθηνᾶ

τί πρὸς τάδ' εἰπεῖν, ὦ ξέν', ἐν μέρει θέλεις;
 λέξας δὲ χώραν καὶ γένος καὶ ξυμφορὰς
 τὰς σάς, ἔπειτα τόνδ' ἀμυναθοῦ ψόγον·
 εἶπερ πεποιθὼς τῇ δίκῃ βρέτας τόδε
 ἦσαι φυλάσσων ἐστίας ἀμῆς πέλας
 σεμνὸς προσίκτωρ ἐν τρόποις Ἰξίονος.
 τούτοις ἀμείβου πᾶσιν εὐμαθὲς τί μοι.

Ὀρέστης

ἄνασσ' Ἀθάνᾳ, πρῶτον ἐκ τῶν ὑστάτων
 τῶν σῶν ἐπῶν μέλημ' ἀφαιρήσω μέγα.
 οὐκ εἰμὶ προστρόπαιος, οὐδ' ἔχων μύσος
 πρὸς χειρὶ τήμῃ τὸ σὸν ἐφεζόμεν βρέτας.
 τεκμήριον δὲ τῶνδ' ἐσσι λέξω μέγα.
 ἄφθογον εἶναι τὸν παλαμναῖον νόμος,
 ἔστ' ἂν πρὸς ἀνδρὸς αἵματος καθαρσίου
 σφαγαὶ καθαιμάξωσι νεοθήλου βοτοῦ.
 πάλαι πρὸς ἄλλοις ταῦτ' ἀφιερῶμεθα
 οἴκοισι, καὶ βοτοῖσι καὶ ῥυτοῖς πόροισι.

¹ Athena confirms as ancient her possession of the district of Sigeum, which had been won from the Mityleneans by the Athenians early in the sixth century.

² Line 405 “yoking this chariot to colts in their prime” contradicts the statement in the preceding verse, and may have been interpolated for a later representation of the play when Athena appeared on a chariot (Paley, Wilam.) .

³ Literally “where joy (or the word **joy**) is nowhere in use.”

440 **Athena**

What do you want to say to this, stranger, in turn? After you name your country and family and fortunes, then defend yourself against this charge; if indeed, relying on the justice of your case, you sit clinging to my image near my hearth, [440] as a sacred suppliant, like Ixion.¹ To all this give me a plain answer.

Orestes

Lady Athena, first of all I will take away a great anxiety
 445 from your last words. I am not a suppliant in need of purification, nor did I sit at your image with pollution on my hands. [445] I will give you strong proof of this. It is the law for one who is defiled by shedding blood to be barred from speech until he is sprinkled with the blood of a new-born victim by a man who can purify from murder. [450]
 450 Long before at other houses I have been thus purified both by victims and by flowing streams.

ταύτην μὲν οὕτω φροντίδ' ἐκποδὼν λέγω.
 γένος δὲ τοῦμὸν ὥς ἔχει πεύση τάχα.
 Ἀργεῖός εἰμι, πατέρα δ' ἱστορεῖς καλῶς,
 Ἀγαμέμνον', ἀνδρῶν ναυβατῶν ἀρμόστορα,
 ξὺν ᾧ σὺ Τροίαν ἄπολιν Ἰλίου πόλιν
 ἔθηκας. ἔφθιθ' οὗτος οὐ καλῶς, μολῶν
 εἰς οἶκον· ἀλλὰ νιν κελαινόφρων ἐμὴ
 μήτηρ κατέκτα, ποικίλοις ἀγρεύμασιν
 κρύψας, ἃ λουτρῶν ἐξεμαρτύρει φόνον.
 καγὼ κατελθὼν, τὸν πρὸ τοῦ φεύγων χρόνον,
 ἔκτεινα τὴν τεκοῦσαν, οὐκ ἀρνήσομαι,
 ἀντικτόνοις ποιναῖσι φιλάτου πατρός.
 καὶ τῶνδε κοινῇ Λοξίας ἐπαίτιος,
 ἄλγη προφωνῶν ἀντίκεντρα καρδία,
 εἰ μή τι τῶνδ' ἔρξαιμι τοὺς ἐπαιτίους.
 σὺ δ' εἰ δικαίως εἴτε μὴ κρῖνον δίκην·
 πράξας γὰρ ἐν σοὶ πανταχῇ τάδ' αἰνέσω.

Ἀθηνᾶ

τὸ πρᾶγμα μεῖζον, εἴ τις οἶεται τόδε
 βροτὸς δικάζειν· οὐδὲ μὴν ἐμοὶ θέμις
 φόνου διαιρεῖν ὀξυμηνίτου δίκας·
 ἄλλως τε καὶ σὺ μὲν κατηρτυκῶς ἐμοῖς
 ἱκέτης προσῆλθες καθαρὸς ἀβλαβῆς δόμοις·
 οὕτως δ' ἄμομφον ὄντα σ' αἰδοῦμαι πόλει.
 αὐταὶ δ' ἔχουσι μοῖραν οὐκ εὐπέμπελον,

And so I declare that this concern is out of the way. As to
 my family, you will soon learn. I am an Argive; my
 455 father—you rightly inquire about him [455] —was
 Agamemnon, the commander of the naval forces; along
 with him, you made Troy, the city of Ilion, to be no city. He
 did not die nobly, after he came home; but my black-
 hearted mother killed him after she covered him in a crafty
 460 snare that still remains to witness his murder in the bath.
 [460] And when I came back home, having been an exile in
 the time before, I killed the woman who gave birth to me, I
 will not deny it, as the penalty in return for the murder of
 my dearly-loved father. Together with me Loxias is
 465 responsible for this deed, [465] because he threatened me
 with pains, a goad for my heart, if I should fail to do this
 deed to those who were responsible. You judge whether I
 acted justly or not; whatever happens to me at your hands,
 I will be content.

470 **1** Ixion, king of the Lapiths, murdered the father of his bride, and was
 given purification by Zeus after having been denied by the other gods.
 Cp. 718.

Athena

475 The matter is too great, if any mortal thinks to pass
 judgment on it; [470] no, it is not lawful even for me to

καὶ μὴ τυχοῦσαι πράγματος νικηφόρου,
 χώρα μεταῦθις ἰὸς ἐκ φρονημάτων
 πέδοι πεσῶν ἄφερτος αἰανὴς νόσος.
 τοιαῦτα μὲν τάδ' ἐστίν· ἀμφότερα, μένειν
 πέμπειν τε δυσπήμαντ' ἀμηχάνως ἐμοί.
 ἐπεὶ δὲ πρᾶγμα δεῦρ' ἐπέσκηψεν τόδε,
 φόνων δικαστὰς ὀρκίους αἰρουμένη
 θεσμόν τὸν εἰς ἅπαντ' ἐγὼ θήσω χρόνον.
 ὑμεῖς δὲ μαρτύριά τε καὶ τεκμήρια
 καλεῖσθ', ἄρωγὰ τῆς δίκης ὀρκώματα·
 κρίνασα δ' ἀστῶν τῶν ἐμῶν τὰ βέλτατα
 ἥξω, διαιεῖν τοῦτο πρᾶγμ' ἐτητύμως,
 ὄρκον πορόντας μηδὲν ἔκδικον φράσειν.

Χορός

νῦν καταστροφαὶ νέων
 θεσμίων, εἰ κρατή-
 σει δίκαια <τε> καὶ βλάβαι
 τοῦδε ματροκτόνου.
 πάντας ἤδη τόδ' ἔργον εὐχερεί-
 α συναρμόσει βροτούς·
 πολλὰ δ' ἔτυμα παιδότρωτα
 πάθεα προσμένει τοκεῦ-
 σιν μεταῦθις ἐν χρόνῳ.
 οὐδὲ γὰρ βροτοσκοπῶν

decide on cases of murder that is followed by the quick
 anger of the Furies, especially since you, by rites fully
 performed, have come a pure and harmless suppliant to
 480 my house; and so I respect you, since you do not bring
 harm to my city. [475] Yet these women have an office that
 does not permit them to be dismissed lightly; and if they
 fail to win their cause, the venom from their resentment
 will fall upon the ground, an intolerable, perpetual plague
 afterwards in the land. So stands the case: [480] either
 485 course—to let them stay, to drive them out—brings disaster
 and perplexity to me. But since this matter has fallen here, I
 will select judges of homicide bound by oath, and I will
 establish this tribunal for all time. Summon your witnesses
 and proofs, [485] sworn evidence to support your case; and
 I will return when I have chosen the best of my citizens, for
 490 them to decide this matter truly, after they take an oath that
 they will pronounce no judgment contrary to justice. *Exit*

Chorus

Here is the overturning of new laws, [490] if the wrongful
 cause of this matricide is to triumph. Now his deed will
 495 accustom all men to recklessness; [495] many sorrowful
 wounds, given in truth by children, wait for parents in the
 future time.
 For the wrath of us, the Furies who keep watch on mortals,

μαινάδων τῶνδ' ἐφέρ-
 ψει κότος τις ἐργμάτων —
 πάντ' ἐφήσω μόρον.
 πεύσεται δ' ἄλλος ἄλλοθεν, προφω-
 νῶν τὰ τῶν πέλας κακά,
 λῆξιν ὑπόδοσιν τε μόχθων·
 ἄκεά τ' οὐ βέβαια τλά-
 μων [δέ τις] μάταν παρηγορεῖ.
 μηδέ τις κικλησκέτω
 ξυμφορᾷ τετυμμένος,
 τοῦτ' ἔπος θροοούμενος,
 ὦ δίκαι,
 ὦ θρόνοι τ' Ἐρινύων.
 ταῦτά τις τάχ' ἂν πατήρ
 ἢ τεκοῦσα νεοπαθῆς
 οἴκτον οἰκτίσαιτ', ἐπει-
 δὴ πίτνει δόμος δίκας.
 ἔσθ' ὅπου τὸ δεινὸν εὖ,
 καὶ φρενῶν ἐπίσκοπον
 δεῖ μένειν καθήμενον.
 ξυμφέρει
 σωφρονεῖν ὑπὸ στένει.
 τίς δὲ μηδὲν ἐν δέει
 καρδίαν <ἂν> ἀνατρέφων
 ἢ πόλις βροτός θ' ὁμοί-

500 will not come stealthily upon such deeds [500] —I will let
 loose death in every form. And as he anticipates his
 neighbor's evils, one man will ask of another when
 hardship is to end or to decrease; [505] and the poor wretch
 offers the vain consolation of uncertain remedies.

