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SENECA'S TRAGEDIES

I

SENECA'S TRAGEDIES

WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY
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IN TWO VOLUMES

I

HERCULES FURENS TROADES MEDEA
HIPPOLYTUS OEDIPUS



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INTRODUCTION

LUCIUS ANNAEUS SENECA, commonly called the Philosopher to distinguish him from his father, Marcus Annaeus Seneca, the Rhetorician, was born close to the beginning of the Christian era, whether shortly before or shortly after is not certain. He, as was his father before him, was born at Cordova in Spain, the birthplace also of his brilliant nephew, Marcus Annaeus Lucanus. Other notable Spaniards in Roman literature were Columella, born in Gades, Martial, in Bilbilis, and Quintilian, in Calagurris.

The younger Seneca was brought to Rome in early infancy and received his training there. He was a Senator under Caligula and Claudius, and in 41 A.D., through the machinations of Messalina, was ordered by the emperor into exile at Corsica. Thence he was recalled in 49 through the influence of Agrippina, now the wife of Claudius, and to him was entrusted the education of Agrippina's son, Domitius, afterwards the emperor Nero. During the early years of Nero's reign, the philosopher had a large influence over his pupil and was virtual ruler for a time. But Nero later became jealous of Seneca's wealth and influence, and, seizing upon the

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pretence of Seneca's complicity in the conspiracy of Piso, he forced his old tutor to commit suicide in the year 65.

In philosophy Seneca was a Stoic, but was influenced also by the teachings of the Pythagoreans. His literary fame rests largely upon his philosophical prose works, concerning which Teuffel remarks: "He started from the Stoic system, but in him its barren austerity was toned down, the harshness softened, its crotchets laid aside; nor did he disdain additions from other systems. His paramount purpose is the forcible and eloquent presentation and advocacy of moral principles conducive to the benefit of the individual and of society."

A group of nine tragedies has also come down to us, assigned by tradition to Senecan authorship. A tenth tragedy, the *Octavia*, has been transmitted with the other nine, but there is fairly good ground for doubting its authenticity.¹ As to the nine, there is no good reason for not considering them the work of Seneca the Philosopher. They agree in general with the philosophical principles and spirit of the prose works, exhibit the same stylistic peculiarities (allowing for the natural difference between prose essay and dramatic poetry) and by their clear stylistic agreement among themselves can readily be accepted as the work of one hand. It should in fairness be said, however, that all critics are not in agreement as to the assignment of all the nine tragedies to Seneca.

¹ See note prefixed to the *Octavia*.

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The place of the tragedies of Seneca in literature is unique. They stand, with the exception of a few fragments, as the sole surviving representatives of an extensive Roman product in the tragic drama. They therefore serve as the only connecting link between ancient and modern tragedy. They parallel more or less closely the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides; and the Greek and Roman product in literature along similar lines cannot be better studied than by a comparison of these Senecan plays with their Greek prototypes—a comparison which is not possible in comedy, since, unfortunately, the Greek originals of Plautus and Terence have not come down to us, except in comparatively scanty fragments.

And yet, while Seneca's tragedies do in most cases parallel the Greek tragedies on corresponding themes, a careful comparative analysis of the Greek and the Latin plays shows quite clearly that Seneca did not take the Greeks for his model in any slavish manner, but, on the contrary, is in many instances surprisingly independent of them both in the introduction of new material and in his use of material common to both. So far as we can judge from the extant fragments, the earlier Roman dramatists, Ennius, Pacuvius and Accius, followed their Greek models, especially Euripides, much more closely, almost to the point of sheer translation.

These plays of Seneca are of great value and interest in themselves, first, as independent dramatic

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literature of no small merit ; and second, as an illustration of the literary characteristics of the age of Nero. It has become quite the fashion among literary critics who include Seneca within their range of observation to pass very harsh judgment upon these tragedies. And they are indeed open to criticism from the standpoint of modern taste, with their florid rhetorical style, their long didactic speeches, their almost ostentatious pride of mythologic lore, their over-sensationalism, which freely admits the horrible and uncanny, their insistent employment of the epigram ; and, finally, their introduction of situations which would be impossible from the standpoint of the technique of practical drama.

But in answer to the critic of Seneca's rhetorical faults it should be said that these were the faults of his age, an age when form, when rhetorical devices, when mere locution, had come to be magnified unduly ; and as to the shortcomings, or rather the overdoings, of these tragedies from the standpoint of dramatic technique, the obvious answer is that these plays were not written for the stage and there is no evidence that they were acted. This was the age of the declaimer, and it is from the standpoint of declamation that we must both explain the composition of the tragedies and attempt an interpretation of their meaning and an appreciation of their style.

Superficially, Seneca's tragedies present no great difficulties to the translator. But a conscientious attempt to interpret them faithfully encounters the

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greatest difficulties, which are chargeable partly to confusion in the text due to imperfect transmission, but chiefly to the extreme terseness in Seneca's style, especially in his epigrams; for it is in the epigrammatic part of the plays that the difficulties in interpretation chiefly lie. Difficulties in translation arise also from Seneca's fondness for displaying his mythologic lore, frequently resulting in allusions to points so abstruse as to puzzle the reader who is not thoroughly versed in mythology.

But Seneca, for all his rhetorical liabilities, has some very considerable literary assets. The choruses are, indeed, often prosy, malapropos and disappointing; but here and there we find in these the ring of true poetry, exquisite in its descriptions of natural scenery, genuine in its human touches, and appropriate to the dramatic situation. Such is the chorus in *Hercules Furens* (lines 125 ff.), in *Troades* (1009 ff.), in *Medea* (301 ff.), *Agamemnon* (52 ff.). He has in his *recitativo* passages admirable descriptions of natural scenery and simple life, as in *Hippolytus* (482 ff.); spirited expressions of lofty sentiment, as in *Hercules Furens* (925 ff.); speeches expressing deep and real passion, as throughout the first half of the *Phoenissae*, in *Medea* (199 ff.), *Hercules Furens* (1321 ff.), *Hippolytus* (195 ff., 566 ff., 671 ff.), *Hercules Oetaeus* (1377 ff.), *Troades* (766 ff., 888 ff.); and numerous *sententiae*, terse, epigrammatic statements of general ethical truths, which are well worth remembrance and quotation.

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The reader will find many echoes of Vergil, Horace, and Ovid scattered through the plays, which serve to claim the tragedies for Latin literature notwithstanding their Greek models. Looking in the other direction, we find that the influence of Seneca's tragedies upon succeeding literature, especially upon English literature in the case of pre-Elizabethan and Elizabethan drama, is very great. A glance at the bibliography following will show something of the extent and importance of this influence.

The text on which this translation is based is that of Leo (Weidmann, Berlin, 1879) except as otherwise explained in the critical notes. Leo's (*i.e.* the German) punctuation, however, has been freely changed, especially in regard to the continual use of the colon, in order to bring the text into conformity with common English usage.

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To be classed with E, as representing the same recension, are R, T, (both fragments and extracts only), and Σ, a lost copy of E, archetype of M and N.

A An inferior and corrupt recension, to which the other minor manuscripts belong (A¹, ψ, α).

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HERCULES FURENS I

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

HERCULES, *son of Jupiter and Alcmena, but the reputed son of Amphitryon.*

JUNO, *sister and wife of Jupiter, and queen of Heaven.*

AMPHITRYON, *husband of Alcmena.*

THESEUS, *king of Athens and friend of Hercules.*

LYCUS, *the usurping king of Thebes, who has, prior to the opening of the play, slain King Creon in battle.*

MEGARA, *wife of Hercules and daughter of Creon.*

CHORUS *of Thebans.*

THE SCENE is laid before the princely palace of Hercules at Thebes, on the day of the return of the hero from the lower world.

ARGUMENT

THE *jealous wrath of Juno, working through Eurystheus, has imposed twelve mighty and destructive tasks on Hercules, her hated stepson. But these, even to the last and worst, the bringing of Cerberus to the upper world, he has triumphantly accomplished. Abandoning her plan of crushing him by toils like these, she will turn his hand against himself, and so accomplish his destruction. Upon the day of his return from hell she brings a madness on him, and so precipitates the tragedy which forms the action of the play.*

HERCVLES FVRENS

IVNO

SOROR Tonantis (hoc enim solum mihi
nomen relictum est) semper alienum Iovem
ac templa summi vidua deserui aetheris
locumque caelo pulsa paelicibus dedi ;
tellus colenda est, paelices caelum tenent.
hinc Arctos alta parte glacialis poli
sublime classes sidus Argolicas agit ;
hinc, qua tepenti¹ vere laxatur dies,
Tyriae per undas vector Europae nitet ;
illinc timendum ratibus ac ponto gregem 10
passim vagantes exerunt Atlantides.
ferro minax hinc terret Orion deos
suasque Perseus aureus stellas habet ;
hinc clara gemini signa Tyndaridae micant
quibusque natis mobilis tellus stetit.
nec ipse tantum Bacchus aut Bacchi parens
adiere superos ; ne qua pars probro vacet,
mundus puellae sarta Cnosiaca gerit.

¹ *So Richter, with AE²: Leo recenti, E¹Σ.*

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JUNO

THE sister of the Thunderer (for this name only is left to me), I have abandoned Jove, always another's lover; widowed, have left the spaces of high heaven and, banished from the sky, have given up my place to harlots; I must dwell on earth, for harlots hold the sky.¹ Yonder the Bear, high up in the icy North, a lofty constellation, guides the Argive ships; yonder, where in the warm springtime the days grow long, he² shines who bore the Tyrian Europa across the waves; there the Atlantides,³ far wandering, put forth their band dreadful to ships and sea alike. Here Orion with threatening sword terrifies the gods, and golden Perseus has his stars; the bright constellation of the twin Tyndaridae shines yonder, and they at whose birth the unsteady land stood firm.⁴ And not alone has Bacchus himself or the mother of Bacchus attained the skies; that no place might be free from outrage, the heavens wear the crown of the Cretan maid.⁵

¹ In Greek mythology the constellations which the poet names all have their place in the sky as the result of some amorous intrigue of Jupiter.

² The Bull.

³ The reference would be more naturally to the Hyades as bringers of stormy weather; but nevertheless the Pleiades are evidently meant, since three of these had been beloved of Jove. See Index *s.v.* "Pleiades."

⁴ See Index *s.v.* "Delos."

⁵ Ariadne.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

Sed vetera querimur : una me dira ac fera
 Thebana tellus sparsa nuribus impiis 20
 quotiens novercam fecit ! escendat licet
 meumque victrix teneat Alceme locum,
 pariterque natus astra promissa occupet,—
 in cuius ortus mundus impendit diem
 tardusque Eoo Phoebus effulsit mari
 retinere mersum iussus Oceano iubar,—
 non sic abibunt odia ; vivaces aget
 violentus iras animus et saevus dolor
 aeterna bella pace sublata geret.

Quae bella ? quidquid horridum tellus creat 30
 inimica, quidquid pontus aut aer tulit
 terribile dirum pestilens atrox ferum,
 fractum atque domitum est. superat et crescit malis
 iraque nostra fruitur ; in laudes suas
 mea vertit odia ; dum nimis saeva impero,
 patrem probavi, gloriae feci locum.
 qua Sol reducens quaque deponens diem
 binos propinqua tinguit Aethiopas face,
 indomita virtus colitur et toto deus
 narratur orbe. monstra iam desunt mihi 40
 minorque labor est Herculi iussa exequi,
 quam mihi iubere ; laetus imperia excipit.
 quae fera tyranni iura violento queant
 nocere iuveni ? nempe pro telis gerit
 quae timuit et quae fudit ; armatus venit
 leone et hydra. nec satis terrae patent ;
 effregit ecce limen inferni Iovis

HERCULES FURENS

¹⁹ But I lament ancient wrongs; one land, the baneful and savage land of Thebes, scattered thick with shameless mistresses, how oft has it made me stepdame! Yet, though Alcmena be exalted and in triumph hold my place; though her son, likewise, obtain his promised star (for whose begetting¹ the world lost a day, and Phoebus with tardy light shone forth from the Eastern sea, bidden to keep his bright car sunk beneath Ocean's waves), not in such fashion shall my hatred have its end; my angry soul shall keep up a long-living wrath, and my raging smart, banishing peace, shall wage unending wars.

³⁰ What wars? Whatever fearsome creature the hostile earth produces, whatever the sea or the air has borne, terrific, dreadful, noxious, savage, wild, has been broken and subdued. He overcomes and thrives on trouble; he enjoys my wrath; to his own credit he turns my hate; imposing too cruel tasks, I have but made known his sire, but given room for glory. Where the Sun, as he brings back, and where, as he dismisses day, colours both Ethiop races with neighbouring torch, his unconquered valour is adored, and in all the world he is storied as a god. Now I have no monsters left, and 'tis less labour for Hercules to fulfil my orders than for me to order; with joy he welcomes my commands. What cruel biddings of his tyrant² could harm this impetuous youth? Why, he bears as weapons what he once fought and overcame; he goes armed by lion and by hydra.³ Nor is earth vast enough for him; behold, he has broken down the doors of infernal Jove, and

¹ See Index *s.v.* "Hercules."

² See Index *s.v.* "Eurystheus."

³ *i.e.* by the lion's skin, which he used as a shield, and by the hydra's poisonous gall in which he dipped his arrow-points.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

et opima victi regis ad superos refert.	48
vidi ipsa, vidi nocte discussa inferum	50
et Dite domito spolia iactantem patri fraterna. cur non vinctum et oppressum trahit ipsum catenis paria sortitum Iovi	
Ereboque capto potitur et reteggit Styga ?	54
parum est reverti ; foedus umbrarum perit,	49
patefacta ab imis manibus retro via est	55
et sacra dirae mortis in aperto iacent. at ille, rupto carcere umbrarum ferox, de me triumphat et superbifica manu atrum per urbes ducit Argolicas canem.	
viso labantem Cerbero vidi diem	60
pavidumque Solem ; me quoque invasit tremor, et terna monstri colla devicti intuens timui imperasse.	

Levia sed nimium queror ;
caelo timendum est, regna ne summa occupet
qui vicit ima—sceptra praeripiet patri.
nec in astra lenta veniet ut Bacchus via ;
iter ruina quaeret et vacuo volet
regnare mundo. robore experto tumet,
et posse caelum viribus vinci suis
didicit ferendo ; subdidit mundo caput

70

nec flexit umeros molis immensae labor
meliusque collo sedit Herculeo polus.

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brings back to the upper world the spoils¹ of a conquered king. I myself saw, yes, saw him, the shadows of nether night dispersed and Dis overthrown, proudly displaying to his father a brother's spoils. Why does he not drag forth, bound and loaded down with fetters, Pluto himself, who drew a lot equal to Jove's? Why does he not lord it over conquered Erebus and lay bare the Styx? It is not enough merely to return; the law of the shades is annulled, a way back has been opened from the lowest ghosts, and the mysteries of dread Death lie bared. But he, exultant at having burst the prison of the shades, triumphs over me, and with arrogant hand leads through the cities of Greece that dusky hound. I saw the daylight shrink at sight of Cerberus, and the sun pale with fear; upon me, too, terror came, and as I gazed upon the three necks of the conquered monster I trembled at my own command.

⁶³ But I lament too much o'er trivial wrongs. 'Tis for heaven we must fear, lest he seize the highest realms who has overcome the lowest—he will snatch the sceptre from his father. Nor will he come to the stars by a peaceful journey as Bacchus did; he will seek a path through ruin, and will desire to rule in an empty universe. He swells with pride of tested might, and has learned by bearing them that the heavens can be conquered by his strength; he set his head beneath the sky, nor did the burden of that immeasurable mass bend his shoulders, and the firmament rested better on the neck of Hercules.²

¹ In Roman custom *spolia opima* were gained when a king met an opposing king in battle, conquered, and despoiled him. In this case the "spoil" was Cerberus; the "king," Pluto, brother of Jupiter.

² *i.e.* than it had on Atlas' shoulders.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

immota cervix sidera et caelum tulit
et me prementem. quaerit ad superos viam.

Perge, ira, perge et magna meditantem opprime,
congrederere, manibus ipsa dilacera tuis ;
quid tanta mandas odia ? discedant ferae,
ipse imperando fessus Eurystheus vacet.

Titanas ausos rumpere imperium Iovis
emitte, Siculi verticis laxa specum, 80
tellus gigante Doris excusso tremens
supposita monstri colla terrifici levet
sublimis alias Luna concipiat feras.¹
sed vicit ista. quaeris Alcidae parem ?
nemo est nisi ipse ; bella iam secum gerat.
adsint ab imo Tartari fundo excitae
Eumenides, ignem flammeae spargant comae,
viperea saevae verbera incutiant manus.

I nunc, superbe, caelitum sedes pete,
humana temne. iam Styga et manes feros 90
fugisse credis ? hic tibi ostendam inferos.
revocabo in alta conditam caligine,
ultra nocentum exilia, discordem deam,
quam munit ingens montis oppositi specus ;
educam et imo Ditis e regno extraham
quidquid relictum est ; veniet invisum Scelus
suumque lambens sanguinem Impietas ferox
Errorque et in se semper armatus Furor—
hoc hoc ministro noster utatur dolor !

¹ *Leo deletes this line.*

HERCULES FURENS

Unshaken, his back upbore the stars and the sky and me down-pressing. He seeks a way to the gods above.

⁷⁵ Then on, my wrath, on, and crush this plotter of big things; close with him, thyself rend him in pieces with thine own hands. Why to another entrust such hate? Let the wild beasts go their ways, let Eurystheus rest, himself weary with imposing tasks. Set free the Titans¹ who dared invade the majesty of Jove; unbar Sicily's mountain cave, and let the Dorian land,² which trembles whenever the giant struggles, set free the buried frame of that dread monster; let Luna³ in the sky produce still other monstrous creatures. But he has conquered such as these. Dost then seek Alcides' match? None is there save himself; now with himself let him war. Rouse the Eumenides from the lowest abyss of Tartarus; let them be here, let their flaming locks drop fire, and let their savage hands brandish snaky whips.

⁸⁹ Go now, proud one, seek the abodes of the immortals and despise man's estate. Dost think that now thou hast escaped the Styx and the cruel ghosts? Here will I show thee infernal shapes. One in deep darkness buried, far down below the place of banishment of guilty souls, will I call up—the goddess Discord, whom a huge cavern, barred by a mountain, guards; I will bring her forth, and drag out from the deepest realm of Dis whatever thou hast left; hateful Crime shall come and reckless Impiety, stained with kindred blood, Error, and Rage, armed ever against itself—these, these be the ministers of my smarting wrath!

¹ For this whole passage see Index *s.v.* "Titans" and "Giants."

² Sicily.

³ The Nemean lion and other monsters were supposed to have fallen from the moon.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

Incipite, famulae Ditis, ardentem citae 100
 concutite pinum et agmen horrendum anguibus
 Megaera ducat atque luctifica manu
 vastam rogo flagrante corripiat trabem.
 hoc agite, poenas petite vitiatæ Stygis
 concutite pectus, acrior mentem excoquat
 quam qui caminis ignis Aetnaeis furit.
 ut possit animo captus Alcides agi,
 magno furore percitus, nobis ¹ prius
 insaniendum est—Iuno, cur nondum furis?
 me me, sorores, mente deiectam mea 110
 versate primam, facere si quicquam apparo
 dignum noverca. vota mutantur mea;
 natos reversus videat incolumes precor
 manuque fortis redeat. inveni diem,
 invisâ quo nos Herculis virtus iuvet.
 me vicit et se vincat et cupiat mori
 ab inferis reversus. hic prosit mihi
 Iove esse genitum. stabo et, ut certo exeant
 emissa nervo tela, librabo manu,
 regam furentis arma, pugnanti Herculi 120
 tandem favebo. scelere perfecto licet
 admittat illas genitor in caelum manus!

Movenda iam sunt bella; clarescit dies
 ortuque Titan lucidus croceo subit.

CHORVS

Iam rara micant sidera pronò
 languida mundo; nox victa vagos
 contrahit ignes luce renata,

¹ *So A: Leo vobis.*

HERCULES FURENS

¹⁰⁰ Begin, handmaids of Dis, make haste to brandish the burning pine ; let Megaera lead on her band bristling with serpents and with baleful hand snatch a huge faggot from the blazing pyre. To work ! claim vengeance for outraged Styx. Shatter his heart ; let a fiercer flame scorch his spirit than rages in Aetna's furnaces. That Alcides may be driven on, robbed of all sense, by mighty fury smitten, mine must be the frenzy first—Juno, why rav'st thou not ? Me, ye sisters, me first, bereft of reason, drive to madness, if I am to plan some deed worthy a stepdame's doing. Let my request be changed ; may he come back and find his sons unharmed, that is my prayer, and strong of hand may he return. I have found the day when Hercules' hated valour is to be my joy. Me has he overcome ; now may he overcome himself and long to die, though late returned from the world of death. Herein may it profit me that he is the son of Jove. I will stand by him and, that his shafts may fly from string unerring, I'll poise them with my hand, guide the madman's weapons, and so at last be on the side of Hercules in the fray. When he has done this crime, then let his father admit those hands to heaven !

¹²³ Now must my war be set in motion ; the sky is brightening and the shining sun steals up in saffron dawn.

CHORUS

Now stars shine few and faint in the sinking sky ;
vanquished night draws in her wandering fires as the

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

cogit nitidum Phosphoros agmen ;
 signum celsi glaciale poli
 septem stellis Arcados ursae¹ 130

lucem verso temone vocat.
 iam caeruleis evectus equis
 Titan summa prospicit Oeta ;
 iam Cadmeis incluta Bacchis
 aspersa die dumeta rubent
 Phoebique fugit reditura soror.
 labor exoritur durus et omnes
 agitat curas aperitque domos.

Pastor gelida cana pruina
 grege dimisso pabula carpit ; 140

ludit prato liber aperto
 nondum rupta fronte iuventus,
 vacuae reparant ubera matres ;
 errat cursu levis incerto
 molli petulans haedus in herba ;
 pendet summo stridula ramo
 pennasque novo tradere soli
 gestit querulos inter nidos
 Thracia paelex, turbaque circa
 confusa sonat murmure mixto 150

testata diem.
 carbasa ventis credit dubius
 navita vitae, laxos aura
 complente sinus. hic exesis
 pendens scopulis aut deceptos

¹ *Leo deletes this line.*

HERCULES FURENS

new day is born, and Phosphor brings up the rear of the shining host; the icy sign high in the north, the Bears of Arcas, with their seven stars, with wheeling pole¹ summons the dawn. Now, upborne by his azure steeds, Titan peeps forth from Oeta's crest; now the rough brakes, made famous by Theban Bacchants, touched by the dawn, flush red, and Phoebus' sister² flees away, to return again. Hard toil arises, sets all cares astir, opens all doors.

¹³⁹ The shepherd, turning out his flock, plucks pasturage still white with frosty rime. In the open mead the young bullock sports at will, his forehead not yet broken with young horns; the kine at leisure fill again their udders; the sportive kid with unsteady, aimless course wanders on the soft turf; perched on the topmost bough, shrill-voiced, amid her complaining young, the Thracian paramour³ is eager to spread her wings to the morning sun; and all around a mingled throng sounds forth, proclaiming the dawn of day with varied notes. The sailor, life ever at risk, commits his canvas to the winds, while the breeze fills its flapping folds. Here the fisher, perched on the wave-worn rocks, either rebaits his

¹ The poet has mixed two conceptions of these constellations: (1) the Great Bear and Arctophylax, the "bear-keeper"; (2) the "Wain" and the "Ox-driver" (Boötes).

² Phoebe, the moon-goddess.

³ Philomela, the nightingale, forced to be the mistress of the Thracian Tereus.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

instruit hamos aut suspensus
spectat pressa praemia dextra;
sentit tremulum linea piscem.

Haec, innocuae quibus est vitae
tranquilla quies et laeta suo 160
parvoque domus; spes immanes 161
urbibus errant trepidique metus. 163
ille superbos aditus regum
durasque fores expers somni
colit, hic nullo fine beatas
componit opes gazis inhians
et congesto pauper in auro;
illum populi favor attonitum
fluctuque magis mobile vulgus 170
aura tumidum tollit inani;
hic clamosi rabiosa fori
iurgia vendens improbus iras
et verba locat. novit paucos
secura quies, qui velocis
memores aevi tempora numquam
reditura tenent. Dum fata sinunt
vivite laeti; properat cursu
vita citato volucrique die
rota praecipitis vertitur anni; 180
durae peragunt pensa sorores
nec sua retro fila revolvunt.
at gens hominum flatur rapidis
obvia fati incerta sui;
Stygias ultro quaerimus undas.

HERCULES FURENS

cheated hooks or, with firm grip, watches anxiously for his prize; meantime, his line feels the quivering fish.

¹⁵⁹ Such are the tasks of those whose is the peaceful calm of harmless lives, whose home rejoices in the tiny store that is its own; overweening hopes stalk abroad in cities, and trembling fears. One, sleepless, haunts the haughty vestibules and unfeeling doors of his rich patrons; another endlessly heaps up blessed wealth, gloats over his treasures, and is still poor amid piled-up gold. Yonder dazed wretch, with empty wind puffed up, popular applause and the mob more shifting than the sea uplift; this, trafficking in the mad wrangles of the noisy court, shamelessly lets out for hire his passions and his speech. Known to but few is untroubled calm, and they, mindful of time's swift flight, hold fast the days that never will return. While the fates permit, live happily; life speeds on with hurried step, and with winged days the wheel of the headlong year is turned. The harsh sisters ¹ ply their tasks, yet do they not spin backward the threads of life. But men are driven, each one uncertain of his own, to meet the speeding fates; we seek the Stygian waves of our own accord. With heart too

¹ The Parcae.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

nimum, Alcide, pectore forti
 properas maestos visere manes ;
 certo veniunt tempore Parcae.
 nulli iusso cessare licet,
 nulli scriptum proferre diem ; 190
 recipit populos urna citatos.

Alium multis gloria terris
 tradat et omnes fama per urbes
 garrula laudet caeloque parem
 tollat et astris ; alius curru
 sublimis eat ; me mea tellus
 lare secreto tutoque tegat.
 venit ad pigros cana senectus
 humilique loco, sed certa sedet
 sordida parvae fortuna domus ; 200
 alte virtus animosa cadit.

Sed maesta venit crine soluto
 Megara parvum comitata gregem,
 tardusque senio graditur Alcidae parens.

AMPHITRYON

O magne Olympi rector et mundi arbiter,
 iam statue tandem gravibus aerumnis modum
 finemque cladi. nulla lux unquam mihi
 secura fulsit ; nullus e nati datur
 labore fructus ;¹ finis alterius mali
 gradus est futuri. protinus reduci novus

¹ *Leo supplies* nullus . . . fructus *as necessary to the sense.*

HERCULES FURENS

brave, Alcides, thou dost haste to visit the grieving ghosts; at the appointed time the Parcae come. No one may linger when they command, no one may postpone the allotted day; the urn receives the nations hurried to their doom.

¹⁹² Let glory laud another to many lands, and let babbling fame sing his praise through every city and lift him to a level with the stars of heaven; let another fare towering in his car; but me let my own land, beside my lonely, sheltered hearth, protect. To men inactive and in lowly state comes hoary age, but secure stands the mean lot of a humble home; from a lofty height ambitious courage falls.

²⁰² But sad Megara comes hither with streaming hair, her flock of children round her, and, slow with age, the father of Alcides moves.

[*Enter from the palace MEGARA with her children, and AMPHITRYON. They take their stand at the altar.*]

AMPHITRYON

O mighty ruler of Olympus, judge of all the world, set now at length a limit to our crushing cares, an end to our disasters. No day has ever dawned for me untroubled; no reward from my son's toil is ever given; the end of one ill is but the step to one beyond. Straightway on his return a new foe is

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

paratur hostis ; antequam laetam domum 210
 contingat, aliud iussus ad bellum meat ;
 nec ulla requies tempus aut ullum vacat,
 nisi dum iubetur. sequitur a primo statim
 infesta Iuno ; numquid immunis fuit
 infantis aetas ? monstra superavit prius
 quam nosse posset. gemina cristati caput
 angues ferebant ora, quos contra obvius
 reptabat infans igneos serpentium
 oculos remisso lumine ac placido intuens ;
 artos serenis vultibus nodos tulit, 220
 et tumida tenera guttura elidens manu
 prolusit hydrae. Maenali pernix fera,
 multo decorum praeferens auro caput,
 deprensa cursu est ; maximus Nemeae timor
 pressus lacertis gemuit Herculeis leo.
 quid stabula memorem dira Bistonii gregis
 suisque regem pabulum armentis datum,
 solitumque densis hispidum Erymanthi iugis
 Arcadia quatere nemora Maenaliū suem,
 taurumque centum non levem populis metum ? 230
 inter remotos gentis Hesperiae greges
 pastor triformis litoris Tartesii
 peremptus, acta est praeda ab occasu ultimo ;
 notum Cithaeron pavit Oceano pecus.
 penetrare iussus solis aestivi plagas
 et adusta medius regna quae torret dies
 utrimque montes solvit ac rupto obice
 latam ruenti fecit Oceano viam.

HERCULES FURENS

ready for him; before he can reach his happy home, bidden to another struggle he sets forth; there is no chance to rest, no time left free, save while fresh commands are being given. From his very birth relentless Juno has pursued him; was even his infancy exempt? He conquered monsters before he could know that they were monsters. Serpents twain with crested heads advanced their fangs against him; the infant crawled to meet them, gazing at the snakes' fiery eyes with mild and gentle look; with serene face he raised their close-coiled folds and, crushing their swollen throats with his baby hands, he practised for the hydra. The nimble hind of Maenalus, raising her head bounteously adorned with gold, was caught by his long pursuit;¹ the lion, mightiest dread of Nemea, crushed by the arms of Hercules roared his last. Why should I tell of the horrid stalls of the Bistonian herd and the king² given as food to his own cattle? of the shaggy boar of Maenalus, whose wont it was on the thick-wooded heights of Erymanthus to harry the groves of Arcady? or of the bull, the crushing terror of a hundred towns?³ Among his herds in the distant land of Spain the three-shaped shepherd⁴ of the Tartesian shore was killed and his cattle driven as spoil from the farthest west; Cithaeron has fed the herd once to Ocean known. When bidden⁵ to enter the regions of the summer sun, those scorched realms which midday burns, he clove the mountains on either hand and, rending the barrier, made a wide path⁶ for Ocean's rushing stream.

¹ Hercules chased the hind a year before he caught her.

² See Index *s.v.* "Diomedes."

³ The hundred towns of Crete.

⁴ Geryon.

⁵ This was not one of the twelve labours ordered by Eurystheus. See Index *s.v.* "Hercules."

⁶ The Straits of Gibraltar.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

post haec adortus nemoris opulenti domos
 aurifera vigilis spolia serpentis tulit; 240
 quid? saeva Lernae monstra, numerosum malum,
 non igne demum vicit et docuit mori,
 solitasque pennis condere obductis diem
 petit ab ipsis nubibus Stymphalidas?
 non vicit illum caelibis semper tori
 regina gentis vidua Thermodontiae;
 nec ad omne clarum facinus audaces manus
 stabuli fugavit turpis Augei labor.

Quid ista prosunt? orbe defenso caret.
 250
 sensere terrae pacis auctorem suae
 abesse. rursus prosperum ac felix scelus
 virtus vocatur; sontibus parent boni,
 ius est in armis, opprimit leges timor.
 ante ora vidi nostra truculenta manu
 natos paterni cadere regni vindices
 ipsumque, Cadmi nobilis stirpem ultimam,
 occidere, vidi regium capiti decus
 cum capite raptum. quis satis Thebas fleat?
 ferax deorum terra, quem dominum tremis?
 e cuius arvis eque fecundo sinu 260
 stricto iuventus orta cum ferro stetit
 cuiusque muros natus Amphion Iove
 struxit canoro saxa modulatu trahens,
 in cuius urbem non semel divum parens
 caelo relicto venit, haec quae caelites
 recepit et quae fecit et (fas sit loqui)
 fortasse faciet, sordido premitur iugo.

HERCULES FURENS

Next he essayed the rich grove's dwellings and bore off the watchful dragon's golden spoil.¹ Lerna's fell monster, pest manifold, did he not quell at last by fire and teach to die? And the Stymphalian birds, wont to hide the day with veiling wings, did he not bring down from the very clouds? Thermodon's unwed queen² of ever virgin couch could not prevail against him, nor did his hands, bold to attempt all glorious deeds, shirk the foul labour of the Augean stalls.

²⁴⁹ But what avails all this? He is banished from the world which he defended. All the earth has felt that the giver of its peace is lost to it. Once again prosperous and successful crime goes by the name of virtue; good men obey the bad, might is right and fear oppresses law. Before my eyes I saw the sons, defenders of their father's³ kingdom, fall dead by the murderer's⁴ hand, and the king himself fall, last scion of Cadmus' famous line; I saw the royal crown that decked his head torn from him, head and all. Who could lament Thebes enough? O land, fertile in gods, before what lord dost thou tremble now? The city from whose fields and fecund bosom a band of youth⁵ stood forth with swords ready drawn, whose walls Jove's son, Amphion, built, drawing its stones by his tuneful melodies—to which not once alone came the father of the gods, quitting the sky—this city, which has welcomed gods and has created gods and (may the word be lawful) perchance will yet create them, is oppressed by the

¹ The golden apples of the Hesperides.

² Hippolyte, queen of the Amazons.

³ Creon.

⁴ Lycus.

⁵ *i.e.* they who sprang from Cadmus' sowing of the dragon's teeth.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

Cadmea proles atque Ophionium genus,
 quo reccidistis? tremitis ignavum exulem,
 suis carentem finibus, nostris gravem. 270
 qui scelera terra quique persequitur mari
 ac saeva iusta scepra confringit manu
 nunc servit absens fertque quae fieri vetat,
 tenetque Thebas exul Herculeas Lycus!
 sed non tenebit; aderit et poenas petet
 subitusque ad astra emerget; inveniet viam
 aut faciet. adsis sospes et remees precor
 tandemque venias victor ad victam domum!

MEGARA

Emerge, coniunx, atque dispulas manu
 abrumpe tenebras; nulla si retro via 280
 iterque clusum est, orbe diducto redi
 et quidquid atra nocte possessum latet
 emitte tecum. dirutis qualis iugis
 praeceps citato flumini quaerens iter
 quondam stetisti, scissa cum vasto impetu
 patuere Tempe—pectore impulsus tuo
 huc mons et illuc cessit et rupto aggere
 nova cucurrit Thessalus torrens via—
 talis, parentes liberos patriam petens,
 erumpe rerum terminos tecum efferens, 290
 et quidquid avida tot per annorum gradus
 abscondit aetas redde et oblitos sui
 lucisque pavidos ante te populos age.
 indigna te sunt spolia, si tantum refers

HERCULES FURENS

shameful yoke. O seed of Cadmus and Ophion's race, to what depths have you fallen! You tremble before a dastard exile, of his own land deprived, to ours a burden. But he who avenges crime on land and sea, who with righteous hand breaks cruel sceptres, now far away endures a master¹ and brooks what he elsewhere forbids—and Lycus, the exile, rules the Thebes of Hercules! But not for long; he will be present with us and exact punishment, and suddenly to the sight of the stars will he come forth. He will find a way or make one. Oh, be present and return in safety, I pray, and come at last victorious to thy vanquished home!

MEGARA

Come forth, my husband, burst through the darkness shivered by thy hand; if there is no backward way, and the road is closed, rend earth asunder and return; and whatever lies hid in the hold of murky night, let forth with thee. Even as once, rending the hills asunder, seeking for the rushing stream² a headlong path, thou stoodst, what time Tempe, cleft by that mighty shock, opened wide—before the thrust of thy breast, this way and that the mountain yielded and through the broken mass the Thessalian torrent raced in its new bed—even so, seeking thy parents, children, fatherland, burst through, bearing away with thee the bounds of things; and all that greedy time through all the march of years has hidden away, restore; and drive out before thee the self-forgetting dead, peoples that fear the light. Unworthy of thee is the spoil, if thou

¹ Eurystheus.

² The Peneus river, a passage for which Hercules is said to have forced between Olympus and Ossa.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

quantum imperatum est. magna sed nimium loquor
 ignara nostrae sortis. unde illum mihi
 quo te tuamque dexteram amplectar diem
 reditusque lentos nec mei memores querar?
 tibi, o deorum ductor, indomiti ferent
 centena tauri colla; tibi, frugum potens, 300
 secreta reddam sacra; tibi muta fide
 longas Eleusin tacita iactabit faces.
 tum restitutas fratribus rebor meis
 animas et ipsum regna moderantem sua
 florere patrem. si qua te maior tenet
 clausum potestas, sequimur. aut omnes tuo
 defende reditu sospes aut omnes trahe—
 trahes nec ullus eriget fractos deus.

AMPHITRYON

O socia nostri sanguinis, casta fide
 servans torum natosque magnanimi Herculis, 310
 meliora mente concipe atque animum excita.
 aderit profecto, qualis ex omni solet
 labore, maior.

MEGARA

Quod nimis miseri volunt
 hoc facile credunt.

AMPHITRYON

Immo quod metuunt nimis
 numquam moveri posse nec tolli putant.
 prona est timoris semper in peius fides.

HERCULES FURENS

bringst back only what was commanded. But I speak too frowardly, all ignorant of the fate in store for us. Oh, whence shall come that day for me when I shall clasp thee and thy right hand and lament thy long-delayed returns that have no thought of me? To thee, O leader of the gods, a hundred bulls never broken to the yoke shall yield their necks; to thee, goddess of fruits,¹ will I perform thy secret rites; to thee in speechless faith silent Eleusis shall toss long trains of torches. Then shall I deem their lives restored unto my brothers, my father himself governing his own realm and flourishing. But if some greater power is holding thee in durance, we follow thee. Either defend us all by thy safe return, or drag us all with thee—thou wilt drag us down, nor will any god lift up our broken house.

AMPHITRYON

O ally of my blood, preserving with chaste faith the couch and children of the great-souled Hercules, have better thought and rouse thy courage. Surely he will come home, as is his wont from every task, the greater.

MEGARA

What the wretched overmuch desire, they easily believe.

AMPHITRYON

Nay, what they fear overmuch they think can never be set aside or done away. Fear's trust inclineth ever to the worse.

¹ Ceres.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

MEGARA

Demersus ac defossus et toto insuper
oppressus orbe quam viam ad superos habet ?

AMPHITRYON

Quam tunc habebat cum per arentem plagam
et fluctuantes more turbati maris 320
adit harenas bisque discedens fretum
et bis recurrens, cumque deserta rate
deprensus haesit Syrtium brevibus vadis
et puppe fixa maria superavit pedes.

MEGARA

Iniqua raro maximis virtutibus
fortuna parcit ; nemo se tuto diu
periculis offerre tam crebris potest.
quem saepe transit casus, aliquando invenit.

Sed ecce saevus ac minas vultu gerens
et qualis animo est talis incessu venit. 330
aliena dextra sceptrā concutiens Lycus.

LYCVS

Vrbis regens opulenta Thebanæ loca
et omne quidquid uberi cingit solo
obliqua Phocis, quidquid Ismenos rigat,
quidquid Cithaeron vertice excelso videt,
et bina findens Isthmos exilis freta,¹
non vetera patriæ iura possideo domus

¹ *Leo deletes this line.*

HERCULES FURENS

MEGARA

Submerged, deep-buried, crushed beneath all the world, what way has he to upper air?

AMPHITRYON

The same he had when across the parched desert and the sands, billowing like the stormy sea, he made his way, and across the strait with twice-receding, twice-returning waves; and when, his barque abandoned, he was stranded, a prisoner on Syrtes' shoals, and, though his vessel was held fast, he crossed o'er seas on foot.¹

MEGARA

Unrighteous fortune seldom spares the highest worth; no one with safety can long front so frequent perils. Whom calamity oft passes by she finds at last.

[*Enter LYCUS.*]

³²⁹ But see, ferocious and with threats upon his brow, the same in gait and spirit, Lycus comes, brandishing another's sceptre in his hand.

LYCUS

Ruling the rich domains of Thebes and all that sloping Phocis encompasses with its rich soil, whatever Ismenus waters, whatever Cithaeron views from his high peak, and slender Isthmus, keeping asunder its twin straits, no ancient rights of an ancestral home

¹ Hercules was once wrecked off the African coast and made his way on foot to the shore.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

ignavus heres ; nobiles non sunt mihi
 avi nec altis inclitum titulis genus,
 sed clara virtus. qui genus iactat suum, 340
 aliena laudat. rapta sed trepida manu
 sceptrata obtinentur ; omnis in ferro est salus ;
 quod civibus tenere te invitis scias
 strictus tuetur ensis. alieno in loco
 haut stabile regnum est ; una sed nostras potest
 fundare vires iuncta regali face
 thalamisque Megara. ducet e genere inclito
 novitas colorem nostra. non equidem reor
 fore ut recuset ac meos spernat toros ;
 quod si impotenti pertinax animo abnuet, 350
 stat tollere omnem penitus Herculeam domum.
 invidia factum ac sermo popularis premet ?
 ars prima regni est posse invidiam pati.¹
 temptemus igitur, fors dedit nobis locum ;
 namque ipsa, tristi vestis obtentu caput
 velata, iuxta praesides astat deos
 laterique adhaeret verus Alcidae sator.

MEGARA

Quidnam iste, nostri generis exitium ac lues,
 novi parat ? quid temptat ?

LYCVS

O clarum trahens
 a stirpe nomen regia, facilis mea 360

¹ So *E*: ad invidiam *A*: te invidiam ψ : to avoid the hiatus,
Leo suggests posse rumores pati or plebis invidiam pati.

HERCULES FURENS

do I possess, a slothful heir ; not mine are noble ancestors, nor a race illustrious with lofty titles, but valour glorious. Who vaunts his race, lauds what belongs to others. But usurped sceptres are held in fearful hand ; all safety is in arms ; what thou knowest thou holdest against the will of citizens, the drawn sword must guard. On alien soil kingship stands not sure ; but one there is who can set my power on firm foundations—Megara, if joined to me in royal wedlock by torch and couch. From her noble line my newness shall gain richer hue. Nor do I think she will refuse and scorn my bed ; but if stubbornly and with headstrong will she should decline, it is my resolve to give to utter ruin the whole house of Hercules. Shall envy and the common people's talk restrain my hand ? 'Tis the first art of kings, the power to suffer envy. Let us make trial, therefore ; chance has given us occasion ; for Megara herself, her head close-veiled in mourning vestments, stands by the altar of her protecting gods, and close by her side keeps the true sire of Hercules.

