

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

ὦ τὴν ἐν ἄστροις οὐρανοῦ τέμνων ὁδὸν
 καὶ χρυσοκολλήτοισιν ἐμβεβῶς δίφροισ
 Ἥλιε, θοαῖς ἵπποισιν εἰλίσσων φλόγα,
 ὡς δυστυχῆ Θήβαισι τῆ τόθ' ἡμέρα
 ἀκτῖν' ἐφήκας, Κάδμος ἠνίκ' ἦλθε γῆν
 τήνδ', ἐκλιπὼν Φοίνισσαν ἐναλίαν χθόνα·
 ὃς παῖδα γήμας Κύπριδος Ἀρμονίαν ποτὲ
 Πολύδωρον ἐξέφυσε, τοῦ δὲ Λάβδακον
 φῦναι λέγουσιν, ἐκ δὲ τοῦδε Λάιον,
 10 ἐγὼ δὲ παῖς μὲν κλήζομαι Μενοικέως,
 Κρέων τ' ἀδελφὸς μητρὸς ἐκ μιᾶς ἔφν
 καλοῦσι δ' Ἰοκάστην με, τοῦτο γὰρ πατὴρ
 ἔθετο, γαμεί δὲ Λαίος μ'· ἐπεὶ δ' ἄπαις
 ἦν χρόνια λέκτρα τὰμ' ἔχων ἐν δώμασιν,
 ἐλθὼν ἐρωτᾷ Φοῖβον ἐξαιτεῖ θ' ἅμα
 παίδων ἐς οἶκους ἀρσένων κοινωνίαν.
 ὁ δ' εἶπεν· ὦ Θήβαισιν εὐίπποις ἄναξ,
 μὴ σπεῖρε τέκνων ἄλοκα δαιμόνων βία·
 εἰ γὰρ τεκνώσεις παῖδ', ἀποκτενεῖ σ' ὁ φύς,
 20 καὶ πᾶς σὸς οἶκος βήσεται δι' αἵματος.
 ὁ δ' ἠδονῆ δούς εἰς τε βακχεῖον πεσὼν
 ἔσπειρεν ἡμῖν παῖδα, καὶ σπεύρας βρέφος,¹

¹ Probably corrupt: scholars propose φρενός, ἄφνω, ἄφαρ.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

Enter JOCASTA.

JOCASTA

O THOU who cleav'st thy path mid heaven's stars,
Who ridest on thy chariot golden-clamped,
Sun, whirling on with flying steeds thy fire,
What beams accurst on that day sheddest thou
O'er Thebes, when Cadmus came to this our land,
Leaving Phoenicia's sea-fringed realm afar!
He took to wife Harmonia, Cypris' child,
And begat Polydore, of whom, men say,
Sprang Labdacus, and Læius of him.

I, daughter of Menoeceus am I named ; 10
My brother Creon the selfsame mother bare.
Jocasta men call me : this name my sire
Gave ; Læius wedded me. But when long years
Of wedlock brought no child our halls within,
He went and questioned Phoebus, craved withal
For me, for him, male heirs unto his house.
The God spake : " King of chariot-glorious Thebes,
Beget not seed of sons in Heaven's despite.
If so thou do, thee shall thine issue slay,
And all thine house shall wade through seas of
blood." 20

Yet he, to passion yielding, flushed with wine,
Begat a son ; and when our babe was born,

γνοὺς τὰμπλάκημα τοῦ θεοῦ τε τὴν φάτιν,
 λειμῶν' ἐς Ἴφρας καὶ Κιθαιρῶνος λέπας
 δίδωσι βουκόλοισιν ἐκθεῖναι βρέφος,
 σφυρῶν σιδηρὰ κέντρα διαπείρας μέσον·
 ὄθεν νιν Ἑλλάς ὠνόμαζεν Οἰδίπουν.

30 Πολύβου δέ νιν λαβόντες ἵπποβουκόλοι
 φέρουσ' ἐς οἴκους εἰς τε δεσποίνης χέρας
 ἔθηκαν. ἡ δὲ τὸν ἐμὸν ὠδίνων πόνου
 μαστοῖς ὑφέϊτο καὶ πόσιν πείθει τεκεῖν.
 ἤδη δὲ πυρσαῖς γένυσιν ἐξανδρούμενος
 παῖς οὐμός, ἡ γνοὺς ἢ τινος μαθὼν πάρα,
 ἔστειχε τοὺς φύσαντας ἐκμαθεῖν θέλων
 πρὸς δῶμα Φοίβου, Λαίος θ', οὐμός πόσις,
 τὸν ἐκτεθέντα παῖδα μαστεύων μαθεῖν,
 εἰ μηκέτ' εἶη. καὶ ξυνάπτετον πόδα
 εἰς ταῦτ' ἄμφω Φωκίδος σχιστῆς ὁδοῦ.
 καὶ νιν κελεύει Λαῖου τροχηλάτης·

40 ὦ ξένε, τυράννοις ἐκποδὼν μεθίστασο.
 ὁ δ' εἶρπ' ἀναυδος, μέγα φρονῶν· πῶλοι δέ νιν
 χηλαῖς τένοντας ἐξεφοίνισσον ποδῶν.
 ὄθεν—τί τὰκτὸς τῶν κακῶν με δεῖ λέγειν;—
 παῖς πατέρα καίνει καὶ λαβῶν ὀχήματα
 Πολύβῳ τροφεί δίδωσιν. ὡς δ' ἐπεζάρει
 Σφίγξ ἄρπαγαῖσι πόλιν, ἐμός τ' οὐκ ἦν πόσις,
 Κρέων ἀδελφὸς τὰμὰ κηρύσσει λέχη,
 ὅστις σοφῆς αἰνιγμα παρθένου μάθοι,
 τούτῳ ξυνάψειν λέκτρα. τυγχάνει δέ πως

50 μούσας ἐμὸς παῖς Οἰδίπους Σφιγγὸς μαθὼν,
 ὄθεν τύραννος τῆσδε γῆς καθίσταται
 καὶ σκῆπτρ' ἔπαθλα τῆσδε λαμβάνει χθονός.
 γαμῆ δὲ τὴν τεκοῦσαν οὐκ εἰδὼς τάλας
 οὐδ' ἡ τεκοῦσα παιδὶ συγκοιμωμένη.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

Ware of his sin, remembering the God's word,
He gave the babe to herdmen to cast forth
In Hera's Mead upon Cithaeron's ridge,
His ankles pierced clear through with iron spikes,
Whence Hellas named him *Swell-foot*—Oedipus.

But Polybus' horse-tenders found him there,
And bare him home, and in their mistress' hands
Laid. To my travail's fruit she gave her breast, 30
Telling her lord herself had borne the babe.
Now, grown to man with golden-bearded cheeks,
My son, divining, or of some one told,
Journeyed, resolved to find his parents forth,
To Phoebus' fane. Now Laïus my lord,
Seeking assurance of the babe exposed,
If dead he were, fared thither. And they met,
These twain, where parts the highway Phocis-ward.
Then Laïus' charioteer commanded him—
"Stand clear, man, from the pathway of a prince!" 40
Proudly he strode on, answering not. The steeds
Spurned with their hoofs his ankles, drawing blood.

Then—why tell aught beyond the sad event?—
Son slayeth father, takes the car, and gives
To Polybus, his fosterer. While the Sphinx
Was ravaging Thebes, when now my lord was not,
Creon my brother published that the man,
Whoso should read the riddle of that witch-maid,
Even he should wed me. Strangely it befell— 50
Oedipus, my son, read the Sphinx's song,
Whence he became the ruler of this land:
Yea, for his guerdon wins the throne of Thebes,
And weds his mother,—wretch!—unwitting he,
Unwitting she that she was her son's bride.

τίκτω δὲ παῖδας παιδὶ δύο μὲν ἄρσενας,
 Ἐτεοκλέα κλεινὴν τε Πολυνείκους βίαν,
 κόρας δὲ δισσάς· τὴν μὲν Ἰσμήνην πατὴρ
 ὠνόμασε, τὴν δὲ πρόσθεν Ἀντιγόνην ἐγώ.
 μαθὼν δὲ τὰ μὰ λέκτρα μητρῶων γάμων
 ὁ πᾶντ' ἀνατλὰς Οἰδίπους παθήματα
 εἰς ὄμμαθ' αὐτοῦ δεινὸν ἐμβάλλει φόνον,
 χρυσηλάτοις πόρπαισιν αἰμάξας κόρας.

60

ἐπεὶ δὲ τέκνων γένυς ἐμῶν σκιάζεται,
 κλήθροισ ἐκρυψαν πατέρ', ἵν' ἀμνήμων τύχη
 γένοιτο πολλῶν δεομένη σοφισμάτων.
 ζῶν δ' ἔστ' ἐν οἴκοις. πρὸς δὲ τῆς τύχης νοσῶν
 ἀρὰς ἀρᾶται παισὶν ἀνοσιωτάτας,
 θηκτῶ σιδήρῳ δῶμα διαλαχεῖν τόδε.
 τῶ δ' εἰς φόβον πεσόντε, μὴ τελεσφόρους
 εὐχὰς θεοὶ κραίνωσιν οἰκούντων ὁμοῦ,
 ξυμβάντ' ἔταξαν τὸν νεώτερον πάρος
 φεύγειν ἐκόντα τήνδε Πολυνείκην χθόνα,
 Ἐτεοκλέα δὲ σκῆπτρ' ἔχειν μένοντα γῆς
 ἐνιαυτὸν ἀλλάσσοντ'. ἐπεὶ δ' ἐπὶ ζυγοῖς
 καθέζετ' ἀρχῆς, οὐ μεθίσταται θρόνων,
 φνυγάδα δ' ἀπωθεῖ τῆσδε Πολυνείκη χθονός.

70

ὁ δ' Ἄργος ἐλθὼν, κῆδος Ἀδράστου λαβὼν,
 πολλὴν ἀθροίσας ἀσπίδ' Ἀργείων ἄγει
 ἐπ' αὐτὰ δ' ἐλθὼν ἐπτάπυλα τείχη τάδε,
 πατρῶ' ἀπαιτεῖ σκῆπτρα καὶ μέρη χθονός.
 ἐγὼ δ' ἔριν λύουσ' ὑπόσπονδον μολεῖν
 ἔπεισα παιδὶ παῖδα πρὶν ψαῦσαι δορός.
 ἦξιεν δ' ὁ πεμφθεὶς φησὶν αὐτὸν ἄγγελος.
 ἀλλ' ὦ φαεινὰς οὐρανοῦ ναίων πτυχὰς
 Ζεῦ, σῶσον ἡμᾶς, δὸς δὲ σύμβασιν τέκνοις.

80

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

And children to my son I bare, two sons,
Eteocles and famed Polyneices' might,
And daughters twain : the one the father named
Ismene, the elder I, Antigone.
But, when he knew me mother both and wife,
Oedipus, crushed 'neath utterest sufferings, 60
On his own eyes wrought ruin horrible,
Yea, with gold brooch-pin drenched their orbs with
blood.

Now, being to bearded manhood grown, my sons
Close-warded kept their sire, that his dark fate,
By manifold shifts scarce veiled, might be forgot.
Within he lives ; but, by his fate distraught,
A curse most impious hurled he at his sons,
That they may share their heritage with the sword.
They, terror-stricken lest, if they should dwell
Together, Gods might bring the curse to pass, 70
Made covenant that Polyneices first,
The younger, self-exiled, should leave the land,
That Eteocles tarrying wear the crown
One year—then change. But, once in sovranly
Firm-seated, he would step not from the throne,
And thrust Polyneices banished forth the land.

To Argos fares he, weds Adrastus' child,
And bringeth huge war-muster of Argive shields.
To our very walls seven-gated hath he come,
Claiming his father's sceptre and his right. 80
And I, to allay their strife, persuaded son
In truce to meet son, ere they touch the spear :
And, saith the messenger I sent, he comes.
O dweller Zeus in heaven's veiling light,
Save us, grant reconciling to my sons !

χρὴ δ', εἰ σοφὸς πέφυκας, οὐκ ἔαν βροτὸν
τὸν αὐτὸν αἰεὶ δυστυχῆ καθεστάναι.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

90 ὦ κλεινὸν οἴκοις Ἀντιγόνη θάλος πατρί,
ἐπεὶ σε μήτηρ παρθενώνας ἐκλιπεῖν
μεθῆκε μελάθρων ἐς διήρες ἔσχατον
στράτευμ' ἰδεῖν Ἀργεῖον ἰκεσίαισι σαῖς,
ἐπίσχεσ, ὡς ἂν προὔξερυνήσω στίβον,
μή τις πολιτῶν ἐν τρίβῳ φαντάζεται,
κάμοι μὲν ἔλθη φαῦλος ὡς δούλῳ ψόγος,
σοὶ δ' ὡς ἀνάσση· πάντα δ' ἐξειδὼς φράσω
ἅ τ' εἶδον εἰσήκουσά τ' Ἀργείων πάρα,
σποιδὰς ὅτ' ἦλθον σῶ κασιγνήτῳ φέρων
ἐνθένδ' ἐκείσε δεῦρό τ' αὐ κείνου πάρα.
100 ἀλλ' οὔτις ἀστῶν τοῖσδε χρίμπτεται δόμοις,
κέδρον παλαιὰν κλίμακ' ἐκπέρα ποδί·
σκόπει δὲ πεδία καὶ παρ' Ἴσμηνοῦ ῥοὰς
Δίρκης τε νᾶμα, πολεμίων στράτευμ' ὅσον.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

ὄρεγέ νυν ὄρεγε γεραιὰν νέα
χεῖρ', ἀπὸ κλιμάκων ποδὸς
ἵχνος ἐπαντέλλων.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

ἰδοὺ ξύναψον, παρθέν· εἰς καιρὸν δ' ἔβης·
κινούμενον γὰρ τυγχάνει Πελασγικὸν
στράτευμα, χωρίζουσι δ' ἀλλήλων λόχους.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

110 ἰὼ πότνια παῖ Λατοῦς
Ἐκάτα, κατάχαλκον ἅπαν
πεδίον ἀστράπτει.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

Thou oughtest not, so thou be wise, to leave
The same man evermore to be unblest. [Exit.

Enter, above, OLD SERVANT and ANTIGONE.

OLD SERVANT

Fair flower of thy sire's house, Antigone,
Albeit thy mother suffered thee to leave
Thy maiden-bower at thine entreaty, and mount 90
The palace-roof to view the Argive host,
Yet stay, that I may scan the highway first,
Lest on the path some citizen appear,
And scandal light—for me, the thrall, 'twere naught,—
On thee, the princess. This known, will I tell
All that I saw, and heard from Argive men,
When, to thy brother on truce-mission sent,
I passed hence thither, and then back from him
Nay, not a citizen draws nigh the halls.
Climb with thy feet the ancient cedar-stair; 100
Gaze o'er the plain, along Ismenus' stream
And Dirce's flow, on yon great host of foes.

ANTIGONE

Stretch it forth, stretch it forth, the old man's hand,
unto me
The child, from the stair, and my feet upbear,
As upward I strain.

OLD SERVANT

Lo, maiden, grasp it: in good time thou com'st,
For yon Pelasgian host is moving now,
Battalion from battalion sundering.

ANTIGONE

O Queen, O Child of Latona, Hecate!
Lo, how the glare of the brass flashes there 110
Over all the plain!

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

οὐ γάρ τι φαύλως ἦλθε Πολυνείκης χθόνα,
πολλοῖς μὲν ἵπποις, μυρίοις δ' ὄπλοις βρέμων.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

ἄρα πύλαι κλήθροισι χαλκόδετ' ἄρ' ἔμβολα
λαϊνέοισιν Ἀμφίονος ὀργάνοις
τείχεος ἤρμοσται ;

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

θάρσει τί γ' ἔνδον ἀσφαλῶς ἔχει πόλις.
ἀλλ' εἰσόρα τὸν πρῶτον, εἰ βούλει μαθεῖν.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

120

τίς οὗτος ὁ λευκολόφας,
πρόπαρ ὃς ἀγέεται στρατοῦ
πάγχχαλκον ἀσπίδ' ἀμφὶ βρα-
χίονι κουφίζων ;

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

λοχαγός, ὃ δέσποινα.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

τίς πόθεν γεγώς ;
αὐδασον, ὃ γεραιέ, τίς ὀνομάζεται ;

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

οὗτος Μυκηναῖος μὲν αὐδάται γένος,
Λερναῖα δ' οἰκεῖ νάμαθ', Ἴππομέδων ἄναξ.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

130

ἔ ἔ ὡς γαῦρος, ὡς φοβερὸς εἰσιδεῖν,
γίγαντι γηγενέτα προσόμοιος
ἀστερωπὸς ἐν γραφαῖσιν, οὐχὶ πρόσφορος
ἀμερίφ γέννα.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

τὸν δ' ἔξαμείβοντ' οὐχ ὀράς Δίρκης ὕδωρ ;

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

OLD SERVANT

Ay, for not feebly Polyneices comes
With thunder of many a steed, with countless shields.

ANTIGONE

Ah, be the gates secure, be the brass-clamped bolts
made sure

In the walls that Amphion in days bygone
Fashioned of stone?

OLD SERVANT

Fear not; the city wards all safe within. [him.
Mark yonder foremost chief, if thou wouldst know

ANTIGONE

Who is he with the white helm-crest
Who marcheth in front of their war-array,
And a brazen buckler fencing his breast
Lightly his arm doth sway?

120

OLD SERVANT

A captain, princess.

ANTIGONE

What his land, his birth?
Make answer, ancient. What name beareth he?

OLD SERVANT

Yon chief proclaims him Mycenean-born:
By streams of Lerna King Hippomedon dwells.

ANTIGONE

Ah me, how haughty, how fearful he is to see,
Like to a Giant, a child of Earth!
Star-blazonry gleams on his shield: not like is he
Unto one of mortal birth.

130

OLD SERVANT

See'st thou not him who crosseth Dirce's flood?

353

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

ἄλλος ἄλλος ὅδε τευχέων τρόπος.
τίς δ' ἐστὶν οὗτος ;

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

παῖς μὲν Οἰνέως ἔφν
Τυδεύς, Ἄρη δ' Αἰτωλὸν ἐν στέροισι ἔχει.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

οὗτος ὁ τᾶς Πολυνεΐκεος, ὦ γέρον,
αὐτοκασιγνήτας νύμφας
ὁμόγαμος κυρεῖ ;
ὡς ἀλλόχρως ὄπλοισι μιξοβάρβαρος.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

140 σακεσφόροι γὰρ πάντες Αἰτωλοί, τέκνον,
λόγχαις τ' ἀκοντιστῆρες εὐστοχώτατοι.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

σὺ δ', ὦ γέρον, πῶς αἰσθάνει σαφῶς τάδε ;

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

σημεῖ' ἰδὼν τότ' ἀσπίδων ἐγνώρισα,
σπονδὰς ὅτ' ἦλθον σῶ κασιγνήτῳ φέρων·
ἂ προσδεδορκῶς οἶδα τοὺς ὀπλισμένους.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

τίς δ' οὗτος ἀμφὶ μνήμα τὸ Ζήθου περᾶ
καταβόστρυχος, ὄμμασι γοργὸς εἰσ-
ιδεῖν νεανίας,
λοχαγός, ὡς ὄχλος νιν ὑστέρω ποδὶ
πάνοπλος ἀμφέπει ;

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

150 ὃδ' ἐστὶ Παρθενοπαῖος, Ἀταλάντης γόνος.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

ἀλλά νιν ἂ κατ' ὄρη μετὰ ματέρος
Ἄρτεμις ἰεμένα τόξοις δαμάσασ' ὀλέσειεν,
ὃς ἐπ' ἐμὰν πόλιν ἔβα πέρσων.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

ANTIGONE

Of other, of stranger fashion his armour shows!
Who is he?

OLD SERVANT

Tydeus he, of Oeneus' blood.
Aetolia's battle-fire in the breast of him glows.

ANTIGONE

Is this he, ancient, by spousal-ties
Unto mine own Polyneices allied,
Whose wife's fair sister he won for his bride?
How half-barbaric his harness, of no Greek guise?

OLD SERVANT

Nay, child, shield-bearers all Aetolians are,
And most unerring hurlers of the lance.

140

ANTIGONE

And thou, how know'st thou, ancient, all so well?

OLD SERVANT

Even then I noted their shield-blazonry,
When to thy brother with truce-pact I fared:
I marked them, and I know their bearers well.

ANTIGONE

Who is this by Zethus' sepulchre going, [flowing?
With the keen, stern eyes and the curls long—
A warrior young,
Yet a chief—for in armour brazen-glowing
See his followers throng!

OLD SERVANT

Parthenopaeus, Atalanta's son.

150

ANTIGONE

Now may Artemis, over the mountains hasting
With his mother, smite with her bow, and in death
lay yon man low,
Who is hitherward come for my city's wasting!

355

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

εἴη τάδ', ὦ παῖ· σὺν δίκη δ' ἤκουσι γῆν,
ὃ καὶ δέδοικα μὴ σκοπῶσ' ὀρθῶς θεοί.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

ποῦ δ' ὅς ἐμοὶ μιᾶς ἐγένετ' ἐκ ματρὸς
πολυπόνῳ μοίρᾳ ;
ὦ φίλτατ', εἶπέ, ποῦ 'στι Πολυνείκης, γέρον.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

160 ἐκείνος ἐπὶ τὰ παρθένων τάφου πέλας
Νιόβης Ἄδράστῳ πλησίον παραστατεῖ.
ὀρᾶς ;

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

ὀρῶ δῆτ' οὐ σαφῶς, ὀρῶ δέ πως
μορφῆς τύπωμα στέρνα τ' ἐξηκασμένα.
ἀνεμῶκεος εἶθε δρόμον νεφέλας
ποσὶν ἐξανύσαιμι δι' αἰθέρος
πρὸς ἐμὸν ὁμογενέτορα, περὶ δ' ὠλένας
δέρα φιλτάτα βάλοιμι χρόνῳ
φυγάδα μέλεον. ὥς
ὄπλοισι χρυσείοισιν ἐκπρεπῆς, γέρον,
ἐώοις ὅμοια φλεγέθων βολαῖς ἄλιον.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

170 ἤξει δόμους τοῦσδ', ὥστε σ' ἐμπλήσαι χαρᾶς,
ἐνσπονδός.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

οὗτος δ', ὦ γεραιέ, τίς κυρεῖ,
ὅς ἄρμα λευκὸν ἠνιοστροφεῖ βεβῶς ;

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

ὁ μάντις Ἀμφιάραος, ὦ δέσποιν', ὅδε
σφάγια δ' ἄμ' αὐτῷ, γῆς φιλαίματοι ῥοαί.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

OLD SERVANT

So be it, child : yet for the right they come ;
Wherefore I dread lest God defend the right.

ANTIGONE

And where is he whom the selfsame mother bore
With me, to a doom of travail sore ?
Dear ancient, where is Polyneices, tell.

OLD SERVANT

He standeth near Adrastus, near the tomb
Of Niobe's unwedded daughters seven.
See'st thou ?

160

ANTIGONE

I see—not clearly—yet, half-guessed,
Discern the outline of his frame and chest.
O that as wind-driven clouds swift-racing
I might speed with my feet through the air,
and light [embracing
By my brother, mine own, and with arms
Might hold but his dear neck close-enfolden—
So long an exile in dolorous plight !
Lo, how he flasheth in armour golden,
Like the morning shafts of the sun bright-
blazing !

OLD SERVANT

Hither with joy to fill thee shall he come
By truce.

170

ANTIGONE

But you chief, ancient, who is he,
Car-borne, who sways the reins of horses white ?

OLD SERVANT

The prophet Amphiaraus, Lady, is this.
With him are victims, Earth's blood-offerings.

357

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

ὦ λιπαροζώνου θύγατερ Ἀελίου
 Σελαναία, χρυσεόκυκλον φέγγος,
 ὡς ἀτρεμαῖα κέντρα καὶ σώφρονα
 πώλοισ μεταφέρων ἰθύνει.
 180 πού δ' ὄς τὰ δεινὰ τῆδ' ἐφυβρίζει πόλει
 Καπανεύς;

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

ἐκείνος προσβάσεις τεκμαίρεται
 πύργων ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω τείχη μετρῶν.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

ἰώ,
 Νέμεσι καὶ Διὸς βαρύβρομοι βρονταί,
 κεραυνῶν τε φῶς αἰθαλόεν, σύ τοι
 μεγαλαγορίαν ὑπεράνορα κοιμίζεις·
 ὄδ' ἐστίν, αἰχμαλωτίδας
 ὄς δορὶ Θηβαίας Μυκηνησίω
 Λερναία τε δώσειν τριαίνα,
 Ποσειδανίοις Ἀμυμονίοις
 ὕδασι, δουλείαν περιβαλῶν, [λέγει];
 190 μήποτε μήποτε τάνδ', ὦ πότνια,
 χρυσεοβόστρυχον ὦ Διὸς ἔρνος
 Ἄρτεμι, δουλοσύναν τλαίην.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

ὦ τέκνον, εἴσβα δῶμα καὶ κατὰ στέγας
 ἐν παρθενῶσι μίμνε σοῖς, ἐπεὶ πόθου
 εἰς τέρψιν ἦλθες ὧν ἔχρηζες εἰσιδεῖν.
 ὄχλος γάρ, ὡς ταραγμός εἰσῆλθεν πόλιν,
 χωρεῖ γυναικῶν πρὸς δόμους τυραννικούς·
 φιλόψογον δὲ χρῆμα θηλειῶν ἔφν,
 σμικρὰς τ' ἀφορμὰς ἦν λάβωσι τῶν λόγων,

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

ANTIGONE

O Child of the Sun-god, the Lord of the radiant zone,
O Moon, thou golden-rounded gleam,
How calmly, how soberly ever he driveth on,
One after other goading his team!
And where is Capaneus—he who hurls at Thebes 180
Insult of threats?

OLD SERVANT

There :—he counts up and down
The wall-stones, gauging our towers' scaling-height.

ANTIGONE

O Nemesis, O ye thunders rolling deep
Of Zeus, thou flaming light of his levin,
Overweening vaunts dost thou hush into endless
sleep!
And is this the hero by whom shall be given
Into bondage to dames of Mycenae the spear-won
daughters [waters
Of Thebes,—to the Trident of Lerna, the fountain-
Amymonian, at stroke of Poseidon that leapt,—
When his net of thraldom around them is swept?
Never, ah never, O Artemis Queen, 190
Zeus' child, with the tresses of golden sheen,
Bowed under bondage may I be seen!

OLD SERVANT

Daughter, pass in, and 'neath the roofs abide
Thy maiden bowers within; for thy desire
Hast thou attained, even all thou fain wouldst see.
Lo, to the royal halls a woman-throng
Comes, now confusion through the town hath passed.
And scandal-loving still is womankind;
For, so they find slight cause for idle talk,

200

πλείους ἐπεισφέρουσιν· ἡδονὴ δέ τις
 γυναιξὶ μηδὲν ὑγιᾶς ἀλλήλας λέγειν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Τύριον οἶδμα λιποῦσ' ἔβαν
 ἀκροθίνια Λοξία
 Φοινίσσας ἀπὸ νάσου
 Φοίβῳ δούλα μελάθρων,
 ἴν' ὑπὸ δειράσι νιφοβόλοις
 Παρνασοῦ κατενάσθη,
 Ἴόνιον κατὰ πόντον ἐλά-
 τα πλεύσασα περιρρύτων
 210 ὑπὲρ ἀκαρπίστων πεδίων
 Σικελίας Ζεφύρου πνοαῖς
 ἰππεύσαντος ἐν οὐρανῷ
 κάλλιστον κελάδημα.

στρ. α

210

πόλεος ἐκπροκριθεῖσ' ἐμᾶς
 καλλιστεύματα Λοξία
 Καδμείων ἔμολον γᾶν,
 κλεινῶν Ἀγηγοριδᾶν
 ὁμογενεῖς ἐπὶ Λαῖτου
 πεμφθεῖσ' ἐνθάδε πύργους.
 220 ἴσα δ' ἀγάλμασι χρυσοτεύ-
 κτοῖς Φοίβῳ γενόμεαν λάτρεις.
 ἔτι δὲ Κασταλίας ὕδωρ
 περιμένει με κόμας ἐμᾶς
 δεῦσαι παρθένιον χλιδὰν
 Φοιβείαισι λατρείαις.

ἀντ. α

220

ὦ λάμπουσα πέτρα πυρὸς
 δικόρυφον σέλας ὑπὲρ ἄκρων
 Βακχείων Διονύσου,

μεσφῶ

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

More they invent. Strange pleasure women take 200
To speak of sister-women nothing good.

[*Exeunt* OLD SERVANT *and* ANTIGONE.

Enter CHORUS

(*Str.* 1)

Afar from the tides against Tyre's walls swelling,
For Loxias chosen an offering,
From the Isle of Phoenicia I came, to be thrall
Unto Phoebus, to serve in his palace-hall,
Where 'neath crags of Parnassus, with arrowy fall
Of the snow oversprent, he hath made him a dwelling.
O'er Ionian seas did it waft me, the wing
Of the oar, while the West-wind's chariot sped
Over the furrows unharvested 210
That from Sicily roughened ;—before him fled
Music, till all the heavens were telling
The glory of beauty his breathings bring.

The choice of my city's virgin-flowers, (*Ant.* 1)
A gift of beauty to Loxias made,
To the land of the children of Cadmus we came,
To the sons of Agenor of ancient fame,
Hither brought to a people by lineage the same
With my fathers, even to Laius' towers.
But as gold-wrought statues to stand arrayed 220
For the service of Phoebus appointed we were ;
And Castaly's fount yet waiteth us there,
That my maiden glory of shining hair
May be oversprayed by its hallowing showers,
Ere for Phoebus's service its tresses I braid.

Hail, rock that flashest a splendour of light (*Mesode*)
From the cloven tongue of thy flame o'er the height
Of the Bacchic peak Dionysus haunteth !

230

οἶνα θ', ἃ καθαμέριον
 σταῖζεις τὸν πολύκαρπον
 οἰνάνθας ἰεῖσα βότρυν,
 ζάθεά τ' ἄντρα δράκοντος οὐ-
 ρεαί τε σκοπιαὶ θεῶν
 νιφόβολόν τ' ὄρος ἱερόν, εἰ-
 λίσσων ἀθανάτας θεοῦ
 χορὸς γενοίμαν ἄφοβος
 παρὰ μεσόμφαλα γύαλα Φοί-
 βου Δίρκαν προλιποῦσα.

240

νῦν δέ μοι πρὸ τειχέων στρ. β'
 θούριος μολῶν Ἄρης
 αἶμα δάιον φλέγει
 τᾶδ', ὃ μὴ τύχοι, πόλει·
 κοινὰ γὰρ φίλων ἄχρη·
 κοινὰ δ', εἴ τι πείσεται
 καλλίπυργος ἄδε γὰ
 Φοινίσσα χώρα. φεῦ φεῦ,
 κοινὸν αἶμα, κοινὰ τέκεα
 τᾶς κερασφόρου πέφυκεν Ἴους·
 ὧν μέτεστί μοι πόνων.

250

ἀμφὶ δὲ πτόλιν νέφος ἀντ. β'
 ἀσπίδων πυκνὸν φλέγει
 σῆμα φοινίου μάχης,
 ἂν Ἄρης τάχ' εἴσεται
 παισὶν Οἰδίου φέρων
 πημονὰν Ἐρινύων.
 Ἄργος ὦ Πελασγικόν,

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

Hail, vine that with each morn offerest up
Thy giant cluster to brim the cup
That never the mystic ritual wanteth!¹ 230
Hail, cavern revered where the Dragon abode!
Hail, watchtower scour of the Archer-god!
Hail, snow-smitten ridges by mortal untrod!
O that the wreaths of the dance I were weaving,
With soul unafraid, to the Goddess undying,
These fear-stricken waters of Dirce leaving
For Apollo's dells by the world's heart lying!

But this day before the wall (Str. 2)
Furious Ares comes; his hand 240
Lights for Thebes the slaughter-brand—
God forbend his will befall!
Friend with friend is one in pain;
And Phoenicia with all bane
Of the stately-towered land
Shall condole, a mourning nation.
One our lineage, one our blood;
All be hornèd Io's brood:
Mine is all your tribulation.

Round the town a shield-array (Ant. 2) 250
Cloudlike flashes levin-light—
Grim presentment of red fight!
Yet shall Ares rue the day
If the Avengers' curse he bring
On the sons of that blind king.
Argos, thy Pelasgian might

¹ In the temple of Dionysus on Parnassus was a vine yielding one ripe cluster daily, to furnish the libation for the God.

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

260

δειμαίνω τὰν σὰν ἀλκὰν
καὶ τὸ θεόθεν· οὐ γὰρ ἄδικον
εἰς ἀγῶνα τόνδ' ἔνοπλος ὄρμῃ
παῖς μετέρχεται δόμους.

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

270

τὰ μὲν πυλωρῶν κληθρὰ μ' εἰσεδέξατο
δι' εὐπετείας τειχέων εἴσω μολεῖν.
ὁ καὶ δέδοικα μὴ με δικτύων ἔσω
λαβόντες οὐκ ἐκφρῶσ' ἀναίμακτον χροῶ.
ὦν εἶνεκ' ὄμμα πανταχῇ διωιστέου
κάκεισε καὶ τὸ δεῦρο, μὴ δόλος τις ἦ.
ὠπλισμένος δὲ χεῖρα τῶδε φασγάνῳ
τὰ πίστ' ἐμαυτῷ τοῦ θράσους παρέξομαι.
ὦ ἦ τίς οὗτος ; ἦ κτύπον φοβούμεθα ;
ἅπαντα γὰρ τολμῶσι δεινὰ φαίνεται,
ὅταν δι' ἐχθρᾶς πούς ἀμείβηται χθονός.
πέποιθα μέντοι μητρί, κοῦ πέποιθ' ἅμα,
ἦ τις μ' ἐπίεισε δεῦρ' ὑπόσπονδον μολεῖν.
ἀλλ' ἐγγὺς ἀλκή· βῶμοι γὰρ ἐσχάρα
πέλας πάρεισι, κοῦκ ἔρημα δώματα.
φέρ' ἐς σκοτεινὰς περιβολὰς μεθῶ ξίφος
καὶ τύσδ' ἔρωμαι, τινες ἐφεστᾶσιν δόμοις.
ξένοι γυναῖκες, εἶπατ', ἐκ ποίας πάτρας
Ἑλληνικοῖσι δώμασιν πελάζετε ;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

280

Φοῖνισσα μὲν γῆ πατρὶς ἢ θρέψασά με,
Ἀγήνορος δὲ παῖδες ἐκ παίδων δορὸς
Φοῖβῳ μ' ἔπεμψαν ἐνθάδ' ἀκροθίνιον.
μέλλων δὲ πέμπειν μ' Οἰδίπου κλεινὸς γόνος
μαντεῖα σεμνὰ Λοξίου τ' ἐπ' ἐσχάρας,
ἐν τῷδ' ἐπεστράτευσαν Ἀργεῖοι πόλιν.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

Dread I, and the hand of Heaven !
For the strife of him who comes
Mail-clad to the ancient homes
Will with Justice' help be striven.

260

Enter POLYNEICES.

POLYNEICES

Lightly, too lightly, have the warders' bolts
Made way for me to pass within the walls.
Wherefore I fear lest, once within their net,
They shall not let me 'scape but with my blood.
Needs must I then turn every way mine eye
Hither and thither, lest some treachery lurk.
Mine hand with this blade armed shall give to me
The assurance of a desperate courage born.
Ha ! who goes there ?—or fear I but a sound ?
All perilous seems to them that venture all,
Soon as their feet are set on hostile soil,
Yet do I trust my mother—and mistrust,—
Who drew me to come hither under truce.
But help is nigh ; for lo, the altar-hearth
At hand ; nor void the palace is of folk.
Into its dark sheath let me plunge my sword,
And ask these by the palace who they be.
Ye alien women, say, from what far land
Unto the homes of Hellas are ye come ?

270

CHORUS

Phoenician was the land that fostered me.
Agenor's sons' sons sent me hitherward
To Phoebus, firstfruits of their battle-spoil.
When Oedipus' famed son would speed me on
To Loxias' awful oracle and hearths,
Even then the Argives marched against the town.

280

365

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

σὺ δ' ἀντάμειψαί μ', ὅστις ὦν ἐλήλυθας
ἐπτάστομον πύργωμα Θηβαίας πόλεως.

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

πατὴρ μὲν ἡμῖν Οἰδίπους ὁ Λαΐου,
ἔτικτε δ' Ἰοκάστη με, παῖς Μενοικέως·
καλεῖ δὲ Πολυνείκη με Θηβαῖος λεώς.

290

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ συγγένεια τῶν Ἀγήνορος τέκνων,
ἐμῶν τυράννων, ὦν ἀπεστάλην ὑπο—
γονυπετεῖς ἔδρας προσπίτνω σ', ἄναξ,
τὸν οἴκοθεν νόμον σέβουσα—
ἔβας ὦ χρόνῳ γὰρ πατρώαν.
ἰὼ ἰὼ πότνια, μόλε πρόδομος,
ἀμπέτασον πύλας.

κλύεις, ὦ τεκοῦσα τόνδε μᾶτερ;
τί μέλλεις ὑπώροφα μέλαθρα περᾶν,
θιγεῖν τ' ὠλέναις τέκνον;

300

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

Φοίνισσαν βοᾶν
κλύουσ', ὦ νεάνιδες, γηραιὸν
ποδὸν ἔλκω, τρομερὰν βᾶσιν.¹

ἰὼ τέκνον,
χρόνῳ σὸν ὄμμα μυρίαὶς ἐν ἀμέραις
προσεῖδον· ἀμφίβαλλε μα-
στὸν ὠλέναισι ματέρος,

¹ Murray: for MSS. γεραιῶ ποδι τρομερὰν ἔλκω (παιδί) ποδὸς βᾶσιν.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

But thou, make answer, who art thou that com'st
Into this fortress of seven-gated Thebes?

POLYNEICES

Oedipus, son of Laius, was my sire ;
Menoceus' child Jocasta gave me birth ;
And me the Theban folk Polyneices name.

290

CHORUS

O kinsmen thou of old Agenor's race,
My rulers, who forth sent me to this place !—
Low on my knees in obeisance I fall,
After the wont of my people, O king !—
Thou art come at the last, to the land of thy fathers
comest thou !
What ho, Queen, ho ! fare forth of the hall !
Wide let the palace-portals swing.
Mother that barest him, hear'st thou my call ?
Why dost thou linger to pass from thine high-roofed
bowers now,
And around thy son with thine arms to cling ? 300

Enter JOCASTA.

JOCASTA

Your Tyrian accents ringing clear
Smote, O ye maidens, on mine ear, [near.
And lo, my tottering feet, for eld slow-trailed, draw
Catches sight of POLYNEICES.

O my son, I behold
Thy face at the last,
After days untold,
O my son !—now cast
Thine arms round thy mother, and bosom to bosom
enfold me fast.

παρηίδων τ' ὄρεγμα βο-
στρύχων τε κνανόχρωτα χαι-
τας πλόκαμον, σκιάζων δέραν ἄμάν.

310

ἰὼ ἰώ, μόλις φανείς
ἄελπτα κἀδόκητα ματρὸς ὠλέναις.
τί φῶ σε; πῶς ἅπαντα
καὶ χερσὶ καὶ λόγοισι
πολυέλικτον ἄδονὰν
ἐκείσε καὶ τὸ δεῦρο
περιχορεύουσα τέρψιν παλαιᾶν λάβω
χαρμονᾶν; ἰὼ τέκος,
ἔρημον πατρῶον ἔλιπες δόμον
φυγὰς ἀποσταλεῖς ὀμαίμου λῶβα,
ἢ ποθεινὸς φίλοις,
ἢ ποθεινὸς Θήβαις.

320

ὄθεν ἐμάν τε λευκόχροα κείρομαι
δακρυόεσσ' ἀνεῖσα πένθει κόμαν,
ἄπεπλος φαρῶν λευκῶν, τέκνον,
δυσόρφναια δ' ἀμφὶ τρύχη τάδε
σκότι' ἀμείβομαι.

330

ὁ δ' ἐν δόμοισι πρέσβυς ὀμματοστερῆς
ἀπήνας ὀμοπτέρου τᾶς ἀπο-
ζυγείσας δόμων
πόθον ἀμφιδάκρυτον αἰεὶ κατέχων

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

Stoop to me, stoop,
Dear face, from above !
Let the dark head droop
The tresses thereof,
Overshadowing my neck with its clustering curls,
with the banner of love.
Hopes, dreams, they were past 310
As a tale that is told ;
Yet thou comest at last
For mine arms to enfold !
What shall I say to thee ?—how shall I grasp it, the
rapture of old ?
By assurance of word,
Or by hands that embrace,
Or by feet that are stirred,
Or by body that sways,
Hitherward, thitherward, tossed as the dance inter-
twineth its maze ?

Ah son, thy father's desolate home forsaking,
Wast thou by thine own brother's tyrannous wrong
Exiled !—for thee thy lovers' hearts were aching, 320
Thebes' heart for thee ached long.

Therefore my white hair have I shorn for mourning,
With weeping let it fall for thee, my son :
Of white robes disarrayed, for all adorning
These night-hued rags I don ;

While in our halls the sightless ancient, ever
Yearning and weeping o'er that noble twain
Whom from home's yoke of love did hatred sever, 330
Rushed, eager to be slain

ἀνήξε μὲν ξίφους
 ἐπ' αὐτόχειρά τε σφαγάν,
 ὑπὲρ τέραμνά τ' ἀγχόνας,
 στενάζων ἀρὰς τέκνοισ·
 σὺν ἀλαλαῖσι δ' αἰὲν αἰαγμάτων
 σκότια κρύπτεται.

340 σὲ δ', ὦ τέκνον, καὶ γάμοισι δὴ
 κλύω ζυγέντα παιδοποιὸν ἄδοιαν
 ξένοισιν ἐν δόμοις ἔχειν
 ξένον τε κῆδος ἀμφέπειν,
 ἄλαστα ματρὶ τᾶδε Λα-
 τίῳ τε τῷ παλαιγενεῖ,
 γάμων ἐπακτὸν ἄταν.
 ἐγὼ δ' οὔτε σοι πυρὸς ἀνήψα φῶς
 νόμιμον ἐν γάμοις
 [ὡς πρέπει] ματέρι μακαρία·
 ἀνυμέναια δ' Ἴσμηνὸς ἐκηδεύθη
 λουτροφόρου χλιδᾶς· ἀνὰ δὲ Θηβαίαν
 πόλιν ἐσιγάθη σᾶς ἔσοδοι νύμφας.

350 ὄλοιτο τὰδ', εἴτε σίδαρος
 εἴτ' ἔρις εἴτε πατήρ ὁ σὸς αἴτιος,
 εἴτε τὸ δαιμόνιον κατεκώμασε
 δώμασιν Οἰδιπόδα·
 πρὸς ἐμὲ γὰρ κακῶν ἔμολε τῶνδ' ἄχη.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

δεινὸν γυναιξὶν αἰ δι' ὠδίνων γοναί,
 καὶ φιλότεκνόν πως πᾶν γυναικείον γένος.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

By his own hand, with sword, with noose down-trailing
From rafters dim,—now groaning o'er the doom
His malison brought on you, and ever wailing
With anguish, hides in gloom.

But thou, my son, men say, hast made affiance
With strangers: children gotten in thine halls
Gladden thee, yea, thou soughtest strange alliance! 340
Son, on thy mother falls

Thine alien bridal curse to haunt her ever.
Thee shall a voice from Laïus' grave accuse.
The spousal torch for thee I kindled never,
As happy mothers use;

Nor for thy bridal did Ismenus bring thee
Joy of the bath; nor at the entering-in
Of this thy bride did Theban maidens sing thee.
A curse be on that sin,

Whether from spell of steel born,¹ from thy father, 350
Or lust of strife, or whether revel rose
Of demons in yon halls!—on mine head gather
All tortures of these woes.

CHORUS

Mighty with women is their travail's fruit;
Yea, dear the child is to all womankind.

¹ "The spell of the steel itself draws men on to fight."—
Od. xix. 13.

ΠΟΛΥΤΝΕΙΚΗΣ

360 μῆτερ, φρονῶν εὖ κού φρονῶν ἀφικόμην
 ἔχθρους ἐς ἄνδρας· ἀλλ' ἀναγκαίως ἔχει
 πατρίδος ἐρᾶν ἅπαντας· ὃς δ' ἄλλως λέγει,
 λόγοισι χαίρει, τὸν δὲ νοῦν ἐκεῖσ' ἔχει.
 οὕτω δὲ τάρβους εἰς φόβον τ' ἀφικόμην,
 μή τις δόλος με πρὸς κασιγνήτου κτάνη,
 ὥστε ξιφήρη χεῖρ' ἔχων δι' ἄστεως
 κυκλῶν πρόσωπον ἦλθον. ἐν δέ μ' ὠφελεί,
 σπονδαί τε καὶ σὴ πίστις, ἧ μ' ἐσήγαγε
 τείχη πατρῶα· πολὺδακρυς δ' ἀφικόμην,
 χρόνιος ἰδῶν μέλαθρα καὶ βωμούς θεῶν
 370 γυμνάσιά θ' οἷσιν ἐνετράφην, Δίρκης θ' ὕδωρ
 ὧν οὐ δικαίως ἀπελαθεῖς ξένην πόλιν
 ναίω, δι' ὄσσων ὄμμ' ἔχων δακρυρροοῦν.

ἀλλ' ἐκ γὰρ ἄλγους ἄλγος αὖ σέ δέρκομαι
 [κᾶρα ξυρήκες καὶ πέπλους μελαγχίμους]
 ἔχουσαν, οἴμοι τῶν ἐμῶν ἐγὼ κακῶν.
 ὡς δεινὸν ἔχθρα, μῆτερ, οἰκείων φίλων
 καὶ δυσλύτους ἔχουσα τὰς διαλλαγάς.
 τί γὰρ πατήρ μοι πρέσβυς ἐν δόμοισι δρᾷ,
 σκοτόν δεδορκῶς; τί δὲ κασίγνηται δύο;
 ἧ που στένουσι τλήμονας φυγὰς ἐμάς;

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

380 κακῶς θεῶν τις Οἰδίπου φθείρει γένος·
 οὕτω γὰρ ἤρξατ', ἄνομα μὲν τεκεῖν ἐμέ,
 κακῶς δὲ γῆμαι πατέρα σὸν φῦναί τε σέ.
 ἀτὰρ τί ταῦτα; δεῖ φέρειν τὰ τῶν θεῶν.
 ὅπως δ' ἔρωμαι, μή τι σὴν δάκω φρένα,
 δέδοιχ', ἅ χρήζω· διὰ πόθου δ' ἐλήλυθα.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

POLYNEICES

Wisely, and yet not wisely, have I come,
Mother, mid foes : yet all men are constrained
To love their fatherland ; who saith not so,
Sporteth with words, his heart is elsewhere. 360
In such misgiving came I, in such dread
Lest treachery slay me, of my brother framed,
That through the city sword in hand I passed,
Aye keenly glancing round. One stay I had :—
The truce and thy fair faith drew me within
These walls ancestral. Full of tears I came,
So late to see home, altars of the Gods,
The athlete-stead that trained me, Dirce's spring,
Whence banished wrongfully, in a strange town
dwell, mine eyes a fountain ever of tears. 370

Thee too, for sorrow's crown of sorrow, I see
With shaven head, and in dark mourning robes
Clad—woe is me for my calamities !
Mother, how dire is strife betwixt near kin,
How hopeless reconciliation is !
What doth mine ancient father in his halls,
Whose light is darkness ? And my sisters twain—
Do these bemoan mine exile's misery ?

JOCASTA

Fouly doth some God ruin Oedipus' line.
Thus it began—I bare forfended issue ; 380
Wed under curse thy sire,—and thou wast born !
Yet wherefore this ? The Gods' will must we bear.
But how to ask the thing I would I fear,
Lest I should gall thy soul, yet long for this.

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

ἀλλ' ἐξερώτα, μηδὲν ἐνδεές λίπης·
ἂ γὰρ σὺ βούλει, ταῦτ' ἐμοί, μήτηρ, φίλα.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

καὶ δὴ σ' ἐρωτῶ πρῶτον ὧν χρήζω τυχεῖν,
τί τὸ στέρεσθαι πατρίδος; ἢ κακὸν μέγα;

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

μέγιστον ἔργω δ' ἐστὶ μείζον ἢ λόγῳ.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

390 τίς ὁ τρόπος αὐτοῦ; τί φυγάσιν τὸ δυσχερές;

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

ἐν μὲν μέγιστον, οὐκ ἔχει παρρησίαν.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

δούλου τόδ' εἶπας, μὴ λέγειν ἅ τις φρονεῖ.

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

τὰς τῶν κρατούντων ἀμαθίας φέρειν χρεών.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

καὶ τοῦτο λυπρὸν, συνασοφεῖν τοῖς μὴ σοφοῖς.

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

ἀλλ' εἰς τὸ κέρδος παρὰ φύσιν δουλευτέον.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

αἱ δ' ἐλπίδες βόσκουσι φυγάδας, ὡς λόγος.

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

καλοῖς βλέπουσαί γ' ὄμμασιν, μέλλουσι δέ.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

οὐδ' ὁ χρόνος αὐτὰς διεσάφησ' οὔσας κενάς;

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

ἔχουσιν ἀφροδίτην τιν' ἠδέϊαν κακῶν.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

400 πόθεν δ' ἐβόσκου πρὶν γάμοις εὐρεῖν βίον;

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

POLYNEICES

Nay, ask ; leave no desire unsatisfied ;
For, mother, that thou wouldst is dear to me.

JOCASTA

First, then, I ask thee that I fain would learn.
What meaneth exile ? Is it a sore ill ?

POLYNEICES

The sorest. In deed sorer than in word.

JOCASTA

In what wise ? Where for exiles lies its sting ?

POLYNEICES

This most of all—a curb is on the tongue.

JOCASTA

That is the slave's lot, not to speak one's thought !

POLYNEICES

The unwisdom of his rulers must one bear.

JOCASTA

Hard this, that one partake in folly of fools !

POLYNEICES

Yokes nature loathes must be for profit borne.

JOCASTA

Yet hopes be exiles' meat, so runs the saw.

POLYNEICES

Hopes look with kind eyes, yet they long delay.

JOCASTA

But doth not time lay bare their emptiness ?

POLYNEICES

Ah, but sweet witchery mid ills have they !

JOCASTA

Whence wast thou fed, ere marriage brought thee
substance ?

400

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

ΠΟΛΥΤΝΕΙΚΗΣ

ποτέ μὲν ἐπ' ἡμᾶρ εἶχον, εἴτ' οὐκ εἶχον ἄν.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

φίλοι δὲ πατρὸς καὶ ξένοι σ' οὐκ ὠφέλουν;

ΠΟΛΥΤΝΕΙΚΗΣ

εὖ πράσσει· τὰ φίλων δ' οὐδέν, ἦν τι δυστυχῆς.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

οὐδ' ἠϋγένειά σ' ἦρεν εἰς ὕψος μέγα;

ΠΟΛΥΤΝΕΙΚΗΣ

κακὸν τὸ μὴ ἔχειν· τὸ γένος οὐκ ἔβοσκε με.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

ἦ πατρίς, ὡς ἔοικε, φίλτατον βροτοῖς.