505

Do not let anyone who is struck by misfortune make an
 appeal and cry aloud this word, [510] "Justice!" "Thrones
 510 of the Furies!" Perhaps some father, or mother, in new
 sorrow, may cry out these words piteously, now that the
 house of Justice is falling. [515] There is a time when fear is
 good and ought to remain seated as a guardian of the heart.
 It is profitable to learn wisdom under strain.

515

520

[520] But who, if he did not train his heart in fear, either
 city or mortal, would still revere justice in the same way?

ως ἔτ' ἂν σέβοι δίκαν;
 μήτ' ἀνάρχετον βίον
 μήτε δεσποτούμενον
 αἰνέσης.
 παντὶ μέσῳ τὸ κράτος
 θεὸς ὥπασεν, ἄλλ'
 ἄλλα δ' ἐφορεύει.
 ζύμμετρον δ' ἔπος λέγω,
 δυσσεβίας μὲν ὕβρις
 τέκος ὡς ἐτύμως·
 ἐκ δ' ὑγιεί-
 ας φρενῶν ὁ πάμφιλος
 καὶ πολύευκτος ὄλβος.
 ἐς τὸ πᾶν δέ σοι λέγω,
 βωμὸν αἰδεσθαι Δίκας·
 μηδέ νιν
 κέρδος ἰδὼν ἀθέω
 ποδὶ λάξ ἀτίσης·
 ποινὰ γὰρ ἐπέσται.
 κύριον μένει τέλος.
 πρὸς τάδε τις τοκέων
 σέβας εὖ προτίων
 καὶ ξενοτί-
 μους δόμων ἐπιστροφὰς
 αἰδόμενός τις ἔστω.

525 [525] Do not approve of a lawless life or one subject to a tyrant. The god grants power to moderation in every form, but he oversees other matters in different ways.

530

[530] I have a timely word of advice: arrogance is truly the child of impiety, but from health of soul [535] comes happiness, dear to all, much prayed for.

535

And as for the whole matter, I say to you: respect the altar of Justice and do not, looking to profit, dishonor it by spurning with godless foot; [540] for punishment will come upon you. The appointed fulfilment remains. Therefore, let a man rightly put first in honor the reverence owed to his parents, [545] and have regard for attentions paid to guests welcomed in his house.

545

ἐκὼν δ' ἀνάγκας ἄτερ δίκαιος ὦν
οὐκ ἄνολβος ἔσται·
πανώλεθρος <δ> οὐποτ' ἂν γένοιτο.
τὸν ἀντίτολμον δέ φαμι παρβάταν
ἄγοντα πολλὰ παντόφυρτ' ἄνευ δίκας
βιαίως ξὺν χρόνῳ καθήσειν
λαῖφος, ὅταν λάβῃ πόνος
θραυομένας κεραίας.
καλεῖ δ' ἀκούοντας οὐδὲν <ἐν> μέσῃ
δυσπαλεῖ τε δίνῃ·
γελαῖ δὲ δαίμων ἐπ' ἀνδρὶ θερμῷ,
τὸν οὐποτ' αὐχοῦντ' ἰδὼν ἀμαχάνοις
δύαις λαπαδνὸν οὐδ' ὑπερθέοντ' ἄκραν·
δι' αἰῶνος δὲ τὸν πρὶν ὄλβον
ἔρματι προσβαλὼν δίκας
ᾤλετ' ἄκλαυτος, αἴστος.

Ἀθηνᾶ

κήρυσσε, κήρυξ, καὶ στρατὸν κατειργαθοῦ,
ἧ τ' οὖν διάτορος Τυρσηνικῇ
σάλπιγι, βροτείου πνεύματος πληρουμένη,
ὑπέρτονον γήρυμα φαίνεται στρατῷ.
πληρουμένου γὰρ τοῦδε βουλευτηρίου
σιγᾶν ἀρήγει καὶ μαθεῖν θεσμούς ἐμούς
πόλιν τε πᾶσαν εἰς τὸν αἰαντὴ χρόνον

- 550 Whoever is just willingly and without compulsion [550]
will not lack happiness; he will never be utterly destroyed.
But I say that the man who boldly transgresses, amassing a
great heap unjustly—by force, in time, he will strike his
sail, [555] when trouble seizes him as the yardarm is
555 splintered. He calls on those who hear nothing and he
struggles in the midst of the whirling waters. The god
laughs at the hot-headed man, [560] seeing him, who
boasted that this would never happen, exhausted by
distress without remedy and unable to surmount the
560 cresting wave. He wrecks the happiness of his earlier life
on the reef of Justice, and he perishes unwept, unseen. [565]

*Enter, in procession, Athena, a herald, the jury of the Areopagus,
a crowd of citizens. Orestes removes to the place appointed for the
565 accused. Apollo appears after Athena's first speech.*

Athena

- Herald, give the signal and restrain the crowd; and let the
piercing Tyrrhenian¹ trumpet, filled with human breath,
send forth its shrill blare to the people! For while this
council-hall is filling, [570] it is good to be silent, and for
570 my ordinances to be learned, by the whole city for
everlasting time, and by these appellants, so that their case
may be decided well.

καὶ τοῦσδ' ὅπως ἂν εὖ καταγνωσθῇ δίκη.

Χορός

ἄναξ Ἀπολλον, ὦν ἔχεις αὐτὸς κράτει.
τί τοῦδε σοὶ μέτεστι πράγματος λέγε.

Ἀπόλλων

καὶ μαρτυρήσων ἦλθον—ἔστι γὰρ νόμῳ
ικέτης ὃδ' ἀνὴρ καὶ δόμων ἐφέστιος—
ἐμῶν, φόνου δὲ τοῦδ' ἐγὼ καθάρσιος—
καὶ ξυνδικήσων αὐτός· αἰτίαν δ' ἔχω
τῆς τοῦδε μητρὸς τοῦ φόνου. σὺ δ' εἴσαγε
ὅπως <τ'> ἐπίστα τήνδε κύρωσον δίκην.

Ἀθηνᾶ

ὕμῶν ὁ μῦθος, εἰσάγω δὲ τὴν δίκην·
ὁ γὰρ διώκων πρότερος ἐξ ἀρχῆς λέγων
γένοιτ' ἂν ὀρθῶς πράγματος διδάσκαλος.

Χορός

πολλὰ μὲν ἔσμεν, λέξομεν δὲ συντόμως.
ἔπος δ' ἀμείβου πρὸς ἔπος ἐν μέρει τιθεῖς
τὴν μητέρ' εἰπὲ πρῶτον εἰ κατέκτονας.

Ὀρέστης

ἔκτεινα· τούτου δ' οὔτις ἄρνησις πέλει.

Χορός

ἐν μὲν τόδ' ἤδη τῶν τριῶν παλαισμάτων.

Enter Apollo.

Chorus

Lord Apollo, be master of what is yours. Say what part you
575 have in this matter. [575]

Apollo

I have come both to bear witness—for this man was a
lawful suppliant and a guest of my sanctuary, and I am his
purifier from bloodshed—and to be his advocate myself. I
am responsible for the murder of his mother. [580] *To*
580 *Athena*. Bring in the case, and, in accordance with your
wisdom, decide it.

Athena

To the Furies. It is for you to speak—I am only bringing in
the case; for the prosecutor at the beginning, speaking first,
shall rightly inform us of the matter.

Chorus

We are many, but we will speak briefly. [585] *To Orestes*.
Answer our questions, one by one. Say first if you killed
your mother.

Orestes

I killed her. There is no denial of this.

Chorus

Of the three falls that win the wrestling match, this one is
already ours.

Ὀρέστης

οὐ κειμένω πω τόνδε κομπάζεις λόγον.

Χορός

εἰπεῖν γε μέντοι δεῖ σ' ὅπως κατέκτανες.

Ὀρέστης

λέγω· ξιφουλκῶ χειρὶ πρὸς δέρην τεμών.

Χορός

πρὸς τοῦ δ' ἐπείσθης καὶ τίνος βουλεύμασιν;

Ὀρέστης

τοῖς τοῦδε θεσφάτοισι· μαρτυρεῖ δέ μοι.

Χορός

ὁ μάντις ἐξηγεῖτό σοι μητροκτονεῖν;

Ὀρέστης

καὶ δεῦρό γ' αἰεὶ τὴν τύχην οὐ μέμφομαι.

Χορός

ἀλλ' εἴ σε μάρψει ψῆφος, ἀλλ' ἐρεῖς τάχα.

Ὀρέστης

πέποιθ'. ἀρωγὰς δ' ἐκ τάφου πέμψει πατήρ.

Χορός

νεκροῖσί νυν πέπισθι μητέρα κτανών.

Orestes

590 You make this boast over a man who is not down yet. [590]

Chorus

You must, however, say how you killed her.

Orestes

I will say it: with drawn sword in hand, I stabbed her in the throat.

Chorus

By whom were you persuaded and on whose advice?

Orestes

By the oracles of this god here; he is my witness.

595 **Chorus**

The prophet directed you to kill your mother? [595]

Orestes

Yes, and to this very hour, I do not blame my fortune.

Chorus

But if the jury's vote catches hold of you, you'll soon speak differently.

Orestes

I have good confidence. My father will send protection from his grave.

Chorus

Put your confidence in the dead now, after you have killed your mother!