MEGARA

What new thing plans that fellow, that destruction and pestilence of our race ? What new thing does he attempt ?

LYCUS

O thou whose illustrious name is drawn from royal stock, graciously listen to my words a little

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

parumper aure verba patienti excipe.
 si aeterna semper odia mortales gerant
 nec coeptus umquam cedat ex animis furor,
 sed arma felix teneat infelix pariet,
 nihil relinquent bella; tum vastis ager
 squalebit arvis, subdita tectis face
 altus sepultas obruet gentes cinis.
 pacem reduci velle victori expedit,
 victo necesse est—particeps regno veni;
 sociemur animis, pignus hoc fidei cape— 370
 continge dextram. quid truci vultu siles?

MEGARA

Egone ut parentis sanguine aspersam manum
 fratrumque gemina caede contingam? prius
 extinguet ortus, referet occasus diem,
 pax ante fida nivibus et flammis erit
 et Scylla Siculum iunget Ausonio latus,
 priusque multo vicibus alternis fugax
 Euripus unda stabit Euboica piger.
 patrem abstulisti, regna, germanos, larem
 patrium—quid ultra est? una res superest mihi 380
 fratre ac parente carior, regno ac lare—
 odium tui, quod esse cum populo mihi
 commune doleo. pars quota ex illo mea est?
 dominare tumidus, spiritus altos gere;
 sequitur superbos ultor a tergo deus.
 Thebana novi regna; quid matres loquar
 passas et ausas scelera? quid geminum nefas
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HERCULES FURENS

while with patient ear. If mortals should cherish everlasting hate and if mad rage, once felt, should never drop from our hearts, but if the victor should keep and the vanquished prepare arms, nothing will wars leave us; then on the wasted farms the fields will lie untilled, the torch will be set to homes, and deep ashes will overwhelm the buried nations. 'Tis expedient for the victor to wish for peace restored; for the vanquished 'tis necessity.—Come, share my throne; let us be joined in purpose; accept this pledge of faith—touch hands with me. Why in grim-faced silence dost thou stand?

MEGARA

What! I touch a hand stained with my father's blood and with my brothers' double murder? Sooner shall the East extinguish, the West bring back, the day; sooner shall snow and flame be in lasting harmony and Scylla join the Sicilian and Ausonian shores; and sooner far shall swift Euripus with his alternating tides rest sluggish upon Euboea's strand! My father hast thou taken from me, my kingdom, brothers, my ancestral home—what is there else? There is one thing left to me, dearer than brother and father, kingdom and home—my hate of thee, which it is my grief that I must share with all the populace. How small a part of it is mine! Rule on, swollen with pride, lift thy spirits high; an avenging god pursues the proud. I know the Theban realm; why mention the crimes which mothers have endured and dared? Why speak of the

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

mixtumque nomen coniugis nati patris?
 quid bina fratrum castra? quid totidem rogos?
 rigit superba Tantalus luctu parens 390
 maestusque Phrygio manat in Sipylo lapis.
 quin ipse torvum subrigens crista caput
 Illyrica Cadmus regna permensus fuga
 longas reliquit corporis tracti notas.
 haec te manent exempla. dominare ut libet,
 dum solita regni fata te nostri vocent.

LYCVS

Agedum efferatas rabida voces amove
 et disce regum imperia ab Alcide pati.
 ego rapta quamvis sceptris victricis geram
 dextra regamque cuncta sine legum metu 400
 quas arma vincunt, pauca pro causa loquar
 nostra. cruento cecidit in bello pater?
 cecidere fratres? arma non servant modum;
 nec temperari facile nec reprimi potest
 stricti ensis ira; bella delectat cruor.
 sed ille regno pro suo, nos improba
 cupidine acti? quaeritur belli exitus,
 non causa. sed nunc pereat omnis memoria;
 cum victor arma posuit, et victum decet
 deponere odia. non ut inflexo genu 410
 regnantem adores petimus; hoc ipsum placet
 animo ruinas quod capis magno tuas;
 es rege coniunx digna; sociemus toros.

HERCULES FURENS

double infamy and the confused names of husband, son and sire? ¹ Why speak of the brothers' ² two-fold camps? the two funeral-pyres? The daughter of Tantalus, presumptuous mother, ³ stiffens with grief and, mournful on Phrygian Sipylus, drips tears—a stone. Nay, Cadmus himself reared a head fierce with its crest and, traversing Illyria's realm in flight, left the long trail of his dragging body. ⁴ Thee do such precedents of doom await. Lord it as thou wilt, if only the accustomed destinies of our realm summon thee.

LYCUS

Come, mad woman, have done with this wild talk, and learn from Alcides to endure the commands of kings. Although I wield a sceptre seized by my victorious hand, though I rule all things without fear of laws which arms o'ermaster, still will I say a few words in mine own cause. 'Twas in a cruel war thy father fell, sayest thou? thy brothers, too? Arms observe no bounds; nor can the wrath of the sword, once drawn, be easily checked or stayed; war delights in blood. But he fought for his realm, sayest thou; we, impelled by insatiable ambition? Of war men ask the outcome, not the cause. But now let all the past be forgotten; when the victor has laid down his arms, it is meet that the vanquished, too, lay down his hate. That thou on bended knee shouldst pray to me as thy sovereign I do not ask; this of itself is pleasing to me, that thou dost take thy overthrow with a high spirit. Worthy art thou to be a king's mate; then let us wed.

¹ The reference is to Oedipus. ² Eteocles and Polynices.

³ Niobe.

⁴ Cadmus was changed into a serpent.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

MEGARA

Gelidus per artus vadit exangues tremor.
quod facinus aures pepulit? haut equidem horruī,
cum pace rupta bellicus muros fragor
circumsonaret, pertuli intrepide omnia ;
thalamos tremesco ; capta nunc videor mihi.
gravent catenae corpus et longa fame
mors protrahatur lenta ; non vincet fidem 420
vis ulla nostram. moriar, Alcide, tua.

LYCVS

Animosne mersus inferis coniunx facit?

MEGARA

Inferna tetigit, posset ut supera assequi.

LYCVS

Telluris illum pondus immensae premit.

MEGARA

Nulla premetur onere, qui caelum tulit.

LYCVS

Cogere.

MEGARA

Cogi qui potest nescit mori.

HERCULES FURENS

MEGARA

Cold horror creeps through my bloodless limbs. What outrage has struck my ears? No terror felt I when peace was broken and war's loud crash rang around our walls; dauntlessly I bore it all; but marriage—I shudder at it; now do I indeed seem captive. Let chains load down my body, and let me die a lingering death by slow starvation; still shall no power o'ercome my loyalty. Alcides, I shall die thine own.

LYCUS

Does a husband buried in the depths produce such spirit?

MEGARA

He reached the depths that he might gain the heights.

LYCUS

The weight of the boundless earth crushes him.

MEGARA

By no weight will he be crushed who upbore the heavens.

LYCUS

Thou shalt be forced.

MEGARA

Who can be forced has not learned how to die.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

LYCVS

Effare potius, quod novis thalamis parem
Regale munus.

MEGARA

Aut tuam mortem aut meam.

LYCVS

Moriere demens.

MEGARA

Coniugi occurram meo.

LYCVS

Sceptrone nostro famulus est potior tibi? 430

MEGARA

Quot iste famulus tradidit reges neci.

LYCVS

Cur ergo regi servit et patitur iugum?

MEGARA

Imperia dura tolle—quid virtus erit?

LYCVS

Obici feris monstrisque virtutem putas?

HERCULES FURENS

LYCUS

Say rather, what royal gift I shall prepare for my new bride.

MEGARA

Thy death or mine.

LYCUS

Fool, thou shalt die.

MEGARA

So shall I meet my husband.

LYCUS

Is a slave more to thee than I, a king?

MEGARA

How many kings has that slave given unto death!

LYCUS

Why, then, does he serve a king and endure the yoke?

MEGARA

Do away with harsh commands—what then will valour be?

LYCUS

To oppose oneself to beasts and monsters think'st thou valour?

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

MEGARA

Virtutis est domare quae cuncti pavent.

LYCVS

Tenebrae loquentem magna Tartarae premunt.

MEGARA

Non est ad astra mollis e terris via.

LYCVS

Quo patre genitus caelitem sperat domos?

AMPHITRYON

Miseranda coniunx Herculis magni, sile ;
partes meae sunt reddere Alcidae patrem 440
genusque verum. post tot ingentis viri
memoranda facta postque pacatum manu
quodcumque Titan ortus et labens videt,
post monstra tot perdomita, post Phlegram impio
sparsam cruore postque defensos deos
nondum liquet de patre? mentimur Iovem?
Iunonis odio crede.

LYCVS

Quid violas Iovem?
mortale caelo non potest iungi genus.

HERCULES FURENS

MEGARA

'Tis valour's part to subdue what all men fear.

LYCUS

The shades of Tartarus bury the braggart deep.

MEGARA

There is no easy way to the stars from earth.

LYCUS

Who is his father that he hopes for a home in heaven?

AMPHITRYON

Unhappy wife of great Hercules, be still; 'tis my place to restore to Alcides his father and true lineage. [*To LYCUS.*] After all the great hero's memorable deeds, after peace has been gained by his hand for all that the sun, rising and setting, sees, after so many monsters tamed, after Phlegra¹ stained with impious blood, after his protection of the gods, is not his fathering yet clear? Claim we Jove falsely? Then believe Juno's hate.

LYCUS

Why blaspheme Jove? The race of mortals cannot mate with heaven.

¹ The scene of the battle between the giants and the gods. Hercules fought on the side of the gods.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

AMPHITRYON

Communis ista pluribus causa est deis.

LYCVS

Famuline fuerant ante quam fierent dei? 450

AMPHITRYON

Pastor Pheraeos Delius pavit greges—

LYCVS

Sed non per omnes exul erravit plagas.

AMPHITRYON

Quem profuga terra mater errante edidit?

LYCVS

Num monstra saeva Phoebus aut timuit feras?

AMPHITRYON

Primus sagittas imbuit Phoebi draco.

LYCVS

Quam gravia parvus tulerit ignoras mala?

AMPHITRYON

E matris utero fulmine eiectus puer
mox fulminanti proximus patri stetit.

HERCULES FURENS

AMPHITRYON

That is the common origin of many gods.

LYCUS

But were they slaves¹ ere they became divine?

AMPHITRYON

The Delian as a shepherd tended flocks at
Pherae—²

LYCUS

But he did not in exile roam o'er all the world.

AMPHITRYON

What? He whom an exiled mother brought
forth on a roaming isle?

LYCUS

Did Phoebus fear savage monsters or wild beasts?

AMPHITRYON

A dragon was the first to stain Phoebus' shafts.

LYCUS

Knowest thou not what heavy ills he bore in
infancy?

AMPHITRYON

Ripped by a thunderbolt from his mother's
womb, a boy³ in after-time stood next his sire, the

¹ As was Hercules to Eurystheus.

² The reference is to Apollo's year of servitude to Admetus.

³ Bacchus.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

quid? qui gubernat astra, qui nubes quatit,
non latuit infans rupis Idaeae specu? 460
sollicita tanti pretia natales habent
semperque magno constitit nasci deum.

LYCVS

Quemcumque miserum videris, hominem scias.

AMPHITRYON

Quemcumque fortem videris, miserum neges.

LYCVS

Fortem vocemus cuius ex umeris leo,
donum puellae factus, et clava excidit
fulsitque pictum veste Sidonia latus?
fortem vocemus cuius horrentes comae
maduere nardo, laude qui notas manus
ad non virilem tympani movit sonum, 470
mitra ferocem barbara frontem premens?

AMPHITRYON

Non erubescit Bacchus effusus tener
sparsisse crines nec manu molli levem
vibrare thyrsus, cum parum forti gradu
auro decorum syrma barbarico trahit.
post multa virtus opera laxari solet.

LYCVS

Hoc Euryti fatetur eversi domus
pecorumque ritu virginum oppressi greges;

HERCULES FURENS

Thunderer. What? he who rules the stars, who shakes the clouds, did he not lie hid in infancy in a cave of rocky Ida? Such lofty birth must pay its price of care, and ever has it cost dear to be born a god.

LYCUS

Whome'er thou shalt see wretched, know him man.

AMPHITRYON

Whome'er thou shalt see brave, call him not wretched.

LYCUS

Are we to call him brave from whose shoulders fell the lion's skin and club, made present for a girl,¹ and whose side shone resplendent, decked out in Tyrian robes? Call him brave, whose bristling locks dripped with nard, who busied those famous hands with unmanly strummings on the tambourine, whose warlike brow a barbaric turban crowned?

AMPHITRYON

But dainty Bacchus does not blush to sprinkle with perfume his flowing locks, nor in his soft hand to brandish the slender thyrsus, when with mincing gait he trails his robe gay with barbaric gold. After much toil, valour still seeks relief.

LYCUS

That fact the ruined house of Eurytus confesses, and the flocks of maidens harried like so many sheep; no

¹ Omphale.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

hoc nulla Iuno, nullus Eurystheus iubet ;
 ipsius haec sunt opera.

AMPHITRYON

Non nosti omnia ; 480

ipsius opus est caestibus fractus suis
 Eryx et Eryci iunctus Antaeus Libys,
 et qui hospitali caede manantes foci
 bibere iustum sanguinem Busiridis ;
 ipsius opus est vulneri et ferro invius
 mortem coactus integer Cycnus pati,
 nec unus una Geryon victus manu.
 eris inter istos—qui tamen nullo stupro
 laesere thalamos.

LYCVS

Quod Iovi hoc regi licet.

Iovi dedisti coniugem, regi dabit ; 490
 et te magistro non novum hoc discet nurus,
 etiam viro probante, meliorem sequi.
 sin copulari pertinax taedis negat,
 vel ex coacta nobilem partum feram.

MEGARA

Vmbrae Creontis et penates Labdaci
 et nuptiales impii Oedipodae faces,
 nunc solita nostro fata coniugio date.
 nunc, nunc, cruentae regis Aegypti nurus,
 adeste multo sanguine infectae manus.
 dest una numero Danais—explebo nefas. 500

46

HERCULES FURENS

Juno, no Eurystheus ordered this; these works are his very own.

AMPHITRYON

Thou knowest not all; his own work it is that Eryx was crushed by his own gauntlets and that Libyan Antaeus shared Eryx' fate; that the altars which dripped with the blood of strangers drank, and justly, too, Busiris' blood; his own work is Cygnus, though proof against wound and sword, forced to suffer death untouched by wounds; and threefold Geryon by one hand overcome. Thou shalt share the fate of these—and yet they never defiled with lust the marriage-bed.

LYCUS

What is Jove's right is a king's right, too. Thou gavest thy wife¹ to Jove, to a king shall he give his²; and taught by thy example thy daughter shall learn this old-time lesson—when the husband also gives consent, to take the better man. But should she stubbornly refuse to wed me by the torches' rite, even by force will I get me a noble stock from her.

MEGARA

Ye shades of Creon, ye household gods of Labdacus, ye nuptial torches of incestuous Oedipus, now to our union grant its accustomed doom. Now, now, ye bloody daughters of King Aegyptus, be present here, your hands deep-stained in blood. One Danaïd is lacking from the tale—I will complete the crime.

¹ Alcmena.

² Megara.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

LYCVS

Coniugia quoniam pervicax nostra abnuit
 regemque terras, sceptrum quid possint scies.
 complectere aras—nullus eripiet deus
 te mihi, nec orbe si remolito queat
 ad supera victor numina Alcides vehi.
 congerite silvas; templa supplicibus suis
 iniecta flagrent, coniugem et totum gregem
 consumat unus igne subiecto rogas.

AMPHITRYON

Hoc munus a te genitor Alcidae peto,
 rogare quod me deceat, ut primus cadam. 510

LYCVS

Qui morte cunctos luere supplicium iubet
 nescit tyrannus esse. diversa inroga:
 miserum veta perire, felicem iube.
 ego, dum cremandis trabibus accrescit rogas,
 sacro regentem maria votivo colam.

AMPHITRYON

Pro numinum vis summa, pro caelestium
 rector parensque, cuius excussis tremunt
 humana telis, impiam regis feri
 compesce dextram—quid deos frustra precor?
 ubicumque es, audi, nate. cur subito labant 520
 agitata motu templa? cur mugit solum?
 infernus imo sonuit e fundo fragor.¹
 audimur, est est sonitus Herculei gradus.

¹ *Leo deletes this line.*

HERCULES FURENS

LYCUS

Since my suit thou dost stubbornly refuse and threatenest thy king, now shalt thou know what royal power can do. Embrace the altar—no god shall snatch thee from me, not though earth's mass could be pushed aside and Alcides brought back in triumph to the upper world. Heap high the logs; let the temple fall blazing on its suppliants; apply the torch and let one pyre consume the wife and all her brood.

AMPHITRYON

This boon as father of Alcides I ask of thee, which becomes me well to ask, that I be first to fall.

LYCUS

He who inflicts on all the penalty of death knows not how to be a king. Impose contrasting penalties: forbid the wretched, command the happy man to die. Now while the pyre feeds on the burning beams, with promised gifts will I worship him who rules the sea. [Exit.

AMPHITRYON

O mightiest of gods, O ruler and sire of the immortals, at whose hurtling bolts mortals tremble, check thou the impious hand of this mad king—why make vain prayers unto the gods? Where'er thou art, hear thou, my son. But why with sudden motion does the rocking temple totter? Why does earth rumble? Infernal crashing has sounded from the lowest pit. Our prayer is heard; it is, it is the resounding tread of Hercules!

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

CHORVS

O Fortuna viris invida fortibus,
 quam non aequa bonis praemia dividis.
 "Eurystheus facili regnet in otio ;
 Alcmena genitus bella per omnia
 monstris exagitet caeliferam manum :
 serpentis reseceat colla feracia,
 deceptis referat mala sororibus, 530
 cum somno dederit pervigiles genas
 pomis divitibus praepositus draco."

Intravit Scythiae multivagas domos
 et gentes patriis sedibus hospitas,
 calcavitque freti terga rigentia
 et mutis tacitum litoribus mare.
 illic dura carent aequora fluctibus,
 et qua plena rates carbasa tenderant,
 intonsis teritur semita Sarmatis.
 stat pontus, vicibus mobilis annuis, 540
 navem nunc facilis nunc equitem pati.
 illic quae viduis gentibus imperat,
 aurato religans ilia balteo,
 detraxit spoliū nobile corpori
 et peltam et nivei vincula pectoris,
 victorem posito suspiciens genu.

Qua spe praecipites actus ad inferos,
 audax ire vias inremeabiles,
 vidisti Sicalae regna Proserpinae ?
 illic nulla noto nulla favonio 550

HERCULES FURENS

CHORUS

O Fortune, jealous of the brave, in allotting thy favours how unjust art thou unto the good! "Let Eurystheus lord it in untroubled ease; let Alcmena's son in endless wars employ on monsters the hand that bore the heavens; let him cut off the hydra's teeming necks; let him bring back the apples from the cheated sisters when the dragon, set to watch over the precious fruit, has given his ever-waking eyes to sleep."¹

⁵³³ He invaded the wandering homes of Scythia and nations strangers to their ancestral haunts; ² he trod the sea's frozen ridge, a still ocean with silent shores. There the frozen waters are without waves, and where but now ships had spread full sail, a path is worn by the long-haired Sarmatae. There lies the sea, changing as seasons change, ready to bear now ship, now horseman. There she ³ who rules o'er tribes unwed, with a golden girdle about her loins, stripped the glorious spoil from her body, her shield and the bands of her snow-white breast, on bended knee looking up to her victor.

⁵⁴⁷ With what hope, driven headlong to the depths, bold to tread ways irretraceable, didst thou see Sicilian Proserpina's realms? There beneath no southern, no western wind do the seas rise

¹ A supposed quotation from Fortune's decree.

² These were nomadic tribes.

³ Hippolyte, queen of the Amazons.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

consurgunt tumidis fluctibus aequora ;
 non illic geminum Tyndaridae genus
 succurrunt timidis sidera navibus :
 stat nigro pelagus gurgite languidum,
 et cum Mors avidis pallida dentibus
 gentes innumeras manibus intulit,
 uno tot populi remige transeunt.

Evincas utinam iura ferae Stygis
 Parcarumque colos non revocabiles.
 hic qui rex populis pluribus imperat, 560
 bello cum peteres Nestoream Pylon,
 tecum conseruit pestiferas manus
 telum tergemina cuspide praeferens :
 effugit tenui vulnere saucius
 et mortis dominus pertimuit mori.
 fatum rumpe manu, tristibus inferis
 prospectus pateat lucis et invius
 limes det faciles ad superos vias !

Inmites potuit flectere cantibus
 umbrarum dominos et prece supplici 570
 Orpheus, Eurydicen dum repetit suam.
 quae silvas et aves saxaque traxerat
 ars, quae praebuerat fluminibus moras,
 ad cuius sonitum constiterant ferae,
 mulcet non solitis vocibus inferos
 et surdis resonat clarius in locis.
 deflent Eurydicen Threiciae nurus,¹

¹ *Placed after 580 in A: Tartareae nurus Withof: Elysiae Bentley.*

HERCULES FURENS

with swollen waves; there the stars of the twin Tyndaridae come not to the aid of timorous ships; sluggish stands the mere¹ with black abyss, and, when Death, pale-visaged with greedy teeth, has brought countless tribes to the world of shades, one ferryman transports those many peoples.

⁵⁵⁸ Oh, that thou mayest o'ercome the laws of cruel Styx, and the relentless distaffs of the Fates. He² who as king lords it o'er countless peoples, what time thou wast making war on Pylos, Nestor's land, brought to combat with thee his plague-dealing bands, brandishing his three-forked spear, yet fled away, with but a slight wound smitten, and, though lord of death, feared he would die. Fate's bars burst thou with thy hands; to the sad nether regions open a view of light, and let the trackless path³ now give easy passage to the upper world!

⁵⁶⁹ Orpheus had power to bend the ruthless lords of the shades by song and suppliant prayer, when he sought back his Eurydice. The art which had drawn the trees and birds and rocks, which had stayed the course of rivers, at whose sound the beasts had stopped to listen, soothes the underworld with unaccustomed strains, and rings out clearer in those unhearing realms. Eurydice the Thracian brides bewail; even the gods,

¹ The Styx.

² Pluto. The reference is to the combat of Hercules against Pluto in defence of the Pylians.

³ *i.e.* between life and death.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

deflent et lacrimis difficiles dei,
 et qui fronte nimis crimina tetrica
 quaerunt ac veteres excutiunt reos 580
 flentes Eurydicen iuridici sedent.
 tandem mortis ait "vincimur" arbiter,
 "evade ad superos, lege tamen data—
 tu post terga tui perge viri comes,
 tu non ante tuam respice coniugem,
 quam cum clara deos obtulerit dies
 Spartanique aderit ianua Taenari."
 odit verus amor nec patitur moras ;
 munus dum properat cernere, perdidit.
 Quae vinci potuit regia carmine, 590
 haec vinci poterit regia viribus.

HERCVLES

O lucis almae rector et caeli decus,
 qui alterna curru spatia flammifero ambiens
 inlustre latis exeris terris caput,
 da, Phoebe, veniam, si quid inlicitum tui
 videre vultus ; iussus in lucem extuli
 arcana mundi. tuque, caelestum arbiter
 parensque, visus fulmine opposito tege ;
 et tu, secundo maria qui sceptro regis,
 imas pete undas. quisquis ex alto aspicit 600
 terrena, facie pollui metuens nova,
 aciem reflectat oraque in caelum erigat
 portenta fugiens. hoc nefas cernant duo,
 qui advexit et quae iussit. in poenas meas

HERCULES FURENS

whom no tears can move, bewail her; and they who with awful brows investigate men's crimes and sift out ancient wrongs, as they sit in judgment¹ bewail Eurydice. At length death's lord exclaims: "We own defeat; go forth to the upper world, yet by this appointed doom—fare thou as comrade behind thy husband, and thou, look not back upon thy wife until bright day shall have revealed the gods of heaven, and the opening of Spartan Taenarus shall be at hand." True love hates delay and brooks it not; while he hastes to look upon his prize, 'tis lost.

⁵⁹⁰ The realm which could be overcome by song, that realm shall strength have power to overcome.

[Enter HERCULES, just returned from the lower world, accompanied by THESEUS; apparently, also, he is leading the dog, CERBERUS, though this point seems less clear as the play develops.]

HERCULES

O lord of kindly light, glory of heaven, who in thy flame-bearing car dost circle both spaces² of the sky, and dost show thy shining face to the broad lands, pardon, O Phoebus, if any unlawful sight thine eyes have seen; at another's bidding have I brought to light the hidden things of earth. And thou, O judge and sire of heavenly beings, hide thy face behind thy thunderbolt; and thou who, next in power, dost control the seas, flee to thy lowest waters. Whoever from on high looks down on things of earth, and would not be defiled by a strange, new sight, let him turn away his gaze, lift his eyes to heaven, and shun the portent. Let only two look on this monster—him who brought and her

¹ It is impossible to reproduce in translation the obvious pun in *Eurydicen iuridici*.

² *i.e.* the upper and lower hemispheres.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

atque in labores non satis terrae patent
 Iunonis odio. vidi inaccessa omnibus,
 ignota Phoebos quaeque deterior polus
 obscura diro spatia concessit Iovi;
 et, si placerent tertiae sortis loca,
 regnare potui. noctis aeternae chaos 610
 et nocte quiddam gravius et tristes deos
 et fata vidi, morte contempta redi.
 quid restat aliud? vidi et ostendi inferos.
 da si quid ultra est, iam diu pateris manus
 cessare nostras, Iuno; quae vinci iubes?
 Sed templa quare miles infestus tenet
 limenque sacrum terror armorum obsidet?

AMPHITRYON

Vtrumne visus vota decipiunt meos,
 an ille domitor orbis et Graium decus
 tristi silentem nubilo liquit domum? 620
 estne ille natus? membra laetitia stupent.
 o nate, certa at sera Thebarum salus,
 teneone in auras editum an vana fruor
 deceptus umbra? tune es? agnosco toros
 umerosque et alto nobilem trunco manum.

HERCVLES

Vnde iste, genitor, squalor et lugubribus
 amicta coniunx? unde tam foedo obsiti
 paedore nati? quae domum clades gravat?

HERCULES FURENS

who commanded. To appoint me penalties and tasks earth is not broad enough for Juno's hate. I have seen places unapproached by any, unknown to Phoebus, those gloomy spaces which the baser pole hath yielded to infernal Jove; and if the regions of the third estate pleased me, I might have reigned. The chaos of everlasting night, and something worse than night, and the grim gods and the fates—all these I saw and, having flouted death, I have come back. What else remains? I have seen and revealed the lower world. If aught is left to do, give it to me, O Juno; too long already dost thou let my hands lie idle. What dost thou bid me conquer?

⁶¹⁶ But why do hostile soldiers guard the shrine and dreadful arms beset the sacred portal?

AMPHITRYON

Can it be that my hopes deceive my sight, or has that world-subduer, the pride of Greece, come back from the silent halls of mournful gloom? Is that my son? My limbs are numb with joy. O son, sure, though late, deliverance of Thebes, do I really clasp thee risen to upper air, or am I mocked, enjoying but an empty shade? Is it thou indeed? Aye, now I recognize the bulging thews, the shoulders, the hand famed for its huge club.

HERCULES

Whence this squalid garb, father? Why is my wife clad in mourning weeds? Why are my sons covered with loathsome rags? What disaster overwhelms my house?

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

AMPHITRYON

Socer est peremptus, regna possedit Lycus,
natos parentem coniugem leto petit.

630

HERCVLES

Ingrata tellus, nemo ad Herculeae domus
auxilia venit? vidit hoc tantum nefas
defensus orbis?—cur diem questu tero?
mactetur hostia, hanc ferat virtus notam
fiatque summus hostis Alcidae Lycus.
ad hauriendum sanguinem inimicum feror,
Theseu; resiste, ne qua vis subita ingruat.
me bella poscunt, differ amplexus, parens,
coniunxque differ. nuntiet Diti Lycus
me iam redisse.

THESEVS

Flebilem ex oculis fuga,
regina, vultum, tuque nato sospite
lacrimas cadentes reprime. si novi Herculem,
Lycus Creonti debitas poenas dabit.
lentum est dabit—dat; hoc quoque est lentum—
dedit.

640

AMPHITRYON

Votum secundet qui potest nostrum deus
rebusque lapsis adsit. O magni comes
magnanime nati, pande virtutum ordinem,
quam longa maestos ducat ad manes via,
ut vincla tulerit dura Tartareus canis.

HERCULES FURENS

AMPHITRYON

The father of thy wife is slain; Lycus has seized the throne; thy sons, thy father, thy wife he claims for death.

HERCULES

O ungrateful land, was there none to aid the house of Hercules? Did it see this monstrous wrong, the world I succoured?—but why waste the day in idle plaints? Let the victim¹ be offered up, let my manhood bear this brand of shame, and let the final foe of Hercules be—Lycus. I haste me, Theseus, to drain his detested blood; remain thou here, lest some unexpected force assail. War summons me; stay thy embraces, father; wife, delay them. Let Lycus take the news to Dis that now I have returned.

[*Exit* HERCULES.]

THESEUS

Banish that tearful look from thine eyes, O queen, and do thou,² since thy son is safe, check thy falling tears. If I know Hercules, Lycus shall pay the penalty he owes to Creon. "Shall pay" is slow—he pays; that, too, is slow—he has paid.

AMPHITRYON

May the god who can, fulfil our desire and favour our fallen estate. And do thou, great-hearted companion of our great son, unfold his heroic deeds in order; tell how long a way leads to the gloomy shades, and how the Tartarean dog bore his galling bonds.

¹ *i.e.* Lycus.

² To Amphitryon.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

THESEVS

650

Memorare cogis acta securae quoque
 horrenda menti. vix adhuc certa est fides
 vitalis aerae, torpet acies luminum
 hebetesque visus vix diem insuetum ferunt.

AMPHITRYON

Pervince, Theseu, quidquid alto in pectore
 remanet pavoris neve te fructu optimo
 frauda laborum; quae fuit durum pati,
 meminisse dulce est. fare casus horridos.

THESEVS

660

Fas omne mundi teque dominantem precor
 regno capaci teque quam amotam inrita
 quaesivit Enna mater, ut iura abdita
 et operta terris liceat impune eloqui.

Spartana tellus nobile attollit iugum,
 densis ubi aequor Taenarus silvis premit;
 hic ora solvit Ditis invisi domus
 hiatque rupes alta et immenso specu
 ingens vorago faucibus vastis patet
 latumque pandit omnibus populis iter.
 non caeca tenebris incipit primo via;
 tenuis relictæ lucis a tergo nitor
 fulgorque dubius solis adflicti cadit
 et ludit aciem. nocte sic mixta solet
 praebere lumen primus aut serus dies.

670

60

HERCULES FURENS

THESEUS

Thou dost force me to recall deeds which strike terror to my soul even in security. Scarcely yet do I trust assuredly to breathe the vital air; the sight of my eyes is dimmed, and my dull vision can scarce bear the unaccustomed light.

AMPHITRYON

But, Theseus, master whate'er of dread yet dwells deep in thy heart and rob not thyself of toils' best fruit; things 'twas hard to bear 'tis pleasant to recall. Tell thou the awful tale.

THESEUS

All the world's holy powers, and thou¹ who rulest the all-holding realm, and thou² whom, stolen from Enna, thy mother sought in vain, may it be right, I pray, boldly to speak of powers hidden away and buried beneath the earth.

⁶⁶² The Spartan land a famous ridge uplifts where Taenarus with its dense forests invades the sea. Here the home of hateful Pluto unbars its mouth; a high cliff cracks asunder, and a huge chasm, a bottomless abyss, spreads its vast jaws wide and opens for all peoples a broad path. Not in utter darkness does the way first begin; a slender gleam of the light left behind and a doubtful glow as of the sun in eclipse falls there and cheats the vision. Such light the day mingled with night is wont to give, at early dawn or at late twilight. From here ample spaces spread out,

¹ Pluto.

² Proserpina.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

hinc ampla vacuis spatia laxantur locis,
 in quae omne versum properat humanum genus.
 nec ire labor est ; ipsa deducit via.
 ut saepe puppes aestus invitas rapit,
 sic pronus aer urguet atque avidum chaos,
 gradumque retro flectere haut umquam sinunt
 umbrae tenaces. intus immensi sinus
 placido quieta labitur Lethe vado 680
 demitque curas, neve remeandi amplius
 pateat facultas, flexibus multis gravem
 involvit amnem, qualis incertis vagus
 Maeander undis ludit et cedit sibi
 instatque dubius litus an fontem petat.
 palus inertis foeda Cocyti iacet ;
 hic vultur, illic luctifer bubo gemit
 omenque triste resonat infaustae strigis.
 horrent opaca fronde nigrantes comae,
 taxum imminentem qua tenet segnis Sopor 690
 Famesque maesta tabido rictu iacet
 Pudorque serus conscios vultus tegit.
 Metus Pavorque furvus et frendens Dolor
 aterque Luctus sequitur et Morbus tremens
 et cincta ferro Bella ; in extremo abdita
 iners Senectus adiuvat baculo gradum.

AMPHITRYON

Estne aliqua tellus Cereris aut Bacchi ferax ?

HERCULES FURENS

void regions, whereto the entire human race turns and hastens. It is no toil to go ; the road itself draws them down. As oft-times the waves sweep on unwilling ships, so does the downward breeze drive, and the greedy void, and never do the clutching shades permit a backward step. Within the abyss, Lethe, measureless in sweep, glides smoothly on with placid stream, and takes away our cares ; and, that there may be no power to retrace the path, with windings manifold it takes its sluggish way, even as the vagrant Maeander with its inconstant waters plays along, now retreats upon itself, now presses on, in doubt whether to seek the seashore or its source. The foul pool of Cocytus' sluggish stream lies here ; here the vulture, there the dole-bringing owl utters its cry, and the sad omen of the gruesome screech-owl sounds. The leaves shudder, black with gloomy foliage where sluggish Sleep clings to the overhanging yew, where sad Hunger lies with wasted jaws, and Shame, too late, hides her guilt-burdened face. Dread stalks there, gloomy Fear and gnashing Pain, sable Grief, tottering Disease and iron-girt War ; and last of all slow Age supports his steps upon a staff.

AMPHITRYON

Is any land there fruitful of corn or wine ?

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

THESEVS

Non prata viridi laeta facie germinant
 nec adulta leni fluctuat Zephyro seges ;
 non ulla ramos silva pomiferos habet : 700
 sterilis profundi vastitas squalet soli
 et foeda tellus torpet aeterno situ,
 rerumque maestus finis et mundi ultima.¹
 immotus aer haeret et pigro sedet
 nox atra mundo. cuncta maerore horrida
 ipsaque morte peior est mortis locus.

AMPHITRYON

Quid ille opaca qui regit sceptro loca,
 qua sede positus temperat populos leves ?

THESEVS

Est in recessu Tartari obscuro locus,
 quem gravibus umbris spissa caligo alligat. 710
 a fonte discors manat hinc uno latex,
 alter quieto similis (hunc iurant dei)
 tacente sacram devehens fluvio Styga ;
 at hic tumultu rapitur ingenti ferox
 et saxa fluctu volvit Acheron inuius
 renavigari. cingitur duplici vado
 adversa Ditis regia, atque ingens domus
 umbrante luco tegitur. hic vasto specu
 pendent tyranni limina, hoc umbris iter,
 haec porta regni. campus hanc circa iacet, 720

¹ *Leo deletes this line.*

HERCULES FURENS

THESEUS

No meadows bud, joyous with verdant view, no ripened corn waves in the gentle breeze; not any grove has fruit-producing boughs; the barren desert of the abysmal fields lies all untilled, and the foul land lies torpid in endless sloth—sad end of things, the world's last estate. The air hangs motionless and black night broods over a sluggish world. All things are with grief dishevelled, and worse than death itself is the abode of death.

AMPHITRYON

What of him who holds sway over the dark realm?
Where sits he, governing his fitting tribes?

THESEUS

There is a place in a dark recess of Tartarus, which with a heavy pall dense mists enshroud. Hence flow from a single source two streams, unlike: one, a placid river (by this do the gods swear), with silent current bears on the sacred Styx; the other with mighty roar rushes fiercely on, rolling down rocks in its flood, Acheron, that cannot be recrossed. The royal hall of Dis stands opposite, girt by a double moat, and the huge house is hid by an o'ershadowing grove. Here in a spacious cavern the tyrant's doors overhang; this is the road for spirits, this is the kingdom's gate. A plain lies round about this where sits the

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

in quo superbo digerit vultu sedens
 animas recentes dira maiestas dei.
 frons torva, fratrum quae tamen speciem gerat
 gentisque tantae, vultus est illi Iovis,
 sed fulminantis; magna pars regni trucis
 est ipse dominus, cuius aspectus timet
 quidquid timetur.

AMPHITRYON

Verane est fama inferis
 tam sera reddi iura et oblitos sui
 sceleris nocentes debitas poenas dare?
 quis iste veri rector atque aequi arbiter? 730

THESEVS

Non unus alta sede quaesitor sedens
 iudicia trepidis sera sortitur reis.
 aditur illo Cnosius Minos foro,
 Rhadamanthus illo, Thetidis hoc audit socer.
 quod quisque fecit, patitur; auctorem scelus
 repetit suoque premitur exemplo nocens.
 vidi cruentos carcere includi duces
 et impotentis terga plebeia manu
 scindi tyranni. quisquis est placide potens
 dominusque vitae servat innocuas manus 740
 et incruentum mitis imperium regit
 animoque parcit, longa permensus diu
 felicitatis aevi spatia vel caelum petit
 vel laeta felix nemoris Elysii loca,
 iudex futurus. sanguine humano abstine
 quicumque regnas; scelera taxantur modo
 maiore vestra.

HERCULES FURENS

god, where with haughty mien his awful majesty assort the new-arriving souls. Lowering is his brow, yet such as wears the aspect of his brothers and his high race; his countenance is that of Jove, but Jove the thunderer; chief part of that realm's grimness is its own lord, whose aspect whate'er is dreaded dreads.

AMPHITRYON

Is the report true that in the underworld justice, though tardy, is meted out, and that guilty souls who have forgot their crimes suffer due punishment? Who is that lord of truth, that arbiter of justice?

THESEUS

Not one inquisitor alone sits on the high judgment-seat and allots his tardy sentences to trembling culprits. In yonder court they pass to Cretan Minos' presence, in that to Rhadamanthus', here the father¹ of Thetis' spouse gives audience. What each has done, he suffers; upon its author the crime comes back, and the guilty soul is crushed by its own form of guilt. I have seen bloody chiefs immured in prison; the insolent tyrant's back torn by plebeian hands. He who reigns mildly and, though lord of life, keeps guiltless hands, who mercifully and without bloodshed rules his realm, checking his own spirit, he shall traverse long stretches of happy life and at last gain the skies, or else in bliss reach Elysium's joyful land and sit in judgment there. Abstain from human blood, all ye who rule: with heavier punishment your sins are judged.

¹ Aeacus, father of Peleus.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

AMPHITRYON

Certus inclusos tenet
 locus nocentes? utque fert fama, impios
 supplicia vinclis saeva perpetuis domant?

THESEVS

Rapitur volucris tortus Ixion rota; 750
 cervice saxum grande Sisyphia sedet;
 in amne medio faucibus siccis senex
 sectatur undas, alluit mentum latex,
 fidemque cum iam saepe decepto dedit,
 perit unda in ore; poma destituunt famem.
 praebet volucris Tityos aeternas dapes
 urnasque frustra Danaides plenas gerunt;
 errant furentes impiae Cadmeides
 terretque mensas avida Phineas avis.

AMPHITRYON

Nunc ede nati nobilem pugnam mei. 760
 patruī volentis munus an spoliū refert?

THESEVS

Ferale tardis imminet saxum vadis,
 stupent ubi undae, segne torpescit fretum.
 hunc servat amnem cultu et aspectu horridus
 pavidosque manes squalidus vectat senex.
 inpexa pendet barba, deformem sinum
 nodus coercet, concavae squalent¹ genae;

¹ So *E*: Richter, with *A*, lucent: Leo conjectures fulgent.

HERCULES FURENS

AMPHITRYON

Does any certain place enclose the guilty? and, as rumour has it, do sinners suffer cruel punishments in bonds unending?

THESEUS

Ixion whirls, racked on a flying wheel; a huge stone rests on the neck of Sisyphus; in mid-stream an old man¹ with parched lips catches at the waves; the water bathes his chin and, when at last it has given him, though oft deceived, a pledge of faith, the wave perishes at his lips; fruits mock his hunger. To the vulture Tityos gives never-ending feasts; the Danaïdes bear their brimming urns in vain; the impious Cadmeïds roam in their madness, and the ravenous bird² torments Phineus at his board.

AMPHITRYON

Now tell my son's famous struggle. Is it his willing uncle's gift, or his spoil, he brings?

THESEUS

A rock funereal o'erhangs the slothful shoals, where the waves are sluggish and the dull mere is numbed. This stream an old man tends, clad in foul garb and to the sight abhorrent, and ferries over the quaking shades. His beard hangs down unkempt; a knot ties his robe's misshapen folds; haggard his sunken cheeks; himself his own boatman, with a long

¹ Tantalus.

² The harpy.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

regit ipse longo portitor conto ratem.
 hic onere vacuam litori puppem applicans
 repetebat umbras; poscit Alcides viam 770
 cedente turba; dirus exclamat Charon:
 "quo pergis, audax? siste properantem gradum."
 non passus ullas natus Alemena moras
 ipso coactum navitam conto domat
 scanditque puppem. cumba populorum capax
 succubuit uni; sidit et gravior ratis
 utrimque Lethen latere titubanti bibit.
 tum victa trepidant monstra, Centauri truces
 Lapithaeque multo in bella succensi mero;
 Stygiae paludis ultimos quaerens sinus 780
 fecunda mergit capita Lernaeus labor.