ΠΟΛΥΤΝΕΙΚΗΣ

οὐδ' ὀνομάσαι δύναί' ἂν ὡς ἐστὶν φίλον.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

πῶς δ' ἦλθες Ἄργος; τίν' ἐπίνοιαν ἔσχεθες;

ΠΟΛΥΤΝΕΙΚΗΣ

οὐκ οἶδ'· ὁ δαίμων μ' ἐκάλεσεν πρὸς τὴν τύχην.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

σοφὸς γὰρ ὁ θεός· τίνι τρόπῳ δ' ἔσχες λέχος;

ΠΟΛΥΤΝΕΙΚΗΣ

ἔχρησ' Ἀδράστῳ Λοξίας χρησμόν τινα.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

410

ποῖον; τί τοῦτ' ἔλεξας; οὐκ ἔχω μαθεῖν.

ΠΟΛΥΤΝΕΙΚΗΣ

κάπρῳ λέοντί θ' ἀρμόσαι παίδων γάμους.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

καὶ σοὶ τί θηρῶν ὀνόματος μετῆν, τέκνον;

ΠΟΛΥΤΝΕΙΚΗΣ

νύξ ἦν, Ἀδράστου δ' ἦλθον εἰς παραστάδας.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

POLYNEICES

Whiles had I daily bread, and whiles had not.

JOCASTA

Helped they not thee, thy father's friends and
guests?

POLYNEICES

Prosper :—friends vanish if thou prosper not.

JOCASTA

Did high birth bring thee not to high estate?

POLYNEICES

A curse is penury. Birth fed me not.

JOCASTA

Most dear, meseems, to men is fatherland.

POLYNEICES

How dear, thou couldst not even utter it.

JOCASTA

To Argos how cam'st thou? With what intent?

POLYNEICES

I know not. Heaven to my fate summoned me.

JOCASTA

Wise is the God. How didst thou win thy bride?

POLYNEICES

To Adrastus Loxias spake an oracle.

JOCASTA

What was it? How mean'st thou? I cannot guess. 410

POLYNEICES

"*Thy daughters wed to a lion and a boar.*"

JOCASTA

Son, with a brute's name what hadst thou to do?

POLYNEICES

"Twas night : to Adrastus' palace-porch I came.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

κοίτας ματεύων ἢ φυγὰς πλανώμενος ;

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

ἦν ταῦτα· κατὰ γ' ἦλθεν ἄλλος αὖ φυγὰς.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

τίς οὗτος ; ὡς ἄρ' ἄθλιος κάκεινος ἦν.

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

Τυδεύς, ὃν Οἰνέως φασὶν ἐκφῦναι πατρός.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

420 τί θηρσὶν ὑμᾶς δῆτ' Ἄδραστος ἤκασεν ;

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

στρωμνῆς ἐς ἀλκὴν οὐνεκ' ἦλθομεν πέρι.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

ἐνταῦθα Ταλαοῦ παῖς συνῆκε θέσφατα ;

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

κάδωκεν ἡμῖν δύο δυοῖν νεάνιδας.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

ἄρ' εὐτυχεῖς οὖν τοῖς γάμοις ἢ δυστυχεῖς ;

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

οὐ μεμπτὸς ἡμῖν ὁ γάμος εἰς τόδ' ἡμέρας.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

πῶς δ' ἐξέπεισας δευρό σοι σπέσθαι στρατόν ;

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

430 δισσοῖς Ἄδραστος ὤμοσεν γαμβροῖς τόδε,
 [Τυδεῖ τε κάμοι· σύγγαμος γάρ ἐστ' ἐμός,]
 ἄμφω κατάξειν εἰς πάτραν, πρόσθεν δ' ἐμέ.
 πολλοὶ δὲ Δαναῶν καὶ Μυκηναίων ἄκροι
 πάρεισι, λυπρὰν χάριν, ἀναγκαίαν δ' ἐμοὶ
 διδόντες· ἐπὶ γὰρ τὴν ἐμὴν στρατεύομαι
 πόλιν. θεοὺς δ' ἐπώμοσ' ὡς ἀκουσίως
 τοῖς φιλτάτοις τοκεῦσιν ἡράμην δόρυ.
 ἀλλ' εἰς σὲ τείνει τῶνδε διάλυσις κακῶν,

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

JOCASTA

Seeking a couch, as homeless exiles roam?

POLYNEICES

Even that. Another exile thither came.

JOCASTA

Who? In what hapless plight was he withal!

POLYNEICES

Tydeus, who sprang, men say, of Oeneus' loins.

JOCASTA

Why to Adrastus seemed ye as wild beasts?

420

POLYNEICES

For that we fell to fighting for our couch.

JOCASTA

Then Talaus' son read right the oracle?

POLYNEICES

Yea—to us twain gave his young daughters twain.

JOCASTA

Blest or unblest, then, art thou in thy bride?

POLYNEICES

Unto this day I find no fault in her.

JOCASTA

How didst thou win yon host to follow thee?

POLYNEICES

To his two daughters' husbands swore Adrastus,

Tydeus and me,—my marriage-kinsman he,—

To bring both home from exile, me the first.

Danaan and Mycenean chiefs be here

430

Many—a needful, yet a mournful grace

To me, for I against my country march.

And, by the Gods I swear, unwillingly

I lift the spear against my father's house.

But with thee rests the assuaging of these ills,

440 μῆτερ, διαλλάξασαν ὁμογενεῖς φίλους
 παῦσαι πόνων με καὶ σὲ καὶ πᾶσαν πόλιν.
 πάλαι μὲν οὖν ὑμνηθέν, ἀλλ' ὅμως ἔρῳ
 τὰ χρήματ' ἀνθρώποισι τιμιώτατα
 δύναμίν τε πλείστην τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἔχει.
 ἀγῶ μεθήκω δεῦρο μυρίαν ἄγων
 λόγχην· πένης γὰρ οὐδὲν εὐγενῆς ἀνὴρ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

καὶ μὴν Ἐτεοκλῆς εἰς διαλλαγὰς ὅδε
 χωρεῖ· σὸν ἔργον, μῆτερ Ἰοκάστη, λέγειν
 τοιούσδε μύθους οἷς διαλλάξεις τέκνα.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

450 μῆτερ, πάρειμι· τήνδε σοὶ χάριν διδούς
 ἦλθον. τί χρὴ δρᾶν; ἀρχέτω δέ τις λόγου.
 ὡς ἀμφὶ τείχη καὶ ξυνωρίδας λόχων
 τάσσω ἐπέσχον πόλιν, ὅπως κλύοιμί σου
 κοινὰς βραβείας, αἷς ὑπόσπονδον μολεῖν
 τόνδ' εἰσεδέξω τειχέων πείσασά με.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

460 ἐπίσχεσ· οὔτοι τὸ ταχὺ τὴν δίκην ἔχει.
 βραδεῖς δὲ μῦθοι πλείστον ἀνύουσιν σοφόν.
 σχάσον δὲ δεινὸν ὄμμα καὶ θυμοῦ πνοάς·
 οὐ γὰρ τὸ λαιμότμητον εἰσορᾶς κᾶρα
 Γοργonos, ἀδελφὸν δ' εἰσορᾶς ἦκοντα σόν.
 σύ τ' αὐτὸ πρόσωπον πρὸς κασίγνητον στρέφε,
 Πολύνεικες· εἰς γὰρ ταῦτόν ὄμμασι βλέπων
 λέξεις τ' ἄμεινον τοῦδέ τ' ἐνδέξει λόγους.
 παραινέσαι δὲ σφῶν τι βούλομαι σοφόν·
 ὅταν φίλος τις ἀνδρὶ θυμωθεῖς φίλῳ
 εἰς ἐν συνελθὼν ὄμματ' ὄμμασιν διδῶ,
 ἐφ' οἷσιν ἤκει, ταῦτα χρὴ μόνον σκοπεῖν,
 κακῶν δὲ τῶν πρὶν μηδενοῦς μνείαν ἔχειν.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

Mother, to set at one those one in blood,
 And end mine, thine, and all the city's toils.
 Old is the saw,—yet will I utter it:—

*Wealth in men's eyes is honoured most of all,
 And of all things on earth hath chiefest power.*

440

Captaining countless spears for this I come ;
 For the high-born in poverty is naught.

CHORUS

Lo, unto parley Eteocles comes.
 Mother Jocasta, thine the task to speak
 Words whereby thou shalt set thy sons at one.

Enter ETEOCLES.

ETEOCLES

Here am I, mother—all for grace to thee
 I come. What needs to do? Be speech begun.
 For I have stayed from marshalling round the walls
 The close-linked cordon of defence, to hear
 Thy mediation for the which thou hast wrought
 On me to admit this man within our walls.

450

JOCASTA

Forbear: haste brings not justice in its train:
 But slow speech winneth oftenest wisdom's end.
 Refrain fierce look and passion's stormy breath:
 The Gorgon's severed head thou seest not;
 Thou seest thine own brother hither come.
 And thou, unto thy brother turn thy face,
 Polyneices; for, if thou but meet his eye,
 Thou shalt the better speak, and hear his words.
 Fain would I wisely counsel thee, and thee.
 When he whose wrath is hot against his friend
 Cometh to meet him, standeth eye to eye,
 Let him look only at that for which he came,
 And cherish no remembrance of old wrongs.

460

λόγος μὲν οὖν σὸς πρόσθε, Πολύνεικες τέκνον·
 σὺ γὰρ στράτευμα Δαναϊδῶν ἦκεις ἄγων,
 ἄδικα πεπονθώς, ὡς σὺ φῆς· κριτῆς δέ τις
 θεῶν γένοιτο καὶ διαλλακτῆς κακῶν.

ΠΟΛΤΝΕΙΚΗΣ

470 ἀπλοῦς ὁ μῦθος τῆς ἀληθείας ἔφυ,
 κοῦ ποικίλων δεῖ τᾶνδιχ' ἔρμηνευμάτων.
 ἔχει γὰρ αὐτὰ καιρόν· ὁ δ' ἄδικος λόγος
 νοσῶν ἐν αὐτῷ φαρμάκων δεῖται σοφῶν.
 ἐγὼ δὲ πατρὸς δωμάτων προῦσκεψάμην
 τοῦμόν τε καὶ τοῦδ', ἐκφυγεῖν χρήζων ἀρὰς
 ἄς Οἰδίπους ἐφθέγγεατ' εἰς ἡμᾶς ποτε,
 ἐξῆλθον ἔξω τῆσδ' ἐκὼν αὐτὸς χθονός,
 δούς τῷδ' ἀνάσσειν πατρίδος ἐνιαυτοῦ κύκλον,
 ὥστ' αὐτὸς ἄρχειν αὐθις ἀνὰ μέρος λαβῶν
 480 καὶ μὴ δι' ἔχθρας τῷδε καὶ φόνου μολῶν
 κακόν τι δρᾶσαι καὶ παθεῖν, ἃ γίγνεται.
 ὁ δ' αἰνέσας ταῦθ' ὀρκίους τε δούς θεούς,
 ἔδρασεν οὐδὲν ὧν ὑπέσχετ', ἀλλ' ἔχει
 τυραννίδ' αὐτὸς καὶ δόμων ἐμὸν μέρος.
 καὶ νῦν ἔτοιμός εἰμι τὰμαντοῦ λαβῶν
 στρατὸν μὲν ἔξω τῆσδ' ἀποστεῖλαι χθονός,
 οἰκεῖν δὲ τὸν ἐμὸν οἶκον ἀνὰ μέρος λαβῶν
 καὶ τῷδ' ἀφεῖναι τὸν ἴσον αὐθις αὐτὸν χρόνον,
 καὶ μῆτε πορθεῖν πατρίδα μῆτε προσφέρειν
 490 πύργοισι πηκτῶν κλιμάκων προσαμβάσεις,
 ἃ μὴ κυρήσας τῆς δίκης πειράσομαι
 δρᾶν. μάρτυρας δὲ τῶνδε δαίμονας καλῶ,
 ὡς πάντα πράσσωσιν σὺν δίκη, δίκης ἄτερ
 ἀποστεροῦμαι πατρίδος ἀνοσιώτατα.
 ταῦτ' αὐθ' ἕκαστα, μῆτερ, οὐχὶ περιπλοκάς

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

Son Polyneices, be the first word thine,
For thou hast brought yon host of Danaus' sons,
Wronged, as thou pleadest. Now be some God judge
Hereof, and reconciler of these ills.

POLYNEICES

Plain and unvarnished is the tale of truth,
And justice needs no subtle sophistries: 470
Itself hath fitness; but the unrighteous plea,
Having no soundness, needeth cunning salves.

I had regard unto my father's house,
My weal, and this man's: fain to 'scape the curse
Uttered of Oedipus against us once,
Of mine own will I went from this realm forth,
Left him for one year's round to rule our land,
Myself in turn to take the sovereignty,
And not in hate and bloodshed clash with him,
And do and suffer ill—as now befalls. 480
And he consented, in the Gods' sight swore,
Yet no whit keepeth troth, but holdeth still
The kingship and mine half the heritage.

Now ready am I, so I receive mine own,
Forth from this land to send my war-array,
To take mine house, in turn therein to dwell,
And for like space to yield it him again,
And not to waste my fatherland, nor bring
Assault of scaling-ladders to her towers,
Which, save I win my right, will I essay 490
To do. I call the Gods to witness this—
That, wholly dealing justly, robbed am I
Of fatherland, unjustly, impiously.
These things have I said, mother, point by point,

λόγων ἀθροίσας εἶπον, ἀλλὰ καὶ σοφοῖς
καὶ τοῖσι φαύλοις ἔνδιχ', ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἐμοὶ μέν, εἰ καὶ μὴ καθ' Ἑλλήνων χθόνα
τεθράμμεθ', ἀλλ' οὖν ξυνετά μοι δοκεῖς λέγειν.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

500 εἰ πᾶσι ταῦτὸ καλὸν ἔφυσόφον θ' ἄμα,
οὐκ ἦν ἂν ἀμφίλεκτος ἀνθρώποις ἔρις·
νῦν δ' οὐθ' ὅμοιον οὐδὲν οὐτ' ἴσον βροτοῖς,
πλὴν ὀνόμασιν, τὸ δ' ἔργον οὐκ ἔστιν τόδε.
ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐδέν, μῆτερ, ἀποκρύψας ἐρῶ·
ἄστρον ἂν ἔλθοιμ' ἡλίου πρὸς ἀντολὰς
καὶ γῆς ἔνερθε δυνατὸς ὦν δράσαι τάδε,
τὴν θεῶν μεγίστην ὥστ' ἔχειν Τυραννίδα.
τοῦτ' οὖν τὸ χρηστόν, μῆτερ, οὐχὶ βούλομαι
ἄλλω παρεῖναι μᾶλλον ἢ σῶζειν ἐμοί·
510 ἀνανδρία γάρ, τὸ πλεον ὅστις ἀπολέσας
τοῦλασσον ἔλαβε. πρὸς δὲ τοῖσδ' αἰσχύνομαι,
ἐλθόντα σὺν ὅπλοις τόνδε καὶ πορθούντα γῆν
τυχεῖν ἂν χρήζει· καὶ γὰρ ἂν Θήβαις τόδε
γένοιτ' ὄνειδος, εἰ Μυκηναίου δορὸς
φόβῳ παρεῖην σκῆπτρα τὰμὰ τῶδ' ἔχειν.
χρῆν δ' αὐτὸν οὐχ ὅπλοισι τὰς διαλλαγάς,
μῆτερ, ποιεῖσθαι· πᾶν γὰρ ἔξαιρεῖ λόγος
ὁ καὶ σίδηρος πολεμίων δράσειεν ἂν.
ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν ἄλλως τήνδε γῆν οἰκεῖν θέλει,
ἔξεστ'· ἐκεῖνο δ' οὐχ ἐκὼν μεθήσομαι,
520 ἄρχειν παρόν μοι, τῶδε δουλεῦσαί ποτε.
πρὸς ταῦτ' ἴτω μὲν πῦρ, ἴτω δὲ φάσγανα,
ζεύγνυσθε δ' ἵππους, πεδία πίμπλαθ' ἀρμάτων,
ὡς οὐ παρήσω τῶδ' ἐμὴν τυραννίδα.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

Not wrapped in webs of words, but, in the eyes
Of wise or simple, naked right, meseems.

CHORUS

To me—albeit Hellas nursed me not,
Yet to me soundly seemest thou to plead.

ETEOCLES

Were wisdom gauged alike of all, and honour,
No strife of warring words were known to men. 500
But "fairness," "equal rights"—men know them not.
They name their names: no being they have as things.

Now, mother, nothing feigning will I speak:—
I would mount to the risings of the stars
Or sun, would plunge 'neath earth, if this I could,
So to win Power, diviner than all gods.
This precious thing, my mother, will I not
Yield to another, when myself might keep.
No man's part this, to let the better slip
And grasp the worse! Nay more—I think foul shame 510
That *he* should come with arms, lay waste the land,
And win his heart's desire. This were reproach
To Thebes, if I, by spears of Argos cowed,
Should yield my sceptre up for him to hold.
With arms should he not come in quest of peace,
Mother; for parley can accomplish all
That even steel of foes can bring to pass.
If he on other terms will dwell in Thebes,
That may he. *This* consent I not to yield.
I, who may rule, shall I be thrall to him? 520

Wherefore let fire and sword have free course now!
Yoke ye the steeds, with chariots fill the plains:—
I will not render him my sovereignty.

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

εἵπερ γὰρ ἀδικεῖν χρή, τυραννίδος πέρι
 κάλλιστον ἀδικεῖν, τᾶλλα δ' εὖσεβεῖν χρεῶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐκ εὖ λέγειν χρή μὴ πὶ τοῖς ἔργοις καλοῖς,
 οὐ γὰρ καλὸν τοῦτ', ἀλλὰ τῇ δίκῃ πικρὸν.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

530 ὦ τέκνον, οὐχ ἅπαντα τῷ γῆρα κακά,
 Ἐτεόκλεες, πρόσσεστιν· ἀλλ' ἡμπεριρία
 ἔχει τι λέξαι τῶν νέων σοφώτερον.
 τί τῆς κακίστης δαιμόνων ἐφίεσαι
 Φιλοτιμίας, παῖ ; μὴ σύ γ'· ἀδικος ἢ θεός·
 πολλοὺς δ' ἐς οἴκους καὶ πόλεις εὐδαίμονας
 εἰσῆλθε καὶ ἐξῆλθ' ἐπ' ὀλέθρῳ τῶν χρωμένων·
 ἐφ' ἣ σὺ μαίνει· κεῖνο κάλλιον, τέκνον,
 Ἰσότητα τιμᾶν, ἢ φίλους ἀεὶ φίλους
 πόλεις τε πόλεσι συμμάχους τε συμμάχοις
 συνδεῖ· τὸ γὰρ ἴσον νόμιμον ἀνθρώποις ἔφν,
 540 τῷ πλέονι δ' ἀεὶ πολέμιον καθίσταται
 τοῦλασσον ἐχθρᾶς θ' ἡμέρας κατάρχεται.
 καὶ γὰρ μέτρ' ἀνθρώποισι καὶ μέρη σταθμῶν
 Ἰσότης ἔταξε κἀριθμὸν διώρισε,
 νυκτός τ' ἀφεγγῆς βλέφαρον ἡλίου τε φῶς
 ἴσον βαδίζει τὸν ἐνιαύσιον κύκλον,
 κούδτερον αὐτῶν φθόνου ἔχει νικώμενον.
 εἶθ' ἡλιος μὲν νύξ τε δουλεύει βροτοῖς,
 σὺ δ' οὐκ ἀνέξει δωμάτων ἔχων ἴσον
 καὶ τῷδ' ἀπονέμειν ; κᾶτα ποῦ ἴστιν ἡ δίκη ;
 550 τί τὴν τυραννίδ', ἀδικίαν εὐδαίμονα,
 τιμᾶς ὑπέρφευ, καὶ μέγ' ἠγησάι τότε ;
 περιβλέπεσθαι τίμιον ; κενὸν μὲν οὖν.
 ἢ πολλὰ μοχθεῖν πόλλ' ἔχων εὐδαίμονα
 βούλει ; τί δ' ἔστι τὸ πλεόν ; ὄνομ' ἔχει μόνον

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

If wrong may e'er be right, for a throne's sake
Were wrong most right :—be God in all else feared !

CHORUS

Befits not fair speech glozing deeds unfair :
Not fair it is, but an offence to justice.

JOCASTA

My son Eteocles, evil unalloyed
Cleaves not to old age : nay, experience
Can plead more wisely than the lips of youth. 530
Why at Ambition, worst of deities,
Son, graspest thou ? Do not : she is Queen of
Wrong.

Homes many and happy cities enters she,
Nor leaves till ruined are her votaries.
Thou art mad for her !—better to honour, son,
Equality, which knitteth friends to friends,
Cities to cities, allies unto allies.
Nature gave men the law of equal rights,
And the less, ever marshalled foe against
The greater, ushers in the dawn of hate. 540
Measures for men Equality ordained,
Meting of weights and number she assigned.
The sightless face of night, and the sun's beam
Equally pace along their yearly round,
Nor either envieth that it must give place.
Sun, then, and night are servants unto men :
Shalt thou not brook to halve your heritage
And share with him ? . . . Ah, where is justice then
Why overmuch dost thou prize Sovranty—
Injustice throned !—and count it some great thing ? 550
Is worship precious ? Nay, 'tis vanity.
Wouldst have, with great wealth in thine halls, great
travail ?

What is thy profit ?—profit but in name ;

ἐπεὶ τὰ γ' ἀρκούνθ' ἱκανὰ τοῖς γε σῶφροσιν.
 αὐτοὶ τὰ χρήματ' ἴδια κέκτηνται βροτοί,
 τὰ τῶν θεῶν δ' ἔχοντες ἐπιμελούμεθα·
 ὅταν δὲ χρήζωσ', αὐτ' ἀφαιροῦνται πάλιν.
 [ὁ δ' ὄλβος οὐ βέβαιος, ἀλλ' ἐφήμερος.]
 560 ἄγ', ἦν σ' ἔρωμαι δύο λόγῳ προθεῖς ἅμα,
 πότερα τυραννεῖν ἢ πόλιν σῶσαι θέλεις,
 ἐρεῖς τυραννεῖν; ἦν δὲ νικήσῃ σ' ὅδε
 Ἀργεῖά τ' ἔγχη δόρυ τὸ Καδμείων ἔλη,
 ὄψει δαμασθὲν ἄστυ Θηβαίων τόδε,
 ὄψει δὲ πολλὰς αἰχμαλωτίδας κόρας
 βία πρὸς ἀνδρῶν πολεμίων πορθομένας.
 ὀδυνηρὸς ἄρ' ὁ πλοῦτος, ὃν ζητεῖς ἔχειν,
 γενήσεται Θήβαισι, φιλότιμος δὲ σύ.
 σοὶ μὲν τὰδ' αὐδῶ. σοὶ δὲ Πολύνεικες λέγω·
 570 ἀμαθεῖς Ἄδραστος χάριτας εἰς σ' ἀνήφατο,
 ἀσύνητα δ' ἦλθες καὶ σὺ πορθήσων πόλιν.
 φέρ', ἦν ἔλῃς γῆν τήνδ', ὃ μὴ τύχοι ποτέ,
 πρὸς θεῶν, τρόπαια πῶς ἀναστήσεις Δί;
 πῶς δ' αὖ κατάρξει θυμάτων, ἐλὼν πάτραν,
 καὶ σκύλα γράφεις πῶς ἐπ' Ἰνάχου ῥοαῖς;
 Θήβας πυρῶσας τάσδε Πολυνείκης θεοῖς
 ἀσπίδας ἔθηκε; μήποτ', ὦ τέκνον, κλέος
 τοιόνδε σοι γένοιθ' ὑφ' Ἑλλήνων λαβεῖν.
 ἦν δ' αὖ κρατηθῆς καὶ τὰ τοῦδ' ὑπερδράμη,
 πῶς Ἀργὸς ἦξεις μυρίους λιπῶν νεκρούς;
 580 ἐρεῖ δὲ δῆ τις· ὦ κακὰ μνηστεύματα
 Ἄδραστε προσθεῖς, διὰ μιᾶς νύμφης γάμον
 ἀπωλόμεσθα. δύο κακῶ σπεύδεις, τέκνον,
 κείνων στέρεσθαι, τῶνδ' ἐν μέσῳ πεσεῖν.
 μέθετον τὸ λίαν, μέθετον ἀμαθίαι δυοῖν,
 εἰς ταῦθ' ὅταν μόλητον, ἔχθιστον κακόν.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

Seeing enough sufficeth for the wise.
 Mortals hold their possessions not in fee :
 We are but stewards of the gifts of God :
 Whene'er he will, he claims his own again.
 And wealth abides not, 'tis but for a day.

Come, if I set two things before thee, and ask,
 "Wouldst thou be lord or saviour of thy Thebes?" 560
 Wilt thou say, "Lord?" But if this man prevail,
 And Argos' spears bear down Cadmean might,
 Then conquered shalt thou see this city of Thebes,
 And many captive maidens shalt thou see
 Dishonoured with foul outrage by the foe.
 Yea, all this wealth thou covetest shall become
 Thebes' curse, and thou shalt be ambition's fool.

This to thee ; and to thee, Polyneices, this :—
 A foolish grace Adrastus did to thee ;
 Madly thou too hast marched to ravage Thebes. 570
 Come, if thou smite this land,—which God forbid,—
 'Fore heaven, how wilt thou set Zeus' trophies up ?
 How sacrifice for fatherland o'ercome ?

And how at Inachus' streams inscribe the spoils?—
 "*Polyneices hath burnt Thebes, and to the Gods
 Offers these shields*"—thus? Never, son, be it thine
 To win from lips of Hellenes such renown !
 But, he triumphant, vanquished thou, to Argos
 How canst thou come, here leaving myriads dead ?
 And one shall say, "O cursed betrothal made 580
 By thee, Adrastus ! For one bridal's sake
 We are ruined !" Evils twain thou draw'st on
 thee,—

There, to lose all, here, fail mid thine emprise.
 Forbear, forbear your vehemence ! When meet
 Two headstrong fools, the issue is foulest ill.

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ θεοί, γένοισθε τῶνδ' ἀπότροποι κακῶν
καὶ ξύμβασίν τιν' Οἰδίπου τέκνοις δότε.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

μη̄τερ, οὐ λόγων ἔθ' ἀγών, ἀλλ' ἀνήλωται χρόνος
οὐν μέσῳ μάτην, περαίνει δ' οὐδέν ἢ προθυμία·
590 οὐ γὰρ ἂν ξυμβαίμεν ἄλλως ἢ 'πὶ τοῖς εἰρη-
μένοις,
ὥστ' ἐμὲ σκήπτρων κρατοῦντα τῆσδ' ἀνακτ' εἶναι
χθονός.
τῶν μακρῶν δ' ἀπαλλαγείσα νουθετημάτων μ' ἔα.
καὶ σὺ τῶνδ' ἔξω κομίζου τειχέων, ἢ κατθανεῖ.

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

πρὸς τίνος ; τίς ὦδ' ἄτρωτος, ὅστις εἰς ἡμᾶς ξίφος
φόνιον ἐμβαλὼν τὸν αὐτὸν οὐκ ἀποίσεται μόρον ;

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

ἐγγύς, οὐ πρόσω βέβηκεν· εἰς χέρας λεύσσεις
ἐμάς ;

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

εἰσορῶ· δειλὸν δ' ὁ πλοῦτος καὶ φιλόψυχον
κακόν.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

κᾶτα σὺν πολλοῖσιν ἦλθες πρὸς τὸν οὐδέν ἐς
μάχην ;

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

ἀσφαλῆς γάρ ἐστ' ἀμείνων ἢ θρασὺς στρατη-
λάτης.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

600 κομπὸς εἶ σπονδαῖς πεποιθώς, αἶ σε σῶξουσιν
θανεῖν.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

CHORUS

Ah Gods, be ye averters of these ills,
And set at one the sons of Oedipus!

ETEOCLES

Mother, 'tis too late for parley; nay, the time in
dallying spent [good intent.
Doth but run to waste, nor aught availeth this thy
Never shall we be at one, except as I have laid it 590
down, [wear the crown.
That in lordship over Thebes I sway the sceptre,
Have thou done with tedious admonitions then, and
let me be; [death shall light on thee.
And, for thee, thou get thee forth these walls, ere

POLYNEICES

Death?—of whom?—what man so woundless, as to
plunge his murderous sword [reward?
Into this my body, and not win himself the like

ETEOCLES

Nigh he is: not far he standeth: lo, these hands—
hast eyes to see?

POLYNEICES

Yea—and know how shrinks from death that craven
curse, prosperity!

ETEOCLES

Yet against a battle-blencher thou must lead yon
huge array!

POLYNEICES

Yea, for better than the reckless is the prudent
captain aye.

ETEOCLES

Safe behind the truce, from death that screens thee,
vaunting dost thou stand! 600

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

καὶ σέ· δεύτερον δ' ἀπαιτῶ σκῆπτρα καὶ μέρη
χθονός.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

οὐκ ἀπαιτούμεσθ'. ἐγὼ γὰρ τὸν ἐμὸν οἰκήσω
δόμον.

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

τοῦ μέρους ἔχων τὸ πλεῖον;

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

φήμ'. ἀπαλλάσσου δὲ γῆς.

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

ὦ θεῶν βωμοὶ πατρώων—

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

οὓς σὺ πορθήσων πάρει.

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

κλύετέ μου—

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

τίς δ' ἂν κλύοι σου πατρίδ' ἐπεστρατευμένου;

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

καὶ θεῶν τῶν λευκοπώλων δώμαθ',

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

οἷ στυγοῦσί σε.

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

ἐξελαυνόμεσθα πατρίδος,

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

καὶ γὰρ ἦλθες ἐξελῶν.

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

ἀδικία γ', ὦ θεοί.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

Μυκήναις, μὴ ἴθάδ' ἀνακάλει θεούς.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

POLYNEICES

Ay, and screens thee!—once again my crown, mine
heritage I claim.

ETEOCLES

Naught to me are claims; for I will dwell in this
mine house—mine own.

POLYNEICES

Grasping more than thine is?

ETEOCLES

Ay!—now get thee forth the land—begone!

POLYNEICES

Altars of our Gods ancestral,—

ETEOCLES

Whom to ravage thou art come!

POLYNEICES

Hear ye me!—

ETEOCLES

And who shall hear thee, bringer of war
against thine home?

POLYNEICES

And ye temples of the Gods of Stainless Steeds!—

ETEOCLES

Who loathe thy name!

POLYNEICES

I am banished from my country!—

ETEOCLES

He that to destroy it came.

POLYNEICES

Wrongfully, ye Gods!

ETEOCLES

To Gods not here, but at Mycenae, cry.

ΦΟΙΝΙ
καὶ σέ· δεύτερον δ' ἀπι
χθονός.

ΕΤΕΟ
οὐκ ἀπαιτούμεσθ'· ἐγὼ
δόμον.

ΠΟΛΥ
τοῦ μέρους ἔχων τὸ πλεῖ

ΕΤΕ

ΠΟΛ
ὦ θεῶν βωμοὶ πατρῶν

ΕΤ

ΠΟ
κλύετέ μου—

Ε
τίς δ' ἂν κλύοι σ

Π
καὶ θεῶν τῶν λευκοπ

ἐξελαννόμεσθα πατ

ἀδικία γ', ὦ θεοί.

Μυκ

ὦ κασίγνηται.

μήτερ, ἀλλὰ μοι σὺ χαίρε.

οὐκέτ' εἰμί παῖς σός.

ὅδε γὰρ εἰς ἡμᾶς ὑβρίζει.

ποῦ ποτε στήσει πρὸ τῶν

ἀντιτάξομαι κτενὸν σε

ὦ τύλαιν' ἐγὼ, τί φάσιν

πατὴρ οὐ φείξεται

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

my sisters!

Why dost call on these, their bitterest enemy?

Well, O my mother?

Sooth, my son, I *fare well*, thus forlorn!

of thine no more!—

To many a sorrow was thy mother born!

See he doth me foul despite!

For foul despite received, I wis! 620

here before the towers wilt plant thee?

Wherefore dost thou question this?

will face thee there to slay thee.

Ha! I long to have it so!

Who is me! what will ye do, my sons?

The issue's self shall show.

Flee, O flee your father's curses!

All our house let ruin seize!

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

ὦ κασίγνηται.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

τί ταύτας ἀνακαλείς ἔχθιστος ὦν ;

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

μητέρα, ἀλλά μοι σὺ χαῖρε.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

χαρτὰ γοῦν πάσχω, τέκνον.

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

οὐκέτ' εἰμὶ παῖς σός.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

εἰς πόλλ' ἀθλία πέφυκ' ἐγώ.

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

ὄδε γὰρ εἰς ἡμᾶς ὑβρίζει.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

620

καὶ γὰρ ἀνθυβρίζομαι.

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

ποῦ ποτε στήσει πρὸ πύργων ;

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

ὡς τί μ' ἱστορεῖς τόδε ;

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

ἀντιτάξομαι κτενῶν σε.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

κάμει τοῦδ' ἔρωσ ἔχει.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

ὦ τάλαιν' ἐγώ. τί δράσετ', ὦ τέκν' ;

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

αὐτὸ σημανεῖ.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

πατὴρσ οὐ φεύξεσθ' Ἐρινῶσ ;

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

ἔρρέτω πρόπασ δόμος.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

POLYNEICES

O my sisters!

ETEOCLES

Why dost call on these, their bitterest enemy?

POLYNEICES

Farewell, O my mother?

JOCASTA

Sooth, my son, I *fare well*, thus forlorn!

POLYNEICES

Son of thine no more!—

JOCASTA

To many a sorrow was thy mother born!

POLYNEICES

Since he doth me foul despite!

ETEOCLES

For foul despite received, I wis! 620

POLYNEICES

Where before the towers wilt plant thee?

ETEOCLES

Wherefore dost thou question this?

POLYNEICES

I will face thee there to slay thee.

ETEOCLES

Ha! I long to have it so!

JOCASTA

Woe is me! what will ye do, my sons?

POLYNEICES

The issue's self shall show.

JOCASTA

Flee, O flee your father's curses!

ETEOCLES

All our house let ruin seize!

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

καὶ σέ· δεύτερον δ' ἀπαιτῶ σκήπτρα καὶ μίθρ
χθονός.

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

οὐκ ἀπαιτούμεσθ'· ἐγὼ γὰρ τὸν ἐμὸν οἶκον
δόμον.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

τοῦ μέρους ἔχων τὸ πλεῖον;

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

φήμ' ἀπαλλάσσου δέ γη·

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

ὦ θεῶν βωμοὶ πατρίων—

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

οὓς σὺ πορθήσων τάς.

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

κλύετε μου—

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

τίς δ' ἂν κλύοι σου πατρίδ' ἐπεστρατευμένων;

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

καὶ θεῶν τῶν λευκοπόλων δώμαθ',

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

οἱ στήλαι δ'

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

ἔξελανόμεσθα πατρίδος,

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

καὶ γὰρ ἠλλεὶς ἐξέλιε

ΠΟΛΥΝΕΙΚΗΣ

ἀδικία γ', ὦ θεοί.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

Μυκῆναις, μὴ ἰθάδ' ἀνακίδας θύων.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

MAIDENS

And sweep thee—sweep again my crown, mine
heritage I claim.

ETHEL

Sought to me are claims; for I will dwell in this
mine house—mine own.

MAIDENS

Goings were thus thine is?

ETHEL

Ay!—now get thee forth the land—begin!

MAIDENS

Alas of our Gods ancestral—

ETHEL

Whom to savage thou art come!

MAIDENS

Hear ye us!—

ETHEL

And who shall bear thee, bringer of war
against thine home?

MAIDENS

And ye temples of the Gods of Stainless Steeds!—

ETHEL

Who hath thy name!

MAIDENS

I am banished from my country!—

ETHEL

He that to destroy it came.

MAIDENS

Wrongfully, ye Gods!

ETHEL

To Gods not here, but at Mycenae, cry.

NS

est enemy?

us forlorn!

ther born!

ed, I wis! 620

ion this?

ive it so!

all show.

n seize!

650 καὶ βαθυσπόρους γύας,
 Βρόμιον ἔνθα τέκετο μή-
 τηρ Διὸς γάμοισι,
 κισσὸς ὃν περιστεφῆς
 ἑλικτὸς εὐθύς ἔτι βρέφος
 χλοηφόροισιν ἔρνεσιν
 κατασκίοισιν ὀλβίσας ἐνώτισεν,
 Βάκχιον χόρευμα παρθένοισι Θηβαίαισι
 καὶ γυναιξὶν εὐίοις.

ἔνθα φόνιος ἦν δράκων ἀντ.
 Ἄρεος, ὠμόφρων φύλαξ
 νάματ' ἔνυδρα καὶ ρέεθρα
 660 χλοερὰ δεργμάτων κόραισι
 πολυπλάνοις ἐπισκοπῶν
 ὃν ἐπὶ χέρνιβας μολῶν
 Κάδμος ὄλεσε μαρμάρῳ,
 κρᾶτα φόνιον ὀλεσίθηρος
 ὠλένας δικῶν βολαῖς,
 δίας ἀμάτορος δ'
 669 εἰς βαθυσπόρους γύας
 668 γαπετεῖς δικῶν ὀδόν-
 667 τας Παλλάδος φραδαῖσιν.¹
 670 ἔνθεν ἔξανῆκε γᾶ
 πάνοπλον ὄψιν ὑπὲρ ἄκρων
 ὄρων χθονός· σιδαρόφρων
 δέ νιν φόνος πάλιν ξυνῆψε γᾶ φίλα.
 αἵματος δ' ἔδενσε γαῖαν, ἃ νιν εὐηλίοισι
 δεῖξεν αἰθέρος πνοαῖς.

καὶ σὲ τὸν προμάτορος ἐπφδ.
 Ἰοῦς ποτ' ἔκγονον

¹ Murray's arrangement, securing metrical correspondence.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

Over meadows and tilth-lands harvest-teeming,
 Where sprang, from the spousals levin-gleaming
 Of Zeus, the God of the shout wild-ringing ; 650
 And the ivy arching its bowers around him,
 With the fairy chains of its greenness bound him,
 To the babe with its sudden tendrils clinging,
 Overmantling with shadow the Blessing-laden,
 For a theme of the Bacchanal dance unto maiden
 Of Thebes, and to matron evoc-singing.

There on the hallowed fountain's border (Ant.)
 Was the dragon of Ares, a ruthless warder ;
 And the glare of his eyeballs fearful-flashing
 Wandered in restless-roving keenness
 O'er the brimming runnels, the mirrored greenness : 660

Then came to the spring for the lustral washing
 Cadmus, and hurled at the monster, and slew it ;
 For he snatched a boulder, his strong arm threw it
 Down on the head of the slaughterer crashing.
 Then, of Pallas, the motherless Goddess, bidden,
 O'er the deep-furrowed earth, in her breast to be
 hidden,

He scattered the teeth from the grim jaws parted.
 And the travailing glebe flung up bright blossom 670
 Of mail-clad warriors over the bosom

Of the earth ; but slaughter the iron-hearted
 Again with the earth their mother blent them,
 And drenched with their blood the breast which had
 sent them

Forth, when to sun-quickened air they upstarted.

Unto thee too, Epaphus, scion (Epode.)
 Of our first mother Io, I moan,

680

Ἐπαφον, ὦ Διὸς γένεθλον,
 ἐκάλεσ' ἐκάλεσα βαρβάρῳ βοᾷ,
 ἰώ, βαρβάρους λιταῖς,
 βᾶθι βᾶθι τάνδε γᾶν·
 σοί νιν ἔκγονοι κτίσαν,
 ἂν διώνυμοι θεαί,
 Περσέφασσα καὶ φίλα
 Δαμάτηρ θεά,
 πάντων ἄνασσα, πάντων δὲ Γᾶ τροφός,
 ἐκτήσαντο· πέμπε πυρφόρους
 θείας, ἄμυνε τᾶδε γᾶ·
 πάντα δ' εὐπετῆ θεοῖς.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

690

χώρει σὺ καὶ κόμιζε τὸν Μενοικέως
 Κρέοντ', ἀδελφὸν μητρὸς Ἰοκάστης ἐμῆς,
 λέγων τάδ', ὡς οἰκεία καὶ κοινὰ χθονὸς
 θέλω πρὸς αὐτὸν συμβαλεῖν βουλευμάτα,
 πρὶν εἰς μάχην τε καὶ δορὸς τάξιν μολεῖν.
 καίτοι ποδῶν σῶν μόχθον ἐκλύει παρῶν·
 ὀρώ γὰρ αὐτὸν πρὸς δόμους στείχοντ' ἐμούς.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ἢ πόλλ' ἐπῆλθον εἰσιδεῖν χρήζων σ', ἄναξ
 Ἐτεόκλεες, περίξ δὲ Καδμείων πύλας
 φύλακὰς τ' ἐπῆλθον σὸν δέμας θηρώμενος.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

700

καὶ μὴν ἐγὼ σ' ἔχρηζον εἰσιδεῖν, Κρέον·
 πολλῶ γὰρ ἠὔρον ἐνδεεῖς διαλλαγάς,
 ὡς εἰς λόγους συνῆψα Πολυνείκει μολῶν.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ἤκουσα μείζον αὐτὸν ἢ Θήβας φρονεῖν,
 κήδει τ' Ἀδράστου καὶ στρατῶ πεποιοθότα.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

Unto thee, of our lord Zeus sprung,
With my alien chant upflung
And with prayers of an alien tongue ! 680
Thy sons, who reared Thebes to thee, cry on
Their father—O come to thine own !
For Demeter, Persephone, wearing
Twin names, have our land in ward—
Even gracious Demeter All-queen,
Who is Earth, nurse of all that hath been,—
O send them, thy people to screen
From the evil, the Queens Torch-bearing !—
Is there aught for the Gods too hard ?

ETEOCLES (*to attendant*)

Go thou, and Creon bring, Menoeceus' son, 690
Who is my mother's, even Jocasta's brother.
This tell him, that I would commune with him
Touching our own advantage and the land's,
Ere we go battleward and range the spears.
But lo, he cometh, sparing thy foot's toil.
Myself behold him drawing nigh mine halls.

Enter CREON.

CREON

Seeking to see thee, far I have wended, King
Eteocles ; round to all Cadmean gates
And guards, still searching for thy face, I passed.

ETEOCLES

Sooth, Creon, fain was I to look on thee : 700
For little worth I found his terms of peace,
When I for parley Polyneices met.

CREON

Beyond Thebes his ambition soars, I hear,
By Adrastus' kinship, and his host, puffed up.

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

ἀλλ' εἰς θεοὺς χρῆ ταῦτ' ἀναρτήσαντ' ἔχειν·
ἂ δ' ἐμποδῶν μάλιστα, ταῦθ' ἦκω φράσω.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

τὰ ποῖα ταῦτα; τὸν λόγον γὰρ ἀγνοῶ.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ἦκει τις αἰχμάλωτος Ἀργείων πάρα.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

λέγει δὲ δὴ τί τῶν ἐκεῖ νεώτερον;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

710 μέλλειν [πέριξ πύργοισι Καδμείων πόλιν
ὄπλοις] ἐλίξειν αὐτίκ' Ἀργείων στρατόν.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

ἐξοιστέον τᾶρ' ὄπλα Καδμείων πόλει.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ποῖ; μῶν νεάζων οὐχ ὄρας ἂ χρῆν σ' ὄραν;

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

ἐκτὸς τάφρων τῶνδ', ὡς μαχουμένους τάχα.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

σμικρὸν τὸ πλήθος τῆσδε γῆς, οἱ δ' ἄφθονοι.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

ἐγὼ δα κείνους τοῖς λόγοις ὄντας θρασεῖς.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ἔχει τιν' ὄγκον Ἄργος Ἑλλήνων πάρα.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

θάρσει τάχ' αὐτῶν πεδίον ἐμπλήσω φόνου.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

θέλωμ' ἄν· ἀλλὰ τοῦθ' ὀρῶ πολλοῦ πόνου.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

720 ὡς οὐ καθέξω τειχέων εἴσω στρατόν.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

καὶ μὴν τὸ νικᾶν ἐστὶ πᾶν εὐβουλία.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

But these things in the Gods' hands must we leave.
Of our main stumblingblock I came to tell.

ETEOCLES

What shall this be? Thy drift is dark to me.

CREON

A captive from the Argive host is come.

ETEOCLES

What tidings bringeth he of dealings there?

CREON

That Argos' host will straightway wind the net 710
Of arms round Cadmus' burg and all her towers.

ETEOCLES

Then Cadmus' burg must lead forth her array,—

CREON

Whither? Sees not thy rash youth what it should?

ETEOCLES

Across yon trenches, as to fight forthwith.

CREON

Small is the host of this land, countless theirs.

ETEOCLES

I know them for tongue-valiant warriors.

CREON

Argos hath high repute mid Hellas' sons.

ETEOCLES

Fear not: their slaughter soon shall load the plain.

CREON

That would I: yet herein I see grim toil.

ETEOCLES

Not I will pen mine host within the walls! 720

CREON

Yet wholly in good counsel victory lies.

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

βούλει τράπωμαι δῆθ' ὁδοὺς ἄλλας τινάς ;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

πάσας γε, πρὶν κίνδυνον εἰς ἅπαξ μολεῖν.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

εἰ νυκτὸς αὐτοῖς προσβάλοιμεν ἐκ λόχου ;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

εἴπερ σφαλεῖς γε δεῦρο σωθήσει πάλιν.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

ἴσον φέρει νύξ, τοῖς δὲ τολμῶσιν πλέον.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ἐνδυστυχήσαι δεινὸν εὐφρόνης κνέφας.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

ἀλλ' ἀμφὶ δείπνον οὔσι προσβάλω δόρυ ;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ἐκπληξίς ἂν γένοιτο· νικῆσαι δὲ δεῖ.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

730

βαθὺς γέ τοι Διρκαῖος ἀναχωρεῖν πόρος.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ἅπαν κάκιον τοῦ φυλάσσεσθαι καλῶς.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

τί δ', εἰ καθιππεύσαιμεν Ἀργείων στρατόν ;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

κὰκεῖ πέφρακται λαὸς ἄρμασιν πέριξ.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

τί δῆτα δράσω ; πολεμίοισι δῶ πόλιν ;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

μὴ δῆτα· βουλεύου δ', ἐπεὶπερ εἶ σοφός.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

τίς οὖν πρόνοια γίγνεται σοφωτέρα ;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ἔπτ' ἄνδρας αὐτοῖς φασιν, ὡς ἤκουσ' ἐγώ,—

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

ETEOCLES

Wouldst thou I turned me unto other paths?

CREON

Any path, ere on one cast all be staked.

ETEOCLES

How if by night we fall on them from ambush?

CREON

Yea,—if, miscarrying, safe thou mayst return.

ETEOCLES

Night equals all, yet helps the venturous most.

CREON

Yet, for ill-speed, night's gloom is terrible.

ETEOCLES

Shall I make onset even as they sup?

CREON

A brief alarm :—'tis victory we need.

ETEOCLES

Dirce's deep ford should hamper their retreat.

730

CREON

Naught were so good as ward us warily.

ETEOCLES

How, if our horse charge down on Argos' host?

CREON

There too their lines be fenced with chariots round.

ETEOCLES

What shall I do then?—yield our town to foes?

CREON

Never. Take thought, if prudent chief thou art.

ETEOCLES

What counsel is more prudent, then, than mine?

CREON

Seven champions are there with them, have I heard,—

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

τί προστετάχθαι δρᾶν; τὸ γὰρ σθένος βραχύ.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

λόχων ἀνάσσειν ἑπτὰ προσκεῖσθαι πύλαις.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

740 τί δῆτα δρῶμεν; ἀπορίαν γὰρ οὐ μενῶ.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ἕπτ' ἄνδρας αὐτοῖς καὶ σὺ πρὸς πύλαις ἐλοῦ.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

λόχων ἀνάσσειν ἢ μονοστόλου δορός;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

λόχων, προκρίνας οἵπερ ἀλκιμώτατοι,

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

ξυνηκ' ἀμύνειν τειχέων προσαμβάσεις.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

καὶ ξυστρατήγους· εἰς δ' ἀνὴρ οὐ πάνθ' ὄρᾳ.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

θάρσει προκρίνας ἢ φρενῶν εὐβουλίᾳ;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ἀμφότερον· ἀπολειφθὲν γὰρ οὐδὲν θάτερον.

ΕΤΕΟΚΛΗΣ

ἔσται τάδ'· ἐλθὼν δ' ἑπτάπυργον ἐς πόλιν
750 τάξω λοχαγούς πρὸς πύλαισιν, ὡς λέγεις,
ἴσους ἴσοισι πολεμίοισιν ἀντιθείς.

ὄνομα δ' ἐκάστου διατριβὴ πολλὴ λέγειν,
ἐχθρῶν ὑπ' αὐτοῖς τείχεσιν καθημένων.

ἀλλ' εἴμ', ὅπως ἂν μὴ καταργῶμεν χέρα.

καὶ μοι γένοιτ' ἀδελφὸν ἀντήρη λαβεῖν

καὶ ξυσταθέντα διὰ μάχης ἐλεῖν δορί,

κτανεῖν θ' ὅς ἦλθε πατρίδα πορθήσων ἐμήν.

γάμους δ' ἀδελφῆς Ἀντιγόνης παιδός τε σοῦ
Αἴμονος, εἴαν τι τῆς τύχης ἐγὼ σφαλῶ,

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

ETEOCLES

Whereto appointed? Seven men's might were small!

CREON

To lead their bands to assail our seven gates.

ETEOCLES

What then? I wait not counsels of despair. 740

CREON

Seven choose thou too to front them at the gates.

ETEOCLES

To lead our bands, or fight with single spear?

CREON

To lead our bands: choose thou our mightiest;—

ETEOCLES

Ay so—to avert the scaling of the walls.

CREON

And under-captains: one man sees not all.

ETEOCLES

For valour chosen, or for prudent wit?

CREON

Nay, both: without its fellow, each is naught.

ETEOCLES

This shall be. Now to the seven towers will I,
And plant chiefs, as thou biddest, at the gates,
Champion for champion, ranged against the foe. 750
To tell each o'er, were costly waste of time,
When foes be camped beneath our very walls.
But I will go, that mine hands loiter not.
God grant I meet my brother face to face,
Clash in the grapple, and slay him with the spear—
Slay him, who came to lay my country waste!
But, for Antigone's marriage with thy son
Haemon,—if aught untoward hap to me,—

ὦ κασί

μητέρα,

οὐκέτ' εἰ

ὄδε γὰρ

620

ποῦ ποτε

ἀντιτάξο

ὦ τύλαι

πατρός ο

396

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

ETEOKLES
τί προστετάχθαι ἔραυ; τὸ γὰρ σθένος ἄρα
κῆρῶν ἀνάσσειν ἔπτα προσκείσθαι πύλαι.

ETEOKLES
τί ἔπρα ἔραυες; ἄτοριαν γὰρ οὐ μὲν.

ETEOKLES
ἔπτα ἄνδρας αὐτοῖς καὶ σὺ πρὸς πύλαι ἀλῶ.

ETEOKLES
τὸ λῆγος ἀνάσσειν ἢ μονοστόλου ἄρα;

ETEOKLES
λῆγος, προκρίνας οἴτερ ἀλκιμαστον.