Ὀρέστης

δυοῖν γὰρ εἶχε προσβολὰς μiasμάτων.

Χορός

πῶς δὴ; δίδαξον τοὺς δικάζοντας τάδε.

Ὀρέστης

ἀνδροκτονοῦσα πατέρ' ἐμὸν κατέκτανεν.

Χορός

τοιγὰρ σὺ μὲν ζῆς, ἡ δ' ἐλευθέρα φόνῳ.

Ὀρέστης

τί δ' οὐκ ἐκείνην ζῶσαν ἤλαυνες φυγῇ;

Χορός

οὐκ ἦν ὅμαιμος φῶτος ὃν κατέκτανεν.

Ὀρέστης

ἐγὼ δὲ μητρὸς τῆς ἐμῆς ἐν αἵματι;

Χορός

πῶς γὰρ σ' ἔθρεψ' ἂν ἐντός, ὧ μαιφόνε,
ζώνης; ἀπεύχῃ μητρὸς αἶμα φίλτατον;

Orestes

600 I do, for she was twice afflicted with pollution. [600]

Chorus

How so? Teach the judges this.

Orestes

By murdering her husband, she killed my father.

Chorus

And so, although you are alive, she is free of pollution by her death.²

Orestes

But why did you not drive her into exile, while she lived?

605 **Chorus**

She was not related by blood to the man she killed. [605]

Orestes

Then am I my mother's kin by blood?

¹ The Etruscans were regarded as the inventors of the trumpet.

² She is freed from blood-guiltiness because her blood has been shed.

Chorus

How else could she have nurtured you, murderer, beneath her belt? Do you reject the nearest kinship, that of a mother?

Ὀρέστης

ἤδη σὺ μαρτύρησον· ἐξηγοῦ δέ μοι,
 Ἀπολλων, εἴ σφε σὺν δίκη κατέκτανον.
 δρᾶσαι γὰρ ὥσπερ ἐστὶν οὐκ ἀρνούμεθα.
 ἀλλ' εἰ δίκαιον εἶτε μὴ τῇ σῇ φρενὶ
 δοκεῖ τόδ' αἶμα, κρῖνον, ὥς τούτοις φράσω.

Ἀπόλλων

λέξω πρὸς ὑμᾶς τόνδ' Ἀθηναίας μέγαν
 θεσμὸν δικαίως, — μάντις ὦν δ' οὐ ψεύσομαι.
 οὐπώποτ' εἶπον μαντικοῖσιν ἐν θρόνοις,
 οὐκ ἀνδρός, οὐ γυναικός, οὐ πόλεως πέρι,
 ὃ μὴ κελεύσαι Ζεὺς Ὀλυμπίων πατήρ.
 τὸ μὲν δίκαιον τοῦθ' ὅσον σθένει μαθεῖν,
 βουλῇ πιφαύσκω δ' ὑμῖν ἐπισπένθαι πατρός·
 ὅρκος γὰρ οὐτι Ζηνὸς ἰσχύει πλέον.

Χορός

Ζεὺς, ὥς λέγεις σύ, τόνδε χρησμὸν ὥπασε,
 φράζειν Ὀρέστη τῷδε, τὸν πατὴρ φόνον
 πράξαντα μητρὸς μηδαμοῦ τιμὰς νέμειν;

Ἀπόλλων

οὐ γάρ τι ταῦτ' ἄνδρα γενναῖον θανεῖν
 διосδότοις σκήπτροισι τιμαλφούμενον,
 καὶ ταῦτα πρὸς γυναικός, οὐ τι θουρίοις
 τόξοις ἐκηβόλοισιν, ὥστ' Ἀμαζόνος,
 ἀλλ' ὥς ἀκούσῃ, Παλλὰς οἷ τ' ἐφήμενοι

Orestes

610 Apollo, give your testimony now. Explain, on my behalf,
 whether I was justified in killing her. [610] For I do not
 deny that I did it, as it is done. But decide whether this
 bloodshed was, to your mind, just or not, so that I may
 inform the court.

Apollo

615 I will speak justly before you, Athena's great tribunal, —
 since I am a prophet, I cannot lie. [615] I have never yet, on
 my oracular throne, said anything about a man or woman
 or city that Zeus, the father of the Olympians, did not
 command me to say. Learn how strong this plea of justice
 620 is; and I tell you to obey the will of my father; [620] for an
 oath is not more powerful than Zeus.¹

Chorus

Zeus, as you say, gave you this oracular command, to tell
 Orestes here to avenge his father's murder but to take no
 account at all of the honor due his mother?

Apollo

625 Yes, for it is not the same thing—the murder of a noble
 man, [625] honored by a god-given scepter, and his murder
 indeed by a woman, not by rushing arrows sped from afar,
 as if by an Amazon, but as you will hear, Pallas, and those
 who are sitting to decide by vote in this matter. [630]

ψήφῳ διαιερεῖν τοῦδε πράγματος πέρι.
 ἀπὸ στρατείας γάρ νιν ἡμποληκότα
 τὰ πλεῖστ' ἄμεινον εὐφροσιν δεδεγμένη,
 δροίτῃ περῶντι λουτρὰ καπὶ τέρματι
 φᾶρος περεσκήνωσεν, ἐν δ' ἀτέρμονι
 κόπτει πεδήσας ἄνδρα δαιδάλῳ πέπλῳ.
 ἀνδρὸς μὲν ὑμῖν οὗτος εἴρηται μῶρος
 τοῦ παντοσέμνου, τοῦ στρατηλάτου νεῶν.
 ταύτην τοιαύτην εἶπον, ὥς δηχθῇ λεώς,
 ὅσπερ τέτακται τήνδε κυρῶσαι δίκην.

Χορός

πατὴρ προστιμᾷ Ζεὺς μῶρον τῷ σῷ λόγῳ
 αὐτὸς δ' ἔδησε πατέρα πρεσβύτην Κρόνον.
 πῶς ταῦτα τούτοις οὐκ ἐναντίως λέγεις;
 ὑμᾶς δ' ἀκούειν ταῦτ' ἐγὼ μαρτύρομαι.

- 630 She received him from the expedition, where he had for the most part won success beyond expectation,² in the judgment of those favorable to him; then, as he was stepping from the bath, on its very edge, she threw a cloak like a tent over it, fettered her husband in an embroidered robe, and cut him down. [635]

This was his death, as I have told it to you—the death of a man wholly majestic, commander of the fleet. As for that woman, I have described her in such a way as to whet the indignation of the people who have been appointed to decide this case.

640

¹ The oath taken by the judges (489) may pronounce Orestes guilty as to the fact; but as his deed was done at the command of Zeus, whose representative is his son, Zeus therefore assumes all moral responsibility.

² Literally “trafficked better”—“better” either “than his foes, the Trojans”; or “beyond expectation” (since he was guilty of the death of his daughter) ; or possibly, without any implicit comparative force, simply “well.”

Chorus

Zeus gives greater honor to a father's death, according to what you say; [640] yet he himself bound his aged father, Cronus. How does this not contradict what you say? I call on you as witnesses *turning to the judges* to hear these

Ἀπόλλων

ὦ παντομισῇ κνώδαλα, στύγη θεῶν,
πέδας μὲν ἂν λύσειεν, ἔστι τοῦδ' ἄκος
καὶ κάρτα πολλή μηχανὴ λυτήριος·
ἄνδρὸς δ' ἐπειδὴν αἶμ' ἀνασπάσῃ κόνις
ἅπαξ θανόντος, οὔτις ἔστ' ἀνάστασις.
τούτων ἐπὶ δὴ οὐκ ἐποίησεν πατὴρ
οὐμός, τὰ δ' ἄλλα πάντ' ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω
στρέφων τίθησιν οὐδὲν ἀσθμαίνων μένει.

Χορός

πῶς γὰρ τὸ φεύγειν τοῦδ' ὑπερδικεῖς ὄρα·
τὸ μητρὸς αἶμ' ὅμαιμον ἐκχέας πέδοι
ἔπειτ' ἐν Ἀργεὶ δώματ' οἰκήσει πατρός;
ποίοισι βωμοῖς χρώμενος τοῖς δημίοις;
ποία δὲ χέρνιψ φρατέρων προσδέξεται;

Ἀπόλλων

καὶ τοῦτο λέξω, καὶ μάθ' ὥς ὀρθῶς ἐρῶ.
οὐκ ἔστι μήτηρ ἢ κεκλημένου τέκνου
τοκεύς, τροφὸς δὲ κύματος νεοσπόρου.
τίκτει δ' ὁ θρώσκων, ἢ δ' ἅπερ ξένω ξένη
ἔσωσεν ἔρνος, οἷσι μὴ βλάβῃ θεός.
τεκμήριον δὲ τοῦδέ σοι δείξω λόγου.
πατὴρ μὲν ἂν γένοιτ' ἄνευ μητρὸς· πέλας
μάρτυς πάρεστι παῖς Ὀλυμπίου Διός,
οὐδ' ἐν σκότοισι νηδύος τεθραμμένη,

things.

Apollo

- 645 Oh, monsters utterly loathed and detested by the gods!
Zeus could undo fetters, there is a remedy for that, [645]
and many means of release. But when the dust has drawn
up the blood of a man, once he is dead, there is no return to
life. For this, my father has made no magic spells, although
650 he arranges all other things, turning them up and down;
[650] nor does his exercise of force cost him a breath.

Chorus

- See how you advocate acquittal for this man! After he has
poured out his mother's blood on the ground, shall he then
live in his father's house in Argos? Which of the public
655 altars shall he use? [655] What purification rite of the
brotherhoods¹ will receive him?