Post haec avari Ditis apparet domus:
 hic saevus umbras territat Stygius canis,
 qui terna vasto capita concutiens sono
 regnum tuetur. sordidum tabo caput
 lambunt colubrae, viperis horrent iubae
 longusque torta sibilat cauda draco.
 par ira formae. sensit ut motus pedum,
 attollit hirtas angue vibrato comas
 missumque captat aure subrecta sonum, 790
 sentire et umbras solitus. ut propior stetit
 Iove natus, antro sedit incertus canis
 leviterque timuit—ecce latratu gravi
 loca muta terret; sibilat totos minax
 serpens per armos. vocis horrendae fragor
 per ora missus terna felices quoque

HERCULES FURENS

pole he directs his craft. Now, having discharged his load, he is turning his boat towards the bank, seeking the ghosts again; Alcides demands passage, while the crowd draws back. Fierce Charon cries: "Whither in such haste, bold man? Halt there thy hastening steps." Brooking no delay, Alcmena's son o'erpowers the ferryman with his own pole and climbs aboard. The craft, ample for whole nations, sinks low beneath one man; as he takes his seat the o'erweighted boat with rocking sides drinks in Lethe on either hand. Then the monsters he had conquered are in a panic, the fierce Centaurs and the Lapithae whom too much wine had inflamed to war; and, seeking the farthest fens of the Stygian swamp, Lerna's labour¹ plunges deep his fertile heads.

⁷⁸² Next after this there appears the palace of greedy Dis. Here the savage Stygian dog frightens the shades; tossing back and forth his triple heads, with huge bayings he guards the realm. Around his head, foul with corruption, serpents lap, his shaggy mane bristles with vipers, and in his twisted tail a long snake hisses. His rage matches his shape. Soon as he feels the stir of feet he raises his head, rough with darting snakes, and with ears erect catches at the onsped sound, wont as he is to hear even the shades. When the son of Jove stood closer, within his cave the dog crouches hesitant and feels a touch of fear. Then suddenly, with deep bayings, he terrifies the silent places; the snakes hiss threateningly along all his shoulders. The clamour of his dreadful voice, issuing from triple throats, fills even the

¹ The Hydra.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

exterret umbras. solvit a laeva feros
 tunc ipse rictus et Cleonaeum caput
 opponit ac se tegmine ingenti tegit,
 victricæ magnum dextera robur gerens. 800
 huc nunc et illuc verbere assiduo rotat,
 ingeminat ictus. domitus infregit minas
 et cuncta lassus capita summisit canis
 antroque toto cessit. extimuit sedens
 uterque solio dominus et duci iubet;
 me quoque petenti munus Alcidae dedit.

Tum gravia monstri colla permulcens manu
 adamante texto vincit; oblitus sui
 custos opaci pervigil regni canis
 componit aures timidus et patiens trahi 810
 erumque fassus, ore summisso obsequens,
 utrumque cauda pulsat anguifera latus.
 postquam est ad oras Taenari ventum et nitor
 percussit oculos lucis ignotæ novus,
 resumit animos victus et vastas furens
 quassat catenas; paene victorem abstulit
 pronumque retro vexit et movit gradu.
 tunc et meas respexit Alcides manus;
 geminis uterque viribus tractum canem
 ira furentem et bella temptantem inrita 820
 intulimus orbi. vidit ut clarum diem
 et pura nitidi spatia conspexit poli,
 oborta nox est, lumina in terram dedit;¹
 compressit oculos et diem invisum expulit

¹ *Leo deletes this line.*

HERCULES FURENS

blessed shades with dread. Then from his left arm the hero looses the fierce-grinning jaws, thrusts out before him the Cleonae¹ head and, beneath that huge shield crouching, plies his mighty club with victorious right hand. Now here, now there, with unremitting blows he whirls it, redoubling the strokes. At last the dog, vanquished, ceases his threatenings and, spent with struggle, lowers all his heads and yields all wardship of the cavern. Both rulers² shiver on their throne, and bid lead the dog away. Me also they give as boon to Alcides' prayer.

⁸⁰⁷ Then, stroking the monster's sullen necks, he binds him with chains of adamant. Forgetful of himself, the watchful guardian of the dusky realm droops his ears, trembling and willing to be led, owns his master, and with muzzle lowered follows after, beating both his sides with snaky tail. But when he came to the Taenarian borders, and the strange gleam of unknown light smote on his eyes, though conquered he regained his courage and in frenzy shook his ponderous chains. Almost he bore his conqueror away, back dragging him, forward bent, and forced him to give ground. Then even to my aid Alcides looked, and with our twofold strength we drew the dog along, mad with rage and attempting fruitless war, and brought him out to earth. But when he saw the bright light of day and viewed the clear spaces of the shining sky, black night rose over him and he turned his gaze to ground, closed tight his eyes and shut out the hated light; back-

¹ *i.e.* of the Nemean lion, so called from Cleonae, near Nemea, in Argolis.

² Pluto and Proserpina.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

faciemque retro flexit atque omni petit
 cervice terram ; tum sub Herculeas caput
 abscondit umbras. densa sed laeto venit
 clamore turba frontibus laurum gerens
 magnique meritas Herculis laudes canit.

CHORVS

Natus Eurystheus properante partu 830
 iusserat mundi penetrare fundum ;
 derat hoc solum numero laborum,
 tertiae regem spoliare sortis.
 ausus es caecos aditus inire,
 ducit ad manes via qua remotos
 tristis et nigra metuenda silva,
 sed frequens magna comitante turba.

Quantus incedit populus per urbes
 ad novi ludos avidus theatri ;
 quantus Eleum ruit ad Tonantem, 840
 quinta cum sacrum revocavit aestas ;
 quanta, cum longae redit hora nocti
 crescere et somnos cupiens quietos
 libra Phoebos tenet aequa currus,
 turba secretam Cererem frequentat
 et citi tectis properant relictis
 Attici noctem celebrare mystae,
 tanta per campos agitur silentes
 turba ; pars tarda graditur senecta,
 tristis et longa satiata vita ; 850
 pars adhuc currit melioris aevi,

HERCULES FURENS

ward he turned his face and with all his necks sought the earth; then in the shadow of Hercules he hid his head.—But see, a dense throng comes on, glad shouting, with laurel wreaths upon their brows and chanting the well-won praises of great Hercules.

CHORUS

Eurystheus, brought to the light by birth untimely, had bidden thee explore the world's foundations; this only was lacking to thy tale of labours, to despoil the king of the third estate. Thou wast bold to enter the blind approach, where a way leads to the far-off shades, a gloomy way and fearsome with dark woods, but crowded with vast accompanying throngs.

⁸³⁸ Great as the host that moves through city streets, eager to see the spectacle in some new theatre; great as that which pours to the Elean¹ Thunderer, when the fifth summer has brought back the sacred games; great as the throng which (when the time comes again for night to lengthen and the balanced Scales,² yearning for quiet slumber, check Phoebus' car) surges to Ceres' secret rites, and the initiates of Attica, quitting their homes, swiftly hasten to celebrate their night—so great is the throng that is led through the silent plains. Some go slow with age, sad and sated with long life; some still can run,

¹ *i.e.* Olympian. The reference is to the Olympic games, celebrated in honour of Zeus.

² See Index.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

virgines nondum thalamis iugatae
 et comis nondum positis ephēbi,
 matris et nomen modo doctus infans.
 his datum solis, minus ut timerent,
 igne praelato relevare noctem ;
 ceteri vadunt per opaca tristes.
 qualis est vobis animus, remota
 luce cum maestus sibi quisque sensit
 obrutum tota caput esse terra ? 860
 stat chaos densum tenebraeque turpes
 et color noctis malus ac silentis
 otium mundi vacuaeque nubes.

Sera nos illo referat senectus ;
 nemo ad id sero venit, unde numquam,
 cum semel venit, potuit reverti ;
 quid iuvat durum properare fatum ?
 omnis haec magnis vaga turba terris
 ibit ad manes facietque inertī
 vela Cocyto. tibi crescit omne, 870
 et quod occasus videt et quod ortus
 —parce venturis—tibi, mors, paramur.
 sis licet segnis, properamus ipsi ;
 prima quae vitam dedit hora, carpit.

Thebis laeta dies adest.
 aras tangite, supplices,
 pingues caedite victimas ;
 permixtae maribus nurus
 sollemnes agitent choros ;
 cessent deposito iugo 880
 arvi fertilis incolae.

HERCULES FURENS

being of happier age—maidens, not yet in wedlock joined, youths with locks still unshorn, and babes that have but lately learned the name of “mother.” To these last alone, that they be not afraid, ’tis given to lessen night’s gloom by torches borne ahead; the rest move sadly through the dark. O ye dead, what thoughts are yours when, light now banished, each has sorrowing felt his head o’erwhelmed ’neath all the earth? There are thick chaos, loathsome murk, night’s baleful hue, the lethargy of a silent world and empty clouds.

⁸⁶⁴ Late may old age bear us thither! None comes too late unto that land, whence never, when once come, can he return. Why does it please us to hasten cruel fate? For all this throng which wanders up and down the earth’s vast spaces shall go to the world of shades and shall set sail on Cocytus’ lifeless stream. For thee, O Death, all things are growing; all that the setting sun, all that the rising, sees—oh, spare thou those who are sure to come—for thee are we all preparing. Though thou be slow, we hasten of ourselves; the hour which first gave life is plucking it away.

⁸⁷⁵ Thebes’ joyful day is here. Lay hold on the altars, ye suppliants; slay the fat victims; let husbands and wives together start up the festal dance; let the tillers of the fertile field lay by the yoke and rest.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

Pax est Herculea manu
Auroram inter et Hesperum,
et qua sol medium tenens
umbras corporibus negat ;
quodcumque alluitur solum
longo Tethyos ambitu,
Alcidae domuit labor.
transvectus vada Tartari
pacatis redit inferis ; 890
iam nullus superest timor ;
nil ultra iacet inferos.

Stantes, sacrificus, comas
dilecta tege populo.

HERCVLES

Victrice dextra fusus adverso Lycus
terram cecidit ore ; tum quisquis comes
fuerat tyranni iacuit et poenae comes.
nunc sacra patri victor et superis feram
caesisque meritas victimis aras colam.

Te te laborum socia et adiutrix precor, 900
belligera Pallas, cuius in laeva ciet
aegis feroces ore saxifico minas ;
adsit Lycurgi domitor et rubri maris,
tectam virente cuspidem thyrsu gerens,
geminumque numen Phoebus et Phoebi soror,
soror sagittis aptior, Phoebus lyrae,
fraterque quisquis incolit caelum meus
non ex noverca frater.

HERCULES FURENS

⁸⁸² Peace reigns by the hand of Hercules from the land of the dawn to the evening star, and where the sun, holding mid-heaven, gives to shapes no shadows. Whatever land is washed by Tethys' far-reaching circuit Alcides' toil has conquered. He has crossed the streams of Tartarus, subdued the gods of the underworld, and has returned. And now no fear remains; naught lies beyond the underworld.

⁸⁹³ Now, priest, bedeck thy bristling¹ hair with his well-loved poplar.

[*Enter HERCULES, fresh from the slaying of LYCUS.*]

HERCULES

Felled by my conquering hand, Lycus first has fallen face downward to the earth. Next, whoever had been the tyrant's comrade lies low, the comrade also of his punishment. And now as victor will I bring offerings to my father and to the heavenly gods, slay victims, and honour the altars with due sacrifice.

⁹⁰⁰ Thee, thee, O ally and helper of my toils, I pray, O warlike Pallas, on whose left arm the targe with its petrifying face sends forth fierce threats; may he, too, be near, the tamer² of Lycurgus and the ruddy sea,³ who bears a spear-point hidden beneath his vine-wreathed staff; and ye, twin deities, Phoebus and Phoebus' sister, the sister more ready with her arrows, Phoebus with his lyre; and whatever brother of mine dwells in the sky—but not a brother from my stepdame born.

¹ *i.e.* with the divine afflatus. Compare Virgil's description of the Sibyl, *Aeneid* VI. 48: *non comptae mansere comae.*

² Bacchus.

³ Which Bacchus crossed when he conquered India.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

Huc appellite

greges opimos; quidquid Indorum seges¹
 Arabesque odoris quidquid arboribus legunt 910
 conferte in aras; pinguis exundet vapor.
 populea nostras arbor exornet comas,
 te ramus oleae fronde gentili tegat,
 Theseu; Tonantem nostra adorabit manus,
 tu conditores urbis et silvestria
 trucis antra Zethi, nobilis Dirce aquae
 laremque regis advenae Tyrium coles.
 date tura flammis.

AMPHITRYON

Nate, manantes prius
 manus cruenta caede et hostili expia.

HERCVLES

Vtinam cruore capitis inuisi deis 920
 libare possem; gratior nullus liquor
 tinxisset aras; victima haut ulla amplior
 potest magisque opima mactari Iovi,
 quam rex iniquus.

AMPHITRYON

Finiat genitor tuos
 opta labores, detur aliquando otium
 quiesque fessis.

¹ *Leo conjectures a lacuna here, and suggests that some such line as this has fallen out after 909:*

praestat colonis igne propioris dei.

HERCULES FURENS

[*To his attendants.*]

⁹⁰⁸ Hither drive fat herds; whatever the fields of the Indians produce, whatever fragrant thing the Arabs gather from their trees, heap on the altars; let the rich smoke roll on high. Let wreaths of poplar bedeck our hair; but thee, O Theseus, an olive-branch, with thy own race's leaves, shall crown. The Thunderer shall my hand adore; do thou ¹ invoke the founders of our city, the wooded caves of savage Zethus, Dirce of far-famed water, and the Tyrian house-gods of our pilgrim king.² Heap incense on the flames.

AMPHITRYON

O son, first purify thy hands, dripping with thy slaughtered foeman's blood.

HERCULES

Would that I could pour out to the gods the blood of the man I hate; no more pleasing stream had stained the altars; no greater, richer victim can be sacrificed to Jove than an unrighteous king.

AMPHITRYON

Pray that thy father end thy toils, that at last rest and repose be given to the weary.

¹ Addressed to Amphitryon.

² Cadmus.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

HERCVLES

Ipse concipiam preces

Iove meque dignas : stet suo caelum loco
 tellusque et aequor ; astra inoffensos agant
 aeterna cursus ; alta pax gentes alat ;
 ferrum omne teneat ruris innocui labor 930
 ensesque lateant ; nulla tempestas fretum
 violenta turbet, nullus irato Iove
 exiliat ignis, nullus hiberna nive
 nutritus agros amnis eversos trahat.
 venena cessent, nulla nocituro gravis
 suco tumescat herba. non saevi ac truces
 regnent tyranni. si quod etiamnum est scelus
 latura tellus, properet, et si quod parat
 monstrum, meum sit.

Sed quid hoc ? medium diem
 cinxere tenebrae. Phoebus obscuro meat 940
 sine nube vultu. quis diem retro fugat
 agitque in ortus ? unde nox atrum caput
 ignota profert ? unde tot stellae polum
 implent diurnae ? primus en noster labor
 caeli refulget parte non minima leo
 iraque totus fervet et morsus parat.
 iam rapiet aliquod sidus ; ingenti minax
 stat ore et ignes efflat et rutila iubam
 cervice iactans quidquid autumnus gravis
 hiemsque gelido frigida spatium refert 950
 uno impetu transiliet et verni petet
 frangetque tauri colla.

HERCULES FURENS

HERCULES

Myself will I frame prayers worthy of Jupiter and me: May heaven abide in its own place, and earth and sea; may the eternal stars hold on their way unhindered; may deep peace brood upon the nations; may the harmless country's toil employ all iron, and may swords lie hid; may no raging tempest stir up the sea, no fires leap forth from angered Jove, no river, fed by winter's snows, sweep away the up-torn fields. Let poisons cease to be. Let no destructive herb swell with harmful juice. May savage and cruel tyrants rule no more. If earth is still to produce any wickedness, let her make haste, and if she is preparing any monster, let it be mine.¹

[*The madness planned by JUNO begins to come upon him.*]

⁹³⁹ But what is this? Shadows have begirt mid-day. Phoebus fares with darkened face though there be no cloud. Who puts the day to flight and drives it back to dawn? Whence does an unfamiliar night rear its black head? Whence do so many stars fill the sky though it is day? See where the lion, my first toil, glows in no small part of heaven, is all hot with rage, and makes ready his fangs. Forthwith he will seize some star; threatening he stands with gaping jaws, and breathes forth fires, and shakes the mane upon his flaming neck; whatever stars sickly autumn and cold winter with its frozen tracts bring back, with one bound will he o'erleap, and attack and crush the neck of the vernal Bull.

¹ *i.e.* to destroy, as he had destroyed so many other earth-born monsters.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

AMPHITRYON

Quod subitum hoc malum est ?
quo, nate, vultus huc et huc acres refers
acieque falsum turbida caelum vides ?

HERCVLES

Perdomita tellus, tumida cesserunt freta,
inferna nostros regna sensere impetus ;
immune caelum est, dignus Alcide labor.
in alta mundi spatia sublimis ferar,
petatur aether ; astra promittit pater.
quid, si negaret ? non capit terra Herculem 960
tandemque superis reddit. en ultro vocat
omnis deorum coetus et laxat fores,
una vetante. recipis et reseras polum ?
an contumacis ianuam mundi traho ?
dubitatur etiam ? vincla Saturno exuam
contraque patris impii regnum impotens
avum resolvam ; bella Titanes parent,
me duce furentes ; saxa cum silvis feram
rapiamque dextra plena Centauris iuga.
iam monte gemino limitem ad superos agam ; 970
videat sub Ossa Pelion Chiron suum,
in caelum Olympus tertio positus gradu
perveniet aut mittetur.

AMPHITRYON

Infandos procul
averte sensus ; pectoris sani parum
magni tamen compesce dementem impetum.

¹ *i.e.* Jove has promised to deify his son. This is one of the chief themes in *Hercules Octaeus*.

HERCULES FURENS

AMPHITRYON

What sudden ill is this? Why, my son, dost turn thy keen eyes now here, now there, and look upon an unreal sky with troubled gaze?

HERCULES

The earth has been subdued, the swollen seas are at rest, the infernal realms have felt my onset; heaven is as yet untried, a task worthy of Alcides. To the lofty regions of the universe on high let me make my way, let me seek the skies; the stars are my father's promise.¹ And what if he should not keep his word? Earth has not room for Hercules, and at length restores him unto heaven. See, the whole company of the gods of their own will summons me, and opens wide the door of heaven, with one alone forbidding. And wilt thou unbar the sky and take me in? Or shall I carry off the doors of stubborn heaven? Dost even doubt my power? I'll free Saturn from his bonds, and against my unfilial² father's lawless sway I'll loose my grandsire. Let the Titans prepare war, with me to lead their rage; rocks, woods and all, will I bring, and with my right hand I'll snatch up ridges full of Centaurs. Now with twin mountains I'll construct a pathway to the realms above; Chiron shall see his own Pelion 'neath Ossa, and Olympus, set as third in order, shall reach clean to heaven—or else I'll hurl it there!

AMPHITRYON

Have done with these horrible imaginings! Re-press the mad fury of thy proud heart, no longer sane.

² Jove with his two brothers had driven their father, Saturn, from the throne.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

HERCVLES

Quid hoc? Gigantes arma pestiferi movent.
 profugit umbras Tityos ac lacerum gerens
 et inane pectus quam prope a caelo stetit.
 labat Cithaeron, alta Pellene tremit
 marcentque ¹ Tempe. rapuit hic Pindi iuga, 980
 hic rapuit Oeten, saevit horrendum Mimans.
 flammifera Erinys verbere excusso sonat
 rogisque adustas propius ac propius sudes
 in ora tendit. saeva Tisiphone, caput
 serpentibus vallata, post raptum canem
 portam vacantem clausit opposita face.—

Sed ecce proles regis inimici latet,
 Lyci nefandum semen; invisio patri
 haec dextra iam vos reddet. excutiat leves
 nervus sagittas—tela sic mitti decet 990
 Herculea.

AMPHITRYON

Quo se caecus impegit furor?
 vastum coactis flexit arcum cornibus
 pharetramque solvit, stridet emissa impetu
 harundo—medio spiculum collo fugit
 vulnere relicto.

HERCVLES

Ceteram prolem eruam
 omnesque latebras. quid moror? maius mihi

¹ *So Richter, with A: Leo, with E, Macetum.*

HERCULES FURENS

HERCULES

What's this? The baleful Giants are taking arms. Tityos has escaped the shades and, with breast all torn and empty, has almost reached the sky. Cithaeron is tottering, lofty Pellene quakes, and Tempe's beauty fades. Here one Giant has seized Pindus' peak, there one has seized Oete, while horribly Mimas rages. Fiery Erinys cracks her brandished scourge, and closer, closer yet, holds out before my face brands burnt on funeral pyres. Cruel Tisiphone, her head with snakes encircled, since the dog was stolen away has blocked the empty gate with her outstretched torch.

[He catches sight of his children.]

⁹⁸⁷ But look! here lurk the children of the king, my enemy, the abominable spawn of Lycus; to your detested father this hand forthwith shall send you. Let my bowstring discharge swift arrows—so it is meet that the shafts of Hercules should fly.

AMPHITRYON

To what deed is his blind fury driven? He has bent his huge bow, the tips drawn close together; he has opened his quiver; shrilly sings the shaft, discharged with force—it has struck the neck full in the middle and sped out past the wound.

HERCULES

The rest of the brood will I rout out and all their hiding-places. Why delay? A greater

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

bellum Mycenis restat, ut Cyclopia
eversa manibus saxa nostris concidant.

Huc eat et illuc valva deiecto obice
rumpatque postes ; culmen impulsum labet. 1000
perlucet omnis regia ; hic video abditum
natum scelesti patris.

AMPHITRYON

En blandas manus
ad genua tendens voce miseranda rogat—
scelus nefandum, triste et aspectu horridum !
dextra precantem rapuit et circa furens
bis ter rotatum misit ; ast illi caput
sonuit, cerebro tecta disperso madent.
at misera, parvum protegens natum sinu,
Megara furenti similis e latebris fugit.

HERCVLES

Licet tonantis profuga condaris sinu, 1010
petet undecumque temet haec dextra et feret.

AMPHITRYON

Quo, misera, pergis ? quam fugam aut latebram
petis ?

HERCULES FURENS

struggle awaits me at Mycenae, that there, by these hands overthrown, the Cyclopean rocks may fall.

[*He begins to tear at the doors of the shrine in which his remaining sons have taken refuge.*]

⁹⁹⁹ Let the doors fly, one here, one there, the barriers cast down; let the smitten roof reel. The whole palace is alight; I see hiding there the son of a cursed sire.

[*He seizes the child and drags him from the scene.*]

AMPHITRYON

[*Standing where he can see what is going on within the palace.*]

See, how he stretches out coaxing hands to his father's knees, and with piteous voice begs—oh, impious crime, grim and horrid sight! With his right hand he has caught the pleading child, and, madly whirling him again and yet again, has hurled him; his head crashed loudly against the stones; the room is drenched with scattered brains. But Megara, poor woman, sheltering her little son within her bosom, flees like a mad creature from her hiding-place.

HERCULES

[*Behind the scene to MEGARA, also behind the scene.*]

Though thou run and hide in the Thunderer's bosom, everywhence shall this hand seek thee and hale thee forth.

AMPHITRYON [*to MEGARA*]

Whither dost thou flee, poor child? What flight or what hiding-place dost thou seek? There is no

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

nullus salutis Hercule infesto est locus.
amplectere ipsum potius et blanda prece
lenire tempta.

MEGARA

Parce iam, coniunx, precor,
agnosce Megaram. natus hic vultus tuos
habitusque reddit; cernis, ut tendat manus?

HERCVLES

Teneo novercam. sequere, da poenas mihi
iugoque pressum libera turpi Iovem;
sed ante matrem parvulum hoc monstrum
occidat.

1020

MEGARA

Quo tendis amens? sanguinem fundes tuum?

AMPHITRYON

Pavefactus infans igneo vultu patris
perit ante vulnus, spiritum eripuit timor.
in coniugem nunc clava libratur gravis—
perfregit ossa, corpori trunco caput
abest nec usquam est.

Cernere hoc audes, nimis
vivax senectus? si piget luctus, habes
mortem paratam; pectus in tela indue,
vel stipitem istuc caede nostrorum inlitum
converte. falsum ac nomini turpem tuo
remove parentem, ne tuae laudi obstrepat.

1030

HERCULES FURENS

place safe from Hercules enraged. Embrace him, rather, and essay to calm him with soothing prayers.

THE VOICE OF MEGARA

Husband, spare me now, I beg. See, I am Megara. This is thy son, with thine own looks and bearing. See, how he stretches out his hands.

THE VOICE OF HERCULES

I have caught my stepdame. Come, pay me thy debt, and free o'ermastered Jove from a degrading yoke.¹ But before the mother let this little monster perish.

THE VOICE OF MEGARA

What wouldst thou, madman? Thine own blood wilt thou shed?

AMPHITRYON

Stricken with terror of his sire's blazing eyes, the child died ere he felt the blow; fear snatched his life away. Against his wife now he poises his heavy club—her bones are crushed, her head is gone from her mangled body, gone utterly.

¹⁰²⁶ [*To himself.*] Darest thou abide this sight, O too stubborn age? If thou art weary of grief, death thou hast ready; expose thy breast to those shafts, or turn against it that club smeared with our children's gore. [*Calling to HERCULES.*] Make away with thy pretended sire, this blot upon thy name, lest he make discord midst thy praise.

¹ He imagines that Megara is Juno, and now he will pay off old scores both in his own and Jove's interests.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

CHORVS

Quo te ipse, senior, obvium morti ingeris?
quo pergis amens? profuge et obtectus late
unumque manibus aufer Herculeis scelus.

HERCVLES

Bene habet, pudendi regis excisa est domus.
tibi hunc dicatum, maximi coniunx Iovis,
gregem cecidi; vota persolvi libens
te digna, et Argos victimas alias dabit.

AMPHITRYON

Nondum litasti, nate; consumma sacrum.
stat ecce ad aras hostia, expectat manum 1040
cervice prona. praebeo occurro insequor;
macta—quid hoc est? errat acies luminum
visusque marcor hebetat; an video Herculis
manus trementes? vultus in somnum cadit
et fessa cervix capite summisso labat;
flexo genu iam totus ad terram ruit,
ut caesa silvis ornus aut portum mari
datura moles.

Vivis an leto dedit
idem tuos qui misit ad mortem furor?

HERCULES FURENS

CHORUS

Why, old man, dost wantonly challenge death? Whither wouldst go, senseless? Flee and securely hide thee, and save Hercules from the one crime left.

[*Re-enter* HERCULES.]

HERCULES

'Tis well; the shameless king's house is utterly destroyed. To thee, wife of almighty Jove, have I slaughtered this devoted flock; vows worthy of thee have I paid right joyfully, and Argos¹ shall give still other victims.

AMPHITRYON

Not yet hast thou made full atonement, son; complete the sacrifice. See, a victim stands before the altar; with bent neck he awaits the stroke. I offer myself to death, I run to meet it, I follow after it; smite—but what is this? The glance of his eyes wanders, and faintness dulls his vision. Do I see the hands of Hercules a-tremble? His eyelids droop in slumber, and his tired neck sinks beneath his drooping head; now his knees give way and his whole body goes crashing to the ground, like an ash-tree felled in the woods, or a falling mass of rock that will give a breakwater to the sea.

[*To* HERCULES.]

¹⁰⁴⁸ Livest thou still, or has that same madness given thee to death which sent thy kindred to their doom?

[*He examines the prostrate body.*]

¹ Eurystheus was lord of Argos.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

sopor est; reciprocos spiritus motus agit. 1050
 detur quieti tempus, ut somno gravi
 vis victa morbi pectus oppressum levet.
 removete, famuli, tela, ne repetat furens.

CHORVS

Lugeat aether magnusque parens
 aetheris alti tellusque ferax
 et vaga ponti mobilis unda,
 tuque ante omnes qui per terras
 tractusque maris fundis radios
 noctemque fugas ore decoro,
 fervide Titan; obitus pariter 1060
 tecum Alcides vidit et ortus
 novitque tuas utrasque domos.

Solvite tantis animum monstis,
 solvite superi, caecam in melius
 flectite mentem. tuque, o domitor
 Somne malorum, requies animi,
 pars humanae melior vitae,
 volucre o matris genus Astraeae,
 frater durae languide Mortis,
 veris miscens falsa, futuri 1070
 certus et idem pessimus auctor,
 pax errorum, portus vitae,
 lucis requies noctisque comes,
 qui par regi famuloque venis,
 pavidum leti genus humanum
 cogis longam discere noctem—
 placidus fessum lenisque fove,
 preme devinctum torpore gravi;
 sopor indomitos alliget artus
 nec torva prius pectora linquat, 1080
 quam mens repetat pristina cursum.

HERCULES FURENS

He sleeps ; his chest heaves with measured breathing.
Let him have time for rest, that deep slumber may
break the force of his madness and relieve his
troubled heart. Ye slaves, remove his weapons, lest
in rage he seek them yet again.

CHORUS

Let heaven mourn, and the great father of high
heaven, and fertile earth, and wandering waves of the
restless main ; and thou above all, who over the lands
and stretches of the sea dost shed thy rays, and dispel-
lest night with comely face, O glowing Sun ; equally
with thee hath Alcides seen the lands of thy setting
and thy rising, and hath known both thy dwellings.

¹⁰⁶³ O free his soul from such monstrous ills, free
him, ye gods, and turn to better things his darkened
spirit. And do thou, O Sleep, vanquisher of woes,
rest of the soul, the better part of human life, thou
winged son of thy mother Astraea, sluggish brother
of cruel Death, thou who dost mingle false with true,
sure yet gloomy guide ¹ to what shall be ; O thou,
who art peace after wanderings, haven of life, day's
respite and night's comrade, who comest alike to
king and slave, who dost compel the human race,
trembling at death, to prepare for unending night—
sweetly and gently soothe his weary spirit ; hold
him fast bound in heavy stupor ; let slumber chain
his untamed limbs, and leave not his savage breast
until his former mind regain its course.

¹ Perhaps because dreams are generally of evil.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

En fusus humi saeva feroci
 corde volutat somnia ; nondum est
 tanti pestis superata mali ;
 clavaeque gravi lassum solitus
 mandare caput quaerit vacua
 pondera dextra, motu iactans
 bracchia vano. nec adhuc omnes
 expulit aestus, sed ut ingenti
 vexata noto servat longos 1090
 unda tumultus et iam vento
 cessante tumet ¹ * * pelle insanos
 fluctus animi, redeat pietas
 virtusque viro. vel sit potius
 mens vesano concita motu ;
 error caecus qua coepit eat ;
 solus te iam praestare potest
 furor insontem. proxima puris
 sors est manibus nescire nefas.

Nunc Herculeis percussa sonent 1100
 pectora palmis, mundum solitos
 ferre lacertos verbera pulsent
 victrice manu ; gemitus vastos
 audiat aether, audiat atri
 regina poli vastisque ferox
 qui colla gerit vincta catenis
 imo latitans Cerberus antro ;
 resonet maesto clamore chaos
 latique patens unda profundi
 et qui medius tua tela tamen 1110
 senserat aer ; ²
 pectora tantis obsessa malis

¹ *Leo recognizes a lacuna here with Withof, and suggests the completion of the sentence thus: sic pristina adhuc quatit ira virum.*

² *et qui . . . aer, deleted by B. Schmidt, followed by Leo.*

HERCULES FURENS

¹⁰⁸² See, prone on the ground, he revolves in his fierce heart his savage dreams; not yet has the baleful power of so great woe been overcome; wont to recline his weary head on his heavy club, he feels for its ponderous trunk with empty hand, tossing his arms in fruitless movement. Not yet has he dispelled all his surging madness, but as the waves, stirred up by a mighty wind, still keep their long, tumultuous roll, and still are swollen though the wind has ceased, [so does his former rage still rack the hero.] Banish¹ the mad passions of thy soul; let the hero's piety and manly courage come again. Or rather, let his mind still be stirred by uncontrolled emotion; let his blind error go on the way it has begun; madness alone can now make thee innocent. Next best to guiltless hands is ignorance of guilt.

¹¹⁰⁰ Now let Hercules' breast resound beneath the blows of his palms; let those arms that were wont to upbear the universe be smitten by his victorious hands; let the heavens hear his mighty groans, let the queen of the dark world hear, and fierce Cerberus, crouching in his lowest cave, his necks still bound with chains; let Chaos re-echo the outcries of his grief, and the spreading waves of the broad deep, and mid-air which no less had felt thy shafts; the breast beset by so great ills must by no light blow be

¹ The poet wavers in his conception of the person addressed throughout this passage (1092-1121).

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

non sunt ictu ferienda levi, uno planctu tria regna sonent. et tu collo decus ac telum suspensa diu, fortis harundo, pharetraeque graves, date saeva fero verbera tergo; caedant umeros robora fortes stipesque potens duris laceret ¹ pectora nodis:	1120
plangent tantos arma dolores.	
Ite infaustum genus, o pueri,	1135
noti per iter triste laboris,	1136
non vos patriae laudis comites	1122
ulti saevos vulnere reges, non Argiva membra palaestra flectere docti fortes caestu	1125
fortesque manu nondumque ferae	1130
terga iubatae ² * * iam tamen ausi	1126
telum Scythicis leve corytis missum certa librare manu	
tutosque fuga figere cervos—	1129
ite ad Stygios, umbrae, portus	1131
ite, innocuae, quas in primo limine vitae scelus oppressit patriusque furor;	1134
ite, iratos visite reges.	1137

HERCVLES

Quis hic locus, quae regio, quae mundi plaga? ubi sum? sub ortu solis, an sub cardine glacialis ursae? numquid Hesperii maris	1140
extrema tellus hunc dat Oceano modum?	

¹ laceret *Leo*: oneret *MSS.*

² *Leo* assumes a lacuna here which he supplies with the line
vulnere gaesi frangere torti.

HERCULES FURENS

smitten ; with one lamentation three kingdoms must resound. And thou, brave reed, which hung so long as ornament and weapon from his neck, and thou, heavy quiver, lay savage blows on his untamed back ; let the stout oak club mangle his strong shoulders and with its hard knots bruise his breast ; let his weapons make lament for his mighty woes.

¹¹³⁵ Go ye, ill-fated brood, ye boys, along the gloomy way of your father's famous task, not destined to be partakers of his praise by taking bloody vengeance on savage kings ; never taught in Argive wrestling school to ply the limbs, brave with boxing-glove and brave with hand, never yet taught to wound the maned lion with well-hurled javelin, but yet already bold to poise and throw with steady hand the slender Scythian dart, and shoot the deer that seek safety in flight—go to the haven of the Styx, go, harmless shades whom on the very threshold of life your sire's mad crime o'ercame ; go, go to the presence of the angered kings.¹

HERCULES

[*Waking up in his right mind.*]

What place is this ? What region, what quarter of the world ? Where am I ? Beneath the sun's rising or beneath the wheeling course of the frozen Bear ? Is this the boundary set to Ocean's stream by that farthest land on the western sea ? What air

¹ *i.e.* the lords of death, angry because Hercules had defied them.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

quas trahimus auras? quod solum fesso subest?
certe redimus—

Unde prostrata ad domum
video cruenta corpora? an nondum exiit
simulacra mens inferna? post reditus quoque
oberrat oculis turba feralis meis?
pudet fateri—paveo; nescio quod mihi,
nescio quod animus grande praesagit malum.
ubi es, parens? ubi illa natorum grege
animosa coniunx? cur latus laevum vacat 1150
spolio leonis? quonam abit tegimen meum
idemque somno mollis Herculeo torus?
ubi tela? ubi arcus? arma quis vivo mihi
detrahere potuit? spolia quis tanta abstulit
ipsumque quis non Herculis somnum horruit?
libet meum videre victorem, libet.
exurge, virtus, quem novum caelo pater
genuit relicto, cuius in fetu stetit
nox longior quam nostra—

Quod cerno nefas?
nati cruenta caede confecti iacent, 1160
perempta coniunx. quis Lycus regnum obtinet?
quis tanta Thebis scelera moliri ausus est¹
Hercule reverso? quisquis Ismeni loca,
Actaea quisquis arva, qui gemino mari
pulsata Pelopis regna Dardanii colis,
succurre, saevae cladis auctorem indica.
ruat ira in omnes; hostis est quisquis mihi
non monstrat hostem. victor Alcidae, lates?

¹ *Leo deletes this line.*

HERCULES FURENS

is this I breathe? What soil lies beneath my weary frame? Surely I have returned to earth—

[*His eyes fall on his murdered children.*]

¹¹⁴³ How is it that I see bloody corpses lying before my house? Is my mind not yet free from infernal phantoms? Even after my return do troops of ghastly things still throng before my eyes? With shame I confess it—I am afraid; something, some great calamity my heart forebodes. Where art thou, father? Where is my wife, so proud of her brood of sons? Why is my left shoulder bare of the lion's spoil? Whither has it gone, that shield of mine, at once a soft couch, too, for the sleep of Hercules? Where are my shafts? my bow? Who has been able to steal away my arms while I still live? Who has gained so great spoils of me, and has not shuddered at even a sleeping Hercules? Glad would I be to see my conqueror, glad. Come forth, thou brave hero, whom my sire, leaving heaven, has begotten, a later son, at whose begetting night stood still, longer than at mine—

[*He recognizes his dead wife and children.*]

¹¹⁵⁹ What horror do I see? My sons, with bloody murder destroyed, lie here, my wife lies slain. What Lycus holds sway now? Who has dared perpetrate such outrages in Thebes, though Hercules has returned? Whoever dwellest by Ismenus' stream, on Attic plains, in the kingdom of Dardanian Pelops, lapped by two seas, come to my aid, tell me the doer of this cruel murder. On all let mine anger sweep; my foeman is he who points not out the foe. Vanquisher of Alcides, dost hide? Come

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

procede, seu tu vindicas currus truces
 Thracis cruenti sive Geryonae pecus 1170
 Libyaeve dominos, nulla pugnandi mora est.
 en nudus asto, vel meis armis licet
 petas inermem.

Cur meos Theseus fugit
 paterque vultus? ora cur condunt sua?
 differte fletus; quis meos dederit neci
 omnes simul, profare—quid, genitor, siles?
 at tu ede, Theseu, sed tua, Theseu, fide.
 uterque tacitus ora pudibunda obtegit
 furtimque lacrimas fundit. in tantis malis
 quid est pudendum? numquid Argivae impotens
 dominator urbis, numquid infestum Lyci 1181
 pereuntis agmen clade nos tanta obruit?
 per te meorum facinorum laudem precor,
 genitor, tuique nominis semper mihi
 numen secundum, fare. quis fudit domum?
 cui praeda iacui?

AMPHITRYON

Tacita sic abeant mala.

HERCVLES

Vt inultus ego sim?

AMPHITRYON

Saepe vindicta obfuit.

HERCULES FURENS

out; whether thou dost seek vengeance for the savage horses of the bloody Thracian,¹ or for Geryon's flock, or the Libyan heroes,² I am ready for the fray. Here I stand defenceless, e'en though with my own arms thou shouldst assail me armourless.

¹¹⁷³ Why does Theseus avoid my eyes, why does my father? Why do they hide their faces? Postpone your tears. Who has given my loved ones to death, all of them at once, tell me—why, father, art thou silent? But do thou tell, Theseus! Nay, Theseus, tell me by thy loyalty!—They both in silence turn away and hide their faces as if in shame, while tears steal down their cheeks. In woes so great what room is there for shame? Has the ruthless lord³ of Argos, has the hostile band of dying Lycus, in ruin so vast overwhelmed me? O father, by the glory of my deeds, I pray thee, and by thy sacred name⁴ always next⁵ hallowed in my sight, speak out! who has overthrown my house? To whom have I fallen prey?

AMPHITRYON

In silence, as they may, let troubles pass.

HERCULES

And I be unavenged?

AMPHITRYON

Oft vengeance has brought bane.

¹ Diomedes.

² *e.g.* Antaeus, Busiris.

³ Eurystheus.

⁴ *i.e.* of father.

⁵ *i.e.* next to that of Jove, real father of Hercules. The play on the words *nomen* and *numen* cannot be reproduced in English.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

HERCVLES

Quisquamne segnis tanta toleravit mala?

AMPHITRYON

Maiora quisquis timuit.

HERCVLES

His etiam, pater,
quicquam timeri maius aut gravius potest? 1190

AMPHITRYON

Cladis tuae pars ista quam nosti quota est!

HERCVLES

Miserere, genitor, supplices tendo manus.
quid hoc? manus refugit—hic errat scelus.
unde hic cruor? quid illa puerili madens
harundo leto? tincta Lernaea est nece—
iam tela video nostra. non quaero manum.
quis potuit arcum flectere aut quae dextera
sinuare nervum vix recedentem mihi?
ad vos revertor; genitor, hoc nostrum est scelus?
tacuere—nostrum est.

AMPHITRYON

Luctus est istic tuus, 1200
crimen novercae. casus hic culpa caret.

HERCVLES

Nunc parte ab omni, genitor, iratus tona,
oblite nostri vindica sera manu

HERCULES FURENS

HERCULES

Has any e'er borne such woes supinely?

AMPHITRYON

Yes, he who greater woes has feared.

HERCULES

But than these, father, can aught still greater or heavier be feared?

AMPHITRYON

How small the part of thy calamity is that thou knowest!

HERCULES

Have pity, father; see, I stretch out suppliant hands. What? from my hands he started back—here lurks the sin. Whence this blood? What of that shaft, still dripping with the blood of boys? It has been dipped in Hydra's gore—ah, now my own weapons do I recognize. No need to ask the hand that used them! Who could have bent the bow or what hand drawn the string which scarce yields to me? I turn to you again; father, is this my deed? Silent still—'tis mine.

AMPHITRYON

Truly the woe is thine; the crime thy step-dame's. This mischance is free from sin.

HERCULES

Now from every quarter of the sky, O father, thunder in thy wrath; though thou hast forgotten

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

saltem nepotes. stelliger mundus sonet
 flammasque et hic et ille iaculetur polus ;
 rupes ligatum Caspiae corpus trahant
 atque ales avida—cur Promethei vacant
 scopuli? vacat cur vertice immenso feras
 volucresque pascens Caucasi abruptum latus
 nudumque silvis? illa quae pontum Scythen 1210
 Symplegas artat hinc et hinc vinctas manus
 distendat alto, cumque revocata vice
 in se coibunt saxaque in caelum expriment
 actis utrimque rupibus medium mare,
 ego inquieta montium iaceam mora.
 quin structum acervans nemore congesto aggerem
 cruore corpus impio sparsum cremo?
 sic, sic agendum est—inferis reddam Herculem.