ETEOKLES
ξυνηκ' ἀνάσειν τειχέων προσαρβάνε.

ETEOKLES
καὶ ξυστρατήγους εἴ δ' ἄρα οἱ πᾶσι κῆρ.

ETEOKLES
θάρασι προκρίνας ἢ φρονῶν εἰδούλα;

ETEOKLES
ἀμφότερον ἀταλερθεῖν γὰρ οὐδὲν ἔστιν.

ETEOKLES
ἔσται τῶδ' ἔλθε δ' ἐπιτόργον εἰ πύλαι
πύλαι λογαγόνι πρὸς πύλαισι, οἱ λῆγος
ἴσους ἴσους τακτικῶσι ἀντιτάξο.

ETEOKLES
ἴσους δ' ἑκάστου ἐστρατῆς πύλαι λῆγος
ἔχθρῶν ἔπ' αὐτοῖς τειχέων καθύπευθε.

ETEOKLES
ἀλλ' εἰμ', ὅταν εἰ μὴ καταργήσῃ γὰρ.
καὶ μοι γένοιτ' ἀδελφῶν ἀντηρ λαθεῖν.

ETEOKLES
καὶ ξυστρατήγους δὲ μάχης εἰλεῖν ἄρα.
κτερεῖν δ' ἢ φλῆε πατρίδα ταφίρων ἐπὶ
πύλαισι δ' ἀδελφῶν Ἀντιγόνης ταυῖς τε πύλαι
ἀμῶνος, εἴω τι τῆς τύχης ἐπιφύλαξι.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

ETEOCLES
were appointed? Seven men's might were small!

CREON
lead their bands to assail our seven gates.

ETEOCLES
What then? I wait not counsels of despair.

740

CREON
seven choose thou too to front them at the gates.

ETEOCLES
To lead our bands, or fight with single spear?

CREON
To lead our bands: choose thou our mightiest;—

ETEOCLES
As so—to avert the sealing of the walls.

CREON
And under-captains: one man sees not all.

ETEOCLES
For valour chosen, or for prudent wit?

CREON
Nay, both: without its fellow, each is naught.

ETEOCLES
This shall be. Now to the seven towers will I,
And plant chiefs, as thou biddest, at the gates,
Champion for champion, ranged against the foe.

ETEOCLES
To tell each o'er, were costly waste of time,
When foes be camped beneath our very walls.

750

ETEOCLES
But I will go, that mine hands loiter not.

ETEOCLES
God grant I meet my brother face to face,
Clash in the grapple, and slay him with the spear—

ETEOCLES
Slay him, who came to lay my country waste!

ETEOCLES
But, for Antigone's marriage with thy son
Hæmon,—if aught untoward hap to me,—

409

μοῦσαν, ἐν ᾧ χάριτες χοροποιοί,
 ἀλλὰ σὺν ὀπλοφόροις στρατὸν Ἀργείων ἐπι-
 πνεύσας

790 αἵματι Θήβαις

κῶμον ἀναυλότατον προχορεύεις,
 οὐδ' ὑπὸ θυρσομανεῖ νεβρίδων μέτα δίνα,
 ἄρμασι καὶ ψαλίοις τετραβάμοσι μώνυχα πῶλον
 ἰππείαις ἐπὶ χεύμασι βαίνων
 Ἴσμηνοῖο θαάζεις, Ἀργείοις ἐπιπνεύσας
 Σπαρτῶν γένναν,
 ἀσπιδοφέρμονα θίασον ἔνοπλον,
 ἀντίπαλον κατὰ λάινα τείχεα
 χαλκῷ κοσμήσας.

ἦ δεινά τις Ἔρις θεός, ἃ τάδε
 μῆσατο πῆματα γᾶς βασιλεῦσιν,

800 Λαβδακίδαις πολυμόχθοις.

ὦ ζαθέων πετάλων πολυθηρότα-
 τον νάπος, Ἀρτέμιδος χιονοτρόφον ὄμμα Κιθαι-
 ρῶν, ἀντ.

μήποτε τὸν θανάτῳ προτεθέντα, λόχευμ' Ἰοκά-
 στας,

ᾧφελος Οἰδιπόδαν θρέψαι βρέφος ἔκβολον οἴκων,
 χρυσοδέτοις περόναις ἐπίσαμεν
 μηδὲ τὸ παρθένιον πτερόν, οὔρειον τέρας, ἐλθεῖν
 πένθεα γαίας,

Σφίγγ', ὑπομουσοτάταισι σὺν ᾠδαῖς,
 ἃ ποτε Καδμογενῆ τετραβάμοσι χαλαῖς

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

A strain to whose witchery dances are wreathing :
 But with clangour of harness of fight through the
 Argive array art thou breathing
 War-lust for the blood of our Thebes athirst, 790
 As thou leadeſt the dance of a revel accurſt
 Where no flutes ring.

Thou art found not where fawnſkin and thyrsus in
 mad reel mingle and ſunder,
 But with chariots and clashing of bits and with war-
 horses' footfall of thunder

 By Iſmenus' brimming marge
 With the ruſhing of ſteeds doſt thou charge,
 Into Argives breathing the battle-hate
 Againſt the ſons of the Dragon-ſtate ;
 And with harness of brass and with targe,
 Fronting our ramparts of ſtone, doſt array
 A hoſt for the fray.

A fearful Goddess in ſooth is Strife,
 By whoſe deviſing the troublous life
 Of the Labdacid kings of the land is anguiſh-rife. 800

Gorges myſterious of frondage, Cithaeron (*Ant.*)
 Beast-haunted, O birth-bed of ſnows, O thou apple
 of Artemis' eye, [Jocasta, to rear on
 Ah that thou ne'er hadſt received him, the babe of
 Thy lap ſuch a foſterling, Oedipus, thruſt from his
 home as to die,

Life-marked with the brooch-pin golden-looping !
 And O that the portent, the wings of the Sphinx
 from the mountain ſwooping,
 Down on the land for its woe had not come,
 The maiden that ſang us a chant of doom,
 An untuneable cry,
 When with talons of feet and of hands on the ram-
 parts of Cadmus ſhe darted,

μούσαν, ἐν ᾗ χάριτες χοροποιοί,
ἀλλὰ σὺν ὀπλοφόροις στρατῶν

790 πνεύσας
αἵματι Θῆβαις

κῶμον ἀναυλότατον προχορεύει
οὐδ' ὑπὸ θυρσομανεῖ νεβρίδων

ἄρμασι καὶ ψαλίοις τετραβάμα
ἰππέαις ἐπὶ χεύμασι βαινόντων

Ἰσμηνοῦ θοάξει, Ἀργείοις ἐπι

Σπαρτῶν γένναν,
ἀσπίδοφέρμονα θίασον ἔνοπλον

ἀντίπαλον κατὰ λάνα τείχεα
χαλκῶ κοσμήσας.

ἢ δεινὰ τις Ἔρις θεός, ἃ ταῦτε
800 μῆσατο πῆματα γῆς βασιλεῦσ

Λαβδακίδαις πολυμοχθοῖς.

ὦ Ζαθέων πετάλαν πολυθηρόν
τον νάπος, Ἀρτέμιδος χιανόντων

μήποτε τὸν θανάτῳ προτεθείστας,

ὠφέλες Οἰδιπόδαν θρέψαι βροχιδόχοις!

Χρυσοδέτοις περόναις ἐπίσαμον ἄνθρωποις
μηδὲ τὸ παρθένου πτερὸν, οὐρανὸν ἄνθρωποις

πένθεα γαίης,
Σφίγγι, ἀπομυσοστάταισι σὺν

ἅ ποτε Καδμογενῆ τετραβάματι

DAUGHTER, with MENOCEUS.

IRIASIAS

to my sightless feet

to mariners.

plant thou my steps.

lengthless is thy sire.

and the augury-lots

the bodings of the birds,

where I divine.

of Creon, tell

the toward way

Faint wax my knees :

have I strength to go.

art nigh thy friends,

grasp his hand, my child.

are wont

another's hand.

summons, Creon?

er strength, regain

y's toil and strain.

ight hitherward

theus' folk.

olpus' spear,

ictory.

t see, have I

ils received.

n fair ;

mid-surge

840

850

417

E E

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

ΤΕΙΡΕΣΙΑΣ

840 ἡγοῦ πάροιθε, θύγατερ· ὡς τυφλῷ ποδὶ
ὀφθαλμὸς εἶ σύ, ναυβάταισιν ἄστρον ὡς·
δεῦρ' εἰς τὸ λευρὸν πέδον ἵχνος τιθεῖσ' ἐμόν,
πρόβαινε, μὴ σφαλῶμεν· ἀσθενὴς πατήρ·
κλήρους τέ μοι φύλασσε παρθένῳ χερί,
οὓς ἔλαβον οἰωνίσματ' ὀρνίθων μαθῶν
θάκοισιν ἐν ἱεροῖσιν, οὐ μαντεύομαι.
τέκνον Μενοικεῦ, παῖ Κρέοντος, εἶπέ μοι
πόση τις ἢ ἴλιος ἀστεως ὁδὸς
πρὸς πατέρα τὸν σόν· ὡς ἐμὸν κάμνει γόνυ,
πυκνὴν δὲ βαίνων ἤλυσιν μόλις περῶ.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

θάρσει. πέλας γάρ, Τειρεσία, φίλοισι σοῖς
ἐξωρμίσαι σὸν πόδα· λαβοῦ δ' αὐτοῦ, τέκνον·
ὡς πᾶσ' ἀπήνη πούς τε πρεσβύτου φιλεῖ
χειρὸς θυραίας ἀναμένειν κουφίσματα.

ΤΕΙΡΕΣΙΑΣ

εἶεν, πάρεσμεν· τί με καλεῖς σπουδῆ, Κρέον·

ΚΡΕΩΝ

850 οὐπω λελήσμεθ'· ἀλλὰ σύλλεξαι σθένος
καὶ πνεῦμ' ἄθροισον, αἶπος ἐκβαλὼν ὁδοῦ.

ΤΕΙΡΕΣΙΑΣ

κόπῳ παρεῖμαι γόνυ· Ἐρεχθιδῶν ἀπο
δεῦρ' ἐκκομισθεὶς τῆς πάροιθεν ἡμέρας·
κάκει γὰρ ἦν τις πόλεμος Εὐμόλπου δορός,
οὐ καλλινίκους Κεκροπίδας ἔθηκ' ἐγώ·
καὶ τόνδε χρυσοῦν στέφανον, ὡς ὄρῃς, ἔχω
λαβὼν ἀπαρχὰς πολεμίων σκυλευμάτων.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

οἰωνὸν ἐθέμην καλλίνικα σὰ στέφη·
ἐν γὰρ κλύδωνι κείμεθ', ὥσπερ οἴσθα σύ,

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

Enter TEIRESIAS led by his DAUGHTER, with MENOECEUS.

TEIRESIAS

Lead on, my daughter : to my sightless feet
As eyes art thou, as star to mariners.
Hither, on even ground, plant thou my steps.
Guide, lest I stumble : strengthless is thy sire.
Guard in thy maiden hand the augury-lots
Which, when I marked the bodings of the birds,
In the holy seat I took, where I divine. 840
Thou child Menoeceus, son of Creon, tell
How much remaineth of the townward way
To where thy father waits. Faint wax my knees :
Journeying so long, scarce have I strength to go.

CREON

Take heart, Teiresias, thou art nigh thy friends,
And thy foot's anchorage. Grasp his hand, my child.
Mule-car and aged foot alike are wont
To await the upbearing of another's hand.

TEIRESIAS

Here am I. Why this instant summons, Creon ?

CREON

We have not forgotten. Gather strength, regain 850
Thy breath, cast off thy journey's toil and strain.

TEIRESIAS

Sooth am I spent with toil, brought hitherward
But yesterday from King Erechtheus' folk.
There too was war, against Eumolpus' spear,
Where I to Cecrops' sons gave victory.
This crown of gold, as thou mayst see, have I
As firstfruits of the foemen's spoils received.

CREON

I take thy triumph-crown for omen fair ;
For we are, as thou knowest, in mid-surge 854

860 δορὸς Δαναϊδῶν, καὶ μέγας Θήβαις ἀγών.
 βασιλεὺς μὲν οὖν βέβηκε κοσμηθεὶς ὄπλοις
 ἤδη πρὸς ἀλκὴν Ἐτεοκλῆς Μυκηνίδα·
 ἐμοὶ δ' ἐπέσταλκ' ἐκμαθεῖν σέθεν πάρα,
 τί δρῶντες ἂν μάλιστα σώσαιμεν πόλιν.

ΤΕΙΡΕΣΙΑΣ

Ἐτεοκλέους μὲν εἶνεκ' ἂν κλήσας στόμα
 χρησμούς ἐπέσχον· σοὶ δ', ἐπεὶ χρήζεις μαθεῖν,
 λέξω. νοσεῖ γὰρ ἦδε γῆ πάλαι, Κρέον,
 ἐξ οὗ τεκνώθη Λάιος βία θεῶν
 870 πύσιν τ' ἔφυσε μητρὶ μέλεον Οἰδίπουν·
 αἴ θ' αἱματωποὶ δεργμάτων διαφθοραὶ
 θεῶν σύφισμα κἀπίδειξις Ἑλλάδι.
 ἂ συγκαλύψαι παῖδες Οἰδίπου χρόνον
 χρήζοντες, ὡς δὴ θεοὺς ὑπεκδραμούμενοι,
 ἤμαρτον ἀμαθῶς· οὔτε γὰρ γέρα πατρὶ
 οὔτ' ἐξοδὸν διδόντες ἄνδρα δυστυχή
 ἐξηγηρίωσαν· ἐκ δ' ἔπνευσ' αὐτοῖς ἀρὰς
 δεινὰς, νοσῶν τε καὶ πρὸς ἠτιμασμένους.
 ἀγὼ τί οὐ δρῶν, ποῖα δ' οὐ λέγων ἔπη,
 εἰς ἔχθος ἦλθον παισὶ τοῖσιν Οἰδίπου.
 880 ἐγγὺς δὲ θάνατος αὐτόχειρ αὐτοῖς, Κρέον·
 πολλοὶ δὲ νεκροὶ περὶ νεκροῖς πεπτωκότες
 Ἀργεῖα καὶ Καδμεῖα μίξαντες βέλη
 πικρὸς γόους δώσουσι Θηβαίᾳ χθονί.
 σύ τ' ὦ τάλαινα συγκατασκάπτει πόλι,
 εἰ μὴ λόγοις τις τοῖς ἐμοῖσι πείσεται.
 ἐκεῖνο μὲν γὰρ πρῶτον ἦν, τῶν Οἰδίπου
 μηδένα πολίτην μηδ' ἄνακτ' εἶναι χθονός,
 ὡς δαιμονῶντας κἀνατρέψοντας πόλιν.
 890 ἐπεὶ δὲ κρεῖσσον τὸ κακὸν ἐστὶ τὰγαθοῦ,
 μὴ ἔστιν ἄλλη μηχανὴ σωτηρίας.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

Of Danaïd war, and Thebes must wrestle hard. 860
 King Eteocles, clad in war-array,
 Even now is gone to face Mycenæ's might ;
 But to me gave in charge to inquire of thee
 What deeds of ours shall best deliver Thebes.

TEIRESIAS

For Eteocles sealed my lips had been,
 The oracles withheld :—since *thou* wouldst know,
 I tell thee. Creon, long this land hath ailed
 Since Laius in heaven's despite begat
 Oedipus, his own mother's wretched spouse.
 Yea, and the gory ruin of his eyes 870
 Was heaven's device, for warning unto Greece.

And Oedipus' sons, who fain had cloaked it o'er
 With time, as though they could outrun the Gods,
 In folly erred : vouchsafing to their sire
 Nor honour nor free air, they stung to fury
 His misery : dread malison he breathed
 Against them, suffering and shamed withal.
 What did I not ? What warnings spake I not ?—
 And had for guerdon hate of Oedipus' sons.
 But nigh them, Creon, mutual slaughter looms ; 880
 And corpses many upon corpses piled,
 Transfixed with Argive and Cadmean shafts,
 With bitter wails shall dower the Theban land.

Thou, hapless town, art made a ruin-heap—
 Except unto my bodings one give heed !
 This had been best, that none of Oedipus' line
 Remained in Thebes, nor citizen nor king :
 They are fiend-possessed and doomed to wreck the
 state.

But, seeing the evil hath o'erborne the good,
 One other way of safety yet remains ; 890

ἀλλ'—οὐ γὰρ εἶπεν οὐτ' ἐμοὶ τόδ' ἀσφαλές
 πικρόν τε τοῖσι τὴν τύχην κεκτημένοις
 πόλει παρασχεῖν φάρμακον σωτηρίας—
 ἄπειμι, χαίρεθ'. εἰς γὰρ ὧν πολλῶν μέτα
 τὸ μέλλον, εἰ χρή, πείσομαι· τί γὰρ πάθω ;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ἐπίσχεσ αὐτοῦ, πρέσβυ.

ΤΕΙΡΕΣΙΑΣ

μὴ' πιλαμβάνου.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

μείνον, τί φεύγεις ;

ΤΕΙΡΕΣΙΑΣ

ἢ τύχη σ', ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐγώ.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

φράσον πολίταις καὶ πόλει σωτηρίαν.

ΤΕΙΡΕΣΙΑΣ

βούλει σὺ μέντοι κούχῃ βουλήσει τάχα.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

900 καὶ πῶς πατρώαν γαῖαν οὐ σῶσαι θέλω ;

ΤΕΙΡΕΣΙΑΣ

θέλεις ἀκούσαι δῆτα καὶ σπουδὴν ἔχεις ;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

εἰς γὰρ τί μᾶλλον δεῖ προθυμίαν ἔχειν ;

ΤΕΙΡΕΣΙΑΣ

κλύοις ἂν ἤδη τῶν ἐμῶν θεσπισμάτων.
 πρῶτον δ' ἐκεῖνο βούλομαι σαφῶς μαθεῖν,
 ποῦ 'στιν Μενοικεύς, ὅς με δεῦρ' ἐπήγαγεν ;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ᾧδ' οὐ μακρὰν ἄπεστι, πλησίον δέ σου.

ΤΕΙΡΕΣΙΑΣ

ἀπελθέτω νυν θεσφάτων ἐμῶν ἐκάς.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

But this to tell, for me were all unsafe,
And bitter unto those whom fate endows
With power to give their city safety's balm.
I go. Farewell! What must befall will I—
One midst a multitude—endure. What help?

[*Turns to go.*]

CREON

Abide here, ancient!

TEIRESIAS

Lay not hold on me.

CREON

Tarry: why flee?

TEIRESIAS

Thy fortune flees, not I.

CREON

Tell citizens and city safety's path.

TEIRESIAS

Ay, fain art thou!—but loth thou soon shalt be.

CREON

How?—not desire to save my fatherland? 900

TEIRESIAS

Wouldst thou indeed hear? Art thou set thereon?

CREON

Yea: whereunto more earnest should I be?

TEIRESIAS

Then straightway shalt thou hear mine oracles.

But of this first would I be certified—

Where is Menoeceus, who hath led me hither?

CREON

He stands not far, but even at thy side.

TEIRESIAS

Let him withdraw then from my bodings far.

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ἔμὸς πεφυκὼς παῖς ἂ δεῖ σιγήσεται.

ΤΕΙΡΕΣΙΑΣ

βούλει παρόντος δῆτά σοι τούτου φράσω ;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

910 κλύων γὰρ ἂν τέρποιτο τῆς σωτηρίας.

ΤΕΙΡΕΣΙΑΣ

ἄκουε δὴ νυν θεσφάτων ἑμῶν ὁδόν·
[ἂ δρῶντες ἂν σώσασθε Καδμείων πόλιν.]
σφάξαι Μενοικῆ τόνδε δεῖ σ' ὑπὲρ πάτρας
σὸν παῖδ', ἐπειδὴ τὴν τύχην αὐτὸς καλεῖς.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

τί φῆς ; τί ν' εἶπας τόνδε μῦθον, ὦ γέρον ;

ΤΕΙΡΕΣΙΑΣ

ἄπερ πέφυκε, ταῦτα κἀνάγκη σε δρᾶν.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ὦ πολλὰ λέξας ἐν βραχεῖ χρόνῳ κακά.

ΤΕΙΡΕΣΙΑΣ

σοί γ', ἀλλὰ πατρίδι μεγάλα καὶ σωτήρια.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

οὐκ ἔκλυον, οὐκ ἤκουσα· χαιρέτω πόλις.

ΤΕΙΡΕΣΙΑΣ

920 ἀνὴρ ὄδ' οὐκέθ' αὐτὸς, ἐκνεύει πάλιν.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

χαίρων ἴθ'. οὐ γὰρ σῶν με δεῖ μαντευμάτων.

ΤΕΙΡΕΣΙΑΣ

ἀπόλωλεν ἀλήθει', ἐπεὶ σὺ δυστυχεῖς ;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ὦ πρὸς σε γονάτων καὶ γερασμίου τριχός,

ΤΕΙΡΕΣΙΑΣ

τί προσπίτνεις με ; δυσφύλακτ' αἰτεῖ κακά.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

CREON

He is my son, will keep what must be secret.

TEIRESIAS

Wilt thou indeed I speak before his face?

CREON

Yea; of this safety gladly shall he hear. 910

TEIRESIAS

Hear then the tenor of mine oracle,
What deed of yours shall save the Thebans' town.
Menoceus must thou slay for fatherland,
Thy son—since thou thyself demandest fate.

CREON

How say'st thou? Ancient, what was this thy word?

TEIRESIAS

As hath been doomed, even this thou needs must do.

CREON

Oh countless ills in one short moment told!

TEIRESIAS

Thine ills—but great salvation for thy land.

CREON

I heard not!—hearkened not!—away, thou Thebes!

TEIRESIAS

Not the same man is this: he flincheth now. 920

CREON

Depart in peace: thy bodings need I not.

TEIRESIAS

Is truth dead, for that thou art fortune-crost?

CREON

Oh, by thy knees, and by thy reverend hair!—

TEIRESIAS

Why kneel? Thou prayest for ruin inevitable.

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

ΚΡΕΩΝ

σίγα· πόλει δὲ τούσδε μὴ λέξης λόγους.

ΤΕΙΡΕΣΙΑΣ

ἀδικεῖν κελεύεις μ'· οὐ σιωπήσαιμεν ἄν.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

τί δή με δράσεις ; παῖδά μου κατακτενεῖς ;

ΤΕΙΡΕΣΙΑΣ

ἄλλοις μελήσει ταῦτ', ἐμοὶ δ' εἰρήσεται.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ἐκ τοῦ δ' ἐμοὶ τόδ' ἦλθε καὶ τέκνω κακόν ;

ΤΕΙΡΕΣΙΑΣ

- 930 ὀρθῶς μ' ἐρωτᾷς κεῖς ἀγῶν' ἔρχει λόγων.
 δεῖ τόνδε θαλάμαις, οὐ δράκων ὁ γηγενῆς
 ἐγένετο Δίρκης ναμάτων ἐπίσκοπος,
 σφαγέντα φόνιον αἷμα γῆ δοῦναι χοάς,
 Κάδμου παλαιῶν Ἄρεος ἐκ μηνιμάτων,
 ὃς γηγενεῖ δράκοντι τιμωρεῖ φόνον.
 καὶ ταῦτα δρῶντες σύμμαχον κτήσεσθ' Ἄρη.
 χθὼν δ' ἀντὶ καρποῦ καρπὸν ἀντὶ θ' αἵματος
 αἷμ' ἦν λάβη βρότειον, ἕξει' εὐμενῆ
 γῆν, ἣ ποθ' ἡμῖν χρυσοπήληκα στάχυν
 940 σπαρτῶν ἀνήκεν· ἐκ γένους δὲ δεῖ θανεῖν
 τοῦδ', ὃς δράκοντος γέννος ἐκπέφυκε παῖς.
 σὺ δ' ἐνθάδ' ἡμῖν λοιπὸς εἰ σπαρτῶν γένους
 ἀκέραιος, ἐκ τε μητρὸς ἀρσένων τ' ἄπο,
 οἱ σοί τε παῖδες. Λίμονος μὲν οὖν γάμοι
 σφαγὰς ἀπείργουσ'· οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἦθεος·
 κεῖ μὴ γὰρ εὐνῆς ἦψατ', ἀλλ' ἔχει λέχος·
 οὗτος δὲ πῶλος τῆδ' ἀνειμένος πόλει
 θανὼν πατρώαν γαῖαν ἐκσώσειεν ἄν.
 950 πικρὸν δ' Ἀδράστῳ νόστον Ἀργείοισί τε
 θήσει, μέλαιναν κῆρ' ἐπ' ὄμμασιν βαλῶν,

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

CREON

Keep silence : to the city tell not this.

TEIRESIAS

Thou bidd'st me sin : I will not hold my peace.

CREON

What wilt thou do to me ?—wilt slay my son ?

TEIRESIAS

Others shall see to that. 'Tis mine to speak.

CREON

Whence came on me this curse, and on my son ?

TEIRESIAS

Fair question and demand that I show cause. 930
In that den where the earth-born dragon lay
Watching the streams of Dirce, must he yield,
Slaughtered, a blood-oblation to the earth ;
For Ares, nursing wrath 'gainst Cadmus long,
Now would avenge his earth-born dragon's death.
Do this, and Ares for your champion win.

If earth for seed gain seed, and human blood
For blood, then kindly shall ye prove the earth
Which once sent up a harvest golden-helmeted
Of Sown-men. And it needeth that one die 940
Born of the lineage of the Dragon's Teeth ;
And sole survivor art thou of the Sown
Of pure blood both on sire's and mother's side,
Thou and thy two sons. Haemon's spousals bar
His slaughter, for he is not virgin man.
Though sealed the rite be not, betrothed is he.

But this lad, to his city consecrate,
Dying, should yet redeem his fatherland,
And for Adrastus and the Argives make
Bitter return, their eyes with black death pulled, 950

κλεινάς τε Θήβας. τοῖνδ' ἔλου' δυοῖν πότμοι
 τὸν ἕτερον· ἢ γὰρ παῖδα σῶσον ἢ πόλιν.
 τὰ μὲν παρ' ἡμῶν πάντ' ἔχεις· ἡγοῦ, τέκνον,
 πρὸς οἶκον. ὅστις δ' ἐμπύρω χρῆται τέχνη,
 μάταιος· ἦν μὲν ἐχθρὰ σημήνας τύχη,
 πικρὸς καθέστηχ' οἷς ἂν οἰωνοσκοπῆ·
 ψευδῆ δ' ὑπ' οἴκτου τοῖσι χρωμένοις λέγων
 ἀδικεῖ τὰ τῶν θεῶν. Φοῖβον ἀνθρώποις μόνου
 χρῆν θεσπιφδεῖν, ὃς δέδοικεν οὐδένα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

960

Κρέον, τί σιγᾶς γῆρυν ἄφθογγον σχάσας ;
 κάμοι γὰρ οὐδὲν ἦσσον ἐκπληξίς πάρα.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

τί δ' ἂν τις εἴποι ; δῆλον οἷ γ' ἐμοὶ λόγοι.
 ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐποτ' εἰς τόδ' εἶμι συμφορᾶς,
 ὥστε σφαγέντα παῖδα προσθεῖναι πόλει.
 πᾶσιν γὰρ ἀνθρώποισι φιλότεκνος βίος,
 οὐδ' ἂν τὸν αὐτοῦ παῖδά τις δοίη κτανεῖν.
 μή μ' εὐλογείτω τὰμά τις κτείνων τέκνα.
 αὐτὸς δ', ἐν ὠραίῳ γὰρ ἔσταμεν βίου,
 θνήσκειν ἔτοιμος πατρίδος ἐκλυτήριον.

970

ἀλλ' εἶα, τέκνον, πρὶν μαθεῖν πᾶσαν πόλιν,
 ἀκόλαστ' ἐάσας μάντεων θεσπίσματα,
 φεῦγ' ὡς τάχιστα τῆσδ' ἀπαλλαχθεὶς χθονός·
 λέξει γὰρ ἀρχαῖς καὶ στρατηλάταις τάδε,
 πύλας ἐφ' ἑπτὰ καὶ λοχαγέτας μολῶν·
 κἂν μὲν φθάσωμεν, ἔστι σοι σωτηρία·
 ἦν δ' ὑστερήσης, οἰχόμεσθα, κατθανεῖ.

ΜΕΝΟΙΚΕΤΣ

ποι' δῆτα φεύγω ; τίνα πόλιν ; τίνα ξένων ;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ὅπου χθονὸς τῆσδ' ἐκποδὼν μάλιστ' ἔσει.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

And make Thebes glorious. One of these two fates
Choose: either save the city, or thy son.

Now hast thou all my tale. Lead on, my child,
Homeward. Who useth the diviner's art
Is foolish. If he heraldeth ill things,
He is loathed of those to whom he prophesies.
If, pitying them that seek to him, he lie,
He wrongs the Gods. Sole prophet unto men
Ought Phoebus to have been, who feareth none.

[*Exit.*

CHORUS

Why silent, Creon, with lips held from speech? 960
On me, too, consternation weighs no less.

CREON

What should one say? But clear mine answer is:
Never such depth of misery will I seek,
As offer for my city a slaughtered son!
For love of children filleth all men's life,
And none to death would yield up his own child.
Let no man praise me while he slays my sons!
Myself—who have reached the ripeness of my
years—

For death stand ready, to redeem my land.
But up, my child, ere all the city hear: 970
Heed not the reckless words of soothsayers,
But fly—with all speed get thee from the land!
To the seven gates, the captains, will he go,
And tell the rulers and the chieftains this.
Yet, may we but forestall him, thou art saved;
But if thou lag, undone we are—thou diest.

MENOECEUS

But whither flee?—what city seek?—what friend?

CREON

Where thou from this land's reach shalt farthest be.

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

ΜΕΝΟΙΚΕΤΣ

οὔκουν σὲ φράζειν εἰκός, ἐκπονεῖν δ' ἐμέ ;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

Δελφοὺς περάσας—

ΜΕΝΟΙΚΕΤΣ

ποῖ με χρή, πάτερ, μολεῖν ;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

Αἰτωλίδ' εἰς γῆν.

ΜΕΝΟΙΚΕΤΣ

ἐκ δὲ τῆσδε ποῖ περῶ ;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

Θεσπρωτὸν οὔδας.

ΜΕΝΟΙΚΕΤΣ

σεμνὰ Δωδώνης βάθρα ;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ἔγνωσ.

ΜΕΝΟΙΚΕΤΣ

τί δὴ τόδ' ἔρυμά μοι γενήσεται ;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

πόμπιμος ὁ δαίμων.

ΜΕΝΟΙΚΕΤΣ

χρημάτων δὲ τίς πόρος ;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ἐγὼ πορεύσω χρυσόν.

ΜΕΝΟΙΚΕΤΣ

εὖ λέγεις, πάτερ.

χώρει νυν· ὡς σὴν πρὸς κασιγνήτην μολών,
ἧς πρῶτα μαστὸν εἶλκυσ', Ἰοκάστην λέγω,
μητρὸς στερηθεὶς ὀρφανός τ' ἀποζυγεῖς,
προσηγορήσων εἶμι καὶ σώσων βίον.
ἄλλ' εἶα, χώρει. μὴ τὸ σὸν κωλυέτω,

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

MENOECEUS

It best beseems that thou tell, I perform.

CREON

Pass Delphi—

MENOECEUS

Whither, father, must I go?

980

CREON

Unto Aetolia.

MENOECEUS

Whither journey thence?

CREON

Thesprotia's soil.

MENOECEUS

Dodona's hallowed floor?

CREON

Thou say'st.

MENOECEUS

What shall be my protection there?

CREON

The God shall speed thee.

MENOECEUS

How supply my need?

CREON

I will find gold.

MENOECEUS

Father, thou sayest well:

Haste then. Unto thy sister will I go,—

Jocasta, on whose bosom first I lay,

Reft of my mother, left an orphan lone,—

To bid her farewell, ere I flee for life.

On then: pass in, be hindrance not in thee.

990

[Exit CREON.]

γυναῖκες, ὡς εὖ πατρὸς ἐξεῖλον φόβου
 κλέψας λόγουςιν, ὥσθ' ἂ βούλομαι τυχεῖν
 ὅς μ' ἐκκομίζει, πόλιν ἀποστερῶν τύχης,
 καὶ δειλία δίδωσι. καὶ συγγνωστὰ μὲν
 γέροντι τούμῳ δ' οὐχὶ συγγνώμην ἔχει,
 1000 προδότῃν γενέσθαι πατρίδος ἢ μ' ἐγείνατο.
 ὡς οὖν ἂν εἰδῆτ', εἶμι καὶ σώσω πόλιν
 ψυχὴν τε δώσω τῆσδ' ὑπερθανεῖν χθονός,
 αἰσχροὺν γάρ, οἱ μὲν θεσφάτων ἐλεύθεροι
 οὐκ εἰς ἀνάγκην δαιμόνων ἀφιγμένοι
 στάντες παρ' ἀσπίδ' οὐκ ὀκνήσουσιν θανεῖν,
 πύργων πάροιθε μαχόμενοι πάτρας ὑπερ-
 ἐγὼ δέ, πατέρα καὶ κασίγνητον προδοῦς
 πόλιν τ' ἐμαυτοῦ, δειλὸς ὡς ἔξω χθονός
 ἄπειμ' ὅπου δ' ἂν ζῶ, κακὸς φανήσομαι.
 μὰ τὸν μετ' ἄστρον Ζῆν' Ἄρη τε φοῖνιον,
 ὅς τοὺς ὑπερτείλαντας ἐκ γαίας ποτὲ
 Σπαρτοὺς ἀνακτας τῆσδε γῆς ἰδρύσατο.
 1010 ἀλλ' εἶμι καὶ στὰς ἐξ ἐπάλλξεων ἄκρων
 σφάξας ἐμαυτὸν σηκὸν ἐς μελαμβαθῆ
 δράκοντος, ἔνθ' ὁ μάντις ἐξηγήσατο,
 ἐλευθερώσω γαῖαν· εἴρηται λόγος.
 στείχω δέ, θανάτου δῶρον οὐκ αἰσχροὺν πόλει
 δώσων, νόσου δὲ τήνδ' ἀπαλλάξω χθόνα.
 εἰ γὰρ λαβῶν ἕκαστος ὅ τι δύναίτο τις
 χρηστὸν διέλθοι τοῦτο κείς κοινὸν φέροι
 πατρίδι, κακῶν ἂν αἱ πόλεις ἐλασσόνων
 πειρώμεναι τὸ λοιπὸν εὐτυχοῖεν ἂν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1020 ἔβας ἔβας,
 ὦ πτεροῦσσα, γᾶς λόχευμα

στρ.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

Maidens, how well I have stilled my father's fear
 By guileful words, to attain the end I would !
 Me would he steal hence, robbing Thebes of hope,
 Branding me coward ! This might one forgive
 In age ; but no forgiveness should be mine
 If I betray the city of my birth.

Doubt not but I will go and save the town,
 And give my soul to death for this land's sake.
 'Twere shame that men no oracles constrain,
 Who have not fall'n into the net of fate, 1000
 Shoulder to shoulder stand, blench not from death,
 Fighting before the towers for fatherland,
 And I, betraying father, brother, yea,
 My city, craven-like flee forth the land—
 A dastard manifest, where'er I dwell !

By Zeus star-throned, by Ares, slaughter's lord,
 Who set on high in kingship over Thebes
 The Dragon-brood that cleft the womb of earth,
 Go will I, on the ramparts' height will stand, 1010
 And o'er the Dragon's gloomy chasm-cave,
 Whereof the seer spake, will I slay myself,
 And make my country free. The word is said.

I go, to give my country no mean gift,
 My life, from ruin so to save the land :
 For, if each man would take his all of good,
 Lavish it, lay it at his country's feet,
 Then fewer evils should the nations prove,
 And should through days to come be prosperous.

[Exit.

CHORUS

Thou camest, camest, O thou wingèd doom, (Str.)
 Fruit of Earth's travailing, 1020

νερτέρου τ' Ἐχίδνας,
 Καδμείων ἀρπαγά,
 πολύφθορος πολύστονος,
 μιξοπάρθενος,
 δάιοιγ τέρας,
 φοιτάσι πτεροῖς
 χαλαῖσί τ' ὠμοσίτοις·
 Διρκαίων ἅ ποτ' ἐκ
 τόπων νέους πεδαίρουσ'
 ἄλυρον ἀμφὶ μούσαν
 ὀλομέναν τ' Ἐρινὺν
 1030 ἔφερες ἔφερες ἄχεα πατρίδι
 φόνια· φόνιος ἐκ θεῶν
 ὃς τάδ' ἦν ὁ πράξας.
 ἰάλεμοι δὲ ματέρων,
 ἰάλεμοι δὲ παρθένων
 ἐστέναζον οἴκοις·
 ἰήιον βοὰν βοάν,
 ἰήιον μέλος μέλος
 ἄλλος ἄλλ' ἐπωτότυζε
 διαδοχαῖς ἀνὰ πτόλιν.
 βροντᾶ δὲ στεναγμὸς
 1040 ἀχά τ' ἦν ὅμοιος,
 ὅποτε πόλεος ἀφανίσειεν
 ἡ πτεροῦσσα παρθένος τιν' ἀνδρῶν.

χρόνῳ δ' ἔβα ἀντ.
 Πυθίαις ἀποστολαῖσιν
 Οἰδίπους ὁ τλάμων
 Θηβαίαν τάνδε γᾶν
 τότε ἀσμένοις, πάλιν δ' ἄχη·
 ματρὶ γὰρ γάμουσ

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

Begotten of the Worm of Nether-gloom,
 On Cadmus' sons to spring
Death-fraught, and fraught with moanings for the
 dead,
 Half maiden, half brute-beast,
Monster of roving pinions, talons red
 From that raw-ravening feast,
Snatching from Dirce's meads her young men,
 shrieking
 O'er them thy dissonant knell,
Anguish of slaughter on our country wreaking,
 Wreaking a curse-doom fell! 1030
Ah, murderous God, these ills for us who fashioned!
 Moanings of mothers filled
The shuddering homes, and maidens' moanings pas-
 sioned :
 And wail to wail aye thrilled,
And dirge to death-dirge, each to each replying
 The stricken city through—
A nation's pang—as thunder pealed their crying, 1040
When the winged maid with each new victim flying
 From earth, was lost to view.
(Ant.)
At last was Oedipus, woe-fated, bound
 From Pytho, hither led,—
Our joy, but soon our grief,—who, triumph-crowned
 From that dark riddle read,
Wretch, in foul bridal made his mother wife,

1050 δυσγάμους τάλας
 καλλίνικος ὦν
 αἰνιγμάτων συνάπτει,
 1060 μαιίνει δὲ πτόλιν·
 δι' αἱμάτων δ' ἀμείβει
 μυσαρὸν εἰς ἀγῶνα
 καταβαλὼν ἀραίσι
 τέκεα μέλεος. ἀγάμεθ' ἀγάμεθ',
 ὅς ἐπὶ θάνατον οἴχεται
 γᾶς ὑπὲρ πατρώας,
 Κρέοντι μὲν λιπῶν γόους,
 τὰ δ' ἐπτάπυργα κληῖθρα γᾶς
 καλλίνικα θήσων.
 1060 γενοίμεθ' ὧδὲ ματέρες
 γενοίμεθ' εὐτεκνοί, φίλα
 Παλλάς, ἃ δράκοντος αἶμα
 λιθόβολον κατειργάσω,
 Καδμείαν μέριμναν
 ὀρμήσασ' ἐπ' ἔργον,
 ὅθεν ἐπέσυτο τάνδε γαῖαν
 ἀρπαγαῖσι δαιμόνων τις ἄτα.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

1070 ὦή, τίς ἐν πύλαισι δωμάτων κυρεῖ;
 ἀνοίγετ', ἐκπορεύετ' Ἰοκάστην δόμων.
 ὦή μάλ' αὐθις· διὰ μακροῦ μὲν, ἀλλ' ὅμως
 ἔξελθ', ἄκουσον, Οἰδίπου κλεινὴ δάμαρ,
 λήξασ' ὄδυρμῶν πενθίμων τε δακρῶν.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

ὦ φίλτατ', ἧ που ξυμφορὰν ἤκεις φέρων
 Ἐτεοκλέους θανόντος, οὐ παρ' ἀσπίδα
 βέβηκας ἀεὶ πολεμίων εἴργων βέλη;

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

1050

Polluted Thebes, and banned
 His sons to stain in this accursèd strife
 With brother-blood the hand.
 Praise to him, praise, who unto death is faring,
 Yea, for his land to die,
 Leaving to Creon moans of love's despairing,
 But setting victory
 For crown upon the city seven-gated!
 Ah, may such noble son
 To bless mine happy motherhood be fated,
 O Pallas, gracious one!—

1060

Pallas, of whom the sudden stone leapt, spilling
 The dragon-warder's blood:
 Thou gav'st the thought the heart of Cadmus thrilling
 To dare the deed whence rushed, with ravin filling
 The land, a God's curse-flood.

Enter MESSENGER.

MESSENGER

Ho there! Who standeth at the palace-gate?
 Open ye, bring Jocasta forth her bowers.
 Ho there, again! Though late, yet come thou forth:
 Hearken, renownèd wife of Oedipus;
 Cease from thy wailings and thy tears of grief.

1070

Enter JOCASTA.

JOCASTA

Friend—friend!—thou com'st not sure with ill news
 fraught
 Of Eteocles' death, by whose shield aye
 Thou marchest, warding him from foemen's darts?

[τί μοί ποθ' ἤκεισ καινὸν ἀγγελῶν ἔπος;]
τέθνηκεν ἢ ζῆ παῖς ἐμός; σήμαινέ μοι.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ζῆ, μὴ τρέσης τόδ', ὥς σ' ἀπαλλάξω φόβου.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

τί δ', ἐπτάπυργοι πῶς ἔχουσι περιβολαί;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἐστᾶσ' ἄθραστοι, κούκ ἀνήρπασται πόλις.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

1080

ἦλθον δὲ πρὸς κίνδυνον Ἀργείου δορός;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἀκμήν γ' ἐπ' αὐτήν· ἀλλ' ὁ Καδμείων Ἄρης
κρείσσων κατέστη τοῦ Μυκηναίου δορός.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

ἐν εἰπέ πρὸς θεῶν, εἴ τι Πολυνείκους πέρι
οἶσθ', ὡς μέλει μοι καὶ τόδ', εἰ λεύσσει φάος.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ζῆ σοι ξυνωρὶς εἰς τόδ' ἡμέρας τέκνων.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

εὐδαιμονοίης. πῶς γὰρ Ἀργείων δόρυ
πυλῶν ἀπεστήσασθε πυργηρούμενοι;
λέξον, γέροντα τυφλὸν ὡς κατὰ στέγας
ἐλθοῦσα τέρψω, τῆσδε γῆς σεσωσμένης.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

1090

ἐπεὶ Κρέοντος παῖς ὁ γῆς ὑπερθανῶν
πύργων ἐπ' ἄκρων στὰς μελάνδετον ξίφος
λαιμῶν διῆκε τῆδε γῆ σωτήριον,
λόχους ἔνειμεν ἐπτά καὶ λοχαγέτας
πύλας ἐφ' ἐπτά, φύλακας Ἀργείου δορός,
σὸς παῖς, ἐφέδρους δ' ἰππότας μὲν ἰππόταις
ἔταξ', ὀπλίτας δ' ἀσπίδηφόροις ἔπι,

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

What word of tidings bringest thou to me?
Dead is my son, or liveth he?—declare.

MESSENGER

He lives. Fear not! I rid thee so of dread.

JOCASTA

And the seven towers, how fares the fence thereof?

MESSENGER

They stand unshattered: Thebes not yet is spoiled.

JOCASTA

Were they sore perilled of the Argive spear?

1080

MESSENGER

At ruin's brink: but stronger proved the might
Of Cadmus' people than Mycenae's spear.

JOCASTA

One thing, by heaven!—of Polyneices aught
Canst tell? I yearn for this? Doth he see light?

MESSENGER

Liveth thus far thy chariot-yoke of sons.

JOCASTA

Blessings on thee! How did ye thrust the spear
Of Argos back from your beleaguered gates?
Tell, that I may rejoice the blind old man
The halls within, with news of this land saved.

MESSENGER

When Creon's son, who for his country died,
Climbing a tower's height, had thrust the sword
Black-hafted through his throat to save the land,
Seven bands with captains to the seven gates,
For watch and ward against the Argive spear,
Thy son set, horsemen covering horsemen ranged,
And men-at-arms behind the shield-bearers,

1090

- ὡς τῷ νοσοῦντι τειχέων εἶη δορός
 ἀλκὴ δι' ὀλίγου. περγάμων δ' ἀπ' ὀρθίων
 1100 Λεύκασπιν εἰσορῶμεν Ἀργείων στρατὸν
 Τευμησὸν ἐκλιπόντα· καὶ τάφρου πέλας
 δρόμῳ συνῆψεν ἄστρῳ Καδμείας χθονός.
 παιᾶν δὲ καὶ σάλπιγγες ἐκελάδουν ὁμοῦ
 ἐκείθεν ἔκ τε τειχέων ἡμῶν πάρα.
 καὶ πρῶτα μὲν προσῆγε Νηίσταις πύλαις
 λόχον πυκναῖσιν ἀσπίσιν πεφρικότα
 ὁ τῆς κυναγοῦ Παρθενοπαῖος ἔκγονος,
 ἐπίσημ' ἔχων οἰκείον ἐν μέσῳ σάκει,
 ἐκηβόλοις τόξοισιν Ἀταλάντην κάπρον
 1110 χειρουμένην Αἰτωλόν. εἰς δὲ Προϊτίδας
 πύλας ἐχώρει σφάγι' ἔχων ἐφ' ἄρματι
 ὁ μάντις Ἀμφιάραος, οὐ σημεῖ' ἔχων
 ὑβρισμέν', ἀλλὰ σωφρόνως ἄσημ' ὄπλα.
 Ὠγύγια δ' εἰς πυλώμαθ' Ἴππομέδων ἀναξ
 ἔστειχ' ἔχων σημεῖον ἐν μέσῳ σάκει
 στικτοῖς Πανόπτην ὄμμασιν δεδορκότα,
 τὰ μὲν σὺν ἄστρον ἐπιτολαῖσιν ὄματα
 βλέποντα, τὰ δὲ κρύπτοντα δυνόντων μέτα,
 ὡς ὕστερον θανόντος εἰσορᾶν παρῆν.
 Ὅμολωσίσιν δὲ τάξιν εἶχε πρὸς πύλαις
 1120 Τυδεύς, λέοντος δέρος ἔχων ἐπ' ἀσπίδι
 χαίτη πεφρικός· δεξιᾷ δὲ λαμπάδα
 Τῖτάν Προμηθεὺς ἔφερεν ὡς πρήσων πόλιν.
 ὁ σὸς δὲ Κρηναίοισι Πολυνείκης πύλαις
 Ἄρη προσῆγε· Ποτνιαδες δ' ἐπ' ἀσπίδι
 ἐπίσημα πῶλοι δρομάδες ἐσκίρτων φόβῳ,
 εὖ πως στρόφιγξιν ἐνδοθεν κυκλούμεναι
 πόρπαχ' ὑπ' αὐτόν, ὥστε μαίνεσθαι δοκεῖν.
 ὁ δ' οὐκ ἔλασσον Ἄρεος εἰς μάχην φρονῶν

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

That, where the wall's defence failed, succour of
spears

Might be hard by. Then from the soaring towers
We marked the white shields of the Argive host
Leaving Teumessus. Having neared the foss, 1100
Suddenly charging closed they on Cadmus' burg.
Then paean swelled, and shattering trumpet shrilled,
All blended, from the foe and from the walls.

Parthenopaeus, that famed huntress' son,
First led against the Gate Neïstian
A squadron horrent all with serried shields,
On his mid-targe the blazon of his house,
Atalanta slaying the Aetolian boar
With shafts far-smiting. Against Proetus' Gate,
Slain victims on his chariot, marched the seer 1110
Amphiaraus, with no proud device,
But sober weapons void of blazonry.
The gates Ogygian King Hippomedon
Assailed, in mid-targe bearing for device
Argus, with gemmy eyes for aye at gaze,
Some with the rising of the stars aglare,
While, as the stars set, some were slumber-veiled,
As might be seen thereafter, he being slain.
Against the Gate of Homole Tydeus took
His stand, his shield draped with a lion's hide 1120
All shaggy-haired: Titan Prometheus bore
A torch in hand there, as to burn the town.

Thy son Polyneices at the Fountain Gate
Led on the war. Upon his shield the steeds
Of Potniae racing in fear-frenzy sprang,
Wheeled round within by pivots cunningly
Hard by the hand-grip, that they seemed distraught.
High-stomached for the fight as Ares' self,

- Καπανεὺς προσῆγε λόχον ἐπ' Ἡλέκτραις πύλαις·
 1130 σιδηρονώτοις δ' ἀσπίδος τύποις ἐπῆν
 γίγας ἐπ' ὄμοις γηγευῆς ὄλην πόλιν
 φέρων μοχλοῖσιν ἕξανασπάσας βάθρων,
 ὑπόνοιαν ἡμῖν οἶα πείσεται πόλις.
 ταῖς δ' ἐβδόμαις Ἄδραστος ἐν πύλαισιν ἦν,
 ἑκατὸν ἐχίδναις ἀσπίδ' ἐκπληρῶν γραφῇ
 ὕδρας ἔχων λαιοῖσιν ἐν βραχίουσιν
 Ἄργεῖον αὐχημ'· ἐκ δὲ τειχέων μέσων
 δράκοντες ἔφερον τέκνα Καδμείων γνάθοις.
 παρῆν δ' ἐκάστου τῶνδ' ἐμοὶ θεάματα
 1140 ξύνθημα παραφέρουσι ποιμέσιν λόχων.
 καὶ πρῶτα μὲν τόξοισι καὶ μεσαγκύλοις
 ἐμαρνάμεσθα σφενδόλαις θ' ἐκηβόλοις
 πετρῶν τ' ἀραγμοῖς· ὡς δ' ἐνικῶμεν μάχῃ,
 ἔκλαγξε Τυδεὺς χῶ σὸς ἐξαίφνης γόνος·
 ὦ τέκνα Δαναῶν, πρὶν κατεξάνθαι βολαῖς,
 τί μέλλετ' ἄρδην πάντες ἐμπίπτειν πύλαις,
 γυμνήτες ἱππῆς ἀρμάτων τ' ἐπιστάται·
 ἠχῆς δ' ὅπως ἤκουσαν, οὐτις ἀργὸς ἦν·
 πολλοὶ δ' ἐπιπτον κρᾶτας αἵματούμενοι,
 1150 ἡμῶν τ' ἐς οὐδας εἶδες ἂν πρὸ τειχέων
 πυκνοὺς κυβιστητήρας ἐκπεπνευκότας,
 ξηρὰν δ' ἔδενον γαῖαν αἵματος ῥοαῖς.
 ὁ δ' Ἄρκας, οὐκ Ἄργεῖος, Ἀταλάντης γόνος
 τυφῶς πύλαισιν ὡς τις ἐμπεσὼν βοᾷ
 πῦρ καὶ δικέλλας, ὡς κατασκάψων πόλιν·
 ἀλλ' ἔσχε μαργῶντ' αὐτὸν ἐναλίου θεοῦ
 Περικλύμενος παῖς λᾶαν ἐμβαλὼν κᾶρα
 ἀμαξοπληθῆ, γεῖσ' ἐπάλλεων ἄπο·
 ξανθὸν δὲ κρᾶτα διεπάλυνε καὶ ῥαφὰς
 1160 ἔρρηξεν ὀστέων, ἄρτι δ' οἰνωπὸν γένυν

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

Led Capaneus his troop to Electra's Gate ;
And, for his iron-faced buckler's blazonry, 1130
An earth-born giant on his shoulders bore
A whole town from its basement lever-wrenched,
As token for us of our city's fate.
And at the seventh gate Adrastus was,
His graven shield with five-score vipers thronged
Swung on his left arm, even the Argive vaunt,
The Hydra ; and its serpents from our walls
Were snatching Cadmus' children in their jaws.
Each chief's device I well might mark, who bare
The watchword to the leaders of our bands. 1140

Then first with bows and thong-spced javelins
We battled, and with slings that smote from far,
And crashing stones. But when we 'gan prevail,
Suddenly shouted Tydeus and thy son :
" Sons of the Danaans, ere their bolts quell you,
Why do ye tarry, onward-hurling all,
To assault their gates—light-armed, horse, chariot-
lords? "

Soon as they heard that cry, was none hung back.
Many, with heads blood-dashed, were falling fast ;
And of us many earthward flung thou hadst seen 1150
Before the walls, like divers plunging, dead,
Drenching the thirsty soil with streams of gore.