Apollo

- I will explain this, too, and see how correctly I will speak.
The mother of what is called her child is not the parent, but
the nurse of the newly-sown embryo.² The one who
660 mounts is the parent, whereas she, as a stranger for a
stranger, [660] preserves the young plant, if the god does
not harm it. And I will show you proof of what I say: a
father might exist without a mother. A witness is here at
hand, the child of Olympian Zeus, who was not nursed in
665 the darkness of a womb, [665] and she is such a child as no

ἀλλ' οἷον ἔρνος οὔτις ἂν τέκοι θεός.
 ἐγὼ δέ, Παλλάς, τᾶλλα θ' ὥς ἐπίσταμαι,
 τὸ σὸν πόλισμα καὶ στρατὸν τεύξω μέγαν,
 καὶ τόνδ' ἔπεμψα σῶν δόμων ἐφέστιον,
 ὅπως γένοιτο πιστὸς εἰς τὸ πᾶν χρόνου
 καὶ τόνδ' ἐπικτήσαιο σύμμαχον, θεά,
 καὶ τοὺς ἔπειτα, καὶ τὰδ' αἰανῶς μένοι
 στέργειν τὰ πιστὰ τῶνδε τοὺς ἐπισπόρους.

Ἀθηνᾶ

ἤδη κελεύω τούσδ' ἀπὸ γνώμης φέρειν
 ψῆφον δικαίαν, ὥς ἅλις λελεγμένων;

Χορός

ἡμῖν μὲν ἤδη πᾶν τετόξευται βέλος.
 μένω δ' ἀκοῦσαι πῶς ἀγὼν κριθήσεται.

goddess could give birth to. For my part, Pallas, as in all other matters, as I know how, I will make your city and people great; and I have sent this man as a suppliant to your sanctuary so that he may be faithful for all time, [670] and that you, goddess, might win him and those to come after him as a new ally and so that these pledges of faith might remain always, for the later generations of these people to cherish.

670

675

¹ Kinsfolk, actual or fictitious, were united in phratriai, with common worship, offerings, and festivals.

² This notion appears in Egypt (Diodorus Siculus 1. 80, whose source was Hecataeus, an older contemporary of Aeschylus) and in various Greek authors later than Aeschylus, e.g. *Eur. Or. 552*; *Frag. 1064*, the Pythagoreans cited by Stobaeus (Hense ii. 72). The passage in the play has been invoked as evidence that the Athenians of the fifth century B.C. were upholding, some the ancient mode of tracing descent from the mother (the argument of the Erinyes); others, the patrilinear theory advocated by Apollo.

Athena

Am I to assume that enough has been said, and shall I now command these jurors to cast an honest vote according to their judgment? [675]

Chorus

For our part, every bolt is already shot. But I am waiting to hear how the trial will be decided.

Ἀθηνᾶ

τί γάρ; πρὸς ὑμῶν πῶς τιθεῖς, ἄμομφος ὦ;

Ἀπόλλων

ἠκούσαθ' ὧν ἠκούσατ', ἐν δὲ καρδίᾳ
ψῆφον φέροντες ὄρκον αἰδεῖσθε, ξένοι.

Ἀθηνᾶ

κλύοιτ' ἂν ἤδη θεσμόν, Ἀττικὸς Λεῶς,
πρώτας δίκας κρίνοντες αἵματος χυτοῦ.
ἔσται δὲ καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν Αἰγέως στρατῶ
αἰεὶ δικαστῶν τοῦτο βουλευτήριον.

πάγον δ' Ἄρειον τόνδ', Ἀμαζόνων ἔδραν
σκηνάς θ', ὅτ' ἦλθον Θησέως κατὰ φθόνον
στρατηλατοῦσαι, καὶ πόλιν νεόπτολιν
τήνδ' ὑψίπυργον ἀντεπύργωσαν τότε,
Ἄρει δ' ἔθυσον, ἔνθεν ἔστ' ἐπώνυμος
πέτρα, πάγος τ' Ἄρειος· ἐν δὲ τῷ σέβας
ἀστῶν φόβος τε ξυγγενῆς τὸ μὴ ἀδικεῖν
σχήσει τό τ' ἤμαρ καὶ κατ' εὐφρόνην ὁμῶς,
αὐτῶν πολιτῶν μὴ ἰπυχραίνοντων νόμους
κακαῖς ἐπιρροαῖσι· βορβόρῳ δ' ὕδωρ
λαμπρὸν μαιίνων οὐποθ' εὐρήσεις ποτόν.
τὸ μήτ' ἀναρχὸν μήτε δεσποτούμενον
ἀστοῖς περιστέλλουσι βουλεύω σέβειν,
καὶ μὴ τὸ δεινὸν πᾶν πόλεως ἔξω βαλεῖν.
τίς γὰρ δεδοικῶς μηδὲν ἔνδικος βροτῶν;

Athena

Why not? As for you *To Apollo and Orestes*, how shall I
arrange matters so that I will not be blamed by you?

Apollo

680 You have heard what you have heard; and as you cast your
ballots, keep the oath sacred in your hearts, friends. [680]

Athena

Hear now my ordinance, people of Attica, as you judge the
first trial for bloodshed. In the future, even as now, this
court of judges will always exist for the people of Aegeus.

685 And this Hill of Ares, the seat and camp of the Amazons,
[685] when they came with an army in resentment against
Theseus, and in those days built up this new citadel with
lofty towers to rival his, and sacrificed to Ares, from which
this rock takes its name, the Hill of Ares:¹ [690] on this hill,

690 the reverence of the citizens, and fear, its kinsman, will
hold them back from doing wrong by day and night alike,
so long as they themselves do not pollute the laws with evil
streams; if you stain clear water with filth, you will never
find a drink. [695] Neither anarchy nor tyranny—this I

695 counsel my citizens to support and respect, and not to
drive fear wholly out of the city. For who among mortals, if
he fears nothing, is righteous? Stand in just awe of such
majesty, [700] and you will have a defense for your land
and salvation of your city, such as no man has, either

τοιόνδε τοι ταρβοῦντες ἐνδίκως σέβας
 ἔρυμά τε χώρας καὶ πόλεως σωτήριον
 ἔχοιτ' ἄν, οἷον οὔτις ἀνθρώπων ἔχει,
 οὔτ' ἐν Σκύθησιν οὔτε Πέλοπος ἐν τόποις.
 κερδῶν ἄθικτον τοῦτο βουλευτήριον,
 αἰδοῖον, ὀξύθυμον, εὐδόντων ὑπερ
 ἐγρηγορὸς φρούρημα γῆς καθίσταμαι.
 ταύτην μὲν ἐξέτειν' ἐμοῖς παραίνεσιν
 ἀστοῖσιν εἰς τὸ λοιπόν· ὀρθοῦσθαι δὲ χρῆ
 καὶ ψῆφον αἶρειν καὶ διαγνῶναι δίκην
 αἰδουμένους τὸν ὄρκον. εἴρηται λόγος.

Χορός

καὶ μὴν βαρεῖαν τήνδ' ὁμιλίαν χθονὸς
 ξύμβουλος εἰμι μηδαμῶς ἀτιμάσαι.

Ἀπόλλων

κᾶγωγε χρησμούς τοὺς ἐμούς τε καὶ Διὸς
 ταρβεῖν κελεύω μῆδ' ἀκαρπῶτους κτίσαι.

700 among the Scythians or in Pelops' realm. I establish this
 tribunal, untouched by greed, worthy of reverence, quick
 to anger, awake on behalf of those who sleep, a guardian of
 the land. [705] I have prolonged this advice to my citizens
 for the future; but now you must rise and take a ballot, and
 705 decide the case under the sacred obligation of your oath.
 My word has been spoken. [710] *The judges rise from their
 seats and cast their ballots one by one during the following
 altercation.*

710 ¹ The Amazons, as “daughters of Ares,” invaded Attica to take
 vengeance on Theseus either, as one story reports, because he had
 carried off Antiope, their queen; or because he did not enclose the hill
 within the confines of his newly-founded city, which included the
 Acropolis. Aeschylus apparently rejects the legend whereby the Hill of
 Ares had its name from the fact that Ares was here tried for the murder
 of Halirrothius, a son of Poseidon, and acquitted by a tie vote of the
 gods, his judges.

Chorus

And I counsel you not to dishonor us in any way, since our
 company can be a burden to your land.

Apollo

And I, for my part, command you to stand in fear of the
 oracles, both mine and Zeus', and not cause them to be
 unfulfilled.

Χορός

ἀλλ' αἵματηρὰ πράγματ' οὐ λαχὼν σέβεις,
μαντεῖα δ' οὐκέθ' ἀγνὰ μαντεύσῃ νέμων.

Ἀπόλλων

ἦ καὶ πατήρ τι σφάλλεται βουλευμάτων
πρωτοκτόνοισι προστροπαῖς Ἰξίονος;

Χορός

λέγεις· ἐγὼ δὲ μὴ τυχοῦσα τῆς δίκης
βαρεῖα χώρα τῇδ' ὁμιλήσω πάλιν.

Ἀπόλλων

ἀλλ' ἔν τε τοῖς νέοις καὶ παλαιτέροις
θεοῖς ἄτιμος εἶ σύ· νικήσω δ' ἐγώ.

Χορός

τοιαῦτ' ἔδρασας καὶ Φέρητος ἐν δόμοις·
Μοίρας ἔπεισας ἀφθίτους θεῖναι βροτούς.

Ἀπόλλων

οὐκ οὐν δίκαιον τὸν σέβοντ' εὐεργετεῖν,
ἄλλως τε πάντως χῶτε δεόμενος τύχοι;

Χορός

σύ τοι παλαιὰς διανομὰς καταφθίσας
οἶνω παρηπάτησας ἀρχαίας θεάς.

Ἀπόλλων

σύ τοι τάχ' οὐκ ἔχουσα τῆς δίκης τέλος
ἐμῇ τὸν ἰὸν οὐδὲν ἐχθροῖσιν βαρύν.

Chorus

715 Although it is not your office, you have respect for deeds of
bloodshed. [715] You will prophesy, dispensing prophecies
that are no longer pure.