AMPHITRYON

Nondum tumultu pectus attonito carens
 mutavit iras quodque habet proprium furor, 1220
 in se ipse saevit.

HERCVLES

Dira Furiarum loca
 et inferorum carcer et sonti plaga
 decreta turbae, si quod exilium latet
 ulterius Erebo, Cerbero ignotum et mihi,
 hoc me abde, tellus; Tartari ad finem ultimum
 mansurus ibo. pectus o nimium ferum!
 quis vos per omnem, liberi, sparsos domum
 deflere digne poterit? hic durus malis
 106

HERCULES FURENS

me, with tardy hand at least avenge thy grandsons. Let the starry heavens resound, and the skies dart lightnings from pole to pole ; let the Caspian crags¹ claim my fettered body, and let the ravenous bird— Why are Prometheus' crags unoccupied? Why, the bare, steep side of Caucasus which, on its lofty summit, feeds beasts and birds of prey? Let those clashing rocks² which confine the Scythian sea stretch my fettered hands apart this way and that o'er the deep, and, when with recurrent change they come together and when, as the crags rush from either side, the rocks force up to heaven the interposing flood, may I lie there the mountains' tortured curb. Nay, I will build me a huge pile of logs and burn my body spattered with impious gore. Thus, thus must I do—to the nether gods will I give back Hercules.

AMPHITRYON

His heart, not yet eased of frenzy's tumult, has shifted its wrath's aim and now, sure sign of madness, he rages against himself.

HERCULES

Ye dire abodes of fiends, prison-house of the dead, ye regions set apart for the guilty throng, if any place of banishment lies hidden away beneath hell itself, unknown to Cerberus and me, hide me there, O earth ; to the remotest bounds of Tartarus will I go and there abide. O heart too fierce ! Who can weep worthily for you, my children, scattered through all my house? This face, hardened with

¹ To which Prometheus had been bound, and from which Hercules released him.

² The Symplegades. See Index.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

lacrimare vultus nescit. huc arcum date,
date huc sagittas, stipitem huc vastum date. 1230

Tibi tela frangam nostra, tibi nostros, puer,
rumpemus arcus; at tuis stipes gravis
ardebit umbris; ipsa Lernaëis frequens
pharetra telis in tuos ibit rogos.
dent arma poenas. vos quoque infaustas meis
cremabo telis, o novercales manus.

AMPHITRYON

Quis nomen usquam sceleris errori addidit?

HERCVLES

Saepe error ingens sceleris obtinuit locum.

AMPHITRYON

Nunc Hercule opus est; perfer hanc molem mali.

HERCVLES

Non sic furore cessit extinctus pudor, 1240
populos ut omnes impio aspectu fugem.
arma, arma, Theseu, flagito propere mihi
subtracta reddi. sana si mens est mihi,
referte manibus tela; si remanet furor,
pater, recede; mortis inveniam viam.

AMPHITRYON

Per sancta generis sacra, per ius nominis
utrumque nostri, sive me altorem vocas

HERCULES FURENS

woe, has forgotten how to weep. Give my bow here, give me my arrows, here give me my huge club.

[*He bends over the corpses and addresses each in turn.*]

¹²³¹ For thee will I break my shafts, for thee, poor boy, will I rend my bow; but to thy shades my heavy club shall burn; my quiver itself, full of Lerna's darts, shall go with thee to thy pyre. So let my arms pay the penalty. You, too, with my weapons will I burn, O cursed hands, my stepdame's tools.

AMPHITRYON

What man anywhere hath laid on error the name of guilt?

HERCULES

Oft hath great error held the place of guilt.

AMPHITRYON

Now must thou be Hercules; bear thou this weight of trouble.

HERCULES

Shame, quenched by madness, has not so far gone from me that with unhallowed presence I should scare all peoples. Arms, Theseus, my arms! I pray you quickly give back what you have stolen. If my mind is sane, give back to my hands their weapons; if madness still remains, fly, O my father; I shall find a path to death.

AMPHITRYON

By the holy ties of birth, by the rights of both my names, whether thou dost call me foster-father

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

seu tu parentem, perque venerandos piis
 canos, senectae parcee desertae, precor,
 annisque fessis; unicum lapsae domus 1250
 firmamen, unum lumen afflicto malis
 temet reserva. nullus ex te contigit
 fructus laborum; semper aut dubium mare
 aut monstra timui; quisquis in toto furit
 rex saevus orbe, manibus aut aris nocens,
 a me timetur; semper absentis pater
 fructum tui tactumque et aspectum peto.

HERCVLES

Cur animam in ista luce detineam amplius
 morerque nil est; cuncta iam amisi bona:
 mentem arma famam coniugem natos manus, 1260
 etiam furorem! nemo polluto queat
 animo mederi; morte sanandum est scelus.

AMPHITRYON

Perimes parentem.

HERCVLES

Facere ne possim, occidam.

AMPHITRYON

Genitore coram?

HERCVLES

Cernere hunc docui nefas.

AMPHITRYON

Memoranda potius omnibus facta intuens
 unius a te criminis veniam pete.

HERCULES FURENS

or true sire, by these grey hairs, which pious sons revere, spare thyself, I pray, to my lonely age and to my weary years. Sole prop of my fallen house, sole light of my woe-darkened life, save thyself for me. No enjoyment of thee, no fruit of thy toils has fallen to my lot; but always have I had to fear either the stormy seas or monsters; every cruel king that rages in all the world with guilt on his hands or altars is cause of dread to me; always do I, thy father, yearn for the joy of touch and sight of thee, my ever-absent son.

HERCULES

Why I should longer stay my soul in the light of day, and linger here, there is no cause; all that was dear to me I've lost: reason, arms, honour, wife, children, strength—and madness too! No power could purge a tainted spirit; by death must sin be healed.

AMPHITRYON

Thou wilt slay thy father.

HERCULES

Lest I do so, I'll die.

AMPHITRYON

Before thy father's eyes?

HERCULES

I have taught him to look on impious deeds.

AMPHITRYON

Nay, rather think upon thy deeds glorious to all, and seek from thyself pardon for one sin.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

HERCVLES

Veniam dabit sibi ipse, qui nulli dedit?
laudanda feci iussus; hoc unum meum est.
succurre, genitor; sive te pietas movet
seu triste fatum sive violatum decus 1270
virtutis. effer arma; vincatur mea
fortuna dextra.

THESEVS

Sunt quidem patriae preces
satis efficaces, sed tamen nostro quoque
movere fletu. surge et adversa impetu
perfringe solito. nunc tuum nulli imparem
animum malo resume, nunc magna tibi
virtute agendum est: Herculem irasci veta.

HERCVLES

Si vivo, feci scelera; si morior, tuli.
purgare terras propero. iamdudum mihi
monstrum impium saevumque et immite ac ferum
oberrat; agedum dextra, conare aggredi 1281
ingens opus, labore bis seno amplius.
ignava cessas, fortis in pueros modo
pavidasque matres? arma nisi dantur mihi,
aut omne Pindi Thracis excidam nemus
Bacchique lucos et Cithaeronis iuga
mecum cremabo, aut tota cum domibus suis
dominisque tecta, cum deis templa omnibus
Thebana supra corpus excipiam meum
atque urbe versa condar, et, si fortibus 1290
leve pondus umeris moenia immissa incident

HERCULES FURENS

HERCULES

Shall he give remission to himself who to none other gave it? As for my glorious deeds, at others' best I did them; this alone is mine. Help me, father; whether love move thee, or my sad fate, or the tarnished glory of my manhood. Bring me my weapons; by my right hand let fate be vanquished.

THESEUS

Enough thy father's prayers have power to move, but let my weeping move thee, too. Up! and with thy wonted force break through adversity. Now get back thy courage which was ne'er unequal to any hardship; now must thou greatly play the man— forbid Hercules to rage!

HERCULES

If I keep to life, I have wrought wrong; if I die, have borne it. I am in haste to purge the earth. Long since a monstrous form, impious, savage, inexorable, wild, has stalked before my eyes; come, hand, grapple with this task greater than the last of all thy labours. Coward, dost thou shrink, brave against boys alone and trembling mothers? My arms, I say! Unless they are given me, either I will cut down all the woods of Thracian Pindus and Bacchus' groves and Cithaeron's ridges, and along with my own body I will burn them up; or else all the dwellings of Thebes with their households and their masters, the temples with all their gods, I will pull down upon myself and lie buried 'neath a city's wreck; and if, hurled on my shoulders, the walls shall fall with too light a weight, and if, buried

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

septemque opertus non satis portis premar,
onus omne media parte quod mundi sedet
dirimitque superos, in meum vertam caput.

AMPHITRYON

Reddo arma.

HERCVLES

Vox est digna genitore Herculis.
hoc en peremptus spiculo cecidit puer.

AMPHITRYON

Hoc Iuno telum manibus immisit tuis.

HERCVLES

Hoc nunc ego utar.

AMPHITRYON

Ecce quam miserum metu
cor palpitat pectusque sollicitum ferit.

HERCVLES

Aptata harundo est.

AMPHITRYON

Ecce iam facies scelus 1300
volens sciensque.

HERCVLES

Pande, quid fieri iubes?

HERCULES FURENS

beneath the seven gates, I be not crushed enough, then all the mass which lies at the centre of the universe and separates gods from men will I overthrow upon my head.

AMPHITRYON

I return thine arms.

HERCULES

Thy words are worthy the sire of Hercules. See, slain by this shaft fell my boy.

AMPHITRYON

'Twas Juno shot the arrow by thy hand.

HERCULES

'Tis I who shall use it now.

AMPHITRYON

Oh, how my woeful heart trembles with fear and smites on my anxious breast!

HERCULES

The shaft is notched.

AMPHITRYON

Ah, now wilt thou sin of thine own will and knowledge.

HERCULES

Speak out ; what wouldst have me do ?

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

AMPHITRYON

Nihil rogamus; noster in tuto est dolor—
 natum potes servare tu solus mihi,
 eripere nec tu. maximum evasi metum;
 miserum haut potes me facere, felicem potes.
 sic statue, quidquid statuis, et causam tuam
 famamque in arto stare et ancipiti scias;
 aut vivis aut occidis. hanc animam levem
 fessamque senio nec minus fessam malis
 in ore primo teneo. tam tarde patri 1310
 vitam dat aliquis? non feram ulterius moram,
 letale ferro pectus impresso¹ induam;
 hic, hic iacebit Herculis sani scelus.

HERCVLES

Iam parce, genitor, parce, iam revoca manum.
 succumbe, virtus, perfer imperium patris.
 eat ad labores hic quoque Herculeos labor:
 vivamus. artus alleva afflictos solo,
 Theseu, parentis. dextra contactus pios
 scelerata refugit.

AMPHITRYON

Hanc manum amplector libens,
 hac nisus ibo, pectori hanc aegro admovens 1320
 pellam dolores.

HERCVLES

Quem locum profugus petam?
 ubi me recondam quave tellure obruar?
 quis Tanais aut quis Nilus aut quis Persica
 violentus unda Tigris aut Rhenus ferox

¹ impressum A: Richter laetare! ferro pectus impresso induam.

HERCULES FURENS

AMPHITRYON

I make no prayer; for me woe is assured—thou alone canst preserve my son to me, but not even thou canst snatch him from me. I have passed my greatest fear; wretched thou canst not make me, but blest, thou canst. Decide, then, as thou wilt decide, but know that in so doing thy cause and fame stand at hazard and doubtful issue; either thou livest or slayest me. This fitting soul, weary with age and no less with woe weary, I hold upon my very lips. So grudgingly does any man grant his father life? [*He seizes a sword and sets its point to his breast.*] I will brook no more delay; with the fatal steel thrust home will I pierce my breast; here, here shall lie the crime of a sane Hercules!

HERCULES

Now hold, father, hold, recall thy hand! Strong soul of mine, yield, do a father's will; add this task also to Hercules' toils—and live! Theseus, lift thou from the ground my father's fainting limbs. My hands defiled shrink from that pious touch.

AMPHITRYON

But I clasp this hand joyfully; by its help I'll walk and, holding it close to my aching heart, banish my griefs.

HERCULES

Whither shall I flee? Where shall I hide me, or in what land bury me? What Tanaïs, what Nile, what Tigris, raging with Persian torrents, what warlike Rhine, or Tagus, turbid with the golden sands

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

Tagusve Hibera turbidus gaza fluens
 abluere dextram poterit? arctoum licet
 Maeotis in me gelida transfundat mare
 et tota Tethys per meas currat manus,
 haerebit altum facinus. in quas impius
 terras recedes? ortum an occasum petes? 1330
 ubique notus perdidit exilio locum.
 me refugit orbis, astra transversos agunt
 obliqua cursus, ipse Titan Cerberum
 meliore vultu vidit. o fidum caput,
 Theseu, latebram quaere longinquam abditam;
 quoniamque semper sceleris alieni arbiter
 amas nocentes, gratiam meritis refer
 vicemque nostris. redde me infernis precor
 umbris reductum, meque subiectum tuis
 substitue vinclis; ille me abscondet locus— 1340
 sed et ille novit.

THESEVS

Nostra te tellus manet.
 illic solutam caede Gradivus manum
 restituit armis: illa te, Alcide, vocat,
 facere innocentes terra quae superos solet.

HERCULES FURENS

of Spain, can cleanse this hand? Though cold Maeotis should pour its northern sea upon me, though the whole ocean should stream along my hands, still will the deep stains cling. To what countries, man of sin, wilt thou betake thee? The rising or the setting sun wilt seek? Known in every land, I have lost place for exile. The world shrinks from my presence, the stars, moving askance, turn away their courses; Titan himself looked upon Cerberus with kindlier face. O faithful friend, Theseus, seek a hiding-place for me, remote, obscure; since, though witness of others' sins, thou dost ever love the sinners, grant me now grace and recompense for favours past. Take me back, I pray thee, and restore me to the nether shades; put me in thy stead, loaded with thy chains; that place will hide me—but it, too, knows me!

THESEUS

My land awaits thee. There Gradivus once cleansed his hands from blood¹ and gave them back to war; thee, Alcides, does that land call, land which can free the immortals from their stains.²

¹ See Index *s.v.* "Mars."

² If Athens could cleanse Mars from blood-guiltiness, she could do the same for Hercules.

DRAMATIC PERSONAE

TROADES

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

- AGAMEMNON, *king of the Greek forces in the war against Troy.*
PYRRHUS, *son of Achilles, one of the active leaders in the final events of the war.*
ULYSSES, *king of Ithaca, one of the most powerful and crafty of the Greek chiefs before Troy.*
CALCHAS, *a priest and prophet among the Greeks.*
TALTHYBIUS, *a Greek messenger.*
AN OLD MAN, *faithful to Andromache.*
ASTYANAX, *little son of Hector and Andromache.*
HECUBA, *widow of Priam, one of the Trojan captives.*
ANDROMACHE, *widow of Hector, a Trojan captive.*
HELENA, *wife of Menelaüs, king of Sparta, and afterwards of Paris, a prince of Troy; the exciting cause of the Trojan war.*
POLYXENA, *daughter of Hecuba and Priam (persona muta).*
CHORUS *of captive Trojan women.*

THE SCENE is laid on the seashore, with the smouldering ruins of Troy in the background.

THE TIME is the day before the embarkation of the Greeks on their homeward journey.

ARGUMENT

THE long and toilsome siege of Troy is done. Her stately palaces and massive walls have been overthrown and lie darkening the sky with their still smouldering ruins. Her heroic defenders are either slain or scattered, seeking other homes in distant lands. The victorious Greeks have gathered the rich spoils of Troy upon the shore, among these the Trojan women, who have suffered the usual fate of women when a city is sacked. They await the lot which shall assign them to their Grecian lords and scatter them among the cities of their foes. All things are ready for the start.

But now the ghost of Achilles has risen from the tomb, and demanded that Polyxena be sacrificed to him before the Greeks shall be allowed to sail away. And Calchas, also, bids that Astyanax be slain, for only thus can Greece be safe from any future Trojan war. And thus the Trojan captives, who have so long endured the pains of war, must suffer still this double tragedy.

TROADES

HECVBA

QVICVMQVE regno fidit et magna potens
dominatur aula nec leves metuit deos
animumque rebus credulum laetis dedit,
me videat et te, Troia. non unquam tulit
documenta fors maiora, quam fragili loco
starent superbi. columen eversum occidit
pollentis Asiae, caelitum egregius labor ;
ad cuius arma venit et qui¹ frigidum
septena Tanain ora pandentem bibit
et qui renatum primus excipiens diem 10
tepidum rubenti Tigrin immiscet freto,
et quae vagos vicina prospiciens Scythas
ripam catervis Ponticam viduis ferit,²
excisa ferro est, Pergamum incubuit sibi.
en alta muri decora congesti³ iacent
tectis adustis ;⁴ regiam flammae ambiunt
omnisque late fumat Assaraci domus.
non prohibet avidas flamma victoris manus.
diripitur ardens Troia. nec caelum patet
undante fumo ; nube ceu densa obsitus 20
ater favilla squallet Iliaca dies.

¹ A : Leo quae.

² Leo deletes et quae . . . ferit.

³ A : Leo congestis.

⁴ A : Leo adusti.

TROADES

HECUBA

WHOEVER trusts in sovereignty and strongly lords it in his princely hall, who fears not the fickle gods and has given up his trustful soul to joy, on me let him look and on thee, O Troy. Never did fortune give larger proof on how frail ground stand the proud. O'erthrown and fallen is mighty Asia's prop,¹ famous work of gods; she to whose assistance came he² who drinks chill Tanaïs, spreading its sevenfold mouths, he³ who first greets the new-born day, where mingle the warm waters of Tigris with the ruddy sea, and she⁴ who sees o'er her borders the wandering Scythians and with her virgin hordes scourges the Pontic shore—e'en she by the sword is razed, Pergamum upon herself has fallen. See! the towering glories of her high-piled wall lie low, her dwellings consumed by fire; the flames lick round her palace, and all the house of Assaracus smokes on every side. The flames check not the victor's greedy hands; Troy is plundered even while she burns. The very sky is hidden by billowing smoke; the face of day, obscured as by an impenetrable cloud, is black and foul with the ashes of Ilium. With wrath still

¹ Troy, whose walls were built by Neptune and Apollo.

² Rhesus.

³ Memnon.

⁴ Penthesilea, queen of the Amazons.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

stat avidus irae victor et lentum Ilium
 metitur oculis ac decem tandem ferus
 ignoscit annis ; horret afflictam quoque,
 victamque quamvis videat, haut credit sibi
 potuisse vinci. spolia populator rapit
 Dardania ; praedam mille non capiunt rates.

Testor deorum numen adversum mihi,
 patriaeque cineres teque rectorem Phrygum 30
 quem Troia toto conditum regno tegit,
 tuosque manes quo stetit stante Ilium,
 et vos, meorum liberum magni greges,
 umbrae minores : quidquid adversi accidit,
 quaecumque Phoebas ore lymphato furens
 credi deo vetante praedixit mala,
 prior Hecuba vidi gravida nec tacui metus
 et vana vates ante Cassandram fui.
 non cautus ignes Ithacus aut Ithaci comes
 nocturnus in vos sparsit aut fallax Sinon.
 meus ignis iste est, facibus ardetis meis. 40

Sed quid ruinas urbis eversae gemis,
 vivax senectus ? respice infelix ad hos
 luctus recentes ; Troia iam vetus est malum.
 vidi execrandum regiae caedis nefas
 ipsasque ad aras (maius admissum fide)
 Aeacidis arma,¹ cum ferox, scaeva manu
 coma reflectens regium torta caput,
 alto nefandum vulneri ferrum abdidit ;

¹ *So Leo conjectures by way of emending the impossible text :
 maius admissumst scelus Aeacis armis.*

TROADES

unglutted the victor stands, eyeing long-lingering Ilium, and at last, spite of his savage hate, forgives the ten long years; he quakes even at her ruins and, though he sees her overthrown, yet trusts not his own witness that she could have been overthrown. The plunderer hurries away the Dardan spoils, booty which a thousand ships cannot contain.

²⁸ I call to witness the divinity of the gods, hostile to me, the ashes of my country, thee,¹ ruler of Phrygia, whom, buried beneath thy whole realm, Troy covers, and the shades of thee² with whose standing Ilium stood, and you, great troops of children mine, ye lesser shades: whatever disaster has befallen us, whatever evils Phoebus' bride,³ raving with frenzied lips, foretold of evil, though the god forbade that she should be believed, I, Hecuba, big with child,⁴ saw first, nor did I keep my fears unuttered, and I before Cassandra was a prophetess unheeded. 'Tis not the crafty Ithacan,⁵ nor the night-prowling comrade⁶ of the Ithacan, who has scattered firebrands 'mongst you, nor the lying Sinon—mine is that fire, by my brands are you burning.

⁴¹ But why lamentest thou the downfall of a city overthrown, old age that clingest too long to life? Think thou, ill-fated, on these recent griefs; Troy's fall is now an ancient woe. I saw the accursed murder of the king and at the very altar (crime past belief) the arms of Aeacides,⁷ when he, with left hand clutching the old man's hair, bent back the royal head and into the deep wound savagely thrust the impious steel; and when with right good will

¹ Priam.

² Hector's.

³ Cassandra.

⁴ Paris. See Index *s.v.* "Paris" and "Hecuba."

⁵ Ulysses.

⁶ Diomedes.

⁷ Pyrrhus, son of Achilles, and remote descendant of Aeacus.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

quod penitus actum cum recepisset libens,
 ensis senili siccus e iugulo redit. 50
 placare quem non potuit a caede effera
 mortalis aevi cardinem extremum premens
 superique testes sceleris et quondam¹ sacrum
 regni iacentis? ille tot regum parens
 caret sepulcro Priamus et flamma indiget
 ardente Troia. non tamen superis sat est;
 dominum ecce Priami nuribus et natis legens
 sortitur urna praedaque en vilis sequar.
 hic Hectoris coniugia despondet sibi,
 hic optat Heleni coniugem, hic Antenoris; 60
 nec dest tuos, Cassandra, qui thalamos petat.
 mea sors timetur, sola sum Danais metus.
 Lamenta cessant? turba captivae mea,
 ferite palmis pectora et planctus date
 et iusta Troiae facite. iamdudum sonet
 fatalis Ide, iudicis diri domus.

CHORVS

Non rude vulgus lacrimisque novum
 lugere iubes: hoc continuis
 egimus annis, ex quo tetigit
 Phrygius Graias hospes Amyclas 70
 secuitque fretum pinus matri
 sacra Cybebae.
 deciens nivibus canuit Ide,
 deciens nostris nudata rogis,
 et Sigeis trepidus campis
 decumas secuit messor aristas,
 ut nulla dies maerore caret.

¹ So ψ : *Leo* quoddam.

¹ Paris.

² *Ibid.*

TROADES

he had plucked away the deep-driven sword, it came unwetted from the old man's throat. Ah, whose rage might not have been stayed from savage slaughter by one close drawing to the last period of mortal life, by the gods who beheld the crime, and by what was once the sanctuary of a fallen realm? Priam, that father of so many princes, lies unentombed and lacks a funeral torch, though Troy is burning. And yet the gods are not satisfied; behold, the urn by lot is choosing lords for the matrons and maids of Priam's house, and I, a spoil unprized, shall follow some new lord. One promises himself the wife of Hector, one prays that Helenus' wife be his, and one, Antenor's; nor is one wanting who seeks thy couch, Cassandra—my lot is dreaded, I only am a terror to the Greeks.

⁶³ Do your wailings falter? O throng of mine, captive as I am, smite breasts with palms, make loud laments, due rites for Troy perform. Long since 'twere time for fatal Ida to resound, home of the ill-omened judge.¹

CHORUS

No untrained company, stranger to tears, dost thou bid mourn; this have we done for years unceasing, from when the Phrygian guest² touched at Grecian Amyclae, and the waves were cleft by the pine sacred to mother Cybele.³ Ten times has Ida whitened with her snows, ten times been stripped for our funeral pyres, and in the Sigeian fields ten harvests has the trembling reaper cut, since when no day has been without its grief. But now we have

² *i.e.* the pines were cut on Mount Ida, which was sacred to Cybele.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

sed nova fletus causa ministrat.
 ite ad planctus, miseramque leva,
 regina, manum. vulgus dominam 80
 vile sequemur; non indociles
 lugere sumus.

HECVBA

Fidae casus nostri comites,
 solvite crinem, per colla fluant
 maesta capilli tepido Troiae
 pulvere turpes. complete manus, 102^b
 hoc ex Troia sumpsisse licet.¹ 103
 paret exertos turba lacertos;
 87
 veste remissa substringe sinus
 uteroque tenus pateant artus.
 cui coniugio pectora velas, 90
 captive pudor?
 cingat tunicas palla solutas,
 vacet ad crebri verbera planctus
 furibunda manus—placet hic habitus,
 placet; agnosco Troada turbam.
 iterum luctus redeant veteres,
 solitum flendi vincite morem;
 Hectora flemus.

CHORVS

Solvimus omnes lacerum multo
 funere crinem; coma demissa est 100
 libera nodo sparsitque cinis
 fervidus ora.
 cadit ex umeris vestis apertis 104
 imumque tegit suffulta latus;

¹ *Leo follows F. Haase in transferring ll. 102^b and 103 to this place.*

TROADES

new cause for weeping. On with your lamentation, and do thou, O queen, lift high thy wretched hand. We, the common throng, will follow our mistress; well trained in mourning are we.

HECUBA

Trusty comrades of my fate, unbind your locks; over your sorrowing shoulders let them flow, defiled with Troy's warm dust. Fill your hands—so much may we take from Troy. Let the band their bared arms make ready; let down your robes and bind their folds; down to the waist let your forms be bared. For what husband dost veil thy breast, O captive modesty? Let your mantles gird up the loose-flowing tunics,¹ let mad hands be free for raining the blows of woe—'tis well, this attire is well; now do I recognize my Trojan band. Repeat once more your old lamentations; exceed your wonted manner of weeping; 'tis for Hector we weep.

CHORUS

We have all loosed our locks at many a funeral torn; our hair has fall'n free from its knot, and hot ashes have sprinkled our faces. From our bared shoulders our garments fall and cover only our loins with their folds. Now naked breasts invite

¹ *i.e.* the outer robe (*palla*) is to be used as a girdle with which to hold up the loose tunic, and so leave the hands free.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

iam nuda vocant pectora dextras ;
 nunc, nunc vires exprime, dolor.
 Rhoetea sonent litora planctu,
 habitansque cavis montibus Echo
 non, ut solita est, extrema brevis 110
 verba remittat, totos reddat
 Troiae gemitus. audiat omnis
 pontus et aether. saevite, manus,
 pulsu pectus tundite vasto,
 non sum solito contenta sono ;
 Hectors flemus.

HECVBA

Tibi nostra ferit dextra lacertos
 umerosque ferit tibi sanguineos,
 tibi nostra caput dextera pulsat,
 tibi maternis ubera palmis 120
 laniata iacent. fluat et multo
 sanguine manet quaecumque tuo
 funere feci rupta cicatrix.
 columen patriae, mora fatorum,
 tu praesidium Phrygibus fessis,
 tu murus eras umerisque tuis
 stetit illa decem fulta per annos ;
 tecum cecidit summusque dies
 Hectoris idem patriaeque fuit.

Vertite planctus ; Priamo vestros 130
 fundite fletus, satis Hector habet.

CHORVS

Accipe, rector Phrygiae, planctus,
 accipe fletus, bis capte senex.
 nil Troia semel te rege tulit,
 bis pulsari Dardana Graio

TROADES

our hands; now, now, O Grief, put forth thy strength. Let the Rhoetean shores resound with our mourning, and let Echo, who dwells in the caves of the mountains, not, after her wont, curtly repeat our final words alone, but give back our full mourning for Troy. Let every sea hear us, and sky. Smite, hands, bruise breasts with mighty blows; I am not content with the accustomed sound—'tis for Hector we weep.

HECUBA

For thee¹ my right hand smites my arms, and bleeding shoulders it smites for thee; for thee my hand beats on my head, for thee my breasts with a mother's palms are mangled. Let flow and stream with blood, bleeding afresh, whatever wound I made at thy funeral. O prop of thy country, hindrance of fate, thou bulwark for weary Phrygians, thou wast our country's wall; propped on thy shoulders, ten years she stood; with thee she fell, and Hector's last day was his country's, too.

¹³⁰ Turn now your mourning; for Priam shed your tears; Hector has enough.

CHORUS

Receive our mourning, O ruler of Phrygia; receive our tears, twice-captured old man. Naught has Troy suffered but once in thy reign; nay, twice she endured the battering of her Dardanian walls by

¹ Hector.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

moenia ferro bisque pharetras
 passa Herculeas. post elatos
 Hecubae partus regumque gregem
 postrema pater funera cludis
 magnoque Iovi victima caesus
 Sigea premis litora truncus. 140

HECVBA

Alio lacrimas flectite vestras ;
 non est Priami miseranda mei
 mors, Iliades. felix Priamus
 dicite cunctae. liber manes
 vadit ad imos, nec feret unquam
 victa Graium cervice iugum ;
 non ille duos videt Atridas
 nec fallacem cernit Vlixen ;
 non Argolici praeda triumpho
 subiecta feret colla tropaeis ;
 non adsuetas ad sceptrum manus
 post terga dabit currusque sequens
 Agamemnonios aurea dextra
 vincula gestans latis fiet
 pompa Mycenis. 150

CHORVS

Felix Priamus dicimus omnes.
 secum excedens sua regna tulit ;
 nunc Elysii nemoris tutis
 errat in umbris interque pias
 felix animas Hectora quaerit.
 felix Priamus, felix quisquis
 bello moriens omnia secum
 consumpta tulit. 160

¹ First, when Hercules captured Troy with the aid of Telamon during the reign of Laomedon, at which time little

TROADES

Grecian steel and twice ¹ felt the arrows of Hercules. After Hecuba's sons were borne out to burial, after that troop of princes, thou, father, dost close the long funeral train and, slaughtered as a victim to mighty Jove,² on Sigeum's strand headless thou liest.

HECUBA

Otherwhere turn ye your tears; not to be pitied is my Priam's death, ye Trojans. Cry ye all, "Happy Priam!" Free fares he to the deep land of spirits, nor ever will bear on his conquered neck the yoke of the Grecians; he does not look upon the two sons of Atreus, nor behold crafty Ulysses; he will not, as booty of Argolic triumph, bend neck 'neath their trophies; he will not yield hands to be bound which have wielded the sceptre, nor, following the car of Agamemnon, wearing gold fetters, will he make show for wide-spreading Mycenae.

CHORUS

"Happy Priam," say we all. With him, in departing, he has taken his kingdom; now in the peaceful shades of Elysium's grove he wanders, and happy midst pious souls he seeks for his Hector. Happy Priam, happy whoe'er, dying in battle, has with his death made an end of all.

Priam was set on the throne; and second, when in the hands of Philoctetes they were again used against Troy.

² Priam was slain near the altar of Jupiter in the central courtyard of his own palace.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

TALTHYBIVS

O longa Danais semper in portu mora,
seu petere bellum, petere seu patriam volunt!

CHORVS

Quae causa ratibus faciat et Danais moram,
effare, reduces quis deus claudat vias.

TALTHYBIVS

Pavet animus, artus horridus quassat tremor.
maiora veris monstra vix capiunt fidem—
vidi ipse, vidi. summa iam Titan iuga 170
stringebat ortu, vicerat noctem dies,
cum subito caeco terra mugitu fremens
concussa totos traxit ex imo sinus;
movere silvae capita et excelsum nemus
fragore vasto tonuit et lucus sacer;
Idaea ruptis saxa ceciderunt iugis.
nec terra solum tremuit; et pontus suum
adesse Achillen sensit ac stravit vada.
tum scissa vallis aperit immensos specus
et hiatus Erebi pervium ad superos iter
tellure fracta praebet ac tumulum levat. 180
emicuit ingens umbra Thessalici ducis,
Threicia qualis arma proludens tuis
iam, Troia, fatis stravit aut Neptunium
136

TROADES

[*Enter* TALTHYBIUS.]

TALTHYBIUS

O delay, ever long for Greeks in harbour, whether they would seek war or seek fatherland!

CHORUS

Tell thou what cause delays the Grecian fleet, what god blocks the homeward paths.

TALTHYBIUS

My spirit is afraid; shivering horror makes my limbs to quake. Portents transcending truth scarce gain belief—but I saw it, with my own eyes I saw. The sun was just grazing the hill-tops with his morning rays and day had vanquished night, when suddenly the earth with hidden rumblings rocked convulsive and brought to light her innermost recesses; the woods tossed their tops and the lofty forest and sacred grove resounded with huge crashing; and rocks came falling from the shivered heights of Ida. Nor did the earth only tremble; the sea, too, felt its own Achilles near and stilled its waters. Then was the valley rent asunder, revealing caverns measureless, and yawning Erebus gave passage-way through the cleft earth to the world above and opened up the tomb.¹ Forth leaped the mighty shade of the Thessalian chief, such shape as when, practising for thy fate, O Troy, he laid low the Thracian² arms, or smote the son³ of Neptune with

¹ *i.e.* the great tomb of Achilles.

² Achilles on his way to Troy defeated Cisseus, father of Hecuba, who was leading Thracian auxiliaries to Troy.

³ See Index *s.v.* "Cycnus" (ii).

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

cana nitentem perculit iuvenem coma,
aut cum inter acies Marte violento furens
corporibus amnes clusit et quaerens iter
tardus cruento Xanthus erravit vado,
aut cum superbo victor in curru stetit
egitque habenas Hectorem et Troiam trahens.
implevit omne litus irati sonus: 190
“ite, ite inertes, manibus meis debitos
auferte honores, solvite ingratas rates
per nostra ituri maria. non parvo luit
iras Achillis Graecia et magno luet.
desponsa nostris cineribus Polyxene
Pyrrhi manu mactetur et tumulum riget.”
haec fatus alta voce dimisit¹ diem
repetensque Ditem mersus ingentem specum
coeunte terra iunxit. immoti iacent
tranquilla pelagi, ventus abiecit minas 200
placidumque fluctu murmurat leni mare,
Tritonum ab alto cecinit hymenaeum chorus.

PYRRHVS

Cum laeta pelago vela rediturus dares,
excidit Achilles cuius unius manu
impulsa Troia, quidquid accessit² morae
illo remoto, dubia quo caderet stetit.
velis licet quod petitur ac properes dare,
sero es daturus; iam suum cuncti duces
tulere pretium. quae minor merces potest
tantae dari virtutis? an meruit parum 210
qui, fugere bellum iussus et longa sedens

¹ So Gronovius, with ψ : Leo alta nocte divisit: Richter alta nocte demer-it.

² So Richter: Leo adiecit, with ω .

TROADES

white plumes gleaming; or when, amidst the ranks raging in furious battle, he choked rivers with corpses, and Xanthus, seeking his way, wandered slowly along with bloody stream; or when he stood in his proud car victorious, plying the reins and dragging Hector—and Troy. The shout of the enraged hero filled all the shore: "Go, go, ye cowards, bear off the honours due to my spirit; loose your ungrateful ships to sail away over my¹ seas. At no small price did Greece avert the wrath of Achilles, and at great cost shall she avert it. Let Polyxena, once pledged to me, be sacrificed to my dust by the hand of Pyrrhus and bedew my tomb." So speaking with deep voice, he bade farewell to day and, plunging down to Dis once more, closed the huge chasm as the earth was again united. The tranquil waters lie motionless, the wind has given up its threats, the calm sea murmurs with gentle waves, from the deep the band of Tritons has sounded the wedding hymn.

[*Enter* PYRRHUS *and* AGAMEMNON.]

PYRRHUS

When thou wast spreading joyful sails for thy return over the sea, Achilles was quite forgot, who by his sole hand made Troy to totter, so that—whate'er delay was added after his death—she but stood wavering which way to fall. Though thou shouldst wish and haste to give him what he seeks, thou wouldst give too late; already have all the chiefs made choice of their spoils. What meaner prize can be given to his great worth? Or was his desert but slight who, bidden to shun the war and idly spend a long old age, surpassing the years of the

¹ Because he was the son of the sea-goddess Thetis.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

aevum senecta ducere ac Pylîi senis
 transcendere annos, exiit matris dolos
 falsasque vestes, fassus est armis virum?
 inhospitali Telephus regno impotens,
 dum Mysiae ferocis introitus negat,
 rudem cruore regio dextram imbuit
 fortemque eandem sensit et mitem manum.
 cecidere Thebae, vidit Eetion capi
 sua regna victus; clade subversa est pari 220
 apposita celso parva Lyrnesos iugo,
 captaque tellus nobilis Briseide
 et causa litis regibus Chryse iacet
 et nota fama Tenedos et quae pascuo
 fecunda pingui Thracios nutrit greges
 Seyros fretumque Lesbos Aegaeum secans
 et cara Phoebos Cilla; quid quas alluit
 vernis Caycus gurgitem attollens aquis?

Haec tanta clades gentium ac tantus pavor,
 sparsae tot urbes turbinis vasti modo 230
 alterius esset gloria ac summum decus;
 iter est Achillis; sic meus venit pater
 et tanta gessit bella, dum bellum parat.
 ut alia sileam merita, non unus satis
 Hector fuisset? Ilium vicit pater,
 vos diruistis. inclitas laudes iuvat
 et facta magni clara genitoris sequi.
 iacuit peremptus Hector ante oculos patris
 patrique Memnon, cuius ob luctum parens
 pallente maestum protulit vultu diem; 240
 suique victor operis exemplum horruit
 didicitque Achilles et dea natos mori.
 tum saeva Amazon ultimus cecidit metus.

TROADES

ancient Pylian,¹ put off his mother's wiles and those disguising garments, confessing himself a man by his choice of arms?² When Telephus, unbridled ruler of inhospitable realm, refused him passage through warlike Mysia, he with his royal blood first dyed that inexperienced hand, and found that same hand brave and merciful.³ Thebes fell and conquered Eëtion saw his kingdom taken; by a like disaster little Lyrnesos, perched on a high hill, was overthrown, and the land famous for Briseïs' capture; Chryse, too, lies low, cause of strife for kings, and Tenedos, well known in fame, and fertile Scyros, which on its rich pasturage feeds the Thracian flocks, and Lesbos, cleaving in twain the Aegean sea, and Cilla, sacred to Phoebus; and what of the lands which the Caycus washes, his waters swollen by the floods of spring?

²²⁹ This great overthrow of nations, this widespread terror, all these cities wrecked as by a tornado's blast, to another could have been glory and the height of fame; to Achilles they were but deeds upon the way. 'Twas thus my father came, and so great wars he waged while but preparing war. Though I speak not of other merits, would not Hector alone have been enough? My father conquered Ilium; you have plundered it. Proud am I to rehearse my great sire's illustrious praises and glorious deeds: Hector lies low, slain before his father's eyes, and Memnon before his uncle's, in sorrow for whose death his mother⁴ with wan face ushered in a mournful day, while the victor shuddered at the lesson of his own work, and Achilles learned that even sons of goddesses can die. Then fell the Amazon,⁵ our latest

¹ Nestor.

² See Index *s.v.* "Achilles."

³ See "Telephus."

⁴ Aurora, goddess of the dawn.

⁵ Penthesilea, queen of the Amazons.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

debes Achilli, merita si digne aestimas,
 et si ex Mycenis virginem atque Argis petat.
 dubitatur et iam placita nunc subito improbas
 Priamique natam Pelei nato ferum
 mactare credis? at tuam natam parens
 Helenae immolasti. solita iam et facta expeto.

AGAMEMNON

Iuvenile vitium est regere non posse impetum; 250
 aetatis alios fervor hic primus rapit,
 Pyrrhum paternus. spiritus quondam truces
 minasque tumidi lentus Aeacidæ tuli.
 quo plura possis, plura patienter feras.

Quid caede dira nobiles clari ducis
 aspergis umbras? noscere hoc primum decet,
 quid facere victor debeat, victus pati.
 violenta nemo imperia continuit diu,
 moderata durant; quoque Fortuna altius
 evexit ac levavit humanas opes, 260
 hoc se magis suppressere felicem decet
 variosque casus tremere metuentem deos
 nimium faventes. magna momento obrui
 vincendo didici. Troia nos tumidos facit
 nimium ac feroces? stamus hoc Danaï loco,
 unde illa cecidit. fateor, aliquando impotens
 regno ac superbus altius memet tuli;
 sed fregit illos spiritus hæc quæ dare
 potuisset aliis causa, Fortunæ favor.
 tu me superbum, Priame, tu timidum facis. 270

TROADES

dread. Thou art Achilles' debtor, if rightly thou estimate his worth, even if he should ask a maiden from Mycenae and from Argos.¹ Dost hesitate and now of a sudden deem wrong what has already been approved,² and count it cruel to sacrifice Priam's daughter to Peleus' son? And yet thine own daughter for Helen's sake thou, her sire, didst immolate. I claim but what is already use and precedent.

AGAMEMNON

Ungoverned violence is a fault of youth; in the case of others 'tis the first fervour of their years that sweeps them on, but with Pyrrhus 'tis his father's heat. The blustering airs and threats of arrogant Aeacides I once bore unmoved. The greater the might, the more should be the patience to endure.

²⁵⁵ Why with cruel bloodshed dost thou besmirch the noble shade of an illustrious chief? This 'twere fitting first to learn, what the victor ought to do, the vanquished, suffer. Ungoverned power no one can long retain; controlled, it lasts; and the higher Fortune has raised and exalted the might of man, the more does it become him to be modest in prosperity, to tremble at shifting circumstance, and to fear the gods when they are overkind. That greatness can be in a moment overthrown I have learned by conquering. Does Troy make us too arrogant and bold? We Greeks are standing in the place whence she has fallen. In the past, I grant, I have been headstrong in government and borne myself too haughtily; but such pride has been broken by that cause which could have produced it in another, e'en Fortune's favour. Thou, Priam, mak'st me proud—and fearful, too.

¹ *i.e.* if he should ask for a Grecian maid, even a daughter of Agamemnon.