But Atalanta's son—no Argive he—
Hurls like a whirlwind at the gates, and shouts
For fire and mattocks, as to raze the town.
But his mid-fury Periclymenus stayed,
The Sea-god's son, who hurled a wain-load crag,
A battlement-coping, down upon his shield,
Spattered abroad the golden head, and rent
The knittings of its bones : the cheeks dark-flushed 1160

καθημάτωσεν· οὐδ' ἀποίσεται βίον
 τῇ καλλιτόξῳ μητρὶ Μαινάλου κόρη.
 ἐπεὶ δὲ τάσδ' εἰσεῖδεν εὐτυχεῖς πύλας,
 ἄλλας ἐπῆει παῖς σός, εἰπόμην δ' ἐγώ.
 ὀρώ δὲ Τυδῆ καὶ παρασπιστὰς πυκνοὺς
 Αἰτωλίσιν λόγχαισιν εἰς ἄκρον στόμα
 πύργων ἀκοντίζοντας, ὥστ' ἐπάλξεων
 λιπεῖν ἐρίπνας φυγάδας· ἀλλά νιν πάλιν,
 κυναγὸς ὡσεὶ, παῖς σὸς ἐξαθροίζεται,
 1170 πύργοις δ' ἐπέστησ' αὐθις. εἰς δ' ἄλλας πύλας
 ἠπειγόμεσθα, τοῦτο παύσαντες νοσοῦν.
 Καπανεὺς δὲ πῶς εἴποιμ' ἂν ὡς ἐμαίνετο ;
 μακραύχενος γὰρ κλίμακος προσαμβάσεις
 ἔχων ἐχώρει, καὶ τοσούνδ' ἐκόμπασε,
 μῆδ' ἂν τὸ σεμνὸν πῦρ νιν εἰργαθεῖν Διὸς
 τὸ μὴ οὐ κατ' ἄκρων περγάμων ἐλεῖν πόλιν.
 καὶ ταῦθ' ἄμ' ἠγόρευε καὶ πετρούμενος
 ἀνεῖρφ' ὑπ' αὐτὴν ἀσπίδ' εἰλίξας δέμας,
 κλίμακος ἀμείβων ξέστ' ἐνηλάτων βάρηρα.
 1180 ἤδη δ' ὑπερβαίνοντα γεῖσα τειχέων
 βάλλει κεραυνῶ Ζεὺς νιν. ἐκτύπησε δὲ
 χθῶν, ὥστε δεῖσαι πάντας· ἐκ δὲ κλιμάκων
 ἐσφενδονᾶτο χωρὶς ἀλλήλων μέλη,
 κόμαι μὲν εἰς Ὀλυμπον, αἶμα δ' εἰς χθόνα,
 χεῖρες δὲ καὶ κῶλ' ὡς κύκλωμ' Ἰξίονος
 εἰλίσσειτ'· εἰς γῆν δ' ἔμπυρος πίπτει νεκρός.
 ὡς δ' εἶδ' Ἄδραστος Ζῆνα πολέμιον στρατῶ,
 ἔξω τάφρου καθίσεν Ἀργείων στρατόν.
 οἱ δ' αὖ παρ' ἡμῶν δεξιὸν Διὸς τέρας
 1190 ἰδόντες ἐξήλαντον ἀρμάτων ὄχους
 ἰππῆς· ὀπλίται τ' εἰς μέσ' Ἀργείων ὄπλα
 συνῆψαν ἔγχη, πάντα δ' ἦν ὁμοῦ κακά·

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

Dashed he with blood. No life shall he bear back
 To his archer-mother, Maid of Maenalus.
 Then, marking how at this gate all went well,
 Passed to the next thy son, I following still.
 There saw I Tydeus with his serried shields,
 With spears Actolian javelining the height
 Of the roofless towers, that from the rampart's crest
 Ours fled in panic. But thy son again
 Rallies them, as the hunter cheers his hounds ;
 So manned the walls anew. To other gates 1170
 On pressed we, having stayed the mischief there.

But how the madness tell of Capaneus ?
 For, grasping the long ladder's scaling rounds,
 On came he, and thus haughtily vaunted he,
 That not Zeus' awful fire should hold him back
 From razing from her topmost towers the town.
 Thus crying, ever as hailed the stones on him,
 He climbed, with body gathered 'neath his targe,
 Aye stepping from smooth ladder-rung to rung.
 But, even as o'er the ramparts rose his head, 1180
 Zeus smiteth him with lightning : rang again
 The earth, that all quailed. From the ladder flew
 His limbs abroad wide-whirling slingstone-like :
 Heavenward his hair streamed, earthward rained his
 blood :

Hands, feet—Ixion on his wheel seemed he—
 Whirled round. To earth he fell, a corpse flame-
 blasted.

Adrastus, seeing Zeus his army's foe,
 Without the trench drew off the Argive host.
 Then, marking Zeus's portent fair for us,
 Forth of the gates our horse their chariots drave : 1190
 Our footmen crashed through Argos' mid-array
 With levelled spears ;—'twas turmoiled ruin all—

ἔθνησκον ἐξέπιπτον ἀντύγων ἄπο,
 τροχοί τ' ἐπήδων ἄξονές τ' ἐπ' ἄξοσι,
 νεκροὶ δὲ νεκροῖς ἐξεσωρεύονθ' ὁμοῦ.
 πύργων μὲν οὖν γῆς ἔσχομεν κατασκαφὰς
 εἰς τὴν παροῦσαν ἡμέραν· εἰ δ' εὐτυχῆς
 ἔσται τὸ λοιπὸν ἤδε γῆ, θεοῖς μέλει·
 καὶ νῦν γὰρ αὐτὴν δαιμόνων ἔσωσέ τις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1200

καλὸν τὸ νικᾶν· εἰ δ' ἀμείνον' οἱ θεοὶ
 γνώμην ἔχουσιν—εὐτυχῆς εἶην ἐγώ.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

καλῶς τὰ τῶν θεῶν καὶ τὰ τῆς τύχης ἔχει·
 παῖδές τε γάρ μοι ζῶσι κακπέφενγε γῆ.
 Κρέων δ' ἔοικε τῶν ἐμῶν νυμφευμάτων
 τῶν τ' Οἰδίου δύστηνος ἀπολαῦσαι κακῶν,
 παιδὸς στερηθεῖς, τῇ πόλει μὲν εὐτυχῶς,
 ἰδίᾳ δὲ λυπρῶς. ἀλλ' ἀνελθέ μοι πάλιν,
 τί τὰπὶ τουτοῖς παιδ' ἐμῶ δρασεῖετον.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἔα τὰ λοιπά· δεῦρ' αἰεὶ γὰρ εὐτυχεῖς.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

1210

τοῦτ' εἰς ὑποπτον εἶπας· οὐκ ἑατέον.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

μειζόν τι χρήξεις παῖδας ἢ σεσωσμένους ;

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

καὶ τὰπίλοιπά γ' εἰ καλῶς πράσσω κλύειν.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

μέθες μ'· ἔρημος παῖς ὑπασπιστοῦ σέθεν.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

κακόν τι κεύθεις καὶ στέγεις ὑπὸ σκότῳ.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

οὐκ ἂν γε λέξαιμ' ἐπ' ἀγαθοῖσί σοι κακά.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

Men dying—falling o'er the chariot-rails—
Wheels leaping—axles upon axles dashed,
And corpses heaped on corpses all confused.

So then for this day have we barred the fall
Of our land's towers ; but if good fortune waits
On Thebes henceforth, this resteth with the Gods :
Only a God's hand rescued her to-day.

CHORUS

Glorious is victory : if more favours yet
The Gods intend—ah, may I so be blest !

1200

JOCASTA

Fair are the dealings of the Gods and Fate :
For lo, my sons live, and the land hath 'scaped.
But Creon hath, meseems, reaped evil fruit
Of mine and Oedipus' marriage—hapless sire,
Reft of his son, for blessing unto Thebes,
But grief to him ! Take up the tale again,
And tell what now my sons are bent to do.

MESSENGER

Forbear the rest. Thus far 'tis well with thee.

JOCASTA

Thou stirr'st surmisings ! I can not forbear !

1210

MESSENGER

How, wouldst thou more than know thy sons are safe ?

JOCASTA

Yea, know if things to come be well for me.

MESSENGER

Now let me go : thy son his henchman lacks.

JOCASTA

Some ill thou hid'st—in darkness veilest it !

MESSENGER

I would not tell thee evil blent with good.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

ἦν μή γε φεύγων ἐκφύγῃς πρὸς αἰθέρα.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

- 1220 αἰαί· τί μ' οὐκ εἶσας ἐξ εὐαγγέλου
 φήμης ἀπελθεῖν, ἀλλὰ μηνῦσαι κακά ;
 τῷ παιῖδε τὸ σὼ μέλλετον, τολμήματα
 αἴσχιστα, χωρὶς μονομαχεῖν παντὸς στρατοῦ,
 λέξαντες Ἀργείοισι Καδμείοισί τε
 εἰς κοινὸν οἶον μήποτ' ὄφελον λόγον.
 Ἔτεοκλῆς δ' ὑπῆρξ' ἀπ' ὀρθίου σταθεῖς
 πύργου, κελεύσας σῖγα κηρῦξαι στρατῶ·
 [ἔλεξε δ' ὦ γῆς Ἑλλάδος στρατηλάται]
 Δαναῶν ἀριστῆς, οἵπερ ἦλθετ' ἐνθάδε,
 Κάδμου τε λαός, μήτε Πολυνείκους χάριν
 ψυχὰς ἀπεμπολᾶτε μήθ' ἡμῶν ὑπερ.
 1230 ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτὸς τόνδε κίνδυνον μεθεῖς
 μόνος συνάψω συγγόνῳ τῷμῳ μάχην·
 κὰν μὲν κτάνω τόνδ', οἶκον οἰκήσω μόνος,
 ἤσσωμενος δὲ τῷδε παραδώσω μόνῳ.
 ὑμεῖς δ' ἀγῶν' ἀφέντες, Ἀργεῖοι, χθόνα
 νίσσεσθε, βίοτον μὴ λιπόντες ἐνθάδε,
 Σπартῶν τε λαὸς ἄλις ὅσος κεῖται νεκρός.
 τοσαῦτ' ἔλεξε· σὸς δὲ Πολυνείκης γόνος
 ἐκ τάξεω ὤρουσε κἀπήνει λόγους.
 πάντες δ' ἐπερρόθησαν Ἀργεῖοι τάδε
 Κάδμου τε λαὸς ὡς δίκαι' ἠγούμενοι.
 1240 ἐπὶ τοῖσδε δ' ἐσπείσαντο, κὰν μεταιχμίους
 ὄρκους συνῆψαν ἐμμενεῖν στρατηλάται.
 ἦδη δ' ἔκρυπτον σῶμα παγχάλκοις ὄπλοις
 δισσοὶ γέροντος Οἰδίου νεανία·
 φίλοι δ' ἐκόσμου, τῆσδε μὲν πρόμον χθονὸς
 Σπартῶν ἀριστῆς, τὸν δὲ Δαναϊδῶν ἄκροι.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

JOCASTA

That shalt thou—except to heaven thou wing thy flight.

MESSENGER

Alas! why couldst thou let me not go hence
After good tidings, but wouldst have the ill?
Thy two sons purpose single fight, apart
From all the host—a desperate deed of shame! 1220
To Argives and Cadmeans one and all
They spake that which would God they had left
unsaid!

Eteocles from a lofty tower began—
Having bid publish silence to the host—
And said: “O battle-chiefs of Hellas-land,
Lords of the Danaans who have hither come,
And Cadmus’ folk—for Polyneices’ sake
Sell not your lives, nor sell them in my cause,
For I myself will free you of this risk,
And with my brother grapple alone in fight, 1230
If I slay him, mine halls I hold alone:
O’erthrown, I yield them up to him alone.
Argives, forbear the struggle, and return
Unto your land, not leaving here your lives;
And of the Sown suffice the already dead.”
Thus spake he; Polyneices then, thy son,
Leapt from the ranks, and hailed the challenge-word;
And all the Argives shouted yea to this,
And Cadmus’ folk, as righteous in their eyes.
On these terms made they truce, and in mid-space 1240
The chiefs took oaths whereby they should abide.
Then ancient Oedipus’ two sons straightway
Gan case their bodies in all-brazen mail,
Holpen of friends; by Theban lords the king
Of this land, and by Danaan chiefs his brother.

ἔσταν δὲ λαμπρῶ, χρῶμά τ' οὐκ ἠλλαξάτην
μαργῶντ' ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισιν ἰέναι δόρυ.
παρεξιόντες δ' ἄλλος ἄλλοθεν φίλων
λόγοισι θαρσύνοντες ἐξηύδων τάδε·

1250

Πολύνεικες, ἐν σοὶ Ζηνὸς ὀρθῶσαι βρέτας
τρόπαιον Ἄργει τ' εὐκλεᾶ δοῦναι λόγον·
Ἐτεοκλέα δ' αὖ· νῦν πόλεως ὑπερμαχεῖς,
σὺ καλλίνικος γενόμενος σκήπτρων κρατεῖς.
τάδ' ἠγόρευον παρακαλοῦντες εἰς μάχην.
μάντεις δὲ μῆλ' ἔσφαζον, ἐμπύρους τ' ἀκμᾶς
ῤήξεις τ' ἐνώμων, ὑγρότητ' ἐναντίαν,
ἄκραν τε λαμπάδ', ἢ δυοῖν ὄρους ἔχει,
νίκης τε σῆμα καὶ τὸ τῶν ἠσσωμένων.
ἀλλ' εἴ τιν' ἀλκὴν ἢ σοφοὺς ἔχεις λόγους
ἢ φίλτρ' ἐπωδῶν, στεῖχ', ἐρήτυσον τέκνα
δεινῆς ἀμίλλης, ὡς ὁ κίνδυνος μέγας·
κάπαθλα δεινὰ δάκρυά σοι γενήσεται
δισσοῖν στερεΐσῃ τῆδ' ἐν ἡμέρᾳ τέκνοιν.

1260

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

ὦ τέκνον, ἔξελθ', Ἀντιγόνη, δόμων πάρος·
οὐκ ἐν χορείαις οὐδὲ παρθενεύμασι
νῦν σοι προχωρεῖ δαιμόνων κατάστασις,
ἀλλ' ἄνδρ' ἀρίστω καὶ κασιγνήτῳ σέθεν
εἰς θάνατον ἐκνεύοντε κωλύσαί σε δεῖ
ξὺν μητρὶ τῇ σῆ μὴ πρὸς ἀλλήλοιν θανεῖν.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

1270

τίν', ὦ τεκοῦσα μήτηρ, ἔκπληξιν νέαν
φίλοις αὐτεῖς τῶνδε δωμάτων πάρος;

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

ὦ θύγατερ, ἔρρει σῶν κασιγνήτων βίος.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

There stood they gleaming,—never paled their cheeks,—

Each panting at his foe to dart the spear.

On this side and on that their friends drew nigh,
With heartening words thus speaking unto them ;

“ Thine, Polyneices, is it to set up 1250

Zeus' trophy-statue, and give Argos fame ” ;

To Eteocles—“ Thou for Thebes dost fight :

Now triumph, and thou hold'st her sceptre fast.”

So did they hail them, cheering them to fight.

And the priests slew the sheep : flame-tongue they marked,

And flame-cleft, steamy reek that bodeth ill,

The pointed flame, which hath decisions twain,

Betokening victory or overthrow.

If any power thou hast or cunning words,

Or spell of charms, go, pluck thou back thy sons 1260

From that dread strife ; for grim the peril is ;

And, for dread guerdon, tears shall be thy portion,

If thou of two sons be this day bereaved. [Exit.]

JOCASTA

Daughter Antigone, come forth the house !

No dances, neither toils of maiden hands,

Beseem thee in this hour of heaven's doom ;

But heroes twain, yea, brethren unto thee,

Now deathward reeling, with thy mother thou

Must hold from dying, each by other slain.

Enter ANTIGONE.

ANTIGONE

Mother that bare me, what strange terror-cry 1270

Before these halls to thy friends utterest thou ?

JOCASTA

Daughter, thy brethren's life is come to naught.

449

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

πῶς εἶπας;

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

αἰχμὴν εἰς μίαν καθέστατον.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

οἶ' γώ, τί λέξεις, μήτηρ;

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

οὐ φίλ', ἀλλ' ἔπou.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

ποῖ, παρθενῶνας ἐκλιποῦσ' ;

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

ἀνὰ στρατόν.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

αἰδούμεθ' ὄχλον.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

οὐκ ἐν αἰσχύνῃ τὰ σά.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

δράσω δὲ δὴ τί;

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

συγγόνων λύσεις ἔριν.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

τί δρῶσα, μήτηρ;

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

προσπίτνουσ' ἐμοῦ μέτα.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

ἡγοῦ σὺ πρὸς μεταίχμι', οὐ μελλητέον.

ΙΟΚΑΣΤΗ

ἔπειγ' ἔπειγε, θύγατερ· ὡς ἦν μὲν φθάσω
παῖδας πρὸ λόγχης, οὐμὸς ἐν φάει βίος·
θανοῦσι δ' αὐτοῖς συνθανοῦσα κείσομαι.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

ANTIGONE

How say'st thou?

JOCASTA

Met they are for single fight.

ANTIGONE

Woe! what wilt say?

JOCASTA

Naught welcome. Follow me.

ANTIGONE

Whither, from maiden-bowers?

JOCASTA

Through the host.

ANTIGONE

I shrink from throngs!

JOCASTA

No time for modesty this!

ANTIGONE

I—what can I do?

JOCASTA

Part thy brethren's strife.

ANTIGONE

Mother, whereby?

JOCASTA

Fall at their feet with me.

ANTIGONE

Lead to the mid-space! We may tarry not.

JOCASTA

Haste, daughter, haste: for, may I but forestall 1280
My sons ere fighting, light of life is mine:
If they be dead, dead with them will I lie. [*Exeunt.*

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

αἰαῖ αἰαῖ,

τρομερὰν φρίκα τρομερὰν φρέν' ἔχω·
διὰ σάρκα δ' ἔμην

ἔλεος ἔλεος ἔμολε ματέρος δειλαίας.

δίδυμα τέκεα πότερος ἄρα πότερον αἰμάξει—

ἰώ μοι πόνων,

1290 ἰὼ Ζεῦ, ἰὼ γᾶ—

ὁμογενῆ δέραν, ὁμογενῆ ψυχὰν

δι' ἀσπίδων, δι' αἱμάτων;

τάλαιν' ἐγὼ τάλαινα,

πότερον ἄρα νέκυν ὀλόμενον ἀχήσω;

φεῦ δᾶ φεῦ δᾶ,

δίδυμοι θῆρες, φόνιαι ψυχαὶ

δορὶ παλλόμεναι

πέσσεια πέσσεια δάι' αὐτίχ' αἰμάξεται.

1300 τάλανες, ὅ τι ποτὲ μονομάχον ἐπὶ φρέν' ἠλθέτην,

βοᾶ βαρβάρῳ

ἰαχὰν στενακτὰν

μελομένην νεκροῖς δάκρυσσι θρηνήσω.

σχεδὸν τύχα πέλας φόνου·

κρινεῖ ξίφος¹ τὸ μέλλον.

ἄποτμος ἄποτμος ὁ φόνος ἔνεκ' Ἐρινύων.

ἀλλὰ γὰρ Κρέοντα λεύσω τόνδε δεῦρο συννεφῆ
πρὸς δόμους στείχοντα, παύσω τοὺς παρεστῶτας
γούους.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

1310 οἶμοι, τί δράσω; πότερ' ἔμαντὸν ἢ πόλιν

στένω δακρύσας, ἣν περίξ ἔχει νέφος

¹ Hermann: for φάος of MSS.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

CHORUS

Alas and alas ! (Str.)

Shuddering, shuddering horror of soul have I :

Through the very flesh of me pass

Compassion-thrills for a mother in misery. [lie—

Two sons—who, slain of the other, in blood shall

Woe, anguish, and dismay !

Zeus !—Earth !—to you I pray !— 1290

With his throat pierced, his life by a brother sped,

His shield cleft, and his blood by a brother shed ?

Woe's me and well-a-day !

For whom shall I uplift my voice to wail him dead ?

O land, O land ! (Ant.)

Two ravening beasts, two spirits of murderous mood,

With the battle-lust quivering they stand ;

But brother shall soon lay brother low in his blood !

Wretches, that ever on duel bent they stood ! 1300

With wail of alien tongue

Shall my wild dirge be sung,

Tears for the dead, and lamentation's cry.

Fate presseth nearer, murder is hard by,

In the sword's balance hung :—

Curst slaughter, curst, the work of Vengeance-destiny !

Ha, 'tis Creon I behold, that hitherward with clouded
brow [but now.

Hasteth to the palace. I will hush the wail begun

Enter CREON, with ATTENDANTS bearing the body of

MENOECEUS

CREON

What shall I do ? Weeping shall I bemoan 1310

Myself, or Thebes whom such a cloud o'er-palls

1320

τοιούτον ὥστε δι' Ἀχέροντος ἰέναι ;
 ἐμός τε γὰρ παῖς γῆς ὄλωλ' ὑπερθανών,
 τοῦνομα λαβὼν γενναῖον, ἀνιαρόν δ' ἐμοί·
 ὄν ἄρτι κρημνῶν ἐκ δρακοντείων ἐλὼν
 αὐτοσφαγῆ δύστηνος ἐκόμισ' ἐν χεροῖν,
 βοᾷ δὲ δῶμα πᾶν· ἐγὼ δ' ἤκω μετὰ
 γέρων ἀδελφὴν γραῖαν Ἰοκύστην, ὅπως
 λούση προθῆται τ' οὐκέτ' ὄντα παῖδ' ἐμόν.
 τοῖς γὰρ θανούσι χρῆ τὸν οὐ τεθνηκότα
 τιμὰς διδόντα χθόνιον εὖσεβεῖν θεόν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

βέβηκ' ἀδελφὴ σή, Κρέων, ἔξω δόμων
 κόρη τε μητρὸς Ἀντιγόνη κοινῶ ποδί.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ποῖ κὰπὶ ποίαν συμφοράν ; σήμαινέ μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἤκουσε τέκνα μονομάχῳ μέλλειν δορὶ
 εἰς ἀσπίδ' ἤξειν βασιλικῶν δόμων ὕπερ.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

πῶς φῆς ; νέκυν τοι παιδὸς ἀγαπάζων ἐμοῦ
 οὐκ εἰς τόδ' ἦλθον ὥστε καὶ τὰδ' εἰδέναί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1330

ἀλλ' οἴχεται μὲν σὴ κασιγνήτη πάλαι
 δοκῶ δ' ἀγῶνα τὸν περὶ ψυχῆς, Κρέων,
 ἤδη πεπρᾶχθαι παισὶ τοῖσιν Οἰδίπου.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

οἴμοι, τὸ μὲν σημεῖον εἰσορῶ τόδε,
 σκυθρωπὸν ὄμμα καὶ πρόσωπον ἀγγέλου
 στείχοντος, ὃς πᾶν ἀγγελεῖ τὸ δρώμενον.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ὦ τάλας ἐγώ, τίν' εἶπω μῦθον ἢ τίνας γόους ;

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

As through the gloom of Acheron drifts her now ?
Dead is my son ! He died for fatherland,
Winning a glorious name, but woe for me.
Him from the Dragon's crags but now I caught
Self-slain, and woefully bare him in mine arms.
My whole house wails. I for my sister come,
Jocasta,—come, the old to seek the old,—
To bathe and lay out this no more my son.
For he who hath not died must reverence
The Nether-gods by honouring the dead. 1320

CHORUS

Gone is thy sister, Creon, forth the house ;
And with her went her child Antigone.

CREON

Whither ?—for what mischance ? Declare to me.

CHORUS

The purpose of her sons she heard, to fight
In single combat for the royal halls.

CREON

How sayest thou ? Lo, tending my son's corse,
I came not to the knowledge of this deed.

CHORUS

Yea, hence thy sister parted long ago :
And that death-struggle, Creon, now, meseems,
Is ended 'twixt the sons of Oedipus. 1330

CREON

Ah me ! a token yonder do I see,
The joyless eye and face of one who comes
A messenger, to tell all horrors done.

Enter MESSENGER.

MESSENGER

Woe is me ! what story can I tell, or utter forth what
wail ?

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

ΚΡΕΩΝ

οἰχόμεσθ'· οὐκ εὐπροσώποις φροιμίους ἄρχει
λόγου.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ὦ τάλας, δισσῶς αὐτῷ· μεγάλα γὰρ φέρω κακά.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

πρὸς πεπραγμένοισιν ἄλλοις πῆμασιν; λέγεις
δὲ τί;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

οὐκέτ' εἰσὶ σῆς ἀδελφῆς παῖδες ἐν φάει, Κρέον.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

1340 αἰαῖ.

μεγάλα μοι θροεῖς πάθεα καὶ πόλει.
ὦ δώματ' εἰσηκούσατ' Οἰδίπου τάδε
παίδων ὁμοίαις συμφοραῖς ὀλωλότων;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὥστ' ἂν δακρῦσαί γ', εἰ φρονοῦντ' ἐτύγχανεν.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

οἴμοι ξυμφορᾶς βαρυποτμωτάτας,
οἴμοι κακῶν δύστηνος· ὦ τάλας ἐγώ.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

εἰ καὶ τὰ πρὸς τούτοισί γ' εἰδείης κακά.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

καὶ πῶς γένοιτ' ἂν τῶνδε δυσποτμώτερα;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

τέθνηκ' ἀδελφῆ σῆ δυοῖν παῖδοιν μέτα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1350 ἀνάγχετ' ἀνάγχετε κωκυτόν,
ἐπὶ κῆρα τε λευκοπήχεις κτύπους χεροῖν.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

CREON

Ah, undone! With no fair-seeming prelude thou be-
ginn'st thy tale.

MESSENGER

Woe! Again I cry it, for I bring a burden of
dismay—

CREON

Heaped upon calamities already wrought? What
wouldst thou say?

MESSENGER

Creon, those thy sister's sons behold no more the light
of day.

CREON

Alas!

Terrible ills for me and for Thebes dost thou tell—
O halls of Oedipus, have ye heard this?—
Dost tell of sons that by one doom have died!

1340

CHORUS

Their very walls might weep, could they but know.

CREON

Woe's me, the disaster, when fate's stroke heavily fell!
Woe for my sorrows! Ah unhappy I!

MESSENGER

Ah, didst thou know the evils more than these!

CREON

What can be more calamitous than these?

MESSENGER

Dead is thy sister—dead with her two sons.

CHORUS

Upraise, upraise the lamentation-strain,
Down on the head let blows of white hands rain!

1350

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ὦ τλήμων, οἶον τέρμον', Ἰοκάστη, βίου
γάμων τε τῶν σῶν Σφιγγὸς αἰνιγμοῖς ἔτλης.
πῶς καὶ πέπρακται διπτύχων παίδων φόνος
ἀράς τ' ἀγώνισμ' Οἰδίπου; σήμαινέ μοι.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

- 1360 τὰ μὲν πρὸ πύργων εὐτυχήματα χθονὸς
οἶσθ'· οὐ μακρὰν γὰρ τειχέων περιπτυχαί.
[ὥστ' οὐχ ἅπαντ' ἄ σ' εἶδέναι τὰ δρώμενα.]
ἐπεὶ δὲ χαλκείοις σῶμ' ἐκοσμήσανθ' ὄπλοις
οἱ τοῦ γέροντος Οἰδίπου νεανίαι,
ἔστησαν ἐλθόντ' εἰς μέσον μεταίχμιον
[δισσῶ στρατηγῶ καὶ διπλῶ στρατηλάτα]
ὡς εἰς ἀγῶνα μονομάχου τ' ἀλκὴν δορός.
βλέψας δ' ἐς Ἄργος ἦκε Πολυνεΐκης ἀράς·
ὦ πότνι Ἥρα, σὸς γὰρ εἰμ', ἐπεὶ γάμοις
ἔξευξ' Ἀδράστου παῖδα καὶ ναίω χθόνα,
δὸς μοι κτανεῖν ἀδελφόν, ἀντήρη δ' ἐμὴν
καθαιματῶσαι δεξιὰν νικηφόρον·
1370 [αἰσχιστον αἰτῶν στέφανον, ὁμογενῆ κτανεῖν.
πολλοῖς δ' ἐπήει δάκρυα τῆς τύχης ὄση,
καῖβλεψαν ἀλλήλοισι διαδόντες κόρας.]
Ἐτεοκλῆς δὲ Παλλάδος χρυσάσπιδος
βλέψας πρὸς οἶκον ἠῤῥατ'· ὦ Διὸς κόρη,
δὸς ἐγγχος ἡμῖν καλλίνικον ἐκ χερὸς
εἰς στέρν' ἀδελφοῦ τῆσδ' ἀπ' ὠλένης βαλεῖν,
κτανεῖν θ' ὃς ἦλθε πατρίδα πορθήσων ἐμὴν.
ἐπεὶ δ' ἀφείθη πυρσὸς ὡς Τυρσηνικῆς
σάλπιγγος ἠχή, σῆμα φοινίου μάχης,
1380 ἦξαν δρόμημα δεινὸν ἀλλήλοισι ἔπι·
κάπροι δ' ὅπως θήγοντες ἀγρίαν γένυν
ξυνήψαν, ἀφρῶ διάβροχοι γενειάδας·

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

CREON

Hapless Jocasta, what an end of life
And marriage hast thou proved the Sphinx's riddle !
How came to pass the death of her two sons,
The strife, of Oedipus' curse that came ?—declare.

MESSENGER

The land's fair fortune in her towers' defence
Thou know'st : the girdling walls be not so far
But that thou mayest know whate'er is done.
Now when in brazen mail they had clad their limbs,
Those princes, sons of ancient Oedipus, 1360
Into the mid-space went they forth and stood,
Those chieftains two, those battle-leaders twain,
As for the grapple and strife of single fight.

Then, gazing Argos-ward, Polyneices prayed :
" Queen Hera,—for thine am I since I wed
Adrastus' child, and dwell within thy land,—
Grant me to slay my brother, and to stain
My warring hand with blood of victory !"—
Asking a crown of shame, to slay a brother.
Tears sprang from many an eye at that dread fate, 1370
And each on other did men look askance.
But unto golden-shielded Pallas' fane
Eteocles looked, and prayed : " Daughter of Zeus,
Grant that the conquering spear, of mine hand sped,
Yea, from this arm, may smite my brother's breast,
And slay him who hath come to waste my land !"

Then, when the Tuscan trump, like signal-torch,
Rang forth the token of the bloody fray,
Forth darted each at other in terrible rush ;
And, like wild boars that whet the tameless tusk, 1380
Clashed they, foam-flakes beslavering their beards.

ἦσσαν δὲ λόγχαις· ἄλλ' ὑφίζανον κύκλοις,
ὅπως σίδηρος ἐξολισθάνοι μάτην.

εἰ δ' ὄμμ' ὑπερσχὸν ἴτυος ἄτερος μάθοι,
λόγχην ἐνώμα, στόματι προφθῆναι θέλων.

ἄλλ' εὖ προσῆγον ἀσπίδων κεγχρώμασιν
ὀφθαλμόν, ἀργὸν ὥστε γίγνεσθαι δόρυ.

πάσιν δὲ τοῖς ὀρώσιν ἐστάλασσ' ἰδρῶς
ἢ τοῖσι δρῶσι, διὰ φίλων ὀρρωδίαν.

1390

Ἐτεοκλῆς δὲ ποδὶ μεταψαίρων πέτρον
ἴχνους ὑπόδρομον, κῶλον ἐκτὸς ἀσπίδος

τίθησι· Πολυνεΐκης δ' ἀπήντησεν δορί,
πληγὴν σιδήρῳ παραδοθεῖσαν εἰσιδὼν,

κνήμης τε διεπέρασεν Ἀργεῖου δόρυ·
στρατὸς δ' ἀνηλάλαξε Δαναϊδῶν ἅπας.

κὰν τῶδε μόχθῳ γυμνὸν ὤμον εἰσιδὼν
ὁ πρόσθε τρωθεὶς στέρνα Πολυνεΐκους βία

διήκε λόγχην, καπέδωκεν ἡδονὰς
Κάδμου πολίταις, ἀπὸ δ' ἔθραυσ' ἄκρον δόρυ.

1400

εἰς δ' ἄπορον ἦκων δορὸς ἐπὶ σκέλος πάλιν
χωρεῖ, λαβὼν δ' ἀφήκε μάρμαρον πέτρον,

μέσον δ' ἄκοντ' ἔθραυσεν· ἐξ ἴσου δ' Ἄρης
ἦν, κάμακος ἀμφοῖν χεῖρ' ἀπεστερημένοι.

ἔνθεν δὲ κώπας ἀρπάσαντε φασγάνων
ἐς ταῦτόν ἦκον, συμβαλόντε δ' ἀσπίδας

πολὺν ταραγμὸν ἀμφιβάντ' εἶχον μάχης·
καὶ πῶς νοήσας Ἐτεοκλῆς τὸ Θεσσαλὸν

εἰσήγαγεν σόφισμ' ὀμιλία χθονός·
ἐξαλλαγεῖς γὰρ τοῦ παρεστῶτος πόνου,

1410

λαιὸν μὲν εἰς τοῦπισθεν ἀμφέρει πόδα,
πρόσω τὰ κοῖλα γαστρὸς εὐλαβούμενος·

προβὰς δὲ κῶλον δεξιὸν δι' ὀμφαλοῦ
καθῆκεν ἔγχος σφονδύλοισ τ' ἐνήρμοσεν.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

With spears they lunged : yet crouched behind their shields,

That so the steel might bootless glance aside.

And, if one saw foe's eye peer o'er the targe,

Aye thrust he, fain to overreach his fence.

Yet cunningly through eyelets of their shields

They glanced, that naught awhile the spear achieved,

While more from all beholders trickled sweat,

Of fear for friends, than from the champions' selves.

But Eteocles, spurning aside a stone

1390

That rolled beneath his tread, without his shield

Showed glimpse of fenceless limb. Polyneices lunged,

Marking the stroke so offered to the steel ;

And through the shank clear passed the Argive lance.

Loud cheered the whole array of Danaus' sons.

But his foe's shoulder by that effort bared

The stricken marked, and Polyneices' breast

Pierced with a strong spear-thrust, and gave back joy

To Cadmus' folk ; yet brake his spear-head short.

So, his lance lost, back fell he step by step,

1400

Caught up a rugged rock, and sped its flight,

Snapping his foe's spear thwart. Now was the fray

Equal, since either's hand was spear-bereft.

Thereupon snatched they at their falchion-hilts,

Closed, clashing shields, and, traversing to and fro,

Made rage the stormy clangour of the fight.

But, having learnt it visiting Thessaly,

Eteocles used the northern warriors' feint :

For, from the instant grapple springing clear,

Back on his left foot, backward still, he sinks,

1410

Watching the while his foe's waist : leaping then,

The right foot foremost, through the navel plunged

His sword, and 'twixt the spine-bones wedged the

point.

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

1420 ὁμοῦ δὲ κάμψας πλευρὰ καὶ νηδὺν τάλας
 σὺν αἵματηραῖς σταγόσι Πολυνεΐκης πίπτει,
 ὁ δ', ὡς κρατῶν δὴ καὶ νενικηκῶς μάχη,
 ξίφος δίκων εἰς γαίαν ἐσκύλευέ νιν,
 τὸν νοῦν πρὸς αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔχων, ἐκείσε δέ·
 ὃ καὶ νιν ἔσφηλ'. ἔτι γὰρ ἐμπνέων βραχύ,
 σῶζων σίδηρον ἐν λυγρῷ πεσήματι,
 μόλις μὲν, ἐξέτεινε δ' εἰς ἦπαρ ξίφος
 Ἐτεοκλέους ὁ πρόσθε Πολυνεΐκης πεσών.
 γαίαν δ' ὀδᾶξ ἐλόντες ἀλλήλων πέλας
 πίπτουσιν ἄμφω κοῦ διώρισαν κράτος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

φεῦ φεῦ, κακῶν σῶν, Οἰδίπου, σ' ὄσων στένω·
 τὰς σὰς δ' ἀρὰς ἔοικεν ἐκπλήσαι θεός.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

1430 ἄκουε δὴ νυν καὶ τὰ πρὸς τούτοις κακά.
 ὡς γὰρ τέκνω πεσόντ' ἐλειπέτην βίον,
 ἐν τῷδε μήτηρ ἢ τάλαινα προσπίπτει
 σὺν παρθένῳ τε καὶ προθυμῖα ποδός.
 1440 τετρωμένους δ' ἰδοῦσα καιρίους σφαγὰς
 ὤμωξεν· ὦ τέκν', ὑστέρα βοηδρόμος
 πάρειμι. προσπίτνουσα δ' ἐν μέρει τέκνα
 ἔκλαι', ἐθρήνει τὸν πολὺν μάτην πόνον
 στένουσ', ἀδελφή θ' ἢ παρασπίζουσ' ὁμοῦ·
 ὦ γηροβοσκῶ μητρός, ὦ γάμους ἐμούς
 προδόντ' ἀδελφῶ φιλτάτῳ. στέρνων δ' ἄπο
 φύσημ' ἀνεῖς δύσθνητον Ἐτεοκλῆς ἀναξ
 1440 ἤκουσε μητρός, κάπιθεις ὑγρὰν χέρα
 φωνὴν μὲν οὐκ ἀφῆκεν, ὀμμάτων δ' ἄπο
 προσεῖπε δακρύοις, ὥστε σημήναι φίλα.
 ὁ δ' ἦν ἔτ' ἐμπνους, πρὸς κασιγνήτην δ' ἰδὼν
 γραϊάν τε μητέρ' εἶπε Πολυνεΐκης τάδε·

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

Then, ribs and belly inarched in anguish-throe,
Down-raining blood-gouts, Polyneices falls.
Our king, as victor, winner of the fight,
Casting his sword down, fell to spoiling him,
Heeding but that, nor recking his own risk ;
Which thing undid him. Faintly breathing yet,
Still grasping in his grievous fall his sword,
First-fallen Polyneices with hard strain
Plunged into Eteocles' heart the blade.
Gnashing in dust their teeth, there side by side
They lie, those twain, the victory doubtful still.

CHORUS

Alas ! I wail thy sore griefs, Oedipus !
Thy malisons, I wot, hath God fulfilled.

MESSENGER

Ah, but hear now what woes remain to tell.
Even as her fallen sons were leaving life,
Their wretched mother rusheth on the scene,—
She and the maid, with haste of eager feet ;
And, seeing them stricken with their mortal wounds,
She wailed, " Ah sons, too late for help I come ! "

Then, falling on her sons, on each in turn,
She wept, she wailed, her long vain nursing-toil
Bemoaning : and their sister at her side—
" Props of your mother's age, dear brethren, who
Leave me a bride unwed ! " One dying gasp
Hard-heaving from his breast, King Eteocles
His mother heard, touched her with clammy hand,
Uttered no word, but from his eyes he spake
With tears, as giving token of his love.
But Polyneices breathing yet, and gazing
On sister and on aged mother, spake :

- ἀπωλόμεσθα, μήτηρ· οἰκτείρω δὲ σὲ
 καὶ τήνδ' ἀδελφὴν καὶ κασίγνητον νεκρόν.
 φίλος γὰρ ἐχθρὸς ἐγένετ', ἀλλ' ὅμως φίλος.
 θάψον δέ μ', ὦ τεκούσα, καὶ σύ, σύγγονε,
 ἐν γῆ πατρώα, καὶ πόλιν θυμουμένην
 1450 παρηγορεῖτον, ὡς τοσόνδε γοῦν τύχῳ
 χθονὸς πατρώας, κεῖ δόμους ἀπώλεσα.
 ξυνάρμοσον δὲ βλέφαρά μου τῇ σῆ χειρί,
 μήτηρ — τίθησι δ' αὐτὸς ὀμμάτων ἐπι —
 καὶ χαίрет'· ἤδη γάρ με περιβάλλει σκότος.
 ἄμφω δ' ἄμ' ἐξέπνευσαν ἄθλιον βίον.
 μήτηρ δ', ὅπως ἐσεῖδε τήνδε συμφοράν,
 ὑπερπαθήσασ' ἤρπασ' ἐκ νεκρῶν ξίφος
 κάπραξε δεινά· διὰ μέσου γὰρ ἀνχένος
 ὠθεῖ σίδηρον, ἐν δὲ τοῖσι φιλτάτοις
 1460 θανοῦσα κεῖται περιβαλοῦσ' ἀμφοῖν χέρας.
 ἀνῆξε δ' ὀρθὸς λαὸς εἰς ἔριν λόγων,
 ἡμεῖς μὲν ὡς νικῶντα δεσπότην ἐμόν,
 οἱ δ' ὡς ἐκείνον. ἦν δ' ἔρις στρατηλάταις,
 οἱ μὲν πατάξαι πρόσθε Πολυνείκην δορί,
 οἱ δ' ὡς θανόντων οὐδαμοῦ νίκη πέλοι.
 κὰν τῶδ' ὑπεξῆλθ' Ἀντιγόνη στρατοῦ δίχα.
 οἱ δ' εἰς ὄπλ' ἦσσαν· εὐ δέ πως προμηθία
 καθήστο Κάδμου λαὸς ἀσπίδων ἐπι·
 κάφθημεν οὐπω τεύχεσιν πεφραγμένον
 1470 Ἀργεῖον εἰσπεσόντες ἐξαίφνης στρατόν.
 κούδεις ὑπέστη, πεδία δ' ἐξεπίμπλασαν
 φεύγοντες, ἔρρει δ' αἷμα μυρίων νεκρῶν
 λόγχαις πιτνόντων. ὡς δ' ἐνικῶμεν μάχῃ,
 οἱ μὲν Διὸς τροπαῖον ἴστασαν βρέτας,
 οἱ δ' ἀσπίδας συλῶντες Ἀργείων νεκρῶν
 σκυλεύματ' εἴσω τειχέων ἐπέμπομεν.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

"Mother, our death is this. I pity thee,
 And thee, my sister, and my brother dead.
 Loved, he became my foe : but loved—yet loved !
 Bury me, mother, and thou, sister mine,
 In native soil, and our chafed city's wrath
 Appease ye, that I win thus much at least
 Of fatherland, though I have lost mine home. 1450
 And close thou up mine eyelids with thine hand,
 Mother ;"—himself on his eyes layeth it—
 "And fare ye well : the darkness wraps me round."
 So both together breathed their sad life forth.

And when the mother saw this woeful chance,
 Grief-frenzied, from the dead she snatched a sword,
 And wrought a horror : for through her mid-neck
 She drives the steel, and with her best-beloved
 Lies dead, embracing with her arms the twain.
 Leapt to their feet the hosts with wrangling cries,— 1460
 We shouting that our lord was conqueror,
 They, theirs. And strife there was between the
 chiefs,
 These crying, "First smote Polyneices' spear !"
 Those, "Both be dead : with none the victory rests !"
 Antigone from the field had stol'n the while.

Then rushed the foe to arms : but Cadmus' folk
 By happy forethought under shield had halted ;
 So we forestalled the Argive host, and fell
 Suddenly on them yet unfenced for fight.
 Was none withstood us : huddled o'er the plain 1470
 Fled they, and streamed the blood from slain untold
 By spears laid low. So, victors in the fight,
 Our triumph-trophy some 'gan rear to Zeus ;
 And, some from Argive corpses stripping shields,
 Within our battlements the spoils we sent.

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

ἄλλοι δὲ τοὺς θανόντας Ἀντιγόνης μετὰ
νεκροὺς φέρουσιν ἐνθάδ' οἰκτίσαι φίλοις.
πόλει δ' ἀγῶνες οἱ μὲν εὐτυχέστατοι
τῆδ' ἐξέβησαν, οἱ δὲ δυστυχέστατοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1480

οὐκ εἰς ἀκοὰς ἔτι δυστυχία
δώματος ἦκει πάρα γὰρ λεύσσειν
πτώματα νεκρῶν τρισσῶν ἤδη
τάδε πρὸς μελάθροισ κοινῶ θανάτῳ
σκοτίαν αἰῶνα λαχόντων.

ἈΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

1490

οὐ προκαλυπτομένα βοτρυχώδεος
ἄβρὰ παρηίδος οὐδ' ὑπὸ
παρθενίας τὸν ὑπὸ βλεφάροισ
φοῖνικ', ἐρύθημα προσώπου,
αἰδομένα φέρομαι βάκχα νεκύων,
κράδεμνα δικοῦσα κόμας ἀπ' ἐμᾶς,
στολίδος κροκόεσσαν ἀνείσα τρυφάν,
ἀγεμόνευμα νεκροῖσι πολύστονον. αἰαῖ, ἰὼ μοι.
ὦ Πολύνεικες, ἔφυς ἄρ' ἐπώνυμος, ὦ μοι, Θῆβαι
σὰ δ' ἔρις οὐκ ἔρις, ἀλλὰ φόνῳ φόνος
Οἰδιπόδα δόμον ὤλεσε κρανθεῖς
αἵματι δεινῶ, αἵματι λυγρῶ.
τίνα προσφδὸν

1500

ἢ τίνα μουσοπόλον στοναχὰν ἐπὶ
δάκρυσι δάκρυσιν, ὦ δόμος ὦ δόμος,
ἀγκαλέσωμαι,
τρισαὶ φέρουσα τάδε σώματα σύγγονα,
ματέρα καὶ τέκνα, χάσματ' Ἐρινύος ;

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

And others with Antigone bear on
 The dead twain hither for their friends to mourn.
 So hath the strife had end for Thebes in part
 Most happily, in part most haplessly.

CHORUS

Not a grief for the hearing alone
 Is the bale of the house : ye may see
 Here, now, yon corpses three
 By the palace, in death as one
 To the life that is darkness gone.

1480

*Enter procession bearing corpses, with CREON and
 ANTIGONE.*

ANTIGONE

Never a veil o'er the tresses I threw
 O'er my soft cheek sweeping,
 Nor for maidenhood's shrinking I hid from view
 The hot blood leaping
 'Neath mine eyes, when I rushed in the bacchanal
 dance for the dead, [head,
 When I cast on the earth the tiring that bound mine 1490
 Loose flinging my bright robe saffron of hue—
 I, by whom corpses with wailing are graveward led.
 Polyneices, "the man of much strife"—well named!
 Woe's me!—
 No strife was thy strife : it was murder by murder
 brought [fraught
 To accomplishment, ruin to Oedipus' house, and
 With bloodshed of horror, with bloodshed of misery.
 On what bard shall I call?
 What harper of dirges shall I bid come
 To wail the lament,—O home, mine home!— 1500
 While the tears, the tears fall,
 As I bear three bodies of kindred slain,
 Mother and sons, while the Fiend gloats over our woe

467

- ἂ δόμον Οἰδιπόδα πρόπαν ὤλεσε,
 τᾶς ἀγρίας ὄτε
 δυσξύνετον ξυνετὸς μέλος ἔγνω
 Σφιγγὸς ἀοιδοῦ σῶμα φονεύσας.
 ἰὼ μοι, πάτερ,
 τίς Ἑλλὰς ἢ βάρβαρος ἢ
 1510 τῶν προπάροιθ' εὐγενετᾶν ἕτερος
 ἔτλα κακῶν τοσῶνδ'
 αἵματος ἀμερίου
 τοιάδ' ἄχρα φανερά ;

 τάλαιν', ὡς ἐλελίξει.
 τίς ἄρ' ὄρνις ἢ δρυὸς ἢ ἐλάτας
 ἀκροκόμοις ἀμφὶ κλάδοις
 ἐξομένα μονομάτορος ὀδυρμοῖς
 ἐμοῖς ἄχεσι συνφδός ;
 1520 αἴλινον αἰάγμασιν ἂ
 τοῖσδε προκλαίω μονάδ' αἰῶνα
 διάξουσα τὸν ἀεὶ χρόνον ἐν
 λειβομένοισιν δακρύοισιν.

 τίν' ἰαχήσω ;
 τίν' ἐπὶ πρῶτον ἀπὸ χαίτας
 σπαραγμοῖς ἀπαρχὰς βάλω ;
 ματρὸς ἐμᾶς διδυ-
 μοισι γάλακτος παρὰ μαστοῖς,
 ἢ πρὸς ἀδελφῶν
 οὐλόμεν' αἰκίσματα νεκρῶν ;

 1530 ὄτοτοτοῖ· λείπε σοὺς δόμους,
 ἀλαὸν ὄμμα φέρων,
 πάτερ γεραϊέ, δεῖξον,
 Οἰδιπόδα, σὸν αἰῶνα μέλεον, ὃς ἐπὶ

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

Who brought in ruin the house of Oedipus low,
In the day when the Songstress Sphinx's strain,
So hard to read, by his wisdom was read,
And the fierce shape down unto death was sped?
Woe for me, father mine!
Who hath borne griefs like unto thine?
What Hellene, or alien, or who that sprang 1510
Of the ancient blood of a high-born line,
Whose race in a day is run, hath endured in the sight
of the sun
Such bitter pang?

Woe's me for my dirge wild-ringing!
What song-bird that rocketh on high,
Mid the boughs of the oak-tree swinging,
Or the pine-tree, will echo my cry,
The moans of the motherless maiden,
Who wail for the life without friend 1520
I must know, who shall weep sorrow-laden
Tears without end?

Over whom shall I make lamentation?
Unto whom with rendings of hair
Shall I first give sorrow's oblation?
Shall I cast them, mine offerings, there
Where the twin breasts are of my mother,
Where a suckling babe I have lain,
Or on ghestliest wounds of a brother
Cruelly slain?