Apollo

Then was my father mistaken in any way in his purposes
when Ixion, who first shed blood, was a suppliant?

Chorus

720 You do argue! But if I fail to win the case, I will once more
inflict my company on this land as a burden. [720]

Apollo

But you have no honor, among both the younger and the
older gods. I will win.

Chorus

You did such things also in the house of Pheres, when you
persuaded the Fates to make mortals free from death.¹

725 **Apollo**

Is it not right, then, to do good for a worshipper, [725]
especially when he is in need?

Chorus

It was you who destroyed the old dispensations when you
beguiled the ancient goddesses with wine.

Apollo

730 Soon, when you have lost the case, you will spit out your
venom—no great burden to your enemies. [730]

Χορός

ἐπεὶ καθιππάζῃ με πρεσβῦτιν νέος,
δίκης γενέσθαι τῆσδ' ἐπήκοος μένω,
ὥς ἀμφίβουλος οὔσα θυμοῦσθαι πόλει.

Ἀθηνᾶ

ἐμὸν τόδ' ἔργον, λιοισθίαν κρῖναι δίκην.
ψῆφον δ' Ὀρέστη τήνδ' ἐγὼ προσθήσομαι.
μήτηρ γὰρ οὔτις ἐστὶν ἢ μ' ἐγείνατο,
τὸ δ' ἄρσεν αἰνῶ πάντα, πλήν γάμου τυχεῖν,
ἅπαντι θυμῷ, κάρτα δ' εἰμὶ τοῦ πατρὸς.
οὕτω γυναικὸς οὐ προτιμήσω μόρον
ἄνδρα κτανούσης δωμάτων ἐπίσκοπον.
νικᾷ δ' Ὀρέστης, κἂν ἰσόψηφος κριθῇ.
ἐκβάλλεθ' ὥς τάχιστα τευχέων πάλους,
ὅσοις δικαστῶν τοῦτ' ἐπέσταλται τέλος.

The balloting is now ended.

Chorus

Since you, a youth, would ride me down, an old woman, I
am waiting to hear the verdict in the case, since I have not
decided whether to be angry at the city.

735 **Athena**

It is my duty to give the final judgment and I shall cast my
vote for Orestes. [735] For there was no mother who gave
me birth; and in all things, except for marriage, whole-
heartedly I am for the male and entirely on the father's
side. Therefore, I will not award greater honor to the death
740 of a woman who killed her husband, the master of the
house. [740] Orestes wins, even if the vote comes out equal.
Cast the ballots out of the urns, as quickly as possible, you
jurors who have been assigned this task.

The ballots are turned out and separated.

¹ In atonement for having shed blood (according to one legend, that of the dragon at Delphi, according to another, that of the Cyclopes), Apollo was compelled by Zeus to serve as a thrall in the house of Admetus, son of Pheres. An ancient story, adopted by Aeschylus, reported that, when the time came for Admetus to die, Apollo, in gratitude for the kindness shown him by the prince, plied the Fates with wine (l. 728) and thus secured their consent that Admetus

Ὀρέστης

ὦ Φοῖβ' Ἀπολλον, πῶς ἀγὼν κριθήσεται;

Χορός

ὦ Νύξ μέλαινα μητέρα, ἄρ' ὁρᾷς τάδε;

Ὀρέστης

νῦν ἀγχόνῃς μοι τέρματ', ἢ φάος βλέπειν.

Χορός

ἡμῖν γὰρ ἔρρειν, ἢ πρόσω τιμὰς νέμειν.

Ἀπόλλων

πεμπάζετ' ὀρθῶς ἐκβολὰς ψήφων, ξένοι,

τὸ μὴ ἴδικεῖν σέβοντες ἐν δαιρέσει.

γνώμης δ' ἀπούσης πῆμα γίγνεται μέγα,

βαλοῦσά τ' οἶκον ψῆφος ὥρθωσεν μία.

Ἀθηνᾶ

ἀνὴρ ὅδ' ἐκπέφευγεν αἵματος δίκην·

ἶσον γὰρ ἔστι τὰρίθμημα τῶν πάλων.

should be released from death on condition that some one should voluntarily choose to die in his stead. Euripides, in his *Alcestis*, tells how, when both the father and the mother of Admetus refused to give up to him the remnant of their days, his wife Alcestis died for him.

745

Orestes

O Phoebus Apollo! How will the trial be decided?

Chorus

O Night, our dark Mother, do you see this? [745]

Orestes

Now I will meet my end by hanging, or I will live.

Chorus

750

Yes, and we will be ruined, or maintain our honors further.

Apollo

Correctly count the ballots cast forth, friends, and be in awe of doing wrong in the division of the votes. Error of judgment is the source of much distress, [750] and the cast of a single ballot has set upright a house.

The ballots are shown to Athena.

Athena

This man is acquitted on the charge of murder, for the numbers of the casts are equal.

Apollo disappears.

Ὀρέστης

ὦ Παλλάς, ὦ σώσασα τοὺς ἐμοὺς δόμους.
 γαίας πατρώας ἐστερημένον σύ τοι
 κατώκισάς με· καί τις Ἑλλήνων ἐρεῖ,
 “Ἀργεῖος ἀνὴρ αὖθις ἔν τε χρήμασιν
 οἰκεῖ πατρώοις, Παλλάδος καὶ Λοξίου
 ἕκατι, καὶ τοῦ πάντα κραίνοντος τρίτου
 σωτῆρος,” ὃς πατρῶον αἰδεσθεὶς μόρον
 σφάζει με, μητρὸς τάσδε συνδίκους ὀρῶν.
 ἐγὼ δὲ χώρα τῇδε καὶ τῷ σῶ στρατῷ
 τὸ λοιπὸν εἰς ἅπαντα πλειστήρη χρόνον
 ὀρκωμοτήσας νῦν ἄπειμι πρὸς δόμους,
 μήτοι τιν’ ἄνδρα δεῦρο προμνήτην χθονὸς
 ἐλθόντ’ ἐποίσειν εὖ κεκασμένον δόρυ.
 αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς ὄντες ἐν τάφοις τότε
 τοῖς τὰμὰ παρβαίνουσι νῦν ὀρκώματα
 ἀμηχάνοισι πράξομεν δυσπραξίαις,
 ὁδοὺς ἀθύμους καὶ παρόρνιας πόρους
 τιθέντες, ὥς αὐτοῖσι μεταμέλη πόνος·
 ὀρθουμένων δέ, καὶ πόλιν τὴν Παλλάδος
 τιμῶσιν αἰεὶ τήνδε συμμάχῳ δορί,
 αὐτοῖσιν ἡμεῖς ἐσμεν εὐμενέστεροι.
 καὶ χαῖρε, καὶ σὺ καὶ πολιissoῦχος λεώς·
 πάλαισμι’ ἄφυκτον τοῖς ἐναντίοις ἔχοις,
 σωτήριόν τε καὶ δορὸς νικηφόρον.

Orestes

- 755 Pallas, savior of my house! I was deprived of a fatherland,
 and it is you who have given me a home there again. [755]
 The Hellenes will say, “The man is an Argive once again,
 and lives in his father's heritage, by the grace of Pallas and
 of Loxias and of that third god, the one who accomplishes
 everything, the savior” —the one who, having respect for
 760 my father's death, [760] saves me, seeing those advocates of
 my mother. I will return to my home now, after I swear an
 oath to this land and to your people¹ for the future and for
 all time to come, that no captain of my land [765] will ever
 come here and bring a well-equipped spear against them.
 765 For I myself, then in my grave, will accomplish it by failure
 without remedy, making their marches spiritless and their
 journeys ill-omened, [770] so that those who violate my
 present oath will repent their enterprise. But while the
 straight course is preserved, and they hold in everlasting
 770 honor this city of Pallas with their allied spears, I will be
 the more well-disposed to them. And so farewell—you and
 the people who guard your city. [775] May your struggle
 with your enemies let none escape, bringing you safety and
 victory with the spear! *Exit.*
 775

Χορός

ἰὼ θεοὶ νεώτεροι, παλαιοὺς νόμους
 καθιππάσασθε καὶ χερῶν εἴλεσθέ μου.
 ἐγὼ δ' ἄτιμος ἅ τάλαινα βαρύκοτος
 ἐν γὰρ τᾷδε, φεῦ,
 ἰὸν ἰὸν ἀντιπενθῇ
 μεθεῖσα καρδίας, σταλαγμὸν χθονὶ
 ἄφορον· ἐκ δὲ τοῦ
 λειχὴν ἄφυλλος, ἄτεκνος,
 ἰὼ δίκαια, πέδον ἐπισύμενος
 βροτοφθόρους κηλίδας ἐν χώρᾳ βαλεῖ.
 στενάζω· τί ῥέξω;
 γελῶμαι πολίταις.
 δύσοισθ' ἄπαθον.
 ἰὼ μεγάλα τοὶ κόραι δυστυχεῖς
 Νυκτὸς ἀτιμοπενθεῖς.

Ἀθηνᾶ

ἐμοὶ πίθεσθε μὴ βαρυστόνως φέρειν.
 οὐ γὰρ νενίκησθ', ἀλλ' ἰσόψηφος δίκη
 ἐξῆλθ' ἀληθῶς, οὐκ ἀτιμία σέθεν·
 ἀλλ' ἐκ Διὸς γὰρ λαμπρὰ μαρτύρια παρῆν,
 αὐτὸς θ' ὁ χρήσας αὐτὸς ἦν ὁ μαρτυρῶν,
 ὥς ταῦτ' Ὀρέστην δρῶντα μὴ βλάβας ἔχειν.
 ὑμεῖς δὲ μὴ θυμοῦσθε μηδὲ τῇδε γῇ
 βαρὺν κότον σκήψητε, μηδ' ἀκαρπῖαν

¹ The passage points to the league between Athens and Argos, formed after Cimon was ostracized (461 B.C.) and the treaty with Sparta denounced.