² Probably a covert allusion to the sacrifice of Iphigenia.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

Ego esse quicumque sceptrum nisi vano putem
 fulgore tectum nomen et falso comam
 vinclo decentem? casus haec rapiet brevis,
 nec mille forsitan ratibus aut annis decem:
 non omnibus fortuna tam lenta imminet.¹
 equidem fatebor (pace dixisse hoc tua,
 Argiva tellus, liceat) affligi Phrygas
 vincique volui; ruere et aequari solo—
 utinam arcuissem. sed regi frenis nequit
 et ira et ardens hostis et victoria 280
 commissa nocti. quidquid indignum aut ferum
 cuiquam videri potuit, hoc fecit dolor
 tenebraeque, per quas ipse se irritat furor,
 gladiusque felix, cuius infecti semel
 vecors libido est. quidquid eversae potest
 superesse Troiae, maneat; exactum satis
 poenarum et ultra est. regia ut virgo occidat
 tumuloque donum detur et cineres riget
 et facinus atrox caedis ut thalamos vocent,
 non patiar. in me culpa cunctorum redit; 290
 qui non vetat peccare, cum possit, iubet.

PYRRHVS

Nullumne Achilles praemium manes ferent?

AGAMEMNON

Ferent, et illum laudibus cuncti canent
 magnumque terrae nomen ignotae audient.
 quod si levatur sanguine infuso cinis,
 opima Phrygii colla caedantur greges
 fluatque nulli flebilis matri cruor.
 quis iste mos est? quando in inferias homo est

¹ *Leo deletes this line.*

TROADES

²⁷¹ Should I count sovereignty anything but a name bedecked with empty glamour, a brow adorned with a lying coronet? Brief chance will plunder these, mayhap without the aid of a thousand ships or ten long years: Fate hangs not over all so long. For my part, I will confess—thy pardon for saying it, O Argive land!—I wished to see the Phrygians beaten down and conquered; but overthrown and razed to the ground—would that I could have spared them that. But wrath, the fiery foeman, victory given to night's charge, these cannot be kept in hand. All that any might have deemed unworthy in me or brutal, this resentment wrought and darkness, whereby fury is spurred to greater fury, and the victorious sword, whose blood-lust, when once stained with blood, is madness. All that can survive of ruined Troy let it survive; enough and more of punishment has been exacted. That a royal maid should fall, be offered to a tomb, should water the ashes of the dead, and that men should call foul murder marriage, I will not permit. The blame of all comes back on me; he who, when he may, forbids not sin, commands it.

PYRRHUS

And shall Achilles' ghost gain no reward?

AGAMEMNON

It shall; all shall sing his praises and unknown lands shall hear his mighty name. But if his dust can be appeased only by on-poured blood, let Phrygian cattle, rich spoil, be slain, and let blood flow which will cause no mother's tears. What custom this? When was a human victim offered up

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

impensus hominis? detrahe invidiam tuo
odiumque patri, quem coli poena iubes.

300

PYRRHVS

O tumide, rerum dum secundarum status
extollit animos, timide cum increpuit metus,
regum tyranne! iamne flammatum geris
amore subito¹ pectus ac veneris novae?
solusne totiens spolia de nobis feres?
hac dextra Achilli victimam reddam suam.
quam si negas retinesque, maiorem dabo
dignamque quam det Pyrrhus; et nimium diu
a caede nostra regia cessat manus
paremque poscit Priamus.

AGAMEMNON

Haud equidem nego 310
hoc esse Pyrrhi maximum in bello decus,
saevo peremptus ense quod Priamus iacet,
supplex paternus.

PYRRHVS

Supplices nostri patris
hostesque eosdem novimus. Priamus tamen
praesens rogavit; tu gravi pavidus metu,
nec ad rogandum fortis, Aiaci preces
Ithacoque mandas clausus atque hostem tremens.

AGAMEMNON

At non timebat tunc tuus, fateor, parens,
interque caedes Graeciae atque uistas rates

¹ So *Leo*, with ω : solito ψ : *Leo* conjectures amoris igne:
Richter amoris aestu: *Peiper* amore nuptae.

TROADES

in honour of human dead? Save thy father from scorn and hate, whom thou art bidding us honour by a maiden's death.

PYRRHUS

O thou swollen with pride so long as prosperity exalts thy soul, but faint of heart when the alarms of war resound, tyrant of kings! Is now thy heart inflamed with sudden love and of a new mistress? Art thou alone so often to bear off our spoils? With this right hand will I give to Achilles the victim due. If thou dost refuse and keep her from me, a greater will I give, worthy the gift of Pyrrhus; too long has my hand refrained from killing kings, and Priam claims his peer.

AGAMEMNON

Nay, I deny not that 'tis Pyrrhus' most glorious deed of war that Priam lies slain by thy brutal sword, and he thy father's suppliant.¹

PYRRHUS

Yea, I know my father's suppliants—and enemies, too. And yet in my father's presence Priam prayed; thou, quaking with o'ermastering fear, not brave enough to make thy own plea, didst delegate thy prayers to Ajax and the Ithacan, staying hid in thy tent and trembling at thy foe.²

AGAMEMNON

But no fear then, I grant it, had thy father, and mid Grecian carnage and their blazing ships idly he

¹ Priam sought out Achilles to ransom Hector's body.

² This scene is described in Homer, *Iliad*, bk. IX.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

segnis iacebat belli et armorum immemor, 320
levi canoram verberans plectro chelyn.

PYRRHVS

Tunc magnus Hector, arma contemnens tua,
cantus Achillis timuit et tanto in metu
navalibus pax alta Thessalicis fuit.

AGAMEMNON

Nempe isdem in istis Thessalis navalibus
pax alta rursus Hectoris patri fuit.

PYRRHVS

Est regis alti spiritum regi dare.

AGAMEMNON

Cur dextra regi spiritum eripuit tua?

PYRRHVS

Mortem misericors saepe pro vita dabit.

AGAMEMNON

Et nunc misericors virginem busto petis? 330

PYRRHVS

Iamne immolari virgines credis nefas?

AGAMEMNON

Praeferre patriam liberis regem decet.

TROADES

lay, thoughtless of war and arms, strumming with dainty quill on tuneful lyre.

PYRRHUS

Then mighty Hector, though he scorned thy arms, still feared Achilles' songs, and midst so great general dread deep peace lay on the ship-camp of Thessaly.¹

AGAMEMNON

Yes, and in that same ship-camp of Thessaly deep peace, again, did Hector's father find.

PYRRHUS

'Tis a high, a kingly act to give life to a king.

AGAMEMNON

Why then from a king did thy hand take the life?

PYRRHUS

The merciful will oft give death instead of life.

AGAMEMNON

And is it now in mercy thou seekest a maiden for the tomb?

PYRRHUS

So *now* thou deemst the sacrifice of maids a crime?

AGAMEMNON

To put country before children befits a king.

¹ *i.e.* in the camp of Achilles' Thessalians, who dwelt in huts by their ships drawn up on the shore.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

PYRRHVS

Lex nulla capto parcit aut poenam impedit.

AGAMEMNON

Quod non vetat lex, hoc vetat fieri pudor.

PYRRHVS

Quodcumque libuit facere victori licet.

AGAMEMNON

Minimum decet libere cui multum licet.

PYRRHVS

His ista iactas, quos decem annorum gravi
regno subactos Pyrrhus exsolvit iugo?

AGAMEMNON

Hos Scyrus animos—?

PYRRHVS

Scelere quae fratrum caret.

AGAMEMNON

Inclusa fluctu—

PYRRHVS

Nempe cognati maris. 340

Atrei et Thyestae nobilem novi domum.

TROADES

PYRRHUS

No law spares the captive or stays the penalty.

AGAMEMNON

What law forbids not, shame forbids be done.

PYRRHUS

Whate'er he will, 'tis the victor's right to do.

AGAMEMNON

Least should he will who has much right.¹

PYRRHUS

Darest fling such words to those whom, overwhelmed beneath thy heavy sway for ten long years, Pyrrhus freed from the yoke?

AGAMEMNON

Does Scyrus give such airs?

PYRRHUS

'Tis free from the crime of brothers.¹

AGAMEMNON

Hemmed by the waves—

PYRRHUS

Yes, of a kindred sea.² Atreus and Thyestes—well do I know their noble house.

¹ A reference to Atreus and Thyestes, father and uncle of Agamemnon, who committed all crimes against each other.

² Explained in l. 346; and see l. 193 and note.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

AGAMEMNON

Ex virginis concepte furtivo stupro
et ex Achille nate, sed nondum viro—

PYRRHVS

Illo ex Achille, genere qui mundum suo
sparsus per omne caelitem regnum tenet:
Thetide aequor, umbras Aeaco, caelum Iove.

AGAMEMNON

Illo ex Achille, qui manu Paridis iacet.

PYRRHVS

Quem nec deorum comminus quisquam petit.

AGAMEMNON

Compescere equidem verba et audacem malo
poteram domare; sed meus captis quoque 350
scit parcere ensis. potius interpres deum
Calchas vocetur. fata si poscent, dabo.

Tu qui Pelasgae vincla solvisti rati
morasque bellis, arte qui reseras polum,
cui viscerum secreta, cui mundi fragor
et stella longa semitam flamma trahens
dant signa fati, cuius ingenti mihi
mercede constant ora: quid iubeat deus
effare, Calchas, nosque consilio rege.

TROADES

AGAMEMNON

Thou son of a maiden's secret shame¹ and of Achilles, but scarce yet a man—

PYRRHUS

Of that Achilles who by right of lineage extends throughout the realm of the immortals and claims the universe: the sea through Thetis, through Aeacus the shades, the heavens through Jove.

AGAMEMNON

Of that Achilles who lies slain by Paris' hand.

PYRRHUS

Whom e'en a god would not contend with face to face.

AGAMEMNON

I could check thy words and curb thy recklessness by punishment; but my sword knows how to spare e'en captives. Rather, let Calchas, the interpreter of the gods, be called. If the fates demand, I will give her up.

[*Enter CALCHAS.*]

³⁵³ Thou who didst free the Pelasgian fleet from bonds, and didst end the wars' delays, who by thy art dost unlock the sky, to whom the entrails' secrets, to whom the crashing heavens and the star with its long, flaming trail disclose the fates, thou whose utterances ever cost me dear: what is God's will, declare, O Calchas, and by thy wisdom guide us.

¹ See Index *s.v.* "Pyrrhus."

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

CALCHAS

Dant fata Danais quo solent pretio viam. 360
 mactanda virgo est Thessali busto ducis ;
 sed quo iugari Thessalae cultu solent
 Ionidesve vel Mycenaeae nurus,
 Pyrrhus parenti coniugem tradat suo.
 sic rite dabitur. non tamen nostras tenet
 haec una puppes causa ; nobilior tuo,
 Polyxene, cruore debetur cruor.
 quem fata quaerunt, turre de summa cadat
 Priami nepos Hectoreus et letum oppetat.
 tum mille velis impleat classis freta. 370

CHORVS

Verum est an timidos fabula decipit
 umbras corporibus vivere conditis,
 cum coniunx oculis imposuit manum
 supremusque dies solibus obstitit
 et tristis cineres urna cohercuit ?
 non prodest animam tradere funeri,
 sed restat miseris vivere longius ?
 an toti morimur nullaque pars manet
 nostri, cum profugo spiritus halitu
 immixtus nebulis cessit in aera 380
 et nudum tetigit subdita fax latus ?

Quidquid sol oriens, quidquid et occidens
 novit, caeruleis Oceanus fretis
 quidquid bis veniens et fugiens lavat,
 aetas Pegaseo corripiet gradu.
 quo bis sena volant sidera turbine,
 quo cursu properat volvere saecula
 astrorum dominus, quo properat modo
 obliquis Hecate currere flexibus ;

TROADES

CALCHAS

'Tis at the accustomed price fate grants the Danaï their voyage. A maiden must be sacrificed on the Thessalian chieftain's tomb; but in the garb in which Thessalian brides are wed, or Ionian or Mycenæan, let Pyrrhus lead his father's bride to him. 'Tis so she shall be given duly. But it is not this cause alone which delays our ships; blood nobler than thy blood, Polyxena, is due. Whom the fates seek, from the high watch-tower let him fall, Priam's grandson, Hector's son, and let him perish there. Then with its thousand sails may the fleet fill the seas.

CHORUS

Is it true, or does the tale cheat timid souls, that spirits live on when bodies have been buried, when the wife has closed her husband's eyes, when the last day has blotted out the sun, when the mournful urn holds fast our dust? Profits it not to give up the soul to death, but remains it for wretched mortals to live still longer? Or do we wholly die and does no part of us remain, when with the fleeting breath the spirit, mingling with vapours, has passed into the air, and the lighted fire has touched the naked body?

³⁸² All that the rising sun and all that the setting knows, all that the ocean laves with its blue waters, twice ebbing and twice flowing, time with the pace of Pegasus shall gather in. With such whirlwind speed as the twelve signs fly along, with such swift course as the lord ¹ of stars hurries on the centuries, and in such wise as Hecate hastens along her slanting

¹ The sun.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

hoc omnes petimus fata nec amplius, 390
 iuratos superis qui tetigit lacus,
 usquam est. ut calidis fumus ab ignibus
 vanescit, spatium per breve sordidus,
 ut nubes, gravidas quas modo vidimus,
 arctoi Boreae dissicit impetus ;
 sic hic, quo regimur, spiritus effluet.
 post mortem nihil est ipsaque mors nihil,
 velocis spatii meta novissima.
 spem ponant avidi, solliciti metum ;
 tempus nos avidum devorat et chaos. 400
 mors individua est, noxia corpori
 nec parcens animae. Taenara et aspero
 regnum sub domino limen et obsidens
 custos non facili Cerberus ostio
 rumores vacui verbaque inania
 et par sollicito fabula somnio.
 quaeris quo iaceas post obitum loco ?
 quo non nata iacent.

ANDROMACHA

Quid, maesta Phrygiae turba, laceratis comas
 miserumque tunsae pectus effuso genas 410
 fletu rigatis ? levia perpressae sumus,
 si flenda patimur. Ilium vobis modo,
 mihi cecidit olim, cum ferus curru incito
 mea membra raperet et gravi gemeret sono
 Peliacus axis pondere Hectoreo tremens.

¹ The Styx.

² *individua* is used here in evident reminiscence of Cicero,

TROADES

ways, so do we all seek fate, and nevermore does he exist at all who has reached the pool¹ whereby the high gods swear. As smoke from burning fires vanishes, staining the air for one brief moment; as clouds, which but now we saw lowering, are scattered by the cold blasts of Boreas, so shall this spirit which rules our bodies float away. There is nothing after death, and death itself is nothing, the final goal of a course full swiftly run. Let the eager give up their hopes; their fears, the anxious; greedy time and chaos engulf us altogether. Death is a something that admits no cleavage,² destructive to the body and unsparing of the soul. Taenarus and the cruel tyrant's³ kingdom and Cerberus, guarding the portal of no easy passage—all are but idle rumours, empty words, a tale light as a troubled dream. Dost ask where thou shalt lie when death has claimed thee? Where they lie who were never born.

[Enter ANDROMACHE, leading her little son, ASTYANAX, and accompanied by an aged man-servant.]

ANDROMACHE

Ye Phrygian women, mournful band, why do you tear your hair, beat on your wretched breasts, and water your cheeks with weeping unrestrained? Trivial woes have we endured if our sufferings can be told by tears. Ilium has fallen but now for you; for me she fell long since, when the cruel foeman behind his swift car dragged limbs—my own, and his axle-tree, on Pelion hewed, groaned loud, straining beneath Hector's weight. On that day over-

de Finibus, I. VI. 17: *atomos . . . id est corpora individua propter soliditatem.*

³ Pluto, lord of death.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

tunc obruta atque eversa quodcumque accidit
 torpens malis rigensque sine sensu fero.
 iam erepta Danais coniugem sequerer meum,
 nisi hic teneret. hic meos animos domat
 morique prohibet; cogit hic aliquid deos 420
 adhuc rogare, tempus aerumnae addidit.
 hic mihi malorum maximum fructum abstulit,
 nihil timere. prosperis rebus locus
 ereptus omnis, dira qua veniant habent.
 miserrimum est timere, cum speres nihil,

SENEX

Quis te repens commovit afflictam metus?

ANDROMACHA

Exoritur aliquod maius ex magno malum.
 nondum ruentis Ilii fatum stetit.

SENEX

Et quas reperiet, ut velit, clades deus?

ANDROMACHA

Stygis profundae claustra et obscuri specus 430
 laxantur et, ne desit eversis metus,
 hostes ab imo conditi Dite exeunt.
 solisne retro pervium est Danais iter?
 certe aequa mors est; turbat atque agitat Phrygas
 communis iste terror; hic proprie meum
 exterret animum noctis horrendaes opor.

TROADES

whelmed and ruined, whatever has happened since I bear, benumbed with woe, stony, insensible. And now, escaping the Greeks, I should follow my husband, if this child held me not. He tames my spirit and prevents my death; he forces me still to ask something of the gods, has prolonged my suffering. He has robbed me of the richest fruit of sorrows, the scorn of fear. All chance of happiness has been snatched away from me; calamity has still a door of entrance. Most wretched 'tis to fear when there is naught to hope.

OLD MAN

What sudden terror has stirred thy stricken soul?

ANDROMACHE

Some greater woe from woe already great arises. The fate of falling Ilium is not yet stayed.

OLD MAN

What new disasters, though he wish, will the god discover?

ANDROMACHE

The bars of deep Styx and its darksome caves are opened and, lest terror be wanting to our overthrow, our buried foemen come forth from lowest Dis. To the Greeks only is a backward passage given? Death surely is impartial. That terror¹ disturbs and alarms all Phrygians alike; but this vision of dread night doth terrify my soul alone.²

¹ Achilles' ghost.

² *i.e.* Hector's ghost.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

SENEA

Quae visa portas? effer in medium metus.

ANDROMACHA

Partes fere nox alma transierat duas
 clarumque septem verterant stellae iugum;
 ignota tandem venit afflictæ quies 440
 brevisque fessis somnus obrepsit genis,
 si somnus ille est mentis attonitæ stupor;
 cum subito nostros Hector ante oculos stetit,
 non qualis ultro bella in Argivos ferens
 Graias petebat facibus Idaeis rates,
 nec caede multa qualis in Danaos furens
 vera ex Achille spolia simulato tulit,
 non ille vultus flammeum intendens iubar,
 sed fessus ac deiectus et fletu gravis
 similisque nostro, squalida obtectus coma. 450
 iuvat tamen vidisse. tum quassans caput:
 "dispelle somnos" inquit "et natum eripe,
 o fida coniunx; lateat, hæc una est salus.
 omitte fletus! Troia quod cecidit gemis?
 utinam iaceret tota, festina, amove
 quocumque nostræ parvulam stirpem domus."
 mihi gelidus horror ac tremor somnum expulit,
 oculosque nunc huc pavida, nunc illuc ferens
 oblita nati misera quaesivi Hectorem;
 fallax per ipsos umbra complexus abit. 460

O nate, magni certa progenies patris,
 spes una Phrygibus, unica afflictæ domus,

TROADES

OLD MAN

What vision hast thou to tell? Speak out thy fears before us all.

ANDROMACHE

Two portions of her course had kindly night well-nigh passed, and the seven stars had turned their shining car; at last long unfamiliar calm came to my troubled heart, and a brief slumber stole o'er my weary cheeks—if, indeed, the stupor of a mind all dazed be slumber—when suddenly Hector stood before my eyes, not in such guise as when, forcing the fight against the Argives, he attacked the Grecian ships with torches from Ida's pines, not as when he raged in copious slaughter against the Danaï and bore off true spoils from a feigned Achilles;¹ not such his face, blazing with battle light, but weary, downcast, heavy with weeping, like my own, covered with matted locks. Even so, 'twas joy to have looked upon him. Then, shaking his head, he said: "Rouse thee from slumber and save our son, O faithful wife! hide him; 'tis the only hope of safety. Away with tears! Dost grieve because Troy has fallen? Would she were fallen utterly!² Make haste, remove to any place soever the little scion of our house." Cold horror and trembling banished sleep; quaking with terror, I turned my eyes now here, now there, taking no thought of my son, and piteously seeking Hector; but from my very arms his cheating ghost was gone.

⁴⁶¹ O son, true offspring of a mighty sire, sole hope of Phrygians, sole comfort of our stricken house,

¹ Patroclus, who was fighting in the borrowed armour of his friend, Achilles.

² He intimates that there is a deeper depth of woe yet to come.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

veterisque suboles sanguinis nimium incliti
 nimiumque patri similis; hos vultus meus
 habebat Hector, talis incessu fuit
 habituque talis, sic tulit fortes manus,
 sic celsus umeris, fronte sic torva minax
 cervice fusam dissipans iacta comam.
 o nate sero Phrygibus, o matri cito,
 eritne tempus illud ac felix dies
 quo Troici defensor et vindex soli
 rediviva ponas Pergama et sparsos fuga
 cives reducas, nomen et patriae suum
 Phrygibusque reddas? sed mei fati memor
 tam magna timeo vota—quod captis sat est,
 vivamus.

470

Heu me, quis locus fidus meo
 erit timori quave te sede oculam?
 arx illa pollens opibus et muris deum,
 gentes per omnes clara et invidiae gravis,
 nunc pulvis altus, strata sunt flamma omnia
 superestque vasta ex urbe ne tantum quidem,
 quo lateat infans. quem locum fraudi legam?
 est tumulus ingens coniugis cari sacer,
 verendus hosti, mole quem immensa parens
 opibusque magnis struxit, in luctus suos
 rex non avarus. optime credam patri.
 sudor per artus frigidus totos cadit;
 omen tremesco misera feralis loci.

480

488

SENECA

Miser occupet praesidia, securus legat.¹

497

ANDROMACHA

Quid quod latere sine metu magno nequit,
 ne prodat aliquis?

496

¹ The order of U. 488-498 is Leo's: Richter follows this, except that he reads l. 491 after 495.

TROADES

child of an ancient, too illustrious line, too like thy father, thou ; such features my Hector had, such was he in gait, such in bearing ; so carried he his brave hands, so bore he his shoulders high, such august, commanding look had he as with head thrown proudly back he tossed his flowing locks. O son, born too late for the Phrygians, too soon for thy mother, will that time ever come and that happy day when, as defender and avenger of the Trojan land, thou shalt establish Pergama restored, bring back its scattered citizens from flight, and give again their name to fatherland and Phrygians ? But, remembering my own lot, I shrink from such proud prayers ; this is enough for captives—may we but live !

⁴⁷⁶ Ah me, what place will be faithful to my fears ? where shall I hide thee ? That citadel, once rich in treasure and its god-built walls, amongst all nations famed and envied, is now deep dust, wasted utterly by fire ; and of that huge city not even enough is left wherein to conceal a child. What place shall I choose to cheat them ? There is my dear lord's great tomb, hallowed, awe-inspiring to the foe, which of huge bulk and at mighty cost his father reared, a prince not niggardly in his grief. To his sire shall I best entrust the child. Cold sweat streams down all my limbs. Ah me ! I shudder at the omen of the place of death.

OLD MAN

In wretchedness, seize any refuge ; in safety, choose.

ANDROMACHE

What that he cannot hide without great danger of betrayal ?

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

SENEX

Amove testes doli. 492

ANDROMACHA

Si quaeret hostis?

SENEX

Vrbe in eversa perit; 493
haec causa multos una ab interitu arcuit, 489
credi perisse.

ANDROMACHA

Vix spei quicquam est super; 490
grave pondus illum magna nobilitas premit. 491
quid proderit latuisse redituro in manus? 494

SENEX

Victor feroces impetus primos habet. 495

ANDROMACHA

Quis te locus, quae regio seducta, in via, 498
tuto reponet? quis feret trepidis opem?
quis proteget? qui semper, etiam nunc tuos, 500
Hector, tuere; coniugis fertum pia
serva et fideli cinere victurum excipe.
succede tumulo, nate—quid retro fugis
tutasque latebras spernis? agnosco indolem;
pudet timere. spiritus magnos fuga
animosque veteres, sume quos casus dedit.
en intuere, turba quae simus super—

TROADES

OLD MAN

Have none to see thy guile.

ANDROMACHE

If the foe inquire ?

OLD MAN

He perished in the city's downfall; this cause alone has saved many from destruction—the belief that they have perished.

ANDROMACHE

Scant hope is left; the crushing weight of his noble birth lies heavy on him. What will it profit him to have hidden, when he must fall into their hands?

OLD MAN

The victor's first onslaughts are the deadliest.

ANDROMACHE [*to ASTYANAX*]

What place, what spot, remote and inaccessible, will keep thee safe? Who will bring help in our sore need? Who will protect? O Hector, who didst always shield thine own, shield them even now; guard thou a wife's pious theft and to thy faithful ashes take him to live again. Enter the tomb, my son—why dost thou shrink back and reject this safe hiding-place? I recognize thy breeding; thou art ashamed of fear. But put away thy high spirit and old-time courage; put on such spirit as misfortune grants. See how small

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

tumulus, puer, captiva ; cedendum est malis.
 sanctas parentis conditi sedes age
 aude subire. fata si miseros iuvant, 510
 habes salutem ; fata si vitam negant,
 habes sepulchrum.

SENEX

Claustra commissum tegunt ;
 quem ne tuus producat in medium timor,
 procul hinc recede teque diversam amove.

ANDROMACHA

Levius solet timere, qui propius timet ;
 sed, si placet, referamus hinc alio pedem.

SENEX

Cohibe parumper ora questusque opprime ;
 gressus nefandos dux Cephallanum admovet.

ANDROMACHA

Dehisce tellus tuque, coniunx, ultimo
 specu revulsam scinde tellurem et Stygis 520
 sinu profundo conde depositum meum.
 adest Vlixes, et quidem dubio gradu
 vultuque ; nectit pectore astus callidos.
 166

TROADES

a company of us remains—a tomb, a child, a captive woman; we must yield to ills. Come, boldly enter the sacred home of thy buried father. If the fates befriend the wretched, thou hast a safe retreat; if the fates deny thee life, thou hast a tomb.

[ASTYANAX enters the tomb and the gates are closed and barred behind him.]

OLD MAN

The bars protect their charge; and, that thy fear may not hale him forth, retire thou far from here and withdraw thyself apart.

ANDROMACHE

Who fears from near at hand, fears often less; but if thou thinkest well, we will betake us elsewhere.

[ULYSSES is seen approaching.]

OLD MAN

Be still a little while, utter no word or cry; the leader of the Cephallanians hither bends his accursed steps.

ANDROMACHE

[*With a final appealing look towards the tomb.*]

Yawn deep, O earth, and thou, my husband, rive the rent earth to its lowest caves and hide the charge I give thee in the deep bosom of the Styx. Ulysses is here, with step and look of one in hesitation; in his heart he weaves some crafty stratagem.

[Enter ULYSSES.]

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

VLIXES

Durae minister sortis hoc primum peto,
 ut, ore quamvis verba dicantur meo,
 non esse credas nostra; Graiorum omnium
 procerumque vox est, petere quos seras domos
 Hectorea suboles prohibet; hanc fata expetunt.
 sollicita Danaos pacis incertae fides
 semper tenebit, semper a tergo timor 530
 respicere coget, arma nec poni sinet,
 dum Phrygibus animos natus eversis dabit,
 Andromacha, vester. augur haec Calchas canit;
 et, si taceret augur haec Calchas, tamen
 dicebat Hector, cuius et stirpem horreo;
 generosa in ortus semina exurgunt suos.
 sic ille magni parvus armenti comes
 primisque nondum cornibus findens cutem
 cervice subito celsus et fronte arduus
 gregem paternum ducit ac pecori imperat; 540
 quae tenera caeso virga de trunco stetit,
 par ipsa matri tempore exiguo subit
 umbrasque terris reddit et caelo nemus
 sic male relictus igne de magno cinis
 vires resumit. est quidem iniustus dolor
 rerum aestimator; si tamen tecum exigas,
 veniam dabis, quod bella post hiemes decem
 totidemque messes iam senex miles timet
 aliasque clades rursus ac numquam bene
 Troiam iacentem. magna res Danaos movet, 550
 futurus Hector. libera Graios metu.

TROADES

ULYSSES

As the minister of harsh fate I beg this first, that, although the words are uttered by my lips, thou count them not my words; it is the voice of all the Grecian chiefs, whom Hector's son is keeping from their late home-coming; 'tis the fates demand him. A fretting mistrust of uncertain peace will ever possess the Danaï, and fear ever will force them to look behind and not let them lay down their arms, so long as thy son, Andromache, and Hector's shall give heart to the conquered Phrygians. Calchas, the augur, gives this response; and if Calchas, the augur, were silent upon this, yet Hector used to say it, and I dread even a son of his; the generous scion grows to its parent's likeness. So that little companion of the mighty herd, his first horns not yet sprouting through the skin, suddenly, with high-borne neck and proudly lifted brow, leads his father's herd and rules the drove; the slender shoot which has sprung up from a lopped-off trunk in a little while rises to match the parent tree, gives back shade to the earth and a sacred grove to heaven; so do the embers of a great fire, carelessly left behind, regain their strength. I know that grief is no impartial judge; still, if thou weigh the matter with thyself, thou wilt forgive a soldier if, after ten winters and as many harvest seasons, now veteran he fears war, fears still other bloody battles and Troy never wholly o'erthrown. A great matter moves the forebodings of the Danaï—another Hector. Free the Greeks

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

haec una naves causa deductas tenet,
 hac classis haeret. neve crudelem putes,
 quod sorte iussus Hectoris natum petam;
 petissem Oresten. patere quod victor tulit.

ANDROMACHA

Vtinam quidem esses, nate, materna in manu,
 nossemque quis te casus ereptum mihi
 teneret, aut quae regio—non hostilibus
 confossa telis pectus ac vinclis manus
 secantibus praestricta, non acri latus 560
 utrumque flamma cincta maternam fidem
 umquam exuissem. nate, quis te nunc locus,
 fortuna quae possedit? errore avio
 vagus arva lustras? vastus an patriae vapor
 corripuit artus? saevus an victor tuo
 lusit cruore? numquid immanis ferae
 morsu peremptus pascis Idaeas aves?

VLIXES

Simulata remove verba; non facile est tibi
 decipere Vlixen; vicimus matrum dolos,
 etiam dearum. cassa consilia amove; 570
 ubi natus est?

ANDROMACHA

Vbi Hector? ubi cuncti Phryges?
 ubi Priamus? unum quaeris; ego quaero omnia.
 170

TROADES

from fear. This one cause holds our ships, already launched; this cause stays the fleet. And think me not cruel because, at the bidding of the lot, I seek Hector's son; I would have sought Orestes.¹ Bear thou what thy conqueror has borne.²

ANDROMACHE

Oh, that thou wert within thy mother's reach, my son, and that I knew what hap holds thee now snatched from my arms, or what place—not though my breast were pierced with hostile spears, and my hands bound with cutting chains, not though scorching flames hemmed me on either side, would I ever put off a mother's loyalty. O son, what place, what fate, hath gotten thee now? On some pathless way dost thou roam the fields? Has the vast burning of thy fatherland consumed thy frame? or has some rude conqueror revelled in thy blood? Slain by some wild beast's fangs, dost feed the birds of Ida?

ULYSSES

Have done with lies; 'tis not easy for thee to deceive Ulysses; we have out-matched the wiles of mothers and even of goddesses.³ Away with vain designs; where is thy son?

ANDROMACHE

Where is Hector? Where all the Phrygians? Where is Priam? Thou seekest one; I seek for all.

¹ *i. e.* even the son of Agamemnon.

² An evident allusion to the sacrifice of Iphigenia by Agamemnon for the public good.

³ It was Ulysses who had tricked Clytemnestra into letting Iphigenia go to Aulis, and had discovered the disguise under which Thetis had hidden her son, Achilles.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

VLIXES

Coacta dices sponte quod fari abnuis.

ANDROMACHA

Tuta est, perire quae potest debet cupit.

VLIXES

Magnifica verba mors prope admota excutit.

ANDROMACHA

Si vis, Vlixе, cogere Andromacham metu,
vitam minare; nam mori votum est mihi.

VLIXES

Verberibus igni omnique¹ cruciatu eloqui
quodcumque celas adiget invitam dolor
et pectore imo condita arcana eruet;
necessitas plus posse quam pietas solet.

580

ANDROMACHA

Propone flammam, vulnera et diras mali
doloris artes et famem et saevam sitim
variasque pestes undique, et ferrum inditum
visceribus istis, carceris caeci luem,
et quidquid audet victor iratus timens.

VLIXES

Stulta est fides celare quod prodas statim.²

ANDROMACHA

Animosa nullos mater admittit metus.

¹ omnique *Leo*: morte *MSS.*

² *Leo* deletes this line.

TROADES

ULYSSES

Thou shalt be forced to tell what of thyself thou wilt not.

ANDROMACHE

She is safe who is able, who ought, who longs to die.

ULYSSES

When death draws near it drives out boastful words.

ANDROMACHE

If thou desirest, Ulysses, to force Andromache through fear, threaten her with life; for 'tis my prayer to die.

ULYSSES

Stripes, fire, and every form of torture shall force thee against thy will, through pain, to speak out what thou concealest, and from thy heart shall tear its inmost secrets; necessity is oft a greater force than love.

ANDROMACHE

Bring on thy flames, wounds, devilish arts of cruel pain, and starvation and raging thirst, plagues of all sorts from every source, and the sword thrust deep within these vitals, the dungeon's pestilential gloom, yea, all a victor dares in rage—and fear.

ULYSSES

'Tis foolish confidence to hide what thou must at once betray.

ANDROMACHE

My dauntless mother-love admits no fears.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

VLIXES

Hic ipse, quo nunc contumax perstas, amor
consulere parvis liberis Danaos monet. 590
post arma tam longinqua, post annos decem
minus timerem quos facit Calchas metus,
si mihi timerem. bella Telemacho paras.

ANDROMACHA

Invita, Vlixе, gaudium Danais dabo ;
dandum est ; fatere quos premis luctus, dolor.
gaudete, Atridae, tuque laetifica, ut soles,
refer Pelasgis—Hectoris proles obit.

VLIXES

Et esse verum hoc qua probas Danais fide ?

ANDROMACHA

Ita quod minari maximum victor potest
contingat et me fata maturo exitu 600
facilique solvant ac meo condant solo
et patria tellus Hectorem leviter premat,
ut luce cassus inter extinctos iacet
datusque tumulo debita exanimis tulit.

VLIXES

Expleta fata stirpe sublata Hectoris
solidamque pacem laetus ad Danaos feram—

TROADES

ULYSSES

This very love, in which thou now dost stubbornly withstand us, warns the Danaï to take thought for their little sons. After a war so distant, after ten years of strife, I should feel less the fears which Calchas rouses, if 'twas for myself I feared. Thou art preparing war against Telemachus.

ANDROMACHE

Unwillingly, Ulysses, will I give to the Danaï cause for joy, but I must give it; confess, O grief, the woes which thou wouldst conceal. Rejoice, ye sons of Atreus, and do thou bear joyful tidings to the Pelasgians as is thy wont—Hector's son is dead.¹

ULYSSES

What surety givest thou the Danaï that this is true?

ANDROMACHE

So may the conqueror's worst threat befall, may fate set me free by an early and easy passing, may I be buried in my own soil, may his native earth rest light on Hector, according as my son, deprived of light, lies amongst the dead and, given to the tomb, has received the due of those who live no more.¹

ULYSSES

That the fates have been fulfilled by the removal of Hector's stock, and that peace is secure, this news will I joyfully bear to the Danaï— [*Aside.*] What

¹ Andromache first says unequivocally that her son is dead, but is not yet under oath; in the second statement, being under oath, she tells the literal truth, but seems to say the opposite.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

quid agis, Vluxe? Danaidae credent tibi,
 tu cui? parenti—fingit an quisquam hoc parens,
 nec abominandae mortis auspiciam pavet?
 auspicia metuunt qui nihil maius timent. 610
 fidem alligavit iure iurando suam;
 si peierat, timere quid gravius potest?
 nunc advoca astus, anime, nunc fraudes, dolos,
 nunc totum Vlixen; veritas numquam perit.
 scrutare matrem. maeret, inlacrimat, gemit;
 sed et huc et illuc anxios gressus refert
 missasque voces aure sollicita excipit;
 magis haec timet, quam maeret. ingenio est opus.

Alios parentes alloqui in luctu decet:
 tibi gratulandum est, misera, quod nato cares, 620
 quem mors manebat saeva praecipitem datum
 e turre, lapsis sola quae muris manet.

ANDROMACHA

Reliquit animus membra, quatiuntur, labant
 torpetque vinctus frigido sanguis gelu.

VLIXES

Intremuit; hac, hac parte quaerenda est mihi;
 matrem timor detexit; iterabo metum.

Ite, ite celeres, fraude materna abditum
 hostem, Pelasgi nominis pestem ultimam,

TROADES

doest thou, Ulysses? The Danaï will believe thy word, but whose word, thou? A mother's—or would any mother feign her offspring's death, and not shrink from the omen of the abhorrent word? Yet omens they fear who have naught worse to fear. She has confirmed her truth by oath; if the oath is false, what is the worse thing she can be fearing? Now, my heart, summon up thy craft, thy tricks, thy wiles, now all Ulysses; truth is never lost.¹ Watch the mother. She grieves, she weeps, she groans; now here, now there she wanders restlessly, straining her ears to catch each uttered word; this woman's fear is greater than her grief. Now must I use skill.

[*To ANDROMACHE.*]

⁶¹⁹ Other parents 'twere fitting to console in sorrow; but thou art to be congratulated, poor soul, that thou hast lost thy son, for a cruel death awaited him, cast headlong from the tower which still stands solitary midst the fallen walls.

ANDROMACHE [*aside*]

Life deserts my limbs, they quake, they fail; my blood stands still, congealed with icy cold.

ULYSSES [*aside*]

She trembles; by this, yes, by this means must I test her. Her fear has betrayed the mother; this fear will I redouble.

[*To his attendants.*]

⁶²⁷ Go, go quickly! This enemy, hidden away by his mother's guile, this last plague of the Pelasgian

¹ *i.e.* it is always to be discovered.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

ubicumque latitat, erutam in medium date.
 Bene est! tenetur! perge, festina, attrahe. 630
 quid respicis trepidasque? iam certe perit.

ANDROMACHA

Vtinam timerem! solitus ex longo est metus.
 dediscit animus sero¹ quod didicit diu.

VLIXES

Lustrale quoniam debitum muris puer
 sacium antecessit nec potest vatem sequi
 meliore fato raptus, hoc Calchas ait
 modo piari posse rediveras rates,
 si placet undas Hectoris sparsi cinis
 ac tumulus imo totus aequetur solo.
 nunc ille quoniam debitam effugit necem, 640
 erit admovenda sedibus sacris manus.

ANDROMACHA

Quid agimus? animum distrahit geminus timor:
 hinc natus, illinc coniugis sacri cinis.
 pars utra vincet? testor immites deos,
 deosque veros coniugis manes mei,
 non aliud, Hector, in meo nato mihi
 placere quam te. vivat, ut possit tuos
 referre vultus.—prorutus tumulo cinis

¹ So Gronovius, with A: sicre (i.e. scire) E, and so Richter
 Leo saepe.

TROADES

name, wherever he is hiding, hunt him out and bring him hither. [*Pretending that the boy is discovered, and then speaking as if to the man who has found him.*] Good! He is caught! Come, make haste and bring him in! [*To ANDROMACHE.*] Why dost thou look around and tremble? Surely he is already dead?

ANDROMACHE

Oh, that I were afraid! 'Tis but my wonted fear, sprung from long use. The mind unlearns but slowly what it has learned for long.

ULYSSES

Since the boy has forestalled the lustral rites we owed the walls and cannot fulfil the priest's command, snatched from us by a better fate, the word of Calchas is that only thus can a peaceful homecoming be granted to our ships, if the waves be appeased by the scattering of Hector's ashes and his tomb be utterly levelled with the ground. Now, since the boy has escaped the death he owed, needs must hands be laid upon his hallowed resting-place.¹

ANDROMACHE [*aside*]

What shall I do? My mind is distracted by a double fear: here, for my son; there, for my husband's sacred dust. Which shall prevail? I call the unpyting deities to witness, and that true deity, my husband's shade, that in my son naught else endears him to me, Hector, than thyself. May he live, that so he may recall thy face.—But shall thy ashes, torn

¹ It need not be supposed that Ulysses suspects that Astyanax is really hidden in the tomb.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

mergetur? ossa fluctibus spargi sinam
 disiecta vastis? potius hic mortem oppetat.— 650
 poteris nefandae deditum mater neci
 videre? poteris celsa per fastigia
 missum rotari? potero, perpetiar, feram,
 dum non meus post fata victoris manu
 iactetur Hector.—hic suam poenam potest
 sentire, at illum fata iam in tuto locant.—
 quid fluctuaris? statue, quem poenae extrahas.
 ingrata, dubitas? Hector est illinc tuus—
 erras—utrimque est Hector; hic sensus potens,
 forsā futurus ultor extincti patris— 660
 utrique parci non potest. quid iam facis?
 serva e duobus, anime, quem Danaï timent.

VLIXES

Responsa peragam; funditus busta eruam.

ANDROMACHA

Quae vendidistis?

VLIXES

Pergam et e summo aggere
 traham sepulchra.

ANDROMACHA

Caelitum appello fidem
 fidemque Achillis; Pyrrhe, genitoris tui
 munus tuere.

¹ *i.e.* it is not really a choice between Hector and the boy, for Hector in a real sense is in the boy, who is to be another Hector. *cf.* 470 ff., 550.

TROADES

from the tomb, be sunk beneath the sea? Shall I permit thy scattered bones to be flung upon the vasty deep? Sooner let the boy meet death.—But canst thou, his mother, see him given up to murder infamous? Canst see him sent whirling over the lofty battlements? I can, I will endure it, will suffer it, so but my Hector after death be not scattered by the victor's hand.—But he can still feel suffering, while death has placed the other beyond its reach. Why dost thou waver? decide whom thou wilt snatch from vengeance. Ungrateful woman, dost thou hesitate? On that side is thy Hector—nay, herein thou errest—Hector is in both;¹ but the boy can still feel pain, and is destined perchance to avenge his father's death—both cannot be saved. What then? Save of the two, my soul, him whom the Danaï dread.

ULYSSES

I will fulfil the oracle; the tomb will I raze to its foundation.

ANDROMACHE

The tomb ye sold?²

ULYSSES

I'll keep right on, and from the mound's top I'll drag the sepulchre.

ANDROMACHE

To heaven's faith I appeal, and Achilles' faith; Pyrrhus, protect thy father's gift.

² Hector's body had been sold to Priam; here the idea of ransom is extended to the tomb as well.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

VLIXES

Tumulus hic campo statim
toto iacebit.