Come forth of thy chambers, blind father; 1530
Ancient, thy sorrows lay bare,
Who didst cause mist-darkness to gather
On thine own eyes, thou who dost wear

δῶμασιν ἀέριον σκότον ὄμμασι
 σοῖσι βαλὼν ἔλκεις μακρόπνουν ζωάν.
 κλύεις, ὦ κατ' αὐλὰν ἀλαίνων γεραιὸν
 πόδα δεμνίοις
 δύστανος ἰαύων ;

ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥΣ

1540 τί μ', ὦ παρθένε, βακτρεύμασι τυ-
 φλοῦ ποδὸς ἐξάγαγες εἰς φῶς
 λεχήρη σκοτίων ἐκ θαλάμων
 οἰκτροτάτοισιν δακρύνουσιν,
 πολὺν αἰθέρος ἀφανὲς εἶδωλον ἧ
 νέκυν ἔνερθεν ἧ
 πτανὸν ὄνειρον ;

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

δυστυχὲς ἀγγελίας ἔπος οἴσει·
 πάτερ, οὐκέτι σοι τέκνα λεύσσει
 φάος οὐδ' ἄλοχος, παραβάκτροις
 ἅ πόδα σὸν τυφλόπουν θεραπεύμασιν αἰὲν ἐμόχθει,
 1550 ὦ πάτερ, ὦμοι.

ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥΣ

ὦμοι ἐμῶν παθέων· πάρα γὰρ στενάχειν τάδ',
 αὐτεῖν.
 τρισσαὶ ψυχαὶ ποία μοίρα
 πῶς ἔλιπον φάος ; ὦ τέκνον, αὔδα.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

οὐκ ἐπ' ὄνειδεσιν οὐδ' ἐπιχάρμασιν,
 ἀλλ' ὀδύναισι λέγω· σὸς ἀλάστωρ
 ξίφεσιν βρίθων
 καὶ πυρὶ καὶ σχετλίσαισι μάχαις ἐπὶ παῖδας ἔβα
 σούς,
 ὦ πάτερ, ὦμοι.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

Weariful days out. O hearken,
Whose old feet grope through the hall,
Who in gloom that no night-tide can darken
On thy pallet dost fall.

Enter OEDIPUS.

OEDIPUS

Why hast thou drawn me, my child, to the light,
Whose sightless hand to thine hand's prop clings, 1540
Who was bowed on my bed amid chambers of night,—
Hast drawn by a wail through tears that rings,—
A white-haired shape, like a phantom that fades
On the sight, or a ghost from the underworld shades,
Or a dream that hath wings?

ANTIGONE

Woe is the word of my tidings to thee!
Father, thy sons behold no more
The light, nor thy wife, who aye upbore
Thy blind limbs tirelessly, tenderly,
O father, ah me! 1550

OEDIPUS

Ah me for my woes! Full well may I shriek, full
well may I moan!
By what doom have the spirits of these three
flown
From the light of life? O child, make known.

ANTIGONE

Not as reproaching, nor mocking, I tell,
But in anguish. Thy curse, with its vengeance of
hell,
With swords laden, and fire,
And ruthless contention, on thy sons fell:
Woe's me, my sire!

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

αἰαί.

ΟΙΔΙΠΟΣ

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

1560 τί τάδε καταστένεις ;

ΟΙΔΙΠΟΣ

τέκνα.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

δι' ὀδύνας ἔβας·

εἰ δὲ τὰ τέθριππά γ' ἐς ἄρματα λεύσσω
ἀελίου τάδε σώματα νεκρῶν
ὄμματος ἀνγαῖς σαῖς ἐπενώμας.

ΟΙΔΙΠΟΣ

τῶν μὲν ἐμῶν τεκέων φανερόν κακόν·

ἀ δὲ τάλαιν' ἄλοχος τίμι μοι, τέκνον, ὄλετο
μοίρα ;

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

δάκρυα γοερά φανερά πᾶσι τιθεμένα,
τέκεσι μαστὸν
ἔφερεν ἔφερεν ἰκέτις ἰκέτιν ὀρομένα.

1570 ἦ ἦρε δ' ἐν Ἡλέκτραισι πύλαις τέκνα

λωτοτρόφον κατὰ λείμακα

λόγχαις κοινὸν ἐνυάλιον

μάτηρ, ὥστε λέοντας ἐναύλους,

μαρναμένους ἐπὶ τραύμασιν, αἵματος

ἤδη ψυχρὰν λοιβὰν φονίαν,

ἂν ἔλαχ' "Αἶδας, ὥπασε δ' "Αρης·

χαλκόκροτον δὲ λαβοῦσα νεκρῶν πάρα φάσγανον
εἶσω

σαρκὸς ἔβαψεν, ἄχει δὲ τέκνων ἔπεσ' ἀμφὶ
τέκνοισιν.

πάντα δ' ἐν ἅματι τῷδε συνάγαγεν,

1580 ὦ πάτερ, ἀμετέροισι δόμοισιν ἄχη θεὸς

ὃς τάδε τελευτᾷ.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

OEDIPUS

Alas for me!

ANTIGONE

Wherefore thy deep-drawn sigh?

1560

OEDIPUS

For my children!

ANTIGONE

Thine hath been agony :—

But oh, to the Sun-god's car couldst thou raise

Thine eyes, couldst thou on these bodies gaze,

Dead where they lie!

OEDIPUS

For the evil fate of my sons, it is all too plain!

But ah, mine unhappiest wife!—by what doom, O
my child, was she slain?

ANTIGONE

Weeping and wailing, that all of her coming were ware,
Hasted she. Unto her children she bare, O she bare
Sacredest breasts of a mother with suppliant prayer.

And she found her sons at Electra's portal,

1570

In the mead with the clover fair,

Closing with spears in the combat mortal:

As lions that strive in their lair

They grappled, with falchions ruthless-gashing:

Yea, now the oblation of death fell plashing

Which Ares giveth when Hades the spoil will share.

And she snatched from the dead, and the bronze-
hammered blade through her bosom she thrust;

And in grief for her children, enclasping her child-
ren, she fell in the dust.

Lo, all the griefs of our line, one marshalled array,
Have been gathered, O father, against our house

1580

this day

Of the God in whose hands their accomplish-
[ment lay.

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πολλῶν κακῶν κατήρξεν Οἰδίπου δόμοις
τόδ' ἡμαρ· εἴη δ' εὐτυχέστερος βίος.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

οἴκτων μὲν ἤδη λήγεθ', ὡς ὄρα τάφου
μνήμην τίθεσθαι· τῶνδε δ', Οἰδίπου, λόγων
ἄκουσον· ἀρχὰς τῆσδε γῆς ἔδωκέ μοι
Ἐτεοκλέης παῖς σός, γάμων φερνὰς διδούς
Αἴμοι κόρης τε λέκτρον Ἀντιγόνης σέθεν.
οὐκ οὖν σ' ἔασω τήνδε γῆν οἰκεῖν ἔτι·
1590 σαφῶς γὰρ εἶπε Τειρεσίας οὐ μὴ ποτε
σοῦ τήνδε γῆν οἰκοῦντος εὖ πράξειν πόλιν.
ἀλλ' ἐκκομίζου. καὶ τὰδ' οὐχ ὕβρει λέγω
οὐδ' ἐχθρὸς ὢν σός, διὰ δὲ τοὺς ἀλάστορας
τοὺς σοὺς δεδοικῶς μὴ τι γῆ πάθη κακόν.

ΟΙΔΙΠΟΣ

ὦ μοῖρ', ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ὡς μ' ἔφυσας ἄθλιον
καὶ τλήμον', εἴ τις ἄλλος ἀνθρώπων ἔφν·
ὄν καὶ πρὶν εἰς φῶς μητρὸς ἐκ γουῆς μολεῖν,
ἄγονον Ἀπόλλων Λαῖψ μ' ἐθέσπισε
1600 φονέα γενέσθαι πατρός· ὦ τάλας ἐγώ.
ἐπεὶ δ' ἐγενόμην, αὐτὸς ὁ σπείρας πατῆρ
κτείνει με νομίσας πολέμιον πεφυκέναι·
χρῆν γὰρ θανεῖν νιν ἐξ ἐμοῦ· πέμπει δέ με
μαστὸν ποθοῦντα θηρσὶν ἄθλιον βοράν·
οὐ σωζόμεσθα. Ταρτάρου γὰρ ὄφελεν
ἐλθεῖν Κιθαιρῶν εἰς ἄβυσσα χάσματα,
ὅς μ' οὐ διώλεσ', ἀλλὰ δουλεῦσαί γέ μοι
δαίμων ἔδωκε Πόλυβον ἀμφὶ δεσπότην.
κτανῶν δ' ἔμαντοῦ πατέρ' ὁ δυσδαίμων ἐγώ
1610 εἰς μητρὸς ἦλθον τῆς ταλαιπώρου λέχος,
παιδίας τ' ἀδελφοὺς ἔτεκον, οὓς ἀπώλεσα,

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

CHORUS

Many an ill to Oedipus' house this day
Brings forth. May happier life be yet in store!

CREON

Refrain laments : time is it we gave heed
To burial. Unto these words, Oedipus,
Hearken : thy son Eteocles gave me rule
O'er this land, making it a marriage-dower
To Haemon with thy child Antigone.
Therefore thou mayest dwell therein no more ;
For plainly spake Teiresias—never Thebes
Shall prosper while thou dwellest in the land. 1590
Then get thee forth : this not despiteously
I speak, nor as thy foe, but fearing hurt
To Thebes by reason of thy vengeance-fiends.

OEDIPUS

Fate, from the first to grief thou barest me,
And pain, beyond all men that ever were.
Ere from my mother's womb I came to light,
Phoebus to Laïus spake me, yet unborn,
My father's murderer—ah, woe is me!
When I was born, my father, my begetter,— 1600
Doomed by mine hand to die,—accounting me
From birth his foe, would slay me, sent me forth,
A suckling yet, a wretched prey to beasts.

Yet was I saved. Oh had Cithaeron sunk
Down to the bottomless chasms of Tartarus,
For that it slēw me not!—but Fate gave me
To be a bondman, Polybus my lord.
So mine own father did I slay, and came,—
Ah wretch!—unto mine hapless mother's couch.
Sons I begat, my brethren, and destroyed, 1610

ἀρὰς παραλαβὼν Λαΐου καὶ παισὶ δούς.
οὐ γὰρ τοσοῦτον ἀσύνητος πέφυκ' ἐγὼ
ὥστ' εἰς ἔμ' ὄμματ' εἰς τ' ἐμῶν παίδων βίου
ἄνευ θεῶν του ταῦτ' ἐμηχανησάμην.
εἶεν· τί δράσω δῆθ' ὁ δυσδαίμων ἐγώ ;
τίς ἡγεμῶν μοι ποδὸς ὀμαρτήσει τυφλοῦ ;
ἦδ' ἢ θανοῦσα ; ζῶσά γ' ἂν σάφ' οἶδ' ὅτι.
ἀλλ' εὐτεκνος ξυνωρίς ; ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔστι μοι.
ἀλλ' ἔτι νεάζων αὐτὸς εὐροιμ' ἂν βίον ;
1620 πόθεν ; τί μ' ἄρδην ὧδ' ἀποκτείνεις, Κρέου ;
ἀποκτενεῖς γάρ, εἴ με γῆς ἔξω βαλεῖς.
οὐ μὴν ἐλίξας γ' ἀμφὶ σὸν χεῖρας γόνυ
κακὸς φανοῦμαι· τὸ γὰρ ἐμόν ποτ' εὐγενὲς
οὐκ ἂν προδοίην, οὐδέ περ πρᾶσσω κακῶς.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

σοί τ' εὖ λέλεκται γόνατα μὴ χροῖζειν ἐμά,
ἐγὼ τε ναίειν σ' οὐκ ἐάσαιμ' ἂν χθόνα.
νεκρῶν δὲ τῶνδε τὸν μὲν εἰς δόμους χρεῶν
ἦδη κομίζεις, τόνδε δ', ὃς πέρσων πόλιν
1630 πατρίδα σὺν ἄλλοις ἦλθε, Πολυνείκους νέκυν
ἐκβάλετ' ἄθραπτον τῆσδ' ὄρων ἔξω χθονός.
κηρύσσεται δὲ πᾶσι Καδμείοις τάδε,
ὃς ἂν νεκρὸν τόνδ' ἢ καταστέφων ἀλφῶ
ἢ γῆ καλύπτων, θάνατον ἀνταλλάσσεται.
εἰάν δ' ἄκλαυστον, ἄταφον, οἰωνοῖς βοράν.
σὺ δ' ἐκλιποῦσα τριπτύχων θρήνουσ νεκρῶν
κόμιζε σαυτήν, Ἀντιγόνη, δόμων ἔσω,
καὶ παρθενεύου τὴν ἰούσαν ἡμέραν
μένουσ' ἐν ἧ σε λέκτρον Αἴμονος μένει.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

1640 ὦ πάτερ, ἐν οἷοις κείμεθ' ἄθλιοι κακοῖς.
ὥς σε στεναῖζω τῶν τεθνηκότων πλέον·

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

Passing to them the curse of Læius.
For not so witless am I from the birth,
As to devise these things against mine eyes
And my sons' life, but by the finger of God.
Let be :—what shall I do, the fortune-crost?
Who shall companion me, my blind steps guide?
She who is dead? O yea, were she alive!
My sons, a goodly pair? Nay, I have none.
Am I yet young, to win me livelihood?
Whence? Wherefore, Creon, slay me utterly? 1620
For thou wilt slay, if forth the land thou cast.
Yet never twining round thy knee mine hands
A coward will I show me, to betray
My noble birth, how ill soe'er I fare.

CREON

Well hast thou said thou wilt not clasp my knees :
I cannot let thee dwell within the land.
Of these dead twain, be this within the halls
Borne straightway: that—the corpse of him who
came
With aliens to smite his father's city—
Forth of the land's bounds tombless shall be cast. 1630
To all Cadmeans shall this be proclaimed :—
“ Whoso on this corpse laying wreaths is found,
Or with earth hiding, death shall be his meed.
Unwept, unburied, leave him meat for birds.”
But thou thy mourning for the corpses three,
Antigone, leave, and get thee within doors.
Thy maiden state until the morrow keep,
Whereon the couch of Haemon waiteth thee.

ANTIGONE

Father, in what ills is our misery whelmed!
For thee I make moan more than for the dead. 1640

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

οὐ γὰρ τὸ μὲν σοι βαρὺ κακῶν, τὸ δ' οὐ βαρὺ,
 ἀλλ' εἰς ἅπαντα δυστυχῆς ἔφυς, πάτερ.
 ἀτὰρ σ' ἐρωτῶ τὸν νεωστὶ κοίρανον
 [τί τόνδ' ὑβρίζεις πατέρ' ἀποστέλλων χθονός;]
 τί θεσμοποιεῖς ἐπὶ ταλαιπώρῳ νεκρῷ;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

Ἐτεοκλέους βουλευμάτ', οὐχ ἡμῶν τάδε.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

ἄφρονά γε, καὶ σὺ μῶρος ὃς ἐπίθου τάδε.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

πῶς; τὰντεταλμέν' οὐ δίκαιον ἐκπονεῖν;

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

οὐκ, ἦν πονηρά γ' ἢ κακῶς τ' εἰρημένα.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

1650

τί δ'; οὐ δικαίως ὄδε κυσὶν δοθήσεται;

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

οὐκ ἔννομον γὰρ τὴν δίκην πρᾶσσεσθέ νιν.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

εἶπερ γε πόλεως ἐχθρὸς ἦν, οὐκ ἐχθρὸς ὦν.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

οὐκουν ἔδωκε τῇ τύχῃ τὸν δαίμονα;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

καὶ τῷ τάφῳ νυν τὴν δίκην παρασχέτω.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

τί πλημμελήσας, τὸ μέρος εἰ μετῆλθε γῆς;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ἄταφος ὄδ' ἀνὴρ, ὡς μάθης, γενήσεται.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

ἐγὼ σφε θάψω, κἂν ἀπεινέπη πόλις.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

σαυτὴν ἄρ' ἐγγὺς τῷδε συνθάψεις νεκρῷ.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

Thine ills are not part heavy and part light,
But in all things art thou in woeful case.
But thee I question, new-created king,
[Why outrage thus my sire with banishment?]
Wherefore make laws touching a hapless corse?

CREON

Eteocles' ordinance, not mine, is this.

ANTIGONE

'Tis senseless—witless thou who giv'st it force.

CREON

How, were't not just to carry out his hests?

ANTIGONE

If they be wrong, in malice spoken—no!

CREON

How, were't not just to cast yon man to dogs?

1650

ANTIGONE

Nay: so ye wreak on him no lawful vengeance.

CREON

Yea, if to Thebes a foe, no foe by birth.

ANTIGONE

Hath he not unto fate paid forfeit life?

CREON

Forfeit of burial now too let him pay.

ANTIGONE

Wherein sinned he, who came to claim his own?

CREON

This man shall have no burial, be thou sure.

ANTIGONE

I, though the state forbid, will bury him.

CREON

Thyself then shalt thou bury with thy dead.

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

ἀλλ' εὐκλεές τοι δύο φίλω κείσθαι πέλας.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

1660

λάζυσθε τήνδε κείς δόμους κομίζετε.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

οὐ δῆτ', ἐπεὶ τοῦδ' οὐ μεθήσομαι νεκροῦ.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ἔκριν' ὁ δαίμων, παρθέν', οὐχ ἅ σοὶ δοκεῖ.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

κάκεινο κέκριται, μὴ ἐφυβρίζεσθαι νεκρούς.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ὡς οὔτις ἀμφὶ τῶδ' ὑγρὰν θήσει κόνιν.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

ναὶ πρὸς σε τῆσδε μητρὸς Ἰοκάστης, Κρέον.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

μίταια μοχθεῖς· οὐ γὰρ ἂν τύχοις τάδε.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

σὺ δ' ἀλλὰ νεκρῶ λουτρὰ περιβαλεῖν μ' ἔα.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ἐν τοῦτ' ἂν εἶη τῶν ἀπορρήτων πόλει.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

ἀλλ' ἀμφὶ τραύματ' ἄγρια τελαμῶνας βαλεῖν.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

1670

οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅπως σὺ τόνδε τιμήσεις νέκυν.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

ὦ φίλτατ', ἀλλὰ στόμα γε σὸν προσπτύξομαι.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

οὐ μὴ ἐς γάμους σοὺς συμφορὰν κτήσῃ γόοις.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

ἦ γὰρ γαμοῦμαι ζῶσα παιδὶ σῶ ποτε ;

ΚΡΕΩΝ

πολλή γ' ἀνάγκη· ποῖ γὰρ ἐκφεύξει λέχος ;

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

ANTIGONE

'Tis glorious that two friends lie side by side.

CREON

Seize ye this girl, and hale her within doors!

1660

ANTIGONE

Never! for I will not unclasp this corpse.

CREON

God hath decreed, girl, not as seems thee good.

ANTIGONE

Yea—hath decreed this, *Outrage not the dead!*

CREON

Know, none shall spread the damp dust over him.

ANTIGONE

Nay!—for Jocasta's, for his mother's sake!

CREON

Vain is thy labour: this thou shalt not win.

ANTIGONE

Suffer at least that I may bathe the corpse.

CREON

This shall be of the things the state forbids.

ANTIGONE

Let me at least bind up his cruel wounds.

CREON

Thou shalt in no wise honour this dead man.

1670

ANTIGONE

Belovèd! on thy lips this kiss at least—

CREON

Mar not thy bridal's fortune by laments.

ANTIGONE

How! living shall I e'er wed son of thine?

CREON

Needs must thou. Whither from the couch wilt flee?

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ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

νύξ ἄρ' ἐκείνη Δαναΐδων μ' ἔξει μίαν.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

εἶδες τὸ τόλμημ' οἶον ἐξωνεΐδισεν ;

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

ἴστω σίδηρος ὄρκιον τέ μοι ξίφος.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

τί δ' ἐκπροθυμῆί τῶνδ' ἀπηλλάχθαι γάμων ;

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

συμφεύξομαι τῷδ' ἀθλιωτάτῳ πατρί.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

1680

γενναιότης σοι, μωρία δ' ἔνεστί τις.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

καὶ ξυνθανοῦμαί γ', ὡς μάθης περαιτέρω.

ΚΡΕΩΝ

ἴθι, οὐ φονεύσεις παῖδ' ἐμόν, λίπε χθόνα.

ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥΣ

ὦ θύγατερ, αἰνῶ μὲν σε τῆς προθυμίας.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

ἀλλ' εἰ γαμοίμην, σὺ δὲ μόνος φεύγοις, πάτερ ;

ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥΣ

μὲν' εὐτυχοῦσα, τᾶμ' ἐγὼ στέρξω κακά.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

καὶ τίς σε τυφλὸν ὄντα θεραπεύσει, πάτερ ;

ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥΣ

πεσὼν ὅπου μοι μοῖρα κείσομαι πέδῳ.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

ὁ δ' Οἰδίπους ποῦ καὶ τὰ κλείν' αἰνίγματα ;

ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥΣ

ὄλωλ'· ἐν ἡμάρ μ' ὤλβισ', ἐν δ' ἀπώλεσεν.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

ANTIGONE

That night shall prove me one of Danaus' Daughters¹!

CREON (*to OEDIPUS*)

Dost mark how rails she in her recklessness?

ANTIGONE (*raising POLYNEICES' sword*)

Witness the steel—this sword whereby I swear.

CREON

Wherefore so eager to avoid this bridal?

ANTIGONE

I will share exile with mine hapless sire.

CREON

Noble thy spirit, yet lurks folly there.

1680

ANTIGONE

Yea, and with him will die. Know this withal.

CREON

Thou shalt not slay my son. Hence, leave the land!
[*Exit.*]

OEDIPUS

Daughter, for thy devotion thank I thee.

ANTIGONE

I marry, father,—thou in exile lone!

OEDIPUS

Ah stay: be happy. I will bear mine ills.

ANTIGONE

Who then will minister to thy blindness, father?

OEDIPUS

Where my weird is, there shall I fall, there lie.

ANTIGONE

Ah, where is Oedipus?—where that riddle famed?

OEDIPUS

Lost. One day blessed me, one hath ruined me

¹ Who slew the husbands whom they wedded perforce.

ΦΟΙΝΙΣΣΑΙ

- 1690 οὔκουν μετασχεῖν κάμει δει τῶν σῶν κακῶν ;
 ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥΣ
 αἴσχρὰ φυγὴ θυγατρὶ σὺν τυφλῷ πατρί.
 ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ
 οὐ, σὺ φρονούσῃ γ, ἄλλὰ γενναία, πάτερ.
 ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥΣ
 προσάγαγέ νῦν με, μητρὸς ὡς ψαύσω σέθεν.
 ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ
 ἰδού, γεραιᾶς φιλτάτης ψαῦσον χερί.
 ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥΣ
 ὦ μήτερ, ὦ ξυνάορ' ἀθλιωτάτη.
 ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ
 οἰκτρὰ πρόκειται, πάντ' ἔχουσ' ὁμοῦ κακά.
 ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥΣ
 Ἔτεοκλέους δὲ πτώμα Πολυνείκους τε ποῦ ;
 ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ
 τῶδ' ἐκτάδην σοι κείσθον ἀλλήλοιν πέλας.
 ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥΣ
 πρόσθε τυφλὴν χεῖρ' ἐπὶ πρόσωπα δυστυχή.
 ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ
 1700 ἰδού, θανόντων σῶν τέκνων ἄπτου χερί.
 ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥΣ
 ὦ φίλα πεσήματ' ἄθλι' ἀθλίου πατρός.
 ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ
 ὦ φίλτατον δῆτ' ὄνομα Πολυνείκους ἐμοί.
 ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥΣ
 νῦν χρησμός, ὦ παῖ, Λοξίου περαίνεται.
 ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ
 ὁ ποῖος ; ἀλλ' ἢ πρὸς κακοῖς ἐρεῖς κακά ;
 ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥΣ
 ἐν ταῖς Ἀθήναις κατθανεῖν μ' ἀλώμενον.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

ANTIGONE

Is it not then my due to share thine ills?

1690

OEDIPUS

'Twere a maid's shame,—exile with her blind sire!

ANTIGONE

Nay, but—so she be wise—her glory, father.

OEDIPUS

That I may touch thy mother, guide me now.

ANTIGONE

Lo, touch her with thine hand—so old, so dear!

OEDIPUS

Ah mother! Ah, most hapless helpmeet mine!

ANTIGONE

Piteous she lies, with all ills crowned at once.

OEDIPUS

Eteocles' corse, and Polyneices'—where?

ANTIGONE

Here lie they, each by other's side outstretched.

OEDIPUS

Lay my blind hand upon their ill-starred brows.

ANTIGONE

Lo there: touch with thine hand thy children slain. 1700

OEDIPUS

Dear hapless dead sons of a hapless sire!

ANTIGONE

Ah Polyneices, name most dear to me!

OEDIPUS

Now, child, doth Loxias' oracle come to pass,—

ANTIGONE

What? Wilt thou tell new ills beside the old?

OEDIPUS

That I, a wanderer, should in Athens die.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

ποῦ ; τίς σε πύργος Ἀθίδος προσδέξεται ;

ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥΣ

ἱερὸς Κολωνός, δώμαθ' ἰππίου θεοῦ.
ἀλλ' εἶα, τυφλῶ τῶδ' ὑπηρέτει πατρί,
ἐπεὶ προθυμεί τῆσδε κοινοῦσθαι φυγῆς.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

1710

ἴθ' εἰς φυγὰν τάλαιναν ὄρεγε χέρα φίλαν,
πάτερ γεραιέ, πομπίμαν
ἔχων ἔμ' ὥστε ναυσίπομπον αὔραν.

ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥΣ

ἰδὸν πορεύομαι, τέκνον·
σύ μοι ποδαγὸς ἀθλία γενοῦ.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

γενόμεθα γενόμεθ' ἀθλιαί
γε δῆτα Θηβαιῶν μάλιστα παρθένων.

ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥΣ

πόθι γεραιὸν ἵχνος τίθημι ;
βάκτρα πρόσφερ', ὦ τέκνον.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

1720

τᾶδε τᾶδε βᾶθί μοι,
τᾶδε τᾶδε πόδα τίθει
ὥστ' ὄνειρον ἰσχύν.

ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥΣ

ἰὼ ἰώ, δυστυχεστάτας φυγὰς
ἐλαύνων τὸν γέροντά μ' ἐκ πάτρας.
ἰὼ ἰώ, δεινὰ δειν' ἐγὼ τλάς.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

τί τλάς ; τί τλάς ; οὐχ ὀρᾶ Δίκα κακούς,
οὐδ' ἀμείβεται βροτῶν ἀσυνεσίας.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

ANTIGONE

Where? What Athenian burg shall harbour thee?

OEDIPUS

Hallowed Colonus, Chariot-father's¹ home.
On then: to this thy blind sire minister,
Since thou art fixed to share my banishment.

ANTIGONE

To woeful exile pass away. 1710
Stretch forth, O father hoary-grey,
Thy dear hand: grasp me. Thee I lead,
As breeze wafts on the galley's speed.

OEDIPUS

Lo, daughter, I pass on:
Thou guide me, hapless one.

ANTIGONE

Hapless I am—thou sayest well—
Above all maids in Thebes that dwell.

OEDIPUS

Where shall I plant mine old feet now?
Reach me my staff, O daughter, thou.

ANTIGONE

Hitherward, hitherward, tread: 1720
Let thy feet follow hither mine hand,
O strengthless as dream of the night!

OEDIPUS

Ah thou who on wretchedest exile hast sped
The old man forth of his fatherland!
Ah woes I have borne! Ah horror's height!

ANTIGONE

*Thou hast borne?—thou hast borne?—doth Justice
regard not then
The sinner? Requith she not the follies of men?*

¹ Poseidon, the Sea-god, who created the first war-horse.

ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥΣ

1730

ὄδ' εἰμὶ μούσαν ὃς ἐπὶ καλ-
λίνικον οὐράνιον ἔβαν
παρθένου κόρας αἴ-
νημ' ἀσύνητον εὐρών.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

Σφυγγὸς ἀναφέρεις ὄνειδος.
ἄπαγε τὰ πάρος εὐτυχήματ' αὐδῶν.
τάδε σ' ἐπέμενε μέλεα πάθεα
φυγάδα πατρίδος ἄπο γενόμενον,
ὦ πάτερ, θανεῖν που.
ποθεινὰ δάκρυα παρὰ φίλαισι παρθένοις
λιποῦσ' ἄπειμι πατρίδος ἀποπρὸ γαίας
ἀπαρθένευτ' ἄλωμένα.

ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥΣ

1740

φεῦ τὸ χρήσιμον φρενῶν.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

εἰς πατρός γε συμφορὰς
εὐκλεᾶ με θήσει·
τάλαιν' ἐγὼ [σῶν] συγγόνου θ' ὑβρισμάτων,
ὃς ἐκ δόμων νέκυς ἄθραπτος οἴχεται
μέλεος, ὄν, εἴ με καὶ θανεῖν, πάτερ, χρεῶν,
σκότια γὰρ καλύψω.

ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥΣ

πρὸς ἡλικας φάνηθι σάς.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

ἄλις ὀδυρμάτων ἐμῶν.

ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥΣ

σὺ δ' ἀμφὶ βωμίους λιτάς—

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

1750

κόρον ἔχουσ' ἐμῶν κακῶν.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

OEDIPUS

Lo, I am he on breath
Of song upraised to heaven,
When that dark riddle of the Maid of Death 1730
To me to read was given.

ANTIGONE

Why raise the ghost of shame, the Sphinx's story?
Forbear to vaunt too late that faded glory.
For thee this anguish lay the while in wait,
Far from thy land to know the exile's fate,
And, father, in some place unknown to die.
To maids who love me leaving tears of yearning,
From fatherland an exile unreturning
I wander far in plight unmaidenly.

OEDIPUS

Woe for the heart where duty's fire is burning! 1740

ANTIGONE

Twined with my father's sad renown
This shall be mine unfading crown.
Woe for thy wrongs! Brother, alas for thine,
Who from thine home a tombless corse art thrust,
Hapless! Though death, my sire, for this be mine,
Yet will I veil him secretly with dust.

OEDIPUS

Show thee again to thy companions' eyes.

ANTIGONE

Why should they weep? Mine own laments suffice.

OEDIPUS

At the Gods' altars then with suppliant cry—

ANTIGONE

They weary of my tale of misery. 1750

ΟΙΔΙΠΟΣ

ἴθ' ἀλλὰ Βρόμιος ἵνα τε ση-
κὸς ἄβατος ὄρεσι μαινάδων.

ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

Καδμείαν ὦ
νεβρίδα στολιδωσαμένα ποτ' ἐγὼ
Σεμέλας θίασον
ἱερὸν ὄρεσιν ἀνεχόρευσα,
χάριν ἀχάριτον εἰς θεοὺς διδοῦσα ;

ΟΙΔΙΠΟΣ

ὦ πάτρας κλεινῆς πολίται, λεύσσειτ', Οἰδίπους
ὄδε,
ὃς τὰ κλείν' αἰνίγματ' ἔγνω καὶ μέγιστος ἦν
ἀνὴρ,

1760 ὃς μόνος Σφιγγὸς κατέσχον τῆς μαιφόνου κράτη,
νῦν ἄτιμος αὐτὸς οἴκτρος ἐξελαύνομαι χθονός.
ἀλλὰ γὰρ τί ταῦτα θρηνῶ καὶ μάτην ὀδύρομαι;
τὰς γὰρ ἐκ θεῶν ἀνάγκας θνητὸν ὄντα δεῖ φέρειν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ μέγα σεμνὴ Νίκη, τὸν ἐμὸν
βίον καταέχοις,
καὶ μὴ λήγοις στεφανοῦσα.

THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

OEDIPUS

Seek at the least the haunt of the Clamour-god
Mid hills of the Maenads by foot profane untrod.

ANTIGONE

How !—render homage without heart
To Him, for whom erstwhile arrayed
In Theban fawnskins, I had part
In Semele's holy dance that swayed
By hill, by glade ?

OEDIPUS

People of a glorious nation, mark me—Oedipus am I,
He who read the riddle world-renowned, the man
once set on high,
He whose single prowess quelled the Sphinx's blood- 1760
polluted might.
Now dishonoured am I banished from the land in
piteous plight.
Yet what boots it thus to wail ? What profits vainly
to lament ?
Whoso is but mortal needs must bear the fate of
heaven sent. [Exeunt OEDIPUS and ANTIGONE.

CHORUS

Hail, reverèd Victory !
Rest upon my life ; and me
Crown, and crown eternally !

[Exeunt OMNES.

ARGUMENT

SUPPLIANTS

ARGUMENT

IN the days when Theseus ruled in Athens, there was war between Argos and Thebes. For the two sons of Oedipus, being mindful of their father's curse, that they should divide their inheritance with the sword, covenanted to rule in turn, year by year, over Thebes. So Eteocles, being the elder, became king for the first year, and Polyneices his brother departed from the land, lest any occasion of offence should arise. But when after a year's space he returned, Eteocles refused to yield to him the kingdom. Then went he to Adrastus, king of Argos, who gave him his daughter to wife, and led forth a host of war under seven chiefs against Thebes. But, forasmuch as in going he set at naught oracles and seers, his array was utterly broken in battle, and of those seven captains none returned, but Adrastus only. Thereafter, according to the sacred custom of Hellas, and the law of war, the Argives sent to require the Thebans to suffer them to bear away their slain that they might bury them. For, among the Greeks, if a man being dead obtained not burial, this was accounted a calamity worse than death, forasmuch as he was thereby made homeless and accurst in Hades. Yet did the Thebans impiously and despitefully reject that claim, being minded to wreak vengeance on their enemies after death. Then king Adrastus, with the mothers of the slain chiefs, came to Eleusis in Attica, and made supplication at the altar of Demeter to Aethra the mother of Theseus, and to the king's self. So Theseus consented to their prayer, and led the array of Athens against Thebes, and there fought and prevailed, and so brought back the bodies of those chiefs, and rendered to them the death-rites at Eleusis.

ARGUMENT

ΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ.

ΑΙΘΡΑ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ΚΗΡΤΞ

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ΕΤΑΔΝΗ

ΙΦΙΣ

ΠΑΙΔΕΣ

ΑΘΗΝΑ

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

AETHRA, *mother of Theseus.*

THESEUS, *son of Aegeus, king of Athens.*

ADRASTUS, *king of Argos.*

HERALD, *from Creon king of Thebes.*

MESSENGER *from the army of Theseus before Thebes.*

EVADNE, *wife of Capaneus one of the seven chiefs.*

IPHIS, *father of Evadne.*

SONS *of the slain chiefs.*

ATHENA, *Patron-goddess of Athens.*

CHORUS, *consisting of the mothers of the slain chiefs, with their Handmaids.*

Athenian heralds, guards, attendants, Athenian soldiers

SCENE: *In the forecourt of the temple of Demeter and Persephone at Eleusis. The great altar stands in the midst.*

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

ΑΙΘΡΑ

10 Δήμητερ ἐστιοῦχ' Ἐλευσίνος χθονὸς
τῆσδ', οἷ τε ναοὺς ἔχετε πρόσπολοι θεᾶς,
εὐδαιμονεῖν με Θησέα τε παῖδ' ἐμὸν
πόλιν τ' Ἀθηνῶν τήν τε Πιτθέως χθόνα,
ἐν ἧ με θρέψας ὀλβίοις ἐν δώμασιν
Αἰθραν πατὴρ δίδωσι τῷ Πανδίοιο
Αἰγεί δάμαρτα, Λοξίου μαντεύμασιν.
εἰς τάσδε γὰρ βλέψασ' ἐπηυξάμην τάδε
γραῦς, αἰ λιποῦσαι δώματ' Ἀργείας χθονὸς
ἰκτῆρι θαλλῷ προσπίτνουσ' ἐμὸν γόνυ
πάθος παθοῦσαι δεινόν· ἀμφὶ γὰρ πύλας
Κάδμου θανόντων ἐπτὰ γενναίων τέκνων
ἄπαιδές εἰσιν, οὓς ποτ' Ἀργείων ἀναξ
Ἄδραστος ἤγαγ', Οἰδίπου παγκληρίας
μέρος κατασχεῖν φυγάδι Πολυνείκει θέλων
γαμβρῷ. νεκροὺς δὲ τοὺς ὀλωλότας δορὶ
θάψαι θέλουσι τῶνδε μητέρες χθονί·
εἵργουσι δ' οἱ κρατοῦντες οὐδ' ἀναίρεσιν
δοῦναι θέλουσι, νόμιμ' ἀτίζοντες θεῶν.

SUPPLIANTS

On the steps of the altar AETHRA is seated ; and around her sit the members of the CHORUS. The olive-boughs of supplicance lie upon the altar, and from these are stretched woollen fillets, attaching them to AETHRA and the CHORUS. ADRASTUS lies prostrate on the earth, apart from these.

AETHRA

DEMETER, warder of Eleusis-land,
And ye which keep and serve the Goddess' fanes,
Grant me and my son Theseus prosperous days,
Grant them to Athens and to Pittheus' land,
Where in a happy home my sire nursed me,
Aethra, and gave me to Pandion's son
Aegeus, to wife, by Loxias' oracles.

Thus pray I as on these grey dames I look,
These which have left their homes in Argos-land,
And fall with suppliant bough before my knee, 10
Stricken with grievous stroke : for round the gates
Of Cadmus lying are their seven sons dead,
Sons of the childless, they whom Argos' king
Adrastus led, in Oedipus' heritage
To win his share for exiled Polyneices,
His daughter's lord. The mothers now of these,
The spear-slain, fain would lay them in the grave,
Wherefrom the victors let them, and refuse
The corpses, setting the Gods' laws at naught.

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

- 20 κοινὸν δὲ φόρτον ταῖσδ' ἔχων χρείας ἐμῆς
 Ἄδραστος ὄμμα δάκρυσιν τέγγων ὄδε
 κείται, τό τ' ἔγχος τήν τε δυστυχεστάτην
 στένων στρατείαν ἦν ἔπεμψεν ἐκ δόμων·
 ὅς μ' ἐξοτρύνει παῖδ' ἐμὸν πείσαι λιταῖς
 νεκρῶν κομιστὴν ἢ λόγοισιν ἢ δορὸς
 ῥώμῃ γενέσθαι καὶ τάφου μεταίτιον,
 μόνον τόδ' ἔργον προστιθεὶς ἐμῶ τέκνω
 πόλει τ' Ἀθηνῶν. τυγχάνω δ' ὑπὲρ χθονὸς
 ἀρότου προθύουσ' ἐκ δόμων ἐλθοῦσ' ἐμῶν
 30 πρὸς τόνδε σηκόν, ἐνθα πρῶτα φαίνεται
 φρίξας ὑπὲρ γῆς τῆσδε κάρπιμος στάχυσ.
 δεσμὸν δ' ἄδεσμον τόνδ' ἔχουσα φυλλάδος
 μένω πρὸς ἀγναῖς ἐσχάrais δυοῖν θεαῖν
 Κόρης τε καὶ Δήμητρος, οἰκτείρουσα μὲν
 πολὺς ἀπαιδᾶς τάσδε μητέρας τέκνων,
 σέβουσα δ' ἱερὰ στέμματ'. οἴχεται δέ μοι
 κῆρυξ πρὸς ἄστυ δεῦρο Θησέα καλῶν,
 ὡς ἢ τὸ τούτων λυπρὸν ἐξέλη χθονός,
 ἢ τάσδ' ἀνάγκας ἱκεσίους λύσῃ, θεοὺς
 40 ὄσιόν τι δράσας· πάντα γὰρ δι' ἀρσένων
 γυναιξὶ πράσσειν εἰκός, αἴτινες σοφαί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- ἰκετεύω σε, γεραιά, στρ. α'
 γεραιῶν ἐκ στομάτων,
 πρὸς γόνυ πίπτουσα τὸ σόν·
 ἄνα μοι τέκνα λῦσαι φθιμένων

SUPPLIANTS

Sharing the burden of their need of me, 20
 Adrastus lieth here, his eyes with tears
 Drowned, mourning for the battle-shivered spear
 And that ill-starred array led forth of him.
 Sore pleadeth he with me to bend by prayers
 My son to be redeemer of the dead
 By speech or spear, and helper to the grave,
 Laying this charge alone upon my son
 And Athens. Now it chanceth that I come
 For the land's harvest's sake from forth mine halls
 To this god's-acre, where first rose to light
 Above the earth's face bristling ears of corn. 30

And, bound in this strong gossamer-chain of leaves,¹
 At the two Goddesses' holy hearths I stay,
 Demeter's and her Daughter's, both for ruth
 Of these unchilded mothers silver-haired,
 And awe of the holy bands. To Athens sped
 Mine herald is, to summon Theseus hither,
 That he may banish from the land these mourners,²
 Or loose this strong constraint of suppliance
 By rendering heaven its due. Seemly it is 40
 That women, which be wise, still act through men.

CHORUS

(Str. 1)

Reverend Queen, with agèd lips do I implore thee;
 In my suppliance at thy knee I fall before thee.
 O redeem thou unto me from that assemblage of the
 dead

¹ The woollen fillets and boughs could not be removed without sacrilege.

² The presence of such, especially at the temple of Demeter, was ominous of evil, which the king only could avert, either by granting their request, or by refusing it and ordering them to depart.

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

νεκύων, οἱ καταλείπουσι μέλη
θανάτῳ λυσιμελεῖ θηρσὶν ὀρείοισι βοράν·

ἔσιδούσ' οἰκτρὰ μὲν ὄσσων ἀντ. α

δάκρυ' ἀμφ' βλεφάροις,

50 ῥυσὰ δὲ σαρκῶν πολιᾶν

καταδρύμματα χειρῶν· τί γάρ; ἅ

φθιμένους παῖδας ἔμοῦς οὔτε δόμοις

προθέμαν, οὔτε τάφων χώματα γαίας ἐσορῶ.

ἔτεκες καὶ σύ ποτ', ὦ πότνια, κούρον στρ. β'

φίλα ποιησαμένα

λέκτρα πόσει σῶ· μέτα νυν

δὸς ἐμοὶ σᾶς διανοίας,

μετάδος δ', ὄσσον ἐπαλγῶ μελέα

τῶν φθιμένων οὓς ἔτεκον·

60 παράπεισον δὲ τὸ σόν, λισσόμεθ', ἐλθεῖν

τέκνον Ἴσμηνὸν ἐμάν τ' εἰς χέρα θείναι

νεκύων θαλερῶν σώματ' ἀλαίνοντ' ἄταφα.¹

ὀσίως οὔχ, ὑπ' ἀνάγκας δὲ προπίπτου- ἀντ. β

σα προσαιτούσ' ἔμολον

δεξιπύρους θεῶν θυμέλας·

ἔχομεν δ' ἔνδικα· καὶ σοί

τι πάρεστι σθένος ὥστ' εὐτεκνίᾳ

δυστυχίαν τὰν παρ' ἐμοὶ

καθελεῖν· οἰκτρὰ δὲ πᾶσχουσ' ἴκετεύω

¹ Murray: for λάινον τάφον.

SUPPLIANTS

My beloved, from the harvest that the hand of death
 hath spread [my womb!
 For the mountain-beasts to ravin on the children of

(*Ant.* 1)

Look upon me:—from mine eyes in my despairing
 Tears are streaming, and my frenzied hands are 50
 tearing [should I do but mourn,
 Crimson furrows on my wrinkled cheeks. What
 Who have laid not out my dead unto their burial to
 be borne, [for their tomb?
 And who see not any heaping of the earth-mound

(*Str.* 2)

Thou hast borne a little one, thou hast given a
 princely son [joy in thee :
 To thy lord, that marriage-treasure made his heart to
 Let the full soul deal its bread to the sad ones
 famishèd :
 Give according to the measure of my childless agony.
 Bend the spirit of thy son, that he may go, whose 60
 help we crave, [our dead—
 To Ismenus, that our hands may lay the bodies of
 Who are outcasts now in Hades, being tombless—
 in the grave.

(*Ant.* 2)

Not according unto rite,¹ but as overmastering might
 Of Necessity constraineth, at the altars do I bend
 Whence to heaven leaps the flame ; and the right
 is that I claim.
 Thou art strong, thy son remaineth ;—thou canst
 make my sorrows end. [wild
 Out of depths of sorest anguish rings my supplication

¹ There was no place in the temple-ritual for mourning.

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

70 τὸν ἐμὸν παῖδα τάλαιν' ἐν χερὶ θεῖναι
νέκυν, ἀμφιβαλεῖν λυγρὰ μέλη παιδὸς ἐμοῦ.

ἀγὼν ὄδ' ἄλλος ἔρχεται γόων γόοις στρ. γ
διάδοχος· ἀχοῦσιν προπόλων χέρες.
ἴτ' ὦ ξυνφδοὶ κακοῖς,
ἴτ' ὦ ξυναλγηδόνες,
χορὸν τὸν Ἰδαίας σέβει,
διὰ παρῆδος ὄνυχα λευκὸν
αἵματοῦτε χρώτά τε φόνιον·
τὰ γὰρ φθιτῶν τοῖς ὀρώσι κόσμος.

80 ἀπληστος ἄδε μ' ἐξάγει χάρις γόων ἀντ. γ
πολύπονος, ὡς ἐξ ἀλιβάτου πέτρας
ὑγρὰ ρέουσα σταγῶν,
ἄπαιστος αἰεὶ γόων·
τὸ γὰρ θανόντων τέκνων
ἐπίπονόν τι κατὰ γυναῖκας
εἰς γόους πέφυκε πάθος. ἔῃ·
θανοῦσα τῶνδ' ἀλγέων λαθοίμαν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

90 τίνων γόων ἤκουσα καὶ στέρνων κτύπον
νεκρῶν τε θρήνους, τῶνδ' ἀνακτόρων ἀπο
ἠχοῦς ἰούσης; ὡς φόβος μ' ἀναπτεροῖ
μή μοί τι μήτηρ, ἦν μεταστείχω ποδὶ
χροίαν ἀποῦσαν ἐκ δόμων, ἔχῃ νέον.
εἶα·
τί χρῆμα; καινὰς εἰσβολὰς ὀρῶ λόγων·
μητέρα γεραιὰν βωμίαν ἐφημένην
ξένας θ' ὁμοῦ γυναῖκας, οὐχ ἓνα ῥυθμὸν

SUPPLIANTS

That thou give me but a corpse, in mine embrace
to hold the same, [my child.
And to fling mine arms around the piteous body of 70

The attendant HANDMAIDS, beating their breasts and marring their faces, wail in unison with the MOTHERS.

O hearken yon wails to our wailing replying, (*Str.* 3)
To the hands of our handmaidens smiting hard
On their bosoms! Come, ye that re-echo our crying
With a burden of mourning, who sigh with our
sighing—

Come ye to the one dance Death doth regard;
Rend, rend ye the cheek, till the red stains streak
White fingers:—the dues that our dear dead seek
Shall be all our reward.

Unsatisfied mourning my soul is enthralling (*Ant.* 3)
Sorrow-burdened, as forth from a precipice flows 80
A spring with its rain ever flashing and falling.
Unrestingly wailing to wailing is calling;

For the heart's love of woman but one path knows,
Nor can choose but to moan for the dear dead son:—
And oh that the days of my life were done,
And forgotten my woes!

Enter THESEUS.

THESEUS

What wailings heard I, smittings upon breasts,
And dirges for the dead, as rang the sound [fear
From the holy place? How throbs mine heart with
Lest to my mother, who hath drawn me hither 90
By her long absence, some mischance betide.
Ha!

What see I here? What strange tale is to tell?
At the altar sitting my grey mother is,
And alien dames with her in diverse guise

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

κακῶν ἐχούσας· ἔκ τε γὰρ γερασμίῳν
 ὄσσων ἐλαίνουσ' οἰκτρὸν εἰς γαίαν δάκρυ,
 κουραὶ δὲ καὶ πεπλώματ' οὐ θεωρικά.
 τῆ ταῦτα, μῆτερ; σὸν τὸ μνηύειν ἐμοί,
 ἡμῶν δ' ἀκούειν· προσδοκῶ τι γὰρ νέον.

ΑΙΘΡΑ

100 ὦ παῖ, γυναῖκες αἶδε μητέρες τέκνων
 τῶν κατθανόντων ἀμφὶ Καδμείας πύλας
 ἐπτα στρατηγῶν· ἰκεσίῳις δὲ σὺν κλάδοις
 φρουροῦσί μ', ὡς δέδορκας, ἐν κύκλῳ, τέκνον.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τίς δ' ὁ στενάζων οἰκτρὸν ἐν πύλαις ὄδε;

ΑΙΘΡΑ

Ἄδραστος, ὡς λέγουσιν, Ἀργείων ἄναξ.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

οἱ δ' ἀμφὶ τόνδε παῖδες ἦ τούτου τέκνα;

ΑΙΘΡΑ

οὐκ, ἀλλὰ νεκρῶν τῶν ὀλωλότων κόροι.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τί γὰρ πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἦλθον ἰκεσία χερί;

ΑΙΘΡΑ

οἶδ'· ἀλλὰ τῶνδε μῦθος οὐντεῦθεν, τέκνον.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

110 σέ τὸν κατήρη χλανιδίοις ἀνιστορῶ.
 λέγ' ἐκκαλύψας κρᾶτα καὶ πάρες γόον·
 πέρας γὰρ οὐδὲν μὴ διὰ γλώσσης ἰόν.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ὦ καλλίνικε γῆς Ἀθηναίων ἄναξ,
 Θησεῦ, σὸς ἰκέτης καὶ πόλεως ἤκω σέθεν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τί χρῆμα θηρῶν καὶ τίνος χρείαν ἔχων;

SUPPLIANTS

Of sore affliction ; for the piteous tear
 Unto the ground from agèd eyes they drop.
 Shorn hair and garb unmeet for worshippers !
 What means it, mother ? 'Tis thy part to tell,
 And mine to hear. I look for some strange thing.

AETHRA

My son, these dames the mothers are of those, 100
 The chieftains seven, that in battle fell
 By gates Cadmean. And with suppliant boughs
 Compassed they hold me, captive, as thou seest.

THESEUS

Who yonder at the gates makes piteous moan ?

AETHRA

Adrastus, as they tell, the Argive king.

THESEUS

And yon lads at his side, his boys are they ?

AETHRA

Nay, but the sons of those dead which have died.

THESEUS

Wherefore to us came they with suppliant hand ?

AETHRA

I know :—but these must tell the rest, my son.

THESEUS

Thee, in thy mantle muffled close, I ask— 110
 Unshroud thine head, speak, let thy mourning be ;
 Naught shalt thou profit, if naught pass thy tongue.

ADRASTUS

O triumph-glorious king of Athens' land,
 Theseus, I come thy suppliant and thy city's.

THESEUS

What seekest thou, and whereof hast thou need ?

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

οἷσθ' ἦν στρατείαν ἐστράτευσ' ὀλεθρίαν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

οὐ γάρ τι σιγῇ διεπέρασας Ἑλλάδα.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ἐνταῦθ' ἀπόλεσ' ἄνδρας Ἀργείων ἄκρους.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τοιαῦθ' ὁ τλήμων πόλεμος ἐξεργάζεται.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

120

τούτους θανόντας ἦλθον ἐξαιτῶν πόλιν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

κήρυξιν Ἑρμοῦ πίσυνος, ὡς θάψῃς νεκρούς ;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

κᾶπειτά γ' οἱ κτανόντες οὐκ ἐῶσί με.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τί γὰρ λέγουσιν, ὅσια χρήζοντος σέθεν ;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

τί δ' ; εὐτυχοῦντες οὐκ ἐπίστανται φέρειν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ξύμβουλον οὖν μ' ἐπήλθες ; ἢ τίνοσ χάριν ;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

κομίσαι σε, Θεσεῦ, παῖδας Ἀργείων θέλων.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τὸ δ' Ἄργος ὑμῖν ποῦ 'στιν ; ἢ κόμποι μάτην ;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

σφαλέντες οἰχόμεσθα. πρὸς σὲ δ' ἤκομεν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ιδία δοκῆσάν σοι τόδ' ἢ πάσῃ πόλει ;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

130

πάντες σ' ἰκνοῦνται Δαναῖδαι θάψαι νεκρούς.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ἐκ τοῦ δ' ἐλαύνεις ἐπτά πρὸς Θήβας λόχους ;

SUPPLIANTS

ADRASTUS

Thou know'st what host I to destruction led.