780

Chorus

Younger gods, you have ridden down the ancient laws and
 have taken them from my hands!¹ And I—dishonored,
 unhappy, deeply angry— [780] on this land, alas, I will
 785 release venom from my heart, venom in return for my
 grief, drops that the land cannot endure. From it, a blight
 that destroys leaves, destroys children—a just return—
 [785] speeding over the plain, will cast infection on the land
 to ruin mortals. I groan aloud. What shall I do? I am
 790 mocked by the people. What I have suffered is unbearable.
 [790] Ah, cruel indeed are the wrongs of the daughters of
 Night, mourning over dishonor!

795

¹ To avoid the collision of metaphors, Abresch assumed the loss of a line in which some qualification of Orestes would have been named as object of the second verb. Verrall thought the object was designedly omitted to indicate the passion of the Erinyes.

Athena

800 Be persuaded by me not to bear it with heavy lament. For
 you have not been defeated; the trial resulted fairly in an
 equal vote, without disgrace to you; [795] but clear

τεύξῃτ', ἀφεῖσαι δαιμόνων σταλάγματα,
 βρωτῆρας αἰχμὰς σπερμάτων ἀνημέρους.
 ἐγὼ γὰρ ὑμῖν πανδίκως ὑπίσχομαι
 ἔδρας τε καὶ κευθμῶνας ἐνδίκου χθονὸς
 λιπαροθρόνοισιν ἡμένας ἐπ' ἐσχάrais
 ἔξειν ὑπ' ἀστῶν τῶνδε τιμαλφουμένας.

Χορός

ὦ θεοὶ νεώτεροι, παλαιοὺς νόμους
 καθιππάσασθε κακὰ χειρῶν εἴλεσθέ μου.
 ἐγὼ δ' ἄτιμος ἅ τάλαινα βαρύκοτος
 ἐν γὰρ τᾷδε, φεῦ,
 ἰὸν ἰὸν ἀντιπενθῇ
 μεθεῖσα καρδίας, σταλαγμὸν χθονὶ
 ἄφορον· ἐκ δὲ τοῦ
 λειχὴν ἄφυλλος, ἄτεκνος,
 ὦ δίκαι, πέδον ἐπισύμενος
 βροτοφθόρους κηλίδας ἐν χώρᾳ βαλεῖ.
 στενάζω· τί ῥέξω;
 γελῶμαι πολίταις·
 δύσοισθ' ἄπαθον.
 ὦ μεγάλα τοι κόραι δυστυχεῖς
 Νυκτὸς ἀτιμοπενθεῖς.

Ἀθηνᾶ

οὐκ ἔστ' ἄτιμοι, μηδ' ὑπερθύμως ἄγαν
 θεαὶ βροτῶν κτίσητε δύσκηλον χθόνα.

testimony from Zeus was present, and he himself who
 spoke the oracle himself gave witness that Orestes should
 not suffer harm for his deed. Do not be angry, do not hurl
 805 your heavy rage on this land, [800] or cause barrenness,
 letting loose drops whose savage spirit will devour the
 seed. For I promise you most sacredly that you will have a
 cavernous sanctuary in a righteous land, [805] where you
 will sit on shining thrones at your hearths, worshipped
 with honor by my citizens here.

810 Chorus

Younger gods, you have ridden down the ancient laws and
 have taken them from my hands! And I—dishonored,
 unhappy, deeply angry— [810] on this land, alas, I will
 release venom from my heart, venom in return for my
 815 grief, drops that the land cannot endure. From it a blight
 that destroys leaves, destroys children—a just return—
 [815] speeding over the plain, will cast infection on the land
 to ruin mortals. I groan aloud. What shall I do? I am
 mocked by the people. What I have suffered is unbearable.
 820 [820] Ah, cruel indeed are the wrongs of the daughters of
 Night, mourning over dishonor!

Athena

You are not dishonored; so, although you are goddesses,
 do not, in excessive rage, blight past all cure a land of
 825 mortals. [825] I also rely on Zeus—what need is there to

κάγὼ πέποιθα Ζηνί, καὶ τί δεῖ λέγειν;
καὶ κληῖδας οἶδα δώματος μόνη θεῶν,
ἐν ᾧ κεραυνός ἐστιν ἐσφραγισμένος·
ἀλλ' οὐδὲν αὐτοῦ δεῖ· σὺ δ' εὐπιθῆς ἐμοὶ
γλώσσης ματαίας μὴ ἔκβαλης ἔπη χθονί,
καρπὸν φέροντα πάντα μὴ πράσσειν καλῶς
κοίμα κελαινοῦ κύματος πικρὸν μένος
ὥς σεμνότιμος καὶ ξυνοικήτωρ ἐμοί·
πολλῆς δὲ χώρας τῆσδ' ἔτ' ἀκροθίνια
θύη πρὸ παίδων καὶ γαμηλίου τέλους
ἔχουσ' ἐς αἰεὶ τόνδ' ἐπαινέσεις λόγον.

Χορός

ἐμὲ παθεῖν τάδε, φεῦ,
ἐμὲ παλαιόφρονα κατὰ τε γᾶς οἰκεῖν,
φεῦ, ἀτίετον μύσος.
πνέω τοι μένος ἅπαντ' ἀ τε κότον.
οἶ οἶ δᾶ, φεῦ.
τίς μ' ὑποδύεται, <τίς> ὀδύνα πλευράς;
θυμὸν ἄιε, μάτερ
Νύξ· ἀπὸ γάρ με τι-
μᾶν δαναιᾶν θεῶν
δυσπάλαμοι παρ' οὐδὲν ἦραν δόλοι.

Ἀθηνᾶ

ὀργὰς ξυνοίσω σοι· γεραιτέρα γὰρ εἶ.
καὶ τῷ μὲν <εἶ> σὺ κάρτ' ἐμοῦ σοφώτερα·

mention that?—and I alone of the gods know the keys to the house where his thunderbolt is sealed. But there is no need of that. So yield to my persuasion and do not hurl the words of a reckless tongue against the land, [830] that all things bearing fruit will not prosper. Calm the black wave's bitter anger, since you will receive proud honors and will live with me. And when you have the first-fruits of this great land forever, offerings on behalf of children and of marriage rites, [835] you will praise my counsel.

835 Chorus

For me to suffer this, alas! For me, with ancient wisdom, to live beneath the earth, alas, without honor, unclean! I am breathing fury and utter rage. [840] Oh, oh, the shame of it! What anguish steals into my breast! Hear my anger, mother Night; for the deceptions of the gods, hard to fight, have deprived me of my ancient honors, bringing me to nothing. [845]

845

Athena

I will endure your anger, for you are older, and in that respect you are surely wiser than I; yet Zeus has given me,

φρονεῖν δὲ καὶ μοῖ Ζεὺς ἔδωκεν οὐ κακῶς.
 ὑμεῖς δ' ἐς ἀλλόφυλον ἐλθοῦσαι χθόνα
 γῆς τῆσδ' ἐρασθήσεσθε· προυννέπω τάδε.
 οὐπιρρέων γὰρ τιμώτερος χρόνος
 ἔσται πολίταις τοῖσδε. καὶ σὺ τιμίαν
 ἔδραν ἔχουσα πρὸς δόμοις Ἐρεχθέως
 τεύξη παρ' ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικείων στόλων,
 ὅσων παρ' ἄλλων οὐ ποτ' ἂν σχέθοις βροτῶν.
 σὺ δ' ἐν τόποισι τοῖς ἐμοῖσι μὴ βάλης
 μήθ' αἵματηρὰς θηγάνας, σπλάγχνων βλάβας
 νέων, αἰνοῖς ἐμμανεῖς θυμώμασιν,
 μήτ' ἔξελοῦς ὥς καρδίαν ἀλεκτόρων,
 ἐν τοῖς ἐμοῖς ἀστοῖσιν ιδρύσης Ἄρη
 ἐμφύλιόν τε καὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλους θρασύν.
 θυραῖος ἔστω πόλεμος, οὐ μόλις παρών,
 ἐν ᾧ τις ἔσται δεινὸς εὐκλείας ἔρως·
 ἐνοικίου δ' ὄρνιθος οὐ λέγω μάχην·
 τοιαῦθ' ἐλέσθαι σοι πάρεστιν ἐξ ἐμοῦ,
 εὖ δρῶσαν, εὖ πάσχουσιν, εὖ τιμωμένην
 χώρας μετασχεῖν τῆσδε θεοφιλεστάτης.

Χορός

ἐμὲ παθεῖν τάδε, φεῦ,
 ἐμὲ παλαιόφρονα κατὰ τε γᾶς οἰκεῖν,
 φεῦ, ἀτίετον μῦσος.
 πνέω τοι μένος ἅπαντά τε κότον.

850 too, no mean understanding. [850] But as for you, if you go
 to a foreign land, you will come to love this land—I
 forewarn you. For time, flowing on, will bring greater
 honor to these citizens. And you, having a seat of honor at
 the house of Erechtheus, [855] will obtain from hosts of
 855 men and women more than you could ever win from other
 mortals. So do not cast on my realm keen incentives to
 bloodshed, harmful to young hearts, maddening them with
 a fury not of wine; [860] and do not, as if taking the heart
 out of fighting cocks, plant in my people the spirit of tribal
 860 war and boldness against each other. Let their war be with
 foreign enemies, and without stint for one in whom there
 will be a terrible passion for glory; [865] but I say there will
 be no battling of birds within the home. It is possible for
 you to choose such things from me: bestowing good,
 865 receiving good, well honored in this land that is most
 beloved to the gods.

870

Chorus

For me to suffer this, alas! For me, with ancient wisdom, to
 live beneath the earth, alas, without honor, unclean! I am

οἱ οἱ δᾶ, φεῦ.

τίς μ' ὑποδύεται, τίς ὀδύνα πλευράς;

θυμὸν ἄιε, μάτερ

Νύξ· ἀπὸ γάρ με τι-

μᾶν δαναϊᾶν θεῶν

δυσπάλαμοι παρ' οὐδὲν ἦραν δόλοι.