ANDROMACHA

Fuerat hoc prorsus nefas
Danais inausum. templa violastis, deos
etiam faventes; busta transierat furor. 670
resistam, inermes offeram armatis manus,
dabit ira vires. qualis Argolicas ferox
turmas Amazon stravit, aut qualis deo
percussa Maenas entheo silvas gradu
armata thyrsos terret atque expers sui
vulnus dedit nec sensit, in medios ruam
tumuloque cineris socia defenso cadam.

VLIXES

Cessatis et vos flebilis clamor movet
furorque cassus feminae? iussa ocius
peragite.

ANDROMACHA

Me, me sternite hic ferro prius. 680
repellor, heu me. rumpe fatorum moras,
molire terras, Hector, ut Vlixen domes.
vel umbra satis es—arma concussit manu,
iaculatur ignes—cernitis, Danai, Hectorem?
an sola video?

VLIXES

Funditus cuncta eruam.

TROADES

ULYSSES

This mound shall at once lie level with the plain.

ANDROMACHE

Such sacrilege, truly, the Greeks had left undared. Temples you have profaned, even of your favouring gods; but our tombs your mad rage had spared. I will resist, will oppose my unarmed hands against you, armed; passion will give strength. Like the fierce Amazon who scattered the Argive squadrons, or like some god-smit Maenad who, armed with the thyrsus only, with frenzied march frightens the forest glades and, beside herself, has given wounds, nor felt them, so will I rush against you and fall in the tomb's defence, an ally of its dust.

ULYSSES [*to his men*]

Do you hold back, and does a woman's tearful outcry and futile rage move you? My orders—be quick and do them.

ANDROMACHE [*struggling with the men*]

Me, me destroy here with the sword sooner. Ah me, I am thrust back. O Hector, burst the bars of death, heave up the earth, that thou mayst quell Ulysses. Even as a shade thou art enough—he¹ has brandished his arms in his hand, he is hurling fire-brands—ye Danaï, do you see Hector? or do I alone see him?

ULYSSES

I'll pull it down to its foundations, all of it.

¹ In her frenzy she seems to see Hector's ghost.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

ANDROMACHA

Quid agis? ruina pariter et natum et virum
 prosternis una? forsitan Danaos prece
 placare poteris.—conditum illidet statim
 immane busti pondus—intereat miser
 ubicumque potius, ne pater natum obruat
 prematque patrem natus.

690

Ad genua accido
 supplex, Vlixе, quamque nullius pedes
 novere dextram pedibus admoveo tuis.
 miserere matris et preces placidus pias
 patiensque recipe, quoque te celsum altius
 superi levarunt, mitius lapsos preme;
 misero datur quodcumque, fortunae datur.
 sic te revisat coniugis sanctae torus,
 annosque, dum te recipit, extendat suos
 Laerta; sic te iuvenis excipiat¹ tuus,
 et vota vincens vestra felici indole
 aetate avum transcendat, ingenio patrem:
 miserere matris. unicum adffictae mihi
 solamen hic est.

700

VLIXES

Exhibe natum et roga.

ANDROMACHA

Huc e latebris procede tuis,
 flebile matris furtum miserae.

¹ So A: Leo aspiciat: E accipiat.

TROADES

ANDROMACHE

[*Aside, while the men begin to demolish the tomb.*]

What art thou doing? dost thou lay low together in common ruin both son and husband? Perhaps thou wilt be able to appease the Danaï by prayer.—But even now the huge weight of the tomb will crush the hidden boy—poor lad! let him perish no matter where, so but sire o'erwhelm not son, and son harm not sire.

[*She casts herself at the knees of ULYSSES.*]

⁶⁹¹ At thy knees I fall, a suppliant, Ulysses, and this hand, which no man's feet have known, I lay upon thy feet. Pity a mother, calmly and patiently listen to her pious prayers, and the higher the gods have exalted thee, the more gently bear down upon the fallen. What is given to misery is a gift to Fortune.¹ So may thy chaste wife's couch see thee again; so may Laertes prolong his years till he welcome thee home once more; so may thy son succeed thee, and, by his nature's happy gifts, surpassing all your prayers, transcend his grandsire's years, his father's gifts: pity a mother. This one only comfort is left in my affliction.

ULYSSES

Produce thy son and then entreat.

ANDROMACHE

[*Going to the tomb, calls ASTYANAX.*]

Hither from thy hiding-place come out, sad object of a wretched mother's theft.

[*ASTYANAX appears from the tomb.*]

¹ *i.e.* Fortune accepts it as an offering to herself, and will repay it in the hour of your own need.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

hic est, hic est terror, Vluxe,
 mille carinis. submitte manus
 dominique pedes supplice dextra
 stratus adora nec turpe puta

710

quidquid miseros fortuna iubet.
 pone ex animo reges atavos
 magnique senis iura per omnes
 incluta terras, excidat Hector,
 gere captivum positoque genu,
 si tua nondum funera sentis,
 matris fletus imitare tuae.

Vidit pueri regis lacrimas
 et Troia prior, parvusque minas
 trucis Alcidae flexit Priamus.

720

ille, ille ferox, cuius vastis
 viribus omnes cessere ferae,
 qui perfracto limine Ditis
 caecum retro patefecit iter,
 hostis parvi victus lacrimis,
 "suscipe" dixit "rector habenas
 patrioque sede celsus solio ;
 sed sceptrum fide meliore tene."

hoc fuit illo victore capi ;
 discite mites Herculis iras.

730

an sola placent Herculis arma ?
 iacet ante pedes non minor illo
 supplice supplex vitamque petit—
 regnum Troiae quocumque volet
 Fortuna ferat.

VLIXES

Matris quidem me maeror attonitae movet,
 magis Pelasgae me tamen matres movent,
 quarum iste magnos crescit in luctus puer.

TROADES

707 Here he is, Ulysses, here is the terror of a thousand ships! [*To ASTYANAX.*] Lower thy hands and, prone at thy master's feet, pray thou with appealing touch; and deem naught base which fortune imposes on the wretched. Forget thy royal ancestry, the illustrious sway of thy noble grandsire o'er all lands, forget Hector, too; play the captive and on bended knee, if thou feelst not yet thine own doom, copy thy mother's tears.

[*She turns to ULYSSES.*]

718 Troy aforetime also ¹ saw the tears of a boy-king, and little Priam averted the threats of fierce Alcides. He, yes he, fierce warrior, to whose vast strength all savage creatures yielded, who burst through the doors of Dis and made the dark way retraceable, conquered by his small enemy's tears, exclaimed: "Take the reins and rule thy state, sitting high on thy father's throne; but wield the sceptre with better faith." This it was to be taken by such a conqueror; learn ye the merciful wrath of Hercules. Or is it the arms alone of Hercules that please thee? ² See, there lies at thy feet a suppliant, no less than that other suppliant, and pleads for life—as for Troy's throne, let Fortune bear that whitherso'er she will.

ULYSSES

The grief of a stricken mother moves me, indeed, and yet the Pelasgian mothers move me more, to whose great sorrow that boy of thine is growing.

¹ Hercules, having taken Troy and slain Laomedon for his breach of faith, spared little Priam, and placed him on the throne of his father.

² *i.e.* if Ulysses would imitate Hercules, let it be in his mercy as well as in his power.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

ANDROMACHA

Has, has ruinas urbis in cinerem datae
 hic excitabit? hae manus Troiam erigent?
 740 nullas habet spes Troia, si tales habet.
 non sic iacemus Troes, ut cuiquam metus
 possimus esse. spiritus genitor facit?
 sed nempe tractus. ipse post Troiam pater
 posuisset animos, magna quos frangunt mala.
 si poena petitur, quae peti gravior potest?
 famulare collo nobili subeat iugum,
 servire liceat. aliquis hoc regi negat?

VLIXES

Non hoc Vlixes, sed negat Calchas tibi.

ANDROMACHA

O machinator fraudis et scelerum artifex,
 750 virtute cuius bellica nemo occidit,
 dolis et astu maleficae mentis iacent
 etiam Pelasgi, vatem et insontes deos
 praetendis? hoc est pectoris facinus tui.
 nocturne miles, fortis in pueri necem,
 iam solus audes aliquid et claro die.

VLIXES

Virtus Vlixis Danaidis nota est satis
 nimisque Phrygibus. non vacat vanis diem
 conterere verbis; ancoras classis legit.

TROADES

ANDROMACHE

These ruins, these ruins of a city brought to dust, shall he wake to life? Shall these hands raise Troy again? Troy has no hopes if she has but such as these. Not such our overthrow¹ that we Trojans can be a fear to any. Does thought of his father rouse pride in him? 'Twas a father dragged in the dust. That father himself after Troy's fall would have given up courage, which great misfortunes break. If revenge be sought, what greater revenge couldst thou seek? Let the yoke of bondage be placed upon his high-born neck, let a slave's lot be granted him. Does any refuse this to a prince?

ULYSSES

'Tis not Ulysses, but Calchas refuses this to thee.

ANDROMACHE

O thou contriver of fraud, cunning master in crime, by whose warlike prowess none has ever fallen, by whose tricks and by the cunning of whose vicious mind even Pelasgians² are undone, dost seek to hide behind seer and blameless gods? This is the deed of thine own heart. Thou nocturnal soldier, brave to do a mere boy to death, at last thou darrest some deed alone and in the open day.

ULYSSES

Ulysses' courage the Danaï know full well, and all too well the Phrygians. But leisure we lack to waste the day in empty words; the fleet is weighing anchor.

¹ *i.e.* we are destroyed not merely in part, but utterly.

² Iphigenia, Palamedes, Ajax, may be cited as illustrations.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

ANDROMACHA

Brevem moram largire, dum officium parens 760
nato supremum reddo et amplexu ultimo
avidos dolores satio.

VLIXES

Misereri tui
utinam liceret. quod tamen solum licet,
tempus moramque dabimus. arbitrio tuo
implere lacrimis ; fletus aerumnas levat.

ANDROMACHA

O dulce pignus, o decus lapsae domus
summumque Troiae funus, o Danaum timor,
genetricis o spes vana, cui demens ego
laudes parentis bellicas, annos avi
toties ¹ precabar, vota destituit deus. 770
Iliaca non tu scepra regali potens
gestabis aula, iura nec populis dabis
victasque gentes sub tuum mittes iugum,
non Graia caedes terga, non Pyrrhum trahes ;
non arma tenera parva tractabis manu
sparsasque passim saltibus latis feras
audax sequeris nec stato lustris die,
solemne referens Troici lusus sacrum,
puer citatas nobilis turmas ages ;
non inter aras mobili velox pede, 780
reboante flexo concitos cornu modos,
barbarica prisco templa saltatu coles.
o Marte diro tristius leti genus!
flebilis aliquid Hectoris magni nece
muri videbunt.

¹ Leo's conjecture for medios of the MSS. : Richter demens.

TROADES

ANDROMACHE

Generously grant a brief delay while I, his mother, do the last service to my son, and with a farewell embrace satisfy my yearning grief.

ULYSSES

Would that I might have compassion on thee; but what alone I may, I will give thee time and respite. Weep thy fill; weeping lightens woe.

ANDROMACHE [to ASTYANAX]

O sweet pledge of love, O glory of our fallen house, last loss of Troy, thou terror of the Danaï, thy mother's vain hope, for whom in my madness I was but now praying thy sire's war-earned praises, thy grandsire's years; God has denied my prayers. Thou shalt not with kingly might wield Ilium's sceptre in thy royal hall, shalt not give laws unto the nations, nor send conquered tribes beneath thy yoke; thou shalt not smite fleeing Greeks nor drag Pyrrhus at thy chariot-wheels. Thy slender hand shall wield no boyish weapons, nor shalt thou boldly chase the wild beasts scattered through broad forest-glades, nor on the appointed lustral day, celebrating the sacred festival of the Trojan Game,¹ shalt thou, a princely boy, lead on thy charging squadrons; nor among the altars, with swift and nimble feet, while the curved horn blares out stirring measures, shalt thou at Phrygian shrines celebrate the ancient dance. O mode of death sadder than cruel war! A sight more tearful than great Hector's death shall the walls behold.

¹ *Troiae Ludus* or *Troia* was an equestrian sham-battle said to have been popular among the boys of Troy, described by Virgil, *Aeneid* v. 545 ff., who traces the game as played at Rome back to this ancient source.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

VLIXES

Rumpe iam fletus, parens
magnus sibi ipse non facit finem dolor.

ANDROMACHA

Lacrimis, Vlixе, parva quam petimus mora est ;
concede paucas, ut mea condam manu
viventis oculos. occidis parvus quidem,
sed iam timendus. Troia te expectat tua ; 790
i, vade liber, liberos Troas vide.

ASTYANAX

Miserere, mater.

ANDROMACHA

Quid meos retines sinus
manusque matris cassa praesidia occupas ?
fremitu leonis qualis audito tener
timidum iuvenсus applicat matri latus,
at ille saevus matre summota leo
praedam minorem morsibus vastis tenens
frangit vehitque, talis e nostro sinu
te rapiet hostis. oscula et fletus, puer,
lacerosque crines excipe et plenus mei 800
occurrere patri ; pauca maternae tamen
perfer querelae verba : “ si manes habent
curas priores nec perit flammis amor,
servire Graio pateris Andromachen uiro,
crudelis Hector ? lentus et segnis iaces ?
redit Achilles.” sume nunc iterum comas

TROADES

ULYSSES

Break off now thy tears, thou mother; great grief sets no limit to itself.

ANDROMACHE

For my tears, Ulysses, the respite I ask is small; grant me a few tears yet, that with my own hand I may close his eyes while he still lives. [*To ASTYANAX.*] Thou diest, little indeed, but already to be feared. Thy Troy awaits thee; go, depart in freedom; go, look on Trojans who are free.¹

ASTYANAX

Pity me, mother.

ANDROMACHE

Why clingest thou to my breast, and graspest the vain protection of thy mother's hands? As, when the lion's roar is heard, the young bull draws close to its mother's trembling flank, but see! the savage lion thrusts the dam away and, with huge jaws grasping the lesser booty, crushes and bears it off, so shall thy enemy snatch thee from my breast. Now, son, take my kisses and tears, take my torn locks and, full of me, hasten to thy sire. Yet bear, too, some few words of a mother's plaint: "If spirits still feel their former cares, and if love perishes not in the funeral flames, dost thou permit Andromache to serve a Greek lord, O cruel Hector? Indifferent and sluggish dost thou lie? Achilles has come back." Take now once again these locks, and take these

¹ *i.e.* the boy is to join his kinsmen who have died free rather than to live enslaved.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

et sume lacrimas, quidquid e misero viri
 funere relictum est, sume quae reddas tuo
 oscula parenti. matris hanc solacio
 relinque vestem ; tumulus hanc tetigit meus 810
 manesque cari. si quod hic cineris latet,
 scrutabor ore.

VLIXES

Nullus est flendi modus—
 abripite propere classis Argolicae moram.

CHORVS

Quae vocat sedes habitanda captas?
 Thessali montes et opaca Tempe,
 an viros tellus dare militares
 aptior Phthie meliorque fetu
 fortis armenti lapidosa Trachin,
 an maris vasti domitrix Iolcos?
 urbibus centum spatiosa Crete, 820
 parva Gortynis sterilisque Tricce,
 an frequens rivis levibus Mothone
 quae sub Oetaeis latebrosa silvis
 misit infestos Troiae ruinis
 non semel arcus?
 Olenos tectis habitata raris,
 virgini Pleuron inimica divae,
 an maris lati sinuosa Troezen?
 Pelion regnum Prothoi superbum,
 tertius caelo gradus? (hic recumbens 830
 montis exesi spatiosus antro
 iam trucis Chiron pueri magister,

TROADES

tears, all that is left from my poor husband's funeral, take kisses to deliver to thy sire. This cloak leave as comfort for thy mother; my tomb has touched it, and my beloved shades. If any of his dust is hidden here, I'll hunt it with my lips.

ULYSSES [*to his attendants*]

There is no limit to her weeping—away with this hindrance to the Argive fleet.

[*Exeunt ULYSSES and his attendants, the former leading the little ASTYANAX.*]

CHORUS

What place of dwelling calls to our captive band? Thessalian mountains and Tempe's shady vale, or Phthia, a land more fitted to produce warriors, and rocky Trachin, famous for its breed of brave herds, or Iolchos, the vast sea's mistress?¹ Crete, spacious with her hundred towns, little Gortynis and barren Tricce, or Mothone, abounding in tiny rills, the land of caves beneath Oeta's wooded heights which sent not once only to Troy's fall the deadly bow?² Olenos, land of scattered homes, Pleuron, which the virgin goddess³ hates, or Troezen, on the broad sea's curving shore? Pelion, proud kingdom of Prothoüs, third step to heaven?⁴ (Here, reclining at full length within his hollowed mountain cave, Chiron, tutor of a youth already pitiless,⁵ with his quill striking

¹ It was from Iolchos that the Argo sailed on its conquest of the sea. See *Medea*, 596.

² *i.e.* of Hercules, who took Troy by the aid of his bow and arrows, and later, dying on Mount Oeta, gave them to Philoctetes, who with them assisted in the second fall of Troy.

³ Diana, who hated this and all Aetolian towns for the sake of Oeneus, king of Calydon, who had slighted her divinity.

⁴ See Index *s.v.* "Pelion."

⁵ Achilles.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

tinnulas plectro feriente chordas,
tunc quoque ingentes acuebat iras
bella canendo.)

An ferax varii lapidis Carystos,
an premens litus maris inquieti
semper Euripo properante Chalcis ?
quolibet vento faciles Calydnae,
an carens numquam Gonoessa vento 840
quaeque formidat Borean Enispe ?
Attica pendens Peparethos ora,
an sacris gaudens tacitis Eleusin ?
numquid Aiacis Salamina ¹ veram ²
aut fera notam Calydonia saeva,
quasque perfundit subiturus aequor
segnibus terras Titaessos undis ?
Bessan et Scarphen, Pylon an senilem ?
Pharin an Pisas Iovis et coronis
Elida claram ? 850

Quolibet tristis miseram procella
mittat et donet cuicumque terrae,
dum luem tantam Troiae atque Achivis
quae tulit, Sparte, procul absit, absit
Argos et saevi Pelopis Mycenae,
Neritos parva brevior Zacyntho
et nocens saxis Ithace dolosis.

Quod manet fatum dominusque quis te,
aut quibus terris, Hecuba, videndam
ducet ? in cuius moriere regno ? 860

¹ The abrupt change of construction in the names of the places here following suggests the loss of some words in this passage. Scaliger conjectures : quove iactatae pelago feremur | exules ? ad quae loca, quas ad urbes ?

² So Scaliger : Leo veri, with MSS. It is vera as opposed to the new Salamis founded by Teucer in Cyprus.

TROADES

out tinkling chords, even then whetted the boy's mighty passions by songs of war.) Or Carystos, rich in many-hued marble, or Chalcis, hard by the shore of the restless sea, where Euripus' racing tides ever flow? Calydnae, easy of approach in any wind, or Gonoëssa, never free from winds, and Enispe, which shivers before the northern blast? Peparethos, lying close to the Attic shore, or Eleusin, rejoicing in her sacred mysteries? Shall we to the true Salamis, home of Ajax, or to Calydon, famed for the wild boar, or to those lands¹ which the Titaressos bathes, destined to flow with its sluggish waters beneath the sea?² or to Bessa, and Scarphe, or Pylos, the old man's³ home? to Pharis or Pisae, sacred to Jupiter, and Elis, famed for victors' crowns?

⁸⁵¹ Let the mournful blasts bear our misery where'er they list and give us to any land if only Sparta, which brought such woe on Troy and the Greeks alike, be far away, and far away be Argos, and Mycenae, home of savage Pelops, and Neritos,⁴ smaller than small Zacynthos,⁴ and baleful Ithaca with her crafty crags.

⁸⁵⁸ What fate, what lord waits for thee, Hecuba, or to what land will he lead thee to be a public show? In whose kingdom shalt thou die?

[*Enter HELEN.*]

¹ Thessaly.

² This river, a sluggish affluent of the Peneus, was said to have its rise in the Styx, and plunged beneath the sea on its way thither again.

³ Nestor

⁴ Two small islands near Ithaca, ruled by Ulysses.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

HELENA

Quicumque hymen funestus, inlaetabilis
 lamenta caedes sanguinem gemitus habet
 est auspice Helena dignus. eversis quoque
 nocere cogor Phrygibus. ego Pyrrhi toros
 narrare falsos iubeor, ego cultus dare
 habitusque Graios. arte capietur mea
 meaque fraude concidet Paridis soror.
 fallatur ; ipsi levius hoc equidem reor ;
 optanda mors est sine metu mortis mori.
 quid iussa cessas agere ? ad auctorem redit 870
 sceleris coacti culpa.

Dardaniae domus
 generosa virgo, melior afflictos deus
 respicere coepit teque felici parat
 dotare thalamo ; tale coniugium tibi
 non ipsa sospes Troia, non Priamus daret.
 nam te Pelasgae maximum gentis decus,
 cui regna campi lata Thessalici patent,¹ 878
 ad sancta lecti iura legitimi petit. 877
 te magna Tethys teque tot pelagi deae
 placidumque numen aequoris tumidi Thetis 880
 suam vocabunt, te datam Pyrrho socer
 Peleus nurum vocabit et Nereus nurum.
 depone cultus squalidos, festos cape,
 dedisce captam ; deprime horrentes comas
 crinemque docta patere distingui manu.
 hic forsitan te casus excelso magis
 solio reponet. profuit multis capi.

¹ Lines 877 and 878 were transposed by Swoboda.

TROADES

HELEN [*aside*]

Whatever wedlock, calamitous, joyless, has mourning, murder, blood, and lamentations, is worthy of Helen's auspices. Even in their ruin am I driven to be the Phrygians' bane. It is my task to tell a false tale of marriage¹ with Pyrrhus; mine, to dress the bride in Grecian fashion; by my craft she will be snared and by my treachery will the sister of Paris fall. Let her be deceived; for her I deem this the easier lot; 'tis a death desirable, to die without the fear of death. Why dost hesitate to execute thy orders? To its author returns the blame of a crime compelled.

[*To POLYXENA.*]

871 Thou noble maid of the house of Dardanus, in more kindly wise doth heaven begin to regard the afflicted, and makes ready to dower thee with a happy bridal; such a match neither Troy herself while still secure, nor Priam, could make for thee. For the greatest ornament of the Pelasgian race, whose realm stretches wide over the plains of Thessaly, seeks thee in holy bonds of lawful wedlock. Thee will great Tethys call her own, thee, all the goddesses of the deep, and Thetis, calm deity of the swelling sea; wedded to Pyrrhus, Peleus as thy father-in-law shall call thee daughter, and Nereus shall call thee daughter. Put off thy mournful garb, don festal array, forget thou art a captive; smooth thy unkempt locks, and suffer my skilled hand to part thy hair.² This fall, perchance, will restore thee to a more exalted throne. Many have profited by captivity.

¹ *i.e.* of Polyxena.

² It was in accordance with Roman custom to part the bride's hair into six locks.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

ANDROMACHA

Hoc derat unum Phrygibus eversis malum—
 gaudere. flagrant strata passim Pergama—
 o coniugale tempus! an quisquam audeat 890
 negare? quisquam dubius ad thalamos eat,
 quos Helena suadet? pestis exitium lues
 utriusque populi, cernis hos tumulos ducum
 et nuda totis ossa quae passim iacent
 inhumata campis? haec hymen sparsit tuus.
 tibi fluxit Asiae, fluxit Europae cruor,
 cum dimicantes laeta prospiceres viros,
 incerta voti. perge, thalamos appara.
 taedis quid opus est quidve solempni face?
 quid igne? thalamis Troia praelucet novis. 900
 celebrate Pyrrhi, Troades, conubia,
 celebrate digne; planctus et gemitus sonet.

HELENA

Ratione quamvis careat et flecti neget
 magnus dolor sociosque nonnumquam sui
 maeroris ipsos oderit, causam tamen
 possum tueri iudice infesto meam,
 graviora passa. luget Andromacha Hectorem
 et Hecuba Priamum; solus occulte Paris
 lugendus Helenae est. durum et invisum et grave
 est
 servitia ferre? patior hoc olim iugum, 910
 annis decem captiva. prostratum Ilium est,
 versi penates? perdere est patriam grave,
 gravius timere. vos levat tanti mali
 comitatus; in me victor et victus furit.
 quam quisque famulam traheret incerto diu
 casu pendit; me meus traxit statim

TROADES

ANDROMACHE

This one woe was lacking to the ruined Phrygians—to rejoice. Pergama's ruins lie blazing all around—fit time for marriage! Would any dare refuse? Would any hesitate to go to a bridal when Helen invites? Thou plague, destruction, pest of both peoples, seest thou these tombs of chieftains, the bare bones which everywhere lie unentombed o'er all the plain? These has thy marriage scattered. For thee has flowed Asia's, has flowed Europe's blood, whilst thou gleefully didst look out upon thy warring husbands with wavering prayer. Go on, make ready thy marriages! What need of pine-brands, what of the solemn nuptial torch, what need of fire? For this strange marriage Troy furnishes the torch. Ye Trojan dames, celebrate Pyrrhus' nuptials, celebrate them worthily; let blows and groans resound.

HELEN

Although great grief lacks reason and will not be turned aside, and sometimes hates the very comrades of its suffering, still could I maintain my cause even before a hostile judge, having borne worse things than you. Andromache mourns for her Hector, and Hecuba for her Priam; for Paris alone must Helen mourn in secret. Is it a hard, a hateful, and a galling thing to endure servitude? This yoke have I long endured, for ten years captive. Is Ilium laid low, are your household gods overthrown? It is hard to lose one's native country, harder to fear it. You are comforted by companionship in so great misfortune; against me victor and vanquished rage alike. Which one of you each lord should drag away as his slave, has long hung on uncertain chance; me has

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

sine sorte dominus. causa bellorum fui
 tantaeque Teucris cladis? hoc verum puta,
 Spartana puppis vestra si secuit freta ;
 sin rapta Phrygiis praeda remigibus fui 920
 deditque donum iudici victrix dea,
 ignosce praedae. iudicem iratum mea
 habitura causa est ; ista Menelaum manent
 arbitria. nunc hanc luctibus paulum tuis,
 Andromacha, omissis flecte—vix lacrimas queo
 retinere.

ANDROMACHA

Quantum est Helena quod lacrimat malum.
 cur lacrimat autem? fare quos Ithacus dolos,
 quae scelera nectat ; utrum ab Idaeis iugis
 iactanda virgo est, arcis an celsae edito
 mittenda saxo? num per has vastum in mare 930
 volvenda rupes, latere quas scisso levat
 altum vadoso Sigeon spectans sinu?
 dic, fare, quidquid subdolo vultu tegis.
 leviora mala sunt cuncta, quam Priami gener
 Hecubaeque Pyrrhus. fare, quam poenam pares
 exprome et unum hoc deme nostris cladibus :
 falli. paratas perpeti mortem vides.

HELENA

Vtinam iuberet me quoque interpres deum
 abrumpere ense lucis invisae moras
 vel Achillis ante busta furibunda manu . 940
 occidere Pyrrhi, fata comitantem tua,
 Polyxene miseranda, quam tradi sibi
 cineremque Achilles ante mactari suum,
 campo maritus ut sit Elysio, iubet.
 202

TROADES

my master dragged away at once, without waiting for the lot. Have I been the cause of wars and all this ruin to the Teucrians? Count that the truth if 'twas a Spartan ship that clove your seas; but if, swept along by Phrygian oarsmen, I was a helpless prey, if a triumphant goddess gave me as a reward to her judge, pity the helpless prey. 'Tis an angry judge my cause will have; the decision of that case waits on Menelaüs. But now forget your own woes a little while, Andromache, and prevail on her¹—I can scarce keep from weeping.

ANDROMACHE

How great must be the woe for which Helen weeps! But why weep? Tell us what tricks, what crimes the Ithacan is devising. Must the maiden be cast down from Ida's crags or thrown from the lofty citadel's high rock? Must she be hurled into the vasty deep over these cliffs which lofty Sigeum with sheer sides raises, looking out on his shallow bay? Speak, speak, whatever it is thou hidest beneath thy lying looks. All woes are easier to bear than that Pyrrhus be son-in-law to Hecuba and Priam. Tell us, explain what suffering thou hast in hand, and subtract this one from our calamities—ignorance of our fate. Thou seest us ready to suffer death.

HELEN

Would that the prophet of the gods bade me, too, end with the sword this lingering, hateful life, or fall before Achilles' tomb by the mad hand of Pyrrhus, a companion of thy fate, poor Polyxena, whom Achilles bids be given to him, and be sacrificed in presence of his ashes, that in the Elysian fields he may wed with thee.

¹ Polyxena.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

ANDROMACHA

Vide ut animus ingens laetus audierit necem.
 cultus decoros regiae vestis petit
 et admoveri crinibus patitur manum.
 mortem putabat illud, hoc thalamos putat.
 at misera luctu mater audito stupet;
 labefacta mens succubuit. assurge, alleva 950
 animum et cadentem, misera, firma spiritum.

Quam tenuis anima vinculo pendet levi!
 minimum est quod Hecubam facere felicem potest.
 spirat, revixit. prima mors miseros fugit.

HECVBA

Adhuc Achilles vivit in poenas Phrygum?
 adhuc rebellat? o manum Paridis levem.
 cinis ipse nostrum sanguinem ac tumulus sitit.
 modo turba felix latera cingebat mea,
 lassabar in tot oscula et tantam gregem
 dividere matrem; sola nunc haec est super 960
 votum, comes, levamen afflictæ, quies;
 haec totus Hecubæ fetus, hac sola vocor
 iam voce mater. dura et infelix age
 elabere anima, denique hoc unum mihi
 remitte funus. inrigat fletus genas
 imberque victo subitus e vultu cadit.

TROADES

ANDROMACHE

See with what joy her mighty soul has heard her doom! The becoming attire of royal robes she seeks, and allows Helen's hand to approach her locks. Death she deemed that other, this, her bridal. But, hearing the woeful news, her wretched mother¹ is in a daze; her tottering reason has given way. Arise, lift up thy courage, poor queen, strengthen thy fainting spirit.

[HECUBA *falls in a faint.*]

⁹⁵² On how slender a thread her frail life hangs! But very little lacks to bring—happiness to Hecuba. She breathes, she lives again. 'Tis the wretched that death first flees.

HECUBA

Does Achilles still live for vengeance on the Phrygians? Does he still war against them? O hand of Paris, too light!² His very ashes and his tomb thirst for our blood. But late a happy throng of children girt me round, and I grew weary of sharing a mother's love among so many kisses and so large a flock; but now this daughter alone is left, object of my prayer, my companion, comfort in affliction, my resting-place; she is Hecuba's entire offspring, hers is the only voice that now calls me mother. O obstinate, unhappy soul, come, slip away, and spare me the sight of this one death at least. Tears overflow my cheeks and from my vanquished eyes a sudden shower falls.

¹ Hecuba has been present during this scene, up to this time as a *persona muta*.

² Paris should have slain Achilles past all resurrection.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

ANDROMACHA

Nos Hecuba, nos, nos, Hecuba, lugendae sumus, 969
 quas mota classis huc et huc sparsas feret; 970
 hanc cara tellus sedibus patriis teget.

HELENA

Magis invidebis, si tuam sortem scies.

ANDROMACHA

An aliqua poenae pars meae ignota est mihi?

HELENA

Versata dominos urna captivis dedit.

ANDROMACHA

Cui famula trador? ede; quem dominum voco?

HELENA

Te sorte prima Scyrius iuvenis tulit.

ANDROMACHA

Cassandra felix, quam furor sorti eximit
 Phoebusque.

HELENA

Regum hanc maximus rector tenet. 978

HECVBA

Laetare, gaude, nata. quam vellet tuos 967
 Cassandra thalamos, vellet Andromache tuos.¹ 968
 estne aliquis, Hecubam qui suam dici velit? 979

¹ *Leo follows Richter in placing ll. 967, 968 after 978.*

TROADES

ANDROMACHE

'Tis we, Hecuba, we, we, Hecuba, who should be mourned, whom the fleet, once started on its way, will scatter to every land; but her the dear soil of her native land will cover.

HELEN

Still more wilt thou envy her when thine own lot thou knowest.

ANDROMACHE

Is any part of my suffering still unknown to me?

HELEN

The urn has whirled and to the captives given lords.

ANDROMACHE

To whom am I given as slave? Speak! Whom do I call master?

HELEN

Thee, by the first lot, the youth¹ of Scyros gained.

ANDROMACHE

Fortunate Cassandra, whom madness and Phoebus from the lot exempt.

HELEN

Her the most mighty king of kings receives.

HECUBA [*to* POLYXENA]

Rejoice and be glad, my daughter! How would Cassandra, how would Andromache long for thy marriage! [*To* HELEN.] Is there anyone who would have Hecuba called his?

¹ Pyrrhus.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

HELENA

Ithaco obtigisti praeda nolenti brevis. 980

HECVBA

Quis tam impotens ac durus et iniquae ferus
 sortitor urnae regibus reges dedit?
 quis tam sinister dividit captas deus?
 quis arbiter crudelis et miseris gravis
 eligere dominos nescit et matrem Hectoris¹ 985
 armis Achillis miscet? ad Vlixen vocor; 987
 nunc victa, nunc captiva, nunc cunctis mihi
 obsessa videor cladibus—domini pudet, 989
 non servitutis.¹ sterilis et saevis fretis 991
 inclusa tellus non capit tumulos meos—
 duc, duc, Vlixee, nil moror, dominum sequor;
 me mea sequentur fata: non pelago quies
 tranquilla veniet, saeviet ventis mare,²
 et bella et ignes et mea et Priami mala.
 dumque ista veniant, interim hoc poenae loco est—
 sortem occupavi, praemium eripui tibi.
 Sed en citato Pyrrhus accurrit gradu
 vultuque torvo. Pyrrhe, quid cessas? age 1000
 reclude ferro pectus et Achillis tui
 coniunge soceros. perge, mactator senum,
 et hic decet te sanguis. abreptam trahe.

¹ Richter incorporates (bracketed) in his text at this point a line which Leo deletes:

Eligere dominos nescit et [saeva manu 985
 dat iniqua miseris fata? quis] matrem Hectoris 986

and again at l. 990:

non servitutis. [Hectoris spoliū feret 990
 qui tulit Achillis?] sterilis et saevis fretis 991

² Leo thinks that some such additional line as the following is required by the sense: sociosque merget, obruent reducem quoque.

TROADES

HELEN

To the Ithacan, against his will, hast thou fallen,
a short-lived prize.

HECUBA

Who so reckless and unfeeling, who so cruelly drawing lots from an unjust urn hath given royalty to royalty? What god so perverse apportions the captives? What arbiter, heartless and hard to the unfortunate, so blindly chooses our lords, and unites Hector's mother to Achilles' arms?¹ To Ulysses am I summoned; now indeed do I seem vanquished, now captive, now beset by all disasters—'tis the master shames me, not the servitude. That barren land, hemmed in by stormy seas, does not contain my tomb²—lead, lead on, Ulysses, I hold not back, I follow my master; but me my fates shall follow: upon the deep no calm peace shall come; the sea shall rage with the winds and engulf thy comrades; and thee, e'en when safe home again, shall wars and fires, my own and Priam's evil fortunes, o'erwhelm.³ And till those shall come, meanwhile this serves in place of vengeance on thee—I have usurped thy lot, I have stolen from thee thy prize.⁴

⁹⁹⁹ But see, Pyrrhus approaches with hurried step and grim countenance. Pyrrhus, why dost thou hesitate? Come, plunge thy sword into my breast, and so unite the parents of thy Achilles' bride. Proceed, thou murderer of old men, this blood of mine also becomes thee. [*Pointing to POLYXENA.*] Seize!

¹ After Achilles' death his arms had been awarded to Ulysses.

² *i.e.* the place of her burial does not lie in Ithaca, since she will die before reaching it.

³ Translating Leo's conjecture.

⁴ *i.e.* Ulysses can have but one choice, and this, instead of being a beautiful young woman, has turned out an ugly old hag.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

maculate superos caede funesta deos,
 maculate manes—quid precer vobis? precor
 his digna sacris aequora; hoc classi accidat
 toti Pelasgae, ratibus hoc mille accidat
 meae precabor, cum vehar, quidquid rati.

CHORVS

Dulce maerenti populus dolentum,
 dulce lamentis resonare gentes; 1010
 lenius luctus lacrimaeque mordent,
 turba quas fletu similis frequentat.
 semper a semper dolor est malignus;
 gaudet in multos sua fata mitti
 seque non solum placuisse poenae.
 ferre quam sortem patiuntur omnes,
 nemo recusat.

Tolle felices: miserum, licet sit,
 nemo se credet. removete multo
 divites auro, removete centum 1020
 rura qui scindunt opulenta bubus:
 pauperi surgent animi iacentes.
 est miser nemo nisi comparatus.
 dulce in immensis posito ruinis,
 neminem laetos habuisse vultus;
 ille deplorat queriturque fatum,
 qui secans fluctum rate singulari
 nudus in portus cecidit petitos.
 aequior casum tulit et procellas,
 mille qui ponto pariter carinas 1030
 obrui vidit tabulaque vectus
 naufraga, terris mare dum coactis
 fluctibus Corus prohibet, revertit.
 questus est Hellen cecidisse Phrixus,
 cum gregis ductor radiante villo
 aureo fratrem simul ac sororem

TROADES

drag her hence! Defile, ye Greeks, the gods above with deadly slaughter, defile the shades below—nay, why pray to you? I pray for seas that befit such¹ rites as these; may such doom befall the whole fleet of the Pelasgians, may such befall their thousand ships, as I shall call down on my own when I set sail.

CHORUS

Sweet to the mourner is a host of mourners, sweet to hear multitudes in lamentation; lighter is the sting of wailing and of tears which a like throng accompanies. Ever, ah, ever is grief malicious; glad is it that its own fate comes on many, and that it alone is not appointed unto suffering. To bear the lot which all endure none can refuse.

¹⁰¹⁸ Remove the fortunate: unfortunate though he be, none will so think himself. Remove those blest with heaps of gold, remove those who plough rich fields with a hundred oxen: the downcast spirits of the poor will rise again. No one is unfortunate save as compared with others. 'Tis sweet to one set in widespread desolation to see no one with joyful countenance; but he deplores and complains of his hard fortune who, while he cleaves the waves in solitary vessel, has been flung naked into the harbour he had sought. More calmly has he endured the tempest and disaster who has seen a thousand vessels engulfed by the selfsame billows and who comes back, borne on a piece of wreckage, to safety, while Corus,² controlling the waves, forbids their onslaught on the land. Phrixus mourned because Helle fell, when the flock's leader, resplendent with golden fleece, bore brother and sister on his back

¹ *i.e.* savage.

² The north-west wind.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

sustulit tergo medioque iactum
 fecit in ponto; tenuit querelas
 et vir et Pyrrha, mare cum viderent,
 et nihil praeter mare cum viderent 1040
 unci terris homines relict.

Solvat hunc questum lacrimasque nostras
 sparget huc illuc agitata classis,
 cum¹ tuba iussi dare vela nautae
 et¹ simul ventis properante remo
 prenderint altum fugietque litus.
 quis status mentis miseris, ubi omnis
 terra decrescet pelagusque crescet,
 celsa cum longe latitabit Ide?
 tum puer matri genetrixque nato, 1050
 Troia qua iaceat regione monstrans,
 dicet et longe digito notabit:
 "Ilium est illic, ubi fumus alte
 serpit in caelum nebulaeque turpes."
 Troes hoc signo patriam videbunt.

NVNTIVS

O dura fata, saeva miseranda horrida!
 quod tam ferum, tam triste bis quinis scelus
 Mars vidit annis? quid prius referens gemam,
 tuosne potius, an tuos luctus, anus?

HECVBA

Quoscumque luctus fleveris, flebis meos; 1060
 sua quemque tantum, me omnium clades premit;
 mihi cuncta pereunt: quisquis est Hecubae est miser.

¹ So Richter; Leo reads with ω: et tuba . . . cum simul,
 and suggests that some such expression as the following is necessary
 here: caede cum pontus fuerit piatus.

TROADES

together, and in mid-sea lost half his burden; but both Pyrrha and her husband¹ checked their mourning, though they saw the sea, and saw nothing else than sea, left as they were sole remnants of the human race on earth.

¹⁰⁴² But the fleet driven this way and that will separate these our laments and scatter our tears, when once the sailors, by the trumpet bidden to spread sail, shall gain the deep, by winds and speeding oarage, and the shore shall flee away. What will be the wretched captives' feelings when all the land shall dwindle and the sea loom large, and lofty Ida shall vanish in the distance? Then son to mother, mother to her son, pointing to the place where Troy lies prostrate, will mark it afar with pointing finger, saying: "Yonder is Ilium where the smoke curls high to heaven, where the foul vapours hang." The Trojans by that sign only will see their fatherland.

[*Enter* MESSENGER.]

MESSENGER

O cruel fate, harsh, pitiable, horrible! What crime so savage, so grievous, has Mars seen in ten long years? Which first shall I tell amidst my lamentations, thy woes, Andromache, or thine, thou aged woman?

HECUBA

Whosoever woes thou weapest, thou wilt weep mine. Each feels the weight of his own disaster only, but I the disasters of them all; for me do all things perish. Whoever is unfortunate is Hecuba's.

¹ Deucalion.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

NVNTIVS

Mactata virgo est, missus e muris puer ;
sed uterque letum mente generosa tulit.

ANDROMACHA

Expone seriem caedis, et duplex nefas
persequere ; gaudet magnus aerumnas dolor
tractare totas. ede et enarra omnia.

NVNTIVS

Est una magna turris e Troia super,
adsueta Priamo, cuius e fastigio
summisque pinnis arbiter belli sedens 1070
regebat acies. turre in hac blando sinu
fovens nepotem, cum metu versos gravi
Danaos fugaret Hector et ferro et face,
paterna puero bella monstrabat senex.
haec nota quondam turris et muri decus,
nunc sola cautes, undique adfusa ducum
plebisque turba cingitur ; totum coit
ratibus relictis vulgus. his collis procul
aciem patenti liberam praebet loco,
his alta rupes, cuius in cacumine 1080
erecta summos turba libravit pedes.
hunc pinus, illum laurus, hunc fagus gerit
et tota populo silva suspenso tremit.
extrema montis ille praerupti petit,
semusta at ille tecta vel saxum imminens
muri cadentis pressit, atque aliquis (nefas)
tumulo ferus spectator Hectoreo sedet.