THESEUS

Yea, not in silence passedst thou through Greece.

ADRASTUS

The chiefest men of Argos lost I there.

THESEUS

Such desolation worketh woeful war.

ADRASTUS

And these my dead I went to ask of Thebes.

120

THESEUS

Did heralds sanctify thy burial-claim?

ADRASTUS

Yea: even so the slayers grant them not.

THESEUS

What say they to thy plea of holy right?

ADRASTUS

Ay, what?—prosperity hath puffed them up.

THESEUS

For counsel com'st thou then, or what wouldst thou?

ADRASTUS

That thou shouldst rescue, Theseus, Argos' sons.

THESEUS

Where is your Argos? Is her vaunting vain?

ADRASTUS

We are fallen and undone. To thee we come.

THESEUS

Dost thou alone will this, or all thy state?

ADRASTUS

All Danaus' sons beseech thee entomb their dead.

130

THESEUS

Why didst thou march those seven hosts to Thebes?

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

δισσοῖσι γαμβροῖς τήνδε πορσύνων χάριν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τῷ δ' ἔξέδωκας παῖδας Ἀργείων σέθεν ;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

οὐκ ἐγγενῆ συνῆψα κηδείαν δόμοις.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ἀλλὰ ξένοις ἔδωκας Ἀργείας κόρας ;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

Τυδεῖ γε Πολυνεῖκει τε τῷ Θηβαγενεῖ.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τίν' εἰς ἔρωτα τῆσδε κηδείας μολών ;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

Φοίβου μ' ὑπῆλθε δυστόπαστ' αἰνίγματα.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τί δ' εἶπ' Ἀπόλλων παρθένοις κραίνων γάμον ;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

140

κάπρω με δοῦναι καὶ λέοντι παῖδ' ἐμῷ.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

σὺ δ' ἐξελίσσεις πῶς θεοῦ θεσπίσματα ;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ἐλθόντε φυγάδε νυκτὸς εἰς ἐμὰς πύλας,

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τίς καὶ τίς ; εἶπέ· δύο γὰρ ἐξαυδάς ἄμα.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

Τυδεὺς μάχην ξυνηῖψε Πολυνεΐκης θ' ἄμα.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ἦ τοῖσδ' ἔδωκας θηρσὶν ὡς κόρας σέθεν ;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

μάχην γε δισσοῖν κνωδάλοιν ἀπεικάσας.

SUPPLIANTS

ADRASTUS

To my two daughters' lords this grace I showed.

THESEUS

Thy daughters? To what Argives gav'st thou them?

ADRASTUS

With no man native-born I linked mine house.

THESEUS

Ha! gavest thou to aliens Argive maids?

ADRASTUS

To Tydeus, and to Thebes' son Polyneices.

THESEUS

Whence thy strong love for such affinity?

ADRASTUS

Phoebus' dark saying wrought upon my mind.

THESEUS

What spake Apollo to control their marriage?

ADRASTUS

"Thy daughters give to a lion and a boar."

140

THESEUS

And the God's precept how unfoldest thou?

ADRASTUS

There came by night two exiles to my gates.

THESEUS

Who this, who that?—for thou dost speak of twain

ADRASTUS

Tydeus and Polyneices: there they fought.

THESEUS

To these, as those wild beasts, gav'st thou thy daughters?

ADRASTUS

Yea: like those monsters twain, methought, they strove.

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ἦλθον δὲ δὴ πῶς πατρίδος ἐκλιπόνθ' ὄρους ;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

Τυδεὺς μὲν αἶμα συγγενὲς φεύγων χθονός.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ὁ δ' Οἰδίπου παῖς τίμῃ τρόπῳ Θήβας λιπών ;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

150 ἀραῖς πατρώαις, μὴ κασίγνητον κτάνοι.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

σοφὴν γ' ἔλεξας τήνδ' ἐκούσιον φυγὴν.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ἀλλ' οἱ μένοντες τοὺς ἀπόντας ἠδίκουν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ἦ πού σφ' ἀδελφὸς χρημάτων νοσφίζεται ;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ταῦτ' ἐκδικάζων ἦλθον· εἴτ' ἀπωλόμην.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

μάντις δ' ἐπήλθες ἐμπύρων τ' εἶδες φλόγα ;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

οἴμοι· διώκεις μ' ἢ μάλιστ' ἐγὼ σφάλην.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

οὐκ ἦλθες, ὡς ἔοικεν, εὐνοία θεῶν.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

τὸ δὲ πλεόν, ἦλθον Ἀμφιάρεώ γε πρὸς βίαν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

οὕτω τὸ θεῖον ῥαδίως ἀπεστράφησ ;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

160 νέων γὰρ ἀνδρῶν θόρυβος ἐξέπλησέ με.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

εὐψυχίαν ἔσπευσας ἀντ' εὐβουλίας.

SUPPLIANTS

THESEUS

How left they home-land's bounds, and came to thee?

ADRASTUS

Tydeus, for shedding blood of kin exiled.

THESEUS

And Oedipus' son, for what cause left he Thebes?

ADRASTUS

His father's curse, lest he should slay his brother. 150

THESEUS

Wise was that self-sought exile, named of thee.

ADRASTUS

But they that tarried wrought the absent wrong.

THESEUS

Ha! did his brother take his heritage?

ADRASTUS

To claim his right I came—and found my ruin.

THESEUS

Didst seek to seers, and gaze on altar-flames?

ADRASTUS

Ah me! thou pressest me where most I erred!

THESEUS

Not with heaven's blessing didst thou go, methinks.

ADRASTUS

Nay, worse; in Amphiaraus' despite I went.

THESEUS

Didst thou thus lightly flout the will divine?

ADRASTUS

The clamour of the young men daunted me. 160

THESEUS

Valour instead of wisdom favouredst thou.

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ὃ δὴ γε πολλοὺς ὤλεσε στρατηλάτας.
 ἀλλ' ὦ καθ' Ἑλλάδ' ἀλκιμώτατον κῆρα,
 ἀναξ' Ἀθηνῶν, ἐν μὲν αἰσχύναις ἔχω
 πίτνων πρὸς οὐδας γόνυ σὸν ἀμπίσχειν χερί,
 πολὺς ἀνὴρ τύραννος εὐδαίμων πάρος·
 ὅμως δ' ἀνάγκη σύμφοραῖς εἶκειν ἐμαῖς.

170 σῶσον νεκροὺς μοι τὰμὰ τ' οἰκτεῖρας κακὰ
 καὶ τῶν θανόντων τάσδε μητέρας τέκνων,
 αἷς γῆρας ἦκει πολὺν εἰς ἀπαιδίαν,
 ἐλθεῖν δ' ἔτλησαν δεῦρο καὶ ξένον πόδα
 θεῖναι μόλις γεραιὰ κινουῦσαι μέλη,
 πρεσβεύματ' οὐ Δήμητρος εἰς μυστήρια,
 ἀλλ' ὡς νεκροὺς θάψωσιν, ἅς αὐτὰς ἐχρῆν
 κείνων ταφείσας χερσὶν ὠραίων τυχεῖν.
 σοφὸν δὲ πενίαν τ' εἰσορᾶν τὸν ὄλβιον,
 πένητά τ' εἰς τοὺς πλουσίους ἀποβλέπειν
 ζηλοῦνθ', ἵν' αὐτὸν χρημάτων ἔρωσ ἔχη,
 180 τὰ τ' οἰκτρὰ τοὺς μὴ δυστυχεῖς δεδορκέναι
 [τόν θ' ὕμνοποιὸν αὐτὸς ἂν τίκτῃ μέλη
 χαίροντα τίκτειν· ἦν δὲ μὴ πάσχη τόδε,
 οὔτοι δύναιτ' ἂν οἴκοθέν γ' ἀτώμενος
 τέρπειν ἂν ἄλλους· οὐδὲ γὰρ δίκην ἔχει.]¹

τάχ' οὖν ἂν εἴποις, Πελοπίαν παρῆς χθόνα
 πῶς ταῖς Ἀθήναις τόνδε προστάσσεις πόνον;
 ἐγὼ δίκαιός εἰμ' ἀφηγεῖσθαι τάδε.
 Σπάρτη μὲν ὠμὴ καὶ πεποίκιλται τρόπους,
 τὰ δ' ἄλλα μικρὰ κάσθενῆ· πόλις δὲ σὴ
 190 μόνη δύναιτ' ἂν τόνδ' ὑποστήναι πόνον.
 τὰ τ' οἰκτρὰ γὰρ δέδορκε καὶ νεανίαν

¹ By most editors regarded as an irrelevant interpolation.

SUPPLIANTS

ADRASTUS

Even that hath ruined many a battle-chief,
 O thou in prowess first all Hellas through,
 O king of Athens, sore ashamed am I
 To fall to earth, and to embrace thy knee,
 A grey-haired king in time past prosperous.
 Yet to mine evil plight I needs must bow.

Save thou my dead, compassionate my woes,
 And these the mothers of the slaughtered sons
 Whom hoary age hath found in childlessness, 170
 Who have endured to come, on alien soil
 To set their feet, who scarce for eld may creep ;
 No mission to Demeter's mysteries,
 But seeking burial for their dead, a boon
 Themselves should have obtained of young strong
 hands.

Wisely doth wealth consider poverty :
 Wisely to wealth the poor uplifts his eyes
 Aspiring, that desire of good may spur him :
 So ought the prosperous to look on woe.
 [The poet's self in gladness should bring forth 180
 His offspring, song ; if he attain not this,
 He cannot from a heart distraught with pain
 Gladden his fellows : reason sayeth nay.]

Perchance thou askest, " Why pass by the land
 Of Pelops, and on Athens lay this charge ? "
 Sooth, right it is that I should answer this :—
 Sparta is heartless, never at one stay ;
 The rest be small and weak : but this thy burg
 Alone can stand beneath the mighty strain.
 'Twas ever pitiful, and hath in thee 190

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

ἔχει σὲ ποιμέν' ἐσθλόν· οὐ χρεία πόλεις
πολλαὶ διώλονται ἐνδεεῖς στρατηλάτου.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

καὶ γὰρ τὸν αὐτὸν τῷδέ σοι λόγον λέγω,
Θησεύ, δι' οἴκτου τὰς ἐμὰς λαβεῖν τύχας.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ἄλλοισι δὴ 'πόνησ' ἀμιλληθεὶς λόγῳ
τοιῷδ'. ἔλεξε γάρ τις ὡς τὰ χείρονα
πλείω βροτοῖσιν ἐστὶ τῶν ἀμεινόνων·
ἐγὼ δὲ τούτοις ἀντίαν γνώμην ἔχω
πλείω τὰ χρηστὰ τῶν κακῶν εἶναι βροτοῖς·
200 εἰ μὴ γὰρ ἦν τόδ', οὐκ ἂν ἦμεν ἐν φάει.
αἰνῶ δ' ὅς ἡμῖν βίοτον ἐκ πεφυρμένου
καὶ θηριώδους θεῶν διεσταθμήσατο,
πρῶτον μὲν ἐνθεὶς σύνεσιν, εἶτα δ' ἄγγελου
γλώσσαν λόγων δούς, ὡς γεγωνίσκειν ὕπα,
τροφὴν τε καρποῦ τῇ τροφῇ τ' ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ
σταγόνας ὑδρηλάς, ὡς τὰ γ' ἐκ γαίας τρέφῃ
ἄρρη τε νηδύν· πρὸς δὲ τοῖσι χείματος
προβλήματ', αἶθρον ἐξαμύνασθαι θεοῦ,
πόντου τε ναυστολήμαθ', ὡς διαλλαγὰς
210 ἔχοιμεν ἀλλήλοισιν ὧν πένοιτο γῆ.
ἂ δ' ἔστ' ἄσημα κοῦ σαφῶς γιγνώσκομεν,
εἰς πῦρ βλέποντες καὶ κατὰ σπλάγχχνων πτυχὰς
μάντεις προσημαίνουσιν οἰωνῶν τ' ἄπο.
ἄρ' οὐ τρυφῶμεν θεοῦ κατασκευὴν βίῳ
δόντος τοιαύτην, οἷσιν οὐκ ἀρκεῖ τάδε ;
ἀλλ' ἢ φρόνησις τοῦ θεοῦ μείζον σθένειν
ζητεῖ, τὸ γαῦρον δ' ἐν φρεσὶν κεκτημένοι
δοκοῦμεν εἶναι δαιμόνων σοφώτεροι.
ἦς καὶ σὺ φαίνει δεκάδος οὐ σοφὸς γεγώς,
220 ὅστις κόρας μὲν θεσφάτοις Φοίβου ζυγεῖς

SUPPLIANTS

A young and valorous chief, for lack of whom
To lead their hosts, have many cities fallen.

CHORUS

I too put up to thee the selfsame prayer,
Theseus, to have compassion on my lot.

THESEUS

With others oft in wrestle of argument
I have grappled touching this:—there be that say
That evil more abounds with men than good.
Opinion adverse unto these I hold,
That more than evil good abounds with men:
Were this not so, we were not of the light. 200

Praise to the God who shaped in order's mould
Our lives redeemed from chaos and the brute,
First, by implanting reason, giving then
The tongue, word-herald, to interpret speech;
Earth's fruit for food, for nurturing thereof
Raindrops from heaven, to feed earth's fosterlings,
And water her green bosom; therewithal
Shelter from storm, and shadow from the heat,
Sea-tracking ships, that traffic might be ours
With fellow-men of that which each land lacks; 210
And, for invisible things or dimly seen,
Soothsayers watch the flame, the liver's folds,
Or from the birds divine the things to be.

Are we not arrogant then, when all life's needs
God giveth, therewith not to be content?
But our presumption stronger fain would be
Than God: we have gotten overweening hearts,
And dream that we be wiser than the Gods.
And thou art of this fellowship of folly,
Who didst by Phoebus' hest thy daughters wed, 220

ξένοισιν ὧδ' ἔδωκας ὡς ζώντων θεῶν,
 λαμπρὸν δὲ θολερῶ δῶμα συμμίξας τὸ σὸν
 ἤλκωσας οἴκους· χρῆν γὰρ οὐδὲ σώματα
 ἄδικα δικάοις τὸν σοφὸν συμμιγνύναι,
 εὐδαιμονοῦντας δ' εἰς δόμους κτᾶσθαι φίλους.
 κοινὰς γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τὰς τύχας ἡγούμενος
 τοῖς τοῦ νοσοῦντος πήμασιν διώλεσε
 τὸν συννοσοῦντα κούδὲν ἠδικηκότα,
 εἰς δὲ στρατείαν πάντας Ἀργείους ἄγων,
 230 μάντεων λεγόντων θέσφατ', εἴτ' ἀτιμάσας
 βία παρελθὼν θεοὺς ἀπώλεσας πόλιν,
 νέοις παραχθείς, οὔτινες τιμώμενοι
 χαίρουσι πολέμους τ' αὐξάνουσ' ἄνευ δίκης,
 φθείροντες ἀστούς, ὁ μὲν ὅπως στρατηλατῆ,
 ὁ δ' ὡς ὑβρίζῃ δύναμιν εἰς χεῖρας λαβῶν,
 ἄλλος δὲ κέρδους εἵνεκ', οὐκ ἀποσκοπῶν
 τὸ πλῆθος εἴ τι βλάπτεται πάσχον τάδε.
 τρεῖς γὰρ πολιτῶν μερίδες· οἱ μὲν ὄλβιοι
 ἀνωφελεῖς τε πλειόνων τ' ἐρῶσ' αἰεί·
 240 οἱ δ' οὐκ ἔχοντες καὶ σπανίζοντες βίου,
 δεινοὶ, νέμουτες τῷ φθόνῳ πλέον μέρος,
 εἰς τοὺς ἔχοντας κέντρ' ἀφιασιν κακά,
 γλώσσαις πονηρῶν προστατῶν φηλούμενοι·
 τριῶν δὲ μοιρῶν ἢ ἂν μέσῳ σφάζει πόλεις,
 κόσμον φυλάσσοις ὄντιν' ἂν τάξῃ πόλις.
 κάπειτ' ἐγὼ σοι σύμμαχος γενήσομαι·
 τί πρὸς πολίτας τοὺς ἐμοὺς λέγων καλόν·
 χαίρων ἴθ'· εἰ γὰρ μὴ βεβούλευσαι καλῶς,
 αὐτὸς πιέζειν τὴν τύχην, ἡμᾶς δ' ἔαν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

250 ἡμαρτεν· ἐν νέοισι δ' ἀνθρώπων τόδε
 ἔνεστι· συγγνώμην δὲ τῷδ' ἔχειν χρεῶν.

SUPPLIANTS

To aliens—thus far recognising Gods ;—
 Yet mingling thy clear blood with turbid, so
 Didst mar thine house : thou oughtest ne'er to have
 blent,

So thou wert wise, just lives with lives unjust,
 But for thine house to have gotten heaven-blest
 friends :

For God, adjudging fates joined hand in hand,
 Destroyeth by the sinner's stroke whoe'er
 Partaketh with him, though he have not sinned.
 Thou leddest forth the Argives all to war, [naught
 Though seers spake heaven's warning, setting at 230
 These, flouting Gods, didst ruin so thy state,
 By young men led astray, which love the praise
 Of men, and multiply wars wrongfully,
 Corrupting others, one, to lead the host,
 One, to win power, and use it for his lust,
 And one for lucre's sake, who recketh naught
 Of mischief to a people thus misused.

For in a nation there be orders three :—
 The highest, useless rich, aye craving more ;
 The lowest, poor, aye on starvation's brink, 240
 A dangerous folk, of envy overfull,
 Which shoot out baleful stings at prosperous folk,
 Beguiled by tongues of evil men, their "champions" :
 But of the three the midmost saveth states,
 Who keep the order which the state ordains.
 Shall I then make me ally unto thee ?
 How to my nation should I make defence ?
 Depart in peace : if thou hast ill devised,
 Face fortune's blows thyself ; drag us not down.

CHORUS

He erred ; yet on the young men rests the blame : 250
 But meet it is that he find grace with thee.

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

οὔτοι δικαστήν σ' εἰλόμην ἐμῶν κακῶν,
 ἀλλ' ὡς ἰατρὸν τῶνδ', ἀναξ, ἀφίγμεθα,¹
 οὐδ', εἴ τι πράξας μὴ καλῶς εὐρίσκομαι,
 τούτων κολαστήν κἀπιτιμητήν, ἀναξ,
 ἀλλ' ὡς ὀναίμην. εἰ δὲ μὴ βούλει τάδε,
 στέργειν ἀνάγκη τοῖσι σοῖς· τί γὰρ πάθω ;
 ἄγ', ὦ γεραιαί, στείχετε, γλαυκὴν χλόην
 αὐτοῦ λιπούσαι φυλλάδος καταστεφῆ,
 260 θεοὺς τε καὶ γῆν τήν τε πυρφόρον θεὰν
 Δήμητρα θέμεναι μάρτυρ' ἡλίου τε φῶς,
 ὡς οὐδὲν ἡμῖν ἤρκεσαν λιταὶ θεῶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

* * * * *
 ὃς Πέλοπος ἦν παῖς, Πελοπίας δ' ἡμεῖς χθονὸς
 ταυτὸν πατρῶον αἶμα σοὶ κεκτῆμεθα.

ΑΙΘΡΑ²

τί δρᾶς ; προδώσεις ταῦτα κἀκβαλεῖς χθονὸς
 γραῦς οὐ τυχοῦσας οὐδὲν ὦν αὐτὰς ἐχρήν ;
 μὴ δῆτ' ἔχει γὰρ καταφυγὴν θῆρ μὲν πέτραν,
 δούλος δὲ βωμούς θεῶν, πόλις δὲ πρὸς πόλιν
 ἔπτηξε χειμασθεῖσα· τῶν γὰρ ἐν βροτοῖς
 270 οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν διὰ τέλους εὐδαιμονοῦν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ.
 βᾶθι, τάλαιν', ἱερῶν δαπέδων ἄπο Περσεφονείας,
 βᾶθι καὶ ἀντίασον γονάτων ἔπι χεῖρα βαλοῦσα,
 τέκνων τεθνεώτων κομίσαι δέμας, ὦ μελέα ἴγώ,
 οὐς ὑπὸ τείχεσι Καδμείοισιν ἀπώλεσα κούρους.

¹ Placed by Barnes here, instead of after 251, as in MSS.

² So assigned by Paley, by other editors to Chorus.

SUPPLIANTS

ADRASTUS

Not for a judge I chose thee of mine ills,
 But as to a healer of them, king, we come ;
 Nor, if I have calamitously sped,
 Need I thy chastisement and chiding, king,
 No, but thine aid. And if thou wilt not this,
 I must content me with thy choice :—what help ?
 Come, aged dames, depart :—yet leave ye here
 The grey-green boughs to roof the altar o'er,¹
 Calling to witness heaven and earth, Demeter, 260
 Fire-bearing Goddess, and the Sun-god's light,
 That naught our prayers unto the Gods availed.

CHORUS

[On thine head be it, grandson thou of Pittheus]
 Old Pelops' son ! Lo, we of Pelops' land
 The selfsame blood ancestral share with thee.

ÆTHRA

How ?—wilt thou flout these prayers, cast forth the
 land
 Grey mothers, which have gained of their dues naught ?
 Nay, nay !—the beast finds refuge in the rock,
 The slave at the Gods' altars ; and a state
 Storm-tossed must cower beneath another's lee ;
 For in man's lot naught prospereth to the end. 270

CHORUS

(Str.)

O thou afflicted, arise from Persephone's hallowed
 floor ; [thine hands, and implore
 Rise thou, and bow at his knees, flinging round them
 That he rescue the clay of my-dead, my beloved—ah,
 woe is me, woe !— [in dust lying low.
 Of the sons I have lost, under ramparts of Cadmus

¹ If the petitioner's prayer was granted, he carried away with him his suppliant-bough ; if not, he left it on the altar.

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

ιώ μοι λάβετε φέρετε πέμπετε αείρετε¹ μεσφδ.
ταλαίνας χέρας γεραιάς.

πρός σε γενειάδος, ὦ φίλος, ὦ δοκιμώτατος
Ἑλλάδι,

ἄντομαι ἀμφιπίτνουσα τὸ σὸν γόνυ καὶ χέρα
δειλαία·

280 οἴκτισαι ἀμφὶ τέκνων μ' ἰκέταν τιν' ἀλάταν
οἴκτρὸν ἰάλεμον οἴκτρὸν ἰεῖσαν,

ἄντ.
μηδ' ἀτάφους, τέκνον, ἐν χθονὶ Κάδμου χάρματα
θηρῶν

παῖδας ἐν ἀλικία τῇ σῇ κατίδης, ἰκετεύω.

βλέψον ἐμῶν βλεφάρων ἔπι δάκρυον, ἅ περὶ
σοῖσι

γούνασιν ὧδε πίτνω, τέκνοις τάφον ἐξανύσασθαι.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

μηῆτερ, τί κλαίεις λέπτ' ἐπ' ὀμμάτων φάρη

βαλοῦσα τῶν σῶν; ἄρα δυστήνους γόους

κλύουσα τῶνδε; καμὲ γὰρ διήλθέ τι.

ἔπαιρε λευκὸν κράτα, μὴ δακρυρροεῖ

290 σεμναῖσι Δηοῦς ἐσχάραις παρημένῃ.

ΑΙΘΡΑ

αἰαῖ.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τὰ τούτων οὐχὶ σοὶ στενακτέον.

ΑΙΘΡΑ

ὦ τλήμονες γυναῖκες.

¹ Hermann; for MSS. κρίνετε.

SUPPLIANTS

(*Mesode*)

Woe for me!—clasp me, uplift me, help onward,
upholding

The palsied hand of the woe-forspent!

By thy beard, O thou chiefest of champions of
Hellas, O friend, I beseech thee,

In the clasp of the wretched thy knees and thy
fingers enfolding!

Pity me; for my children in suppliance bent 280
Like a beggar I bow: let my pitiful, pitiful out-
cryings reach thee!

(*Ant.*)

Ah, not unburied on Cadmus's soil, for a ravin and glee
Unto beasts of the wold do thou leave them, the
young men like unto thee!

O look on the tears from mine eyes that are stream-
ing!—and all that I crave

Falling low at thy knees, is a grave—that thou win
for my sons but a grave!

THESEUS

Mother, why weepst thou, before thine eyes
Casting thy fine-spun veil? Dost weep to hear
Their mournful wails? Sooth, mine own heart was
thrilled.

Raise thy white head; be not a fount of tears,
There sitting at Demeter's holy hearth.

290

AETHRA

Ah me!

THESEUS

'Tis not for thee to wail their woes.

AETHRA

Oh hapless dames!

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

οὐ σὺ τῶνδ' ἔφυς.

ΑΙΘΡΑ

εἶπω τι, τέκνον, σοί τε καὶ πόλει καλόν;

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ὡς πολλά γ' ἐστὶ κἀπὸ θηλειῶν σοφά.

ΑΙΘΡΑ

ἀλλ' εἰς ὄκνον μοι μῦθος ὄν κεύθω φέρει.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

αἰσχρόν γ' ἔλεξας, χρήστ' ἔπη κρύπτειν φίλους.

ΑΙΘΡΑ

οὔτοι σιωπῶσ' εἶτα μέμψομαί ποτε
 τὴν νῦν σιωπὴν ὡς ἐσιγήθη κακῶς,
 οὐδ' ὡς ἀχρεῖον τὰς γυναῖκας εὐ λέγειν
 300 δείσασ' ἀφήσω τῷ φόβῳ τοῦμὸν καλόν.
 ἐγὼ δέ σ', ὦ παῖ, πρῶτα μὲν τὰ τῶν θεῶν
 σκοπεῖν κελεύω μὴ σφαλῆς ἀτιμάσας·
 τᾶλλ' εὐ φρονῶν γάρ, ἐν μόνῳ τούτῳ σφάλῃς.
 πρὸς τοῖσδε δ', εἰ μὲν μὴ ἀδικουμένοις ἐχρῆν
 τολμηρὸν εἶναι, κάρτ' ἂν εἶχον ἡσύχως·
 νυνὶ δὲ σοί τε τοῦτο τὴν τιμὴν φέρει
 κάμοι παραινεῖν οὐ φόβον φέρει, τέκνον,
 ἄνδρας βιαίους καὶ κατείργοιτας νεκροὺς
 τάφου τε μοίρας καὶ κτερισμάτων λαχεῖν
 310 εἰς τήνδ' ἀνάγκην σῆ καταστήναι χερί,
 νόμιμά τε πάσης συγγέοντας Ἑλλάδος
 παῦσαι· τὸ γάρ τοι συνέχον ἀνθρώπων πόλεις
 τοῦτ' ἔσθ', ὅταν τις τοὺς νόμους σῶζῃ καλῶς.
 ἐρεῖ δὲ δὴ τις ὡς ἀνανδρία χερῶν,
 πόλει παρόν σοι στέφανον εὐκλείας λαβεῖν,
 δείσας ἀπέστης, καὶ σὺς μὲν ἀγρίου

SUPPLIANTS

THESEUS

Thou art not of their blood.

AETHRA

Son, may I speak for thine and Athens' honour?

THESEUS

Yea, even from women's lips much wisdom flows.

AETHRA

Yet—yet, it gives me pause, the word I hide.

THESEUS

Nay, this were shame, to hide good rede from friends.

AETHRA

I will not hold my peace, to blame hereafter
Myself for coward silence of this day;
Nor, cowed by that taunt, "Woman's best advice
Is worthless," will refrain my lips from good. 300
My son, I bid thee look to this first, lest
Thou err, despising their appeal to heaven.
In this alone thou err'st, in all else wise.

Nay more—I had endured, and murmured not,
Wert thou not *bound* to champion the oppressed.
Lo, this is the foundation of thy fame;
Therefore I fear not to exhort thee, son,
That thou wouldst lay thy strong constraining hand
On men of violence which refuse the dead 310
The dues of burial and of funeral-rites,
And quell the folk that would confound all wont
Of Hellas: for the bond of all men's states
Is this, when they with honour hold by law.

Ay, some will say faint heart made feeble hand;
That to win Athens glory's crown was thine,
Yet didst thou flinch for fear; that thou didst close

ἀγῶνος ἤψω φαῦλον ἀθλήσας πόνον,
 οὐ δ' εἰς κράνος βλέψαντα καὶ λόγχης ἀκμὴν
 320 χρῆν ἐκπονήσαι, δειλὸς ὢν ἐφηυρέθης.
 μὴ δῆτ' ἐμός γ' ὢν, ὦ τέκνον, δράσης τάδε.
 ὄρας, ἄβουλος ὡς κεκερτομημένη
 τοῖς κερτομοῦσι γοργὸν ὄμμ' ἀναβλέπει
 σὴ πατρίς; ἐν γὰρ τοῖς πόνοισιν αὖξεται·
 αἱ δ' ἡσυχοὶ σκοτεινὰ πρίσσουσαι πόλεις
 σκοτεινὰ καὶ βλέπουσιν εὐλαβούμεναι.
 οὐκ εἶ νεκροῖσι καὶ γυναιξὶν ἀθλίαις
 προσωφελήσων, ὦ τέκνον, κεχρημέναις;
 ὡς οὔτε ταρβῶ σὺν δίκῃ σ' ὀρμώμενον,
 330 Κάδμου θ' ὀρώσα λαὸν εὐ πεπραγότα,
 ἔτ' αὐτὸν ἄλλα βλήματ' ἐν κύβοις βαλεῖν
 πέποιθ'. ὁ γὰρ θεὸς πάντ' ἀναστρέφει πάλιν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ φιλτάτη μοι, τῷδέ τ' εἴρηκας καλῶς
 κάμοί· διπλοῦν δέ χάσμα γίγνεται τόδε.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ἐμοὶ λόγοι μὲν, μήτηρ, οἱ λελεγμένοι
 ὀρθῶς ἔχουσ' εἰς τόνδε, κάπεφηνάμην
 γνώμην ὑφ' οἴων ἐσφάλῃ βουλευμάτων·
 ὀρῶ δὲ καὶ γὰρ ταῦθ' ἄπερ με νουθετεῖς,
 ὡς τοῖς ἐμοῖσιν οὐχὶ πρόσφορον τρόποις
 340 φεύγειν τὰ δεινά. πολλὰ γὰρ δράσας καλά,
 ἔθος τόδ' εἰς Ἑλληνας ἐξεδειξάμην,
 αἰεὶ κολαστῆς τῶν κακῶν καθεστάναι.
 οὐκοῦν ἀπαυδᾶν δυνατὸν ἐστὶ μοι πόνουσ.
 τί γὰρ μ' ἐροῦσιν οἷ γε δυσμενεῖς βροτῶν,
 ὅθ' ἢ τεκοῦσα χυπερορρωδοῦσ' ἐμοῦ

SUPPLIANTS

In strife of little toil with that wild swine,¹
 But when behoved to face the helm, bear brunt
 Of the spear's point, a craven wert thou found.
 Ah, do not so, my son, as thou art mine ! 320
 Hast marked—bemooked for reckless policy,
 How on the mockers glares with fierce bright eyes
 Thy country?—in her energy is her life.

But states which work in darkness, cautelous,
 Grope in the darkness, for their caution's meed.
 What, to the dead, and women misery-worn
 Wilt thou not bring help, son, in this their strait?
 I fear naught ; justice is with thine essay ;
 And, though the folk of Cadmus prosper now,
 Far otherwise yet for them the dice of doom 330
 Shall fall, I trust :—God bringeth low the proud.

CHORUS

O best-beloved, well hast thou said, for him
 And me alike ; herein is twofold joy.

THESEUS

Mother, the words I spake were words of truth
 Unto this man, wherein I showed my mind
 Touching the counsels by the which he fell.
 Yet these thy warnings—yea, I see their force,
 That with my life's use it accordeth not
 To flinch from peril. Many a glorious deed
 Hath shown to sons of Hellas this my wont, 340
 Ever to be a punisher of wrong.

Toil's challenge therefore cannot I refuse :
 For what will they which hate me say of me,
 When she that bare me—who, beyond all, fears

¹ Phaea, the wild sow of Krommyon, slain by Theseus.

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

πρώτη κελεύεις τόνδ' ὑποστῆναι πόνον ;
 δράσω τάδ'· εἶμι καὶ νεκροὺς ἐκλύσομαι
 λόγοισι πείθων· εἰ δὲ μή, βία δορὸς
 ἤδη τόδ' ἔσται κούχῃ σὺν φθόνῳ θεῶν.
 350 δόξαι δὲ χρήζω καὶ πόλει πάσῃ τόδε.
 δόξει δ' ἐμοῦ θέλοντος· ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου
 προσδοῦς ἔχοιμ' ἂν δῆμον εὐμενέστερον.
 καὶ γὰρ κατέστησ' αὐτὸν εἰς μοναρχίαν
 ἐλευθερώσας τήνδ' ἰσόψηφον πόλιν.
 λαβὼν δ' Ἄδραστον δεῖγμα τῶν ἐμῶν λόγων,
 εἰς πλήθος ἀστῶν εἶμι καὶ πείσας τάδε,
 λεκτοὺς ἀθροίσας δεῦρ' Ἀθηναίων κόρους
 ἤξω παρ' ὄπλοις θ' ἡμενος πέμψω λόγους
 Κρέοντι νεκρῶν σώματ' ἐξαιτούμενος.
 360 ἀλλ' ὦ γεραιαί, σέμν' ἀφαιρεῖτε στέφη
 μητρός, πρὸς οἴκους ὡς νιν Αἰγέως ἄγω,
 φίλην προσάψας χεῖρα· τοῖς τεκοῦσι γὰρ
 δύστηνος ὅστις μὴ ἀντιδουλεύει τέκνων.
 κάλλιστον ἔρανον δοῦς γὰρ ἀντιλάζνται
 παίδων παρ' αὐτοῦ τοιάδ' ἂν τοκεῦσι δῶ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α'

ἰππόβοτον Ἄργος, ὃ πάτριον ἐμὸν πέδον,
 ἐκλύετε τάδ' ἐκλύετ' ἄνακτος
 ὅσια περὶ θεοὺς καὶ μεγάλη Πελασγία
 καὶ κατ' Ἄργος.

ἀντ. α

370 εἰ γὰρ ἐπὶ τέρμα καὶ τὸ πλεόν ἐμῶν κακῶν
 ἰκόμενος ἔτι ματέρος ἄγαλμα
 φόνιον ἐξέλοι, γᾶν δὲ φίλιον Ἰνάχου
 θεῖτ' ὀνήσας.

*SUPPLIANTS

For me,—first bids me undertake this toil?
 I will unto the deed, redeem their dead
 By fair words, if I may; if not, the might
 Of spears shall do it, nor the Gods shall grudge.
 Yet I require all Athens' sanction here.
 My wish should win their sanction; yet, if I 350
 Show cause withal, the loyaller shall they be.
 For I have made the land one single realm,
 A free state, with an equal vote for all.
 Adrastus for my witness will I take,
 And meet their concourse; their consenting won,
 With muster of chosen youths Athenian
 Will I return; and tarrying under arms,
 Will send to Creon, asking back the dead.
 But ye, grey women, from my mother take
 The holy wreaths, that I may clasp her hand, 360
 And lead to Aegæus' halls. A sorry son
 Is he that pays not service-debt to parents.
 Who giveth of love's best, by his own sons
 For all he hath given his parents is repaid.

[*Exeunt* THESEUS and AETHRA.

CHORUS

(*Str.* 1)

O Argos, mead of the battle-steed, O land where my
 fathers abode of yore, [the hero-king,
 Ye have heard it, heard in Heaven was the word of
 His sacred plight in Pelasgia's sight, the pledge to be
 published all Argos o'er.

(*Ant.* 1)

O may he gain—yea, more than attain to the goal
 that seeth my miseries end! [mother to bring
 Forth let him go, let him wrest from the foe, to the 370
 Her darling's clay blood-stained, and for aye have
 our own dear Inachus' land to friend.

529

καλὸν δ' ἄγαλμα πόλεσιν εὐσεβῆς πόνος στρ. β'
 χάριν τ' ἔχει τὰν ἐς αἰί.

τί μοι πόλις κρανεῖ ποτ' ; ἄρα φίλιά μοι
 τεμεῖ, καὶ τέκνοις ταφὰς ληψόμεσθα ;

ἄμννε ματρί, πόλις, ἄμννε, Παλλάδος, ἀντ. β'
 νόμους βροτῶν μὴ μαιίνειν.

380 σύ τοι σέβεις δίκαν, τὸ δ' ἦσσον ἀδικία
 νέμεις, δυστυχῆ τ' αἰὲ πάντα ρύει.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τέχνην μὲν αἰὲ τήνδ' ἔχων ὑπηρετεῖς
 πόλει τε κἄμοί, διαφέρων κηρύγματα·
 ἐλθὼν δ' ὑπέρ τ' Ἀσωπὸν Ἴσμηνοῦ θ' ὕδωρ
 σεμνῶ τυράννω φράζε Καδμείων τάδε·
 Θησεύς σ' ἀπαιτεῖ πρὸς χάριν θάψαι νεκρούς,
 συγγείτον' οἰκῶν γαίαν, ἀξιῶν τυχεῖν,
 φίλον τε θέσθαι πάντ' Ἐρεχθιδῶν λεῶν.

390 κἄν μὲν θέλωσιν αἰνέσαι, παλίσσυτος
 στεῖχ' ἦν δ' ἀπιστῶσ', οἶδε δεύτεροι λόγοι
 κῶμον δέχεσθαι τὸν ἐμὸν ἀσπιδηφόρον.

στρατὸς δὲ θάσσει κἄξετάζεται παρὼν
 Καλλίχορον ἀμφὶ σεμνὸν εὐτρεπῆς ὄδε.

καὶ μὴν ἐκοῦσά γ' ἀσμένη τ' ἐδέξατο
 πόλις πόνου τόνδ', ὡς θέλοντά μ' ἦσθετο.

ἔα· λόγων τίς ἐμποδὼν ὄδ' ἔρχεται ;
 Καδμείος, ὡς ἔοικεν οὐ σάφ' εἰδότη.

SUPPLIANTS

(Str. 2)

Memorial fair shall the cities share of the sacred labour
of love : evermore [lingering.
The grace thereof shall abide, and the love aye
Ah, what shall come of their rede?—what doom?—
shall Athens bestow the grace I implore?
Shall she league her might with me, and the right of
the tomb to my slaughtered sons restore?

(Ant. 2)

O Pallas' Town, for my help step down; the holy
cause of the mother defend; [thing.
So the laws of men shall be made not then a polluted
Thou reverencest great Justice' hest : injustice be-
neath thy yoke shall bend :
And through all the lands thy champion hands to the
helpless oppressed deliverance send.

380

Enter THESEUS with ATHENIAN HERALD.

THESEUS

O thou that usest still thine art to serve
Athens and me, wide publishing mine hests,
Pass thou Asopus and Ismenus' stream,
And to the proud Cadmean despot say :
" Theseus of grace asks corpses for the tomb :
He dwells thy neighbour, and he claims but right :
So make thou the Erechtheid folk thy friend."
If they consent to grant it, turn thou back.
If they refuse, my second message speak,
" Look for my shielded revel-rout of war !"
Mine host is camped and marshalled hard at hand
By sacred Callichorus for fight prepared.
Yea, Athens of good will, and glad withal,
Took up this task, made ware of my desire.
Ha !—breaking in upon my speech who comes ?
Theban, I deem, yet know not certainly :—

390

531

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

κῆρυξ. ἐπίσχεσ, ἦν σ' ἀπαλλάξῃ πόνου
 μολῶν ὑπαντα τοῖς ἐμοῖς βουλευμασιν.

ΚΗΡΥΞ

400 τίς γῆς τύραννος ; πρὸς τίν' ἀγγεῖλαί με χρῆ
 λόγους Κρέοντος, ὃς κρατεῖ Κάδμου χθονός,
 Ἐτεοκλέους θανόντος ἀμφ' ἑπταστόμους
 πύλας ἀδελφοῦ χειρὶ Πολυνείκους ὑπο ;

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

πρῶτον μὲν ἦρξω τοῦ λόγου ψευδῶς, ξένε,
 ζητῶν τύραννον ἐνθάδ'· οὐ γὰρ ἄρχεται
 ἐνὸς πρὸς ἀνδρός, ἀλλ' ἐλευθέρα πόλις.
 δῆμος δ' ἀνάσσει διαδοχαῖσιν ἐν μέρει
 ἐνιαυσίαισιν, οὐχὶ τῷ πλούτῳ διδούς
 τὸ πλεῖστον, ἀλλὰ χῶ πένης ἔχων ἴσον.

ΚΗΡΥΞ

410 ἐν μὲν τὸδ' ἡμῖν ὥσπερ ἐν πεσσοῖς δίδωσ
 κρεῖσσον· πόλις γὰρ ἣς ἐγὼ πάρειμ' ἀπο
 ἐνὸς πρὸς ἀνδρός, οὐκ ὄχλῳ κρατύνεται
 οὐδ' ἔστιν αὐτὴν ὅστις ἐκχαυνῶν λόγοις
 πρὸς κέρδος ἴδιον ἄλλοτ' ἄλλοσε στρέφει·
 ὁ δ' αὐτίχ' ἠδὺς καὶ διδούς πολλὴν χάριν,
 εἰσαῦθις ἔβλαψ', εἶτα διαβολαῖς νέαις
 κλέψας τὰ πρόσθε σφάλματ' ἐξέδου δίκης.
 ἄλλως τε πῶς ἂν μὴ διορθέων λόγους
 ὀρθῶς δύναιτ' ἂν δῆμος εὐθύνειν πόλιν ;
 ὁ γὰρ χρόνος μάθησιν ἀντὶ τοῦ τάχους
 420 κρεῖσσω δίδωσι. γαπόνος δ' ἀνὴρ πένης
 εἰ καὶ γένοιτο μὴ ἀμαθής, ἔργων ὑπο
 οὐκ ἂν δύναιτο πρὸς τὰ κοιν' ἀποβλέπειν.
 ἦ δὴ νοσῶδες τοῦτο τοῖς ἀμείνοσιν,
 ὅταν πονηρὸς ἀξίωμ' ἀνὴρ ἔχῃ
 γλώσση κατασχῶν δῆμον, οὐδὲν ὦν τὸ πρῖν.

SUPPLIANTS

A herald!—stay : thy toil perchance is spared.
His coming meets my purpose in mid way.

Enter THEBAN HERALD.

HERALD

Your despot, who?—to whom must I proclaim
The words of Creon, lord of Cadmus' land 400
Since Eteocles by the hand was slain
Of Polyneices by the sevenfold gates ?

THESEUS

First, stranger, with false note thy speech began,
Seeking a despot here. Our state is ruled
Not of one only man : Athens is free.
Her people in the order of their course
Rule year by year, bestowing on the rich
Advantage none ; the poor hath equal right.

HERALD

One vantage hast thou given me, as to one
That playeth draughts :—the city whence I come 410
By one man, not by any mob, is swayed.
There is none there who, slaving them with talk,
This way and that way twists them for his gain,
Is popular now, and humours all their bent ;
Now, laying on others blame for mischief done,
He cloaks his faults, and slips through justice' net.

How should the mob which reason all awry
Have power to pilot straight a nation's course ?
For time bestoweth better lessoning
Than haste. But yon poor delver of the ground, 420
How shrewd soe'er, by reason of his toil
Can nowise oversee the general weal.
Realm-ruining in the wise man's sight is this,
When the vile tonguester getteth himself a name
By wooing mobs, who heretofore was naught.

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

- κομφός γ' ὁ κήρυξ καὶ παρεργάτης λόγων,
 ἐπεὶ δ' ἀγῶνα καὶ σὺ τόνδ' ἠγωνίσω,
 ἄκου' ἄμιλλαν γὰρ σὺ προύθηκας λόγων.
 οὐδὲν τυράννου δυσμενέστερον πόλει,
 430 ὅπου τὸ μὲν πρῶτιστον οὐκ εἰσὶν νόμοι
 κοινοί, κρατεῖ δ' εἰς τὸν νόμον κεκτημένος
 αὐτὸς παρ' αὐτῷ, καὶ τόδ' οὐκέτ' ἔστ' ἴσον.
 γεγραμμένων δὲ τῶν νόμων ὅ τ' ἀσθενῆς
 ὁ πλούσιός τε τὴν δίκην ἴσῃν ἔχει,
 ἔστιν δ' ἐνισπεῖν τοῖσιν ἀσθενεστέροις
 τὸν εὐτυχοῦντα ταῦθ', ὅταν κλύῃ κακῶς.
 νικᾷ δ' ὁ μείων τὸν μέγαν δίκαι' ἔχων.
 τοῦλεύθερον δ' ἐκείνο· τίς θέλει πόλει
 χρηστόν τι βούλευμ' εἰς μέσον φέρειν ἔχων ;
 440 καὶ ταῦθ' ὁ χρήζων λαμπρός ἐσθ', ὁ μὴ θέλων
 σιγᾷ. τί τουτων ἔστ' ἰσαίτερον πόλει ;
 καὶ μὴν ὅπου γε δῆμος εὐθυντῆς χθονός,
 ὑποῦσιν ἀστοῖς ἦδεται νεανίαις·
 ἀνὴρ δὲ βασιλεὺς ἐχθρὸν ἠγεῖται τόδε,
 καὶ τοὺς ἀρίστους, οὓς ἂν ἠγῆται φρονεῖν
 κτείνει, δεδοικῶς τῆς τυραννίδος πέρι.
 πῶς οὖν ἔτ' ἂν γένοιτ' ἂν ἰσχυρὰ πόλις,
 ὅταν τις ὡς λειμῶνος ἠρινοῦ στάχυν
 τὸλμας ἀφαιρῇ κάπολωτίζη νέους ;
 450 κτᾶσθαι δὲ πλοῦτον καὶ βίον τί δεῖ τέκνοις,
 ὡς τῷ τυράννῳ πλείον' ἐκμοχθῆ βίον ;
 ἢ παρθενεύειν παῖδας ἐν δόμοις καλῶς
 τερπνὰς τυράννοις ἠδονάς, ὅταν θέλῃ,
 δάκρυα δ' ἐτοιμάζουσι ; μὴ ζῶν ἔτι,

SUPPLIANTS

THESEUS

An eloquent herald this, a speech-crammed babbler !
 But, since thou hast plunged into this strife, hear
 me :— [parley :—

'Twas thou flung'st down this challenge unto
 No worse foe than the despot hath a state,
 Under whom, first, can be no common laws, 430
 But one rules, keeping in his private hands
 The law : so is equality no more.

But when the laws are written, then the weak
 And wealthy have alike but equal right.
 Yea, even the weaker may fling back the scoff
 Against the prosperous, if he be reviled ;
 And, armed with right, the less o'ercomes the great.
 Thus Freedom speaks¹ :—“ What man desires to bring
 Good counsel for his country to the people ? ”

Who chooseth this, is famous : who will not, 440
 Keeps silence. Can equality further go ?

More—when the people piloteth the land,
 She joyeth in young champions native-born :
 But in a king's eyes this is hatefullest ;
 Yea, the land's best, whose wisdom he discerns,
 He slayeth, fearing lest they shake his throne.
 How can a state be stablished then in strength,
 When, even as sweeps the scythe o'er springtide
 mead,

One lops the brave young hearts like flower-blooms ?
 What boots it to win wealth and store for sons, 450
 When all one's toil but swells a despot's hoard ?
 Or to rear maiden daughters virtuously
 To be a king's sweet morsels at his will,
 And tears to them that dressed this dish for him ?

¹ He quotes the formula with which the herald opened the proceedings of the popular assembly at Athens.

εἰ τὰ μὰ τέκνα πρὸς βίαν νυμφεύσεται.
 καὶ ταῦτα μὲν δὴ πρὸς τὰ σὰ ἐξηκόντισα.
 ἤκεις δὲ δὴ τί τῆσδε γῆς κεχρημένος ;
 κλαίων γ' ἂν ἦλθες, εἴ σε μὴ "πεμψεν πόλις,
 περισσὰ φωνῶν· τὸν γὰρ ἄγγελον χρεῶν
 460 λέξανθ' ὅσ' ἂν τάξῃ τις ὡς τάχος πάλιν
 χωρεῖν. τὸ λοιπὸν δ' εἰς ἐμὴν πόλιν Κρέων
 ἦσσον λάλον σου πεμπέτω τιν' ἄγγελον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

φεῦ φεῦ· κακοῖσιν ὡς ὅταν δαίμων διδῶ
 καλῶς, ὑβρίζουσ' ὡς αἰὲν πράζοντες εὖ.

ΚΗΡΤΞ

λέγοιμ' ἂν ἤδη. τῶν μὲν ἠγωνισμένων
 σοὶ μὲν δοκείτω ταῦτ', ἐμοὶ δὲ τάντια.
 ἐγὼ δ' ἀπαυδῶ πᾶς τε Καδμείως λεῶς
 "Ἄδραστον εἰς γῆν τήνδε μὴ παριέναι
 470 εἰ δ' ἔστιν ἐν γῆ, πρὶν θεοῦ δῦναι σέλας,
 λύσαντα σεμνὰ στεμμάτων μυστήρια
 τῆσδ' ἐξελαύνειν, μηδ' ἀναιρεῖσθαι νεκροῦς
 βία, προσήκοντ' οὐδὲν Ἀργείων πόλει.
 κἂν μὲν πίθῃ μοι, κυμάτων ἄτερ πόλιν
 σὴν ναυστολήσεις· εἰ δὲ μή, πολὺς κλύδων
 ἡμῖν τε καὶ σοὶ συμμάχοις τ' ἔσται δορός.
 σκέψαι δὲ, καὶ μὴ τοῖς ἐμοῖς θυμούμενος
 λόγοισιν, ὡς δὴ πόλιν ἐλευθέραν ἔχων,
 σφριγῶντ' ἀμείψῃ μῦθον ἐκ βραχιόνων.
 480 ἐλπὶς γάρ ἐστ' ἄπιστον, ἢ πολλὰς πόλεις
 συνῆψ', ἄγουσα θυμὸν εἰς ὑπερβολάς.
 ὅταν γὰρ ἔλθῃ πόλεμος εἰς ψῆφον λεῶ,
 οὐδεὶς ἔθ' αὐτοῦ θάνατον ἐκλογίζεται,
 τὸ δυστυχὲς δὲ τοῦτ' ἐς ἄλλον ἐκτρέπει·
 εἰ δ' ἦν παρ' ὄμμα θάνατος ἐν ψῆφου φορᾷ,

SUPPLIANTS

May I die ere I see my daughters ravished !
Such answering shaft to thine do I hurl back.
But thou, what wouldst thou have of this our land ?
Except thy state had sent thee, thou shouldst rue
Thine insolent prating ! 'Tis the herald's part
To speak his message, and to get him back
With speed. Henceforth let Creon to my town
Send a less wordy messenger than thee. 460

CHORUS

Out on it ! When God prospereth evil men,
Wanton they wax, as who should prosper aye.