Ἀθηνᾶ

οὐτοὶ καμουῖμαί σοι λέγουσα τὰγαθά,

ὥς μήποτ' εἵπης πρὸς νεωτέρας ἐμοῦ

θεὸς παλαιὰ καὶ πολισσούχων βροτῶν

ἄτιμος ἔρρειν τοῦδ' ἀπόξενος πέδου.

ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν ἀγνόν ἐστί σοι Πειθοῦς σέβας,

γλώσσης ἐμῆς μείλιγμα καὶ θελκτῆριον,

σὺ δ' οὖν μένοις ἄν· εἰ δὲ μὴ θέλεις μένειν,

οὐ τὰν δικαίως τῇδ' ἐπιρρέποις πόλει

μῆνιν τιν' ἢ κότον τιν' ἢ βλάβην στρατῶ.

ἔξεστι γάρ σοι τῇσδε γαμόρῳ χθονὸς

εἶναι δικαίως ἐς τὸ πᾶν τιμωμένη.

Χορός

ἄνασσ' Ἀθάνᾳ, τίνα με φῆς ἔχειν ἔδραν;

Ἀθηνᾶ

πάσης ἀπήμον' οἰζύος· δέχου δὲ σύ.

Χορός

καὶ δὴ δέδεγμαι· τίς δέ μοι τιμὴ μένει;

breathing fury and utter rage. Oh, oh the shame of it! What
875 anguish steals into my breast! [875] Hear my anger, mother
Night; for the deceptions of the gods, hard to fight, have
deprived me of my ancient honors, bringing me to nothing.
[880]

880

Athena

No, I will not grow tired of telling you about these good
things, so you will never be able to say that you, an ancient
goddess, were cast out, dishonored and banished, from this
land by me, a younger goddess, and by the mortal
885 guardians of my city. But if you give holy reverence to
Persuasion, [885] the sweetness and charm of my tongue,
then you might remain. But if you are not willing to stay,
then surely it would be unjust for you to inflict on this city
any wrath or rage or harm to the people. For it is possible
890 for you to have a share of the land justly, with full honors.
[890]

Chorus

Lady Athena, what place do you say I will have?

Athena

One free from all pain and distress; accept it.

Chorus

Say that I have accepted it, what honor awaits me?

Ἀθηνᾶ

ὥς μή τιν' οἶκον εὐθενεῖν ἄνευ σέθεν.

Χορός

σὺ τοῦτο πράξεις, ὥστε με σθένειν τόσον;

Ἀθηνᾶ

τῷ γὰρ σέβοντι συμφορὰς ὀρθώσομεν.

Χορός

καί μοι πρόπαντος ἐγγύην θήσῃ χρόνου;

Ἀθηνᾶ

ἔξεστι γάρ μοι μὴ λέγειν ἂ μὴ τελῶ.

Χορός

θέλξιν μ' ἔοικας καὶ μεθίσταμαι κότου.

Ἀθηνᾶ

τοιγὰρ κατὰ χθόν' οὐς' ἐπικτήσῃ φίλους.

Χορός

τί οὖν μ' ἄνωγας τῇδ' ἐφυμνῆσαι χθονί;

Ἀθηνᾶ

ὅποια νίκης μὴ κακῆς ἐπίσκοπα,

καὶ ταῦτα γῆθεν ἔκ τε ποντίας δρόσου

ἔξ οὐρανοῦ τε κἀνέμων ἀήματα

εὐηλίως πνέοντ' ἐπιστεῖχειν χθόνα·

καρπὸν τε γαίας καὶ βοτῶν ἐπίρρυτον

ἀστοῖσιν εὐθενοῦντα μὴ κάμνειν χρόνῳ,

καὶ τῶν βροτείων σπερμάτων σωτηρίαν.

τῶν εὐσεβούντων δ' ἐκφορωτέρα πέλοις.

Athena

895 That no house will flourish without you. [895]

Chorus

Will you gain for me the possession of such power?

Athena

Yes, for we will set straight the fortunes of those who worship.

Chorus

And will you give me a pledge for all time?

Athena

Yes, for I have no need to say what I will not accomplish.

900 **Chorus**

It seems you will win me by your spells; I am letting go my anger. [900]

Athena

Then stay in the land and you will gain other friends.

Chorus

What blessings then do you advise me to invoke on this land?

905 **Athena**

Blessings that aim at a victory not evil; blessings from the earth and from the waters of the sea and from the heavens: that the breathing gales of wind may approach the land in radiant sunshine, [905] and that the fruit of the earth and

910 offspring of grazing beasts, flourishing in overflow, may

στέργω γάρ, ἀνδρὸς φιλυποῖμενος δίκην,
τὸ τῶν δικαίων τῶνδ' ἀπένθητον γένος.
τοιαῦτα σοῦστι. τῶν ἀρειφάτων δ' ἐγὼ
πρεπτῶν ἀγώνων οὐκ ἀνέξομαι τὸ μὴ οὐ
τήνδ' ἀστύνικον ἐν βροτοῖς τιμᾶν πόλιν.

Χορός

δέξομαι Παλλάδος ξυνοικίαν,
οὐδ' ἀτιμάσω πόλιν,
τὰν καὶ Ζεὺς ὁ παγκρατὴς Ἄρης τε
φρούριον θεῶν νέμει,
ῥυσίβωμον Ἑλλάνων ἄγαλμα δαιμόνων·
τ' ἐγὼ κατεύχομαι
θεσπίσασα πρευμενῶς
ἐπισύτους βίου τύχας ὀνησίμους
γαίας ἐξαμβρῦσαι
φαιδρὸν ἀλίου σέλας.

Ἀθηνᾶ

τάδ' ἐγὼ προφρόνως τοῖσδε πολίταις
πράσσω, μεγάλας καὶ δυσαρέστους
δαίμονας αὐτοῦ κατανασσαμένη.
πάντα γὰρ αὐταὶ τὰ κατ' ἀνθρώπους
ἔλαχον διέπειν.
ὁ δὲ μὴ κύρσας βαρεῶν τούτων
οὐκ οἶδεν ὅθεν πληγαὶ βίотου.
τὰ γὰρ ἐκ προτέρων ἀπλακήματά νιν

not fail my citizens in the course of time, and that the seed
of mortals will be kept safe. May you make more
prosperous the offspring of godly men; [910] for I, like a
gardener, cherish the race of these just men, free of sorrow.

915 *Pointing to the audience.*

Such blessings are yours to give. I, for my part, will not
allow this city to be without honor among mortals, this city
victorious in the glorious contests of deadly war. [915]

Chorus

I will accept a home with Pallas, and I will not dishonor a
city which she, with Zeus the omnipotent and Ares, holds
as a fortress of the gods, the bright ornament that guards
the altars of the gods of Hellas. [920] I pray for the city,
with favorable prophecy, that the bright gleam of the sun
may cause blessings that give happiness to life to spring
from the earth, in plenty. [925]

Athena

930 I act zealously for these citizens in this way, installing here
among them divinities great and hard to please. For they
have been appointed to arrange everything among mortals.
[930] Yet the one who has not found them grievous does
not know where the blows of life come from. For the sins of

πρὸς τάσδ' ἀπάγει, σιγῶν <δ> ὄλεθρος
καὶ μέγα φωνοῦντ'
ἐχθραῖς ὀργαῖς ἀμαθύνει.

Χορός

δενδροπήμων δὲ μὴ πνέοι βλάβα,
τὰν ἐμὰν χάριν λέγω
φλογμός τ' ὀμματοστερῆς φυτῶν, τὸ
μὴ περᾶν ὄρον τόπων,
μηδ' ἄκαρπος αἰανῆς ἐφερπέτω νόσος,
μῆλ' αὖτ' εὐθενοῦντα γὰρ
ξὺν διπλοῖσιν ἐμβροῖς
τρέφοι χρόνῳ τεταγμένῳ γόνος <δ>
πλουτόχθων ἐρμαίαν
δαιμόνων δόσιν τίοι.

Ἀθηνᾶ

ἦ τάδ' ἀκούετε, πόλεως φρούριον,
οἳ' ἐπικραίνει; μέγα γὰρ δύναται
πότνι' Ἐρινὺς παρὰ τ' ἀθανάτοισιν
τοῖς θ' ὑπὸ γαῖαν, περὶ τ' ἀνθρώπων
φανερῶς τελέως διαπράσσουσιν,
τοῖς μὲν αἰοιδάς, τοῖς δ' αὖ δακρύων
βίον ἀμβλωπὸν παρέχουσαι.

Χορός

ἀνδροκμητὰς δ' ἄωρ-
ους ἀπεννέπω τύχας,

935 his fathers drag him before them; destruction, in silence
and hateful wrath, levels him to the dust, for all his loud
boasting. [935]

Chorus

May no hurtful wind blow to harm the trees—I declare my
favor—and may no burning heat, stealing the buds from
940 plants, pass the border of its proper place; [940] may no
deadly plague draw near to kill the fruit; may the earth
nurture the thriving flocks with twin offspring at the
appointed time; [945] and may the rich produce of the earth
945 always pay the gods' gift of lucky gain.¹

¹ Because the god's gifts of precious metals (the Athenians have especially silver in mind) must be found, as it were, by luck; and Hermes is the god of lucky finds. ἔρμαιον is an "unexpected find."

950 **Athena**

Do you hear, guards of my city, the things she will
accomplish? For the lady Erinys is very powerful, [950]
both with the deathless gods and with those below the
earth; and in their dealings with mankind, they accomplish
955 matters visibly, perfectly; to some giving songs, to others a
life made dim by tears. [955]

Chorus

I forbid deadly and untimely fate for men; grant to lovely

νεανίδων τ' ἐπηράτων
 ἀνδροτυχεῖς βιότους
 δότε, κύρι' ἔχοντες,
 θεαί τ' ὦ Μοῖραι
 ματροκασιγνήται,
 δαίμονες ὀρθονόμοι,
 παντὶ δόμῳ μετάκοινοι,
 παντὶ χρόνῳ δ' ἐπιβριθεῖς
 ἐνδίκους ὁμιλίας,
 πάντα τιμιώταται θεῶν.