Per spatia late plena sublimi gradu
incedit Ithacus parvulum dextra trahens
Priami nepotem, nec gradu segni puer 1090

TROADES

MESSENGER

The maiden is slain; thrown from the walls the boy. But each met doom with noble spirit.

ANDROMACHE

Expound their deaths in order and relate the twofold crime; great grief hath joy to dwell on all its woes. Out with it, tell us all the tale.

MESSENGER

There is one high tower left of Troy, much used by Priam; upon its battlements and lofty pinnacles he would sit watching the war and directing the embattled lines. On this tower, nestling his grandson in his fond arms, when Hector with sword and torch pursued the Danaï fleeing in abject fear, the old man would point out to the lad his father's battles. Around this tower, once famous, the glory of the walls, but now a solitary ruin, on all sides pours a throng of chiefs and commons, encircling it. The whole host, leaving the ships, assembles here. For some, a far-off hill gives a clear view of the open space; for others, a high cliff, on whose top the eager crowd stands on tiptoe balanced. A pine-tree holds one, a laurel-tree, another, a beech-tree, one; and the whole forest sways with clinging people. One climbs to the highest peak of a steep mountain, another seeks a smouldering roof or stands on an overhanging stone of a crumbling wall, and one (oh, shame!) sits heartlessly to view the show from Hector's tomb.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Now along the plain, on every hand thronged with people, with stately step the Ithacan makes his way, leading by the hand the little grandson of Priam; and with no lagging step does the boy

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

ad alta pergit moenia. ut summa stetit
 pro turre, vultus huc et huc acres tulit
 intrepidus animo. qualis ingentis ferae
 parvus tenerque fetus et nondum potens
 saevire dente iam tamen tollit minas
 morsusque inanes temptat atque animis tumet;
 sic ille dextra pressus hostili puer
 ferox superbit.¹ moverat vulgum ac duces
 ipsumque Vlixen. non flet e turba omnium
 qui fletur; ac, dum verba fatidici et preces
 concipit Vlixes vatis et saevos ciet
 ad sacra superos, sponte desiluit sua
 in media Priami regna—

1100

ANDROMACHA

Quis Colchus hoc, quis sedis incertae Scytha
 commisit, aut quae Caspium tangens mare
 gens iuris expers ausa? non Busiridis
 puerilis aras sanguis aspersit feri,
 nec parva gregibus membra Diomedes suis
 epulanda posuit. quis tuos artus leget
 tumuloque tradet?

NVNTIVS

Quos enim praeceps locus
 reliquit artus? ossa disiecta et gravi
 elisa casu; signa clari corporis,
 et ora et illas nobiles patris notas,
 confudit imam pondus ad terram datum;
 soluta cervix silicis impulsu, caput
 ruptum cerebro penitus expresso—iacet
 deforme corpus.

1110

¹ *Leo*: superbe *MSS.*

TROADES

approach the lofty walls. When he stood on the tower's summit, he turned his keen gaze now here, now there, undaunted in spirit. As the cub of some great beast, tiny and young, not yet strong enough to do injury with its fangs, still bristles, bites harmlessly, and swells with rage; so the boy, though in his enemy's grasp, was proudly bold. He had moved the crowd to tears, and the chieftains, and even Ulysses. Of all the throng he alone, for whom they wept, wept not; and while Ulysses rehearsed the words and prayers appointed by the fate-revealing priest,¹ and summoned the cruel gods to the sacrifice, of his own will leaped the boy down into the midst of Priam's kingdom—

ANDROMACHE

What Colchian, what Scythian of shifting home e'er committed crime like this, or what tribe to law unknown by the Caspian sea has dared it? No blood of children stained the altars of Busiris, cruel though he was, nor did Diomedes² set limbs of babes for his herds to feast on. Who will take up thy limbs and consign them to the tomb?

MESSENGER

What limbs has that steep place left? His bones were crushed and scattered by the heavy fall; the familiar marks of his noble form, his face, the illustrious likeness of his sire, have been disfigured by his body's weight plunging to earth below; his neck was broken by the crash upon the rock, his skull was crushed, his brains dashed out—he lies a shapeless corpse.

¹ Calchas.

² See Index *s.v.* "Diomedes."

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

ANDROMACHA

Sic quoque est similis patri.

NUNTIVS

Praeeps ut altis cecidit e muris puer
 flevitque Achivum turba quod fecit nefas,
 idem ille populus aliud ad facinus redit 1120
 tumulumque Achillis. cuius extremum latus
 Rhoetea leni verberant fluctu vada ;
 adversa cingit campus et clivo levi
 erecta medium vallis includens locum.
 crescit theatri more concursus frequens,
 implevit omne litus. hi classis moram
 hac morte solvi rentur, hi stirpem hostium
 gaudent recidi. magna pars vulgi levis
 odit scelus, spectatque. nec Troes minus
 suum frequentant funus et pavidi metu 1130
 partem ruentis ultimam Troiae vident ;
 cum subito thalami more praecedunt faces
 et pronuba illi Tyndaris, maestum caput
 demissa. "tali nubat Hermione modo"
 Phryges precantur, "sic viro turpis suo
 reddatur Helena." terror attonitos tenet
 utrosque populos. ipsa deiectos gerit
 vultus pudore, sed tamen fulgent genae
 magisque solito splendet extremus decor,
 ut esse Phoebi dulcius lumen solet 1140
 iamiam cadentis, astra cum repetunt vices
 premiturque dubius nocte vicina dies.
 stupet omne vulgus, et fere cuncti magis
 peritura laudant. hos movet formae decus,

TROADES

ANDROMACHE

So also is he like his sire.

MESSENGER

After the boy fell headlong from the lofty tower, and the throng of Greeks wept for the crime it wrought, that same host turned to a second crime and to Achilles' tomb. Its further side is gently lapped by Rhoeteum's waters; its front is surrounded by a plain, while a valley, sloping gently up, hems in the middle space. The surging mass increases as if thronging to a theatre and has filled all the shore. Some think that by this death the fleet's delay is ended; some joy that the foeman's stock is cut away; the greater part of the heedless mob detest the crime—and gaze. Nor any less do the Trojans throng their own funeral and, quaking with fear, look on at the last act of the fall of Troy; when suddenly, as at a wedding, the torches come, leading the way, and the daughter¹ of Tyndareus as the bride's attendant, with sad and drooping head. "So may Hermione² be wed," the Phrygians pray; "in such wise may base Helen to her husband be given back." Terror holds both peoples awe-struck. The maid herself comes on with eyes in modesty cast down, but yet her face is radiant and the dying splendour of her beauty shines beyond its wont; as Phoebus' light is wont to appear more glorious at the moment of his setting, when the stars come back to their stations and the uncertain daylight is dimmed by the approach of night. Astonished gazes the whole multitude, for all ever admire the more what must soon pass from them. Some, her beauty

¹ Helen.

² Daughter of Helen and Menelaüs.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

hos mollis aetas, hos vagae rerum vices ;
 movet animus omnes fortis et leto obvius.
 Pyrrhum antecedit ; omnium mentes tremunt,
 mirantur ac miserantur. ut primum ardui
 sublime montis tetigit atque alte edito
 iuvenis paterni vertice in busti stetit, 1150
 audax virago non tulit retro gradum ;
 conversa ad ictum stat truci vultu ferox.
 tam fortis animus omnium mentes ferit
 novumque monstrum est Pyrrhus ad caedem piger.
 ut dextra ferrum penitus exacta abdidit,
 subitus recepta morte prorupit cruor
 per vulnus ingens. nec tamen moriens adhuc
 deponit animos ; cecidit, ut Achilli gravem
 factura terram, prona et irato impetu.
 uterque flevit coetus ; at timidum Phryges 1160
 misere gemitum, clarius victor gemit.
 hic ordo sacri. non stetit fusus cruor
 humove summa fluxit ; obduxit statim
 saevusque totum sanguinem tumulus bibit.

HECVBA

Ite, ite, Danaï, petite iam tuti domos ;
 optata velis maria diffusis secet
 secura classis. concidit virgo ac puer ;
 bellum peractum est. quo meas lacrimas feram ?
 ubi hanc anilis expuam leti moram ?
 natam an nepotem, coniugem an patriam fleam ?
 an omnia an me sola ? mors votum meum, 1170
 infantibus, violenta, virginibus venis,

TROADES

moves; some, her tender youth; some, the shifting changes of her fortune; but one and all, her courage, dauntless and death-confronting. On she comes and Pyrrhus follows; the hearts of all are filled with terror, wonder, pity. Soon as the young man reached the summit of the steep mound, and stood upon the high-raised top of his father's tomb, the dauntless maid did not shrink back, but, facing the stroke, stood there with stern look and courageous. A spirit so bold strikes the hearts of all and—strange prodigy—Pyrrhus is slow to kill. When his hand, thrust forth, had buried deep the sword, with the death-stroke her blood leaped out in a sudden stream through the gaping wound. Yet, though in the very act of death, she put not by her spirit; she fell, as if thus to make the earth heavy on Achilles, prone and with angry thud. The throng of both peoples wept; but the Phrygians mourned her with timid lamentation, while the victors wailed aloud. Thus was the rite performed. The shed blood stayed not nor flowed off on the surface of the ground; instantly the savage mound sucked it down and drank the whole draught of gore.

HECUBA

Go, go, ye Danaï, seek now your homes in safety; let your fleet now spread its sails and at ease plough the longed-for sea. A maiden and a boy have fallen; the war is done. But I, whither shall I betake my tears? Where in my old age shall I spew out this lingering life? Daughter or grandson, husband or country—which shall I lament? Shall I mourn all or, in my loneliness, myself alone? O death, object of my prayer, to boys and girls everywhere thou com'st with speed and savage violence;

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

ubique properas, saeva ; me solam times
vitasque, gladios inter ac tela et faces
quaesita tota nocte, cupientem fugis.
non hostis aut ruina, non ignis meos
absumpsit artus ; quam prope a Priamo steti.

NVNTIVS

Repetite celeri maria, captivae, gradu ;
iam vela puppis laxat et classis movet.

TROADES

me alone dost thou fear and shun ; sought midst
swords and spears and firebrands the livelong night,
thou dost evade my eager search. No foe, no falling
wall, no fire has consumed my limbs ; and yet how
near to Priam did I stand !

MESSENGER

Haste to the sea, ye captives ; already the vessels
are spreading sail and the fleet is off.

MEMORANDUM

TO : [Illegible]

FROM : [Illegible]

SUBJECT : [Illegible]

[Illegible text]

MEDEA

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

MEDEA, daughter of *Aeëtes*, king of *Colchis*, and wife of *Jason*.

JASON, son of *Aeson*, and nephew of *Pelias*, the usurping king of *Thessaly*; organizer and leader of the *Argonautic expedition* to *Colchis* in quest of the *Golden Fleece*.

CREON, king of *Corinth*, who had received into his hospitable kingdom *Medea* and *Jason*, fugitives from *Thessaly*, after *Medea* had plotted the death of *Pelias*.

NURSE of *Medea*.

MESSENGER.

TWO SONS of *Medea* and *Jason* (*personae mutae*).

CHORUS OF CORINTHIANS, friendly to *Jason* and hostile to *Medea*.

THE TIME of the play is confined to the single day of the culmination of the tragedy, the day proposed by *Creon* for the banishment of *Medea* and the marriage of *Jason* to *Creusa*, daughter of *Creon*.

THE SCENE is in *Corinth*, in the court of the house of *Jason*.

ARGUMENT

ALTHOUGH the play is confined in time to the final day of catastrophe at Corinth, the background is the whole romantic story of the Argonauts: how Jason and his hero-comrades, at the instigation of Pelias, the usurping king of Thessalian Iolchos, undertook the first voyage in quest of the Golden Fleece; how, after many adventures, these first sailors reached the kingdom of Aëtes, who jealously guarded the fleece, since upon its possession depended his own kingship; how the three deadly labours were imposed upon Jason before the fleece could be won—the yoking of the fiery bulls, the contest with the giants that sprang from the sown serpent's teeth, and the overcoming of the sleepless dragon that ever guarded the fleece; how, smitten by love of him, the beautiful barbaric Medea, daughter of the king, by the help of her magic aided Jason in all these labours and accompanied him in his flight; how to retard her father's pursuit she slew her brother and scattered his mangled remains in the path as they fled; how again, for love of Jason, she restored his father to youth and tricked Pelias' own daughters into slaying their aged sire; how, for this act, Medea with her husband were exiled from Thessalia and dwelt in Corinth; how, for ten happy years, she lived with her husband and two sons in this alien land, her wild past almost forgotten, her magic untouched.

But now Jason has been won away from his wife, and is about to wed Creusa, the daughter of Creon, king of Corinth. The wedding festivities have already begun when the play opens and reveals Medea invoking all the powers of heaven and hell in punishment of her false lord.

MEDEA

MEDEA

Di coniugales tuque genialis tori,
Lucina, custos, quaeque domituram freta
Tiphyn novam frenare docuisti ratem,
et tu, profundi saeve dominator maris,
clarumque Titan dividens orbi diem,
tacitisque praebens conscium sacris iubar
Hecate triformis, quosque iuravit mihi
deos Iason, quosque Medae magis
fas est precari—noctis aeternae chaos,
aversa superis regna manesque impios
dominumque regni tristis et dominam fide
meliore raptam, voce non fausta precor.
nunc, nunc adeste, sceleris ultrices deae,
crinem solutis squalidae serpentibus,
atram cruentis manibus amplexae facem,
adeste, thalamis horridae quondam meis
quales stetistis; coniugi letum novae
letumque socero et regiae stirpi date.

Mihi peius aliquid, quod precer sponso, manet—
vivat. per urbes erret ignotas egens

MEDEA

MEDEA

YE gods of wedlock, and thou, Lucina, guardian of the nuptial couch, and thou¹ who didst teach Tiphys to guide his new barque to the conquest of the seas, and thou, grim ruler of the deeps of Ocean, and Titan, who dost portion out bright day unto the world, and thou who dost show thy bright face as witness of the silent mysteries, O three-formed Hecate, and ye gods by whose divinity Jason swore to me, to whom Medea may more lawfully appeal—thou chaos of endless night, ye realms remote from heaven, ye unhallowed ghosts, thou lord² of the realm of gloom, and thou, his queen,³ won by violence but with better⁴ faith, with ill-omened speech I make my prayer to you. Be present, be present, ye goddesses⁵ who avenge crime, your hair foul with writhing snakes, grasping the smoking torch with your bloody hands, be present now, such as once ye stood in dread array beside my marriage couch; upon this new wife destruction bring, destruction on this father-in-law and the whole royal stock.

¹⁹ I have yet curse more dire to call down on my husband—may he live. Through unknown cities

¹ Minerva.

² Pluto.

³ Proserpina.

⁴ *i.e.* than that which Medea had experienced.

⁵ The Furies.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

exul pavens invisus incerti laris,
 iam notus hospes limen alienum expetat,
 me coniugem optet quoque non aliud queam
 peius precari, liberos similes patri
 similesque matri.—parta iam, parta ultio est:
 peperit. querelas verbaque in cassum sero?
 non ibo in hostes? manibus excutiam faces
 caeloque lucem. spectat hoc nostri sator
 Sol generis, et spectatur, et curru insidens
 per solita puri spatia decurrit poli?
 non redit in ortus et remetitur diem?
 da, da per auras curribus patriis vehi,
 committe habenas, genitor, et flagrantibus
 ignifera loris tribue moderari iuga;
 gemino Corinthos litore opponens moras
 cremata flammis maria committat duo.

30

Hoc restat unum, pronubam thalamo feram
 ut ipsa pinum postque sacrificas preces
 caedam dicatis victimas altaribus.
 per viscera ipsa quaere supplicio viam,
 si vivis, anime, si quid antiqui tibi
 remanet vigoris; pelle femineos metus
 et inhospitalem Caucasum mente indue.
 quodcumque vidit Pontus aut Phasis nefas,
 videbit Isthmos. effera ignota horrida,
 tremenda caelo pariter ac terris mala
 mens intus agitat—vulnera et caedem et vagum

40

MEDEA

may he wander, in want, in exile, in fear of life, hated and homeless; may he seek hospitality at strange doors, by now a familiar applicant; may he desire me for wife, and, than which I can pray nothing worse, may his children be like their sire and like their mother.—Already borne, borne is my vengeance! I have borne children! But why frame complaints and idle words? Shall I not go against my enemies? I'll snatch the bridal-torches from their hands and the light from heaven. Does he behold this, the Sun, father of my race, and do men still behold him¹ as, sitting in his chariot, he courses over bright heaven's accustomed spaces? Why does he not return to his rising and measure back the day? Grant, oh, grant that I ride through the air in my father's car; give me the reins, O sire, give me the right to guide thy fire-bearing steeds with the flaming reins; then let Corinth, with her twin shores cause of delay² to ships, be consumed by flames and bring the two seas together.

³⁷ This course alone remains, that I myself bear the wedding torch unto the chamber and, after sacrificial prayers, slay victims on the consecrated altars. Amid the very entrails seek thou a way for punishment, if thou livest, O soul, if there remains to thee aught of thy old-time strength. Away with womanish fears, clothe thy heart with unfeeling Caucasus. Whatever horror Pontus has beheld, or Phasis, Isthmus shall behold. Wild deeds, unheard-of, horrible, calamities at which heaven and earth alike shall tremble, my heart deep within is planning—wounds, slaughter, death, creeping from limb to limb. Ah, too trivial

¹ He should be darkened at sight of such wickedness.

² *i.e.* by requiring ships to sail around the Peloponnesus.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

funus per artus. levia memoravi nimis ;
 haec virgo feci. gravior exurgat dolor ;
 maiora iam me scelera post partus decent. 50
 accingere ira teque in exitium para
 furore toto. paria narrentur tua
 repudia thalamis. quo virum linques modo ?
 hoc quo secuta es. rumpe iam segnes moras ;
 quae scelere parta est, scelere linquenda est domus.

CHORVS

Ad regum thalamos numine prospero
 qui caelum superi quique regunt fretum
 adsint cum populis rite faventibus.
 primum sceptriferis colla Tonantibus
 taurus celsa ferat tergore candido ; 60
 Lucinam nivei femina corporis
 intemptata iugo placet, et asperi
 Martis sanguineas quae cohibet manus,
 quae dat belligeris foedera gentibus
 et cornu retinet divite copiam,
 donetur tenera mitior hostia.
 et tu, qui facibus legitimis ades,
 noctem discutiens auspice dextera
 huc incede gradu marcidus ebrio, 70
 praecingens roseo tempora vinculo.
 et tu quae, gemini praevia temporis,
 tarde, stella, redis semper amantibus,
 te matres, avide te cupiunt nurus
 quamprimum radios spargere lucidos.

MEDEA

the deeds I have rehearsed; these things I did in girlhood. Let my grief rise to more deadly strength; greater crimes become me, now that I am a mother. Gird thyself with wrath, and prepare thee for deadly deeds with the full force of madness. Let the story of thy rejection match¹ the story of thy marriage. How wilt thou leave thy husband? Even as thou didst follow him. Break off now dull delay; the home which by crime was gained, by crime must be abandoned.

CHORUS

[*Chanting the epithalamium for JASON and CREUSA.*]

May the high gods who rule over heaven, and they who rule the sea, with gracious divinity attend on our princes' marriage, amid the people's solemn applause. First to the sceptre-bearing Thunderers² let the bull with white-shining hide offer his high-raised neck. Lucina let a heifer appease, snow-white, untouched by the yoke; and let her³ who restrains the bloody hands of rough Mars, who brings peace to warring nations and holds plenty in her rich horn, mild goddess, be given a tender victim. And do thou,⁴ who the torches of lawful marriage attendest, dissipating the night with propitious hand, hither come, reeling with drunken footstep, binding thy temples with garlands of roses. And thou star,⁵ forerunner of twilight, who returnest ever slowly for lovers—thee, mothers, thee, brides eagerly await, to see thee full soon thy bright beams scattering.

¹ In the crimes accompanying each.

² The epithet here includes Juno as well as Jupiter.

³ Pax, goddess of concord.

⁴ Hymen.

⁵ Hesperus, the evening star.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

Vincit virgineus decor
 longe Cecropias nurus,
 et quas Taygeti iugis
 exercet iuvenum modo
 muris quod caret oppidum
 et quas Aonius latex

80

Alpheosque sacer lavat.
 Si forma velit aspici,
 cedent Aesonio duci
 proles fulminis improbi
 aptat qui iuga tigribus,
 nec non, qui tripodas movet,
 frater virginis asperae,
 cedet Castore cum suo
 Pollux caestibus aptior.

Sic, sic, caelicolae, precor,
 vincat femina coniuges,
 vir longe superet viros.

90

Haec cum femineo constitit in choro,
 unius facies praenitet omnibus.
 sic cum sole perit sidereus decor,
 et densi latitant Pleiadum greges
 cum Phoebe solidum lumine non suo
 orbem circuitis cornibus alligat.

Talem dum iuvenis conspicit, en rubor
 perfudit subito purpureus genas.¹
 ostro sic niveus puniceo color
 perfusus rubuit, sic nitidum iubar
 pastor luce nova roscidus aspicit.

100

¹ *Leo finds a lacuna here and suggests the insertion of Talem . . . genas.*

MEDEA

75 Our maiden in beauty far excels the Cecropian¹ brides, and those who on Taygetus' ridges are trained after the manner of men by the unwalled city,² and those who bathe in Aonia's³ waters and Alpheus'⁴ sacred stream.

82 Should he wish to be judged in beauty, all will yield to the son of Aeson, our leader—the ruthless lightning's son⁵ who yokes the wild tigers, and he⁶ who makes tremble the tripod, the stern virgin's⁷ brother; with his twin, Castor, Pollux will yield, more skilful in boxing.

90 So, so, ye heaven-dwellers, I pray you, let this bride surpass brides, this husband far excel husbands.

93 When she has taken her stand midst her train of maidens, her one beauty shines more brightly than all. So does starlight splendour wane with the coming of the sun, and the huddled flock of the Pleiades vanish away when Phoebe, shining with borrowed light, with encircling horns encloses her full-orbed disk.⁸

98^a While on such beauty the young lover gazes, see, her cheeks are suddenly covered with rosy blushes.⁹ So snowy wool, dipped in purple dye, doth redden; so shines the sun when the shepherd at dawn, wet with the dew, beholds it.

¹ Athenian. ² Sparta. ³ Boeotian. ⁴ Of Elis.

⁵ See Index *s.v.* "Bacchus" and "Semele."

⁶ Apollo. ⁷ Diana.

⁸ *cf.* Sappho, 3:

*ἄστερες μὲν ἀμφὶ κάλαν σελάνναν
ἀψ' ἀπυκρύπτοισι φάεννον εἶδος
ὅπποτα πλήθοισα μάλιστα λάμπη
γᾶν ἐπὶ παῖσαν.*

⁹ Translating Leo's suggested supplementary lines.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

Ereptus thalamis Phasidis horridi,
 effrenae solitus pectora coniugis
 invita trepidus prendere dextera,
 felix Aeoliam corripe virginem
 nunc primum soceris, sponse, volentibus.

Concesso, iuvenes, ludite iurgio,
 hinc illinc, iuvenes, mittite carmina;
 rara est in dominos iusta licentia.

Candida thyrsigeri proles generosa Lyaei, 110
 multifidam iam tempus erat succendere pinum;
 excute sollemnem digitis marcentibus ignem.
 festa dicax fundat convicia fescenninus,
 solvat turba iocos—tacitis eat illa tenebris,
 si qua peregrino nubit fugitiva marito.

MEDEA

Occidimus, aures pepulit hymenaeus meas.
 vix ipsa tantum, vix adhuc credo malum.
 hoc facere Iason potuit, erepto patre
 patria atque regno sedibus solam exteris
 deserere durus? merita contempsit mea 120
 qui scelere flammam viderat vinci et mare?
 adeone credit omne consumptum nefas?
 incerta vaecors mente vaesana feror
 partes in omnes; unde me ulcisci queam?
 utinam esset illi frater! est coniunx; in hanc
 ferrum exigatur. hoc meis satis est malis?
 si quod Pelasgae, si quod urbes barbarae
 novere facinus quod tuae ignorent manus,
 236

MEDEA

¹⁰² Do thou, O bridegroom, rescued from the marriage bonds of barbarous Phasis, wont with fear and reluctant hand to caress an unruly wife, joyfully take to thy arms the Aeolian maid¹—now at last 'tis with the parents' will.

¹⁰⁷ Sport, youths, with free banter and jesting; let your songs ring out, O youths, in responsive cadence; rarely against our lords is unrebuked licence given.

¹¹⁰ Comely, noble scion² of Lyaeus, the thyrsus-bearer, now is the time to light thy torch of frayed pinewood; toss on high the ritual fire with languishing fingers. Let saucy, sharp wit pour forth festive banterings and let the throng be free with jesting.—Let *her* pass in silent gloom who steals away to wed with a foreign husband.

MEDEA

We are undone! Upon my ears has sounded the marriage-hymn. So great a calamity scarce I myself, scarce even yet can comprehend. Had Jason the heart to do this; having robbed me of my father, native land, and kingdom, could he be so cruel as to leave me alone in a foreign land? Has he scorned my deservings, who saw flames and sea conquered by my crime? Does he think that all my powers of evil are so exhausted? Perplexed, witless, with mind scarce sane, I am tossed to every side. Whence can I get vengeance? I would that he had a brother!³ A wife he has; into her heart let the sword be driven. Is this enough to offset my woes? All monstrous deeds which Pelasgian, which barbaric cities know, all that thy own hands do not know,

¹ Creusa, a descendant of Aeolus.

² Hymen, son of Bacchus and Venus.

³ That he might be slain as her own had been.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

nunc est parandum. scelera te hortentur tua
 et cuncta redeant—inclitum regni decus 130
 raptum et nefandae virginis parvus comes
 divisus ense, funus ingestum patri
 sparsumque ponto corpus, et Peliae senis
 decocta aeno membra. funestum impie
 quam saepe fudi sanguinem!—et nullum scelus
 irata feci; movit infelix amor.

Quid tamen Iason potuit, alieni arbitri
 iurisque factus? debuit ferro obvium
 offerre pectus—melius, a melius, dolor 140
 furiose, loquere. si potest, vivat meus,
 ut fuit, Iason; si minus, vivat tamen
 memorque nostri muneri parcat meo.
 culpa est Creontis tota, qui sceptro impotens
 coniugia solvit quique genetricem abstrahit
 natis et arto pignore astrictam fidem
 dirimit; petatur, solus hic poenas luat
 quas debet. alto cinere cumulabo domum;
 videbit atrum verticem flammis agi
 Malea longas navibus flectens moras.

NVTRIX

Sile, obsecro, questusque secreto abditos 150
 manda dolori. gravia quisquis vulnera
 patiente et aequo mutus animo pertulit,
 referre potuit; ira quae tegitur nocet;
 professa perdunt odia vindictae locum.

MEDEA

must be made ready now. Let thine own crimes urge thee on, and let them all return in memory—the bright ornament of the kingdom stolen away, and the wicked girl's little comrade¹ hewn in pieces with the sword, his murder forced upon his father's sight, his body scattered over the deep, and the limbs of aged Pelias seethed in a brazen pot. Murder and impious bloodshed how often have I wrought!—and yet no crime have I done in wrath; 'twas ill-omened love that stirred me.

¹³⁷ But what else could Jason have done, once made subject to another's will and power? He should have bared his breast unto the sword—nay, ah, nay, mad grief, say not so! If possible, may he live, my Jason, as once he was; if not, still may he live and, mindful of me, keep unharmed the gift² I gave. The fault is Creon's, all, who with unbridled sway dissolves marriages, tears mothers from their children, and breaks pledges bound by straitest oath; on him be my attack, let him alone pay the penalties which he owes. I will pile his home high with ashes; its dark pinnacles wrapt in flames Malea shall see, where, jutting out, it holds ships in tedious delay.

NURSE

Be silent, I pray thee, and confide to secret grief thy hidden plaints. Whoe'er has dumbly borne hard blows with patient and calm soul, has been able to repay them; it is hidden wrath that harms; hatred proclaimed loses its chance for vengeance.

¹ Absyrtus; see Index.

² *i.e.* his life.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

MEDEA

Levis est dolor qui capere consilium potest
et clepere sese ; magna non latitant mala.
libet ire contra.

NVTRIX

Siste furialem impetum,
alumna ; vix te tacita defendit quies.

MEDEA

Fortuna fortes metuit, ignavos premit.

NVTRIX

Tunc est probanda, si locum virtus habet. 160

MEDEA

Numquam potest non esse virtuti locus.

NVTRIX

Spes nulla rebus monstrat adffictis viam.

MEDEA

Qui nil potest sperare, desperet nihil.

NVTRIX

Abiere Colchi, coniugis nulla est fides
nihilque superest opibus e tantis tibi.

MEDEA

Medea superest—hic mare et terras vides
ferrumque et ignes et deos et fulmina.

MEDEA

MEDEA

Light is the grief which can take counsel and hide itself; great ills lie not in hiding. 'Tis pleasing to face the foe.

NURSE

Stay this frenzied outburst, my child; even silent calm can scarce defend thee.

MEDEA

Fortune fears the brave, the cowardly overwhelms.

NURSE

If there is place for courage, then should it be approved.

MEDEA

It can never be that for courage there is no place.

NURSE

No hope points out a way for our broken fortunes.

MEDEA

Whoso has naught to hope, let him despair of naught.

NURSE

The Colchians are no longer on thy side, thy husband's vows have failed, and there is nothing left of all thy wealth.

MEDEA

Medea is left—in her thou beholdest sea and land, and sword and fire and gods and thunderbolts.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

- NVT. Rex est timendus.
 MED. Rex meus fuerat pater.
 NVT. Non metuis arma?
 MED. Sint licet terra edita.
 NVT. Moriere.
 MED. Cupio.
 NVT. Profuge.
 MED. Paenituit fugae. 170
 NVT. Medea,
 MED. Fiam.
 NVT. Mater es.
 MED. Cui sim vides.
 NVT. Profugere dubitas?
 MED. Fugiam, at ulciscar prius.
 NVT. Vindex sequetur.
 MED. Forsan inveniam moras.

NVTRIX

Compesce verba, parce iam, demens, minis
 animosque minue; tempori aptari decet.

MEDEA

Fortuna opes auferre, non animum potest.—
 sed cuius ictu regius cardo strepit?
 ipse est Pelasgo tumidus imperio Creo.

CREO

Medea, Colchi noxium Aectae genus,
 nondum meis exportat e regnis pedem? 180

MEDEA

- NUR. The king is to be feared.
 MED. My father was a king.
 NUR. Fearst thou not arms?
 MED. Not though they were sprung from earth.¹
 NUR. Thou'lt die.
 MED. I wish it.
 NUR. Flee!
 MED. Of flight I have repented.
 NUR. Medea,
 MED. Will I be.
 NUR. Thou art a mother,
 MED. By whom, thou seest.
 NUR. Dost delay flight?
 MED. Flee I shall, but I'll take vengeance first.
 NUR. The avenger will pursue.
 MED. Perchance I shall find means to stay him.

NURSE

Check thy words, spare now thy threats, foolish one, and thy proud spirit humble; 'tis well to fit thee to the times.

MEDEA

Fortune can take away my wealth, but not my spirit.—But under whose blows does the king's door upon its hinges creak? It is Creon himself, puffed with Pelasgian power.

[MEDEA has retired to the back of the stage. Exit
 NURSE. Enter CREON.]

CREON

Medea, Colchian Aeëtes' baleful child, has she not yet taken herself from my realm? She is

¹ As when armed warriors sprang from the dragon's teeth sowed in the earth by Jason.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

molitur aliquid ; nota fraus, nota est manus.
 cui parceret illa quemve securum sinet?
 abolere prope pessimam ferro luem
 equidem parabam ; precibus evicit gener.
 concessa vita est, liberet fines metu
 abeatque tuta.

Fert gradum contra ferox
 minaxque nostros propius affatus petit.
 arcete, famuli, tactu et accessu procul,
 iubete sileat. regium imperium pati
 aliquando discat. vade veloci fuga 190
 monstrumque saevum horribile iamdudum avehe.

MEDEA

Quod crimen aut quae culpa multatur fuga ?

CREO

Quae causa pellat, innocens mulier rogat.

MEDEA

Si iudicas, cognosce ; si regnas, iube.

CREO

Aequum atque iniquum regis imperium feras.¹

MEDEA

Iniqua numquam regna perpetuo manent.

CREO

I, querere Colchis.

¹ *Leo alone of editors gives si regnas, iube to Creon, and deletes l. 195. This omission, especially, is unfortunate, as it leaves no background for iniqua in l. 196.*

MEDEA

plotting mischief; I know her guile, I know her power. Whom will she spare? Whom will she let live in peace? I was making ready to rid me of this outrageous pest by the sword's means and with all speed; but the prayers of my daughter's husband have prevailed. I have granted her life; let her free my boundaries from fear, and depart in safety.

[*He sees MEDEA approaching.*]

¹⁸⁶ Boldly she moves to meet me, and with threatening mien seeks closer speech. Keep her off, ye slaves, from touch and approach far off; bid her keep silence; let her learn at last to obey a king's commands. [*To MEDEA.*] Hence in swift flight! remove at once thine abominable presence, dire, horrible!

MEDEA

What crime, what fault is punished by my exile?

CREON

What cause expels her—that may an innocent woman ask.

MEDEA

If thou'rt my judge, then hear me; if my king, command.

CREON

A king's commands, just and unjust, thou must obey.

MEDEA

Unjust rule never abides continually.

CREON

Go, complain to the Colchians.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

MEDEA

Redeo; qui avexit, ferat.

CREO

Vox constituto sera decreto venit.

MEDEA

Qui statuit aliquid parte inaudita altera,
aequum licet statuerit, haud aequus fuit. 200

CREO

Auditus a te Pelia supplicium tulit?
sed fare, causae detur egregiae locus.

MEDEA

Difficile quam sit animum ab ira flectere
iam concitatum, quamque regale hoc putet,
sceptris superbas quisquis admovit manus,
qua coepit, ire, regia didici mea.
quamvis enim sim clade miseranda obruta,
expulsa supplex sola deserta, undique
afflicta, quondam nobili fulsi patre
avoque clarum Sole deduxi genus. 210
quodcumque placidis flexibus Phasis rigat
Pontusque quidquid Scythicus a tergo videt,
palustribus qua maria dulcescunt aquis,
armata peltis quidquid exterret cohors
inclusa ripis vidua Thermodontiis,—

MEDEA

MEDEA

I go; but let him take me who brought me thence.

CREON

Thy prayer comes too late; my resolve is fixed.

MEDEA

He who has judged aught, with the other side unheard, may have judged righteously, but was himself unrighteous.

CREON

Didst thou hear Pelias ere he suffered punishment? But say on; be a hearing granted to thine excellent case.

MEDEA

How hard it is to turn away from wrath the spirit when once aroused, and how royal it seems to him who has grasped the sceptre in his proud hands to go on as he has begun, I have learned in my own royal home. For, although I am overwhelmed by piteous disaster, an exile, suppliant, lonely, forsaken, on all sides buffeted, once I had glory from my noble father, and from my grandsire, the Sun, traced illustrious descent. All the land that Phasis waters with its calm, winding stream, all that Scythian Pontus sees behind it, where the sea grows sweet with marshy waters,¹ all that the unwedded hordes,² crescent-shielded, hemmed by Thermodon's banks,

¹ Numerous rivers flow into the eastern part of the Pontus, depositing much mud. Hence the marshy nature of the shore. These waters also sweeten the naturally saline water of the Pontus.

² The Amazons.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

hoc omne noster genitor imperio regit.
 generosa, felix, decore regali potens
 fulsi ; petebant tunc meos thalamos proci,
 qui nunc petuntur. rapida fortuna ac levis
 praecepsque regno eripuit, exilio dedit. 220

Confide regnis, cum levis magnas opes
 huc ferat et illuc casus ! hoc reges habent
 magnificum et ingens, nulla quod rapiat dies :
 prodesse miseris, supplices fido lare
 protegere. solum hoc Colchico regno extuli,
 decus illud ingens Graeciae et florem inclitum,
 praesidia Achivae gentis et prolem deum
 servasse memet. munus est Orpheus meum,
 qui saxa cantu mulcet et silvas trahit,
 geminique munus Castor et Pollux meum est 230
 satique Borea quique trans Pontum quoque
 summota Lynceus lumine immisso videt,
 omnesque Minyae ; nam ducem taceo ducum,
 pro quo nihil debetur ; hunc nulli imputo ;
 vobis revexi ceteros, unum mihi.

Incesse nunc et cuncta flagitiaingere.
 fatebor : obici crimen hoc solum potest,
 Argo reversa. virgini placeat pudor
 paterque placeat ; tota cum ducibus ruet
 Pelasga tellus, hic tuus primum gener 240
 tauri ferocis ore flammanti occidet.

fortuna causam quae volet nostram premat,

MEDEA

fill with alarm—over all this my father rules. High-born, blest of heaven, in royal power and splendour then I shone; then princes sued for marriage with me, whom now I must sue. Swift and fickle is fortune and, swooping down, has torn me from royalty and given me o'er to exile.

²²¹ Put thy trust in royalty, although light chance hither and thither tosses e'en mighty wealth! This is the glorious, great privilege of kings, which time can never snatch away—to succour the afflicted, on a safe hearth to shelter suppliants. This only have I brought from my Colchian realm, that by my own self I saved that great glory and illustrious flower of Greece, bulwark of the Achaeans, offspring of gods.¹ Orpheus is my gift, who softens the rocks by his singing and draws trees after him; mine, too, are the twins, Castor and Pollux, and the sons of Boreas,² and Lynceus, who with far-flung gaze sees things removed even beyond Pontus,—and all the Minyans. For of the leader³ of the leaders I say no word; for him naught is owing; I count none debtor for his sake. For you I brought back the rest; him only for myself.

²³⁶ Come on now, and heap all kinds of shameful deeds upon me. I will confess them; but as for crimes, this only can be charged, the rescue of the Argo. Suppose modesty should please the maiden, suppose her filial duty should please her; then will the whole Pelasgian land perish with its leaders, and this thy son-in-law will first fall before the fiery breath of the fierce bull.⁴ Let what fortune will, oppress me;

¹ The Argonauts.

² Zetes and Calais.

³ Jason.

⁴ In vivid memory she puts herself back at the parting of the ways, where she was debating in her heart as to her course, and from this standpoint she speaks.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

non paenitet servasse tot regum decus.
 quodcumque culpa praemium ex omni tuli,
 hoc est penes te. si placet, damna ream;
 sed redde crimen. sum nocens, fateor, Creo;
 talem sciebas esse, cum genua attigi
 fidemque supplex praesidis dextrae peti;
 iterum miseris angulum ac sedem rogo
 latebrasque viles. urbe si pelli placet,
 detur remotus aliquis in regnis locus.

250

CREO

Non esse me qui sceptrum violentus geram
 nec qui superbo miserias calcem pede,
 testatus equidem videor haud clare parum
 generum exulem legendo et afflictum et gravi
 terrore pavidum, quippe quem poenae expetit
 letoque Acastus regna Thessalica optinens.
 senio trementem debili atque aevo gravem
 patrem peremptum queritur et caesi senis
 discissa membra, cum dolo captae tuo
 piaae sorores impium auderent nefas.
 potest Iason, si tuam causam amoves,
 suam tueri; nullus innocuum cruor
 contaminavit, a fuit ferro manus
 proculque vestro purus a coetu stetit.
 tu, tu malorum machinatrix facinorum,
 feminea cui nequitia ad audenda omnia,
 robur virile est, nulla famae memoria,
 egredere, purga regna, letales simul
 tecum aufer herbas, libera cives metu,
 alia sedens tellure sollicita deos.

260

270

MEDEA

I repent not the glorious salvation of so many kings. Whatever reward I have won by all my crimes, it is in thy hands. Arraign and condemn me, if 'tis thy pleasure; but give me back my sin.¹ I am guilty, I confess it, Creon; such didst thou know me when I clasped thy knees and as suppliant sought the loyalty of thy protecting hand. Once more, some corner, some abiding-place for my woes I beg, some paltry hiding-place; if from thy city thou art pleased to drive me, let some remote nook in thy realm be given me.

CREON

That I am not one to wield the sceptre with violence nor to trample upon misery with haughty foot, methinks I have not unclearly shown by choosing for son-in-law an exile, crushed and stricken with heavy fear—aye, one whom Acastus, lord of Thessaly, demands for punishment and death. He complains that his father,² palsied and weak with age, burdened with years, was taken off, and the murdered old man's limbs torn asunder, when, deceived by thy guile, his³ pious sisters dared an impious crime. Jason can defend his own cause if it is separate from thine; no blood has stained his innocence, his hand wielded no sword, and he has kept far off and free from company of such as thou. Thou, thou contriver of wickedness, who combinest woman's wanton recklessness and man's strength, with no thought of reputation, away! Purge my kingdom and take thy deadly herbs with thee; free the citizens from fear; abiding in some other land, harry⁴ the gods.

¹ *i.e.* Jason, for whom she sinned.

² Pelias. ³ *i.e.* Acastus'.

⁴ *i.e.* by the power of her witchcraft.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

MEDEA

Profugere cogis? redde fugienti ratem
vel redde comitem. fugere cur solam iubes?
non sola veni. bella si metuis pati,
utrumque regno pelle. cur sontes duos
distinguis? illi Pelia, non nobis iacet;
fugam, rapinas adice, desertum patrem
lacerumque fratrem, quidquid etiam nunc novas
docet maritus coniuges, non est meum.
totiens nocens sum facta, sed numquam mihi. 280

CREO

Iam exisse decuit. quid seris fando moras?

MEDEA

Supplex recedens illud extremum precor:
ne culpa natos matris insontes trahat.

CREO

Vade; hos paterno ut genitor excipiam sinu.

MEDEA

Per ego auspiciatos regii thalami toros,
per spes futuras perque regnorum status,
Fortuna varia dubia quos agitat vice,
precor, brevem largire fugienti moram,
dum extrema natis mater infigo oscula
fortasse moriens.