HERALD

Now will I speak my charge. For our dispute,
Be this thy mind, contrariwise be mine.
But I and all the folk Cadmean warn thee—
Receive Adrastus not into this land.
If in the land he is, ere set of sun
Free from yon wreaths your sacred Mysteries, 470
And drive him forth, nor go about by force
To take those dead : ye have naught to do with
Argos.

If thou obey me, thou by storm unscathed
Shalt helm thy city ; if not, our great surge
Of war on thee and thine allies shall fall.

Look to it, nor, being chafed at these my words,—
Because forsooth a city free thou hast,—
Make arrogant answer from a weaker cause.
Hope is delusive : many a state hath this
Embroided, by kindling it to mad emprise. 480
For, when for war a nation casteth votes,
Then of his own death no man taketh count,
But passeth on to his neighbour this mischance.
But, were death full in view when votes were cast,

οὐκ ἄν ποθ' Ἑλλὰς δοριμανῆς ἀπόλλυτο.
 καίτοι δυοῖν γε πάντες ἄνθρωποι λόγοιιν
 τὸν κρείσσον' ἴσμεν καὶ τὰ χρηστὰ καὶ κακά,
 ὅσῳ τε πολέμου κρείσσον εἰρήνη βροτοῖς·
 ἢ πρῶτα μὲν Μούσαισι προσφιλεστάτη,
 490 Ποινάισι δ' ἐχθρά, τέρπεται δ' εὐπαιδία,
 χαίρει δὲ πλούτῳ. ταῦτ' ἀφέντες οἱ κακοὶ
 πολέμους ἀναιρούμεσθα καὶ τὸν ἤσσονα
 δουλούμεθ', ἄνδρες ἄνδρα καὶ πόλις πόλιν.
 σὺ δ' ἄνδρας ἐχθροὺς καὶ θανόντας ὠφελεῖς,
 θάπτων κομίζων θ' ὕβρις οὓς ἀπόλεσεν.
 οὐ τὰρ ἔτ' ὀρθῶς Καπανέως κεραύνιον
 δέμας καπνοῦται, κλιμάκων ὀρθοστάτας
 ὅς προσβαλὼν πύλαισιν ὤμοσεν πόλιν
 500 πέρσειν θεοῦ θέλοντος ἦν τε μὴ θέλη,
 οὐδ' ἤρπασεν χάρυβδις οἰωνοσκόπον,
 τέθριππον ἄρμα περιβαλοῦσα χάσματι,
 ἄλλοι τε κεῖνται πρὸς πύλαις λοχαγέται
 πέτροις καταξανθέντες ὀστέων ῥαφάς.
 ἢ νυν φρονεῖν ἄμεινον ἐξαύχει Διός,
 ἢ θεοὺς δικαίως τοὺς κακοὺς ἀπολλύναι.
 φιλεῖν μὲν οὖν χρὴ τοὺς σοφοὺς πρῶτον τέκνα,
 ἔπειτα τοκέας πατρίδα θ', ἦν αὖξιν χρεῶν
 καὶ μὴ κατὰξαι. σφαλερὸν ἡγεμῶν θρασὺς
 νεῶς τε ναύτης· ἤσυχος καιρῶ σοφός.
 510 καὶ τοῦτό τοι τάνδρείον, ἢ προμηθία.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἐξαρκέσας ἦν Ζεὺς ὁ τιμωρούμενος,
 ὑμᾶς δ' ὑβρίζειν οὐκ ἐχρῆν τοιάνδ' ὕβριν.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ὦ παγκάκιστε—

SUPPLIANTS

Never war-frenzied Greece would rush on ruin.
 Yet, of elections twain, we know—all know—
 Whether is best, the blessing or the curse,
 And how much better is peace for men than war ;
 Peace, she which is the Muses' chiefest friend,
 But Retribution's foe, joys in fair children, 490
 In wealth delights. Fools let these blessings slip,
 And rush on war : man bringeth weaker man
 To bondage ; city is made city's thrall.
 Thou helpest men our foes, and dead men they,
 Wouldst win for graves them whom their insolence
 slew !

Good sooth, then, wrongfully did levin blast
 Capaneus' frame upon yon ladder's height,
 Which he had reared against our gates, and swore
 To sack the town, whether God willed or no :
 Wrongly earth's chasm snatched from sight the seer, 500
 Shrouding with yawning gulf his four-horse car,
 While other captains lie before our gates,
 The knittings of whose bones great stones have
 shattered !

Or boast thee to surpass in wisdom Zeus,
 Or grant that rightly Gods destroy the wicked.
 Behoves the wise to love his children first,
 Parents and country next,—to make her great,
 Not break her down. Rash leaders, pilots heady,
 Mean ruin : the wise in season sitteth still.
 This too is manful valour, even discretion. 510

CHORUS

The punishment of Zeus might well suffice !
 Shall ye insult with wanton arrogance ?

ADRASTUS

Villain of villains !—

ΙΚΕΤΙΑΔΕΣ

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

σὶγ', Ἄδραστ', ἔχε στόμα
 καὶ μὴ ἴπιπροσθεν τῶν ἐμῶν τοὺς σοὺς λόγους
 θῆς· οὐ γὰρ ἦκει πρὸς σέ κηρύσσων ὄδε,
 ἀλλ' ὡς ἐμ' ἡμᾶς κάποκρίνασθαι χρεῶν.
 καὶ πρῶτα μὲν σε πρὸς τὰ πρῶτ' ἀμείψομαι.
 οὐκ οἶδ' ἐγὼ Κρέοντα δεσπόζοντ' ἐμοῦ
 οὐδὲ σθένοντα μείζον, ὥστ' ἀναγκάσαι
 520 δρᾶν τὰς Ἀθήνας ταῦτ'· ἄνω γὰρ ἂν ῥέοι
 τὰ πράγμαθ' οὕτως, εἰ ἴπιταξόμεσθα δῆ.
 πόλεμον δὲ τοῦτον οὐκ ἐγὼ καθίσταμαι,
 ὅς οὐδὲ σὺν τοῖσδ' ἦλθον εἰς Κάδμου χθόνα.
 νεκροὺς δὲ τοὺς θανόντας, οὐ βλάπτων πόλιν
 οὐδ' ἀνδροκμῆτας προσφέρων ἀγωνίας,
 θάψαι δικαίῳ, τὸν Πανελλήνων νόμον
 σώζων. τί τούτων ἐστὶν οὐ καλῶς ἔχον;
 εἰ γάρ τι καὶ πεπόνθατ' Ἀργείων ὕπο,
 530 τεθνᾶσιν, ἡμύνασθε πολεμίους καλῶς,
 αἰσχρῶς δ' ἐκείνοις, χῆ δίκη διοίχεται.
 εἴσατ' ἤδη γῆ καλυφθῆναι νεκροὺς,
 ὅθεν δ' ἕκαστον εἰς τὸ φῶς ἀφίκετο,
 ἐνταῦθ' ἀπελθεῖν, πνεῦμα μὲν πρὸς αἰθέρα,
 τὸ σῶμα δ' εἰς γῆν· οὔτι γὰρ κεκτῆμεθα
 ἡμέτερον αὐτὸ πλὴν ἐνοικῆσαι βίον,
 κάπειτα τὴν θρέψασαν αὐτὸ δεῖ λαβεῖν.
 δοκεῖς κακουργεῖν Ἄργος οὐ θάπτων νεκροὺς;
 ἦκιστα· πάσης Ἑλλάδος κοινὸν τόδε,
 εἰ τοὺς θανόντας νοσφίσας ὦν χρῆν λαχεῖν
 540 ἀτάφους τις ἔξει· δειλίαν γὰρ εἰσφέρει
 τοῖς ἀλκίμοισιν, οὔτος ἦν τεθῆ νόμος.
 κάμοι μὲν ἦλθες δεῖν' ἀπειλήσων ἔπη,
 νεκροὺς δὲ ταρβεῖτ', εἰ κρυβήσονται χθονί;

SUPPLIANTS

THESEUS

Hold, Adrastus, peace,
 And thrust not in before my words thine own ;
 For not to thee you fellow doth his message,
 But unto me : 'tis I must make reply.
 Now, thy first utterance will I answer first :—
 I know no Creon despot over me,
 Nor more of might than I, that he should force
 Athens to do this. Sourceward back should flow 520
 The world's stream, if we brook such hest as his ;
 It is not I that launch upon this war,
 Seeing with these I sought not Cadmus' land.

But lifeless bodies—harming not your state,
 Nor thrusting man-destroying strife on her,—
 I claim to bury : lo, all Hellas' law
 Do I uphold. How is not this well done ?
 For if of Argives ye have suffered aught,
 They are dead : with glory ye hurled back your foes,
 With shame to them :—but there your right hath
 end. 530

Let now the dead be hidden in the earth,
 And each part, whence it came forth to the light,
 Thither return, the breath unto the air,
 To earth the body ; for we hold it not
 In fee, but only to pass life therein ;
 Then she which fostered it must take it back.

Dost think thou woundest Argos through her dead ?
 Not so : the common cause of Greece is this,
 If one shall rob the dead of rightful dues,
 And hold them from the tomb : this shall unman 540
 Even heroes, if such law shall be ordained.
 And to me comest thou to bluster threats,
 While ye fear corpses, if they be entombed ?

τί μὴ γένηται; μὴ κατασκάψωσι γῆν
 ταφέντες ὑμῶν; ἢ τέκν' ἐν μυχοῖς χθονὸς
 φύσωσιν, ἐξ ὧν εἰσὶ τις τιμωρία;
 σκαιὸν γε τὰνάλωμα τῆς γλώσσης τόδε,
 φόβους πονηροὺς καὶ κενοὺς δεδοικέναι.
 550 ἀλλ' ὦ μάταιοι, γνῶτε τὰνθρώπων κακά·
 παλαίσμαθ' ἡμῶν ὁ βίος· εὐτυχοῦσι δὲ
 οἱ μὲν τάχ', οἱ δ' ἐσαῦθις, οἱ δ' ἤδη βροτῶν.
 τρυφᾶ δ' ὁ δαίμων· πρὸς τε γὰρ τοῦ δυστυχοῦς,
 ὡς εὐμενῆς ἦ, τίμιος γεραίρεται,
 ὃ τ' ὄλβιός νιν πνεῦμα δειμαίνων λιπεῖν
 ὑψηλὸν αἶρει. γνόντας οὖν χρεῶν τάδε
 ἀδικουμένους τε μέτρια μὴ θυμῷ φέρειν
 ἀδικεῖν τε τοιαῦθ' οἶα μὴ βλάψει πόλιν.
 πῶς οὖν ἂν εἶη; τοὺς ὀλωλότας νεκροὺς
 560 θάψαι δόθ' ἡμῖν τοῖς θέλουσιν εὐσεβεῖν.
 ἢ δῆλα τὰνθένδ'· εἶμι καὶ θάψω βία.
 οὐ γάρ ποτ' εἰς Ἑλληνας ἐξοισθήσεται
 ὡς εἰς ἔμ' ἔλθων καὶ πόλιν Πανδίουος
 νόμος παλαιὸς δαιμόνων διεφθάρη.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

θάρσει· τὸ γάρ τοι τῆς Δίκης σφῶζων φάος,
 πολλοὺς ὑπεκφύγοις ἂν ἀνθρώπων ψόγους.

ΚΗΡΤΞ

βούλει συνάψω μῦθον ἐν βραχεῖ σέθεν;

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

λέγ', εἴ τι βούλει· καὶ γὰρ οὐ σιγηλὸς εἶ.

ΚΗΡΤΞ

οὐκ ἂν ποτ' ἐκ γῆς παιῖδας Ἀργείων λάβοις.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

κάμου νιν ἀντάκουσον, εἰ βούλει, πάλιν.

SUPPLIANTS

What fear ye? Lest they undermine your land,
 There buried?—or in earth's dark womb beget
 Children, of whom shall vengeance fall on you?
 'Twere idle waste of speech, good sooth, to unmask
 Your caitiff terrors and your empty fears!
 O fools, learn ye the real ills of men:—
 Our life is conflict all: of mortals some
 Succeed ere long, some late, and straightway
 some;

550

While Fortune sits a queen: worship and honour
 The unblest gives her, so to see good days;
 The prosperous extols her, lest her breeze
 Fail him one day. Remembering this, should we
 Meet wrong with calmness, not with fury of rage,
 Neither on one whole nation visit wrong.

How shall it be then?—grant to us, who are fain
 To render heaven its due, to entomb the dead.
 Else, clear is the issue: this will I by force.
 Never to Greeks shall it be said, that when
 It fell to me and Athens to uphold
 Heaven's ancient law, that law was set at naught.

560

CHORUS

Fear not: while thou upholdest Justice' light,
 Thou shalt not fear what men can say of thee.

HERALD

Wouldst thou I summed up this thy claim in brief?

THESEUS

Speak, an thou list: no tongue-tied wight art thou.

HERALD

Thou ne'er shalt win from our land Argos' sons.

THESEUS

Give ear to me in turn, then, if thou wilt.

543

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

570

ΚΗΡΤΞ

κλύοιμ' ἄν· οὐ γὰρ ἀλλὰ δεῖ δοῦναι μέρος.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

θάψω νεκρούς γῆς ἐξελών Ἀσωπίας.

ΚΗΡΤΞ

ἐν ἀσπίσι σοι πρῶτα κινδυνευτέον.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

πολλοὺς ἔτλην δὴ χιόνους ἄλλους πόνους.

ΚΗΡΤΞ

ἢ πᾶσι οὖν σ' ἔφυσεν ἐξαρκεῖν πατήρ;

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

οἷοι γ' ὑβρισταί· χρηστὰ δ' οὐ κολάζομεν.

ΚΗΡΤΞ

πράσσειν σὺ πόλλ' εἴωθας ἢ τε σὴ πόλις.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τοιγὰρ πονούση πολλὰ πόλλ' εὐδαίμονα.

ΚΗΡΤΞ

ἔλθ', ὥς σε λόγῃ σπαρτὸς ἐν πόλει λάβῃ.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τίς δ' ἐκ δράκοντος θούρος ἂν γένοιτ' Ἄρης;

ΚΗΡΤΞ

580

γνώσει σὺ πάσχων· νῦν δ' ἔτ' εἶ νεανίας.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

οὔτοι μ' ἐπαρεῖς ὥστε θυμοῦσθαι φρένας
 τοῖς σοῖσι κόμποις. ἀλλ' ἀποστέλλου χθονός,
 λόγους ματαίους οὔσπερ ἠνέγκω λαβών.
 περαίνομεν γὰρ οὐδέν. ὀρμᾶσθαι χρεῶν
 πάντ' ἄνδρ' ὀπλίτην ἀρμάτων τ' ἐπεμβάτην,
 μοναμπύκων τε φάλαρα κινεῖσθαι στόμα
 ἀφρῶ καταστάζοντα, Καδμείαν χθόνα.
 χωρήσομαι γὰρ ἐπὶ πρὸς Κάδμου πύλας

SUPPLIANTS

HERALD

Yea—since I cannot choose but hear in turn. 570

THESEUS

From thy land will I take and bury them.

HERALD

First must thou face the hazard of the shield.

THESEUS

Pull many a harder emprise have I dared.

HERALD

A champion born to match him with all men!

THESEUS

All arrogant tyrants: I scourge not the right.

HERALD

Ay, thou wilt still be meddling—thou and Athens.

THESEUS

Therefore, with much toil, much good speed is hers.

HERALD

Come!—let the Dragon-seed but find thee there!

THESEUS

What valorous host should spring from dragons' teeth?

HERALD

This shalt thou learn, and rue. Thou art yet but
young. 580

THESEUS

Tush, man, thou canst not move mine heart to wrath
With all thy vauntings. Get thee forth the land:
The idle words thou broughtest, bear them back.
Naught comes of wrangling. [Exit HERALD.

Let each man-at-arms,

Each chariot-rider, and each battle-steed,
Whose swinging cheek-plate dashes round his jaws
The foam, charge onward into Cadmus' land.
For on to Cadmus' seven gates will I march,

545

SUPPLIANTS

Bearing myself the whetted steel in hand,
 Myself mine herald. Thee I bid remain, 590
 Adrastus : mingle not with mine thy fate.
 For I 'neath mine own fortune's star will lead
 Mine host, a taintless chief with taintless spear.
 One only thing I need, all Gods to have
 Which reverence right : for where these are, they give
 Victory. Naked valour naught avails
 To men, except it have the Gods' good will. [*Exit.*]

HALF-CHORUS 1

(*Str.* 1)

Ye hapless mothers of hapless chieftains dead,
 Ah, how is mine heart stormed-tossed with pale
 dismay—

HALF-CHORUS 2

What ominous word and strange of thee is said? 600

HALF-CHORUS 1

For the dread decision on Pallas' war-array !

HALF-CHORUS 2

Through battle, or peace-fraught parley, wouldst
 thou say ?

HALF-CHORUS 1

Ay, this last should be well ; but if warrior-quelling
 Slaughters and battles again shall be seen,
 With the beating of breasts in each desolate dwelling
 Of the land, what reproaches bitter-keen [*been!*]
 Should I win, through whom this sorrow hath

HALF-CHORUS 2

(*Ant.* 1)

Yet doom may the victor bring down low in dust ;
 This comforteth me, and bids be dauntless-souled.

HALF-CHORUS 1

Thou speakest of Gods that fail not, ever just. 610

547

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ Β'

τίνες γὰρ ἄλλοι νέμουσι συμφοράς ;

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ Α'

διάφορα πολλὰ θεῶν βροτοῖσιν εἰσορῶ.

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ Β'

φόβῳ γὰρ τῷ πάρος διόλλυσαι
 δίκαι δίκαν δ' ἐκάλεσε καὶ φόνοσ
 φόνον, κακῶν δ' ἀναψυχὰς
 θεοὶ βροτοῖς νέμουσιν,
 ἀπάντων τέρμ' ἔχοντες αὐτοί.

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ Α'

τὰ καλλίπυργα πεδία πῶς ἰκοίμεθ' ἄν, στρ. β'
 Καλλίχορον θεᾶσ ὕδωρ λιποῦσαι ;

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ Β'

620 ποτανὰν εἶ μέ τις θεῶν κτίσαι,
 διπόταμον ἵνα πόλιν μόλω.

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ Α'

εἰδείης ἄν φίλων
 εἰδείης ἄν τύχας.

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ Β'

τίσ ποτ' αἶσα, τίσ ἄρα πότμος
 ἐπιμένει τὸν ἄλκιμον
 τᾶσδε γᾶσ ἄνακτα ;

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ Α'

κεκλημένους μὲν ἀνακαλούμεθ' αὐ θεοῦσ· ἀντ. β'
 ἀλλὰ φόβων πίστις ἄδε πρώτα.

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ Β'

ἰὼ Ζεῦ, τᾶσ παλαιομάτοροσ
 παιδογόνε πόριος Ἰνάχου.

SUPPLIANTS

HALF-CHORUS 2

Of whom but of such be all our fates controlled ?

HALF-CHORUS 1

Ah, many a change in God's ways I behold !

HALF-CHORUS 2

By the terrors o'erpast is the heart in thee stricken :

Yet justice aloud unto justice doth call ;

Blood calleth for blood, and the Gods shall requicken

Our souls, for to mortals all blessings befall

From the hands that encompass the goal of all.

HALF-CHORUS 1

(*Str.* 2)

O might I speed from the Goddess's springs,

Even Callichorus, to the fair-towered plain !

HALF-CHORUS 2

O would the Gods but vouchsafe to me wings,

So to win to the city of rivers twain !¹

620

HALF-CHORUS 1

Ah then shouldst thou clearly discern—

How thy champions speed shouldst thou learn.

HALF-CHORUS 2

Ah God, what fate, what doom doth await

The king of the mighty hand,

The hero of Cecrops' land ?

HALF-CHORUS 1

(*Ant.* 2)

We have cried to the Gods, and we cry once more

To the first best trust of the sore afraid.

HALF-CHORUS 2

Zeus, hear us, whose offspring was born of yore

Of Inachus' daughter, the heifer-maid !

¹ Thebes : round the old citadel flowed, on one side, the Ismenus, on the other, the Dirce.

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ α'

630 πόλει μοι ξύμμαχος
γενοῦ τᾶδ' εὐμενής.

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ β'

τὸ σὸν ἄγαλμα, τὸ σὸν ἴδρυμα
πόλεος ἐκκομίζομαι
πρὸς πυρὰν ὑβρισθέν.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

640 γυναῖκες, ἦκω πόλλ' ἔχων λέγειν φίλα,
αὐτὸς τε σωθεῖς, ἠρέθην γὰρ ἐν μάχῃ,
ἦν οἱ θανόντων ἑπτὰ δεσποτῶν λόχοι
ἠγωνίσαντο ῥεῦμα Διρκαίου πάρα,
νίκην τε Θησέως ἀγγελῶν. λόγου δέ σε
μακροῦ ἀποπαύσω· Καπανέως γὰρ ἦ λάτρις,
ὃν Ζεὺς κεραυνῶ πυρπόλῳ καταίθαλοῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ φίλτατ', εὖ μὲν νόστον ἀγγέλλεις σέθεν
τήν τ' ἀμφὶ Θησέως βύξιν· εἰ δὲ καὶ στρατὸς
σῶς ἐστ' Ἀθηνῶν, πάντ' ἂν ἀγγέλλοις φίλα.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

σῶς, καὶ πέπραγεν ὡς Ἄδραστος ὠφέλε
πρᾶξαι ξὺν Ἀργείοισιν, οὓς ἀπ' Ἰνάχου
στεύλας ἐπεστράτευσε Καδμείων πόλιν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πῶς γὰρ τροπαῖα Ζηνὸς Αἰγέως τόκος
ἔστησεν οἳ τε συµμετασχόντες δορός ;
λέξον· παρὼν γὰρ τοὺς παρόντας εὐφρανεῖς.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

650 λαμπρὰ μὲν ἀκτίς ἡλίου, κανὼν σαφής,
ἔβαλλε γαῖαν· ἀμφὶ δ' Ἥλέκτρας πύλας
ἔστην θεατῆς πύργον εὐαγῆ λαβών.
ὀρῶ δὲ φῦλα τρία τριῶν στρατευμάτων·

SUPPLIANTS

HALF-CHORUS 1

Oh be our champion thou,
To our city be gracious now !

630

HALF-CHORUS 2

Thy belovèd are we, it was planted of thee,
This city whose sons we would gain
For the tomb from the outrage-stain.

Enter MESSENGER.

MESSENGER

Women, I come with tidings full of joy,—
Myself escaped, for I was ta'en in fight,
What time those seven bands of chieftains slain
Hard by the fount of Dirce strove their strife,—
Tidings of Theseus' triumph. I will spare thee
Question :—a vassal I of Capaneus
Whom Zeus did blast with blazing levin-bolt.

640

CHORUS

Dear friend, glad tidings this of thy return,
Glad news of Theseus : but if Athens' host
Is safe withal, thou heraldest all joy.

MESSENGER

Safe : and hath fared—I would Adrastus so
Had fared with Argos' sons, whom forth he led
From Inachus to that Cadmean burg.

CHORUS

How then did Aegeus' son uprear to Zeus
The trophy, he and those his spear-allies ?
Tell ; thou wast there : them that were not make glad.

MESSENGER

Bright the sun's beam, true-levelled shaft of light,
Smote on the earth. Beside Electra's gate
On a far-looking tower I stood to watch.
And three tribes I beheld of war-bands three :

650

662 τευχεςφόρον μὲν λαὸν ἐκτείνοντ' ἄνω
 Ἴσμήνιον πρὸς ὄχθον, ὡς μὲν ἦν λόγος,
 659 αὐτὸν τ' ἄνακτα, παῖδα κλεινὸν Αἰγέως,
 660 καὶ τοὺς σὺν αὐτῷ, δεξιὸν τεταγμένους
 661 κέρας, παλαιᾶς Κεκροπίας τ' οἰκήτορας,
 664 ἴσους ἀριθμὸν· ἀρμάτων δ' ὀχήματα
 665 αὐτὸν τε Πάραλον ἐστολισμένον δορί·
 666 κρήνην παρ' αὐτὴν Ἄρεος· ἵππότην δ' ὄχλου
 667 πρὸς κρασπέδοισι στρατοπέδου τεταγμένον.
 Κάδμου δὲ λαὸς ἦστο πρόσθε τειχέων,
 νεκροὺς ὀπισθεν θέμενος, ὧν ἔκειτ' ἀγῶν.
 668 ἔνερθε σεμνῶν μνημάτων Ἀμφίονος.¹
 ἵππεῦσι δ' ἵππηϊς ἦσαν ἀνθρωπισμένοι
 τετραόροισί τ' ἀντί' ἄρμαθ' ἄρμασιν.
 κῆρυξ δὲ Θεσέως εἶπεν εἰς πάντας τάδε·
 670 σιγᾶτε, λαοί, σίγα, Καδμείων στίχες,
 ἀκούσαθ'· ἡμεῖς ἤκομεν νεκροὺς μέτα
 θάψαι θέλοντες, τὸν Πανελλήνων νόμον
 σῶζοντες, οὐδὲν δεόμενοι τείναι φόνον.
 κούδεν Κρέων τοῖσδ' ἀντεκήρυξεν λόγοις,
 ἀλλ' ἦστ' ἐφ' ὄπλοις σίγα. ποιμένες δ' ὄχλων
 τετραόρων κατῆρχον ἐντεῦθεν μάχης·
 πέραν δὲ διελάσαντες ἀλλήλων ὄχους,
 παραιβάτας ἔστησαν εἰς τάξιν δορός.
 680 χοῖ μὲν σιδήρῳ διεμάχονθ', οἱ δ' ἔστρεφον
 πώλους ἐς ἀλκὴν αὐθις ἐς παραιβάτας.
 ἰδὼν δὲ Φόρβας, ὃς μοναμπύκων ἀναξ
 ἦν τοῖς Ἐρεχθείδαισιν, ἀρμάτων ὄχλον,
 οἷ τ' αὐτὸ Κάδμον διεφύλασσον ἵππικόν,
 συνῆψαν ἀλκὴν κἀκράτουν ἡσσωτό τε.
 λεύσων δὲ ταῦτα κού κλύων, ἐκεῖ γὰρ ἦ

¹ Murray's re-arrangement adopted.

SUPPLIANTS

A mail-clad host far-stretching up the slopes
 Unto the height Ismenian, as men said ;
 I saw the king's self, Aegeus' glorious son,
 And his own war-band, marshalled on the right
 With all the folk of Cecrops' ancient land,
 Equal by tale. And all the battle-cars
 And Seaboard Men, arrayed with spears, were ranged
 By Ares' fountain ; and the clouds of horse 660
 Were drawn out on the fringes of the host.
 Before their walls were marshalled Cadmus' folk—
 Behind them lay those corpses, cause of strife—
 On levels 'neath Amphion's hallowed tomb.
 So against horsemen panoplied horsemen stood,
 And four-yoked chariots were by chariots faced.
 Then Theseus' herald cried in all men's ears :
 " Silence, ye people ! Hush ye, ranks of Cadmus !
 Hearken—we come but for the corpses' sake, 670
 To bury them, and keep all Hellas' law
 Inviolate ; nor would lengthen bloodshed out."
 But Creon let his herald answer not,
 But silent under shield abode. Thereat
 The four-horsed chariot-lords began the fray.
 On, down the battle-lanes of foes they swept,
 Set down their warriors, spear opposing spear,
 And, while these strove with bickering steel, those
 wheeled
 Their steeds about, to aid their fighting-men.
 Then Phorbas, captain of the Erechtheid horse, 680
 And they withal which led the Theban riders,
 Marking the tumult of the battle-cars,
 Down charging clashed, now triumphing, rolled back
 now.
 This saw I, and not heard ; for I was there,

- ἔνθ' ἄρματ' ἠγωνίζεθ' οἳ τ' ἐπεμβάται.
 τὰ κεῖ παρόντα πολλὰ πῆματ', οὐκ ἔχω
 τί πρῶτον εἶπω, πότερα τὴν ἐς οὐρανὸν
 κόνιν προσαντέλλουσαν, ὡς πολλὴ παρῆν,
 ἢ τοὺς ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω φορουμένους
 690 ἱμάσιν, αἵματός τε φοινίου ῥοάς,
 τῶν μὲν πιτυόντων, τῶν δέ, θραυσθέντων δίφρων,
 εἰς κρᾶτα πρὸς γῆν ἐκκυβιστώντων βία
 πρὸς ἀρμάτων τ' ἀγαῖσι λειπόντων βίον.
 νικῶντα δ' ἵπποις ὡς ὑπείδετο στρατὸν
 Κρέων τὸν ἐνθένδ', ἰτέαν λαβὼν χερὶ
 χωρεῖ, πρὶν ἐλθεῖν ξυμμάχοις δυσθυμίαν.
 καὶ συμπατάξαντες μέσον πάντα στρατὸν
 700 ἔκτεινον ἐκτείνοντο, καὶ παρηγγύων
 κελυσμὸν ἀλλήλοισι σὺν πολλῇ βοῇ·
 θεῖν', ἀντέρειδε τοῖς Ἐρεχθείδαις δόρυ.
 697 καὶ μὴν τὰ Θησέως γ' οὐκ ὄκνω διεφθάρη,
 698 ἀλλ' ἴετ' εὐθύς λάμπρ' ἀναρπάσας ὄπλα.¹
 703 λόχος δ' ὀδόντων ὄφεος ἐξηνδρωμένος
 δεινὸς παλαιστῆς ἦν· ἔκλινε γὰρ κέρας
 τὸ λαιὸν ἡμῶν· δεξιού δ' ἠσσωμένον
 φεύγει τὸ κείνων· ἦν δ' ἀγὼν ἰσόρροπος.
 κὰν τῷδε τὸν στρατηγὸν αἰνέσαι παρῆν·
 οὐ γὰρ τὸ νικῶν τοῦτ' ἐκέρδαινε μόνον,
 ἀλλ' ὄχετ' εἰς τὸ κάμνον οἰκείου στρατοῦ.
 710 ἔρρηξε δ' αὐδήν, ὥσθ' ὑπηχῆσαι χθόνα·
 ὦ παῖδες, εἰ μὴ σχήσετε στερρόν δόρυ
 σπαρτῶν τόδ' ἀνδρῶν, οἴχεται τὰ Παλλάδος.
 θάρσος δ' ἐνώρσε παντὶ Κραναίδων στρατῷ.
 αὐτός θ' ὄπλισμα τοῦπιδαύριον λαβὼν
 δεινῆς κορύνης διαφέρων ἐσφενδόνα,

¹ Murray's re-arrangement adopted.

SUPPLIANTS

There where the chariots and the warriors grappled.
 Of thousand horrors there, which first to tell
 I know not—or of dust that surged and soared
 Upward unto the heavens, clouds on clouds,—
 Of men, by tangling reins snatched from the cars,
 Slung earthward,—of the murder-streams of gore,— 690
 Men falling here, and there, as crashed the chariots,
 With violence hurled head downwards to the earth,
 And battered out of life by chariot-shards.

But Creon, marking how our horse prevailed
 On one wing, grasped his buckler in his hand,
 And vanward pressed, ere allies' hearts should faint.
 All down the lines the fronts of battle clashed :
 Men slew—were slain—a thunder of wild war-cries 700
 Rang, roared, of men on-cheering each his fellow—
 “Smite!”—“Drive the spear against Erechtheus'
 sons!”

Ha, but the heart of Theseus fainted not !
 On charged he, tossing high his flaming shield.
 But the host wrought to man of dragon-teeth
 Was a grim wrestler : back it bowed our wing
 Far on the left ; but, by our right o'erborne,
 Fled theirs : so equal-balanced was the fight.

Then did our captain well and worshipfully ;
 His triumph on the right sufficed him not,
 But he to his hard-pressed half-array sped fast,
 And sent a shattering shout,—earth rang again,— 710
 “My sons, except ye stay the stubborn spear
 Of the Dragon-seed, your Pallas' cause is lost !”
 So thrilled with courage all his Cranaid host.
 Himself that Epidaurian weapon seized,
 The fearful mace, and slingwise swung it round,

ὁμοῦ τραχήλους κάπικείμενον κάρα
 κυέας θερίζων κάποκαυλίζων ξύλω.
 μόλις δέ πως ἔτρεψεν εἰς φυγὴν πόδα.
 720 ἐγὼ δ' ἀνηλάλαξα κἀνωρχησάμην
 κἀκρουσα χεῖρας. οἱ δ' ἔτεινον εἰς πύλας.
 βοή δὲ καὶ κωκυτὸς ἦν ἀνὰ πτόλιν
 νέων, γερόντων, ἱερά τ' ἐξεπίμπλασαν
 φόβω. παρὸν δὲ τειχέων εἴσω μολεῖν,
 Θησεὺς ἐπέσχευ· οὐ γὰρ ὡς πέρσων πόλιν
 μολεῖν ἔφασκεν, ἀλλ' ἀπαιτήσων νεκρούς.
 τοιόνδε τοι στρατηγὸν αἰρεῖσθαι χρεῶν,
 ὃς ἔν τε τοῖς δεινοῖσιν ἔστιν ἄλκιμος
 μισεῖ θ' ὑβριστὴν λαόν, ὃς πρᾶσσω καλῶς
 εἰς ἄκρα βῆναι κλιμάκων ἐνήλατα
 730 ζητῶν ἀπώλεσ' ὄλβον ᾧ χρῆσθαι παρήν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

νῦν τήνδ' ἄελπτον ἡμέραν ἰδοῦσ' ἐγὼ
 θεοὺς νομίζω, καὶ δοκῶ τῆς συμφορᾶς
 ἔχειν ἔλασσον, τῶνδε τισάντων δίκην.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ᾧ Ζεῦ, τί δῆτα τοὺς ταλαιπώρους βροτοὺς
 φρονεῖν λέγουσι; σοῦ γὰρ ἐξηρτήμεθα
 δρῶμέν τε τοιαῦθ' ἂν σὺ τυγχάνης θέλων.
 ἡμῖν γὰρ ἦν τό τ' Ἄργος οὐχ ὑποστατόν,
 αὐτοὶ τε πολλοὶ καὶ νέοι βραχίουσιν·
 740 Ἐτεοκλέους δὲ σύμβασιν ποιουμένον,
 μέτρια θέλοντος, οὐκ ἐχρήζομεν λαβεῖν,
 κἀπειτ' ἀπωλόμεσθ'. οἱ δ' αὖ τὸτ' εὐτυχής,
 λαβὼν πένης ὡς ἀρτίπλουτα χρήματα,
 ὑβρίζ', ὑβρίζων τ' αὐθις ἀνταπώλετο
 Κάδμου κακόφρων λαός. ᾧ καιροῦ πέρα ¹

¹ Murray's transposition of *κεν. βρ.* and *κ. περ.* adopted.

SUPPLIANTS

Down-mowing and clean-logging with his club
Alike their necks and heads in helmets cased :
And scarce even then those stubborn feet would fly.
And I, for joy I shouted, yea, I danced,
And clapped mine hands. On strained they to the
gates. 720

Then rang a cry and wailing through the town
Of young and old : the panic-stricken thronged
The fanes. But, though the way within lay clear,
There Theseus stayed :—" Not to destroy the town
Came I," spake he, " but to reclaim the dead."
Well might men choose such battle-chief as this,
Who is in peril's midst a tower of strength,
But hates the scorners who, in fortune's hour
Seeking to mount the ladder's topmost round,
Let slip the bliss that lay within their hands. 730

CHORUS

Now I, beholding this unhopèd-for day,
Know that Gods live, and feel my load of ill
Lighter, since these have paid the penalty.

ADRASTUS

Zeus, wherefore do they say that wretched man
Is wise ? For lo, we hang upon thy skirts,
And that we do, it is but as thou wilt.
We deemed before our Argos none might stand,
Ourselves, a countless host of lusty arms ;
And, when Eteocles proffered terms of peace,
Fair was his offer, yet we would not hear ; 740
So were undone. Now, prospering in their turn,
Like beggar-wight with sudden-gotten wealth,
Wanton they waxed, and perished in their pride
Cadmus' mad-hearted sons. O foolish men

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

τὸ τόξον ἐντείνοντες, ὦ κενοὶ βροτῶν,
καὶ πρὸς δίκης γε πολλὰ πάσχοντες κακά,
φίλοις μὲν οὐ πείθεσθε, τοῖς δὲ πράγμασι
πόλεις τ', ἔχουσαι διὰ λόγου κάμψαι κακά,
750 φόνῳ καθαιρεῖσθ', οὐ λόγῳ, τὰ πράγματα.
ἀτὰρ τί ταῦτα; κείνο βούλομαι μαθεῖν,
πῶς ἔξεσώθης· εἶτα τ' ἄλλ' ἐρήσομαι.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἐπεὶ ταραγμὸς πόλιν ἐκίνησεν δορί,
πύλας διήλθον, ἤπερ εἰσῆει στρατός.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ὦν δ' εἶνεχ' ἄγων ἦν, νεκροὺς κομίζετε;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ὅσοι γε κλεινοῖς ἔπτ' ἐφέστασαν λόχοις.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

πῶς φής; ὁ δ' ἄλλος ποῦ κεκμηκότων ὄχλος;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

τάφῳ δέδονται πρὸς Κιθαιρῶνος πτυχαῖς.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

τοῦκείθεν ἢ τοῦνθένδε; τίς δ' ἔθαψέ νιν;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

Θησεύς, σκιώδης ἐνθ' Ἐλευθερὶς πέτρα.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

760 οὓς δ' οὐκ ἔθαψε ποῦ νεκροὺς ἦκεις λιπῶν;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἐγγύς· πέλας γὰρ πᾶν ὅ τι σπουδάζεταιται.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ἢ που πικρῶς νιν θέραπες ἦγον ἐκ φόνου;

SUPPLIANTS

Who strain the bow beyond the mark, and suffer
 Much harm at justice' hand, and yield at last
 Not to friends' mediation, but stern facts!
 O foolish states, which might by parley end
 Feuds, yet decide them in the field of blood!
 Yet wherefore this?—fain would I know of thee 750
 How thou didst 'scape; then will I ask the rest.

MESSENGER

When tumult's battle-earthquake shook the town,
 Through that gate slipt I where the host poured in.

ADRASTUS

And the dead bring ye, cause of all the strife?

MESSENGER

Evenall which captained those seven bands renowned.

ADRASTUS

Ha!—and the rest which perished, where be they?

MESSENGER

Laid in the tomb, hard by Cithaeron's folds.

ADRASTUS

On that side, or on this?¹—who buried them?

MESSENGER

Theseus, where hangs Eleutheræ's shadowing rock.

ADRASTUS

Where leftest thou those whom he buried not? 760

MESSENGER

At hand: for earnest haste brings all things near.

ADRASTUS

With loathing, surely, thralls took up the slain.

¹ *i.e.* On the Theban or the Attic side of the range: the tombs would be in the possession of the people in whose land they were. Eleutheræ was in Attica.

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

οὐδείς ἐπέστη τῷδε δούλος ὦν πόνω.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

* * * * *

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

φαίης ἄν, εἰ παρήσθ' ὅτ' ἠγάπα νεκρούς.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ἔνιψεν αὐτὸς τῶν ταλαιπώρων σφαγάς;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

κᾶστρωσέ γ' εὐνάς κἀκάλυψε σώματα.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

δεινὸν μὲν οὖν βάσταγμα κᾶσχύνην ἔχον.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

τί δ' αἰσχρὸν ἀνθρώποισι τὰλλήλων κακά;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

οἴμοι· πόσῳ σφιν συνθανεῖν ἂν ἤθελον.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

770 ἄκραντ' ὀδύρει ταῖσδέ τ' ἐξάγεις δάκρυ.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

δοκῶ μὲν, αὐταί γ' εἰσὶν αἱ διδάσκαλοι.
 ἀλλ' εἶεν· αἶρω χεῖρ' ἀπαντήσας νεκροῖς
 "Αἶδου τε μολπὰς ἐκχέω δακρυρρούους,
 φίλους προσαυδῶν, ὦν λελειμμένος τάλας
 ἔρημα κλαίω· τοῦτο γὰρ μόνον βροτοῖς
 οὐκ ἔστι τὰνάλωμ' ἀναλωθὲν λαβεῖν,
 ψυχὴν βροτείαν· χρημάτων δ' εἰσὶν πόροι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

780 τὰ μὲν εὖ, τὰ δὲ δυστυχή· στρ. α'
 πόλει μὲν εὐδοξία
 καὶ στρατηλάταις δορὸς
 διπλάζεται τιμά·

SUPPLIANTS

MESSENGER

Never a slave set hand unto the toil.

ADRASTUS

[How?—did the *king* endure this, of his love?]

MESSENGER

Hadst thou but seen his ministry of love!

ADRASTUS

He washed, himself, the poor youths' slaughter-stains!

MESSENGER

And spread the biers, and veiled the bodies o'er.

ADRASTUS

An awful burden was it, fraught with shame!

MESSENGER

Nay, but what shame to men are brethren's ills?

ADRASTUS

Ah me, far liever had I died with them!

MESSENGER

Bootless thy mourning, stirring these to tears.

770

ADRASTUS

I trow themselves this mourning-lore have taught.
 Enough: I raise mine hand to greet the dead,
 And pour out songs of death with streaming eyes,
 Hailing our loved, bereft of whom—ah me!—
 Forlorn I weep: for the one loss is this
 That never mortal maketh good again,—
 The life of man, though wealth may be re-won.

CHORUS

(*Str.* 1)

There is joy, there is sorrow this day; for our town
 Hath a garland of glory;
 And the chiefs of the spear-host, lo, twofold renown 780
 Maketh splendid their story.

561

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

ἔμοι δὲ παίδων μὲν εἰσιδεῖν μέλη
πικρὸν, καλὸν θέαμα δ', εἵπερ ὄψομαι
τὰν ἄελπτον ἄμεραν,
ἰδοῦσα πάντων μέγιστον ἄλγος.

ἄγαμόν μ' ἔτι δεῦρ' αἰεὶ ἀντ. α'
χρόνος παλαιὸς πατὴρ
ὠφελ' ἄμερᾶν κτίσαι.
τί γάρ μ' ἔδει παίδων;
790 τί μὲν γὰρ ἤλπιζον ἂν πεπονθέναι
πάθος περισσόν, εἰ γάμων ἀπεζύγην;
νῦν δ' ὀρώ σαφέστατον
κακόν, τέκνων φιλτάτων στειρεῖσθαι.

ἀλλὰ τάδ' ἤδη σώματα λεύσσω
τῶν οἰχομένων παίδων μελέα
πῶς ἂν ὀλοίμην σὺν τοῖσδε τέκνοις
κοινὸν εἰς "Αἰδην καταβῶσα;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

στεναγμόν, ὦ ματέρες, στρ. β'
τῶν κατὰ χθονὸς νεκρῶν
800 αὔσατ' ἀπύσατ' ἀντίφων' ἐμῶν
στεναγμάτων κλύουσαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ παῖδες, ὦ πικρὸν φίλων
προσηγόρημα ματέρων,
προσαυδῶ σε τὸν θανόντα.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ἰὼ ἰώ,

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τῶν γ' ἐμῶν κακῶν ἐγώ.

SUPPLIANTS

But to see my sons' limbs!—sight bitter for me,
 Yet proud, for the day that I hoped not to see
 Hath uprisen before me,
 Who have seen earth's ghestliest misery.

(Ant. 1)

Ah that Time the father, the ancient of days,
 Had but caused me unmarried
 To abide! Was I wholly in evil case
 While childless I tarried?
 Yea, what dark bodings of anguish broke
 My peace, when I thought to refuse love's yoke?
 But of dear sons harried
 Now see I mine home, no visioned stroke.

790

Ah, yonder I see the forms draw nigh
 Of our perished children; alas!
 O but with these my belovèd to die,
 Unto union in Hades to pass!

*Enter THESEUS, with Athenian soldiers marching in
 procession with corpses on biers.*

ADRASTUS

Mothers, ring out the moan
 For dear dead 'neath the ground;
 Echo my crying with accordant groan
 Of mournful-wailing sound.

(Str. 2)

800

CHORUS

O dead son!—bitter word
 For mothers' lips to know!
 I cry on thee, in ears that have not heard:
 Ah for my woe!

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

αἰαῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

* * * * *

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ἐπάθομεν ὦ —

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τὰ κύντατ' ἄλγη κακῶν.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ὦ πόλις Ἀργεΐα, τὸν ἐμὸν πότμον οὐκ ἐσορᾶτε;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὀρῶσιν ἐμὲ τὴν

τάλαιναν, τέκνων ἄπαιδα.

810

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

προσάγετε τῶν δυσπότμων

ἀντ. β'

σώμαθ' αἱματοσταγῆ,

σφαγέντας οὐκ ἄξι' οὐδ' ὑπ' ἀξίων,

ἐν οἷς ἀγὼν ἐκράνθη.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

δόθ', ὡς περιπτυχαῖσι δὴ

χέρας προσαρμόσασ' ἐμοῖς

ἐν ἀγκῶσι τέκνα θῶμαι.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ἔχεις ἔχεις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πημάτων γ' ἄλις βᾶρος.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

αἰαῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τοῖς τεκοῦσι δ' οὐ λέγεις;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

αἰετέ μου.

SUPPLIANTS

ADRASTUS

We suffered—

CHORUS

Deepest anguish!

ADRASTUS

Ah, fair town
Of Argos, see my fate!

CHORUS

O yea, upon our sorrows she looks down,
The childless desolate!

810

ADRASTUS

Bring them, the blood-besprent (*Ant. 2*)
Forms of the evil-starred,

When to unrighteous foes the victory went,
Slain, an unmeet reward!

CHORUS

Give them, that I may cast
Mine arms round these, and lull,
In death's sleep clasped, my children.

ADRASTUS

This thou hast.

CHORUS

Grief's cup is full!

ADRASTUS

Woe!

CHORUS

For these mothers wail!

ADRASTUS

Hear me!

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

820

ΧΟΡΟΣ
στένεις ἐπ' ἀμφοῖν ἄχη.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ
εἶθε με Καδμείων ἕναρον στίχες ἐν κονίαισιν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἐμὸν δὲ μήποτ' ἐζύγη
δέμας γ' ἐς ἀνδρὸς εὐνάν.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ
ἴδετε κακῶν πέλαγος, ὦ
ματέρες τάλαιναι τέκνων.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
κατὰ μὲν ὄνυξιν ἠλοκίσμεθ', ἀμφὶ δὲ
σποδὸν κára κεχύμεθα.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ
ἰὼ ἰὼ μοί μοι·
κατὰ με πέδον γὰς ἔλοι,
830 διὰ δὲ θύελλα σπίασαι,
πυρός τε φλογμὸς ὁ Διὸς ἐν κára πέσοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
πικρὸν ἐσεῖδες γάμους,
πικρὰν δὲ Φοῖβον φάτιν·
ἔρημά σ' ἄ πολύστονος Οἰδιπόδα
δώματα λιποῦσ' ἦλθ' Ἐρινύς.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ
μέλλων σ' ἐρωτᾶν, ἠνίκ' ἐξήντλεις στρατῶ
γούους, ἀφήσω· τοὺς ἐκεῖ μὲν ἐκλιπὼν
840 εἶασα μύθους, νῦν δ' Ἄδραστον ἱστορῶ·
πόθεν ποθ' οἶδε διαπρεπεῖς εὐψυχία
θνητῶν ἔφυσαν; εἰπέ γ', ὡς σοφώτερος,
νέοισιν ἀστῶν τῶνδ' ἐπιστήμων γὰρ εἶ.

SUPPLIANTS

CHORUS

Thy moan
For us, for thee, is sped.

820

ADRASTUS

Oh had the foe slain me!

CHORUS

Oh to have known
Never a husband's bed!

ADRASTUS

Ah mother!—ah, dead child!
Lo, what a trouble-sea!

CHORUS

Our cheeks are furrow-scarred, and our white heads
are marred

With ashes all defiled.

ADRASTUS

Woe's me, ah woe is me!
Yawn for my grave, earth's floor!
Storm-blast, in pieces break!

830

O that on mine head dashed the flame of Zeus down
flashed!

CHORUS

Ruin those bridals bore:
Thy ruin Phoebus spake.
The curse of Oedipus, with sighing fraught,
Childless hath left his house, and thee hath sought.

THESEUS (*to leader of CHORUS*)

Thee had I asked, but, for thy mourning poured
Forth to the host, refrain, and my request
To thee forgo, and ask Adrastus now:—
Of what race sprang these chiefs, above all men
Which shone in valour? To my young Athenians
Tell, of thy fuller wisdom; for thou know'st.

840

567

εἶδες¹ γὰρ αὐτῶν κρείσσον' ἢ λέξαι λόγῳ
 τολμήμαθ', οὗς ἠλπίζον αἰρήσειν πόλιν.
 ἐν δ' οὐκ ἐρήσομαί σε, μὴ γέλωτ' ὄφλω,
 ὅτῳ ξυνέστη τῶνδ' ἕκαστος ἐν μάχῃ
 ἢ τραῦμα λόγχης πολεμίων ἐδέξατο.
 850 κοινοὶ² γὰρ οὗτοι τῶν τ' ἀκουόντων λόγοι
 καὶ τοῦ λέγοντος· πῶς τις ἐν μάχῃ βεβῶς
 λόγχης ἰούσης πρόσθεν ὀμμάτων πυκνῆς
 σαφῶς ἀπήγγειλ' ὅστις ἐστὶν ἀγαθός;
 οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην οὐτ' ἐρωτῆσαι τάδε
 οὐτ' ἂν πιθέσθαι τοῖσι τολμῶσιν λέγειν·
 μόλις γὰρ ἂν τις αὐτὰ τὰναγκαῖ' ὀρᾶν
 δύναιτ' ἂν ἐστῶς πολεμίοις ἐναντίος.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ἄκουε δὴ νυν· καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἄκοντί μοι
 δίδως ἔπαινον τῶνδ', ἐγὼ τε βούλομαι
 φίλων ἀληθῆ καὶ δίκαι' εἰπεῖν πέρι.
 860 ὀρᾶς τὸ Δῖον οὐ βέλος διέπτατο;
 Καπανεὺς ὄδ' ἐστίν· ὧ βίος μὲν ἦν πολὺς,
 ἦκιστα δ' ὄλβῳ γαῦρος ἦν· φρόνημα δὲ
 οὐδέν τι μείζον εἶχεν ἢ πένης ἀνὴρ,
 φεύγων τραπέζαις ὅστις ἐξογκοῖτ' ἄγαν
 τάρκουντ' ἀτίζων· οὐ γὰρ ἐν γαστρὸς βορᾷ
 τὸ χρηστὸν εἶναι, μέτρια δ' ἐξαρκεῖν ἔφη.
 φίλος τ' ἀληθῆς ἦν φίλοις παροῦσί τε
 καὶ μὴ παροῦσιν· ὧν ἀριθμὸς οὐ πολὺς.
 870 ἀψευδὲς ἦθος, εὐπροσήγορον στόμα,
 ἄκραντον οὐδὲν οὐτ' ἐς οἰκέτας ἔχων
 οὐτ' εἰς πολίτας. τὸν δὲ δεύτερον λέγω

¹ Paley; for MSS. εἶδον.

² So MSS. Grotius, *κενοι*: "For this, for those that tell and those that hear, Were an idle tale."