Ἀθηνᾶ

τάδε τοι χώρα τήμῃ προφρόνως
 ἐπικρανομένων
 γάνυμαι· στέργω δ' ὄμματα Πειθοῦς,
 ὅτι μοι γλῶσσαν καὶ στόμ' ἐπωπᾶ
 πρὸς τάσδ' ἀγρίως ἀπανηναμένας·
 ἀλλ' ἐκράτησε Ζεὺς ἀγοραῖος·
 νικᾷ δ' ἀγαθῶν
 ἔρις ἡμετέρα διὰ παντός.

Χορός

τὰν δ' ἄπληστον κακῶν
 μήποτ' ἐν πόλει στάσιν
 τᾶδ' ἐπεύχομαι βρέμειν.
 μηδὲ πιούσα κόνις
 μέλαν αἶμα πολιτᾶν

maidens life with a husband, you that have the rightful
 power; [960] you, divine Fates, our sisters by one mother,
 960 divinities who distribute justly, who have a share in every
 home, and whose righteous visitations press heavily at
 every season, [965] most honored everywhere among the
 gods!

965

Athena

970 I am glad that they are zealously accomplishing these
 things for my land; and I am grateful to Persuasion, [970]
 that her glance kept watch over my tongue and mouth,
 when I encountered their fierce refusal. But Zeus of the
 assembly has prevailed.¹ Our rivalry in doing good is
 975 victorious forever. [975]

¹ Zeus presides over the assemblies of citizens and directs the speech of public men.

Chorus

980 I pray that discord, greedy for evil, may never clamor in

δι' ὀργάν ποινᾶς
ἀντιφόνους ἄτας
ἀρπαλίσαι πόλεως.
χάρματα δ' ἀντιδιδόειν
κοινοφιλεῖ διανοία,
καὶ στυγεῖν μιᾷ φρενί·
πολλῶν γὰρ τόδ' ἐν βροτοῖς ἄκος.

Ἀθηνᾶ

ἄρα φρονοῦσιν γλώσσης ἀγαθῆς
ὁδὸν εὐρίσκειν;
ἐκ τῶν φοβερῶν τῶνδε προσώπων
μέγα κέρδος ὀρῶ τοῖσδε πολίταις·
τάσδε γὰρ εὐφρονας εὐφρονες αἰεὶ
μέγα τιμῶντες καὶ γῆν καὶ πόλιν
ὀρθοδίκαιον
πρέψετε πάντως διάγοντες.

Χορός

<χαίρετε> χαίρετ' ἐν αἰσιμίαισι πλούτου.
χαίρετ' ἀστικός Λεῶς,
ἵκταρ ἤμενοι Διός,
παρθένου φίλας φίλοι
σωφρονοῦντες ἐν χρόνῳ.
Παλλάδος δ' ὑπὸ πτεροῖς
ὄντας ἄζεται πατήρ.

this city, and may the dust not drink the black blood of its people [980] and through passion cause ruinous murder for vengeance to the destruction of the state.¹ But may they return joy for joy in a spirit of common love, [985] and may they hate with one mind; for this is the cure of many an evil in the world.

985

¹ The expression of the thought “take reprisals in a civil war,” is overloaded and the grammatical relation of the words is involved. More exactly: “seize greedily (as a wild beast seizes his prey) upon calamities—of vengeance—to the State, calamities in which blood is shed in requital for blood.”

990

Athena

Do they not then intend to find the path of good speech? From these terrible faces [990] I see great profit for these citizens; for, if you always greatly honor with kindness the kindly ones, you will surely be pre-eminent, keeping your land and city in the straight path of justice. [995]

995

Chorus

Farewell, farewell, in the wealth allotted to you by fate. Farewell, people of the city, seated near to Zeus, the beloved of the beloved maiden, learning at last the way of wisdom. [1000] The Father stands in awe of you, since you are under Pallas' wings.

1000

Ἀθηνᾶ

χαίρετε χῦμεῖς· προτέραν δ' ἐμὲ χρὴ
στείχειν θαλάμους ἀποδείξουσιν
πρὸς φῶς ἱερὸν τῶνδε προπομπῶν.
ἴτε καὶ σφαγίων τῶνδ' ὑπὸ σεμνῶν
κατὰ γῆς σύμεναι τὸ μὲν ἀτηρὸν
χώρας κατέχειν, τὸ δὲ κερδαλέον
πέμπειν πόλεως ἐπὶ νίκη.
ὑμεῖς δ' ἡγεῖσθε, πολισσοῦχοι
παῖδες Κραναοῦ, ταῖσδε μετοίκους.
εἴη δ' ἀγαθῶν
ἀγαθὴ διάνοια πολίταις.

Χορός

χαίρετε, χαίρετε δ' αὖθις, ἐπανδιπλάζω,
πάντες οἱ κατὰ πόλιν,
δαίμονές τε καὶ βροτοί,
Παλλάδος πόλιν νέμον-
τες· μετοικίαν δ' ἐμὴν
εὖ σέβοντες οὔτι μέμ-
ψεσθε συμφορὰς βίου.

Athena

Farewell to you also; but I must lead the way to show you
1005 your dwellings by the sacred light of these, your escorts.¹
[1005] Go, and, speeding beneath the earth with these
solemn sacrifices, hold back what is ruinous to the land,
but send what is profitable for the city to win her victory.
You who hold the city, children of Cranaus,² lead on their
1010 way these new dwellers here. [1010] May there be good
will in the citizens in return for good done to them!

¹ The Chorus is now to be solemnly conducted to the cave beneath the Hill of Ares, the seat of the worship of the Venerable Ones (Σεμναί, l. 1041) , with whom the poet here identifies the Erinyes, the Angry Ones, the Avenging Spirits. The identification seems also to include the Eumenides, the Kindly Ones, who were worshipped at Sicyon, at Argos, and in Attica at Phlya and Colonus (see **Soph. OT**) . The procession is formed by Athena (at its head) , the Chorus, the Areopagites, torch-bearers, the women who guard the Palladium, and various others. In the rear came the Athenian public.

1015

1020

² Cranaus was the mythical founder of the "rocky city" (κραναός "rocky") , a favourite name of Athens.

Chorus

Farewell, farewell, again, I repeat, all you in the city, [1015]
both gods and mortals, living in Pallas' city; if you duly
revere my residence among you, you will not blame the

Ἀθηνᾶ

αἰνῶ τε μύθους τῶνδε τῶν κατευγμάτων
πέμψω τε φέγγει λαμπάδων σελασφόρων
εἰς τοὺς ἔνερθε καὶ κατὰ χθονὸς τόπους
ξὺν προσπόλοισιν, αἶτε φρουροῦσιν βρέτας
τοῦμὸν δικαίως. ὄμμα γὰρ πάσης χθονὸς
Θησῆδος ἐξίκοιτ' ἂν εὐκλεῆς λόχος
παίδων, γυναικῶν, καὶ στόλος πρεσβυτίδων.
φοινικοβάπτοις ἐνδυτοῖς ἐσθήμασι
τιμᾶτε, καὶ τὸ φέγγος ὀρμάσθω πυρός,
ὅπως ἂν εὐφρων ἦδ' ὁμιλία χθονὸς
τὸ λοιπὸν εὐάνδροισι συμφοραῖς πρέπη.

Προπομποί

βᾶτε δόμῳ, μεγάλαι φιλότιμοι
Νυκτὸς παῖδες ἄπαιδες, ὑπ' εὐφρονι πομπᾷ,
εὐφameίτε δέ, χωρῖται,
γὰς ὑπὸ κεύθεσιν ὠγυγίοισιν,
[καὶ] τιμαῖς καὶ θυσίαις περίσεπτα τυχοῦσαι,
εὐφameίτε δὲ πανδαμεί.
Ἰλαοὶ δὲ καὶ σύμφρονες γὰ
δεῦρ' ἴτε, σεμναί, <ξὺν> πυριδάπτω
λαμπάδι τερπόμεναι καθ' ὁδόν.
ὀλολύξατε νῦν ἐπὶ μολπαῖς.
σπονδαὶ δ' ἐς τὸ πᾶν ἐκ μετοίκων

chances of life. [1020]

Athena

I approve the words of your invocation, and will escort you
by the light of gleaming torches to the places below and
beneath the earth, with the attendant women who guard
1025 my image in duty bound. [1025] For the eye of the whole
land of Theseus will come forth, a glorious troop of
children, matrons and a band of old women.
Dress them honorably in robes dyed scarlet, and let the
torches' light move on, so that this kindly company of
1030 visitors to our land [1030] may show itself afterwards in
blessings that bring prosperity to men.

Chorus of the Processional Escort

1035 Go on your way to your home, children of Night: mighty,
lovers of honor, children, yet aged, under kindly escort —
you who dwell in the land, refrain from inauspicious
speech! [1035]
1040 Under the primeval caverns of the earth, gaining the high
honor of worship and sacrifice — all you people, refrain
from inauspicious speech! Gracious and favorable to the
land, [1040] come here, venerable goddesses, with flame-
fed torch, rejoicing as you go — cry aloud now in echo to

Παλλάδος ἀστοῖς. Ζεὺς <ό> πανόπτας
οὔτω Μοῖρά τε συγκατέβα.
ὀλολύξατε νῦν ἐπὶ μολπαῖς.

1045 our song!
Peace endures for all time between Pallas' citizens and
these new dwellers here. [1045] Zeus who sees all and Fate
have come down to lend aid—cry aloud now in echo to our
song!

Exeunt omnes.

THE END