MEDEA

MEDEA

Dost force me to flee? Give back then to the fugitive her ship, yea, give back her comrade.¹ Why dost thou bid me flee alone? I did not come alone. If 'tis war² thou fearest, drive us both from thy kingdom. Why make distinction 'twixt two culprits? 'Tis for him Pelias lies dead, and not for me. Add flight, theft, a deserted father, a mangled brother, any crime which e'en now the bridegroom is teaching his new wives³—'tis no crime of mine. Full oft have I been made guilty, but never for myself.

CREON

Thy going is already overdue. Why dost contrive delay with words?

MEDEA

Suppliant I make this last prayer to thee as I depart: let not the mother's guilt drag down her guiltless sons.

CREON

Go then; these will I take as father to my fatherly embrace.

MEDEA

By the blest bed of this royal marriage, by thy hopes for the future, and by the estate of thrones, which fickle Fortune disturbs with changeful lot, I pray thee be bountiful of a brief stay of my flight, while I, their mother, imprint on my sons the latest kiss, perchance my dying act.

¹ Jason.

² *i.e.* with Acastus.

³ She uses the plural with a sneer.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

CREO

Fraudibus tempus petis.

290

MEDEA

Quae fraus timeri tempore exiguo potest?

CREO

Nullum ad nocendum tempus angustum est malis.

MEDEA

Parumne miserae temporis lacrimis negas?

CREO

Etsi repugnat precibus infixus timor,
unus parando dabitur exilio dies.

MEDEA

Nimis est, recidas aliquid ex isto licet.
et ipsa propero.

CREO

Capite supplicium lues,
clarum priusquam Phoebus attollat diem
nisi cedis Isthmo.

Sacra me thalami vocant,
vocat precari festus Hymenaeo dies.

300

CHORVS

Audax nimium qui freta primus
rate tam fragili perfida rupit
terrasque suas post terga videns,
animam levibus credidit auris,
dubioque secans aequora cursu

MEDEA

CREON

For treachery thou art seeking time.

MEDEA

What treachery can be feared in time so scant?

CREON

No time is too brief for harm to those on evil bent.

MEDEA

Dost refuse a poor mother just a little time for tears?

CREON

Though my ingrained fear bids me refuse thy plea, one day shall be given to prepare for banishment.

MEDEA

'Tis more than enough, though thou retrench it somewhat. I also am in haste.

CREON

With thy life shalt thou pay penalty if before Phoebus brings the bright day thou art not gone from Isthmus.

²⁹⁹ But the marriage rites summon me, summons the festal day to pray to Hymen. [*Exeunt.*]

CHORUS

Too venturesome the man who in frail barque first cleft the treacherous seas and, with one last look behind him at the well-known shore, trusted his life to the fickle winds; who, ploughing the waters on an

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

potuit tenui fidere ligno ¹	
inter vitae mortisque vias	
nimum gracili limite ducto.	308
Candida nostri saecula patres ²	329
videre, procul fraude remota.	330
sua quisque piger litora tangens	
patrioque senex factus in arvo,	
parvo dives, nisi quas tulerat	
natale solum, non norat opes.	334
nondum quisquam sidera norat,	309
stellisque quibus pingitur aether	310
non erat usus, nondum pluvias	
Hyadas poterat vitare ratis,	
non Oleniae lumina caprae,	
nec quae sequitur flectitque senex	
Attica tardus plaustra Bootes,	
nondum Boreas, nondum Zephyrus	
nomen habebant.	
Ausus Tiphys pandere vasto	
carbasa ponto legesque novas	
scribere ventis : nunc lina sinu	320
tendere toto, nunc prolato	
pede transversos captare notos,	
nunc antemnas medio tutas	
ponere malo, nunc in summo	
religare loco, cum iam totos	
avidus nimium navita flatus	
optat et alto rubicunda tremunt	
sipara velo.	328
bene dissaepi foedera mundi	335
traxit in unum Thessala pinus	

¹ *Leo deletes these two lines.*

² *Leo and Richter agree in the rearrangement of the following lines ; M. Müller, of the modern editors, defends the traditional order.*

MEDEA

unknown course, could trust to a slender plank, stretching too slight a boundary between the ways of life and death.

³²⁹ Unsullied the ages our fathers saw, with crime banished afar. Then every man inactive kept to his own shores and lived to old age on ancestral fields, rich with but little, knowing no wealth save what his home soil had yielded. Not yet could any read the sky and use the stars with which the heavens are spangled; not yet could ships avoid the rainy Hyades; not yet did the fires of the Olenian Goat nor the Attic Wain which slow old Boötes follows and controls, not yet did Boreas, not yet Zephyrus have names.

³¹⁸ Tiphys made bold to spread his canvas on the vasty deep and to write new laws for the winds: now to spread full-bellied sail, now to haul the forward sheet¹ and catch cross-breezes, now to set the yards in safety midway of the mast, now to bind them at the top, when the too eager sailor prays for winds and aloft the ruddy topsails flutter. The lands, well separated before by nature's laws, the Thessalian ship² made one, bade the deep suffer

¹ *i.e.* to set the sail sideways.

² The Argo.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

iussitque pati verbera pontum,
partemque metus fieri nostri
mare sepositum.

Dedit illa graves improba poenas 340
per tam longos ducta timores,
cum duo montes, claustra profundi,
hinc atque illinc subito impulsu
velut aetherio gemerent sonitu,
spargeret arces nubesque ipsas
mare deprensam.

palluit audax Tiphys et omnes
labente manu misit habenas,
Orpheus tacuit torpente lyra
ipsaque vocem perdidit Argo.
quid cum Siculi virgo Pelori, 350
rabidos utero succincta canes,
omnes pariter solvit hiatus?

quis non totos horruit artus
totiens uno latrante malo?
quid cum Ausonium dirae pestes
voce canora mare mulcerent,
cum Pieria resonans cithara
Thracius Orpheus solitam cantu
retinere rates paene coegit

Sirena sequi? quod fuit huius 360
pretium cursus? aurea pellis
maiusque mari Medea malum,
merces prima digna carina.

Nunc iam cessit pontus et omnes
patitur leges; non Palladia
compacta manu regumque ferens
inclita remos quaeritur Argo;
quaelibet altum cumba pererrat.
terminus omnis motus et urbes
muros terra posuere nova, 370

MEDEA

blows,¹ and the sequestered sea become a part of our human fear.

³⁴⁰ Heavy the penalties which that bold barque paid, brought through long terrors, when two mountains, barriers of the deep, from either side quick rushing, roared as with sound of thunder, and the sea, caught between, sprinkled their peaks and the clouds themselves. Bold Tiphys paled with fear and let the helm slip wholly from his faltering hand; Orpheus was still, his lyre mute with amaze, and the Argo herself lost voice.² What, when the maid³ of Sicilian Pelorus, her waist begirt with ravenous dogs, opened all her gaping throats together? Who did not shudder in every limb when that one monster howled with so many tongues? What, when the deadly pests⁴ soothed the Ausonian sea with their tuneful songs, when, sounding back on his Pierian lyre, Thracian Orpheus well-nigh forced the Siren to follow, though wont to hold ships spell-bound by her song? Of this voyage what was the prize? The golden fleece and Medea, worse evil than the sea, worthy to be the first ship's merchandise.

³⁶⁴ Now, in our time, the deep has ceased resistance and submits utterly to law; no famous Argo, framed by a Pallas' hand, with princes to man its oars, is sought for; any little craft now wanders at will upon the deep. All bounds have been removed, cities have set their walls in new lands, and the world, now

¹ *i.e.* of oars.

² The Argo's figurehead was made of wood from the talking oaks of Dodona and had itself power to speak and give timely warnings.

³ Scylla.

⁴ The Sirens.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

nil qua fuerat sede reliquit
 pervius orbis :
 Indus gelidum potat Araxen,
 Albin Persae Rhenumque bibunt.
 venient annis saecula seris,
 quibus Oceanus vincula rerum
 laxet et ingens pateat tellus
 Tethysque novos detegat orbes
 nec sit terris ultima Thule.

NVTRIX

Alumna, celerem quo rapis tectis pedem? 380
 resiste et iras comprime ac retine impetum.
 Incerta qualis entheos gressus tulit
 cum iam recepto maenas insanit deo
 Pindi nivalis vertice aut Nysae iugis,
 talis recursat huc et huc motu effero,
 furoris ore signa lymphati gerens.
 flammata facies spiritum ex alto citat,
 proclamat, oculos uberi fletu rigat,
 renidet; omnis specimen affectus capit. 389
 quo pondus animi vergat, ubi ponat minas, 391
 haeret; minatur aestuat queritur gemit. 390
 ubi se iste fluctus franget? exundat furor. 392
 non facile secum versat aut medium scelus;
 se vincet. irae novimus veteris notas.
 magnum aliquid instat, efferum immane impium.
 vultum furoris cerno. di fallant metum!

MEDEA

passable throughout, has left nothing where it once had place : the Indian drinks of the cold Araxes, the Persians quaff the Elbe and the Rhine. There will come an age in the far-off years when Ocean shall unloose the bonds of things, when the whole broad earth shall be revealed, when Tethys shall disclose new worlds and Thule not be the limit of the lands.

NURSE

[*Sees MEDEA hurrying out of the house.*]

Dear child, whither hurriest thou abroad ? Stay, curb thy passion, check thy impetuous haste.

[*MEDEA goes on without heeding.*]

³⁸² As a maenad uncertainly directs her frenzied steps when now she raves at the oncoming of the god, on snowy Pindus' top or on Nysa's ridges, so she runs now here, now there, with frantic rush, marks of distracted passion in her face. Her cheeks aflame, she pants with deep sobs for breath, shouts aloud, weeps floods of tears, beams with joy ; she assumes the proof of every passion. Whither the weight of her wrath inclines, where it aims its threats, hangs still in doubt ; she threatens, seethes with rage, complains, groans aloud. Where will this wave of madness break ? Madness o'erflows its bounds. No simple or half-way crime doth she ponder in her heart ; she will outdo herself. I recognize the marks of her old-time rage. Something great is impending, wild, monstrous, impious.

[*MEDEA now approaches.*]

I see madness in her face, May Heaven avert my fears !

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

MEDEA

Si quaeris odio, misera, quem statuas modum,
 imitare amorem. regias egone ut faces
 inulta patiar? segnis hic ibit dies,
 tanto petitus ambitu, tanto datus? 400
 dum terra caelum media libratum feret
 nitidusque certas mundus evolvit vices
 numerusque harenis derit et solem dies,
 noctem sequentur astra, dum siccas polus
 versabit Arctos, flumina in pontum cadent,
 nunquam meus cessabit in poenas furor
 crescetque semper. quae ferarum immanitas,
 quae Scylla, quae Charybdis Ausonium mare
 Siculumque sorbens quaeve anhelantem premens
 Titana tantis Aetna fervebit minis? 410
 non rapidus amnis, non procellosum mare
 Pontusve Coro saevus aut vis ignium
 adiuta flatu possit imitari impetum
 irasque nostras; sternam et evertam omnia.

Timuit Creontem ac bella Thessalici ducis?
 amor timere neminem verus potest.
 sed cesserit coactus et dederit manus;
 adire certe et coniugem extremo alloqui
 sermone potuit. hoc quoque extimuit ferox.
 laxare certe tempus immitis fugae 420
 genero licebat—liberis unus dies
 datus est duobus. non queror tempus breve;
 multum patebit. faciet hic faciet dies
 quod nullus unquam taceat. invadam deos
 et cuncta quatiam.

MEDEA

MEDEA [*aside*]

If thou seekst, poor soul, what limit thou shouldst set to hate, copy thy love. Can it be that unavenged I should endure this royal wedding? Shall this day go idly by so anxiously besought, so anxiously bestowed? While the central earth shall bear up the balanced heavens, while the bright universe shall pursue its unchanging rounds, while sands lack number, while day attends the sun and stars the night, while the dry¹ Bears revolve about the pole, and rivers fall to the sea, my madness shall never cease its quest of vengeance and shall grow on for ever. What ferocity of beasts, what Scylla, what Charybdis, sucking up the Ausonian and Sicilian waters, or what Aetna, resting heavily on panting Titan, shall burn with such threats as I? No whirling river, no storm-tossed sea, no Pontus, raging beneath the north-west wind, no violence of fire, fanned by the gale, could imitate the onrush of my wrath. I shall lay prostrate and destroy all things.

⁴¹⁵ Did he² fear Creon and the threats of Thessaly's king?³ True love can fear no man. But grant that under compulsion he yielded and made surrender; he could at least have come to me, could have spoken some last words to his wife. This also, though bold of heart, he feared to do. Surely 'twas in the power of the king's son-in-law to put off the time of my cruel banishment—one day was given for my children twain. But I complain not that the time is short; it shall stretch far. This day shall do, shall do that whereof no day shall e'er be dumb. I will storm the gods, and shake the universe.

¹ Because these constellations never set beneath the ocean.

² Jason.

³ Acastus.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

NVTRIX

Recipe turbatum malis,
era, pectus, animum mitiga.

MEDEA

Sola est quies,
mecum ruina cuncta si video obruta ;
mecum omnia abeant. trahere, cum pereas, libet.

NVTRIX

Quam multa sint timenda, si perstas, vide
nemo potentes aggredi tutus potest. 430

IASON

O dura fata semper et sortem asperam,
cum saevit et cum parcit ex aequo malam !
remedia quotiens invenit nobis deus
periculis peiora ; si vellem fidem
praestare meritis coniugis, leto fuit
caput offerendum ; si mori nollem, fide
misero carendum. non timor vicit fidem,
sed trepida pietas ; quippe sequeretur necem
proles parentum. sancta si caelum incolis
Iustitia, numen invoco ac testor tuum : 440
nati patrem vicere. quin ipsam quoque,
etsi ferox est corde nec patiens iugi,
consulere natis malle quam thalamis reor.
constituit animus precibus iratam aggredi.
atque ecce, viso memet exiluit, furit,
fert odia prae se ; totus in vultu est dolor.

MEDEA

NURSE

Win back thy woe-troubled heart, my mistress ;
calm thy soul.

MEDEA

The only calm for me—if with me I see the
universe o'erwhelmed in ruins ; with me let all things
pass away. 'Tis sweet to drag others down when
thou art perishing. [*Exit.*]

NURSE [*calling after MEDEA*]

Beware how many perils are to be feared if thou
persist ; no one may safely assail the strong.

[*Enter JASON.*]

JASON

O fate, ever hard, and fortune, cruel—when she
rages and when she spares, equally malign ! How
often does God find cures for us worse than our
perils ; should I resolve to be faithful to my wife
according to her deserts, my life would be forfeited
to death ; should I refuse to die, alas ! I must be
faithless. It is not fear, but fearful father-love that
has conquered faith ; surely my children would share
their parents' death. O holy Justice, if in heaven
thou dwellest, I call thy divinity to witness : the
sons have prevailed upon the sire. Nay, even she
herself, though she is fierce of heart and ill brooks
the yoke, would rather, methinks, take thought for
her sons than for her marriage rights. My mind is
fixed to assail her wrath with prayers. [*Enter MEDEA.*]
And see, at sight of me she starts up, bursts into a
passion, displays her hate ; all her anguish is in
her face.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

MEDEA

Fugimus, Iason, fugimus. hoc non est novum,
 mutare sedes; causa fugiendi nova est—
 pro te solebam fugere. discedo exeo,
 penatibus profugere quam cogis tuis; 450
 at quo remittis? Phasin et Colchos petam
 patriumque regnum quaeque fraternus cruor
 perfudit arva? quas peti terras iubes?
 quae maria monstras? Pontici fauces freti
 per quas revexi nobilem regum manum
 adulterum secuta per Symplegadas?
 parvamne Iolcon, Thessala an Tempe petam?
 quascumque aperui tibi vias, clausi mihi.
 quo me remittis? exuli exilium imperas
 nec das. eatur. regius iussit gener; 460
 nihil recuso. dira suppliciaingere;
 merui. cruentis paelicem poenis premat
 regalis ira, vinculis oneret manus
 clausamque saxo noctis aeternae obruat;
 minora meritis patiar.

Ingratum caput,
 revolvat animus igneos tauri halitus
 interque saevos gentis indomitae metus
 armifero in arvo flammeum Aeetae pecus,¹
 hostisque subiti tela, cum iussu meo
 terrigena miles mutua caede occidit. 470
 adice expetita spolia Phrixei arietis
 somnoque iussum lumina ignoto dare
 insomne monstrum, traditum fratrem neci

¹ *Leo deletes ll. 467, 468.*

MEDEA

MEDEA

We are fleeing, Jason, fleeing. 'Tis no new thing to change our abode; but the cause of flight is new—'twas *for* thee I was wont to flee. I withdraw, I go away, whom thou art forcing to flee forth from thy home; but whither dost thou send me back? Shall I seek Phasis and the Colchians, my father's kingdom, the fields drenched with my brother's blood? What lands dost thou bid me seek? What waters dost show to me? The jaws of the Pontic sea through which I brought back the noble band of princes, following thee, thou wanton, through the Clashing Rocks? Is it little Iolcos or Thessalian Tempe I shall seek? All the ways which I have opened for thee I have closed upon myself. Whither dost send me back? Thou imposest exile on an exile, but givest no place. But let me go. A king's son-in-law has commanded it; I'll not refuse. Heap dire penalties upon me; them have I deserved. Let the angry king crush thy mistress with cruel punishments, load her hands with chains, shut her up and bury her in dungeons of eternal darkness. I shall suffer less than I deserve.

⁴⁶⁵ O ungrateful man, let thy heart recall the bull's fiery breath, and, midst the savage terrors of an unconquered race, the fire-breathing herd on Aëtes' arm-bearing¹ plain, the weapons of the suddenly appearing foe, when, at my order, the earth-born soldiery fell in mutual slaughter. Think, too, on the long-sought spoil of the ram of Phrixus, the sleepless dragon, bidden to close his eyes in unknown slumber, my brother given up to death,

¹ Where the dragon's teeth sowed by Jason sprang up into full-armed warriors.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

et scelere in uno non semel factum scelus, ausasque natas fraude deceptas mea secare membra non revicturi senis.	476
per spes tuorum liberum et certum larem, per victa monstra, per manus, pro te quibus numquam peperci, perque praeteritos metus,	478
per caelum et undas, coniugi testes mei, miserere, redde supplici felix vicem.	482
aliena quaerens regna deserui mea ;	477
ex opibus illis, quas procul raptas Scythae usque a perustis Indiae populis agunt, quas quia referta vix domus gaza capit, ornamus auro nemora, nil exul tuli nisi fratris artus. hos quoque impendi tibi tibi patria cessit, tibi pater, frater, pudor— hac dote nupsi. redde fugienti sua.	483

IASON

Perimere cum te vellet infestus Creo, lacrimis meis evictus exilium dedit.	490
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MEDEA

Poenam putabam ; munus ut video est fuga.

IASON

Dum licet abire, profuge teque hinc eripe ;
gravis ira regum est semper.

¹ Medea not only slew her brother, but cut him in pieces and cast them into the sea. She thinks of each piece as a separate crime. Similarly, when her brother's ghost appears to her (l. 963) it is still in pieces, *dispersis membris*.

MEDEA

crime not done once alone in one act of crime;¹ think on the daughters² who, lured by my guile, dared dismember the old man who was never to return to life. By the hopes of thy children, thine established house, by the monsters conquered, by these hands which I have never spared in thy service, by the perils we have undergone, by heaven and sea, witnesses of my marriage, have mercy on me; happy thyself, give thy suppliant her turn at happiness. Seeking a kingdom for another, I have given up my own; of all that wealth which, plundered even from the distant swart tribes of India, the Scythians heap up, that golden treasure which, since the packed palace can scarce contain it, we hang upon the trees,³ I brought away nothing in my exile save only my brother's limbs. Those also I squandered upon thee; for thee my country has given place, for thee father, brother, maidenhood—with this dower did I wed thee. Give back to the fugitive her own.

JASON

When angry Creon was bent on thy destruction, 'twas by my tears he was prevailed upon to grant thee banishment.

MEDEA

A punishment I deemed it; now, as I see, exile is a boon.

JASON

Depart while still thou mayst; take thyself hence; grievous ever is the wrath of kings.

¹ Of Pelias.

² Referring to the golden fleece.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

MEDEA

Hoc suades mihi,
praestas Creusae ; paelicem invisam amoves.

IASON

Medea amores obicit ?

MEDEA

Et caedem et dolos.

IASON

Obicere tandem quod potes crimen mihi ?

MEDEA

Quodcumque feci.

IASON

Restat hoc unum insuper,
tuis ut etiam sceleribus fiam nocens.

MEDEA

Tua illa, tua sunt illa ; cui prodest scelus 500
is fecit. omnes coniugem infamem arguant ;
solus tuere, solus insontem voca ;
tibi innocens sit quisquis est pro te nocens.

IASON

Ingrata vita est cuius acceptae pudet.

MEDEA

Retinenda non est cuius acceptae pudet.

MEDEA

MEDEA

In urging this upon me, thou art Creusa's advocate; thou wouldst remove the rival whom she hates.

JASON

What! Medea charge me with love?

MEDEA

Yes, murder, too, and treachery.

JASON

What crime, pray, canst thou charge to me?

MEDEA

Whatever I have done.

JASON

This one thing remains still for me, to become guilty of thy sins as well.

MEDEA

They are, they are thine own; who profits by a sin has done the sin. Though all should hold thy wife infamous, do thou alone protect her, do thou alone call her innocent; let her be guiltless in thy sight, who for thy sake is guilty.

JASON

Unwelcome is life which one is ashamed to have accepted.

MEDEA

Then one should not keep a life which he is ashamed to have accepted.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

IASON

Quin potius ira concitum pectus doma,
placare natis.

MEDEA

Abdico eiuro abnuo.
meis Creusa liberis fratres dabit ?

IASON

Regina natis exulum, afflictis potens.

MEDEA

Non veniat umquam tam malus miseris dies 510
qui prole foeda misceat prolem inclitam,
Phoebi nepotes Sisyphi nepotibus.

IASON

Quid, misera, meque teque in exitium trahis ?
abscede quaeso.

MEDEA

Supplicem audivit Creo.

IASON

Quid facere possim, loquere.

MEDEA

Pro me ? vel scelus

IASON

Hinc rex et illinc—

MEDEA

JASON

Nay, calm thy wrath-stirred heart; for thy sons' sake be reconciled.

MEDEA

I reject, forswear, disown them! Shall Creusa bear brothers to my children?

JASON

Yes, a queen, to the sons of exiles; a royal lady to the fallen.

MEDEA

Never may such ill day come to the wretched, as shall mingle a base breed with illustrious stock Phoebus' sons with the sons of Sisyphus.

JASON

Why, wretched woman, dost thou drag both me and thee to ruin? Begone, I pray thee.

MEDEA

Creon has heard my prayer.

JASON

What can I do? Tell me.

MEDEA

For me? Crime.

JASON

A king on this side and on that——

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

MEDEA

Est (et hic maior metus ¹)
Medea. nos configere.² certemus sine,
sit pretium Iason.

IASON

Cedo defessus malis.
et ipsa casus saepe iam expertos time.

MEDEA

Fortuna semper omnis infra me stetit. 520

IASON

Acastus instat.

MEDEA

Propior est hostis Creo;
utrumque profuge. non ut in socerum manus
armes nec ut te caede cognata inquines
Medea cogit; innocens mecum fuge.

IASON

Et quis resistet, gemina si bella ingruant,
Creo atque Acastus arma si iungant sua?

MEDEA

His adice Colchos, adice et Aeeten ducem,
Scythas Pelagis iunge; demersos dabo.

IASON

Alta extimesco sceptrā.

¹ Reading with Richter. Leo, Est et hic maior metus: |
Medea.

² The text is obviously corrupt here. Nothing satisfactory has
been made of nos configere; Leo considers ll. 516-520 an
interpolation; Page suggests conflige, used in active sense.

MEDEA

MEDEA

There is (and this more fearsome still) Medea.
Let us ¹ strive together, and let the prize be Jason.

JASON

I yield, worn with trouble. And do thou thyself
beware lest thou tempt fate too often.

MEDEA

Always has every fortune stood beneath my feet.

JASON

Acastus is hard after us.

MEDEA

Nearer foe is Creon; flee them both. That thou
arm thy hand against thy father-in-law, and stain
thyself with kindred ² blood, Medea does not compel
thee; remain guiltless and escape with me.

JASON

And who will resist if double war assail us, if
Creon and Acastus unite their arms?

MEDEA

Add the Colchians to these, add Aeetes, too, to
lead them, join Scythians with Pelasgians; to des-
truction will I give them all.

JASON

I tremble at lofty sceptres.

¹ *i.e.* Creon and me.

² Acastus was Jason's cousin.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

MEDEA

Ne cupias vide.

IASON

Suspecta ne sint, longa colloquia amputa. 530

MEDEA

Nunc summe toto Iuppiter caelo tona,
intende dextram, vindices flammam para
omnemque ruptis nubibus mundum quate.
nec deligenti tela librentur manu
vel me vel istum; quisquis e nobis cadet
nocens peribit, non potest in nos tuum
errare fulmen.

IASON

Sana meditari incipe
et placida fare. si quod ex soceri domo
potest fugam levare solamen, pete.

MEDEA

Contemnere animus regias, ut scis, opes 540
potest soletque; liberos tantum fugae
habere comites liceat in quorum sinu
lacrimas profundam. te novi nati manent.

IASON

Parere precibus cupere me fateor tuis;
pietas vetat; namque istud ut possim pati,
non ipse memet cogat et rex et socer.
haec causa vitae est, hoc perusti pectoris
curis levamen. spiritu citius queam
carere, membris, luce.

MEDEA

MEDEA

See that thou lust not after them.

JASON

Cut short this long discourse, lest it arouse suspicion.

MEDEA

Now, O most high Jupiter, thunder throughout thy heavens, stretch forth thy hand, thine avenging flames prepare, rend the clouds and make the whole world quake. Let thy bolts be poised with hand that chooseth neither me nor him; whichever of us falls will perish guilty; against us thy bolt can make no error.

JASON

Begin to think with reason, and speak with calm. If any solace from my father-in-law's house can soothe thy flight, request it.

MEDEA

To scorn the wealth of kings, my soul, as well thou knowest, hath strength and wont. I ask but this: that I may have my children as comrades of my flight, that in their bosoms I may pour forth my tears. Thee new sons await.

JASON

I confess that right gladly would I yield unto thy prayer, but a father's love forbids; for that I should permit this thing, not Creon himself, my king and father-in-law, could force me. This is my reason for living, this, my heart's comfort, consumed as it is with cares. Sooner could I part with breath, with limbs, with light.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

MEDEA

Sic natos amat?

bene est, tenetur, vulnere patuit locus.— 550
 suprema certe liceat abeuntem loqui
 mandata, liceat ultimum amplexum dare;
 gratum est et illud. voce iam extrema peto,
 ne, si qua noster dubius effudit dolor,
 maneant in animo verba; melioris tibi
 memoria nostri sedeat; haec irae data
 oblitterentur.

IASON

Omnia ex animo expuli
 precorque et ipse, fervidam ut mentem regas
 placideque tractes; miserias lenit quies.

MEDEA

Discessit. itane est? vadis oblitus mei 560
 et tot meorum facinorum? excidimus tibi?
 nunquam excidemus. hoc age, omnes advoca
 vires et artes. fructus est scelerum tibi
 nullum scelus putare. vix fraudi est locus;
 timemur. hac aggredere, qua nemo potest
 quicquam timere. perge nunc, aude, incipe
 quidquid potest Medea, quidquid non potest.

Tu, fida nutrix, socia maeroris mei
 variique casus, misera consilia adiuva. 570
 est palla nobis, munus aetherium, domus
 decusque regni, pignus Aeetae datum
 a Sole generis, est et auro textili
 monile fulgens quodque gemmarum nitor

MEDEA

MEDEA [*aside*]

Thus does he love his sons? 'Tis well! I have him! The place to wound him is laid bare. [*To JASON.*] As I depart, my final message, at least, grant me to speak; grant me to give the last embrace; e'en that will be a boon. With my latest utterance I beg thee now; let not any words my distracted grief has poured forth remain within thy mind; let the memory of my better self stay with thee, and let these words spoken in wrath be quite forgot.

JASON

All have I driven from my mind, and I also make prayer to thee that thou curb thy hot passion and be calm; peace soothes the soul's distresses. [*Exit.*]

MEDEA

He has gone! Can it be so? Goest thou, forgetful of me and of all the deeds I wrought? Have we fallen from thy memory? Nay, we shall never fall therefrom. [*To herself.*] To thy task; summon up all thy powers and arts. The fruit of thy crimes is to count nothing crime. There is scant room for fraud; we are held in fear. There make attack where no one can fear aught. Haste thee now, dare, begin whatever Medea can—and cannot—do.

[*To the NURSE.*]

568 Do thou, faithful nurse, comrade of my grief and of my shifting fortunes, help my unhappy plannings. I have a robe, a gift from heaven, the glory of our house and kingdom, given by the Sun to Aetes as a pledge of fatherhood; there is also a gleaming necklace of woven gold and a golden band which the

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

distinguit aurum, quo solent cingi comae.
haec nostra nati dona nubenti ferant,
sed ante diris inlita ac tincta artibus.
vocetur Hecate. sacra letifica appara;
statuantur arae, flamma iam tectis sonet.

CHORVS

Nulla vis flammae tumidive venti
tanta, nec teli metuenda torti, 580
quanta cum coniunx viduata taedis
ardet et odit;

non ubi hibernos nebulosus imbres
Auster advexit properatque torrens
Hister et iunctos vetat esse pontes
ac vagus errat;

non ubi impellit Rhodanus profundum,
aut ubi in rivos nivibus solutis
sole iam forti medioque vere
tabuit Haemus. 590

caecus est ignis stimulatus ira
nec regi curat patiturve frenos
aut timet mortem; cupit ire in ipsos
obvius enses.

Parcite, o divi, veniam precamur,
vivat ut tutus mare qui subegit;
sed furit vinci dominus profundi
regna secunda.

ausus aeternos agitare currus
immemor metae iuvenis paternae 600
quos polo sparsit furiosus ignes
ipse recepit.

MEDEA

sparkle of gems adorns, with which the hair is encircled. Let my sons bring these as gifts unto the bride, but let them first be anointed and imbued with baneful poisons. Now call on Hecate. Prepare the death-dealing rites; let altars be erected, and let now their fires resound within the palace.

CHORUS

No violence of fire or of swelling gale, no fearful force of hurtling spear, is as great as when a wife, robbed of her love, burns hot with hate; not when cloudy Auster has brought the winter's rains, and Hister's flood speeds on, wrecking bridges in its course, and wanders afield; not when the Rhone beats back the sea, or when the snows melt into streams beneath the sun's strong rays and in mid-spring Haemus has dissolved. Blind is the fire of love when fanned by rage, cares not to be controlled, brooks no restraint, has no fear of death; 'tis eager to advance even against the sword.

⁵⁹⁵ Have mercy, O gods, be gracious, we beseech you, that he ¹ may live in safety who tamed the sea; but the lord ² of the deep is enraged that the second realm is conquered. The youth ³ who dared drive the everlasting chariot, heedless of his father's goal, himself caught the fire which in his madness he scattered o'er the sky. The familiar path has cost

¹ Jason, who first ventured on the sea in the *Argo*; cf. ll. 318 ff.

Neptune. Jupiter is lord of the sky, Neptune of the sea, and Pluto of the underworld.

³ Phaëthon.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

constitit nulli via nota magno ;
vade qua tutum populo priori,
rumpe nec sacro, violente, sancta
foedera mundi.

Quisquis audacis tetigit carinae
nobiles remos nemorisque sacri
Pelion densa spoliavit umbra,
quisquis intravit scopulos vagantes 610
et tot emensus pelagi labores
barbara funem religavit ora
raptor externi rediturus auri,
exitu diro temerata ponti
iura piavit.

Exigit poenas mare provocatum.
Tiphys in primis, domitor profundi,
liquit indocto regimen magistro ;
litore externo, procul a paternis
occidens regnis tumuloque vili 620
tectus ignotas iacet inter umbras.
Aulis amissi memor inde regis
portibus lentis retinet carinas
stare querentes.

Ille vocali genitus Camena,
cuius ad chordas modulante plectro
restitit torrens, siluere venti,
cum suo cantu volucris relicto
adfuit tota comitante silva,
Thracios sparsus iacuit per agros, 630
at caput tristi fluitavit Hebro ;
contigit notam Styga Tartarumque,
non rediturus.

MEDEA

no mortal dear; walk thou where 'twas safe for folk aforetime, nor break, rash man, the inviolable covenants of the universe.

⁶⁰⁷ Whoever handled that daring ship's famous oars and despoiled Pelion of his sacred grove's thick shade, whoever entered between the roaming rocks ¹ and, having passed the perils of the deep, moored his vessel on a savage shore, to return captor of foreign gold—all by a dreadful end atoned for the sea's outraged laws.

⁶¹⁶ Punishment the challenged ocean claims. First of all, Tiphys, the tamer of the deep, gave up control to an untrained helmsman; dying on a foreign shore, far from his ancestral realm, in a paltry tomb he lies midst unfamiliar shades. For this, Aulis, remembering her lost king, in her becalmed harbour holds ships chafing at delay.²

⁶²⁵ That son ³ of the tuneful Muse, at whose sweet melodies the swift stream stood still and the winds were hushed, when the bird, leaving off its own singing, came near him, the whole wood following after—he lay scattered over the Thracian fields, but his head floated down mournful Hebrus; never to return, he came to Tartarus and the familiar ⁴ Styx.

¹ The Symplegades.

² *i.e.* Aulis, long after this event, keeps the Greek fleet back from Troy, as if thus taking vengeance on that first fleet which robbed her of her king.

³ Orpheus.

⁴ Orpheus had visited the lower world once before.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

Stravit Alcides Aquilone natos,
 patre Neptuno genitum necavit
 sumere innumeras solitum figuras;
 ipse post terrae pelagique pacem,
 post feri Ditis patefacta regna,
 vivus ardenti recubans in Oeta
 praebuit saevis sua membra flammis, 640
 tabe consumptus gemini cruoris
 munere nuptae.

Stravit Ancaeam violentus ictu
 saetiger; fratrem, Meleagre, matris
 impius mactas morerisque dextra
 matris iratae. meruere cuncti
 morte quod crimen tener expiavit
 Herculi magno puer inrepertus,
 raptus, heu, tutas puer inter undas. 650
 ite nunc, fortes, perarate pontum
 fonte timendo.

Idmonem, quamvis bene fata nosset,
 condidit serpens Libycis harenis;
 omnibus verax, sibi falsus uni,
 concidit Mopsus caruitque Thebis.
 ille si vere cecinit futura,
 exul errabit Thetidis maritus.¹
 igne fallaci nociturus Argis
 Nauplius praeceps cadet in profundum;
 occidet proles,² patrioque pendet 660
 crimine poenas;

¹ *Leo deletes this line, but reads erravit with w. Richter retains line and reads errabit.*

² *Leo supplies occidet proles.*

MEDEA

⁶³⁴ Alcides laid low the sons¹ of Aquilo, he slew Neptune's son² wont to take upon him countless shapes; but he himself, after establishing peace on land and sea, after opening up the kingdoms of savage Dis, laid him down, living, on burning Oeta, and gave his body to the devouring flames, consumed by the wasting of the double blood,³ his wife's offering.

⁶⁴³ The bristling boar,⁴ irresistible in his thrust, laid Ancaeus low; thou, Meleager, dost impiously slay thy mother's brother and diest by thine enraged mother's hand. All these deserved the charge⁵ for which that tender boy,⁶ sought vainly by mighty Hercules, atoned by death—the boy snatched away, alas, midst peaceful waters. Go now, ye brave, plough up the sea, whose streams ye ought to dread.

⁶⁵² Idmon, though he well knew his fate, was slain⁷ by a serpent on Libya's sands; true to all, but false to himself alone, Mopsus fell and saw not Thebes again. If he⁸ told truth as to the future, Thetis' husband⁹ shall in exile wander. Nauplius, while striving to wreck the Argives by false beacon fires, shall fall headlong into the deep; his son¹⁰ shall perish and pay the penalty of his father's sin;¹¹ Oileus,¹²

¹ Zetes and Calais.

² Periclymenus.

³ *i.e.* the commingled blood of the hydra and of Nessus; see Index *s.v.* "Nessus."

⁴ The Calydonian boar.

⁵ *i.e.* of violating the sea.

⁶ Hylas.

⁷ He could foresee the fate of others, as of Peleus, but could not foresee and guard against his own.

⁸ Mopsus.

⁹ Peleus.

¹⁰ Palamedes.

¹¹ *i.e.* of joining in the Argonautic expedition.

¹² Ajax; the father's name is put in place of the son's.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

fulmine et ponto moriens Oileus ;
 coniugis fatum redimens Pheraei
 uxor, impendens animam marito.
 ipse qui praedam spoliūque iussit
 aureum prima revehi carina,
 ustus accenso Pelias aeno
 arsit angustas vagus inter undas.
 iam satis, divi, mare vindicastis ;
 parcite iusso.

NVTRIX

Pavet animus, horret, magna perniciēs adest. 670
 immane quantum augescit et semet dolor
 accendit ipse vimque praeteritam integrat.
 vidi furem saepe et aggressam deos,
 caelum trahentem ; maius his, maius parat
 Medea monstrum. namque ut attonito gradu
 evasit et penetrare funestum attigit,
 totas opes effundit et quidquid diu
 etiam ipsa timuit promittit atque omnem explicat
 turbam malorum, arcana secreta abdita,
 et triste laeva comprecans¹ sacrum manu 680
 pestes vocat quascumque ferventis creat
 harena Libyae quasque perpetua nive
 Taurus coerces frigore Arctoo rigens,
 et omne monstrum. tracta magicis cantibus
 squamifera latebris turba desertis adest.
 hic saeva serpens corpus immensum trahit
 trifidamque linguam exertat et quaerit quibus
 mortifera veniat ; carmine audito stupet
 tumidumque nodis corpus aggestis plicat
 cogitque in orbes. "parva sunt" inquit "mala 690

¹ So *Leo*, with *E*: complicans *A*: congregans *Richter*:
 comparans *Buecheler*: comprimens *Koetschau*.

MEDEA

too, dying midst flame and flood; redeeming from death her lord¹ of Pherae, the wife² shall perish, giving up her life for her husband's sake. Pelias himself, who bade the prize of the golden spoil be brought away in the first ship, seething in boiling pot, wandering midst waters close confined, perished by fire. Enough now, ye gods, have ye avenged the sea; spare him³ who was ordered to the task.

NURSE [*alone*]

My spirit quakes with horror; some great disaster is at hand. Monstrously grows her grief, feeds its own fires and renews its former strength. Often have I seen her in frenzy and assailing the gods,⁴ drawing down the sky; but greater than such deeds, greater is the monstrous thing Medea is preparing. For now that with maddened steps she has gone out and come to her baleful shrine, she lavishes all her stores and brings forth whatever e'en she herself long has dreaded, and marshals her whole train of evil powers, things occult, mysterious, hidden; and, supplicating the grim altar with her left hand, she summons destructive agencies, whatever burning Libya's sands produce, what Taurus, stiff with arctic cold, holds fast in his everlasting snows, and all monstrous things. Drawn by her magic incantations, the scaly brood leave their lairs and come to her. Here a savage serpent drags its huge length along, darts out its forked tongue, and seeks against whom it is to come death-dealing; hearing her incantation, it stops in amaze, knots its swollen body into writhing folds, and settles them into coils. "Petty are the evils," she cries, "and cheap is the weapon which

¹ Admetus.

² Alcestis.

³ Jason.

⁴ *i.e.* the sun and moon.

SENECAE TRAGOEDIAE

et vile telum est, ima quod tellus creat ;
 caelo petam venena. iam iam tempus est
 aliquid movere fraude vulgari altius.

huc ille vasti more torrentis iacens
 descendat anguis, cuius immensos duae,
 maior minorque, sentiunt nodos ferae
 (maior Pelasgis apta, Sidoniis minor)
 pressasque tandem solvat Ophiuchus manus
 virusque fundat ; adsit ad cantus meos
 lacessere ausus gemina Python numina.

700

et Hydra et omnis redeat Herculea manu
 succisa serpens, caede se reparans sua.
 tu quoque relictis pervigil Colchis ades,
 sopite primum cantibus, serpens, meis."

Postquam evocavit omne serpentum genus,
 congerit in unum frugis infaustae mala.

quaecumque generat invius saxis Eryx,
 quae fert opertis hieme perpetua iugis
 sparsus cruore Caucasus Promethei,

et quis sagittas divites Arabes linunt

711

pharetraque pugnax Medus aut Parthi leves,

710

aut quos sub axe frigido sucos legunt

712

lucis Suebae nobiles Hyrcaniis ;

quodcumque tellus vere nidifico creat

aut rigida cum iam bruma discussit decus

nemorum et nivali cuncta constrinxit gelu,

quodcumque gramen flore mortifero viret,

quicumque tortis sucus in radicibus

causas nocendi gignit, attrectat manu.

MEDEA

deepest earth begets; from heaven will I seek my poisons. Now, now is the time to set in motion some plan deeper than common guile. Hither let that serpent¹ descend which lies like a vast rushing stream, whose huge folds the two beasts² feel, the greater and the less (the greater used³ by Pelasgians; by Sidonians, the less); let Ophiuchus at length relax his choking grip and give the poison vent; in answer to my incantations let Python come, who dared to attack the twin divinities.⁴ Let Hydra return and every serpent cut off by the hand of Hercules, restoring itself by its own destruction.⁵ Thou, too, ever-watchful dragon,⁶ quitting the Colchians, come thou to my aid, thou who through my incantations wast first lulled to slumber."

⁷⁰⁵ When she had summoned forth the whole tribe of serpents, she assembled her evil store of baleful herbs. Whatever trackless Eryx produces on his rocky slopes; plants that grow on heights clothed in unbroken winter, the heights of Caucasus, spattered with Prometheus' gore; plants wherewith the rich Arabians smear their arrows, and the bold Medegirt with his quiver, or the light-armed Parthians; or those juices which, under the cold pole, high-born Sueban women gather in Hyrcanian groves; whatever the earth produces in the nest-building spring-time or when frozen winter has stripped the woods of their glory and bound all things with icy fetters; all plants that bloom with deadly flower, and all whose juices breed cause of death in their twisted

¹ The constellation Draco, winding between the two Bears.

² The Bears.

³ *i.e.* as a fixed point in sailing.

⁴ Apollo and Diana. ⁵ See Index *s.v.* "Hydra."

⁶ Which guarded the golden fleece.