SUPPLIANTS

Their gallant deeds, too great for words to speak,
Thou saw'st, whereby they hoped to win yon Thebes.

One question, meet for laughter, I ask not—
Whom each of these encountered in the strife,
Or from what foeman's spear received his wound.
For they that hear such tales as much could say
As he which tells. Who, that hath stood in fight, 850
When spear on spear is flying before men's eyes,
Can certainly report who bravely bears him?
I could not ask such vanity as this,
Nor them believe whose impudence would tell.
Scarce can a man see what needs must be seen,
What time he standeth foot to foot with foes.

ADRASTUS

Hear then. To no unwilling lips thou givest
The praise of these : full fain am I to speak
Both truth and justice touching men I loved.
Seest thou yon corpse wherethrough leapt Zeus's
bolt? 860

Capaneus he, a mighty man of wealth,
Yet naught thereby exalted, but he bare
A spirit no whit loftier than the poor,
Shunning the man whose pomp of banquets scorned
That which sufficeth. "Not in gluttony,"
Said he, "is good : enough is as a feast."
True friend to friends was he, alike when near
And far : of such is there no multitude.
A guileless heart, a mouth of gracious speech,
Who left no dues unrendered, or to servants 870
Or citizens. Now of the next I speak,

- Ἐτέοκλον, ἄλλην χρηστότητ' ἠσκηκότα
 νεανίας ἦν τῷ βίῳ μὲν ἐνδεής,
 πλείστας δὲ τιμὰς ἔσχ' ἐν Ἀργείᾳ χθονί.
 φίλων δὲ χρυσὸν πολλάκις δωρουμένων
 οὐκ εἰσεδέξατ' οἶκον ὥστε τοὺς τρόπους
 δούλους παρασχεῖν χρημάτων ζευχθεὶς ὑπο.
 τοὺς δ' ἔξαμαρτάνοντας, οὐχὶ τὴν πόλιν
 ἤχθαιρ'· ἐπεὶ τοι κούδεν αἰτία πόλις
 880 κακῶς κλύουσα διὰ κυβερνήτην κακόν.
 ὁ δ' αὖ τρίτος τῶνδ' Ἴππομέδων τοιοῦσδ' ἔφν·
 παῖς ὦν ἐτόλμησ' εὐθύς οὐ πρὸς ἠδονὰς
 Μουσῶν τραπέσθαι πρὸς τὸ μαλθακὸν βίου,
 ἀγροὺς δὲ ναίων, σκληρὰ τῇ φύσει διδοὺς
 ἔχαιρε πρὸς τάνδρείον, εἰς τ' ἄγρας ἰὼν
 ἵπποις τε χαίρων τόξα τ' ἐντείνων χεροῖν,
 πόλει παρασχεῖν σῶμα χρήσιμον θέλων.
 ὁ τῆς κυναγοῦ δ' ἄλλος Ἀταλάντης γόνος,
 παῖς Παρθενοπαῖος, εἶδος ἔξοχώτατος,
 890 Ἄρκας μὲν ἦν, ἐλθὼν δ' ἐπ' Ἰνάχου ῥοὰς
 παιδεύεται κατ' Ἄργος. ἐτραφεὶς δ' ἐκεῖ
 πρῶτον μὲν, ὡς χρὴ τοὺς μετοικοῦντας ξένους,
 λυπηρὸς οὐκ ἦν οὐδ' ἐπίφθονος πόλει
 οὐδ' ἐξεριστῆς τῶν λόγων, ὅθεν βαρὺς
 μάλιστα ἂν εἴη δημότης τε καὶ ξένος·
 λόχοις δ' ἐφεστῶς ὥσπερ Ἀργεῖος γεγῶς
 ἤμυνε χώρα, χῶπότ' εὐπράσσοι πόλις,
 ἔχαιρε, λυπρῶς δ' ἔφερον, εἴ τι δυστυχοί.
 πολλοὺς δ' ἐραστὰς καπὸ θηλειῶν ὅσας
 900 ἔχων, ἐφρούρει μηδὲν ἔξαμαρτάνειν.
 Τυδέως δ' ἔπαινον ἐν βραχεῖ θήσω μέγαν·
 οὐκ ἐν λόγοις ἦν λαμπρός, ἀλλ' ἐν ἀσπίδι
 δεινὸς σοφιστῆς πολλά τ' ἐξευρεῖν σοφός.

SUPPLIANTS

Eteoclus, graced, he too, with excellence.
 A young man he, not rich in this world's goods,
 But in the Argive land dowered rich with honour;
 Who oft, when friends would lavish on him gold,
 Received it not his doors within, to make
 His life a slave bowed 'neath the yoke of wealth.
 He loathed wrong-doers, not his erring country;
 Seeing the guilt is nowise in the State
 That through an evil pilot wins ill fame. 880
 Such too Hippomedon was, the third with these.
 From childhood up he deigned not turn aside
 Unto the Muses' joys, for ease of life;
 But in the field abode, enduring hardness
 Gladly for valour's sake, and, hunting still,
 Joyed in the steed and hands that strain the bow,
 Eager to yield his land his body's best.

The fourth was huntress Atalanta's son,
 Parthenopaeus, unmatched in goodlihead:
 Arcadian he, but came to Inachus, 890
 And lived his youth at Argos. Fostered there,
 First, as beseems the sojourner in the land,
 He vexed not, nor was jealous of the state,
 Nor was a wrangler, whereby citizens
 Or aliens most shall jar with fellow-men;
 But in the ranks stood like an Argive born,
 Fought for the land, and, whenso prospered Argos,
 Rejoiced, and grieved when it went ill with her;—
 Of many a man, of many a woman loved,
 Yet from transgression did he keep him pure. 900

Tydeus' high praise next will I sum in brief.
 In speech he shone not; a dread reasoner he
 In logic of the shield, and war's inventions:

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

910 γνώμη δ' ἀδελφοῦ Μελεάγρου λελειμμένος,
 ἴσον παρέσχεν ὄνομα, διὰ τέχνης δορός
 εὐρῶν ἀκριβῆ μουσικὴν ἐν ἀσπίδι·
 φιλότιμον ἦθος, πλούσιον φρόνημα δὲ
 ἐν τοῖσιν ἔργοις, οὐχὶ τοῖς λόγοις ἴσον.
 ἐκ τῶνδε μὴ θαύμαζε τῶν εἰρημένων,
 Θησεῦ, πρὸ πύργων τούσδε τολμῆσαι θανεῖν.
 τὸ γὰρ τραφῆναι μὴ κακῶς αἰδῶ φέρει·
 αἰσχύνεται δὲ τὰγάθ' ἀσκήσας ἀνήρ
 κακὸς κεκλῆσθαι πᾶς τις. ἢ δ' εὐανδρία
 διδακτός, εἴπερ καὶ βρέφος διδάσκεται
 λέγειν ἀκούει θ' ὧν μάθησιν οὐκ ἔχει.
 ἂ δ' ἂν μάθη τις, ταῦτα σώζεσθαι φιλεῖ
 πρὸς γῆρας. οὕτω παῖδας εὖ παιδεύετε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

920 ἰὼ τέκνον, δυστυχῆ σ'
 ἔτρεφον, ἔφερον ὑφ' ἥπατος
 πόνους ἐνεγκοῦσ' ἐν ὠδίσι· καὶ νῦν
 "Αἶδας τὸν ἐμὸν ἔχει
 μόχθον ἀθλίας, ἐγὼ δὲ
 γηροβοσκὸν οὐκ ἔχω
 τεκοῦσ' ἅ τάλαινα παῖδα.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

930 καὶ μὴν τὸν Οἰκλέους γε γενναῖον τόκον
 θεοὶ ζῶντ' ἀναρπάσαντες εἰς μυχοὺς χθονὸς
 αὐτοῖς τεθρίπποις εὐλογοῦσιν ἐμφανῶς·
 τὸν Οἰδίπου δὲ παῖδα, Πολυνείκην λέγω,
 ἡμεῖς ἐπαινέσαντες οὐ ψευδοίμεθ' ἄν.
 ξένος γὰρ ἦν μοι πρὶν λιπῶν Κάδμου πόλιν

SUPPLIANTS

In counsel not as his brother Meleager,
Yet of like fame, through science of the spear
Getting him ripest scholarship of war.
A soaring soul was his, a spirit rich
Where deeds might serve ; in speech of less avail.

Hearing my words, O Theseus, marvel not
That these before yon towers feared not to die. 910
The fruit that noble nurture bears is honour ;
And whosoe'er hath practised knightly deeds
Would blush to be called craven. Ye may teach
This chivalry ; for even the babe is taught
To speak and hear things not yet understood ;
And what one learneth, that he is wont to keep
To hoary hairs. Then train ye well the child.

CHORUS

O son, for thy sorrow I gave thee
Life of my life 'neath my zone,
And I bore for thee travail-pain : 920
And now is my loss death's gain ;
Of my labours no fruit doth remain,
Nor to foster mine eld may I have thee.
Woe's me that I bare a son !

THESEUS

To Oekleus' noble son the very Gods,
Who whelmed him with his car down earth's abyss
Living, gave manifest token of their praise.¹
But Oedipus' son—I tell of Polyneices—
Myself shall praise, nor falsely speak herein. 930
My guest was he, ere, leaving Cadmus' town

¹ As being rescued from pursuers, and entombed by the Gods.

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

φυγῆ πρὸς Ἄργος διαβαλεῖν ἀνθαίρετος.
ἀλλ' οἶσθ' ὃ δρᾶσαι βούλομαι τούτων πέρι;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

οὐκ οἶδα πλὴν ἓν, σοῖσι πείθεσθαι λόγοις.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τὸν μὲν Διὸς πληγέντα Καπανέα πυρί—

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ἢ χωρὶς ἱερὸν ὡς νεκρὸν θάψαι θέλεις;

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ναί· τοὺς δέ γ' ἄλλους πάντας ἐν μιᾷ πυρᾷ.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ποῦ δῆτα θήσεις μνήμα τῷδε χωρίσας;

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

αὐτοῦ παρ' οἴκουσ τούσδε συμπήξας τάφον.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

οὗτος μὲν ἤδη δμωσὶν ἂν μέλοι πόνος.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

940

ἡμῖν δέ γ' οἶδε· στειχέτω δ' ἄχθη νεκρῶν.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

ἴτ', ὦ τάλαιναι μητέρες, τέκνων πέλας.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ἦκιστ', Ἄδραστε, τοῦτο πρόσφορον λέγεις.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

πῶς; τὰς τεκούσας οὐ χρεῶν ψαῦσαι τέκνων;

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ὄλουντ' ἰδοῦσαι τούσδ' ἂν ἠλλοιωμένους.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

πικρὰ γὰρ ὄψις αἶμα κῶτειλαὶ νεκρῶν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

τί δῆτα λύπην ταῖσδε προσθεῖναι θέλεις;

SUPLIANTS

Self-banished, unto Argos he crossed o'er.
But knowest thou my wish as touching these?

ADRASTUS

Naught know I, save one thing—to heed thy words.

THESEUS

Capaneus, stricken by the fire of Zeus—

ADRASTUS

Wouldst bury him apart, a hallowed corpse?

THESEUS

Yea, but the rest all on one funeral-pyre.

ADRASTUS

Where wilt thou set for him that several tomb?

THESEUS

Here, by these halls I have built his sepulchre.

ADRASTUS

Our servants' tendance shall he straightway have.

THESEUS

These, mine. Now let the biers of death move on. 940

ADRASTUS

Come, hapless mothers, to your sons draws nigh.

THESEUS

Adrastus, this thou say'st were all unmeet.

ADRASTUS

How should the mothers choose but touch their sons?

THESEUS

'Twere death to look on them so sorely marred.

ADRASTUS

Bitter to see are slain men's blood and wounds.

THESEUS

Why then wouldst add fresh anguish to their grief?

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

950 νικᾶς· μένειν χρῆ τλημόνως· λέγει γὰρ εὖ
 Θησεύς· ὅταν δὲ τούσδε προσθῶμεν πυρί,
 ὅστᾳ προσάξεσθ'· ὦ ταλαίπωροι βροτῶν,
 τί κτᾶσθε λόγχας καὶ κατ' ἀλλήλων φόνους
 τίθεσθε; παύσασθ', ἀλλὰ λήξαντες πόνων
 ἄστη φυλάσσεθ' ἤσυχοι μεθ' ἡσύχων.
 σμικρὸν τὸ χρῆμα τοῦ βίου· τοῦτον δὲ χρῆ
 ὡς ῥᾶστα καὶ μὴ σὺν πόνοις διεκπερᾶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐκέτ' εὐτεκνος, οὐκέτ' εὐπαις, στρ.
 οὐδ' εὐτυχίας μετεστίν μοι
 κουροτόκοις ἐν Ἀργείαις·
 οὐδ' Ἄρτεμις λοχία
 προσφθέγγξαιτ' ἂν τὰς ἀτέκνους.
 960 δυσαιῶν δ' ὁ βίος,
 πλαγκτὰ δ' ὡσεὶ τις νεφέλα,
 πνευμάτων ὑπὸ δυσχίμων αἴσσω.

ἐπτὰ ματέρες ἐπτὰ κούρους ἀντ.
 ἐγεινάμεθ' αἱ ταλαίπωροι
 κλεινοτάτους ἐν Ἀργείοις·
 καὶ νῦν ἄπαις ἄτεκνος
 γηράσκω δυστηνοτάτως,
 οὐτ' ἐν φθιμένοις
 οὐτ' ἐν ζῶσιν κρινομένα,
 970 χωρὶς δὴ τινα τῶνδ' ἔχουσα μοῖραν.

ὑπολελειμμένα μοι δάκρυα· ἐπωδ.
 μέλεα παιδὸς ἐν οἴκοις
 κεῖται μνήματα, πένθιμοι
 κουραὶ καὶ στέφανοι κόμας,

SUPPLIANTS

ADRASTUS

Well said. Ye, tarry patiently, for well
 Speaks Theseus. When to fire we have given these,
 Yourselves the bones shall gather. Hapless mortals!
 Why do ye get you spears and deal out death 950
 To fellow-men? Stay, from such toils forbear,
 And peaceful mid the peaceful ward your towns.
 Short is life's span: behoves to pass through this
 Softly as may be, not with travail worn.

*The funeral procession passes on to the pyres, which are
 kindled in sight of the stage.*

CHORUS

Crowned with fair sons above others (Str.)
 No more am I seen,
 Neither blessèd mid Argive mothers;
 Nor the Travail-queen
 To the childless shall give fair greeting!
 Forlorn is my life, as a fleeting 960
 Lone cloud that flees from the beating
 Of storm-scourges keen.

Seven mothers—and heroes seven (Ant.)
 To our sorrow we bare:
 None princelier to Argos were given.
 Now in childless despair
 Drear old age creepeth upon me;
 Yet the ranks of the dead have not known me,
 Nor the count of the living may own me;
 But an outcast I fare. 970

For me are but tears remaining: (Epode)
 Saddest memorials rest
 In mine halls of my son—shorn hair
 And garlands of mourning are there;

577

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

λοιβαί τε νεκύων φθιμένων,
 αοιδαί θ' ἄς χρυσοκόμας
 Ἄπολλων οὐκ ἐνδέχεται
 γόοισιν δ' ὀρθρευομένα
 δάκρυσιν νοτερόν ἀεὶ πέπλων
 πρὸς στέρνῳ πτύχα τέγγω.

980

καὶ μὴν θαλάμας τάσδ' ἐσορῶ δὴ
 Καπανέως ἤδη τύμβον θ' ἱερόν
 μελάθρων τ' ἐκτὸς
 Θησέως ἀναθήματα νεκροῖς,
 κλεινὴν τ' ἄλοχον τοῦ καταφθιμένου
 τοῦδε κεραυνῶ πέλας Εὐάδην,
 ἣν Ἴφισ ἀναξ παῖδα φυτεύει.
 τί ποτ' αἰθερίαν ἔστηκε πέτραν,
 ἣ τῶνδε δόμων ὑπερακρίζει,
 τήνδ' ἐμβαίνουσα κέλευθον;

ΕΥΑΔΝΗ

990

τί φέγγος, τί ν' αἶγλαν
 ἐδίφρευε τόθ' ἄλιος
 σελάνα τε κατ' αἰθέρα,
 λαμπάσιν ὠκυθόαις λυγρᾶς¹
 ἰππεύουσα δι' ὄρφνας,
 * * ἀνίκα γάμων
 τῶν ἐμῶν πόλις Ἄργους
 αοιδὰς εὐδαιμονίας
 ἐπύργωσε καὶ γαμέτα
 χαλκεοτευχοῦς τε Καπανέως;
 1000 δρομὰς ἐξ ἐμῶν πρὸς σ' ἔβαν
 οἴκων ἐκβακχευσαμένα,

στρ.

¹ Text corrupt. Paley's reading and interpretation.

SUPPLIANTS

Libations—for dead lips' draining ;
 Songs—which the golden-tressed
 Apollo shall turn from in scorn ;
 And with wails shall I greet each morn,
 Ever drenching with tears fast raining
 The vesture-folds on my breast.

980

Lo, yonder the fiery bower,
 Even Capaneus' sacred pyre :
 I see it without the fane,
 With Theseus' gifts to the slain.
 Ha ! the wife draweth nigh in this hour
 To the slain of the levin-fire,
 Evadne the princess renowned !
 On yon cliff why is she found
 Whose crags above this fane tower ?
 And she climbs, and she climbs ever higher !

EVADNE *appears on the cliff above the pyre of Capaneus,
 dressed in festal attire.*

EVADNE

What light ill-omened shone
 When flashed thy wheels, O Sun,
 And when the moon raced on,
 And star-lamps glancing
 Raced through a lowering sky,
 When Argos tossed on high
 The gladsome bridal-cry,
 And throbb'd with dancing,
 And thrilled with song, to see
 Mine hero wed with me ?
 O love, I rush to thee
 From mine home, raving,

(Str.) 990
 1000

ΙΚΕΤΙΑΔΕΣ

πυρὸς φῶς τάφον τε
 ματεύουσα τὸν αὐτόν,
 ἐς Ἴλιδαν καταλύσουσ' ἔμμοχθον
 βίοτον αἰῶνός τε πόνους·
 ἠδιστος γάρ τοι θάνατος
 συνθνήσκειν θνήσκουσι φίλοις,
 εἰ δαίμων τάδε κραίνοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1010

καὶ μὴν ὄρας τήνδ' ἧς ἐφέστηκας πέλας
 πυράν, Διὸς θησαυρόν, ἐνθ' ἔνεστι σὸς
 πόσις δαμασθεῖς λαμπάσιν κεραυνίσις.

ΕΤΑΔΝΗ

1020

ὀρῶ δὴ τελευτάν,
 ἴν' ἔστακα· τύχα δέ μοι
 ξυνάπτει ποδός· ἀλλὰ τῆς
 εὐκλείας χάριν ἐνθεν ὀρ-
 μάσω τᾶσδ' ἀπὸ πέτρας
 πηδήσασα πυρὸς ἔσω,
 σῶμά τ' αἴθοπι φλογμῶ
 πόσει συμμίξασα φίλον,
 χρώτα χρωτὶ πέλας θεμένα
 Περσεφονείας ἠξω θαλάμους,
 σὲ τὸν θανόντ' οὐποτ' ἐμᾶ
 προδοῦσα ψυχᾶ κατὰ γᾶς.
 ἴτω φῶς γάμοι τε.
 †εἶθ' ἀμείνονες εὐναὶ
 δικαίων ὑμεναίων ἐν Ἀργεῖ
 φανείεν τέκνοισιν ἐμοῖς,
 εἴη δ' εὐναῖος γαμέτας†¹

¹ Text uncertain. Paley's reading and interpretation.

SUPPLIANTS

Seeking thy tomb, thy pyre,
 Longing with strong desire
 To end in that same fire
 Mine anguish, braving
 Hades—to end life's woe ;
 For death is sweetest so
 With dear dead to lie low :—
 God grant my craving !

CHORUS

Lo, the pyre nigh,—above it dost thou stand,—
 Zeus' own possession, on the which is laid
 Thy lord, o'erthrown by flash of levin-bolt.

1010

EVADNE

The end !—I see it now,
 Here standing. Friend art thou,
 Fortune ! From this cliff's brow,
 For wifhood's glory,
 With spurning feet I dart
 Down into yon fire's heart
 To meet him, ne'er to part,—
 Flames reddening o'er me,—
 To nestle to his side,
 In Cora's¹ bowers a bride !
 O love, though thou hast died,
 I'll not forsake thee.
 Farewell life, bridal bed !
 By happier omens led,
 Ah, be our children wed !
 May leal love make ye,
 Bridegrooms to be, life through
 Unto my daughters true :

(Ant.)
1020

¹ Persephone, queen of Hades.

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

1030 συντηχθεῖς αὔραις ἀδόλοις
γενναίας ψυχᾶς ἀλόχῳ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

καὶ μὴν ὄδ' αὐτὸς σὸς πατὴρ βαίνει πέλας,
γεραῖος Ἴφισ εἰς νεωτέρους λόγους,
οὓς οὐ κατειδῶς πρόσθεν ἀλγήσει κλύων.

ΙΦΙΣ

ὦ δυστάλαιnai, δυστάλας δ' ἐγὼ γέρων,
ἦκω διπλοῦν πένθημ' ὀμαιμόνων ἔχων,
τὸν μὲν θανόντα παῖδα Καδμείων δορι
Ἐτέοκλον εἰς γῆν πατρίδα ναυσθλώσω νεκρόν,
ζητῶν δ' ἐμὴν παῖδ', ἣ δόμων ἐξώπιος
βέβηκε πηδήσασα Καπανέως δάμαρ,
1040 θανεῖν ἐρώσα σὺν πόσει. χρόνον μὲν οὖν
τὸν πρόσθ' ἐφρουρεῖτ' ἐν δόμοις· ἐπεὶ δ' ἐγὼ
φυλακὰς ἀνήκα τοῖς παρεστῶσιν κακοῖς,
βέβηκεν, ἀλλὰ τῆδέ νιν δοξάζομεν
μάλιστ' ἂν εἶναι φράζετ' εἰ κατείδετε.

ΕΤΑΔΝΗ

τί τάσδ' ἐρωτᾶς; ἦδ' ἐγὼ πέτρας ἔπι
ὄρνις τις ὡσεὶ Καπανέως ὑπὲρ πυρᾶς
δύστηνον αἰώρημα κουφίζω, πάτερ.

ΙΦΙΣ

τέκνον, τίς αὔρα; τίς στόλος; τίνος χάριν
δόμων ὑπερβᾶσ' ἦλθες εἰς τήνδε χθόνα;

ΕΤΑΔΝΗ

1050 ὀργὴν λάβοις ἂν τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων
κλύων· ἀκοῦσαι δ' οὐ σε βούλομαι, πάτερ.

ΙΦΙΣ

τί δ'; οὐ δίκαιον πατέρα τὸν σὸν εἶδέναι;

SUPPLIANTS

One love-breath breathe in you.
Now, Death, come—take me!

1030

CHORUS

Lo, here himself, thy sire, is drawing nigh,
Old Iphis, within sound of thy strange speech,
Which, heard not yet, shall wring his heart to hear.

Enter IPHIS.

IPHIS

O hapless ye!—O hapless ancient I!
Burdened with twofold grief for kin I came,
To bear unto his fatherland oversea
My son Eteoclus, slain by Theban spear,
And seeking for my daughter, who hath fled
Forth of mine halls, the wife of Capaneus,
Longing with him to die. Through days o'erpast 1040
Guarded she was at home: but soon as I
Slackened the watch, for ills that pressed on me,
Forth did she pass. Howbeit here, methinks,
Is she most like to be. Say, have ye seen her?

EVADNE

Wherefore ask these? Here am I on the rock.
Even as a bird, my father, hang I poised
In misery o'er the pyre of Capaneus.

IPHIS

My child, what wind hath blown, what journeying
led thee?
Why flee thine home and come unto this land?

EVADNE

Thou wouldst be wroth to hear my purposes. 1050
O father, I would not that thou shouldst hear.

IPHIS

How?—were't not just thy very father knew?

583

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

ΕΤΑΔΝΗ

κριτης ἂν εἴης οὐ σοφὸς γνώμης ἐμῆς.

ΙΦΙΣ

σκευῆ δὲ τῆδε τοῦ χάριν κοσμεῖς δέμας ;

ΕΤΑΔΝΗ

θέλει τι κλεινὸν οὗτος ὁ στολμός, πάτερ.

ΙΦΙΣ

ὡς οὐκ ἐπ' ἀνδρὶ πένθιμος πρέπεις ὀρᾶν.

ΕΤΑΔΝΗ

εἰς γάρ τι πρᾶγμα νεοχμὸν ἐσκευάσμεθα.

ΙΦΙΣ

κᾶπειτα τύμβῳ καὶ πυρᾷ φαίνει πέλας ;

ΕΤΑΔΝΗ

ἐνταῦθα γὰρ δὴ καλλίνικος ἔρχομαι.

ΙΦΙΣ

1060

νικῶσα νίκην τίνα ; μαθεῖν χρήζω σέθεν.

ΕΤΑΔΝΗ

πάσας γυναῖκας ἄς δέδορκεν ἥλιος.

ΙΦΙΣ

ἔργοις Ἀθάνας ἢ φρενῶν εὐβουλία ;

ΕΤΑΔΝΗ

ἀρετῇ· πόσει γὰρ συνθανοῦσα κείσομαι.

ΙΦΙΣ

τί φῆς ; τί τοῦτ' αἰνιγμα σημαίνεις σαθρόν ;

ΕΤΑΔΝΗ

ἄσσω θανόντος Καπανέως τήνδ' εἰς πυράν.

ΙΦΙΣ

ὦ θύγατερ, οὐ μὴ μῦθον εἰς πολλοὺς ἐρεῖς ;

ΕΤΑΔΝΗ

τοῦτ' αὐτὸ χρήζω, πάντας Ἀργείους μαθεῖν.

ΙΦΙΣ

ἄλλ' οὐδέ τοί σοι πείσομαι δρώση τάδε.

SUPPLIANTS

EVADNE

Thou wouldst be no wise judge of my resolve.

IPHIS

And why in this attire array thy form?

EVADNE

Father, this vesture glorious meaning hath.

IPHIS

Thou seemest not as one that mourns her lord.

EVADNE

For deed unheard-of have I decked me thus.

IPHIS

By tomb and pyre appear'st thou in such guise?

EVADNE

Yea, I for victory's triumph hither come.

IPHIS

What victory this? Fain would I learn of thee. 1060

EVADNE

Over all wives on whom the sun looks down.

IPHIS

In works by Pallas taught, or prudent wit?

EVADNE

In courage. With my lord will I lie dead.

IPHIS

How sayest thou?—what sorry riddle this?

EVADNE

I plunge to yon pyre of dead Capaneus.

IPHIS

O daughter, speak not so before a throng!

EVADNE

Even this would I, that all the Argives hear.

IPHIS

Nay, surely will I let thee from this deed.

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

ΕΥΑΔΝΗ

1070

ὅμοιον· οὐ γὰρ μὴ κίχης μ' ἔλὼν χερί.
καὶ δὴ παρεῖται σῶμα, σοὶ μὲν οὐ φίλον,
ἡμῖν δὲ καὶ τῷ συμπυρομένῳ πόσει.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἰώ, γύναι, δεινὸν ἔργον ἐξειργάσω.

ΙΦΙΣ

ἀπωλόμην δύστηνος, Ἀργείων κόραι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἔ ἔ, σχέτλια τάδε παθῶν,
τὸ πάντολμον ἔργον ὄψει τάλας.

ΙΦΙΣ

οὐκ ἂν τιν' εὔροισ' ἄλλον ἀθλιώτερον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἰὼ τάλας·
μετέλαχες τύχας Οἰδιπόδα, γέρον,
μέρος καὶ σὺ καὶ πόλις ἐμὰ τλάμων.

ΙΦΙΣ

1080

οἴμοι· τί δὴ βροτοῖσιν οὐκ ἔστιν τόδε,
νέους δις εἶναι καὶ γέροντας αὐτὰ πάλιν;
ἀλλ' ἐν δόμοις μὲν ἦν τι μὴ καλῶς ἔχῃ,
γνώμαιοισιν ὑστέροιαισιν ἐξορθούμεθα,
αἰῶνα δ' οὐκ ἔξεστιν. εἰ δ' ἦμεν νέοι
δις καὶ γέροντες, εἴ τις ἐξημάρτανε,
διπλοῦ βίου τυχόντες ἐξωρθούμεθ' ἂν.
ἐγὼ γὰρ ἄλλους εἰσορῶν τεκνουμένους
παίδων τ' ἐραστὴς ἢ πόθῳ τ' ἀπωλλύμην.
εἰ δ' εἰς τόδ' ἦλθον κάξεπειράθην παθῶν¹
οἶον στέρεσθαι πατέρα γίγνεται τέκνων,
οὐκ ἂν ποτ' εἰς τόδ' ἦλθον εἰς ὃ νῦν κακόν·

1090

¹ Paley; for MSS. τέκνων.

SUPPLIANTS

EVADNE

Let or let not—thou canst not reach nor seize me.
Lo, hurled my body falls, for grief to thee,
For joy to me and him with me consumed.

1070

Throws herself from the cliff on to the pyre.

CHORUS

O lady, what awful deed hath been compassed of
thee!

IPHIS

O Argos' daughters, wretched I!—undone!

CHORUS

Woe for thee, woe, who hast borne this misery!
Yet its fulness of horror remaineth for thee to see.

IPHIS

None other shall ye find more sorrow-crushed.

CHORUS

O ancient, O sore-stricken heart,
In the fortune partaker thou art [part.
Of Oedipus: thou and mine hapless city therein have

IPHIS

Ah me, why is not this to men vouchsafed,
Twice to see youth, and twice withal old age?
Now in our homes, if aught shall fall out ill,
By wisdom's second thoughts this we amend;
Life lived we may not. Might we but be young
And old twice o'er, if any man should err,
We would amend us in that second life.
For I, beholding others rich in sons,
For children yearned, and by my longing perished.
Had I to that come first,—by suffering proved
What to a father child-bereavement means,
I had never come to this, to this day's woe,

1080

1090

ὅστις φυτεύσας καὶ νεανίαν τεκὼν
 ἄριστον, εἶτα τοῦδε νῦν στερίσκομαι.
 εἶεν· τί δὴ χρῆ τὸν ταλαίπωρόν με δρᾶν;
 στείχειν πρὸς οἴκους; κατ' ἔρημίαν ἴδω
 πολλὴν μελάθρων ἀπορίαν τ' ἐμῶ βίῳ;
 ἢ πρὸς μέλαθρα τοῦδε Καπανέως μὴλω;
 ἥδιστα πρὶν γε δῆθ', ὅτ' ἦν παῖς ἦδε μοι.
 ἀλλ' οὐκέτ' ἔστιν· ἦ γ' ἐμὴν γενειάδα
 1100 προσήγετ' αἰεὶ στόματι καὶ κᾶρα τόδε
 κατεῖχε χερσίν· οὐδὲν ἥδιον πατρὶ¹
 γέροντι θυγατρός· ἀρσένων δὲ μείζονες
 ψυχαί, γλυκεῖαι δ' ἦσσαν εἰς θωπεύματα.
 οὐχ ὡς τάχιστα δῆτά μ' ἄξειτ' εἰς δόμους
 σκότῳ τε δώσεται; ἔνθ' ἀσιτίαις ἐμὸν
 δέμας γεραῖον συντακεῖς ἀποφθερῶ.
 τί μ' ὠφελήσει παιδὸς ὀστέων θυγεῖν;
 ὦ δυσπάλαιστον γῆρας, ὡς μισῶ σ' ἔχων,
 1110 μισῶ δ' ὅσοι χρήζουσιν ἐκτείνειν βίον,
 βρωτοῖσι καὶ ποτοῖσι καὶ μαγεύμασι
 παρεκτρέποντες ὀχετὸν ὥστε μὴ θανεῖν·
 οὐς χρῆν, ἐπειδὴν μηδὲν ὠφελῶσι γῆν,
 θανόντας ἔρρειν κάκποδῶν εἶναι νέοις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἰώ, τάδε δὴ παίδων φθιμένων
 ὅστ᾽ ἀφέρεται. λάβειτ', ἀμφίπολοι
 γραιῖας ἀμενοῦς· οὐ γὰρ ἔνεστιν
 ῥώμη παίδων ὑπὸ πένθους,

¹ Burney : for MSS. χειρὶ· πατρὶ δ' οὐδὲν ἥδιον.

SUPPLIANTS

I, who begat a young son of my loins
 Most goodly, and am now of him bereft!
 No more!—what must I do, the sorrow-fraught?
 Wend home?—and filled with desolation see
 Home—for my life the hunger of despair?
 Or seek the mansion of yon Capaneus?—
 Once sweet, O sweet, when this my daughter lived!
 Ah, but she is no more, who wont to draw
 Down to her lips my face, fold in her arms 1100
 Mine head:—naught sweeter than a daughter is
 To grey-haired sire; sons' hearts be greater-framed,
 But not, not theirs the dear caressing wiles!
 Lead me, with speed O lead me to mine home,
 And hide in darkness, there to make an end
 Of this old frame, by fasting pined away.
 What profit if I touch my daughter's bones?
 Strong wrestler Eld, O how I loathe thy grasp—
 Loathe them which seek to lengthen out life's span,
 By meats and drinks and magic philtre-spells 1110
 To turn life's channel, that they may not die,
 Who, when they are but cumberers of the ground,
 Should hence, and die, and make way for the young.

*The stage gradually fills with a procession, in which the
 sons of the dead chiefs bear the urns containing their ashes.*

The members of the CHORUS advance to meet them.

CHORUS

Woe is me, woe!
 Onward, onward the bones of sons, sons dead,
 Are borne: O lend me your hands; my strength is
 sped,
 Handmaids: stricken with eld, in childless pain
 I faint for my dear sons slain,

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

1120 πολλοῦ τε χρόνου ζώσης μέτα δῆ,
καταλειβομένης τ' ἄλγεσι πολλοῖς.
τί γὰρ ἂν μείζον τοῦδ' ἔτι θνητοῖς
πάθος ἐξεύροις
ἢ τέκνα θανόντ' ἐσιδέσθαι;

ΠΑΙΔΕΣ

φέρω φέρω,¹ στρ. α'
τάλαινα μάτερ, ἐκ πυρᾶς πατρὸς μέλη,
βάρος μὲν οὐκ ἀβριθὲς ἀλγέων ὕπερ,
ἐν δ' ὀλίγῳ τὰμὰ πάντα συνθείς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1130 ἰὼ ἰώ.
παῖ δάκρυα φέρεις φίλα
ματρὶ τῶν ὀλωλότων,
σποδοῦ τε πλήθος ὀλίγον ἀντὶ σωμαίων
εὐδοκίμων δῆποτ' ἐν Μυκῆναις;

ΠΑΙΣ α'

1140 παπαῖ παπαῖ. ἀντ. α'
ἐγὼ δ' ἔρημος ἀθλίου πατρὸς τάλας
ἔρημον οἶκον ὀρφανεύσομαι λαβών,
οὐ πατρὸς ἐν χερσὶ τοῦ τεκόντος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ α'

1150 ἰὼ ἰώ.
ποῦ δὲ πόνος ἐμῶν τέκνων,
ποῦ λοχευμάτων χάρις
τροφαὶ τε ματρὸς ἀνπνά τ' ὀμμάτων τέλη
καὶ φίλαι προσβολαὶ προσώπων;

¹ Paley's arrangement of this *Commos* adopted.

SUPPLIANTS

Bowed down under the load of years on years,
 Wasted ever with sorrows, aye with tears.
 Couldst thou tell of a harder, sorer stroke 1120
 That lighteth on mortal folk,
 Than when mothers behold their dead sons' biers?

CHORUS OF CHILDREN

I bear, O I bear, (Str. 1)
 Sad mother, the limbs of my sire from the
 burning,— [there,—
 A burden not light, for the weight of my sorrow is
 All that I love in this little vial inurning.

CHORUS OF MOTHERS

Woe is me, woe!
 Is it all that thou bringest, the salt tears' flow,
 To the dead man's mother?—naught else canst
 thou show? [the men of renown
 To a handful of dust brought down are the forms of 1130
 So glorious erewhile in Mycenae-town?

FIRST CHILD

Alas for my doom! (Ant. 1)
 Sad son by an ill-starred father forsaken,
 Henceforth I inherit the orphan's desolate home,
 Unsheltered by arms of the sire from whose loins
 I was taken.

FIRST MOTHER

Woe for my plight!
 Whitherward hath my toil for my babes taken
 flight?
 What now doth the pain of my travail requite?
 What reward hath the mother's breast, and the eyes
 that would take no rest, [pressed?
 And the face to the dear little babe-face

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

ΠΑΙΣ Β'

βεβᾶσιν, οὐκέτ' εἰσίν· οἴμοι πάτερ· στρ. β'
 1140 βεβᾶσιν· αἰθὴρ ἔχει νιν ἤδη,

ΧΟΡΟΣ Β'

πυρὸς τετακότας σποδῶ·
 ποτανοὶ δ' ἤνυσαν τὸν Ἄιδαν.

ΠΑΙΣ Γ'

πάτερ, μῶν σῶν κλύεις τέκνων γόους·
 ἄρ' ἀσπιδούχος ἔτι ποτ' ἀντιτίσομαι σὸν φόνον·

ΧΟΡΟΣ Γ'

εἰ γὰρ γένοιτο, τέκνον.

ΠΑΙΣ Δ'

ἔτ' ἂν θεοῦ θέλοντος ἔλθοι δίκαια ἀντ. β'
 πατρῶος· οὐπω κακὸν τόδ' εὔδει.

ΧΟΡΟΣ Δ'

ἄλις γόων, ἄλις τύχας,
 ἄλις δ' ἀλγέων ἐμοὶ πάρεστιν.

ΠΑΙΣ Ε'

1150 ἔτ' Ἄσωποῦ με δέξεται γάνος
 χαλκείους ἐν ὄπλοις Δαναϊδῶν στρατηλάταν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ Ε'

τοῦ φθιμένου πατρὸς ἐκδικαστᾶν.

ΠΑΙΣ ΣΤ'

ἔτ' εἰσορᾶν σε, πάτερ, ἐπ' ὀμμάτων δοκῶ— στρ. γ'

ΧΟΡΟΣ ΣΤ'

φίλον φίλημα παρὰ γένυν τιθέντα σόν.

SUPPLIANTS

SECOND CHILD

They are gone! No sons hast thou any more—they
are lost!—
Alas for my father!—through void air drifts each 1140

(*Str.* 2)

[*ghost.*

SECOND MOTHER

They crumbled to ashes mid flame as they lay,
And to Hades now have they winged their way.

THIRD CHILD

O my father, the wail of thy sons ringeth down
unto thee.
Ah shall I ever bear shield, an avenger to be
Of thy blood?

THIRD MOTHER

God grant it, my child, to thy destiny!

FOURTH CHILD

My father's avenging!—one day unto me shall it
come,
If God will:—the wrong sleepeth not by his side in
[the tomb.

(*Ant.* 2)

FOURTH MOTHER

Ah, to-day's disaster and sorrow suffice:
Sufficeth the grief on mine heart that lies! 1150

FIFTH CHILD

Ha, yet shall they greet me, Asopus' ripples of light,
Leading the Danaans onward in brass-mail dight!

FIFTH MOTHER

A champion thou of thy perished father's right.

SIXTH CHILD

O father mine, methinks I see thee now— (*Str.* 3)

SIXTH MOTHER

Laying the kiss of love upon thy brow.

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

ΠΑΙΣ 5'

λόγων δὲ παρακέλευσμα σῶν
ἀέρι φερόμενον οἴχεται.

ΧΟΡΟΣ 5'

δουῶν δ' ἄχη, ματέρι τ' ἔλιπε—
σέ τ' οὐποτ' ἄλγη πατρῶα λείψει.

ΠΑΙΣ 5'

ἔχω τοσόνδε βάρος ὅσον μ' ἀπώλεσεν. ἀντ. γ'

ΧΟΡΟΣ 5'

1160 φέρ', ἀμφὶ μαστὸν ὑποβάλω σποδόν.

ΠΑΙΣ 5'

ἔκλαυσα τόδε κλύων ἔπος
στυγνότατον· ἔθιγέ μου φρενῶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ 5'

ὦ τέκνον, ἔβας· οὐκέτι φίλον
φίλας ἄγαλμ' ὄψομαί σε ματρός.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

1170 Ἄδραστε καὶ γυναῖκες Ἀργεῖαι γένος,
ὀρᾶτε παῖδας τούσδ' ἔχοντας ἐν χεροῖν
πατέρων ἀρίστων σώμαθ' ὧν ἀνειλόμην·
τούτοις ἐγὼ σφε καὶ πόλις δωρούμεθα.
ὑμᾶς δὲ τῶνδε χρὴ χάριν μεμνημένους
σώζειν, ὀρῶντας ὧν ἐκύρσατ' ἐξ ἐμοῦ.
παισὶν δ' ὑπέϊπον τοῖσδε τοὺς αὐτοὺς λόγους,
τιμᾶν πόλιν τήνδ', ἐκ τέκνων αἰεὶ τέκνοισ
μνήμην παραγγέλλοντας ὧν ἐκύρσατε.
Ζεὺς δὲ ξυνίστωρ οἷ τ' ἐν οὐρανῷ θεοὶ
οἷων ὑφ' ἡμῶν στείχεται ἡξιωμένοι.

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

Θησεῦ, ξύνισμεν πάνθ' ὅσ' Ἀργεῖαν χθόνα
δέδρακας ἐσθλὰ δεομένην εὐεργετῶν,

SUPPLIANTS

SIXTH CHILD

But thy words of exhorting are come to naught ;
They are wafted afar on the wind's wing caught.

SIXTH MOTHER

Unto twain is anguish bequeathed, unto me,
And grief for thy father shall ne'er leave thee.

SEVENTH CHILD

By this my burden am I all undone ! (Ant. 3) 1160

SEVENTH MOTHER

Let me embrace the ashes of my son !

SEVENTH CHILD

I weep to hearken thy piteous word,
Most piteous—the depths of mine heart hath it
stirred.

SEVENTH MOTHER

O son, thou art gone : never more shall I gaze
On the light of thy mother, thy glorious face !

THESEUS

Adrastus, and ye dames of Argive race,
Ye see these children bearing in their hands
The dust of gallant sires whom I redeemed :
That dust do I and Athens give to these.
But ye must guard the memory of this grace,
Keeping my boon for aye before your eyes ;
And on these boys I lay the selfsame charge,
To honour Athens, and from son to son
To pass on like a watchword this our boon.
Lo, Zeus is witness, and the Gods in heaven,
How honoured and how favoured hence ye pass.

1170

ADRASTUS

Theseus, our hearts know all thy noble deeds
To Argos, and thy kindness in her need.

595

χάριν τ' ἀγήρων ἔξομεν· γενναῖα γὰρ
παθόντες ὑμᾶς ἀντιδρᾶν ὀφείλομεν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

1180

τί δῆτ' ἔθ' ὑμῖν ἄλλ' ὑπουργῆσαί με χρή;

ΑΔΡΑΣΤΟΣ

χαῖρ'· ἄξιός γὰρ καὶ σὺ καὶ πόλις σέθεν.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

ἔσται τάδ'· ἀλλὰ καὶ σὺ τῶν αὐτῶν τύχοις.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

ἄκουε, Θησεῦ, τούσδ' Ἀθηναίας λόγους,
ἃ χρή σε δρᾶσαι, δρῶντα δ' ὠφελεῖν τάδε.
μὴ δῶς τάδ' ὅστ' αὖ τοῖσδ' ἐς Ἀργεῖαν χθόνα
παισὶν κομίζεις ῥαδίως οὕτω μεθεῖς,
ἀλλ' ἀντὶ τῶν σῶν καὶ πόλεως μοχθημάτων
πρῶτον λάβ' ὄρκον. τόνδε δ' ὀμνῖναι χρεῶν
Ἄδραστον· οὗτος κύριος, τύραννος ὢν,
πάσης ὑπὲρ γῆς Δαναϊδῶν ὀρκωμοτεῖν.
ὁ δ' ὄρκος ἔσται, μή ποτ' Ἀργείους χθόνα
εἰς τήνδ' ἐποίσειν πολέμιον παντευχίαν,
ἄλλων τ' ἰόντων ἐμποδῶν θήσειν δόρυ.
ἦν δ' ὄρκον ἐκλιπόντες ἔλθωσιν πόλιν,
κακῶς ὀλέσθαι πρόστρεπ' Ἀργείων χθόνα.
ἐν ᾧ δὲ τέμνειν σφάγια χρή σ', ἄκουέ μου.
ἔστιν τρίπους σοι χαλκόπους εἴσω δόμων,
ὄν Ἰλίου ποτ' ἐξαναστήσας βάθρα
σπουδῆν ἐπ' ἄλλην Ἡρακλῆς ὀρμώμενος
στήσαί σ' ἐφέϊτο Πυθικὴν πρὸς ἐσχάραν.
ἐν τῷδε λαιμούς τρεῖς τριῶν μῆλων τεμὼν
ἐγγραψον ὄρκους τρίποδος ἐν κοίλῳ κύτει,
κάπειτα σφάζειν θεῶ δὸς ᾧ Δελφῶν μέλει,
μνημεῖά θ' ὄρκων μαρτύρημά θ' Ἑλλάδι.
ἦ δ' ἂν διοίξῃς σφάγια καὶ τρώσης φόνον,

1190

1200

SUPPLIANTS

Our love shall ne'er wax old : ye have dealt with us
Nobly : your debtors owe you like for like.

THESEUS

What service yet remains that I may render ?

1180

ADRASTUS

Fare well : for thou art worthy—thou and Athens.

THESEUS

So be it. The same fortune light on thee.

ATHENA appears in her chariot above the temple-roof.

ATHENA

Give ear, O Theseus, to Athena's hest
What thou must do—for Athens' service do :—
Yield thou not up thus lightly yonder bones
For these their sons to bear to Argive land.
Nay, first, for thine and Athens' travail's sake,
An oath take of them. Let Adrastus swear—
He answereth for them, despot of their folk,
For all troth of the land of Danaus' sons :—
Be this the oath,—that never Argive men
Shall bear against this land array of war ;
If others come, their spear shall bar the way.
If they break oath, and come against our town,
Call down on Argos miserable ruin.

1190

And where to slay the victims hear me tell :
Thou hast a brazen tripod in thine halls,
Which Hercules, from Ilium's overthrow
Hasting upon another mighty task,
Bade thee to set up at the Pythian hearth.
O'er this three throats of three sheep sever thou,
And in the tripod's hollow grave the oath.
Then give it to the Delphian God to guard,
Token of oaths and witness unto Hellas. [gashed
And that keen knife, wherewith thou shalt have

1200

ΙΚΕΤΙΔΕΣ

- 1210 ὀξύστομον μάχαιραν ἐς γαίας μυχοῦς
 κρύψον παρ' αὐτὰς ἐπτὰ πυρκαϊὰς νεκρῶν·
 φόβον γὰρ αὐτοῖς, ἦν ποτ' ἔλθωσιν πόλιν,
 δειχθεῖσα θήσει καὶ κακὸν νόστον πάλιν.
 δράσας δὲ ταῦτα πέμπε γῆς ἔξω νεκρούς.
 τεμένη δ' ἴν' αὐτῶν σώμαθ' ἠγγίσθη πυρί,
 μέθες παρ' αὐτὴν τρίοδον Ἴσθμίαν θεῶ.
 σοὶ μὲν τάδ' εἶπον· παισὶ δ' Ἀργείων λέγω·
 πορθήσεθ' ἠβήσαντες Ἴσμηνοῦ πόλιν,
 πατέρων θανόντων ἐκδικάζοντες φόνον,
 σύ τ' ἀντὶ πατρός, Αἰγιαλεῦ, στρατηλάτης
 νέος καταστάς, παῖς τ' ἀπ' Αἰτωλῶν μολῶν
 Τυδέως, ὃν ὠνόμαζε Διομήδην πατῆρ.
 1220 ἀλλ' οὐ φθάνειν χρὴ συσκιάζοντας γέννυ
 καὶ χαλκοπληθῆ Δαναϊδῶν ὄρμῶν στρατὸν
 ἐπτάστομον πύργωμα Καδμείων ἐπι.
 πικροὶ γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἦξετ', ἐκτεθραμμένοι
 σκύμνοι λεόντων, πόλεος ἐκπορθήτορες.
 κούκ ἔστιν ἄλλως· Ἐπίγονοι δ' ἀν' Ἑλλάδα
 κληθέντες ᾧδὰς ὑστέροισι θήσετε·
 τοῖον στράτευμα σὺν θεῶ πορεύσετε.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ

- 1230 δέσποιν' Ἀθάνα, πείσομαι λόγοισι σοῖς·
 σὺ γάρ μ' ἀνορθοῖς, ὥστε μὴ ἔαμαρτάνειν·
 καὶ τόνδ' ἐν ὄρκοις ζεύξομαι· μόνον σὺ με
 εἰς ὀρθὸν ἴστη· σοῦ γὰρ εὐμενοῦς πόλει
 οὕσης τὸ λοιπὸν ἀσφαλῶς οἰκήσομεν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στείχωμεν, Ἄδρασθ', ὄρκια δῶμεν
 τῷδ' ἀνδρὶ πόλει τ' ἄξια δ' ἡμῖν
 προμεμοχθήκασι σέβεσθαι.

SUPPLIANTS

The victims with the death-wound, bury thou
 In the earth's depths hard by the seven pyres.
 For, if they march on Athens ever, this, [shame.
 Shown them, shall daunt, and turn them back with
 This done, then send the dead dust forth the land. 1210

The precinct where fire purified their limbs
 Be the God's Close, by those three Isthmian ways.
 This to thee : now to the Argives' sons I speak.
 Ye shall, to man grown, waste Ismenus' town
 In vengeance for the slaughter of dead sires.
 Thou in thy sire's stead, Aegialeus,¹ shalt be
 Their young chief : from Aetolia Tydeus' son,
 Named Diomedes of his sire, shall come.
 When beards your cheeks are shadowing, tarry not
 To hurl a brazen-harnessed Danaid host 1220
 On the Cadmean seven-gated hold.

Bitter to them, the lions' whelps full-grown
 To strength, to sack their city shall ye come.
 This is sure doom. "The After-born" through
 Hellas

Named, shall ye kindle song in days to be ;
 Such war-array with God's help shall ye lead.

THESEUS

Athena, Queen, thy words will I obey :
 Thou guid'st me ever that I may not err.
 Him will I bind with oaths : only do thou
 Still lead me aright ; for, gracious while thou art 1230
 To Athens, shall we ever safely dwell.

CHORUS

On pass we, Adrastus, and take oath-pledge
 Unto Theseus and Athens. That worship requite
 Their travail for us, is meet and right.

[*Exeunt* OMNES.]

¹ Son of Adrastus.

The ground with the earth which has been
 to the same depth and by the same
 low at the mouth of the river, and
 show them both down, and not from land with
 the same that stands about the land
 the position of the land is marked by the
 in the land of the river, and the
 this is done, and to the ground, and I
 to shall be the ground, and the
 in various for the ground, and the
 from in the ground, and the
 left hand, and from the
 ground, and the ground, and the
 then being, and the ground, and the
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King
of
the
East

1877